EDUC221

Theory and Practice of Peer Assisted Learning

S1 Day 2015

Dept of Education

Contents

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Unit Convenor
Mitch Parsell
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Credit points
3

Prerequisites
24cp

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description
This unit aims to provide students who want to explore aspects of learning and teaching within their discipline with the knowledge and skills to enable them to be effective peer assisted learning leaders at undergraduate level. Each student is placed in a teaching and learning role during their study of this unit, so that they will be in a position to apply what they are learning (and reflect on their experiences). Where possible, the teaching and learning support role involves interaction with students within their substantive discipline area. The unit develops students' personal and professional skills in line with the University's graduate capabilities.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Knowledge of the pedagogy and teaching philosophy that underpins peer assisted learning

An understanding of discipline specific issues in peer assisted learning leadership

Practical, social and communicative skills required to be an effective PAL Leader

Evaluative skills necessary to critically assess claims about the PAL model of learning and teaching

An understanding of how the PAL model of learning and teaching accommodates

student diversity

Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Due
Reflective Journal	30%	Thursday week 4 & 12
Short Essay	30%	Thursday Week 9
Practical Task	40%	Weeks 9-11

Reflective Journal

Due: **Thursday week 4 & 12**
Weighting: **30%**

Continuous assessment worth a total of 30%.

Word Limit: 200 words per entry

The continuous Reflective Journal provides you with an opportunity to assess your successes and ongoing professional development needs. It is primarily focused on the formative assessment of the skills needed to become a critically reflective teacher. It tests content knowledge and the ability to critically apply this to practical challenges. Exercises will include peer and self-assessment tasks.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Knowledge of the pedagogy and teaching philosophy that underpins peer assisted learning
- An understanding of discipline specific issues in peer assisted learning leadership
- Evaluative skills necessary to critically assess claims about the PAL model of learning and teaching
- An understanding of how the PAL model of learning and teaching accommodates student diversity

Short Essay

Due: **Thursday Week 9**
Weighting: **30%**

One Short Essay worth 30%.

Word Limit: 1000 words

The specific topic of each essay will be negotiated, possible topics include:

(i)   A statement of your teaching philosophy;

(ii)   Why learning occurs best in a community of peers;

(iii)   The three most important skills of a PAL Leader are ….;

(iv)   In my discipline PAL Leaders need to ….;

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Knowledge of the pedagogy and teaching philosophy that underpins peer assisted learning
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- Evaluative skills necessary to critically assess claims about the PAL model of learning and teaching
- An understanding of how the PAL model of learning and teaching accommodates student diversity

Practical Task

Due: **Weeks 9-11**
Weighting: **40%**

Due: By negotiation between weeks 9-11.

Time Limit: Approximately 20 minute sessions.

The primary focus of this unit is the development of the skills required to be an effective PAL Leader. This task offers an authentic assessment of this learning outcome. It integrates the entire unit content into a practical exercise that allows you to demonstrate your mastery of content knowledge, discipline specific issues and the application of these to the PAL leadership environment. Session must be nominated ahead of time to allow pre and post briefing sessions to be organised.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Knowledge of the pedagogy and teaching philosophy that underpins peer assisted learning
- An understanding of discipline specific issues in peer assisted learning leadership
- Practical, social and communicative skills required to be an effective PAL Leader
- Evaluative skills necessary to critically assess claims about the PAL model of learning and teaching
- An understanding of how the PAL model of learning and teaching accommodates student diversity

Delivery and Resources

Unit Content

The specific unit content is partially negotiated with students, but will cover three board areas:

- *Theoretical* Issues in Peer Assisted Learning:

In this section of the unit we will explore a range of theoretical issues that ground PAL. This will include discussions and exploration of Communities of Practice, Communities of Enquiry, Constructivist Learning principles and the notion of student-centred learning. Further, we will examine the empirical literature for results relevant to the efficacy, efficiency and generalizability of PAL. These discussions will inform the practical skills we will explore and develop in section two.

- *Practical* Skills for Peer Assisted Learning Leadership:

In this section we will explore, develop and practice a range of practical skills relevant to PAL leadership. These practical skills will be related back to the Theoretical Issues explored earlier and will act as a catalyst for self-reflection and identification of ongoing professional development needs.

- *Discipline Issues* in the Leading Peer Assisted Learning Sessions:

In this section we will examine if and how PAL leadership need to be adapted to different discipline contexts. Each student will explore the literature from their home discipline(s) and develop any discipline-specific skills required to be an effective PAL Leader. Refection on discipline-specific skills, issues and problems will allow us to develop a more robust and generalizable notion of PAL Leadership. Further, this section will enable us to refocus on the underlying theoretical basis of PAL.

Readings

All required readings and supporting material will be provided in seminars.

Unit Webpage

http://ilearn.mq.edu.au

Requirements

The assessment tasks for this unit are designed specifically to enable you to build the necessary practical skills and theoretical understanding to be an effective and self-reflective PAL leader. The Short Essay tasks are designed to allow you to test your understanding of the theoretical grounding of PAL and the empirical support for this model of teaching. Further, these are used as catalyst for self-reflection to enable you (together with your peers) to identify your continuing professional development needs. The skills identified are then practiced in the practical PAL Leadership sessions. The assessment profile is staggered and scaffolded to enable this process to be iterated so your understanding, self-awareness and practical skills can be continuous developed throughout the semester.

To pass this unit you must complete *all* assessment tasks and receive a *total* mark of 50% or more.

Attendance: Attendance is compulsory. If do not attend 90% of the unit workshops you will be failed for non-attendance.

Assignment to be submitted electronically through iLearn.

Late Submission: Extension must be requested in writing prior to the assessment due date. Requests for extensions must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. Assessments received late will incur a 10% mark reduction per day late (including weekends). No late assessment can be accepted after that task has been returned to students.

Consultation

Dr Mitch Parsell

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Faculty of Human Sciences

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Room: Student Centre (C3A)

Consultation: By negotiation

What has changed

In response to student feedback 2015 the assessment requirements have been reduced.

Unit Schedule

The unit is taught via two-hour intensive workshops led by both teaching staff and students. The format is used to encourage active participation and enable students to drive their own learning and practice the skills required to be effective PAL leaders. In addition to workshops students are required to reflection on their own practices and professional development needs. In line with the central theme of learning communities (or Communities of Practice) students must engage with their peers by providing targeted feedback on their abilities as PAL leaders. There will also be presentations from PAL leaders from Macquarie University students.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central. Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

Academic Honesty Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/academic_honesty/policy.html

Assessment Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/assessment/policy.html

Grading Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grading/policy.html

Grade Appeal Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html

Grievance Management Policy http://mq.edu.au/policy/docs/grievance_management/policy.html

Disruption to Studies Policy http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/disruption_studies/policy.html *The Disruption to Studies Policy is effective from March 3 2014 and replaces the Special Consideration Policy.*

In addition, a number of other policies can be found in the Learning and Teaching Category of Policy Central.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/support/student_conduct/

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in eStudent. For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit http://students.mq.edu.au/support/

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- Workshops
- StudyWise
- Academic Integrity Module for Students
- Ask a Learning Adviser

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Disability Service who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://informatics.mq.edu.au/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the Acceptable Use Policy. The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

Capable of Professional and Personal Judgement and Initiative

We want our graduates to have emotional intelligence and sound interpersonal skills and to demonstrate discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgement. They will exercise initiative as needed. They will be capable of risk assessment, and be able to handle ambiguity and complexity, enabling them to be adaptable in diverse and changing environments.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Evaluative skills necessary to critically assess claims about the PAL model of learning and teaching
- An understanding of how the PAL model of learning and teaching accommodates student diversity

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal
- Short Essay
- Practical Task

Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills

Our graduates will take with them the intellectual development, depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content in their chosen fields to make them competent and confident in their subject or profession. They will be able to demonstrate, where relevant, professional technical competence and meet professional standards. They will be able to articulate the structure of knowledge of their discipline, be able to adapt discipline-specific knowledge to novel situations, and be able to contribute from their discipline to inter-disciplinary solutions to problems.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Knowledge of the pedagogy and teaching philosophy that underpins peer assisted learning
- An understanding of discipline specific issues in peer assisted learning leadership
- Evaluative skills necessary to critically assess claims about the PAL model of learning and teaching

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal
- Short Essay
- Practical Task

Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

We want our graduates to be capable of reasoning, questioning and analysing, and to integrate and synthesise learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments; to be able to critique constraints, assumptions and limitations; to be able to think independently and systemically in relation to scholarly activity, in the workplace, and in the world. We want them to have a level of scientific and information technology literacy.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Evaluative skills necessary to critically assess claims about the PAL model of learning and teaching

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal
- Short Essay
- Practical Task

Problem Solving and Research Capability

Our graduates should be capable of researching; of analysing, and interpreting and assessing data and information in various forms; of drawing connections across fields of knowledge; and they should be able to relate their knowledge to complex situations at work or in the world, in order to diagnose and solve problems. We want them to have the confidence to take the initiative in doing so, within an awareness of their own limitations.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- An understanding of discipline specific issues in peer assisted learning leadership
- Evaluative skills necessary to critically assess claims about the PAL model of learning and teaching

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal
- Short Essay
- Practical Task

Effective Communication

We want to develop in our students the ability to communicate and convey their views in forms effective with different audiences. We want our graduates to take with them the capability to read, listen, question, gather and evaluate information resources in a variety of formats, assess, write clearly, speak effectively, and to use visual communication and communication technologies as appropriate.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- Practical, social and communicative skills required to be an effective PAL Leader

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal
- Short Essay
- Practical Task

Engaged and Ethical Local and Global citizens

As local citizens our graduates will be aware of indigenous perspectives and of the nation's historical context. They will be engaged with the challenges of contemporary society and with knowledge and ideas. We want our graduates to have respect for diversity, to be open-minded, sensitive to others and inclusive, and to be open to other cultures and perspectives: they should have a level of cultural literacy. Our graduates should be aware of disadvantage and social justice, and be willing to participate to help create a wiser and better society.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- An understanding of how the PAL model of learning and teaching accommodates student diversity

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal
- Practical Task

Socially and Environmentally Active and Responsible

We want our graduates to be aware of and have respect for self and others; to be able to work with others as a leader and a team player; to have a sense of connectedness with others and country; and to have a sense of mutual obligation. Our graduates should be informed and active participants in moving society towards sustainability.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcome

- An understanding of how the PAL model of learning and teaching accommodates student diversity

Assessment tasks

- Reflective Journal
- Practical Task