

Maths Support Discussion Group

Questions for Deb Jackson from her talk

Latrobe is funded 50% by University and 50% by HEPP funding – Higher Education Participation.

40 or so tutors – sessional tutors – mainly HDRs – some of these tutors have a role to interact with the lecturers / coordinators of specific courses (tutors as partners)

How do you advertise – via courses, flyers, posters and communication through newsletters – as many pathways as possible?

Why do students who don't access the service not use it – research to be undertaken in the UK soon.

Do the academics get feedback on what students are asking? Yes – as much as possible. Feedback pathway is through the coordinator – not always directly back to the face-to-face teachers.

It would be good if the Maths Support centre can feedback on teaching to academic staff – peer enhancement – mainly focused on maths and stats courses at Latrobe at the moment. The Latrobe experience is that academic staff have been largely supportive of the Maths Hub staff.

University College Dublin – student visits are logged and weekly report sent to appropriate coordinator – maths academics journaling their learning from this feedback – publications.

Do lecturers offer support or have consultation hours? Yes + SST – Subject support tutor have consultation classes in the Maths Hub.

Limited success with online discussion forums – lecturers wanted them to be embedded within the subject – Maths Hub has access to all specific subject discussion boards and can field maths specific enquiries for discipline subjects. (Both Don and Deb in their MathsHub). Blackboard discussion forum are difficult to use. Poh suggested Piazza as an alternative platform for student engagement.

Maths Skills in an individual self-paced course. Worksheets + help sessions (F2F), videos and online. Discipline specific. Certificate for completing skills.

Web-based skills on websites are fairly common – UK resources common.

Do students only use the services 'just in time' – at assessment time or as more steady-paced services? At Latrobe whilst there as spikes at assessments but there is also a steady core of people who use the centre as a more constant resource.

Guidance only for assignment questions – not helping them solve it.

Feedback on assignment feedback as part of the service.

Academic skills are funded from university core funding (e.g. learning advisors). Is this also true for numeracy? RMIT – academic skills included maths skills, are centrally funded. In most other Universities partially soft funded.

PASS as part of maths support (HEPP funding).

Does support hubs legitimise academics 'letting go' of needing to provide their own maths support within their own courses? Not all disciplines are capable of maths support. Some students need support from another voice that is not their lecturer.

Needs to be linkages between academics and support services – mandating this should be part of the roles of the Deans.

Maths and Stats support hub at Melbourne Uni – traditionally only for maths and stats subjects – now maths staff help maths students – maths help people are dealing with the broader needs of the university – quantitative support.

Maths support could be a breeding ground for skills development for service teaching – break down a lot of walls. Maths support community needed for maths support – share resources and benchmark and drive some institutional change. Need to play with mainstream teachers. Sub group under FyiMaths.

Maths support people know more than the academics often have more idea about what students are struggling with. Is maths support impacting on lecture attendance? Maths support will not repeat a lecture but help with clarification on questions arising from the lectures.

Maths support hub at Latrobe used as a catch up for practice classes for specific subjects at lecturers suggestion.

Bench marking or having evidence for the benefits of maths support – SIGMA in the UK are trying to quantify this. SIGMA mailing list. And SIGMA network websites. One day and half day workshops are run by good will of institutions and are usually free.

Maths support at Loughborough in UK (Maths Centre UK) is staffed by academics as part of their service component.