



Developing Australia's VET workforce to
implement the national training system

Engaging VET Practitioners Forum Continuous Improvement in VET

Think piece

Student Survey, a design for sustaining continuous improvement

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Overview

The challenge that is now embedded in AQTF 2007 is to use data and information for continuous improvement. But then there is nothing new in this.

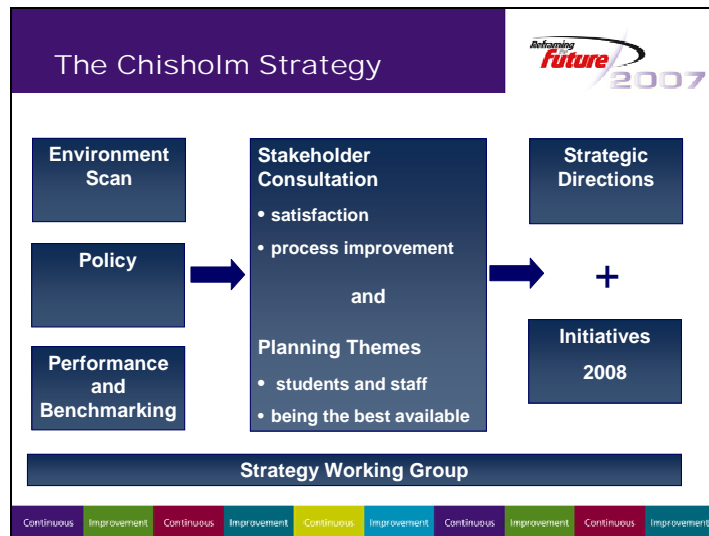
All training providers use student feedback, market assessments, improvement in their teaching practices, and so on, to ensure that they remain a viable business that delivers a quality product. How do we know that the information that we collect is actually about stakeholder satisfaction? And how can we collect reliable information in order to improve what we do?

Chisholm TAFE has been using student, staff, graduate and employer satisfaction surveys for many years. The Institute always used this stakeholder information in its strategic planning program, but Chisholm hasn't always been systematic about it.

In early 2006, Chisholm decided to start with a blank sheet of paper and redesign its surveys so that the Institute could be confident that it had reliable and valid measures of satisfaction. Chisholm began with a student survey and the intention of linking the drivers of satisfaction to Institute strategy and resource allocation. Each of these activities on its own delivers information and benefit to Chisholm, but purposefully using them together can create continuous improvement and greater benefit.

The Strategic Planning Program.

The first step on this journey happened in 2003 when Chisholm designed its Strategic Planning program. The institute Council wanted a simple and sustainable program that could engage staff at every level of the organisation. The design follows a reasonably standard format:



Added to the program is a simple presentation of the Chisholm Strategy. It is a brightly coloured, one-page document that can be seen pinned to notice boards all over the Institute, conveying direction, measures and activities (see attachment).

Did we succeed in meeting Council's expectations and in engaging Chisholm staff? The staff survey tells us that staff knowledge of the Institute's Strategic Directions has improved from 34% to 79% over the past four years. But there is more to go!

The Student Survey

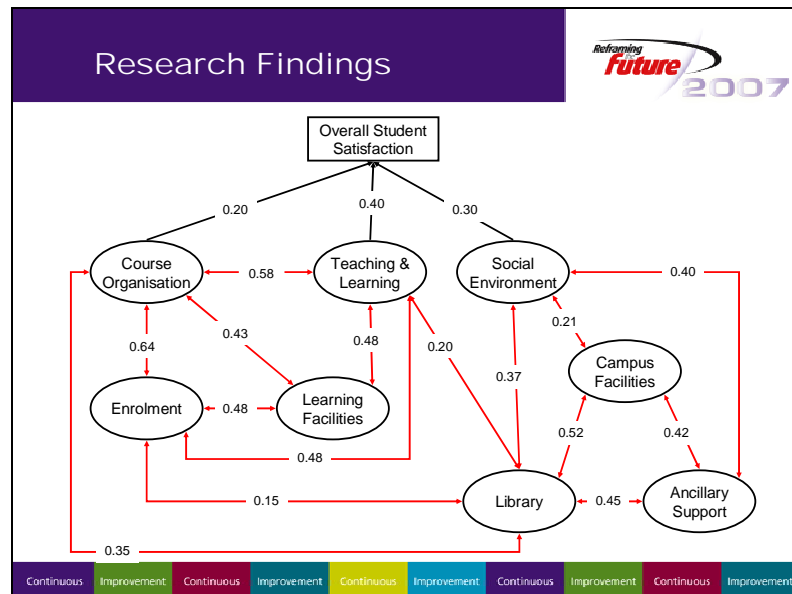
The aim in designing a new student survey was to identify and measure issues pertinent to student satisfaction with the educational experience in VET. The research integrated quantitative and qualitative methodologies and derived the dimensions associated with the concept of satisfaction amongst Chisholm Students.

Without going into the substantive statistical analysis that underpins this study, Chisholm found that there were eight dimensions of student satisfaction.

1. **Enrolment:** encompassing the procedures of completing enrolment forms, payment of fees and charges, the taking of photos and obtaining a student card.
2. **Organisational:** encompassing such organisational issues as timetables, subject/module outlines, booklists, and orientation day activities.
3. **Learning facilities:** encompassing such items as the size of the classroom, all classroom facilities (audio visual, overhead projectors, etc), atmosphere in classrooms (heating and cooling, lighting), and other learning facilities (computers, lathes, ovens, machinery, etc)
4. **Campus facilities:** encompassing such facilities as the canteen, student lounges and recreational areas, sporting facilities, parking, and personal safety and security.
5. **Library:** encompassing such items as books, computers, DVD, as well as opening hours.
6. **Teaching & Learning:** encompassing provision of assessment requirements, feedback on progress, relevance of skills, the extent to which classes are interesting and enjoyable as well as **staff/student interaction:** encompassing issues concerning staff treatment of students, the availability of staff, and the skill levels of staff.

7. **Social activities:** encompassing participation in social clubs or sporting events, and the level of sociability and support given by fellow students.
8. **Student support:** encompassing study support outside the classroom, including: literacy and numeracy, career counselling, and personal counselling.

The inter-relationship between the dimensions of satisfaction was examined using a statistical technique called “Structural Equation Modelling”. This process allows a conceptual map of student satisfaction to be constructed. It shows how the dimensions of satisfaction inter-relate to produce an overall perception of satisfaction.



At the Reframing the Future Forum, Chisholm will demonstrate how to use the model, and how to link it to organisational strategy. But for the moment, the model shows that only three dimensions have a direct impact upon overall student satisfaction: teaching and learning, the social environment, and course organisation. The impact of the other dimensions upon overall satisfaction is of a secondary nature, asserting their influence through their effect upon one of the three primary dimensions.

Given that our aim is to increase overall student satisfaction with VET services, the structural equation model provides us with a blueprint to the way in which improvements in certain areas of satisfaction impact upon overall satisfaction. When combined with current satisfaction data, we can use this model to prioritise and direct scarce resources to those areas that will have the greatest influence upon overall satisfaction.

While structural equation modelling is gaining popularity in the financial and hi-technology industries as a means of analysing customer satisfaction, an international literature review has discovered that there is very little published on the application of structural equation modelling to student satisfaction in education and training. Such a study has never been conducted in the context of the Australian VET system. Nevertheless, there is enough congruence between Chisholm's research and others to suggest that the student perception of satisfaction as represented in the dimensions above may be universal in nature. This means that it is likely that most

VET students would relate to the dimensions of Chisholm's model. We might all now have a platform from which we can think creatively and within our own context about continual improvement.

Conclusion

Chisholm Institute has designed a means through which it can improve its students' perception of the quality of the educational process. The three steps are:

- the design of an effective strategic planning program
- the design of a powerful model of student satisfaction
- using these and other sources of data and information to inform resource allocation.

Chisholm needed a valid means of looking at and working with the factors that drive student satisfaction. The Institute now has a working system that provides it with a sophisticated means of allocating scarce resources, thereby making the process sustainable, leading inevitably to continuous improvement.

CHISHOLM STRATEGY 2006 – 2008 OVERVIEW 2007



OUR PURPOSE

To contribute to the social and economic prosperity of the individual, industry and the region
through the achievement of quality education and training outcomes

Strategic Direction	Stakeholder	Value	Outcome / KPI, 2006 - 2008	Activity / Measure, 2007	
Chisholm Learning Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excellent teaching ▪ Quality educational environment ▪ Opportunity for individual success 	STUDENTS	Excellence	1. Successful learning outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>module load completion rate</i> ▪ <i>student satisfaction</i> 	1.1 Learning and assessment plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>100% of plans registered on shared drives</i> 1.2 Technology in teaching and learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>100% of students in accredited training using network</i> 1.3 Student destination surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>10 course areas</i> 1.4 Information services to students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>1 major continual improvement initiative for local / international students verified for each school/division</i> 	Chisholm Charter of Professional Practice in Teaching and Learning TRIENNIAL ENABLING STRATEGIES Teaching & Learning Enterprise Development Finance & Infrastructure External Engagement Workforce Development Chisholm Charter for Student Success
Capable Chisholm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professionalism ▪ Skills currency ▪ Staff qualifications 	STAFF	Commitment	2. Capable and professional staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>qualifications of staff</i> 	2.1 Professional practice program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>100 teachers participating</i> 2.2 Sessional teaching staff support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>100% of sessional staff completing mandatory program</i> 	
Adaptive Chisholm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Industry alliances ▪ Packaging and customisation ▪ Work relevant learning 	INDUSTRIES	Relevance	3. Flexibility and performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>employer satisfaction</i> 	3.1 Industry strategic alliances <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>new strategic alliances for each school/division</i> 3.2 Enterprise partnerships for work placement and/or industry release <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>1 published case study per school/division</i> 	
Collaborative Chisholm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community partnerships ▪ Valuing diversity ▪ Pride in Chisholm 	REGIONAL COMMUNITIES	Mutual Benefit	4. Community strength <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>alliances and partnerships</i> 	4.1 Friends of Chisholm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>implementation in each school/division</i> 4.2 Educational alliances/partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>case studies published (Schools, TAFE, Higher Ed, ACE)</i> 	
Prosperous Chisholm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial strength ▪ Differentiation ▪ Managed levels of risk 	GOVERNMENT	Integrity	5. Financial strength <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>TAFE system averages</i> ▪ <i>fee for service revenue</i> 	5.1 Industry integrated learning centres <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>1 major commercial initiative documented for each centre</i> 5.2 Learning environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>budgeted allocation per campus</i> 5.3 Asset management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>5% increase in space utilisation</i> 5.4 Fee for service income <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>fee for service business plans</i> ▪ <i>15% increase in income per school/division</i> 	

