Draft – Educational Experience Plan Conversation Backlog

The ‘conversation backlog’ is a collection of thoughts, ideas, and questions that have been introduced during the ‘Iron’ round of consultation and require additional consideration and conversation.

Perhaps we can pull topics off of the Backlog and introduce them to the forum for discussion. In this way the most interesting or pressing topics will be address the soonest, while those of less interest fall to the bottom of the queue.

You will note that the formatting of the items is a bit inconsistent and reference is made to the Iron Consultation document available in ‘Supporting Documents’ on the Consultation Site. Some of them will need more work than others to get them appropriately crafted to start a forum topic.

Our Commitment to Open Access to Information

A key idea but, ironically, one that is currently not implemented internally where we have tight constraints on seeing what others are doing in their teaching and limited scope for sharing.

There should be a concerted effort to open up access to course materials and designs internally so that we can more easily learn from each other.

Should there be an item with an explicit commitment to internal openness of learning materials as a means of promoting increasing quality through learning from each other?

Should internal openness be reflected somehow here? (Section 8 #5)

Connections between lifelong and life-wide learning & disconnection with USQ Strategy

We promise to partner with learners in the pursuit of their study objectives regardless of their background, location or stage in life.

Overall I don’t really see an explicit valuing of lifelong learning. It appears that informal learning might link to life wide learning.

Establishing a broad culture of “engagement” rather than transmission (policy development should be a conversation, as should the university)

Overall I wonder how we can make space for conversations rather than presentation in meetings, workshops, faculty assemblies and other forums (in a risk-free way)
Learning is a shared process with shared benefits and responsibilities

Lines 8 and 18 discussing partnership with learners. For me this means an obligation on both sides i.e. The learner and USQ. In reading the plan I didn’t see anything about student responsibilities within the learning process; however that is their job – just as my job is to facilitate learning opportunities but in the end I can’t learn it for them.

Inclusion: Both of these statements also speak to a relationship between teachers and learners, both of whom have responsibilities to themselves, and each other to engage in the learning partnership and process.

Where else does this notion belong in the plan?

Can we reframe environmental threats in terms of opportunities?

The section of ‘USQ’s Situation’, has a deficit orientation. Lines 78 and 86 - looks at what is happening from a threat or deficit perspective. Can we also look at how these changes might provide opportunity for our learners and also for USQ??

How do we engage ideas and invest appropriately?

Line 104 – excited to see resources for promising ideas. What might the processes to collect these?

‘Innovation Pipeline’ (what is a better way of expressing this?)

What types of creative assessment would enable demonstration of knowledge?

Students are supported to acquire and demonstrate knowledge and skill in diverse ways

(Section 6.2) Line 131 - I’d be interested in exploring student acquirement and demonstration of skills across the university is very broad ways. How might we use new, alternative or innovative ways of assessment which enable students to demonstrate what they know – and do they all need to do it in the same way i.e. can we provide students with choice.

Might flexibility in assessment that enables demonstration of achievement through authentic, workplace projects be part of this? (connecting ‘USQ will measure and increase its capacity to support student acquisition and demonstration of knowledge and skill in diverse ways’. And ‘All teaching will include pedagogical elements that promote learning that bridges theoretical knowledge with practice and life experience’.)
Are there relationships between the development of a measurement culture and innovation?

Measurement and innovation sometimes are difficult to link together. Also the benefits of innovation are sometimes seen down the track rather than immediately.

Referencing the ‘Capacity Gaps’.

Given the definition, what are some of the challenges that ‘flexibility’ provides?

Section 10.3. my experience is that too much flexibility can lead to substantially increased costs – need to balance this.

The Nature of Personal Learning, Learner Defined Success, and Credentialing

What is 'learner defined success'? I can see this causing some nervousness for those who teach in areas where professional competency documents and accreditation have a big impact on what learning success is judged to be. Education is one of those disciplines that takes everyday words & gives them special meaning that people in our environment don’t always understand. Perhaps it needs to be defined in Section 10?

learner define success – what if the learners define success at a different level to that of professional expectations – this is high on my mind (and others) at the moment when students complain about their marks and believe they should have a higher one.

we need to recognise that professional accreditation bodies and employers (esp. at the undergraduate levels) may not value informal learning as a core part of their degree.

It is probably worth talking about the self-determinate nature of learners and how they balance earning credentials and meeting their personal, intellectual, and educational goals.

What does it mean to blend digital and physical education and what are the roles of campus locations?

Might there be instances in which physical presence is not strictly required for the activity but where it offers a preferred mode for at least some learners. Perhaps the wording might indicate that "Requirements for physical teaching space..." or similar. That would leave the option to offer alternative modes for those who can, and prefer to, access them.

Line 225 – I believe this section devalues f2f learning. What about our students who choose f2f (rather than online), esp in SF campus where the expectation for those students is for more f2f. Also, we need to remember that f2f and online are
not the same, I myself teach very differently in a course that is only online verses one that has both online and f2f elements.

Does the University need to really think formally about how it wants to “blend” its environments and be very clear with learners. Getting clarity around how we offer and why we offer in different formats will allow us to ensure that we are doing so with the interests of current and future learners in mind (as an institution). It might be worth checking out the University of Colorado Boulder Continuing Education site (https://conted.colorado.edu/courses/) to see how they make it pretty simple.

What is Open Educational Practice and How Can we Participate?

It seems to me (I could be wrong) that when we talk about openness, we talk a lot about what we can take from it but we rarely talk about how we can contribute to it. Is there a place to be more explicit about the reciprocal nature of the openness movement & our role in it?

Getting a Better Understanding of ‘Personalised Learning’.

I think we need to look at personalised learning within a networked environment and also one where the work environment, employability skills and many professional accreditation bodies expect and value collaborative practices.

We need to recognise that AQF and external accreditation will impact on this in many disciplines.

Some of this needs to be covered off in the Tactics, but it will need to be supported by a pretty sophisticated conversation

What would an Open Culture Look Like?

1. Develop a culture (artefacts, patterns, norms, and behaviours) conducive to open and agile practice and open educational practice.

This is critically important as a starting point for greater internal openness.

What does this mean to support the acquisition and demonstration (recognition) of knowledge in diverse ways? Do we need to provide illustrations? (case studies/user cases)

2. Commitment/Objective: USQ will measure and increase its capacity to support student acquisition and demonstration of knowledge and skill in diverse ways.
Is there a way to give accreditation better context in the description? At the moment it seems like a bit of an add-on that you’ve slipped in because you feel that you have to include it. All of the accreditation & professional competency documents that I’ve dealt with actually have much in common with the liberal education perspective. What they often do (in my experience) is give professional meaning/context/slant to the concept. And, that makes them very powerful partners for a university that focuses on providing services to people who want to practice professions.

Should there be explicit mention of such possibilities as negotiated assessment? Our current practice is to lock things in once per year and insist on uniformity of assessment.

I do think that some of this is identified in the ‘Tactics’.

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**Personal learning is critical, but so is social learning for a range of reasons. How do they relate?**

We should also develop collaborative skills and practices, it is disturbing that the focus is on habits for individual work rather than collaborative (or am I reading that incorrectly).

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**What are appropriate aspirational success indicators for our educational experience?**

Should there be something in there about increasing completions rates through the use of exit qualifications rather than having students drop out part way through their study; if we are able to add more sub degrees this will be easier at the undergraduate level.

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**Do we need to define ‘Integrated Learning’?**

What is ‘integrated learning’? I had to look it up & can now see that it fits into your liberal education lens, but I also saw it used in other contexts. Perhaps it’s another for Section 10?

What does it have to do with inter-disciplinary and practice-infused learning? (for example)

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**Are there differences among general attributes for undergraduate and graduate students?**

Are we looking at different standards of the graduate attributes depend in the level of student? Or is the expectation is associate degree the same for Masters?
Can we develop a model or framework to better structure what we mean by 'Personalised Learning Support'? (Let's Put this one out for consultation as a Strategy)

I would like to propose the consideration of an additional action statement that explicitly refers to non-academic/teaching support structures that facilitate retention and academic success, and provide enhanced layers of personalised learning referred to in the first of the two goals attributed to this commitment/objective.

With regards to defining non-academic/teaching support, I see it as part of a spectrum of personalised support services that move through 4 transitional tiers:

1. **Academic Support** – provided by teaching and academic staff directly related to meeting the objectives of the course/program/area of study/research, learning and scholarship.

2. **Academic Support Services** - such as “Meet-up”, The Learning Centre and the Library, where the focus of the support is academic skill acquisition.

3. **Student Support Services** – including Student Relationship Officers who act as a conduit between all tiers of support, provide personal outreach to students based on retention risk factors, as well as the needs identified for their specific cohort, such as Elite Athletes, Australian Awards students, International Students, students transitioning from pathway programs etc., as well as Student Services and Phoenix Central, who provide “whole of student life” support such as life balance and well-being advice and initiatives, career guidance and development, leadership and representative opportunities etc.

4. **Administrative Support Services** – provided to ensure that students have access to the USQ systems they need to study, such as facilitating enrolment, access to USQStudyDesk, logon details, fee payments and include ICT support and administration support.

Are there opportunities to pursue inter-university collaboration to improve educational experience?

Are there other places in the Plan where we might benefit from attempting to develop inter-institutional sharing? (in reference to RAL)

Do we need more operational flexibility (agility) in the course definition process?

7.2 Commitment/Objective: USQ will measure and increase its capacity to support student acquisition and demonstration of knowledge and skill in diverse ways.

Current barriers to more flexible/personalised assessment include the inflexible timelines (up to a year or more ahead) and requirements of uniformity for
assessment. Should there be some review of the course specification and associated processes?

What would it take for learners to engage in self-discovery?

a. Purposefully embed elements of self-discovery (knowledge development through reflective and critical practice) in the formal curriculum and extra-curricular programming.

Self-discovery – we will probably need to explicitly teach the skills for this.

What type of data is needed to effectively improve the educational experience, in what time frame, and who needs access?

data should be at the course and program levels and be easy to gain – this is not currently the case (well data that is actually useful). E.g. there is no easy way to check the average score of multiple markers on 1 assessment item, it is difficult to find which student might be repeating the course to see if they required additional/different support.

again the data needs to be available for the CE’s and the PC or discipline coordinator positions

What does it mean to have a ‘culture of collaboration’?

culture of collaboration needs to occur at the academic, professional and service staff areas (as well as our students)

Should ‘relationship development’ be included in our ‘core capacity gaps’?

I think we also remember we are dealing with people and are engaged in education which is an industry which relies on relationships (which is also the focus of USQ’s mantra)

Quality indicators and goals occur at multiple levels. Do we need some sort of framework to understand how they relate to each other?

880 – are you looking at KPI’s at the HOS, CE, PC/discipline co-ordinator level or at the course level??
What are the relationships between teaching, scholarship, and discovery? Earnest Boyer in Scholarship Rediscovered identifies 4 forms of scholarship:

- Teaching
- Discovery
- Integration
- Practice

This is just one model, there are others. Which are we using when we talk about academic work?

great to see capacity development here – would like to see it more in the area of scholarship (and research)