Teaching and Learning Conference 2009 - Inspire: Delivering inspiring teaching

In a break from the tradition of the previous years’ Teaching and Learning Conferences, the 2009 event held on Monday 14 September 2009, employed an alternative format designed to allow delegates to set their own agenda. The theme of ‘delivering inspirational teaching and learning’ was chosen to encourage reflection on the University’s strategic aim and the means by which this could be fulfilled.

To engage with fellow professionals a small number of trainee teaching students from the School of Education and Professional Development were invited to attend. We were also pleased to welcome four of our five Student Union Executive members who fully participated in the proceedings.
Our VC opened the event which was facilitated by ‘Open Space Technology’ expert Stuart Hunt. Stuart explained the process and opened the ‘market place’ at which delegates were invited to post up ideas for discussion sessions they wished to facilitate.

At the end of this very dynamic procedure around 45 individual session topics had been posted by colleagues and students from a variety of disciplines. Topics ranged from pre-enrolment social networking to anarchy in the university.
A text wall facility developed by Ian McNaught, learning technology advisor in Music, Humanities and Media enabled participants to post opinions and thoughts throughout the day.

A plenary was held which enabled delegates to feedback on both the content and the process and make suggestions for improvement. All responses have been evaluated by the Steering Group and taken into consideration for future events. The majority of delegate feedback was positive although some participants missed certain aspects of previous conferences. ‘It was a wonderful experience and a great opportunity to build on and share existing skills.’ Commented one delegate

Initial outputs from the day are being followed through via project funding and staff development sessions in order to further develop topics and ideas discussed at the conference.

'I was very encouraged by the response to the new format: we have such a great deal of expertise and innovative thinking among colleagues, and the conference indicated the confidence we can have in our capacity to respond to the challenge of inspiring tomorrow's professionals.' Commented Professor Tim Thornton, Pro Vice-chancellor for Teaching and Learning