MEANINGFUL DATA CONTRIBUTE TO A CULTURE OF QUALITY

This show & tell is a contribution by Marjolein van der Moolen and Geja Kinds. Both are educational consultants at Stenden University of Applied Sciences and project leaders in the Student Success Program.

We want to know what challenges students and what supports them in their success. Don't we all? That's why we started a Stenden wide student success program with several activities, to help the specific programs to recognize and define their own challenges and solutions. In this program we want to manage the challenges and the support that students need. And we want to work structural, integral and evidence based. This leads us to the title of our presentation: meaningful data contribute to a culture of quality.

Decisions about programs or courses were sometimes based on assumptions. Lectures and management have ideas about what students can do, what they cannot do, or what they need. How does this match with reality? This is why we need data and discuss about the analyses with students and lecturers. In this Student Success Program we use student performance data and rearrange them into student success reports. We show the tempo of students' progress: do groups of students proceed fast or slow?

We want to make the teams more aware of what the real issues are and what really works. We want them to make meaningful plans based on meaningful data. We believe that research, data, information can lead to more understanding of students' needs. But these data have to be meaningful. It's not just about providing data. What they need are transparant reports. The reports have to be correct and meet up to the needs of the different users. Also the analysis and interpretation of the reports have to be done correctly. The student success program faclitates, stimulates and supports the proper use of data.

We facilitate by providing data and creating time for analyzing, interpreting and making right decisions. The aim is to co-create meaningful data for different types of users. Study coaches receive results of their students after every 10-week period, so they can invite students for an interview. Educational coordinators receive results of courses and take notice how many chances students take before succeeding. Managers receive reports of the tempo of groups of students so that they recognize trends and bottlenecks. Furthermore they receive yield and dropout rates.

In Tinto's keynote last year was mentioned that the stimulating force in developing sustainable change is middle management. In this program we pay explicitly attention to that.

We stimulate the use of the student success reports. Also the student success program stimulates dialogue between staff of different programs. We've created Communities of Practice and organized meetings and events. We invited students in these meetings and in the student succes teams in the programs.

The program members support the different programs in their specific analysis and interpretation of the data and the choice of possible effective interventions based on evidence and experience. Also the program supported Stenden wide issues like a more effective study coaching program. We started last september.

Results so far: School of Education focuses on the testing schedule. They do this in cooperation with their students. We sense a lot of energy when teachers and staff are discussing their reports. We share best practices AND failures. Also this contributes to culture of quality.