NEAS Health Check

Area H: Online Delivery

Report prepared on: 20/07/20

Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic forced a rapid shift from face-to-face to online learning for many ELICOS Centres. NEAS prepared this Online Health Check activity, assisting English Language Teaching (ELT) Centres to evaluate and reflect on their response to establishing online delivery and plan for continuous improvement. The Health Check was a Self-Review activity comprising a series of questions aligned with the NEAS Quality Principles of Area H: Online Delivery. The Health Check was completed in two stages. Stage one required responses from a representative of the Centre, defined in this report as the Manager/Director while stage two engaged teaching and professional staff as well as students in the review process. The outcome of the Online Health Check for the Industry is presented in this report.

This report should be read in conjunction with the NEAS Quality Assurance Framework for Area H: Online Delivery, attached to this report in Appendix 1. This can be used to reference specific Principles and Drivers mentioned in this report. You can find the complete NEAS Quality Assurance Framework at neas.org.au

Industry Results

Which platforms/tools are you using for your online delivery?

	Manager/Director n (Responses)	%
Zoom	44	69.84%
Skype	2	3.17%
WhatsApp	10	15.87%
Microsoft Teams	23	36.51%
Google Classroom	15	23.81%
An existing LMS, such as Blackboard or Canvas	22	34.92%
Other:	13	20.63%

Schoolbox, Quizlet, Moodle, Big Blue Button, Viber, Pearson English Lab, Edmodo, exam.net, Voice of America, dreamreader.net, TAFE LMS - Connect, Collaborate Ultra, ELS Sunagolearn, Google Drive

Select any areas that you require further support with for online delivery:

	n (Responses)	%
Engaging Learners	83	40.69%
Staff Training and Professional Development	57	27.94%
Learning Resources and Activities	67	32.84%
Assessment	82	40.20%
Student Support	55	26.96%
Other:	4	1.96%

Student Discipline, Technical support, Tracking student participation and progress, Mental Health Support

Are you continuing to offer 20 hours of delivery per week?. If 'No', please indicate number of delivery hours offered.

	Manager/Director n (Responses)	%
Yes	53	84.13%
No' - Hours (Average):	14.2 Hours	

neas.org.au

Quality Principles

	Student Response	Staff Response	Student / Staff Gap*
n (Responses)	621	204	
Principle H1	79.24%	84.50%	-5.26%
Principle H2	78.60%	83.68%	-5.08%
Principle H3	77.83%	79.61%	-1.78%
Principle H4	77.97%	83.92%	-5.95%
Average	78.41%	82.93%	-4.52%
Overall Evaluation	72.14%	87.16%	-15.02%

The student / staff gap for the 'Overall Evaluation' represents an interesting figure. The 'Overall Evaluation' score draws on student and staff responses to a single item question about overall perception of their Centre's online delivery. Students scored each Quality Principle more highly than they rated their overall satisfaction with their Centre's online delivery. This is perhaps explained in part by open responses from students, which generally reflect a continued preference for classroom-based learning.

Student Comments

"Learning online is great however learning in actual classroom is still the best"

"I prefer to study English at school. It helps me improve my English skills quickly. So I hope I can study English face to face. This is the main reason I choose to study abroad"

"The online learning does not provide students full chance to improving English, however teachers and supporter are very helpful and kind [sic]"

"Online experience was good but I definitely prefer face to face classes, you can take more advantage"

"Online education will never be effective like face to face education"

Staff on the other hand provided slightly lower individual Principle scores than their overall evaluation of their Centre's response to facilitating online learning. This result is a reflection of the camaraderie, agility and resilience shown by ELT staff during this difficult period.

Staff Comments

"I must say that our teachers have been amazing in the way they have stepped up to the challenge of teaching online"

"We all worked extremely hard during the break to ensure we were all ready for online classes this quarter"

"Obviously in the beginning I imagine most centres were scrambling to make the transition to online classes, but now we are getting the hang of it and can focus on improving the quality of the students' experience"

"Our Centre supported students and teachers very well considering the Covid situation"

"This is my first time teaching online, and I must say my Centre has made a very smooth transition from classroom teaching"

Staff Response Breakdown for the Industry

	Teacher	Manager	Professional	Staff Gap
n (Responses)	112	63	29	
Principle H1	84.17%	85.08%	84.48%	0.91%
Principle H2	82.48%	85.29%	84.83%	2.81%
Principle H3	77.11%	82.86%	82.18%	5.74%
Principle H4	81.54%	86.79%	86.90%	5.36%
Average	81.33%	85.01%	84.60%	3.68%
Overall Evaluation	86.96%	86.67%	88.97%	2.30%

The small gap between different staff responses to the overall evaluation item is an encouraging indicator of collaboration and thorough review and evaluation processes.

Lowest Drivers for the Industry

Staff Response		Student Response	
H3.2	76.37%	H1.6	71.24%
H3.5	77.84%	H2.9	74.75%
H2.6	78.82%	H1.5	75.65%

The lowest-rated Quality Principle according to staff was H3.2 "Students have the necessary technical skills and technology to complete tasks." Extended online learning delivery would require careful attention to this area.

Student Comments

"Online learning is unsuitable for me because I have no some tools [sic]"

"Have a lot of problems with online class because the internet is not working good all the time"

"I don't have laptop [sic], so I used my phone. It is a very small screen and difficult to watch the Documents"

The lowest-rated Quality Principle according to students was H1.6 "To maintain learner motivation, a range of learning tools is employed in the design process." Extended online learning delivery would require review of things like platform technology, media components, interactivity, inclusivity and design.

Student Comments

"I don't like that online classes is really difficult understand everything without a real platform for learn online [sic]. Everything have been doing in zoom and don't have any considerations with the students [sic]"

"The teacher is really good, but the learning online is boring [sic]"

"I would be happy if we use copyrighted software specializing in online learning of the school"

Highest Drivers for the Industry

Staff Response		Student Response	
H1.4	91.67%	H1.4	87.76%
H1.8	90.20%	H1.8	82.90%
H4.2	87.25%	H2.2	81.71%

Both stakeholder groups were unanimous in their highest-rated Quality Principle H1.4 "The teacher maintains an online presence through regularly posting updates and announcements." This is unsurprising given the full-time study load of ELICOS programs. Successful extended online learning delivery should prioritise things like the online learning environment – ensuring access to teachers and individual learning support is easy, and making operational decisions, such as H4.3 "Instructor response time is clearly stated."

Student Comments

"Online learning classes are very good and I can follow the learning process. The teacher who teaches in my class also provides motivation and explains the material clearly. I like to study online"

"I find it really interesting to study online. This learning is enough for me to train and study with my classmates. Moreover, the teachers are very friendly and enthusiastic"

"They (teachers) work hard to support the students and solve their problem, always they respond to any order or help [sic]. They are kindly and friendly [sic]"

"Online learning has boost my digital literacy and I am fully satisfied with it [sic]"

"The teacher was very creative in the online classes"

Most Aligned Drivers (Smallest Gap) for the Industry, between students and staff

H3.5	0.51%
H2.6	0.79%
H2.8	-0.89%

The three drivers listed here represent features which are more characteristic of quality asynchronous online learning models. Consensus between students and staff here is reflective of the predominantly synchronous delivery of existing face to face ELICOS courses during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Least Aligned Drivers (Biggest Gap) for the Industry, between students and staff*

H1.6	-12.78%
H4.2	-11.51%
H2.4	-9.03%

* A negative value indicates the Student Response was lower than the Staff Response and may require further investigation.

The negative gaps here flag key drivers which would require careful attention for extended online learning.

Recommendations

1. Extended online learning delivery will require careful attention to ensure students have the necessary technical skills and technology to effectively participate in courses. Centres will need to consider suitable screening and assessment processes and may need to implement innovative support strategies.

2. Online delivery models rapidly implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic could prove unsuitable for extended online learning provision. Centres will need to consider the extent that their platform technology allows for a range of learning tools to be employed to maintain learner motivation and meet the NEAS Quality Principles of Area H.

3. Assessment was largely identified by staff as an area requiring further support for online delivery. Centres will need to review assessment processes to ensure that validity, reliability, fairness and flexibility can be maintained in the online context. Students will require transparency in assessment supported by the use of common templates and rubrics.

4. Successful extended online learning delivery will prioritise the online learning environment - ensuring access to teachers and individual learning support is easy, and following through with stated teacher response times for enquiries and assessment results.

5. Independent Quality Assurance processes and stakeholder engagement and input will play a pivotal role in the success and continuous improvement of online learning models. Student feedback should contribute to the quality review and improvement cycle and will be particularly important in addressing the student / staff gap identified in relation to the provision of clear information and explicit instructions for the amount and timing of participation required of students.

Appendix 1 - NEAS Quality Assurance Framework for Area H: Online Delivery

QUALITY PRINCIPLE H1

The online environment is designed to support a positive and engaging user experience.

H1.1 Navigation is intuitive, logically sequenced and signposted.

H1.2 Visual design and layout is consistent and aesthetically pleasing throughout.

H1.3 Courses conform to accessibility standards.

H1.4 The teacher maintains an online presence through regularly posting updates and announcements.

H1.5 There is a single location for announcements, news and events.

H1.6 To maintain learner motivation, a range of learning tools is employed in the design process.

H1.7 There is a forum where students and teachers can post comments, questions and responses.

H1.8 There is provision for teacher interaction with individual students.

QUALITY PRINCIPLE H2

Learning and assessment strategies are appropriate to online delivery.

H2.1 Courses provide variety in learning and assessment tasks and technologies.

H2.2 Instructional language is appropriate to the proficiency of the learner.

H2.3 Content is selected to ensure inclusivity.

H2.4 Oral skills development is supported through the use of real time face-to-face video interaction.

H2.5 Written and audio-visual input is presented in amounts which take account of cognitive load.

H2.6 Content is linked to formative assessment activities with automated feedback.

H2.7 Learning and assessment tasks are designed to facilitate active and collaborative learning.

H2.8 Self- and peer-assessment activities are supported by templates and rubrics.

H2.9 Transparency in assessment is supported by the use of common templates and rubrics throughout, for both formative and summative assessment.

QUALITY PRINCIPLE H3

Learning resources and technology support and facilitate learning.

H3.1 Online courses work across all devices and operating systems commonly used by students.

H3.2 Students have the necessary technical skills and technology to complete tasks.

H3.3 The introduction of new technologies is appropriately scaffolded.

H3.4 There are opportunities for students with more advanced digital literacy skills to demonstrate them.

H3.5 All course related activities are accommodated by a single sign on process.

H3.6 There is a designated officer or help desk with responsibility and appropriate resourcing for course maintenance and troubleshooting.

QUALITY PRINCIPLE H4

Courses are supported by an integrated reporting system.

H4.1 There are explicit orientation and socialisation activities, with introductions to the course, the teaching team and key staff.

H4.2 Students are given clear information and explicit instructions as to the amount and timing of participation required of them.

H4.3 Instructor response time is clearly stated.

H4.4 Standards and guidelines for online interaction (netiquette) are made explicit.

H4.5 There are links to relevant support services offered by the provider.