

Some gender issues in a post-experience taught management programme: An exploration of an online survey

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What is it about?

The Master of Information Management programme at Victoria University, having started almost 5 years ago, is currently considering its shape, future direction and learning outcomes at a time when enrolments in Information Systems courses are declining worldwide. Ketteridge, Marshall & Fry (2002) identify strategies for addressing curriculum development, emphasising the importance of understanding the starting point of students, teaching diverse students and enhancing employability through enhance skills learning, information literacy, etc.” (Ketteridge, Marshall & Fry (2002), p186). As part of the data gathering process, an online survey was undertaken of existing and past students, including graduates, *inter alia* to determine age, diversity and motivation for entering the programme. Cross tabulating selected responses reveals that the female students start studies later in life than the male students. A higher proportion of them work in the public sector and have post-graduate qualifications when they enter the programme. A higher proportion of female students also report quicker promotion and greater salary increases as a result of their involvement in the programme than do their male counterparts.

Why is it important?

In New Zealand the government has identified a digital strategy, part of which includes working “to ensure that all New Zealanders have access to life-long learning opportunities to develop ICT skills for the 21st century .. (and) .. build broader ICT literacy and capability in the community.” (New Zealand Government, (2005)) Understanding the demographics and motivation of students entering a specialist taught master’s programme of this nature, particularly disparities in gender attitudes and outcomes, must impact on the way that we market our courses and the learning outcomes. These findings could have implications for delegates teaching in post-experience programmes as well as those considering their own future careers.

How the session will be run.

The intention is to present the cross tabulation tables as a basis for discussing the significance of the outcomes for taught master’s programmes in management in New Zealand. It is anticipated that this will draw out insights into how the research might be tightened up in future to reveal more significant outcomes. It is also expected that participants might assist in identifying learning outcomes that will help to develop a more vibrant programme.

Biggs, J. (1999) *Teaching for quality learning at University*. Buckingham; SREHE/Open University Press.

Gosling, D. & Moon J. (2002) *How to use learning outcomes and assessment criteria*. 3rd ed. London; Southern England Consortium for Credit Accumulation and Transfer, SEEC.

Ketteridge, S., Marshall, S. & Fry, H. (2002) *The effective academic: a handbook for enhanced academic practice*. London; Kogan Page

New Zealand Government. (2005) Creating a Digital Future for all New Zealanders. (Available from <http://www.digitalstrategy.govt.nz/> Accessed 061025)