Southern Cross Program Case Study

Student Engagement

Albury Wodonga Community College
Increase Student Retention

School Description

Albury Wodonga Community College was established in 2006 as a new school offering an alternative to mainstream education for students who had disengaged or were at risk of disengaging from education. They have around 100 students and focus on Year 11 and Year 12. The core values of the school stress that learning is intrinsically valuable and that it empowers the individual, promotes individual growth, provides opportunities and choice, improves quality of life, and advances citizenship in our community.

Albury Wodonga Community College’s curriculum is designed with an applied learning focus and attempts to re-engage youth who do not ‘fit’ into mainstream education. The school plays an important role in the community by participating in community events and working with industry to provide work experience and mentoring.

Project

The goal of Albury Wodonga Community College’s Southern Cross project was to raise the retention rate for students to 75 per cent in 2012, which is a 10 per cent increase. The project explored the variables that impact students leaving school and identified the variables staff can change to increase student success and retention.

This project aims to improve the spirit of the school with increased student numbers and retention.

Process

Albury Wodonga Community College defined their project and then began to explore the project scope. It was important for the team to determine the variables in the project that they could control and explore these further. The team determined that they needed to collect more data on the reasons why students had left Albury Wodonga Community College, and the best way to do this would be to interview past students. The team also reviewed the enrolment process and the Student Welfare Policy and Procedure, with the aim of making improvements that may lead to improved student outcomes and retention.

Albury Wodonga Community College found that the Southern Cross training provided a fantastic framework for implementing change within their school. The tools they learnt challenged their assumptions and enabled them to use data for decision making. The tools that they found most effective were the 5 Whys and the ‘Cause and Effect’ (Fishbone) diagram. Use of the tools learnt during the training helped to define their project scope and focus on the selected areas. It is easy to see how the tools can be used in many different contexts.

Results

Whilst doing the Southern Cross training, the team identified other projects that should undergo the Southern Cross process framework. These include: review of the Individual Pathways Plan, student case management approach and improvements to the school environment.

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