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Strengthening the first-year gateways: a collaborative approach to facilitating curriculum transformation

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A large teaching and learning (T&L) grant provided the resources to develop and implement a systematic and sustainable approach to facilitate transformation of curriculum and pedagogical approaches across eight diverse first-year ‘gateway’ courses within a faculty. The project sought to enhance the student experience and student learning by ensuring a constructively-aligned curriculum involving flipped classrooms, active learning approaches, and a focus on academic literacy skills. This was achieved via combinations of online and in-class activities and engagement with a Faculty-wide academic literacy community site. A comprehensive set of academic design guides was developed to assist teaching teams adopt a rigorous action learning plan approach for the design, implementation, evaluation and redesign of their gateway course. Guiding resources were provided within a community-based project website, in addition to a video and media production kit and hands-on workshops to assist the teaching teams to design and adopt their innovations. Each of the pilot courses produced a sustainable teaching and learning plan to consolidate their designs and findings and to assist further dissemination. This included an evaluation plan to investigate the success of their innovations. Project evaluations revealed positive feedback across a wide range of curriculum and pedagogic innovations that increased student engagement with learning. Further, the project enhanced cross-school discussion of T&L, and led to university-wide recognition as an exemplar case study, and to awards for academics involved within specific pilot courses. The sustainable teaching and learning plans are being used to assist extension of the program to further courses across the Faculty.

Keywords: flipped-classrooms, active learning, action learning plan

Introduction

Eight diverse first-year teaching teams collaborated across the broad Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), within the University of Queensland (UQ), to transform and enhance first-year gateway course curriculum, student learning and university experience. The project, ‘Strengthening the First-Year Gateways: Aligned, Literate & Flipped’ included
gateway courses in the disciplines of Archaeology, Classical Languages, Education, English, Music, Philosophy, and Studies in Religion.

Previous Faculty-based empirical findings from program reviews, consultations with first-year course coordinators and student evaluations had confirmed that not all students within the large and diverse first-year cohort possessed the requisite skills, abilities and knowledge required to ensure success and retention (D’Agostino, 2010). Of particular note was the finding that although many students transitioned into university and programs without strong academic literacy skills, in particular, in relation to scholarly essay and assignment skills, lecturers often assumed that these were in place.

The ‘historical’ challenges facing large broad-based degree programs, such as the Bachelor of Arts, compounded difficulties in the transition process and engagement with learning and the university experience. This included the sheer size of the cohorts across the diverse programs and within each course. As detailed by Gannaway (2015), these challenges also included ‘perceptions’ or concern about graduate outcomes; ‘mirroring’, or using the program as a launchpad to other higher-entry programs; and absence of an ‘integrated vertical curriculum’.

The project aimed to increase student engagement with learning and the university experience through the introduction of more active and collaborative learning pedagogies that aim to engage students in learning, “beyond where the teacher is active and the student is passive”, (Cannon & Newble, 2000). It can range from simple pair discussion through to more complex peer and group-based collaborative learning, problem based learning, case studies etc., and aims to assist higher order learning outcomes and a sense of belonging to a learning community. The project also assisted lecturers to constructively align pilot course learning activities and assessment to the intended course learning outcomes (Biggs, 1999), and to support the development of academic literacy skills associated with the scholarly essay and assignment processes, via engagement with the Faculty-wide ‘Knowledge-Making’ site and an online peer mentoring program.

A collaborative project approach

An overarching collaborative approach was used to provide essential resources and assistance to the eight pioneering pilot course teams to re-design their curriculum and pedagogical approaches around their chosen aims and their own unique learning investigation/ question.

The collaborators included a core project team comprising academic and professional staff, including the Associate Dean and Deputy Associate Dean, Academic (Project Directors), the Faculty Educational Designer (Project Lead), e-Learning Coordinator, and Student and Academic Administration Manager and Finance Team, and eight pilot course teaching teams, including course coordinators, lecturers and tutors. An extended team of professional support staff from within the University central teaching and learning unit, the library, Student Services and information technology services was also available for consultation and attended project-wide collaborative workshop sessions.

Three workshops were organized by the core project team. The first workshop was planned as a ‘meet and greet’ for all project members and course teaching teams. Introductory project guidance was provided and three of the course teaching teams shared their initial design progress with the group. The second workshop held mid-semester focused on educational
technology approaches within pilot courses, and the third workshop focused on evaluation methods with an emphasis on data analysis.

Comprehensive resources to support and guide the course teaching teams were provided within a Blackboard-based community website. These resources included key documents, deliverables, timelines, design guides and links to active learning and flipped classroom resources and tools. Interactive spaces on the site aimed to encourage a community of practice through pilot course academics sharing their works-in-progress. The Project Lead/Educational Designer also used the site announcement tool to keep the project team updated about key project actions, plans and guidance, and along with the e-learning Coordinator also provided ongoing consultation with the course teams to facilitate their progress in each stage of the project.

A video and media production kit, including video recorders, mini ipads, tripods, lights and sound equipment was also assembled for use by the teaching teams to assist the creation of engaging course materials and learning activities.

**Methodology (a) - action learning plan approach**

As suggested by Fullan (1999), an action learning plan approach can assist staff to navigate through the turbulent waters of what may otherwise be perceived as a complex educational change process. Within this Project, the use of action learning cycles assisted to structure and guide the learning inquiry over time and in some cases across several iterations of learning situations, increasing the likelihood of more sustainable learning designs and learning outcomes (Keppell et al., 2011).

Dillworth (2003) also argued this approach encourages questioning of the core learning issue/s at hand, and this can lead to transformative learning both for students and for the academics implementing an innovation. A further advantage of this approach is that it encourages the scholarship of teaching and learning to include both an inquiry of the ways students learn and the full curriculum experience (Kreber, 2007).

In this project, therefore the implementation of the initiatives in each course was framed by a systematic and sustainable action learning plan approach based on the foundational work of Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, as cited in Brockbank and McGill, 2003), that included a cyclical process of four key phases as detailed in Figure 1. below:

![Figure 1: Four key phases of the action learning plan cycle](image)

These four key phases included:
1. Plan - design teaching and learning (T&L) innovations (including identifying aims, activities, assessment);
2. Act - implement the innovations within the course;
3. Observe - evaluate innovations during and after implementation; and
4. Reflect - on findings and outcomes, including revise and re-design course and
innovations as required, prior to restart of the cycle again.

The four key phases were used within a flexible, iterative approach, acknowledging that some
of the phases overlapped, or could be combined, with each informing the other, allowing for
continual refinement. For example, evaluation planning was encouraged to commence within
the initial design phase, to assist and inform the resultant design process. A comprehensive
project-based guide that elaborated and included these frameworks was developed to assist
the pilot course teams - ‘Your Action Learning Plan: a Guide to Designing your Innovations,
Evaluation and Sustainable T&L Plan’.

The action learning plan approach provided teaching teams with frameworks to assist
transformation of curriculum and pedagogical approaches (Alkema, 2012; Turner, 2015)
across each of the four key phases – Plan, Act, Observe and Reflect, as detailed above. It
assisted the pioneering teams in their process of identifying their key learning issue/s, the
resultant course design, implementation and evaluation strategies, as well as identifying staff
support and resourcing required. Each of the eight courses documented these findings within
a final “Sustainable T&L Plan”. This same framework also provided an ideal opportunity to
‘nest’ the ‘aligned curriculum’ (Biggs, 1996) design approach within each action learning
plan phase, as detailed below.

**Methodology (b) - phases of the action learning plan**

This section provides information about each phase of the plan, the approach used and the
resources developed by the core project team to support the teaching innovations.

1. **Plan**
The first step in the planning phase was to identify the overarching question for the new
course design and innovations. This established the new design curriculum and pedagogy.

A Learning Innovations Matrix (see Table 1 below), was used to simplify understanding of
design elements to be aligned: the Innovation / related Aims (or learning outcomes) /
Learning Activities / and related Assessment. When these aligned elements are laid out within
the one row, it becomes very clear whether they are indeed aligned, and if there are any gaps
between initial intended learning outcomes and the path via learning activities, towards
assessment of those outcomes. Within this innovations matrix we also added an additional
two columns – one for ‘Technologies’ related to the Learning Activity, using Erhmann’s
Flashlight model to evaluate educational technologies (Ehrmann, 2011); and a final column to
courage early consideration of ‘Evaluation’ methodologies for each of the elements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation</th>
<th>Outcome/s (or Aims)</th>
<th>Activity/s</th>
<th>Technologies</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Evaluation Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Act (Implement)**
The Learning Innovation Matrix was then used to guide the subsequent Phases of the Action
Learning Plan, including the process for Phase 2. Act (or implement), through detailed plans
of the actual learning activities that would be undertaken, with the associated learning technologies, to be assessed in a particular format, and subsequently evaluated.

3. Observe (Evaluate)
Each of the eight pilot courses designed an evaluation plan around their original Action Learning Plan aims, activities and assessment, as documented within the Learning Innovations Matrix. With assistance from the broader project team, they also obtained ethics approval to investigate the effectiveness of their teaching and learning innovations, via combinations of the following evaluation methodologies: perception and performance data, including both quantitative and qualitative feedback via student surveys/ focus groups/ informal feedback/ student observation, and student performance data; as well as tutor and teaching team focus groups/ formal interviews/ informal feedback/ self-reflection; University-based teaching evaluations; and academic peer review.

The initial Learning Innovations Matrices also transformed into Phase 3, Observe (Evaluate), by detailing all the discrete elements of the overall curriculum and pedagogical approaches that could be evaluated to determine if the learning aims or outcomes were achieved within those elements. To assist this process, the columns along the top of the Learning Innovations Matrix were transposed into rows within the left-hand ‘Elements’ column of the evaluation table, as detailed in Table 2. below. Four new evaluation columns were then added to the right to assist in identifying appropriate evaluation techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Evaluation Questions</th>
<th>Data Sources [student/peer/self/system]</th>
<th>Collection Methods/Timing</th>
<th>Findings/Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation 1</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Evaluation plan

It was important to include a range of data sources and collection methods to allow for adequate triangulation or comparison of results from different sources. We encouraged the teaching teams to draw on four key data sources to strengthen their findings, as referred to in Figure 2 (Gannaway, 2014), within which there are a range of data types and methods (see Appendix A.)

Figure 2: Data sources  (Gannaway, 2014)
4. Reflect
Once the new course innovations were implemented and evaluations completed, the course teaching teams were well-placed to reflect on their findings and reconsider their new curriculum and pedagogical designs, before documenting these in their final Sustainable T&L Plans (Table 3. below). In the case where both the Learning Innovations Matrix and the Evaluation Plan were completed, these two tables assisted consolidation into the Sustainable T&L Plan.

Table 3: Sustainable T&L plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Evaluation Findings</th>
<th>What Worked Best</th>
<th>Resource/Time Requirements</th>
<th>Tips &amp; cautions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovation 1</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Results and Evaluation Findings

Each of the eight first-year gateway pilot courses used a combination of project resources, collaborative guidance and processes within the action learning plan framework, to design their own tailored innovations to increase student engagement with learning, assist higher order learning outcomes and enhance the student experience. This was achieved through designing their constructively-aligned curriculum innovations (Biggs, 1999), to include variations of flipped classroom pedagogies (Butchart et al., 2009), incorporating combinations of pre-and post-class learning and preparation to assist more active and collaborative in-class learning activities and engagement with the Faculty-wide academic literacy community site and associated online peer mentoring program (Chanock, 2004).

A wide range of innovative curriculum transformations and positive learning outcomes were achieved within the eight diverse Project pilot courses, as described in the overview of findings below.

1. Increased student engagement as an outcome of a flipped-classroom approach assisting opportunities for self-directed, active and collaborative learning.
Pilot course evaluations indicated that carefully designed flipped classroom pedagogy, including engaging pre- and post-class learning activities in addition to effective formative assessment and/or feedback to guide student progress (Boud, Sadler, & Joughin et al., 2010), assisted students to become ‘self-directed’ partners in the learning process and hence increased engagement with learning (Nichol & McFarlane-Dick, 2006). Further, when the engagement with pre-class online learning was directly aligned to in-class follow-up active and collaborative learning opportunities (Butchart et al., 2009), and aligned to innovative assessment methods, (eg. progressive assessment, formative feedback, peer review, self-assessment, e-assessment, and integrating assessment criteria and rubrics), increased engagement with learning was most evident (Boud et al., 2010). Multiple sources also confirm that transformative learning is assisted via active learning and collaborative learning approaches that are part of a 'student-centred, community-based learning environment' (Brew, 2006; Chickering & Gamson, 1987, cited in Draper 2002; Krause, 2005; Vygotsky cited in Jacobs, 2008).
Sample findings

- The Philosophy course used a flipped classroom approach to align pre- and post-class academic and social transition support with in-class learning via collaboration with the Library, Student Services and the Faculty ‘Knowledge-Making’ Community site. A student survey (n=33) revealed 86% agreement that the online pre-class presentations and aligned quizzes provided the opportunity to think on topic before class; 80% agreement that they assisted engagement with tutorials; 81% agreement amongst those that used the Knoweldge-Making Site, that the exemplar assignments modelled by peer mentors were useful to their learning, and 89% agreement re. the 5 Essay Steps. Both students and tutors indicated that the aligned collaborative workshop activity on argument mapping assisted learning. A staged assessment task via optional tutorial exercises and aligned online Library-scaffolded Blackboard learning modules integrated with the Knowledge-Making site resulted in a 5% increased performance for those who engaged with the new learning approaches compared to those who did not.

- The Classical Languages course focused on technology-enhanced learning innovations that enabled students to take control of their own learning styles pre- and post-class. The purpose-built ‘u qlatin’ site, color-coded vocabulary learning tools, and aligned online quizzes scaffolded student learning of Latin grammar and assisted preparation for aligned in-class learning. A student survey (n=25) revealed that 100% agreed or strongly agreed (93% the latter) that these technology-enhanced learning approaches assisted their learning, 83% agreed that colour-coded vocabulary tools used in class similarly assisted. Students said: “UQLatin assisted me tremendously in my learning”; “[I have] a full time job in finance and…am therefore extremely grateful for the quality and quantity of resources provided to assist with my learning outside of class.”

- The English course used feedback-rich online quizzes to assist students to engage with their pre-class readings and learning. In a student survey (n=43), 86% agreed that the quizzes were helpful. Further, 90% of students reported benefiting more from lectures and 98% felt better able to take part in tutorials, when they had read the required texts prior to class. In a focus group of five students, a student commented: “The quizzes made for a great learning environment because everyone had done the reading”. A focus group of five tutors reported “a huge improvement in the level of class engagement” and in the number of students taking part in serious, critical discussion since the introduction of aligned online quizzes.

- The Studies in Religion course used online narrated presentations and an aligned reflection activity of a written response to a key question/theme, via discussion board for assessment weighting. In a student survey (n = 22) students strongly agreed (4.75 out of 5) that these pre-class activities helped prepare them to contribute to the aligned in-class discussions and activities, including debates and group work and students said: “Written responses ensured readings were actually completed and helped me to remember main concepts much more effectively than just reading with nothing after”.

- The Music course used a flipped classroom approach including pre-class preparation of student-generated class discussion questions that were submitted via the Blackboard test tool. These were used in aligned in-class polling and tutorial discussion sessions. 87% of students surveyed (n=91) agreed that attending these aligned discussion tutorials helped their learning. Further, the overall student evaluation of the course increased from 3.94 to 4.43 (out of 5) after flipping the class, and one student commented: “Loved the student participation methods. Asking everyone to submit a discussion question prior to lessons made sure each student had an opportunity to have their say, the same students weren’t dominating class discussion (most of the time).”
- **The Archaeology course** used a flipped-classroom approach and engaging pre-class learning via narrated, graphic online presentations with aligned quizzes that allowed for broader curriculum topics and increased time for hands-on, practical learning, i.e. now 1-hour lecture and 2-hour prac (replacing the traditional 2-hour lecture and 1-hour prac). Students evaluated the revised course highly with 4.5 out of 5 (n=26). Student comments also highlighted the value of the longer practical times and hands-on engagement with a wide range of materials. Appreciation was also expressed for the opportunity for their own style of self-directed learning: “The flipped classroom worked well for me. I could take my time writing all the notes out without having to rush and miss out on something in the slide.”

- **Multiple courses** including two Education courses, English and Studies in Religion courses used in-class student response systems, such as Padlet (online pinboard) and/or online polling to enhance in-class group discussion. In Education course (a), students found the online Padlet tool to be the most enjoyable and interactive collaborative tool out of several tools sampled. “I enjoyed padlet and the discussion board because it allowed me to see other people’s ideas and responses that I hadn’t thought of or considered, and it sparked ideas”.

- **The Education course (a)** further facilitated active learning of students prior to attending class, through engagement with a series of custom-made themed video lecture segments. Students evaluated these as ‘different, interactive, and provided information on course content’. One student said, “The videos were great for outlining what we were going to learn. It makes it easier to understand the concepts.” The Course Coordinator observed that the videos helped students to be engaged in the course and the course tutors agreed: “Good introductory content overview; simplified content; activate prior knowledge; created connection with the new knowledge”. Aligned in-class active and collaborative learning included the use of UQ Poll, concept mapping tools, and the class favourite, Padlet online pinboard.

- **The Education course (b)** engaged students via a range of social media-inspired learning approaches that assisted to align formative pre-class and in-class learning with their summative assessment. One example, a Youtube/short-video research assessment activity aimed to identify real-world issues connected to the course topics. There was 98% agreement among the first-year students surveyed (n=97), that this helped them identify real-world issues connected to the course topics. Tutor feedback was equally supportive: “It (use of social media) is a very powerful and useful strategy which enables every student to have the opportunity to contribute and build a shared knowledge within the course.” 95% of surveyed students that engaged with the peer mentored exemplar assignments on the Knowledge-Making also found them useful to their learning.

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2. **Enhanced student academic literacy skills via engagement with the Faculty-wide, discipline-specific community website and online peer mentoring program.**

Pilot course evaluations, in addition to Faculty-wide evaluations (since 2013), revealed that first-year student academic literacy skills are enhanced through engagement with the Faculty Knowledge-Making in the Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences community site and associated online HASS Peer Mentoring Program. This program (shortlisted for a 2017 UQ Excellence Award) builds upon extensive and ongoing collaborations with the University’s Student Services Unit and UQ Library. Since its inception in 2013, the Program has consistently received positive feedback that it is assisting student learning and university experience. It provides guidance in particular, regarding discipline-specific scholarly essay and assignment
skills, (Chanock, 2004; Henderson & Hirst, 2007; Krause, 2005), an area of need also identified via empirical Faculty research (D’Agostino, 2010)

Sample findings
- **Multiple pilot courses including two in Education, English, Music, Philosophy, and Studies in Religion** engaged students with the online program’s exemplar assignment galleries, online peer mentoring and learning modules. All Project pilot courses received positive findings that the Program assisted their students’ learning, including the Education example in Figure 3.

![Example Active Learning Approaches](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aims</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>How To / Examples</th>
<th>Findings /Tips</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Assist student academic literacy skills | Engage students with the Faculty ‘Knowledge-Making in the Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences’ Site & Peer Mentoring Program via discipline-based:  
- exemplar assignment modelling;  
- collaboration with online HASS Peer Mentors. | 3 levels of course engagement:  
- email flyer to students / as PPT slide in class.  
- Add a link from your BB course site  
- Use the site as a resource or learning activity in your classes or tutorials. Eg. Education Pilot Course | V. positive student feedback - assists their learning and uni experience.  
- Eg. Education Pilot course - 95% of students that used the exemplar assignments activities agreed they were useful to their learning, eg. quote: “Example assignments were fantastic!!!!!!  
I felt like I could actually learn how to write better, instead of...without feedback on how to improve.” |

**Figure 3: Simplified model of findings on engagement with the ‘Knowledge-Making’ site in Education**

**Discussion and Further Outcomes**

In this short paper the focus has been on a methodology used to design, implement and evaluate teaching and learning curriculum innovations across first-year gateway courses in a large Faculty. The aim is to disseminate an approach that may assist other faculties and universities to work collaboratively in adopting teaching and learning curriculum and pedagogical innovations.

While the evaluations conducted in the eight pilot courses revealed positive feedback across a wide range of curriculum and pedagogic innovations that the initiatives assisted student learning, our claim is that the collaborative approach that brought smaller course-based project teams together into an overarching project had benefits additional to the effects on student learning. The Project:

1. brought together academics who would not routinely engage with one another to discuss T&L and share insights.
2. was “spotlighted” by the University as an exemplar case study within UQ’s Student Strategy, which aims to assist student learning and the broader university student experience.
3. paved the way for a new large UQ funding grant to extend curriculum change across a further 14 multi-discipline pilot courses in HASS, including both first-year gateway and second-year cornerstone courses.

4. produced additional outputs including a comprehensive set of T&L guides and resources to assist future academics to design, implement and evaluate new T&L innovations:
   a. a comprehensive design document;
   b. a set of eight ‘Sustainable T&L Plans’ and a ‘Summary of Findings’ to assist further dissemination (Alkema, 2012).
   c. a project Blackboard community website including resources and guidance to assist innovation designs and cross-pilot course collaboration;
   d. a video-based multimedia technical kit to loan to academics to assist the development of media-rich content;
   e. expansion of the Faculty’s online academic literacy site.

5. assisted a raft of awards, recognition and flow-ons for multiple pilot course academics, including: an Australian Award for University Teaching (AAUT) 2016 Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning (for the English Pilot Course Coordinator); two individual Faculty Teaching and Learning Excellence Awards, (one for the Education (b) Course Coordinator, and one for the Archaeology Course Coordinator); a UQ Library Excellence Award (for a Library-based team member of the Philosophy pilot course), and the creation of a successful MOOC based on the Philosophy Pilot Course.

Acknowledgements

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References


D’Agostino, F. (2010). *Using Year 12 subject results in the transition to tertiary study*. Faculty of Arts Teaching and Learning Committee Paper. University of Queensland, St Lucia, Australia.


## Appendix: Summary of Data Sources and Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Data Source</th>
<th>Range of Associated Data Types Available (may include either qualitative or quantitative data)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Students**    | **Perception data:**  
|                 | - In-class questions & polls (eg. 3 Questions, muddiest points, one minute paper, one-sentence summary etc.) – using either responseware, verbal or paper-based (also see ‘Getting Started with Blended Learning’ (Bath & Burke, 2010):  
|                 | - Informal or formal interviews  
|                 | - Surveys  
|                 | - Focus groups  
| **Performance data:** |  
|                 | - Formative Assessment & feedback + peer review  
|                 | - Summative Assessment results & course artifacts  
| **Attendance/engagement in class** |  
|                 | - observation  
| **Online System data re. student engagement** |  
| **Past student observation** | re. new innovations  
| **Self**        | **Perception data:**  
|                 | - observations  
|                 | - reflections  
|                 | - journal  
|                 | re. teaching, learning and preparation etc.  
| **Peers** (Colleagues & members of teaching teams, academics or professional staff) | **Perception data:**  
|                 | - observations/ reflections  
|                 | - formal or informal interviews or reports  
|                 | - surveys  
| **System/s** (eg. Blackboard etc.) | **User statistics** from the educational technology and platforms used, eg. Blackboard etc. for overview of System Collection methods, including Blackboard. |