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POSTCARDS
of
PRACTICE

A1: Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes

I recently became the unit coordinator for a large first year engineering subject. This is a core unit and is taken by anywhere between 850-1000 students per year. My discipline area attracts a large number of international students (anywhere up to 30% of the cohort) from countries such as India, China, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Qatar. I am mindful of this when designing learning activities and resources from students where English may not be their first language (e.g. in how I explain technical terms), and how their previous educational experiences may impact on their engagement in the classroom (V1). This really became apparent when reviewing the previous feedback on the end of semester student survey which indicated that students felt disconnected from their peers (eg. “I barely spoke to anyone in this unit then was expected to suddenly complete a group task”) (K3, K5). In response to this, I considered how I could create more opportunities for students to work together and develop communication and teamwork skills prior to completing assessment (V2). I designed a set of new learning activities to promote and strengthen student communication skills and ensure that students had the opportunity to develop clear communication and collegial, team-work process skills which are desired by employers (Rajabzadeh et al, 2022) (V3, V4).

To engage international and domestic students, I created and added into the course more ‘Think pair share’ activities, which encouraged students to have low-risk conversations about their initial thoughts and questions about what they were learning (V1, V2). I created some teaching guide notes for my tutorials to deliberately mix up groups each time so students had the opportunity to meet and share with many different learners over the course of tutorials (K1, K2). For example, I created an activity where students had five minutes together and need to estimate the amount of paint required to coat the steel structure in S Block outside of the tutorial room. This kind of estimation problem helps students to immediately begin to estimate and reason through the approach to a solution. They then have to swap with another person in the room their approach to the problem so that everyone has a turn talking and sharing (V1, V2). My tutors have given feedback that since introducing activities such as these there has been a lot more engagement in class, and they have recognised students chatting more pre and post class with their peers (K3).

Rajabzadeh, A.R.; Long, J.; Saini, G.; Zeadin, M. (2022). Engineering Student Experiences of Group Work. *Educ. Sci.* 2022, 12, 288. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12050288>

*Excerpts are aligned with Descriptor 2 of the 2023 Professional Standards Framework
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Discussion Questions:

- What are strengths of the reflection?
What could be improved?
- Effective and inclusive are key features of the D2 criteria. How has effective and inclusive been reflected upon in this example?





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A2: Teach and/or support learning through appropriate approaches and environments

I am teaching Social Determinants of Health in Medicine in second year of the program (focused on the non-medical factors which influence health outcomes). Most students who enter the course overall are fresh from high school with a few mature-age students, they often form tight study groups and peer groups early on in the program. Year 2 medical students are in their pre-clinical years, where they learn about the basics of medicine. Due to the selection process into Medicine, students are incredibly fast-thinking and they get bored quickly with classic lectures. They are also very clinically- and science-minded, which is a big challenge in teaching non-clinical topics such as Social Determinants of Health. Rather than just lecturing about Social Capital, I used the opportunity to produce few real-life-based scenarios in collaboration with community service providers (eg. Early Childhood organisations, Dieticians, Housing Services, Discrimination Advisors) (V4, V5). I formatted the scenarios into “Choose Your Own Adventure” model where students could explore the social conditions of different community members and how it would impact their health outcomes overall. I hosted them on H5P application hosted in Blackboard classes, using H5P branching scenario. I based this on the literature on gamified learning (Krishnamurthy et al, 2022) (V3). This makes it more engaging than simple lecture format as I have found that medical students don’t like lecturing especially in non-science and non-clinical topics, and enjoy thinking clinically (K1, K4). Has it been successful? In my end-of-semester evaluation students have been consistently positive. Qualitatively, they are very engaged – they laughed a lot, they got emotionally invested (K3). Students still bring up these scenarios in other classes. It’s inclusive because the students can go with their own pace, and discuss in small groups the parts they are not sure of. Being in H5P, students who cannot attend e.g. working part time, can run the cases at home asynchronously (V2).

Krishnamurthy, K., Selvaraj, N., Gupta, P., Cyriac, B., Dhurairaj, P., Abdullah, A., Krishnapillai, A., Lugova, H., Haque, M., Xie, S., & Ang, E.-T. (2022). Benefits of gamification in medical education. *Clinical Anatomy*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ca.23916>

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Discussion Questions:

- What are strengths of the reflection? What could be improved?
- How is the context the teaching takes place in defined and discussed in this reflection?





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A3: Assess and give feedback for learning

As an academic developer who works with academics to develop their teaching skills, I am asked to support and develop a wide range of practices including helping improve assessment practices. To improve understanding for students on what's required to do well on an assignment, I led several sessions on how to develop rubrics with a group of academics. These sessions were run online via Zoom because the academics are spread across different campuses across Australia and this technology enabled file sharing, breakout rooms for discussions, screen sharing for collaboration and the recording function to capture learnings (K1, K4). When I run these sessions, I always use the screen name function to model how to list preferred pronouns in brackets after my name and discuss with staff how this helps normalise this equity approach to support students (V1).

This example relates to the Law School who did not have any clear success criteria present within rubrics which failed to differentiate clearly between generic terms like “good” or “great”. Students had no clear idea what was required to be successful. I ran workshop session with 12 academics where I spent time discussing the principles of Constructive Alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2007) (V3). This helped the academics look at the design of their unit and consider how the rubrics could be designed based on the overall subject learning outcomes. It was important that I provided opportunities for practical engagement as this would allow the staff to start working on their own subject’s resources (K1). I set up Padlets as collaborative design boards so that various academics could offer suggestions on how to improve the rubric language (K4). This was especially useful during breakout room activities and I could see how useful these boards were as they enabled a number of improvements to be made to the language as a result of these discussions (K3). With my help, the Law School created a series of improved rubrics as a table that outlined the success criteria for the different grades. Ultimately these would enable students to have a clearer idea of what they need to do to achieve desired grades. I received several unsolicited emails from staff thanking me for taking the time to work with them and how my session had been helpful (K3). I learned from this experience that rubrics are not something that all academics are familiar with nor do they know how to go about creating them. It has helped me to not make assumptions about what staff know how to do.

Biggs, J.B. & Tang, C. (2007). Teaching for Quality Learning at University. (3rd Ed.). Maidenhead: McGraw Hill Education & Open University Press.

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Discussion Questions:

- What are strengths of the reflection? What could be improved?
- Effective and Inclusive is a key feature of the D2 criteria. How has effective and inclusive been reflected upon in this example?





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A3: Assess and give feedback for learning

In the first year marketing unit I teach, I have found that it is important students are given the opportunity to engage with other students as part of an assessment process. This was further confirmed as crucial for learning during the Lunch Box Seminar I attended run by the Business Team Learning Designers where they presented research on the importance of students having a dialogue approach in learning which includes feedback conversations (V3). This dialogue helps to develop professional communication skills including justification, reasoning which is important when working in industry with clients (V4), and also ensures that student aren't relying on AI to get feedback on their presentation/writing (K1). For example in their first assignment which is due as a draft in week 4, after students create their draft poster presentations and SWOT analysis (Strengths Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) on their chosen case study, I get learners to walk around to each other's posters, and provide feedback on the work (K1). This is done verbally, and I use the student's participation in the process as an opportunity to allow them to learn how to have a feedback conversation with others which helps them be more comfortable with having praise and corrective conversations with others (V2). I also ask students to assess the drafts of others, as well as assess their own work using the same rubric used for marking the final version of the assessment due in week 6. This serves two important processes. Firstly, learners begin to think like assessors and make evaluative judgements about the quality of the work they are viewing, and view their own work through a self-evaluation lens (V1, K1). This allows them to consider how to do this process in their own assignment drafts in future and aligns with Universal Design for Learning CAST framework, which suggests learners should be involved in assessing their own learning progress (CAST, 2020) (V3). Secondly, learners need to think about how they deliver the feedback to other students. This helps them to consider how to have feedback conversations with others (V1, K2).

CAST (2020). *UDL Tips for Assessment*. Wakefield, MA: Author. Retrieved from <https://www.cast.org/products-services/resources/2020/udl-tips-assessments>.

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Discussion Questions:

- What are strengths of the reflection? What could be improved?
- The example is missing “K3: critical evaluation as a basis for effective practice”. What qualitative or quantitative evidence can be included to demonstrate their approach to assessing and giving feedback is effective?





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A4: support and guide learners

As a Librarian, I noticed the increasing silos that exist for staff in Faculty and I felt as though I wanted to do something to help my colleagues to connect, encourage collaboration and sharing of good practice. Over the last few years working with my colleagues in different disciplines across the university, I am always asked for examples of what people are doing in their units, so I knew that the approach I took would need to incorporate sharing of examples (K1). My values are underpinned by collaboration, so my strategy was to create a Community of Practice and I did this in partnership with Learning Designers, Technical Developers and other discipline Librarians (V5). CoPs are widely established in higher education as they enable interdisciplinary conversations and enable peer to peer learning (Wenger et al, 2011) (V3, K1). To ensure that all interested participants could engage, I made use of a hybrid meeting option to bring together participants in person, but also include online (V2). My colleague from Academic Development used this dual mode to help model to the CoP members how to support learners during hybrid teaching and we developed a “one page” document outlining best practice principles in dual mode teaching to share during the CoP. The overall focus for the CoP was the integration of AI into university as this is an area of current concern for many academics in higher education as my colleagues and I had noticed an increase in enquiries on this topic. The purpose of the CoP was to share concerns and build capability for staff in this area. Initially, I invited 'guest presenters' (Faculty members, and other institutions) to share their existing practices with AI, but as a group of 35 active members, we also worked together and brainstormed new strategies and approaches to teaching with AI (V5). I set up a Sharepoint page for the CoP members to post resources and take notes about what was shared during the meeting. This became quite an active place (683 engagements per month), with lots of engagement even from members outside of the CoP (K3). This page was often shared in staff newsletters resulting in hundreds of downloads of our resource guides (K3). My colleagues and I worked together to evaluate the effectiveness of the CoP through an end of year survey on Qualtrics which included members reflecting on the immediate value of the CoP (V5, K3). I was pleased to see many staff commented on finding the collegiality useful, however some feedback showed that staff were uncertain what the university's position on AI in teaching was. This feedback helped inform a review and improvement of the messaging on the staff intranet page managed by the Technology for Learning Director (K5).

Wenger, E., Trayner, B., and de Laat, M. (2011) Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: a conceptual framework. Open University of the Netherlands.

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Discussion Questions:

- What are strengths of the reflection? What could be improved?
- How has “V5 collaborate with others to enhance practice” been used in this reflection?





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A5: enhance practice through own continuing professional development

As Peer Leader Training Coordinator, I have looked for ways to respond to the national and institutional requirement to embed Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum (V3, V4), as well as my commitment to ensuring that the Indigenous students I work with feel seen, heard and respected in their learning and non-Indigenous students have an opportunity to engage meaningfully with Indigenous content, customs and practices. I explored the literature, sought assistance across the university, but found that there was little capacity for curriculum design support in this space. Therefore, I actively sought out opportunities for professional learning to develop my cultural capability to take a strengths-based approach to identifying and recognising opportunities to enhance my practice. I was aware from my own reading that the Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners/Country can be problematic (Davis, 2020) (V3) and this was also part of my teaching I felt I didn't do very well. I undertook a training course through the Cultural Awareness training organisation Evolve Communities (V3). Aunty Munya Andrews led me through an activity where we unpacked the meaning behind an Acknowledgement of Country, and I defined my own connection to Country. This helped me to develop a personalised approach to how I give an Acknowledgement and how to ensure that it is meaningful for me, and because of this, it will have the intention of being meaningful for students (V1). After undertaking this learning, I have gained confidence, and improved the way I deliver my teaching. As a quality assurance process, I took what I had learned back to the Learning and Teaching committee in my area and gained feedback from my colleagues reflecting on my tone, and the words I used (V3, K5). I utilise the Acknowledgement of Country in every peer leader training session to pass on the learning I have received. Each training session, I connect with my students by using the Acknowledgement as an opportunity for group connection and discussion (K2). For example, I explained "why" we do this - that "Aboriginal" is an English word, and there is no "Aboriginal" group, there are hundreds. Another time what does "Boodjar" (country) really mean? More recently, my peer leaders have been taking turns to give the Acknowledgment and personalising this, which shows me the impact of this approach on my students (V3).

Davis, M. (2020). Reconciliation and the promise of an Australian homecoming. <https://www.themonthly.com.au/issue/2020/july/megan-davis/reconciliation-and-promise-australian-homecoming#mtr>

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Discussion Questions:

- What are strengths of the reflection? What could be improved?
- What does it mean to enhance practice? How has the reflection explored the concept of enhancement?

