

Case Study F: Balancing Quantitative and Qualitative Data to Drive Change

Module discipline: Teacher Education

Approximate module size: 150 Students

Level of module: Largely Postgraduate with some Undergraduates

Reasons for using analytics in the module

Student engagement principally. Quantitative data measurements of students' usage are limited but I believe they help to provide a very important insight into our students' learning experience, when used judiciously alongside qualitative and narrative feedback data.

Data sources/modelling approach

I use the tools built into Blackboard. I do not use them to identify individual students or particular usage *per se*, but just to get a sense of what our students are generally interested in and thus engaging with when in the VLE.

Impact of using data

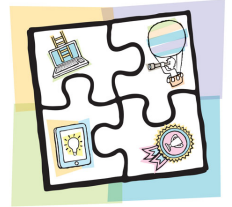
I have used the data to adapt the module, but only alongside qualitative feedback from students. I have used data-informed approaches primarily to triangulate with, and corroborate what emerges from student feedback and student evaluations of teaching.

Gathering further data

For example, one of my UG assessments was to have students keep a reflective blog (as well as comment on each other's blog entries) so I was interested to develop a profile of usage and assess 'dwell time' – e.g. duration of engagement in the VLE, times and frequency of posts. I added this data in the VLE, and they were showing that students were only logging on and editing their blogs on or around the required submission date. Also the data pointed to a superficial engagement. The kind of richer, organic discussions and commenting I was hoping for were not happening. Therefore, in addition to the blog, I have added a collaborative in-class PBL assignment which is working much better in terms of seeding and mobilising better engagement overall, both on and offline. The data helpfully showed me that the blog alone was not working.

Advice for colleagues interested in using a data-enhanced approach

Triangulate, triangulate, triangulate! Use qualitative and quantitative together – this can help to provide comprehensive data points to gain a realistic insight into students' learning experience. So don't rely on one source or type of data – e.g. look at any quantitative data in the context of narrative feedback, through student evaluations of teaching (SETs), external examiner reports, etc.



Case Studies of Data Use in Module Design/Delivery

Be clear on your learning outcomes and what you are seeking to measure – avoid measurement for measurement's sake.