Creating Inclusive, Safe and Supportive Schools (EDFD 271/221/261), Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University*

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The unit, EDFD 271/221/261 Creating Inclusive, Safe and Supportive Schools, is a core unit in three of our key undergraduate programs - the Bachelor of Education (Primary) - [EDFD271], the Bachelor of Education (Primary/Early Childhood) - [EDFD261], the Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Arts – [EDFD221]. Independent versions of the unit are delivered in blended mode (mostly face-to-face) each year across five campuses (Melbourne, Sydney, Ballarat, Brisbane and Canberra) to over 950 students.

There is a “Lecturer in Charge” (LIC) on each campus. There is a requirement that each version of the unit is similar and that there should be common, moderated, assessment tasks, however there is no national coordination of content, teaching and assessment of the unit. The delivery of independent versions of this unit across five campuses to varying cohorts is problematic. From a systemic perspective it is costly because there is duplication of delivery, teaching, administration, and coordination. From a student perspective there is inconsistency (course drift), inflexibility, and limited access to content and expertise that exists on other campuses. While the quality of the student experience is high, the redesign will improve efficiency through less duplication of effort, teaching, administration and coordination.

Choice of redesign model: The Replacement Model

The Replacement Model has been selected with the goal of developing one, nationally consistent version of the unit. The unit will be totally redesigned and redeveloped in the University’s Learning Management System (LMS - Moodle/Equella). Existing content across all iterations will be filtered and consolidated and, where appropriate new content and new learning objects introduced. The syllabus, assessment, and student interaction and engagement activity will be reconstructed in the LMS. In-class meetings will supplement this; however, careful consideration will be given to reducing the number and frequency, and changing the nature, of these face-to-face meetings. It is expected that a nationally consistent, version of the unit that has renewed and consolidated content, rationalized assessment, and utilizes technology to provide flexibility, engagement, and active learning will improve the student experience. It is also anticipated that it will be less costly, not only in monetary terms, but also in time.

Choice of assessment plan: Before and after comparisons using pre- and post-test grades and a range of other evaluation processes involving interviews and surveys of staff and students.

The main assessment plan measure selected is to compare student final scores/grades. A five-year average of student scores/grades will be collated to establish a baseline. This will be compared to the scores/grades awarded to students in the redesign. This measure will be implemented for the pilot using two sections and for the 8 sections of the full implementation.

Feedback regarding the student experience of the redesigned unit will be sorted and compared to previous years students surveys. Staff experience of the redesign process will also be assessed.

Cost reduction strategy: Increase the number of sections that each instructor carries for the same workload credit, accommodating enrolment growth

The redesign will decrease the number of “workload hours” it takes to prepare and deliver a section, lowering the “per student” cost. This is achieved by reducing the number of hours devoted to curriculum development, materials acquisition, and materials development by all staff, as well savings made in course delivery. In particular, gains are made by reducing or repurposing face-to-face lectures, and sharing content. This is offset somewhat by an increase in online interaction and monitoring. The workload hours saved under the redesign will be reallocated to other teaching duties and/or give each lecturer more time to concentrate on building his/her publishing and research.

There will also be an increase in the number of students per section in some locations. Our enrolment plan (and enrolment patterns) clearly indicates strong growth in student numbers. The flow on effect of the increase in student number means that some sections will carry more students for the same workload credit in 2013, with further increasing numbers in 2014 and 2015.

* Note: The redesign will not strictly follow the NCAT’s methodology

This information refers to the redesign project 2011-2013 at JCU and ACU www.lhmi.edu.au