The subject Education for Cultural Diversity is a core subject for education students at James Cook University. The subject aims to prepare students with the knowledge of theories, policies, frameworks and teaching strategies to cater for cultural diversity as future teachers and involves confronting their understandings of their own culture and the culture of ‘others’. This subject is vital to the strategic aims of the university in catering for underserved populations in our region and is a necessity for teachers who are entering increasingly economically and culturally diverse schools. The target enrolment numbers are 320 students across all four modes of delivery: Townsville Internal (160), Cairns Internal (80), Townsville External (60) and Townsville Limited (20).

Choice of redesign model: The Replacement Model

The replacement model has been selected as the most appropriate for redesign of the subject Education for Cultural Diversity for all modes of delivery. For the internal delivery, the replacement model reduces in-class meeting time, replaces some in-class time with online interactive learning activities and makes significant changes to remaining in-class meetings. The redesign replaces the bulk of the traditional lecture structure with interactive content, such as weekly face-to-face student seminars that: (a) engage with pre-designed theory and empirically supported class activities, (b) engage with short activities that help explain the online component of the subject, and (c) review materials that students find challenging from the previous week. The redesign subject reduces the number of in-class meeting and maximise students learning when meeting in-class. For external students, the redesign will bring greater alignment and efficiency as all students will be working with one online interface for the delivery of content.

Choice of assessment plan: Before and after comparisons of common final exams and student work using common rubrics

The outcomes of the redesign will be measured using baseline ‘before’ and ‘after’ data. Subject data from the 2011 traditional delivery of the subject will be compared to 2012 data collected after the implementation. Quantitative and Qualitative data will be gathered to compare the two and assess the impact of the redesign. Quantitatively, the student participation can be tracked, student achievement data can be gathered and retention data. More qualitatively, a survey and sample focus groups with students will gather feedback about the pedagogy, subject materials and assessments across the redesign and traditional modes. The results of the end of semester examination will also be able to be compared before and after the redesign.

Cost reduction strategy: Each instructor carries more students, stable enrolment

Redesign will reduce preparation and teaching costs by reducing the amount of teaching hours required to deliver the subject and consolidating the delivery of the subject across modes and campuses. By replacing the face-to-face lectures with interactive online delivery, costs will be significantly reduced. The redesign produces cost savings by serving the same number of students with reduced number of instructors, from 3 to 2. This eliminates the cost of employing casual staff. The redesign will make the subject less labour intensive, while serving the same number of students. By replacing some hand graded assessment for automated online grading and software which supports collaboration such as the poster, further costs will also be reduced. The school will use the savings to allocate teaching time to other subjects, and allocate research time to the academic staff thereby increasing the research capacity and teaching capacity of the school, particularly in this strategic area of Education for Cultural Diversity.