

# IMPROVING LEARNING AND TEACHING OUTCOMES AT UNIVERSITY



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## Objectives of this workshop

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- Describe my teaching practices and rationale:
  - present a framework for comprehensively evaluating teaching
  - suggest strategies to engage students in lectures
- Share stories of quality teaching practices and ideas:
  - think about and discuss teaching in a scholarly and collegial manner



## Overview of my Teaching Context

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- *Undergraduate*: primary school preservice teachers, PE preservice teachers, final year research project.
- *Postgraduate*: Research methods; Dip Ed; PhD students.
- Research – school and community based interventions to prevent and treat obesity
- Greatest challenges but greatest rewards
- Lortie (1975) ‘insiders into the profession’
- Role model as a ‘teachers of teachers’
- Good ‘teacher’ and good ‘teaching practices’

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## Overview of my Teaching Context cont...

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### Modification examples:

- Designing tasks for PE students - vary instructional model to suit learner profile
- Critical reflection - deconstruction of experiences and cooperative learning

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## Quality Teaching at University

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- Greater interest in enhancing quality of teaching and learning at university
  - performance management
  - LTPF
  - AUQA audits
  - course experience questionnaire
  - retention/attrition
- Focus on **teaching quality** in the last 15 years has resulted in heightened awareness and interest regarding **strategies to evaluate teaching effectiveness**.

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## Evaluation of Teaching

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- Evaluation is widely viewed as a vehicle for the **improvement** of teaching and can provide an indication of **course or teaching effectiveness**.
- Barriers:
  - minimal accountability
  - lack of motivation
  - poor perceptions of value
  - lack of understanding of appropriate evaluation procedures

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## Evaluation of Teaching

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- **Purposes:** formative (quality improvement) and summative (quality assurance) methods, (although often overlap).
- **Issues:** Collecting data on teaching strengths for promotion purposes may take priority over examining areas of teaching that need improvement
- Evaluation requires an understanding of:
  - what to evaluate;
  - how to evaluate it;
  - how to analysis the information and;
  - how to action and implement what has been learned.

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## Evaluation of Teaching cont...

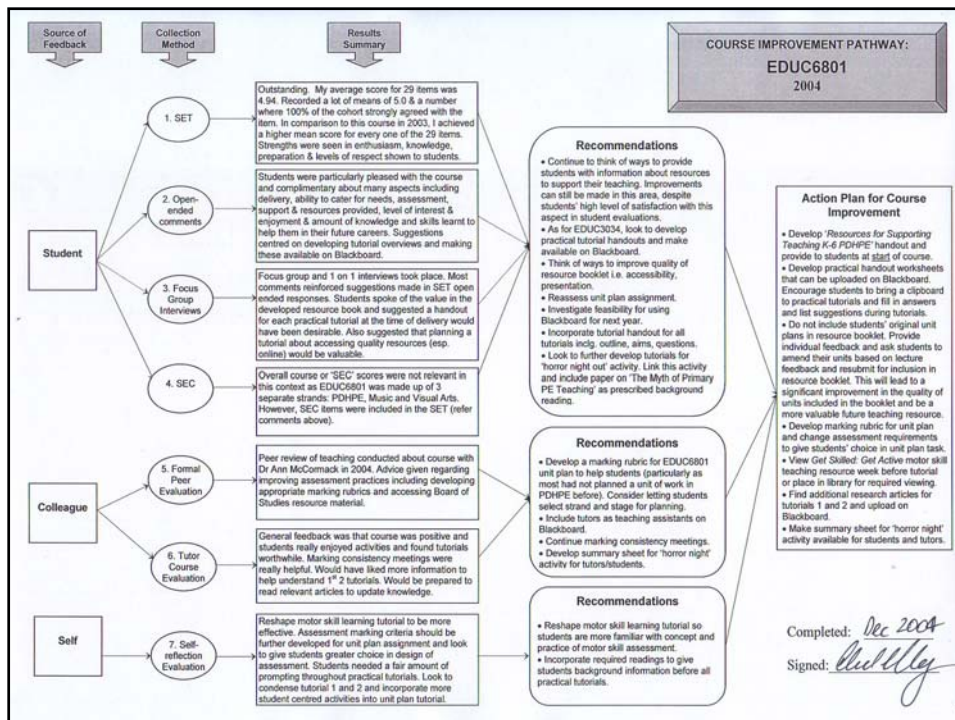
8

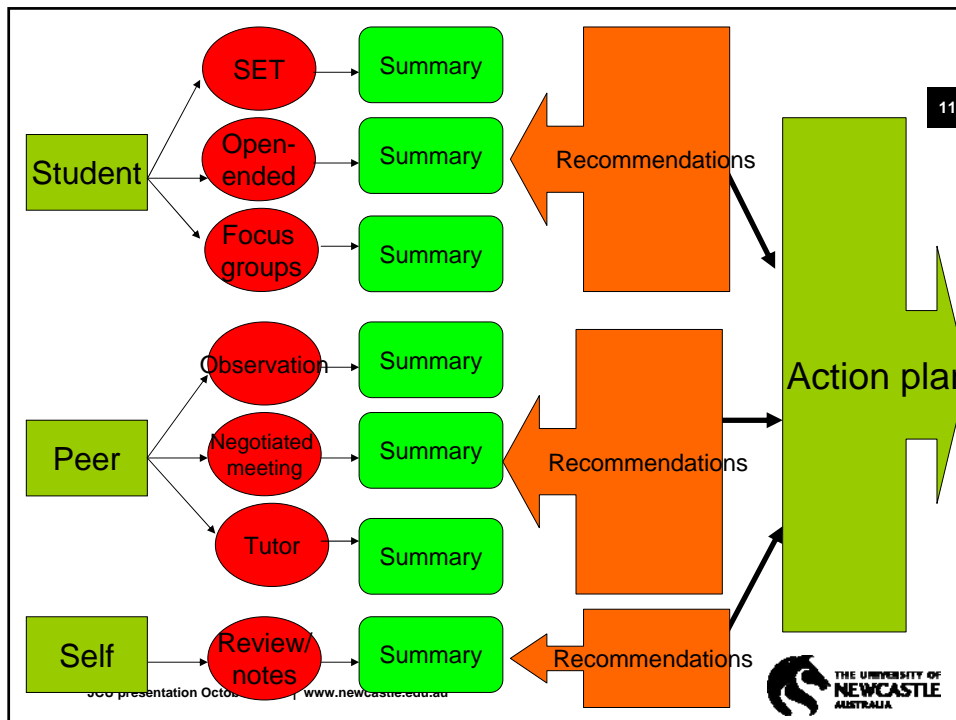
- In terms of evaluation, one single data source and one single collection method may reveal only one perspective of teaching.
- It is also important to recognise that all dimension of teaching (e.g. pedagogies) and the course (e.g. assessment, resources) need to be evaluated.
- Need to plan/prepare for evaluation (“ink it, don’t think it”)

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- Morgan, P.J. (2008).** The Course Improvement Flowchart: A description of a tool and process for the evaluation of university teaching. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*. 5(2), 1-13.





## Sources of Feedback

- Students may provide valuable feedback in:
  - rapport,
  - workload,
  - usefulness of materials,
  - what they have learned,
  - clarity of presentation,
  - concern for progress and welfare
- *but maybe not:*
  - appropriateness of content,
  - materials,
  - course objectives
  - assessment of student work.

## Sources of Feedback cont...

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### Peer Evaluation of Teaching

- Important but is rarely used (why?)
- Effective for feedback on:
  - subject matter knowledge,
  - curriculum development,
  - materials,
  - course design,
  - delivery,
  - assessment.

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- Can occur both inside and outside the lecture theatre/classroom
- Purpose should be made explicit
- Contextualise the process in terms of professional learning, growth and improvement.
- Quality enhancement rather than quality assurance process.
- Tutor evaluation of courses as well (questionnaire or meeting)

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## Sources of Feedback cont...

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### Self-Evaluation of Teaching

- Reflective journals, checklists, statements of teaching philosophy.
- Reflection could also be a summary of all other sources
- A self-evaluation pro forma
- Anecdotal comments
- Mid-course evaluations are very useful

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## Closing the Feedback Loop

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- The extent to which feedback impacts on teaching practices:
  - (i) ensuring students are informed about the outcomes and action plan of the evaluation;
  - (ii) that teachers are accountable to a colleague that this process has been undertaken and discussed.

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## Pedagogic resonance

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- Should we try to make lectures more engaging? Lecturing versus Teaching?
- Adult learning environment?
- Are we on the same wavelength as students?



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## What drives 'engaged' students?

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- **4 major goals:**
  - (1) Curiosity – *the need for 'understanding'*
  - (2) Success – *the need for 'mastery'*
  - (3) Originality – *the need for 'self-expression'*
  - (4) Relationships – *the need for 'involvement with others'*
- \* Strong, Silver and Robinson, 1995

**Ten Working Principles for Enhancing Student Engagement  
(Krause, 2005)**

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## Research on engagement

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### Greater engagement

- = enhanced learning processes and outcomes
- = maximal psychological investment in learning

Kearsley and Shneiderman, 1999



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## Principles and strategies for student engagement (lectures)

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- ✓ Increase self efficacy
  - opportunities for success
  - questioning
  - learners need to feel 'safe'; non-threatening, supportive learning environment
- ✓ Generate interest/situational interest
  - can override other motivational orientations - through novelty, humour, variety >>long-term memory
  - Images/clips
  - use of personal anecdotes (tell stories)

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## Principles and strategies for student engagement (lectures)

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- ✓ Clarity and Significance
  - explicit objectives
  - highlight relevance and significance
  - authentic assessments, case studies
  - minimal note taking
  - closure (review and foreshadow)
  - research integration
  
- ✓ Understanding of personal experiences
  - critical reflection
  - consider/survey beliefs/attitudes
  - demographic subgroup differences

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## Principles and strategies for student engagement (lectures)

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- ✓ Accountability
  - Challenge and peer assessment (e.g. allow opportunities to teach concepts to each other)
  
- ✓ Valuing students' contribution
  - students contribute to decisions about what/how they learn
  - emphasise teachers and learners working 'together'
  - do you care?
  - do you know your students' names?

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## Potential strategies for student engagement in lectures cont..

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- ✓ Collaborative learning experiences
  - opportunities for social learning networks
  
- ✓ Enjoyment?
  - BUT fun, entertaining and memorable is not necessarily educational
  - be creative
  
- ✓ Street Credibility
  - research-teaching nexus
  - e.g. work with schools (research, workshops, advisory panels, consultancy)

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## DOES THE SCHOOL HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY IN REDUCING CHILDHOOD OBESITY?

Student input  
Relevance



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## Summary – engagement principles

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- Research-Teaching nexus
- Understanding personal experiences
- Learning networks
- Ensure challenge
- Self efficacy
- Opportunities for success
- Fun
- Enjoyment
- Name recall
- Guarantee street credibility
- Accountability
- Generate situational interest
- Emphasise relevance
- More real-life examples
- Explicit objectives
- Note taking minimal
- Teacher/learner work together

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