

RESPONDING TO STUDENT NEEDS: TRIALLING A 'BLENDED ENVIRONMENT'

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Abstract

'Applied Skills and Scholarship' (HHB116) is a core unit for first year students, which was historically delivered using the traditional lecture and tutorial format. However, with a sudden increase in student numbers and a demand for more flexibility, it became apparent that a fresh approach was necessary to accommodate student needs.

The solution entailed a mixed delivery approach that integrated the use of educational technology, personal interaction and collaborative exercises. While the content remained unchanged, streamed audio recordings substituted the traditional lecture format. Face-to-face tutorial sessions were retained, and group work activities were introduced. The question now is whether first year students can be responsible for their own learning in such a unit, whether they have the motivation and discipline to manage their study without the closer guidance of traditional delivery. Have we assumed too much?

This paper will explore the use of a 'blended environment' from a pedagogical perspective, and will investigate the benefits, disadvantages and the resulting modifications that may be necessary to ensure successful learning outcomes for students.

Keywords

blended learning, e-learning, educational technology, flexible learning, motivation.

Introduction

In recent years there has been a relentless trend in universities towards e-learning and blended learning. The former has been defined as "technology-based learning in which learning materials are delivered electronically to remote learners via a computer network" (Zhang, Zhou, & Nunamaker, 2004, p. 76) and boasts many advantages such as providing "a learner-centred, self-paced learning environment" (Zhang et al., 2004, p. 76), enhancing "lifelong learning capacities" (Armatas & Rice, 2004, p. 78), and preparing students for the increasingly networked and technologically complex real world of work.

However, the headlong rush to embrace e-learning opportunities in tertiary institutions may have neglected some important issues in student learning. Both students and lecturers seem to miss the personal contact of the traditional university learning environment (Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal, 2004, p. 3), such as face-to-face lectures and tutorial sessions. Indeed, Alexander (2001, p. 241) has pointed out that “the use of information technology does not of itself improve learning”. A more balanced approach appears to be blended learning, which combines traditional and online teaching methods (Dziuban et al., 2004, pp. 2-3).

This paper describes the transformation of a relatively traditionally delivered first-year unit into a blended learning environment. It outlines the rationale for the change, the transformation process, the current outcomes, and our realisation that one of the most critical issues in blended learning, especially for first year students, is creating a “harmonious balance” (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003, p. 227). The unit of interest is Applied Skills and Scholarship (HHB116), a compulsory unit for first-year Human Services students.

What is HHB116 and how was it Delivered Before?

HHB116 is designed to assist first year students from diverse backgrounds and with a wide range of preparedness for university study, to develop the academic skills required for success in their courses. To this end it focuses on demystifying the university environment and introducing a range of skills such as research, information literacy, critical thinking, academic writing, oral presentation and so on. Traditionally, delivery has comprised two-hour weekly lectures, one-hour tutorials, and access to a range of readings, lecture notes and other resources online through a learning management system (OLT). The students have been drawn mainly from the School of Humanities and Human Services. The majority of students are school-leavers, but a fairly significant number, especially in Human Services, are mature age.

In this traditional mode, the content was delivered in the weekly lectures, and this content was extended, practised and contextualised in the tutorials. Lectures were not videoed, although the PowerPoint slides were provided on the OLT site. Initial lecture attendance was excellent, but this dwindled as the semester progressed, perhaps partly because of the availability of the PowerPoint slides (students thought that these provided a substitute for attending lectures). Nonetheless, the delivery format provided a supportive environment with substantial guidance in terms of explaining the relevance and context of the content. One disadvantage was the linear format: content was provided in a particular order relating to the process of researching and writing an academic paper. Several students commented that they needed certain skills and information earlier, to apply to assignments in other units. Indeed, Osguthorpe and Graham (2003, p.228) confirm that the lack of time flexibility is a disadvantage of traditionally delivered courses. However, the constraints of the 13-week semester made it difficult to address this issue.

Rationale for Change

There were a number of reasons why it was decided that the unit should be changed. One significant reason was that the unit was expecting a sudden increase in enrolments as it was to become a compulsory unit for first year business students attending Carseldine campus. In fact, there was no lecture hall large enough to accommodate so many students. Moreover, a significant number of students would be part-time, and would have more difficulty attending campus-based lectures. The deteriorating lecture attendance was another reason. Perhaps students did not find the traditional lecture format conducive to learning the desired skills.

It was felt that an online environment would offer considerable flexibility for students who could not or would not attend lectures, and for students who needed to access information at different times to apply to their other units. The unit also usually has a number of students with disabilities, and it was assumed that such students could be better assisted with a more flexible delivery mode.

This might also be useful in supporting the diverse range of student learning styles (Bonk & Kim, 2004, n.p.). The fact that a variety of formats could be used, and that students could self-pace, access information in their preferred order, or readdress content, made the electronic environment attractive. This handing over of personal control to students is also thought to be a motivating factor (Beffa-Negrini, Cohen & Miller, 2002, p. 338).

Rogers (n.d.) refers to several studies which suggest that combinations of strategies, media and information access result in positive outcomes for students. Many students also have wide-ranging commitments such as families, employment, and unexpected crises like illness and accidents – such issues as these seem to cry out for a more flexible delivery mode. Dziuban et al. (2004, p. 9) point out that a blended learning environment in which students can engage in online and face-to-face learning activities is much more ‘congruent’ with the lifestyles of students (see also Jelfs et al., 2004, p. 86).

One of the objectives of the unit is to prepare students for the demands of tertiary education, and since many courses and units are implementing technological enhancements, it seemed necessary to introduce students to such requirements both through the teaching and the assessment in HHB116. We wanted to expose students to a range of teaching, learning and assessment technologies and to make them aware of the wealth of tools available for their learning, creating a relevant, authentic learning environment (Oliver, 1999, p. 242).

For example, one significant omission from the original unit content was group work. Group work is a regular learning and assessment form in most units across the university. However, students are usually told to form groups and complete a task without being told *how* to work effectively in groups (Alexander, 2001, p. 242). Therefore, it was decided that as well as setting a group work project, students should also learn about group dynamics and processes, and how to collaborate on the task. Moreover, this would provide an important opportunity for students to develop support networks and socialise with others.

Developing the New Unit

Having identified the main drivers for change, it was now a matter of finding the best solution to address these issues. The primary task now was to design an effective learning experience for students, while also creating a manageable environment for teaching staff.

The Strategy

We did not want to take the risk of presenting the entire unit online, although it was tempting in terms of the management of a large student cohort (up to 550 students in first semester). However, these were first year students requiring regular contact and guidance, and assumptions should not be made about their technical competence. A strategy was needed that could accommodate different learning styles and approaches to learning, and the issue of flexibility, while promoting the development of student learning communities. The goal was a learner-centred approach, with consideration of Biggs’ (1999) ‘constructive alignment’ which specifies that “[a] good teaching system aligns teaching method and assessment to the learning activities stated in the objectives...in supporting appropriate student learning” (p. 11). Our objective therefore was to design a rich and engaging online learning environment, supplemented with supportive and engaging face-to-face activities, and relevant assessment. The solution involved the creation of a blended teaching and learning environment, which would suit the needs of students and teaching staff.

Designing the Online Environment

In the design of the online components, a number of existing resources were re-engineered, such as PowerPoint slides and formative online test mechanisms (such as multiple choice quizzes). However, it became evident that in order to build a rich, engaging and supportive learning experience, a number of new online resources would be required. Moreover, it would be essential

to carefully consider the scaffolding which would support students as they attempt to find meaning and construct knowledge (Oliver, 1999, p. 242) in this new university terrain.

The online delivery of educational material can benefit students by offering greater levels of access and more flexible teaching and learning approaches (Oliver, 1999, p. 240). A fundamental advantage of online delivery is the potential for reusability of online components, otherwise

commonly referred to as 'learning objects', which may come in forms such as video, audio, animations, web pages, PDFs, PowerPoint files, and more (Oliver, 2001, p. 454). With flexibility and reusability in mind, the design of the online components needed to be logical, intuitive and well-structured, yet flexible enough to accommodate the diverse student cohort and their various needs.

The outcome was a modularised approach to the design of content and user interactivity. Lecture content, activities, readings and assessment items were presented in a non-linear format, but in a logical progression from basic to more advanced concepts. Each of the learning modules was scaffolded with clear instructions alongside consistent, intuitive navigation mechanisms. The framework was based on weeks, as students progressed through the semester (Week 1, Week 2, Week 3 etc.), in order to help students manage their time. This solution allowed students to access online materials at any time they pleased, while having the opportunity to skip ahead or revisit learning modules in their own preferred sequence.

Changes to Delivery

The most fundamental change to the delivery of this unit was the transformation of the traditional lecture format to online. In terms of student acceptance, this was a significant leap into unknown territory. However, recent research shows that students in other universities react positively to online delivery due to the flexibility of access to lecture content (Phillips et. al., 2004). It was also felt that it would address some of the issues mentioned above about self-pacing, learning styles, and alternative access for students with disabilities. From a teaching perspective, this approach would also create a number of learning objects that could be reused in future teaching and learning episodes.

Like the traditional lectures, the aim of the online lectures was still to provide the main content of the unit, which students would later be assessed on. However, it was necessary to separate each lecture, traditionally two hours in length, into smaller, manageable chunks (Delahaye & Smith, 1998, p. 12). These chunks could later be treated as separate, independent modules, enabling future reordering or other reusability in different contexts if required. Much care was taken to maintain the critical content, while condensing the duration of each lecture to an average of 20 minutes. With this in mind, scripts were carefully written for recording by the lecturer and the dialogue would later be synchronised with the PowerPoint slides (with the assistance of technical staff).

The choice of whether to use video or audio was carefully considered. Initially the thought of video seemed the most attractive option, as it provided a 'friendly face' for students to identify with, providing emotional appeal for the students (Dewstow & Kunz, 2004). However, upon closer investigation, it became apparent that audio was in fact a more suitable option. First, the pedagogical value of the talking head style of video was questioned. It was felt that the provision of audio only would minimise the amount of cognitive load for students (with video, student attention would be split between the video and the slides), which is in line with the outcomes of experiments undertaken by researchers such as Kalyuga, Chandler and Sweller (1999). Focusing attention on the slide contents was a priority. Second, the bandwidth is much lower for audio than video, meaning that students were more likely to successfully access the lecture modules from home, as well as from on campus.

Considering that access to the lecture content in HHB116 is crucial to the success of student learning outcomes, accessibility to all students in an equitable manner is essential, both morally and legally. In adherence with accessibility standards and guidelines (as specified by the Worldwide Web Consortium), the full transcript of each audio lecture was included in text format. Not only can a transcript be useful for those with disabilities, but it also broadens the range of student learning styles that can be satisfied (see for example Fleming, 2001; Honey & Mumford, 1992; Smith & Kolb, 1986). Furthermore, a text transcript also provides an additional resource for those wishing to print, download or quote by copying and pasting.

Changes to Content and Learner Engagement

Apart from providing lecture content, each online learning module also contained a number of non-mandatory (but highly relevant in terms of the learning objectives of the unit) online activities for students to complete at their leisure. Rather than reinventing the wheel, use was made of the extensive pool of existing resources on the Internet, which were engaging and usually interactive (such as Flash objects that included drag and drop activities). The intention was that students would access and utilise these resources according to their individual learning requirements, providing the choice and flexibility that students were requesting.

Within each learning module were also a number of readings for students to peruse, which were relevant to the content provided in the online lectures. Links were provided to the relevant readings held in the Course Materials Database (CMD), or directly to specific catalogue references if the book was held in the library.

Another characteristic of the online component was the online assessment. Online quizzes were integrated into the program of learning activities. In previous teaching episodes these quizzes were available to students as formative tests, but with such large student numbers and so few tutors the automated marking and feedback system offered by the quiz tool technology seemed desirable. Some adaptation and redevelopment was therefore required to tailor the assessment outcomes of each quiz and to incorporate meaningful feedback for students. The online environment was also utilised for its administration benefits for an assessment on time management, where a time management plan proforma was provided for students to download, complete, and then reupload for marking by their respective tutors.

For a unit that was previously delivered using relatively little in the way of technology, it was evident that some dramatic changes were being initiated with this new blended delivery approach in terms of the uptake and reliance upon technology. To minimise student anxiety (Beffa-Negrini et al., 2002, p. 338), therefore, additional face-to-face support sessions were introduced for those students who felt unprepared or uneasy with the online delivery, or who wanted further explanation on lecture content or clarification of tasks. Students responded positively to the extra assistance, and sessions were relatively well-attended (averaging 10 to 20 per session). Shelton (2000) states that “even today’s students need help learning how to interact with the variety of technological interfaces available” (p. 2).

Integrating Online and Face-to-Face Environments Using Group Work Activities

So far this paper has described many of the individual learning activities that students were required to carry out online. Group work activities were also introduced, involving both an online Group Work Area and face-to-face group meetings both in and out of tutorial sessions.

The online Group Work Area not only enabled the administration of student group allocations, but also provided structured activities for students to access and consider prior to group meetings. An online space was allocated to each group, where group members could upload files (for example, collaborative documents for group work activities). This provided flexibility for some group members who may have missed the occasional group meeting, enabling them to stay up to date with group progress.

Group work activities aimed to expose students to the processes of group work, in order to explain effective group work performance (for example, groups were required to record meeting minutes). Group work activities were structured in a way that enabled students to put these processes into practice. Also, it significantly promoted interaction, another motivational strategy (Beffa-Negrini et al., 2003, p. 339).

Resources for Teaching Staff

To enable a consistent teaching approach between tutors and tutorial groups, a ‘tutorial kit’ was provided for all tutors on CD-ROM. This included a number of group work and content-related teaching resources, enabling even those tutors who had not experienced tutoring group work

activities to hit the ground running. In a further development, all teaching staff for HHB116 now have access to a shared network drive, providing a common, dynamic shared area for teaching resources. It is anticipated that the shared network drive will replace the static CD-ROM.

With a number of resources to develop and integrate, this project required the collaboration of a whole team of people from various departments across the university (including audio/visual experts, a learning designer, library staff, and peer academic staff). Considering all team members had other existing work commitments, the successful completion of this project within the set timeframe can be attributed to the collaborative nature and willing participation of all staff involved.

Evaluating the Changes and Analysing Student Feedback

Mid-Semester Evaluation

An informal mid-semester evaluation was undertaken to find out how students were using the resources and how they were faring in the new learning environment. Many of the responses were expected, but some were rather surprising.

A survey was devised and administered during tutorial sessions, with 289 students in total completing it. With a view to the collection of descriptive, qualitative data, open-ended questions were posed. The intent was to gather honest, objective data from students, and to explore other responses which may not have been exposed using closed-ended questions (such as multiple choice) (Creswell, 2005, p. 363)

Collating and comparing the responses was a time-consuming (yet valuable) exercise. Results were collated and grouped manually using a broad set of criteria, as summarised below (see Appendix A for questions and Appendix B for a summary of collated responses and categorisations).

Survey Results

Flexibility of access

Many students appreciated the flexibility of the learning experience, and its 'just-in-time' nature. However, a larger number seemed to miss the face-to-face contact and support of traditional lectures (Alexander, 2001, p. 242; Jelfs et al., 2004). They commented that they needed considerably more guidance and that they had difficulty staying motivated. This is confirmed by Waddoups, Hatch and Butterworth's (2003) case study which points out that many students are uncomfortable with so much independence in their learning. Laszlo and Kupritz (2003, p. 63) recognise that little research has addressed "the motives that facilitate online learning".

Group work and collaboration

In response to the questions on group work, a very large majority said that they had enjoyed the 'socialising' aspect. While this was important, there were of course other reasons for having included this component of the unit. Most students felt that they had benefited from sharing ideas, the supportive environment and the collaboration on a project. The difficulties experienced by students were perhaps predictable in one sense: they said that the main problem was finding a mutually convenient time to meet in the weeks between tutorials. This was in fact a question of attitude more than reality, as all students enrolled in a particular tutorial slot should have had that time free on the intervening weeks, and thus could have agreed to use that time to meet.

The other expected issue was that of varied commitment to the group and the task. Students were often lazy about attending group work meetings or did not complete agreed work, despite early collaboration and agreement on ground rules. Another dilemma was students actually withdrawing from the unit, and thus leaving their group depleted. However, most groups were able to overcome this problem, and allowances were made in assessing groups which had been left in the lurch.

Relevance of unit content

Many students, surprisingly, said that they failed to see the relevance of the unit to the rest of their study, and others said that since they were largely left to work at their own pace, the unit tended to take second priority to their other units, which demanded that they accomplish tasks and reading by certain dates. Both Laszlo and Kupritz (2003) and Keller and Suzuki (2004) assert that course relevance is crucial in motivating students to learn. Not only must the content be seen to be relevant to their longer term goals, but also to the completion of their coursework. This is of particular pertinence in a unit like HHB116, which aims to provide the skills needed in other units undertaken by students.

Use of online resources

There was also a disappointing response to the question on how many online resources (lectures, activities and readings) students had accessed. While some said they had accessed 'some' or 'most', a large number said they had accessed 'very little' or 'none'. Again, a common admission was that they lacked the discipline or motivation to work through the materials, and that there was 'too much to do'. Jelfs et al. (2004, p. 88) concede that while providing all the material at once means that it is ready for use, this can also be overwhelming. Research also shows that some students, especially new students, can feel obliged to complete every activity that is set (Beaty & Morgan, 1992, cited by Jelfs, et. al., 2004), or as was the case of HHB116, some students could not decide which activities to undertake and gave up entirely, without completing any of them.

Emerging issues

Although 'personal agency' (Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003, p. 231) is an important goal of blended learning, it also turned out to be a problem for HHB116. This could be frustrating for students as they struggled to complete the coursework in the limited time available (Christensen, 2003, p. 240). Armatas et al. (2004, pp. 84-5) advise providing support and guidance to students in working through the required learning resources and activities. This is perhaps one issue inadequately dealt with thus far in HHB116.

It was starting to become clearer that some students were overwhelmed with the abundance of resources. Some students could not decide which activities to undertake and lost the motivation to complete anything. A major implication of providing flexibility for learners is the requirement for them to be more selective and responsible for their own learning. Unfortunately this is beyond many students, especially school-leavers, who are not used to so much freedom, and expect a more prescriptive approach.

The rationale for providing a large number of resources was that students come to university with various levels of preparedness: some students need a greater range of materials to work through and practise with to bolster their skills. Some materials were provided with a view to addressing different learning styles. It was not anticipated that all students would necessarily access all materials. However, students seemed to have great difficulty selecting what they needed. This was perhaps one reason why some students ended up trying to do everything, while others did nothing at all.

There is clearly a delicate balance between providing enough and too much in terms of resources (Jelfs et al., 2004). The assumption was clearly too burdensome for many students: that they would have the maturity and insight to make informed choices about what and how much to do, and at what pace. We expected students to be "strategic and reflective on their learning needs" (Jelfs et al., 2004, p. 91), but it is clear that first years in particular do not necessarily know what they do not know, and are ill-equipped to make judgements on their learning needs. Moreover, they are often unaware of university standards and expectations, and of their own shortcomings. They seem to need considerably more guidance and a more prescriptive approach as they navigate the transition from the highly structured and supportive environment of school to the relatively unstructured environment of university.

It can be seen that despite the strong rationale for changing the unit, and the justification for the developments incorporated into the new blended learning environment, there were some outcomes and unexpected results that need to be addressed in future versions of the unit.

End of Semester Evaluation

A further (online) survey eliciting quantitative data was conducted at the end of the semester in order to measure and ultimately draw conclusions (Creswell, 2005, p. 48) about student perceptions of the unit. Participants were asked to agree or disagree with statements using Likert scales (closed-ended responses). These data were then collated and mathematically analysed by the computer system to produce statistics (Creswell, 2005, p. 49) (see Appendix C for survey questions and statistics). Even though students were encouraged to complete the survey, with reminders in lectures, electronic notices on the OLT site and emails, only 92 students provided responses (approximately 20 per cent of the total number of students in the unit).

Survey Results

The responses were generally far more positive than in the mid-semester evaluation. However, fewer students answered the survey, and those who did may have been more positive about the unit anyway, since it was their choice to undertake the survey (the earlier evaluation was undertaken in a tutorial session). Regardless, the responses perhaps reflect a growing realisation of the value of the unit as the semester progressed. Despite the more positive responses, it was still felt that the aforementioned issues needed to be dealt with.

Conclusions drawn

One of the main assumptions made was that students would be able to take responsibility for their own learning, and be independent, proactive learners to benefit fully from the delivery mode of the unit. While some students did appear able to manage alone and make discriminating choices, many others were overwhelmed by the freedom of the environment. Armatas et al. (2004) doubt the wisdom of requiring first years to do wholly online units as they are trying to “negotiate the transition to tertiary education” (p. 78). While HHB116 has not been wholly online, this is clearly where many of the problems lay.

Future Directions

The aim for the future is to retain the many good things attempted with the unit, but to provide considerably more scaffolding and support for those students unable to cope. It is envisaged that shifting the balance will provide more responsiveness to student needs. Some of the proposed changes are the reintroduction of face-to-face lectures, a more guided and prescriptive approach, a reduction in the amount of readings and activities, and a more task-driven program which will hopefully make more explicit the relevance of the content and the interrelationship between all components of the unit. Another addition will be the provision of an online discussion forum to increase the sense of connectedness and community among students.

The purpose of reintroducing lectures is not to replace nor to repeat the online modules, but rather to contextualise the content, and to clarify the reasons for learning the skills and undertaking the tasks. Also, many students missed the personal contact with a lecturer. Alexander (2001, p. 242) maintains that “Students need to be briefed on the views of learning which underpin particular learning strategies, and encouraged to be reflective about their own learning”. It is hoped that the lectures will be able to do just this.

There seems to be a strong link between assessment and whether or not students access materials. In her study, Alexander (2001) concluded that “if the e-learning activity did not count towards assessment of the subject, students simply did not use the materials or participate in the activity” (p. 242); this was certainly confirmed by our evaluation and survey. As most of our online materials were not explicitly assessed, and students failed to realise that the material was being implicitly assessed in their writing and presentation tasks, many did not do them. One of the consequences was a large number of very disappointing written assignments which failed to meet the minimum standards. Therefore, the next version of the unit will include two short in-class exams which may encourage students to access the online resources. More importantly, however, the face-to-face lectures will reveal the value and relevance of these resources, and their applicability to tasks, both in HHB116 and in other units.

In a further effort to improve the quality of students' academic writing, the written assignment will become the central focus of the workshops (as the tutorials have been renamed). Each workshop will take students through a stage in the research and writing process and link it to the resources and activities online. The lectures will have a central role in coordinating and linking all aspects of the process.

The online resources and activities will be pared down to those that are considered essential, in an effort to make the workload more manageable and the quantity of tasks less daunting. Rather than deleting the remaining useful resources, these will be placed in an online pool for students who do wish to explore and develop their skills further, or for students who are particularly weak in a certain area and need more practice materials.

Finally, a discussion forum will be added to the learning management system in order to provide both a virtual social space for students and a focus for discussion of assignment topics. It is envisaged that students will be able to ask questions and obtain clarification (both from staff and peers) and to create a sense of community and connectedness with other students.

Summary

The development of HHB116 is a work in progress, which from the outset has been treated as the first 'phase' of a larger project for further refinement and adaptation. Shelton (2000, p. 4) has asserted that "it takes one-to-two years to perfect an online course. Instructors should not try to include every form of interactivity possible in a Web format all at one time". Although HHB116 is not a purely online unit, the advice remains valuable. Indeed, this is how the evolution of the unit was envisioned: HHB116 undergoes a constant process of development, responsiveness and reflection. Christensen (2003, p. 242) believes that one should "fine-tune the blend of strategies through successive iterations", while Boyle et al. (2003, pp. 176-7) advocate that the "blend should be dynamic and evolve over a number of years" to avoid resistance among tutors and students and to create a stable transition. HHB116 will certainly undergo many more upheavals and will probably never be a 'finished' product. The search for the perfect blend, which provides a rich, harmonious and productive learning environment for students is elusive, but the chase is on!

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Appendix A

HHB116 Applied Skills and Scholarship Mid-Semester Evaluation (sem 1 2005)

Please write your answers on this sheet. To ensure anonymity, please do NOT include your name.

1. So far, what have you found useful about this unit?

2. So far, what have you not found useful in this unit?

3. How many lecture modules have you accessed so far (be honest ☺)?

4. In terms of the activities and readings recommended each week (on the OLT site), how much have you undertaken? (Please circle)
Everything Most Some Very little None at all

5. So far, what has been good about the group work?

6. So far, what has been difficult about the group work?

7. Do you have any other comments/suggestions/criticisms to make?

Appendix B

Results of mid-semester evaluation/survey

Student perceptions on the delivery of HHB116 blended delivery approach were as follows:

Categories of responses	Number of responses
Useful	
Specific skills taught (time management, research, writing, referencing, internet)	248
Flexibility of access	37
Tutorials	10
Group work	30
Everything	14
Relevance to other study	30
Not useful	
Tutorials	13
Lack of face-to-face contact	26
Content/assessment	92
Relevance	6
Need for self-motivation	8
Lectures accessed	
None	24
Most	20
All	51
1-4	131
5-7	61
Activities done	
All	8
Most	59
Some	117
Very little	84
None	29
Group work- what's good	
Nothing	5
Social/support	144
Group work skills learned	21
Collaboration	139
Good group	18
Group work – what's difficult	
Meeting/organisation/communication	107
Conflict	35
Don't like group work	10
The work itself	37
Other comments	
Too much work	17
Prefer face-to-face	30
Good unit (flexibility/format)	12
Good OLT site	3

Appendix C

Survey report for HHB116 STUDENT SURVEY

Q1)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The unit has a lot of inbuilt opportunities for support and feedback about my performance.	3% (3/92)	21% (19/92)	26% (24/92)	43% (40/92)	7% (6/92)

Q2) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Lecturer and tutor feedback enabled me to always knew how well I was performing in this unit.	4% (4/92)	33% (30/92)	24% (22/92)	35% (32/92)	4% (4/92)

Q3) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The content and skills taught in this unit are essential to my future University success.	2% (2/91)	10% (9/91)	11% (10/91)	52% (47/91)	25% (23/91)

Q4)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel confident that I can use the skills taught in this unit in my everyday University studies.	0% (0/92)	9% (8/92)	13% (12/92)	47% (43/92)	32% (29/92)

Q5) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
When I began this unit, I had a poor understanding of the concepts and skills required to be successful .	14% (13/92)	42% (39/92)	14% (13/92)	24% (22/92)	5% (5/92)

Q6) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The online activities and assessments in the unit were interesting and challenging to complete.	8% (7/92)	33% (30/92)	16% (15/92)	40% (37/92)	3% (3/92)

Q7) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think that I have the ability to do well in this unit.	1% (1/92)	2% (2/92)	18% (17/92)	60% (55/92)	18% (17/92)

Q8)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am prepared to devote the time and effort that it takes to do well in this unit.	5% (5/92)	11% (10/92)	17% (16/92)	57% (52/92)	10% (9/92)

Q9) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
I found that the sequence of online learning activities was cohesive and made sense to me.	7% (6/92)	16% (15/92)	20% (18/92)	50% (46/92)	8% (7/92)

Q10) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Tutors and lecturers provided clear instructions about the nature and timing of learning activities.	7% (6/92)	16% (15/92)	17% (16/92)	52% (48/92)	8% (7/92)

Q11) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
I found the group activities essential in my learning for this unit.	14% (13/91)	29% (26/91)	12% (11/91)	37% (34/91)	8% (7/91)

Q12) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The tutors and lecturer were always ready to help with problems that students had with the unit.	1% (1/92)	7% (6/92)	17% (16/92)	48% (44/92)	27% (25/92)

Q13) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The online component allowed me to have greater control of my own learning in this unit.	3% (3/92)	13% (12/92)	14% (13/92)	42% (39/92)	27% (25/92)

Q14) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The online component allowed me greater control over the management of my time in this unit.	4% (4/92)	11% (10/92)	17% (16/92)	43% (40/92)	24% (22/92)

Q15) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The structure of the online component allowed me greater choice about what content I accessed.	3% (3/91)	0% (0/91)	12% (11/91)	59% (54/91)	25% (23/91)

Q16) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The assessment tasks were integrated and related well to the activities students were asked to carry out.	7% (6/92)	12% (11/92)	22% (20/92)	54% (50/92)	5% (5/92)

Q17) :	Strongly	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly
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	Disagree				Agree
There was enough time to complete the required tasks and assessments.	0% (0/92)	2% (2/92)	9% (8/92)	70% (64/92)	20% (18/92)

Q18) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Working in groups was an efficient way to complete tasks in terms of time and effort.	10% (9/92)	28% (26/92)	12% (11/92)	37% (34/92)	13% (12/92)

Q19) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Accessing the online content was essential in order to succeed in this unit.	15% (14/92)	22% (20/92)	15% (14/92)	39% (36/92)	9% (8/92)

Q20) :	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
The blend of online and face to face learning was an effective way to study the content and concepts of this unit.	10% (9/92)	24% (22/92)	18% (17/92)	36% (33/92)	12% (11/92)