Learning Analytics Collaborative Cluster Report

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Contents

Learning Analytics Framework

Workshop participants identified a need for a mechanism to share good practice around the learning analytics framework. This would include:

- oversight/governance
- institutional strategy
- definitions
- policy/guidelines
- lessons learned
- implementation strategy
- where HEIs are in the development journey.

It was anticipated that two student interns, to be based at the University of Stirling, would develop and implement an information gathering strategy, collecting an overview of the operational framework used by Scottish institutions when implementing the use of learning analytics.

It was proposed that in year 2 of the Enhancement Theme, a resource be developed, that would be populated with the research gathered by the interns to enable sharing and promotion of good practice across the sector.

Year 3 of the Enhancement Theme could result in work being undertaken to evaluate the evidence gathered from the interns and produce sector-wide policy/guidance/best practice framework documents, that could be released under a Creative Commons licence, for institutions to modify and use when implementing learning analytics.

Engagement

Workshop attendees grouped staff and student engagement into one complimentary strand of work. Discussions focused on data literacy of staff and students, however, it was felt that this aspect of work would be covered by the QAA Scotland sector activity. There was also a discussion around the ethics of using data in this manner and the impact that may have on student well-being and student mental health. It was suggested that a new collaborative cluster focused on student mental health may be formed in the 2018-19, which, might be best placed to take this area of work forward.

Consultancy and buy-in was discussed, for both staff and students, but it was also identified that there was a need for tangible examples of learning analytics that can be used when engaging staff and students.

It was suggested that a piece of research surrounding the different categories of students and the needs of these categories from learning analytics would be a useful starting point to engage with students. A student intern, to be based at the University of Strathclyde, would undertake research to establish the different categories of students, in order that any strategy developed within an institution would support all student groups, and not just those deemed 'at risk' from failing or leaving the university.

It was proposed that in year 2 of the Enhancement Theme, a sector wide project be undertaken to gain student views on learning analytics and the specific needs required by each group of students.

A similar project for staff could be undertaken either in tandem in year 2 or independently in year 3 of the Theme.

Application of Learning Analytics

The importance of sharing examples and information was highlighted and it was suggested at the workshop that a 'show, tell and share' approach to the applications strand would be an advantage. This would provide a platform for institutions to demonstrate and share good practice in terms of the implementation of their learning analytics framework and tools they have developed/introduced to support their strategy for learning analytics implementation.

It was suggested that the focus for the interns and for year 2 of the collaborative cluster would be the framework and engagement strands, and that work on the application strand would commence in year 3 of the Theme.

Recommendations

The learning analytics collaborative cluster recommendation, for work to be undertaken by collaborative clusters or as sector strand activity, to QAA Scotland would be:

- the development of a tool to share knowledge and practice in learning analytics framework activity throughout the Scottish sector
- the development of policy/guidelines/best practice guides, released under Creative Commons licences, that are specifically targeted at Scottish institutional priorities
- that research be undertaken into the different categories of students and staff and the development of a needs analysis for each category with regards to learning analytics for sharing throughout the sector
- the development of a mechanism to share the knowledge, resources and activities developed to support individual institution's learning analytics strategies.