Completing the Loop:
Returning meaningful learning analytic data to teachers

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Introduction

The field of learning analytics offers the potential to enhance teaching and learning practices in higher education by providing an empirical basis for educational design and delivery. Increases in the role of technology in teaching and learning have resulted in the increased availability of data on students' learning practices.

However, a greater understanding of how teachers can usefully harness learning analytics to address the educational problems and situations they face is needed to inform successful implementation of learning analytics. This project will investigate ways to deliver useful learning analytics to academic teachers in higher education.

Aims

- Better understand how analytics can be interpreted, applied and actioned by teaching academic staff.
- "Complete the loop" by providing easily accessible data to teachers about their students' interactions in online learning environments.

Phases and outcomes

Phase 1

Explore teaching problems and analytics solutions

Phase 2

Development of a web-based analytics tool

Phase 3

Tool trial and dissemination

Deliverables

- Academic papers
- Web-based analytics tool
- Workshop series
- Final report
- Handbook
- Website
- Technical framework

Preliminary findings – Phase 1

Interviews were conducted with twelve teaching academics across three Australian universities: the University of Melbourne, Macquarie University, and the University of South Australia. The following themes emerged from a preliminary analysis of the interview data:

- Participants had fairly basic requests concerning their needs and ideas of how leaning analytics can be used and retrieved from their courses.
- Such requests mainly focused on analytics around student engagement, specifically frequency of access to resources.
- Due to the blended nature of their teaching, few participants made use of interactive online activities such as quizzes and discussions, limiting the availability of data.
- Some participants wanted to relate data from the learning management system with data from other sources. For example, student evaluation surveys.
- Only a minority of participants currently monitor their students' activities using learning analytics.
- Participants expressed concern about their own ability to interpret the data, and identified a need for training in this area.
- They were also concerned about the time it would take to collect, analyse and develop actions based on the learning analytics data.

More information

Website:
www.cshe.unimelb.au/research/teaching/completingtheloop

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