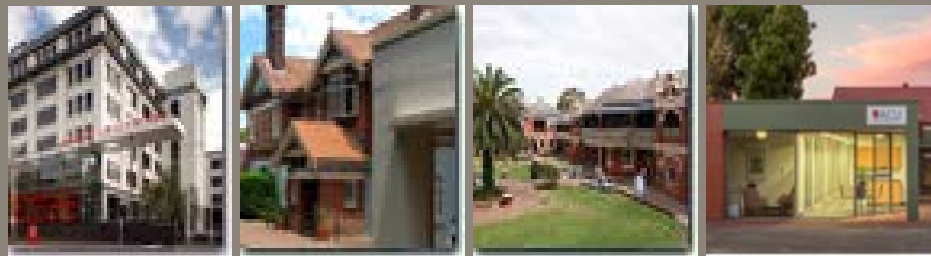


***‘Just in Time’  
support to  
students through  
ACU Unitpulse***

**Assoc. Prof. Elizabeth Santhanam &  
Dr Bernardine Lynch,  
Learning and Teaching Centre,  
Australian Catholic University**

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# Encouraging early feedback on Learning and Teaching & ‘Just in time’ support to students:

*A long term strategic approach at institutional level*

## Content

1. Institutional context – Australian Catholic University (ACU)
2. Need for early feedback process - pedagogical aspects and operational perspectives
3. Finding *Bluepulse* and implementing *ACU Unitpulse*
  - Meeting institutional policies, procedures, strategies, etc.
  - Bridging gap between technical scope and human expectations
  - The long-term view – changing practices through strategic approach

# 1. Institutional Context

- Australian Catholic University (ACU) is publicly funded and has:
  - more than 33,000 students.
  - 7 campuses spread over a number of states/territories.
- Current practice for surveying ACU student view of learning and teaching quality:
  - Using standardized questionnaires and survey process managed by a central unit.
  - Survey results are reported at the end of a study period (semester, term, etc.).
- Expectation of ACU academics: ‘Close the feedback loop’ by informing students in the next study period.

## 2. Formative evaluation (early feedback) – what, why and how?

Formative evaluation/assessment:

- A process that allows [A] to take action(s) for ongoing improvement of [B], based on feedback from [C].
- In an ideal educational setting, the ‘Teacher’ (at all levels of human education) has a good understanding of Learner’s background factors (e.g., knowledge, skills and motivations), even before the Teacher meets the Learner.
- For teaching to be effective, at least one person learns what is intended.
- Pedagogical advice for Lecturers facing ‘real world’ classes:
  - Collect information about students’ learning processes and outcomes through formative/diagnostic evaluation during a study period (semester, trimester, term, etc.).
  - Modify teaching practice, curriculum, assessment or other aspects of L&T setting to provide ‘just in time’ support for students.

# 3. Finding *Bluepulse* and implementing *ACU Unitpulse*

ACU's journey from 2016 to 2019:  
Purchase, Pilot/Trial and University-wide access

## Why *Bluepulse* or *ACU Unitpulse*?

*Bluepulse* licensing agreement was reached in 2016. It was introduced as *ACU Unitpulse* based on the possibility to:

- Collect student feedback while L&T is in progress.
- Modify L&T practices for the benefit of those who provide the feedback, and influence their learning experience/outcome.
- Provide confidential, self-initiated feedback in a ‘safe’ way (without the risk of being identified).

### A ‘hidden gem’ for lecturers/tutors:

Opportunity to improve summative (end of study period) evaluation findings if their students perceive their views ‘matter’ and they can make a difference to teaching practice!

# ACU's journey from 2016 to 2019: Purchase, Pilot/Trial and University-wide access

## 2017 Summer

- Access via an external link (outside the LMS); manual upload of enrolments (uploading CSV files).
- Low level of student engagement.
- Lecturer engagement/effort is key to getting students to engage with *ACU Unitpulse*.

## 2017 Semesters 1 & 2

- Access via LMS (i.e., automated connection to student enrolment data).
- Wider promotion through multiple avenues, training (in person) and online resources, including tips to help engage students.
- Improved uptake of tool and student engagement. 32 unit sites in the LMS.
- 3,740 students enrolled in 32 courses (units) had access; 869 (23.24%) students participated.

# 2017 Pilot – Lecturer Feedback



Would/ could be useful,  
but I like X better...

May have more uptake,  
if it is more commonly used...



Amazing tool...  
worked incredibly well...

Students loved it..



# Lessons from ‘real world’ when introducing *ACU Unitpulse*...

1. Most people tend to stay in ‘safe zones’ and do what they’ve always done.
2. There are other tools with similar functions (Survey Monkey, Kahoot, Socrative, etc.).
3. Academics and students don’t always pay attention to notices that are published/sent.
4. Need to market *ACU Unitpulse* – highlight benefits and differentiate it from other tools.
5. Need to make accessing *ACU Unitpulse* easy.

## Key actions and findings from 2018

- *Bluepulse 3* implementation.
- Resources modified to reflect changes in new version.
- *ACU Unitpulse* was added to 23 units/courses in LMS; questions were posted in 13 of them.

# The hidden story: Strategies at Institutional level

- Identification of need for a tool that enables formative evaluation within current institutional plans, strategic direction, regulations, etc. (Needs analysis).
- Developing a business case, including discussions:
  - With IT and LMS service providers and investigation of feasibility.
  - In lower level committees for ‘Value for money’ (cost effectiveness) – sources for funding, staff time/workload, etc.
  - Within team project planning.

## Meeting institutional policies, procedures, strategies, etc.

- Preparing discussion paper outlining the need for a tool to assist in Formative Evaluation and a project plan for testing and implementing a new tool.
- Submitting discussion paper to the *University Learning and Teaching Committee* (ULTC) which reports to the *Academic Board* in ACU.
- Consulting Faculty/School/Department representatives in ULTC, and seeking endorsement from ULTC for *ACU* Unitpulse implementation.
- Development of Guidelines as required by ULTC.

# Bridging gap between technical scope and human expectations

- Seeking feedback from *ACU Unitpulse* users (academics) and liaising with Explorance for modification or feature requests.
- Enabling relatively easy access to academics, e.g., streamline the ‘request’ process.
- Preparing flyers and online resources regarding *ACU Unitpulse*. Publishing articles through main communication channel.

# The long-term view for changing practices through strategic approach

- Promoting ACU Unitpulse use in collaboration with Faculty or School representatives in committees, and communicating directly to Deans, Heads of School, etc.
- Embedding a culture of reflective teaching practice among academics.
- Requiring evidence of reflective teaching practice in applications for academic promotion or 'tenure' process; evidence to include feedback from students (summative and formative) as well as from peers.

# Questions?

[Evaluations.ltc@acu.edu.au](mailto:Evaluations.ltc@acu.edu.au)