

THANKS FOR THE FEEDBACK: MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES IN GROUP DESIGN PROCESSES

Chris Browne

Presenting Author: Chris Browne (chris.browne@anu.edu.au)
Science Teaching & Learning Centre, ANU, Canberra, ACT, 2601, Australia

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PROBLEM

Group design projects are used in design disciplines at capstone level to mimic a real-world scenario of professional practice. Professional practice is varied, messy, iterative, non-linear and full of failure – attributes that grate against the safety of the university classroom. In small group projects there are multiple perspectives of the trajectory that a project should run and individual's role in maintaining this trajectory.

PLAN

To provide an opportunity for students to have a transitional experience of professional practice, we have developed a flexible mode of expectations that balances the need for delivering an outcome to a client and the need to undertake sound professional practice techniques. The model allows for projects in different domains and at different project maturity levels to be valued in equal ways. Students report on their project process in an action-learning cycle of reviews, modelled on a 360-degree review process. Through this feedback, teams are provided with information about the state of their project from the perspective of their own team, their peers, their instructors and their client.

ACTION

Students provide qualitative and quantitative feedback three times during semester on their own project, and a project that they are following throughout the semester. Students begin to use this feedback to benchmark their team's performance, and their own performance within the team. Differences in the quantitative feedback from different perspectives and the qualitative feedback allow the team to self-correct their trajectory throughout the design project.

REFLECTION

The objective 'truth' in a group design project is difficult to see. Through using feedback to guide the trajectory of projects, teams become collaborative and eager to share their progress with their peers.

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