

# Personalising the Student Approach to Tertiary Study through a Self-Assessment Model

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## Rationale

In following the national directive to Tertiary Education Organisations to facilitate the move into tertiary study, to focus on quality outcomes and student retention, the Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) has been proactive in gathering data on student competency levels at point of entry. To date, this has been directed towards numeracy and literacy competencies, a project is progressing to extend this further into technology competency assessment of students considering enrolment in Wintec.

## Background

In 2010, Wintec received two reports, “*Report on the e-Learning Maturity Model Capability Assessment of Waikato Institute of Technology, 2010*”, and the internal report “*Master of Nursing Programme Self-Assessment, 2009*”. These reports identified two areas of concern/deficiency firstly, Wintec had no hard data on the levels of technology competency of entry-level students, and, secondly, the institution needed to prepare students for the technologies they would encounter during their studies. To address these deficiencies, the Student Technology Competency Project was initiated late in 2010 and implemented throughout 2011. Late in 2011, the *Report on the e-Learning Maturity Model Capability Assessment of Waikato Institute of Technology, 2011*” was received. The report recommended the technology training programme be extended and information made available to potential students, prior to enrolment. The resulting project is presented as a case study.

## Project Methodology

Personalisation of learning underpins the project— an online self-assessment framework has been developed which enables potential students to create a profile of their own technology competencies. A database sitting behind the framework will inform student support areas in Wintec and enable tailored technology programmes to be offered to newly-enrolled students.

The project goals are firstly, to increase students’ self-awareness of their technology competence, secondly, to provide them with linked instructional material at point of need and, thirdly to commence the process of students taking responsibility for the creation of their own learning profile through the provision of a tool that can be developed across the curricula and throughout their time of learning.

The project has been jointly managed and implemented by the Digital Learning Hub and Emerging Technologies Centre and is designed around four critical components;

- Ensure the framework design enables relevant data to be captured – both from a student and institutional perspective
- Enable online support to be accessible at point of need
- Design the capture and reporting software that will enable the data to inform support processes
- Review and evaluate the project

### **Report on progress**

With completion of the first stage, the self-assessment framework, based upon the e-Learning Maturity Model (eMM) capability assessment framework has been developed and is in the process of review by invited staff and students. Discussions on the development or modification of software to support data capture and reporting is taking place. It is intended to have the framework and supporting software available for the commencement of 2013 enrolment in October.

### **Future development**

The self-assessment tool will be extended into other areas of Wintec in 2012 to enable students to develop a more meaningful profile of their levels of competency across curricula and supporting services.

The ability to capture and utilise pre-enrolment self-assessment information is of value both to the potential student and to Wintec and has the potential to assist student retention strategies throughout the institution.

### **Conclusion**

For students to be successful they need early awareness of their own levels of competencies and an understanding of where the gaps in their knowledge lie. The technology competency project is demonstrating a clear commitment by Wintec to assisting student satisfaction and retention through the provision of a self-awareness framework that enables informed choices prior to enrolment and more confident entry into technology-enhanced education.

### **Keywords**

Student Retention; Student Technology Competency; Self-Assessment Frameworks; e-Learning Maturity Model

### **Contribution to knowledge development in “PLEs in Practice” theme**

- Examines an identified critical risk relating to student success
- Offers a novel approach to eliminating barriers to student success and retention
- Demonstrates the application of a self-assessment framework in preparing students for study

### **References**

“*Master of Nursing Programme Self-Assessment, 2009*”, Waikato Institute of Technology internal report.

“*Report on the e-Learning Maturity Model Capability Assessment of Waikato Institute of Technology, 2010*” prepared by Dr. Stephen Marshall, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

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**Presentation strategy – round table**