ARCH1080 Introduction to Architecture and Enabling Skills
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About the Course
This course is a first-year, first-semester core course within the Bachelor of Architectural Studies degree designed to support the development of foundational skills for architectural research and thinking. It is one of the largest courses within the degree (199 students in 2017) and includes a cohort of students enrolled in the Bachelor of Civil Engineering with Architecture degree.

Approach
The course is focused on exemplary modern and contemporary architects and their buildings. Three form the basis of three interconnected ‘case study’ projects that form a sequence aimed to develop students’ skills in architectural description, analysis and interpretation of architectural strategies. Together these three projects contribute to the development of students’ ability to describe, analyse and communicate architectural ideas and meanings.

Redesign Aims
In 2016 the course was selected as the Faculty’s inclusion in the Course Design Tool Pilot run by the office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) as part of the initial implementation of the university’s Inspired Learning Initiative. This involved trialling a new Moodle interface template (theme) and providing feedback on its usability from a course administrator’s and student point of view. The structure and program of the course basically remained the same as in previous years but with the addition of new resources and content designed to assist students in the preparation of their assignment work. These consisted of a guide to the different case study projects, a referencing instruction module (tailored to the course requirements) and four recorded commentaries on previous exemplary student work.

Outcomes
The course outcomes demonstrate a high level of student engagement, satisfaction and achievement of learning goals. The Moodle site had a high and wide rate of use particularly in relation to the new components that were developed as part of the redesign. For example, viewing of the recorded commentaries on exemplary work for Projects 2–4 averaged between 4–5 times per student. Student satisfaction with the overall quality of the course as registered through the myExperience survey was improved (90.8% Agreement = above both Program and Faculty % Agreement for Session 1 2017). The use and appreciation of the new components also contributed to the general solid quality of student assignment work, exceeding staff expectations for first year work with many high distinction achievements. The rate of plagiarism was also down on previous years.