

# Negotiating the Third Space in Collaborative Research

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Benchmarking and assessment moderation are generally recognised as important quality assurance mechanisms in education (Nazarko et al, 2009). Substantial investments are made in benchmarking and assessment moderation in higher education across the world. They form the basis for ensuring the quality of education, and institutional operations. It has become clear, however, in a number of reviews of benchmarking, e.g. Garlick & Pryor (2004), Stella & Woodhouse (2007), that a one-size-fits all model of benchmarking, e.g. as expressed in the McKinnon et al (1999) *Benchmarking: A manual for Australian universities*, is not appropriate or helpful for **all** higher education institutions. Our project seeks to establish a framework for alternative benchmarking processes across four institutions, recognizing also that the outcomes of such a project have inherent value for the sector. Our interest is in showcasing how institutional-based collaborative research can create a Third-Space of learning and bring institutional as well as sector benefits. We explore the merits of this Third Space.