Remixing Online Learning
u!magine: The story so far...

u!magine’s focus over our first two years has encompassed strategic, academic, operational and global contributions with an overarching goal of repositioning CSU at the forefront of online education in Australia. We have taken a collaborative approach in our work which has shaped the initiatives and projects we’ve undertaken. Our ideal has been to lay a cohesive platform for innovation and quality in online teaching and learning across the institution underpinned by the DE Strategy and the CSU Online Learning Model.

This edition of u!magine News highlights some of the initiatives that we have established during this period. The u!magine Innovation Grants program stimulated a number of creative innovations using digital technologies aimed at improving the quality of learning experiences at CSU and these are gradually coming to fruition (see for example the article about Riverina Shore on Page 10). u!magine Think Tanks have brought global speakers together to share their ideas on the topics of partnerships, alternative staffing models, and online organisational models (see Page 4). u!magine has also acted to bring together academic and support staff around topics such as digital simulations, alternatives to residential schools, and technology showcases of best practices in digital tools (see Pages 9 & 12).

u!magine has worked to develop long-term partnership opportunities for CSU with membership of world class professional groups such as the International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE), the European Distance and eLearning Network, and others. In November CSU will host the 2016 ICDE Presidents’ Summit bringing together the leaders in distance learning from around the world (see Page 12).

A key goal of u!magine is to encourage and support innovation to build quality, service, and reputation in the sector. The co-directors are active in strategic and operational aspects of CSU ranging from sub-plan management, virtual education, and serving as liaisons to senior and academic leadership with an emphasis on strengthening the overall strategic directions of the institution. The core staff regularly engage with academic staff, educational designers, technology staff, teaching resource staff, learning analytics personnel and other key partners in a wide range of activities focussed on stimulating innovation and embedding high quality online teaching and learning practices across the institution.

The implementation of the Online Learning Model (initially in eight of our largest online courses, but eventually university wide) is a significant strategic initiative that u!magine is overseeing with the aim of ensuring that CSU students are provided with the highest quality online learning experiences. (see Page 5)

For us, innovation is not simply about technology - innovation comes in many packages and guises. u!magine sees a future of building ‘communities for innovation’ that tap the collective creativity of all staff, students, and stakeholders and partners in our regional communities.

**Professor Barney Dalgarno**
Co-Director
Institutional Engagement

**Professor Don Olcott, Jr.**
Co-Director
Partnerships & Outreach

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**Quality Learning & Teaching**

As part of CSU’s Quality Learning & Teaching (QLT) initiative, the QLT (Online) Leads are supporting staff in working on strategies to facilitate student centred practices and enhance the student experience through the 3 standards that relate to online learning:

- **KPI9:** Students experience initial quality assured subject Interact2 site landing pages and basic outline.
- **KPI11:** Students experience a subject that provides the opportunity for peer-to-peer interactions in the online space.
- **KPI12:** Students experience a subject that provides structured opportunity for staff-to-student interactions in the online space.

So far the QLT (Online) Leads have conducted a series of Faculty-wide and School-based workshops, and are continuing to provide feedback and more specific support where needed. They have also been busy working with academics in collecting exemplars of the excellent strategies staff are already using in each of these three areas. These are being housed on the new QLT (Online) blog uimagine.edu.au/dlt-online, which you can access from the u!magine website. There you’ll also find a range of resources, ‘quick tips’ and strategies – small changes academics can make now to improve learning experiences in each of the three areas. On academic request, the QLT (Online) leads have also established an emerging community space, where all staff can share and discuss ideas in relation to their online learning, so we all collectively learn from each other and enhance our practice.

All 201660 landing pages have been through a ‘quality check’ and interaction within sites will have a similar check during the mid-session break.

We’d like to acknowledge the major contribution within u!magine made by Lucy Webster as a Quality Learning and Teaching Leader during the first half of this year. Lucy has done a mountain of work in supporting the Faculty of Science in meeting the QLT KPIs relating to online learning. She has also laid the important foundations for the work towards implementation of the Online Learning Model in the Bachelor of Medical Science and Bachelor of Nursing courses. We’d also like to congratulate her on her appointment to her new role as Sub Dean Learning and Teaching.
New Members of the u!magine Team

Introducing new members to the u!magine team for 2016 - QLT Leaders: Julie Lindsay, Judy O'Connell and Carole Hunter; and our Events and Research Coordinator, Lauren Carlson.

Julie Lindsay - QLT Leader
Julie has a 30+ years career in K-12 schools and more recently has become employed in higher education. She worked in international schools for fifteen years as an educational technology leader across Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Her passion is for online global collaboration and she has designed and implemented award winning online projects for K-12 levels and customised learning experiences for educators including virtual courses and live events. In 2014, Julie was appointed as an Adjunct Lecturer in the School of Information Studies and has co-developed and taught subjects for the Master of Education (Knowledge Networks and Digital Innovation) degree. Julie has a Master of Arts in Music (La Trobe), and a Master of Arts in Educational Technology Leadership (George Washington) and is currently completing an EdD at the University of Southern Queensland, with a research focus of online global collaborative educators and pedagogical change. In 2015, Julie was appointed as the QLT Academic Lead for Online Learning in the Faculty of Education.

Judy O'Connell - QLT Leader
Judy joined the Quality Learning and Teaching team as Academic Lead for the Faculty of Science from the position of Project Manager, Online Subject Enhancement in the Faculty of Education after having completed 3 ½ years as Courses Director in the School of Information Studies. Her work gained her a Faculty of Education award for Academic Excellence in 2014, and a Faculty Team Award for Academic Excellence in 2016 for leading the Smart Learning implementation in two courses. Judy has engaged in a number of initiatives and projects across CSU, and in industry online environments through activities as diverse as running a national social media community for information professionals to providing seminars and keynotes to industry professionals. Leveraging technology, Judy established the CSU Thinkspace platform for online learning journals, project websites and ePorfolios. Passionate about online learning, she also established the Master of Education (Knowledge Networks & Digital Innovation), teaching into the course to foster innovation in digital environments.

Carole Hunter - QLT Leader
Carole has a long history of enabling and facilitating online learning, beginning way back in 2002 where she led a team that implemented some of the University of the South Pacific's first online courses. She has over 15 years of experience in higher education both as an Educational Designer and academic, and has been recognised for her contributions to online learning through a national innovation and excellence award, two Vice Chancellor's awards, and a multitude of Faculty and Divisional awards. Carole has a Bachelor and Masters in Education (Educational Technology), and is currently preparing for her doctoral studies. She is the QLT Academic Lead for Online Learning in the Faculty of Business, where she has worked as a lecturer in online learning for the past three years. During that time, she supported the Faculty's Online Course Innovation project with a particular focus on quality evaluation and enhancement.

Lauren Carlson - Events & Research Coordinator
Lauren is a former CSU student who graduated in 2009 with a Bachelor of Education (Primary) (Hons, Class I). She has experience working as Primary Teacher, Research Assistant and Administrative Officer. Lauren previously worked with Barney Dalgarno between 2010-2014 as a Research Assistant on a number of projects and activities; assisting with grant and ethics applications, data collection and analysis, event planning and writing for publication. Outside of work, Lauren has a passion for the performing arts and you may see her face on a few CSU marketing campaigns, including the CSU Scholarships brochure!
u!magine Hosts Partnership Think Tank

by Don Olcott

u!magine hosted a Think Tank on Partnerships in Wagga Wagga on the 24th of November 2015. Two globally recognised leaders attended: Sir John Daniel, former Vice Chancellor of the Open University UK and former President of the Commonwealth of Learning; and Dr. Michael Crock, former PVC Learning Innovation at the University of New England and senior positions at Open Universities Australian and Griffith University.

In addition, we were delighted to also have some CSU staff who shared their unique collaborations. A special thanks to Heather Cavanaugh (CSU International), Liz Smith (Office for Students), Gaye Krebs (Go TAFE Vet Tech Partnership), and Jason Howarth, and Martin Hale (IT Masters) for presenting provocative and practical insights into their specific partnerships.

The focus of the Think Tank was to have our guest experts serve as catalysts for innovative and creative thinking about the type and focus of CSU’s partnerships in the future. Moreover, with the new strategic planning process beginning in early 2016, to define the university’s strategic directions for 2016-2019, the general consensus of the Think Tank participants was the need to build new partnerships that support CSU’s emergent strategic directions.

A summary of the Partnership Think Tank as well as presentations and handouts from by Sir John and Dr. Crock are available at http://uimagine.edu.au/portfolio/partnerships-think-tank/

CSUEd by James Purkis

In November of last year CSUEd Week was held at the Albury campus involving large numbers of CSU staff as well as many from other universities in three mini-conferences. The u!magine team were involved as presenters, chair people and panellists as well as supporting current projects funded by u!magine. As part of the “Education without Borders: Open and Online Learning” conference, co-director Don Olcott Jnr chaired a keynote on academic integrity and open education as well as thoughtfully bringing together the ideas in a plenary session at the end of the day. Multiple members of the team were involved in the “Exploring the Borders: Learning and Teaching at CSU” conference in the latter part of the week. The co-directors of u!magine, Barney Dalgarno and Don Olcott Jnr, chaired or were panellists on sessions regarding the u!magine Online Learning Model (OLM), CSU virtual campus and Online Teaching Standards. Lindy Croft-Piggin presented on the OLM as well as contributing to a panel about the overall online learning goals of CSU. Tim Klapdor was also involved in a presentation on workplace learning assessment and contributed to a poster on the Study Link Subject. Finally, James Purkis presented on supervision models for higher degree research and the implications of new digital technologies. Overall, CSUEd Week presented a chance to build connections within the CSU community around online learning and teaching more broadly.
‘Scaling Up’ the Online Learning Model
Development and Pilot Implementation

The Online Learning Model was developed in order to characterise the learning experiences that CSU collectively aspires to for its Online students. This characterisation will help guide the work of academic staff and educational designers and will provide clarity for incoming students about what to expect. The Model consists of seven elements designed to increase student engagement and the overall quality of student learning experiences. The Model was drafted and refined as part of the consultation on the draft Distance Education Strategy and Version 1 of the Model was published within the finalised Strategy. The Model was then workshopped with nearly 200 academic and educational design and support staff during the 16 Conversations about Online Learning Workshops led by u!imagine in 2015. These workshops confirmed that the model supported and reinforced current best practice strategies in online learning at CSU.

During 2015, faculties selected 28 subjects to pilot the Model, and each subject was revised to incorporate a single element of the model for delivery in 2016. Importantly the purpose of the pilot implementation was to test the clarity of the Model, and the processes, support and technologies needed to implement it, as well as to allow exemplar strategies aligned to each element to emerge. Because the pilot subjects only implemented a single element it is not expected that the full learning benefits of the model will be evident.

Refining the Model

During the pilot implementation it became clear that some elements of the Model were somewhat ambiguous, either because the title was misleading, or the abstract did not describe the intended strategies in sufficient detail. The core group of people responsible for supporting the implementation of the Model came together during April and May 2016 to identify refinements needed. This group which consisted of, u!imagine Design and Technology leaders, Quality Learning and Teaching Leaders and Online Learning Model specialist Educational Designers, focussed on the titles and abstracts for the elements and developed an initial revised version. This then circulated to around 30 CSU learning and teaching leaders and scholars and further refinements were made building on the feedback they provided.

Version 2 of the Online Learning Model is included in the following pages. The most significant change is that Learning Communities, Interaction with the Professions and Flexible and Adaptive Learning are all renamed elements, that have been restructured to provide greater clarity and focus. Additionally more specific teaching or learning design strategies have been provided for each element and further supporting resources have also been developed which now include a Learning Exchange incorporating: Online Learning Model Videos, a Strategy section with practice examples, a literature supported rationale for the model and each element and ‘The Mixer’ (see Page 8). To explore the revised version of the Online Learning Model and its support resources in more detail please visit the Online Learning Exchange website at http://uimagine.edu.au/csulx.

Phase 1 Implementation

Phase one of the implementation of the Model focuses on some of the largest Online courses across the university, timed for 2017 delivery. The DVC Academic in consultation with Executive Deans and faculty leadership identified 8 courses as priorities for implementation, including approximately 95 subjects to be revised during 2016 for delivery in session 3 2016 or session 1 2017, and a further 95 subjects being revised in 2017 for delivery in sessions 2 and 3, 2017. The courses are as follows:

» Faculty of Business, Justice and Behavioural Sciences: Bachelor of Accounting, Bachelor of Social Science (Psychology) and Bachelor of Business (HR Management)
» Faculty of Arts and Education: Bachelor of Education (Birth to 5 Years), Bachelor of Social Science (Social Welfare) and Bachelor/Master of Teaching (Secondary),
» Faculty of Science: Bachelor of Nursing and Bachelor of Medical Science

Support for course teams includes: 30 hours of academic staff time relief for each subject coordinator, support from seven Online Learning Model Element specialists; Educational Design assistance for each course and subject, and Learning Resource development support.

u!imagine Co-Director Institutional Engagement, Professor Barney Dalgarno, provides overall leadership for the implementation, with Online Learning Design Leader, Lindy Croft-Piggin, Online Learning Technology Leader, Tim Klapdor, and the three Quality Learning and Teaching Online Leaders, Carole Hunter (BJBS), Julie Lindsay (AE) and Judy O’Connell (Science) making up the broader leadership team.

The seven Online Learning Model Element Specialists are: Miriam Edwards (Learning Communities), Alissa Brabin (Interaction between Students), Ged Bourke (Teacher Presence), Sandra Maathuis-Smith (Interactive Resources), Nathan Miles (eAssessment), Stewart McKinney (Flexible and Adaptive Learning) and Theresa Winchester-Seeto (Interaction with the Professions).
The CSU Online Learning Model

Revised Overview

The Online Learning Model consists of a set of elements designed to increase student engagement, retention and overall satisfaction. The model builds on Moore’s (1989) model which incorporates learner-teacher, learner-learner and learner-content interaction. The model broadens Moore’s notion of interactivity to one of engagement and adds learner-community engagement as a key component of professional courses, as well as learner-institution engagement to ensure a connected student experience.

This then leads to five categories of student engagement:

» learner-teacher engagement
» learner-learner engagement
» learner-content engagement
» learner-community engagement, and
» learner-institution engagement.

Each of the seven elements of the Online Learning Model are designed to increase one or more types of engagement. The elements, which are outlined in the following sections, are designed to be combined together in varying degrees of intensity within the subjects making up a course. The intention is that a specific subject might emphasise about three or four elements rather than the entire model.

Learning Communities

Feeling part of and actively contributing to a learning community is directly linked to student motivation and resilience. Studying within learning groups can be an important foundation for effective interaction between students, their peers and teachers in support of deeper learning. Proactive support from teachers for learning within smaller groups, provided synchronously or asynchronously, is important if the benefits of intellectual rigour and deep engagement are to be achieved. This element supports enhanced learner-teacher and learner-learner engagement.

The Learning Communities element is exemplified by:

» Smaller sub cohorts within large cohorts facilitated by a tutor who guides community building, provides formative feedback and marks summative assessment tasks.
» Orientation, socialisation and personalisation of the online environment prior to curriculum focused learning activities.
» Contribution to a shared resource such as a gallery of photos from professional placement.
» Social media streams using tools such as Twitter, Instagram or shared bookmarking.

Interaction Between Students

Student learning is enhanced through online peer learning activities aligned with the subject outcomes and actively facilitated by an online teacher. These activities may be conducted synchronously or asynchronously and student participation and learning benefits are highest when they support the completion of assessment tasks. This element supports enhanced learner-learner engagement.

The Interaction Between Students element is exemplified by:

» Synchronous and asynchronous discussions that allow students to share their experiences, knowledge and perspectives.
» Peer-to-peer teaching activities.
» Collaborative small group projects.
» Online reflective journals including video or audio blogs, allowing peer comments and feedback.
» Co-operative inquiry-based or problem-based learning activities.
» Co-creation of authentic learning products.

Teacher Presence

Awareness of the presence of a passionate, knowledgeable and skilled online teacher improves student confidence supporting independent learning and socialisation of the learning experience. Regular online communication can bolster student awareness of the support and availability of the teacher and humanise the expectations around learning activities and assessment. Teacher presence can also support the development of learning communities for purposeful interaction between students. This element supports enhanced learner-teacher and learner-learner engagement.

The Teacher Presence element is exemplified by:

» Welcome videos, audio recordings and photographs.
» Teacher photographs or voice snapshots throughout the online materials.
» Thoughtfully managed communication tone to encourage student participation and agency.
» Explicit acknowledgement and naming of all staff involved in the subject delivery.
» Timely responses to student online questions and comments.
» New resources, including voice or video commentary, during the session in response to emergent ideas.
The Flexible and Adaptive Learning element is exemplified by:

- Online strategies which connect students with professionals and sites of professional practice can provide a valuable context for engagement with subject content and make clearer the relevance of the subject learning outcomes by connecting theory to practice. This engagement also supports the development of professional capabilities, induction into the culture and values of the profession, and an ethos of lifelong learning and career planning. This element supports enhanced learner-community engagement.

The Interaction with the Professions element is exemplified by:

- Case studies that highlight professional contexts through rich media.
- Guest online lectures by professional practitioners.
- Assessment tasks requiring students to draw on and reflect upon placements.
- Online discussions with peers and teachers during work placements.
- Online role plays and simulations.
- Online mentoring and professional networking.
- Video conference connections to sites of practice.

The e-Assessment element is exemplified by:

- Construction of rich media artefacts modelled on the products of the profession.
- ePortfolios to capture student reflections and record and demonstrate professional practice capabilities.
- Blogs and online journals for formative and summative assessment.
- Self-marking quizzes.
- Automated plagiarism checking, online marking and online peer assessment.
- Badges for micro-credentialing of competencies.
- Contemporary computer-based exams with remote exam invigilation.

The Interactive Resources element is exemplified by:

- Dashboards that provide feedback to students on their learning strategies.
- Flexible or adaptive lesson, subject or course designs providing individualised pathways based on demonstration of knowledge and competency.
- Flexibility in assessment providing opportunities for students to build on their specific discipline knowledge or professional expertise.
The OLM Mixer by Lindy Croft-Piggin

Getting the Balance Right: Applying the Online Learning Model to Teaching Practice

Teaching, like composing music, is as much art as science. There are many elements to balance and discord occurs if any one of the elements is in the wrong relationship to another. Technology has introduced a range of new possibilities to the teaching space but in doing so it introduces further opportunities for potential dissonance. There is no magic formula for creating fabulous music or fabulous learning experiences but there are principles that we know will work and combinations of elements that form pleasing patterns which we can repeat.

When composing, performing and recording a piece of music successful patterns and sound combinations used in the past are rethought and built on through a process of careful selection in the context of current practice and new ways of hearing and thinking about music. As educators we need to go through a similar process. Just as a musician builds on a personal history of scholarly expertise and immersion in music experience, developing a sense of the repertoires that please their ear and the ears of others, educators take the patterns of successful experiences and research of the past and recombine them in the new contexts of today to find the right balance for harmonious, or thrilling learning experiences.

A sound mixer is a complex instrument exploiting scientific principles to highlight some elements of a piece of music and de-emphasise others. For any piece of music performed, this balancing act could produce thousands of possible variations. There is no mathematical formula for the one perfect combination of vibrations, science can only go so far and then art takes over, and so it is with education. Educational judgements are made at every stage of planning a sequence of developmental learning experiences. These judgments are made based on prior experience and the literature expounding the experiences and empirical evidence of others. These may be codified to some degree to develop reliable patterns but inspiring learning experiences require the same careful listening and personal response as a piece of music.

The Online Learning Model (OLM) proposed by CSU highlights seven elements composing a potential learning experience. These elements have been identified through prior experience and research to contribute to the composition of high quality online learning experiences. They are not a mathematical formula that can be applied to every situation uniformly, the balance between the elements and the unique context of various courses determines the appropriate expression of each element. Educators must make the judgement calls at many stages along the way of planning, composing and performing learning experiences. They must weigh the needs of the experience and judge which elements to engage with in greater depth and which ones will provide better support with a lighter touch.

The sound mixer separates out elements of a piece, allowing particular features to be focused on individually. A visual display illustrates the relationships between these elements enabling choices to be made and levels adjusted. Similar decisions may be made when planning a learning cycle. It is not desirable (or possible) to focus on each element of the OLM at full volume, a balance must be achieved. Finding the right levels requires a sense of the audience, the purpose, the context and the nature of the instruments available (including the performer).

The OLM elements mixer is a tool for illustrating the levels of potential engagement with a range of teaching strategies. It provides a range of descriptors to diagnose existing practice and a visual map of the relationships between the features in a learning cycle for future planning. To explore the mixer and to dive deeper into the Online Learning Model head to http://uimagine.edu.au/csulx/mixer
Campus & the Cloud Symposium
by Lucy Webster

Exploring opportunities to improve, supplement or replace residential schools

On Tuesday 10 May 2016, u!magine hosted a thought-provoking symposium that challenged participants to think about our current residential school offerings and how these might be improved, supplemented or even replaced by online alternatives. Sandra Wills set the scene for the day with an introduction to CSU’s plan for Distance Education - Destination 2020. Sandra also shared her passion for online role-play using specific examples from her book The Power of Role-Based e-Learning. Barney Dalgarno, co-director u!magine, also used specific examples (CSU Virtual Chemistry Lab & Virtual Prex pre-service teacher classroom simulation) to highlight progress already made in this space at CSU.

Matthew Cheesman from The University of Queensland presented his work on the Virtual Laboratory Practical Class (VPLC). Matt designed and developed a small number of online experiments that students were required to complete prior to the wet-laboratory session. Some of the advantages of this approach discussed by Matt included: the ability for students to complete dangerous experiments in a safe environment, students completing the experiments multiple times to master their learning without wasting valuable resources and the powerful analytics captured by the system that could be used to address deficiencies in students understanding prior to them performing the “real” experiment.

The second keynote speaker, Swee Kin Loke from the University of Otago gave a live demonstration of the Otago Virtual Hospital. This hospital, built in Second Life, enables students to interact with virtual patients by completing examinations and investigations, and determining diagnoses and treatment plans. Kin highlighted that students were able to learn clinical reasoning skills and dispositional aspects of the work; but certainly could not learn physical aspects of the tasks (e.g. intubating a patient).

The remaining speakers were all CSU staff members and each presented aspects of their own work related to enhancing (or removing) residential schools with online activities. Euan Lindsay, Foundation Professor of Engineering, presented some interesting research data highlighting the fact that different access modes lead to significantly different learning experiences. Euan also challenged the participants to question whether the fidelity of the online laboratory really mattered - do we really need to compete with the student’s X-box? Rocco Crino, School of Psychology, discussed the use of Skype interviews to complete a clinical competency assessment in his subjects. Feedback from students was overwhelmingly positive. The audience asked questions about the time invested in conducting the interviews and Rocco agreed that it was labour intensive, however it was valuable to guarantee that each student had met the required competency level. Ruth Bailey, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, demonstrated the e-simulation developed by the Media Service and Learning Design team at CSU (funded by u!magine Project Grant). The e-simulation will be trialled and evaluated in Session 2 this year - so stay tuned for an update in future u!magine newsletters! Lucy Webster (CSU) and Stuart Canning (Smart Sparrow) presented an overview of the Smart Sparrow adaptive e-learning program and demonstrated current applications of this technology in histology, pathology, haematology, vet science and dentistry disciplines. Lucy also highlighted that CSU is a member of the Biomedical Education, Skills & Training (BEST) Network and encouraged academic staff to look at the courseware available that might be adapted for their own subjects.

The day concluded with two panel sessions that drew together all of the presentations and included representation from the student body. Overall, the symposium posed many questions and participants left thinking about practical strategies that they might use in their own subjects to supplement, shorten or perhaps even replace their own residential schools. If you would like further information or have questions about online strategies that you might like to trial in your subjects, please don't hesitate to contact the QLT Online Lead in your Faculty.
Project Spotlight: Riverina Shore

by Caroline Robinson

‘Riverina Shore’ is a virtual community which has been developed within the School of Community Health as an online learning resource for students. The virtual community is presented as an attractive web page in which client scenarios are embedded in locations such as homes, community health centre and social spaces.

Four client scenarios have been produced for the pilot resource and comprise a mix of video clips, audio recordings and links to online resources. The virtual clients are real people from the Albury-Wodonga community who experience a range of health care needs. Engagement of CSU with the local community is a valuable element of this project and the participation of community members has enabled the development of authentic scenarios.

The purpose of this virtual community is to facilitate student-focused learning, foster critical thinking and to enable opportunities for interprofessional learning. In the context of Community Health, students may interact with the scenarios to determine a client’s health needs and goals, evaluate facilitators and barriers to improved health experiences, and analyse ways in which they could provide support or services. Students can interact with the media resources at their own pace, using their own sense of logic. It is intended that academics will link to this web resource through subject 12 sites, in order to scaffold the specific purpose of the students’ learning experience. The design of Riverina Shore has been planned carefully to enable intuitive navigation around the community, to stimulate the students’ curiosity and to ensure easy access to linked online resources. The website is accessible through mobile devices to maximise functionality.

A major strength of this project is the interdisciplinary collaboration between academics, health practitioners, media technologists and an educational designer. This collaborative approach has ensured that a diverse range of perspectives informed the project design and development of the media resources. The inclusion of a practitioner-academic in the project team further strengthens the partnership between the School of Community Health and Albury-Wodonga Health. The future development of Riverina Shore has the potential to embrace all disciplines in health, education, business, science, agriculture, social science and humanities, to include resources which meet the needs of a diverse group of students.

Recent Publications & Presentations


Hunter, C., Hard, L and Douglas, F. (in press). Humanizing Learning for all: Considerations for large-scale online design initiatives. In M. Northcote and K. Gosselin (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Humanizing the Distance Learning Experience. IGI Global.


O’Connell, J. (2015). Game-based learning and academic integrity. Crossing the borders: new frontiers for academic integrity, 7th Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity, Charles Sturt University, Albury NSW.


Opinion Piece: Disrupting Disruption
by Tim Klapdor

Despite all the rhetoric education hasn't fundamentally changed that much. Despite the billions being invested in innovation, a raft of technology driven agendas and the growth of the web - education is still conducted in much the same way as it was before computers and the web. Yes, there have been changes, but it's been incremental adjustments rather than the wholesale disruption that was promoted and promised.

Think about it - the LMS didn't disrupt educational practice - it simply allowed us to change the mode of delivery for courses. The web didn't change the way we assess students - it just changed the methods for information gathering. I'm not denying that change has occurred, but it's been incremental, around the edges or the adaptation of existing practices to newer tools. Changes in learning design have been focussed on subject and course models - not on rethinking those models themselves. Content is presented in new ways - from print to web, from text to video, not on rethinking their existence, the methods of production or the possibility of developing these resources as part of a student's learning. Instead of rethinking the underlying pedagogies and practices for teaching online, the focus has been on training staff on using specific systems, software and applications.

The reason for this is that no one goes after the big fish - the fundamental structures, mindsets and models that underpin education. Much of the focus has instead been on creating and re-engineering existing resources and practices, of innovating within the system, rather than innovating the system itself. Is it any wonder that the more things change the more they stay the same?

Indie Ed-Tech

I recently had the privilege of being invited to an ideas jam at Davidson College in the U.S. that gathered some of the finest practitioners, thinkers and critics of Educational Technology. Together with students from a number of universities we discussed, debated, designed and shared new ways of thinking about technology in education. We critiqued the kinds of innovation that’s happening in education, who was leading it and how it was happening. It was interesting to hear that most institutions have effectively outsourced their innovation to tech companies and Silicon Valley. As a sector we have become reliant on vendors, feature releases and software updates in order to innovate. Innovation has effectively become something that is done to us, not by us.

One way to circumvent this is through Indie Ed-tech. This is innovation that happens at the grass-roots. It’s done through technology that’s tailored to the needs of specific courses and subjects, technology that isn’t required to scale, it just needs to work. What we saw were efforts that do in fact scale, not through mandate or policy, but because they provided something missing in so much of our current technology - agency and autonomy. Many universities that have taken this approach are seeing meaningful change and innovation in their teaching and learning.

Another alternative that was discussed was the idea of educational institutions coming together to invest in a start-up accelerator program that works with the tech industry, but on our terms. To illustrate we were introduced to Matter, a different type of venture capital outfit that supports ventures that have the potential to make society more informed, connected, and empowered. Matter does things quite differently and focuses on supporting efforts that do good and contribute to a better society rather than profit. What if we established something like that for Ed-Tech? What if instead of being on the receiving end of innovation (as if that actually works) we were partners in developing, fostering and in the end benefiting from that change?

Reclaiming Innovation

It's time for universities to disrupt the disruptors and take more responsibility for innovation. We need to invest in new ways, new models, new tools and new practices. We have to take charge of our destiny when it comes to technology and stop being reactive. We have to be proactive in this space and reclaim innovation for ourselves. This means supporting the grassroots innovation by creating environments for them to thrive. It also means looking at the bigger picture and rethinking the underlying models, structures and practices. This two pronged approach to innovation is how we move forward and take control of our destiny, to move beyond the traditions and to create our own future.
Engaging Large Online Cohorts
by Julie Lindsay,

At the last Learning Technology Forum we put the challenge of managing learners for group work within a large online cohort under the microscope. Presentations provided valuable insight into the structure and design of subjects that have larger cohorts, including challenges and enablers faced by course designers and subject coordinators.

Presentations at the forum included:

» “Creating learning communities within sub-cohorts in the B-5 Education course” by Amy MacDonald and Paige Lee, School of Education

» “Enhancing teacher presence and interaction between students through a small group assignment incorporating peer feedback” by Kylie Murphy and Natalie Hamam, School of Community Health,

» “Creating strong teacher presence through proactive online contact and student responsiveness” by Kristina Gottschall and Kirsten Locke, School of Indigenous Australian Studies,

» “Effective strategies for student engagement in MGT100 aligned with group activity design and assessment” by Miriam Edwards, Ged Bourke and Wendy Webber, DSL and School of Management,

Key concepts and discussions included:

» Random assignment of students to small groups to support synchronous activities and collaborations

» Self-selection of groups affording students more effective learning cohorts

» Group work focus included activities like collaboratively generating research questions, conducting research and discussing the value of a research, attending open online chat sessions

Group work and collaboration between students continues to be difficult in a competitive academic environment, however with methodical planning and implementation along with clear learning objectives groups can thrive in both online and internal subjects and provide exciting peer-to-peer interactions and learning support.

Upcoming Events

Learning Technology Forum
Online Interaction with the Professions
26th August 2016
Find out more: http://uimag.in/LTforum

Scholarship in Online Learning Group
A Strengths Approach to Child Protection Preparation
Wednesday 7 September
Find out more: http://uimag.in/SOLgroup

ICDE Presidents Summit
20-23 November 2016
Find out more: http://uimagine.edu.au/icde

ICDE Presidents Summit

The International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE) and Charles Sturt University (CSU) are delighted to invite you to participate in the ICDE 2016 Presidents’ Summit, to be held at Cronulla Beach near Sydney, Australia, from 20-23 November 2016.

Join international, leading experts within online, open and distance education for a dialogue on ‘The New Era of Leadership and Quality: The Business of Online, Open and Flexible Learning 2020.’ The 2016 ICDE Presidents’ Summit will focus on new trends in executive leadership, changing paradigms, and innovative approaches for distributed leadership and management practice.

Visit the Summit website to register for the Summit, make hotel reservations and review an abbreviated Agenda at a Glance.

Conference Web Site: http://uimagine.edu.au/icde/

Who Should Attend: The conference is designed for chief executives, vice chancellors, and presidents; however, Deputy and Pro-Vice Chancellors, senior planning and finance personnel, and global leaders are also strongly encouraged to join the Summit.

For more information, please contact Professor Don Olcott, Jr. at dolcott@csu.edu.au or Lauren Carlson at lacarlson@csu.edu.au

We look forward to welcoming you to the 2016 ICDE Presidents’ Summit.

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