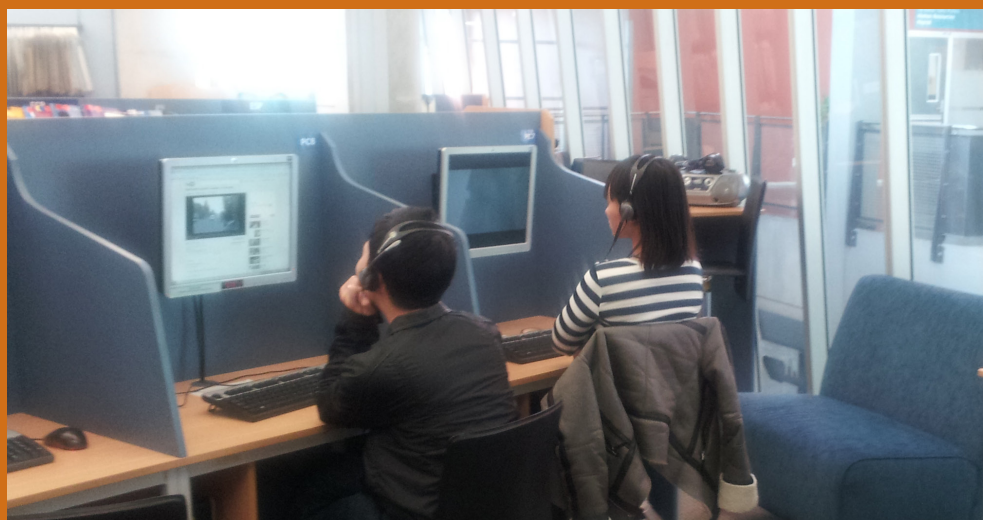


Best Practice in Distance Education and e-Learning



Sheila Douglas

Higher Education and Skills Group (formerly Skills Victoria)
ISS Institute Overseas Fellowship



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i. Executive Summary

The Australian population over the age of 65 is increasing and this trend will continue as the 'baby boomer' generation ages.

As the number of Australians requiring care increases, so does the need for qualified aged care workers. The lack of qualified aged care workers has been identified as a current and future skills shortage.

It has been suggested that the number of aged care workers will need to double by 2050, and that the current aged care workforce has a high average age and may soon be retiring from the paid workforce.¹ These trends create a significant and immediate need for accessible, flexible and high quality training options to increase the number of qualified aged care workers within Australia.

The availability of high quality and accessible information communication options, combined with the implementation of the National Broadband Network, creates an environment ripe for the development of quality distance and e-learning training opportunities. The provision of blended delivery aged care training courses across Australia, including rural and remote areas, offers an immediate strategy to address the future needs of ageing Australians.

In rural communities where there is a shortage of aged care workers, and high unemployment rates, the provision of blended delivery aged care training addresses both needs and offers clear benefits to the communities involved.

However, the development and delivery of distance education isn't just a matter of bringing ICT and potential learners together. There are many issues to be considered.

The aim of the Fellowship was to identify best practice examples of distance education and research answers to the following questions.

How do training providers successfully achieve the following:

- Develop online content that is driven by sound pedagogical principles, rather than the demands of technology?
- Ensuring online content is easy to use and navigate?
- Provide online content that is not just 'text on line'?
- Develop online content that is engaging and supports students to learn, and be assessed, using relevant real work situations?
- Provision of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities?
- Identify and utilise appropriate e-learning tools and content development software?
- Build and maintain relationships with regional communities?
- Source necessary resources within regional communities?
- Source, and support, appropriate trainers?
- Provide appropriate professional development for trainers working at distance?
- Address cultural considerations within the development, delivery and assessments processes?
- Provide access to appropriate delivery and assessment opportunities for the practical components of course when delivered at distance?
- Identify best software and ICT options?
- Develop sense of community and enquiry amongst students?
- Develop and foster relationships between students, trainers and RTO managers/administration?

¹ http://www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/110897/05-aged-care-chapter1.pdf

i. Executive Summary

- Provide prompt and effective response to student queries?
- Provide flexible study opportunities to meet student's needs?
- Contextualise course for the specific needs of learners?
- Providing language and literacy support?

To research answers and solutions, the Fellow travelled to New Zealand, visiting University of Canterbury (who hosted the Fellow), CPIT, New Zealand College of Early Childhood Education (private RTO), Open Polytechnic and attended Adult and Community Education Aotearoa conference in Wellington – 'Community solutions – the business of learning'.

The Fellow also travelled to Canada visiting University of Athabasca (that hosted the Fellow), Indigenous Learning Centres in the north of Alberta and University of Alberta.

These educational organisations were chosen for many reasons:

- Similar demographics to Australia –remote and rural areas
- Strong indigenous presence
- Demonstration of best practice in distance education theory
- Demonstration of best practice in practical application and delivery of distance education
- Willingness to share their experience and stories with the Fellow, and have examples of their distance education courses showcased in this report.

Many people were interviewed, practical labs viewed, indigenous communities visited and information shared.

The Fellow found that whilst the range of range of courses and organisations varied, a high level of consistency was apparent in the design and delivery strategies utilised.

This report outlines the strategies that form the scaffolding necessary for successful delivery of distance education courses.

Disseminating these strategies to education providers that are delivering aged care training (or any other distance education courses) will support the increase in skilled aged care workers throughout Australia. It will also assist in reducing both unemployment rates and an identified skills shortage.

This information could be disseminated via organised workshops, development of a website or development of workbooks and manuals.

The Fellow has been active in sharing the findings of the Fellowship experience. She has made presentations at the Melbourne Converge conference and Learn Local Metro Expo Learning Opportunities Conference, as well as presenting initial findings via DEANZ and University of Canterbury New Zealand. She has invitations to deliver additional workshops and contribute to the DEANZ magazine during 2013 and be included in the ACPET education calendar in 2013.

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ii. Abbreviations/Acronyms

ACPET

Australian Council for Private Education and Training

CPIT

Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology

DEANZ

Distance Education Association of New Zealand

FAQ

Frequently asked questions

GOTAFE

Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE

ICT

Information and Communications Technology

LEARN

University of Canterbury's on line system

LMS

Learner Management Systems

NATSIHEC

The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equality Council

NBN

National Broadband Network

RTO

Registered Training Organisation

TAFE

Technical and Further Education

iii. Definitions

Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous distance learning occurs when the teacher and the pupils interact in different places and during different times.

Blog

On line forum for sharing information

Cree

Native American people inhabiting a large area from eastern Canada west to Alberta and the Great Slave Lake

Illuminate®

Software program that provides synchronous online delivery

First Nations

An organized aboriginal group or community, especially any of the bands officially recognized by the Canadian government.

Interactive White Boards

An interactive whiteboard (IWB), is a large interactive display that connects to a computer and projector.

Maori

A member of a people of New Zealand, of Polynesian-Melanesian descent

Metis

Canadian aboriginal people who trace their descent to mixed First Nations and European heritage.

Pacifica People

Indigenous inhabitants of any of the three major sub-regions of Oceania: Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia.

PowerPoint®

Commercial software for developing presentation slides

Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning takes place when two or more people are communicating in real time.

1. Acknowledgements

Sheila Douglas would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who gave generously of their time and their expertise to assist, advise and guide her throughout the Fellowship program.

Awarding Body – International Specialised Skills Institute (ISS Institute)

The International Specialised Skills Institute Inc is an independent, national organisation that for over two decades has worked with Australian governments, industry and education institutions to enable individuals to gain enhanced skills and experience in traditional trades, professions and leading-edge technologies.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our Fellows. Under the **Overseas Applied Research Fellowship Program** the Fellows travel overseas. Upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

1. Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions.
2. Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses.
3. Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

Over 200 Australians have received Fellowships, across many industry sectors. In addition, recognised experts from overseas conduct training activities and events. To date, 22 leaders in their field have shared their expertise in Australia.

According to Skills Australia's 'Australian Workforce Futures: A National Workforce Development Strategy 2010':

Australia requires a highly skilled population to maintain and improve our economic position in the face of increasing global competition, and to have the skills to adapt to the introduction of new technology and rapid change.

International and Australian research indicates we need a deeper level of skills than currently exists in the Australian labour market to lift productivity. We need a workforce in which more people have skills, but also multiple and higher level skills and qualifications. Deepening skills across all occupations is crucial to achieving long-term productivity growth. It also reflects the recent trend for jobs to become more complex and the consequent increased demand for higher level skills. This trend is projected to continue regardless of whether we experience strong or weak economic growth in the future. Future environmental challenges will also create demand for more sustainability related skills across a range of industries and occupations.

In this context, the ISS Institute works with Fellows, industry and government to identify specific skills in Australia that require enhancing, where accredited courses are not available through Australian higher education institutions or other Registered Training Organisations. The Fellows' overseas experience sees them broadening and deepening their own professional practice, which they then share with their peers, industry and government upon their return. This is the focus of the ISS Institute's work.

For further information on our Fellows and our work see <http://www.issinstitute.org.au>.

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1. Acknowledgements

Fellowship Sponsor

The Victorian Government, Higher Education and Skills Group (HESG) formerly Skills Victoria, is responsible for the administration and the coordination of programs for the provision of training and further education, adult community education and employment services in Victoria, and is a valued sponsor of the ISS Institute. The Fellow would like to thank them for providing funding support for this Fellowship.

Supporters

Individuals and organisations involved in the development of this program and during the Fellowship submission were as follows:

- Rod Cook, CEO, Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council
- Leanne Fitzgerald, Team Leader, Coonara Community House
- Maria Langwell, Previously Executive Officer, VIC and Tasmania, Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET)
- Debbie Soccio, Toolbox Business Activity Manager, eWorks.

Employer Support

The Fellow specifically acknowledges the support of the Director of Employease Pty Ltd, Daryl Neilson, during the entire Fellowship candidature.

Organisations Impacted by the Fellowship

Government

- ACPET
- Community Services and Health, Industry Skills Council
- DEEWR
- Department of Health and Ageing
- Higher Education and Skills Group
- The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equality Council (NATSIHEC)

Industry

- Aged Care Industry
- Disability Support Industry
- IT industry – software development
- Vocational Education and Training

Professional Associations

- EASTERN VETNET
- VELG
- VISTA

1. Acknowledgements

Education and Training

- Community Services and Health Industry Skills Council
- Technical and Further Education institutes (TAFEs) and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) including:
 - » Bendigo Regional Institute of TAFE (BRIT)
 - » Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE (Gipps TAFE)
 - » Chisholm Institute of TAFE (Chisholm)
 - » East Gippsland Institute of TAFE (East Gippsland TAFE)
 - » Gordon Institute of TAFE (Gordon)
 - » Goulburn Ovens Institute of TAFE (GO TAFE)
 - » Holmesglen Institute of TAFE (Holmesglen)
 - » Kangan Batman Institute of TAFE (Kangan)
 - » Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT)
 - » RMIT TAFE
 - » University of Ballarat TAFE (Ballarat TAFE)
 - » Victoria University TAFE (VU TAFE)
 - » Wodonga Institute of TAFE (Wodonga TAFE)
 - » Adult Council of Further Education (ACFE) Providers.

Community

- Employment - graduates from distance education courses will gain employment in the aged care and disability industries
- Reduced skill shortage in aged care industry
- Increased number of qualified care workers will enhance the quality of life for older Australians requiring support
- Increased number of qualified care workers will allow a greater number of older Australians to avoid the risk of premature institutionalisation.

Organisations

- Aged Care Victoria
- Aged & Community Services Australia
- The Australian Association of Gerontology
- Indigenous Community Volunteers
- National Aged Care Alliance
- Aged Care Association Australia
- Alzheimer's Association Victoria
- Diversional Therapy Association Australia

2. About the Fellow

Name

Sheila Madeline Douglas

Employment

VET Manager and Educator, Employease Pty Ltd

Qualifications

- Advanced Diploma Disability Studies, Sunraysia TAFE, 1997
- Diploma of Education and Training, University of Melbourne, Melbourne, 2001
- Diploma of Management, Australian Institute Flexible Learning, Melbourne, 2009
- Certificate IV in Training and Education - 2011

Membership/s

- ACPET Melbourne
- Eastern VET NET
- VELG Training – Melbourne

Prior to moving into education, Sheila Douglas had a career in the aged care and disability industries, in both direct care and coordination roles. She has also worked as an Assessor ensuring quality service delivery within aged care facilities.

Her commitment to ensuring quality provision of client care within these industries resulted in the development of training roles in the VET sector and Swinburne TAFE.

The Fellow then moved into coordination and training roles at a number of RTOs, both private and not for profit. Her passion for the education and community services industries has resulted in the development of innovative course delivery methodologies. These methodologies support strong vocational outcomes for students and the provision of quality services for people requiring care.

The Fellow has held the position of VET Manager for Employease Training for the past seven years and has been instrumental in developing mentored training within the aged care sector. The development and implementation of mentored training has been widely embraced and applauded by both industry and students undertaking training within the mentored program.

The Fellow has also provided consultancy support to a range of RTOs to ensure their training programs are innovative and learner focussed, along with meeting AQTF and VRQA requirements. She has recently undertaken training in the design and development of e-learning programs as a participant in ACPET's e-learning mentoring program and was a participant in the Mentoring Project managed by VDC. Both programs were funded by Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

The Fellow also undertook e-learning training with e-works in 2012. Additionally, she intends to further her skills by developing a range of flexible distance education options. In particular, creating blended delivery courses for the delivery of aged care training to rural and remote areas of Australia.

3. Aims of the Fellowship Program

The aims of this Fellowship were to gain access to current best practice in the delivery of distance education. In particular, researching how courses with a high skills base are being delivered. Additionally, investigating how the specific issues of cultural diversity and rural and remote students were being addressed.

The specific areas of research that the Fellow focussed on are listed below. These areas of research are expanded upon in the Identifying the Skills Deficiencies section of this report:

Best Practice

Undertake a broad consultation with current practitioners of best practice methods of blended delivery.

Supporting Delivery of Skills-Based Courses

To gain an understanding of flexible support options for the skills-based components of distance education courses.

Engaging Rural Students in Study

To develop skills in engaging and supporting rural students in education.

Addressing Needs of Indigenous and Culturally Diverse Learners

To gain knowledge of strategies to support the needs of culturally diverse students. Based on the learnings gained from the research, develop a portfolio of best practice strategies. The next step will involve providing support and recommendations to RTOs. This in turn will support distance and e-learning in the aged care field, particularly to rural and remote students.

4. The Australian Context

Aged Care Delivery

The picture of ageing in Australia is a changing one, requiring well-timed and innovative strategies to ensure that support for older Australians is appropriate and sustainable. The picture is currently influenced by:

- The number of older Australians is rising and the demand for aged care services is increasing, there is a commensurate increase in demand for a well-trained aged care workforce
- The Productivity Commission anticipates that the aged care workforce will need to more than quadruple by 2050
- The number of Australians aged 85 and over is projected to increase from 0.4 million in 2010 to 1.8 million (5.1 per cent of the population) by 2050
- By 2050, it is expected that over 3.5 million older Australians will access aged care services each year, with around 80 per cent of services delivered in the community
- There is increasing diversity among older Australians in their preferences and expectations (which continue to increase) including a greater desire for independent living and culturally relevant care. This is particularly relevant for many culturally and linguistically diverse, sexually diverse and indigenous communities
- The aged care workforce will need to expand considerably at a time of 'age induced' tightening of the overall labour market, an expected relative decline in family support and informal carers and strong demand for workers from other parts of the health and disability systems. It will need to adopt new models of care and scopes of practice
- The increasing incidence of age-related disability and disease, especially dementia
- Rising expectations about the type and flexibility of care that is received
- Community concerns about variability in the quality of care
- A relative decline in the number of informal carers
- A need for significantly more nurses and personal care workers with enhanced skills¹
- Aged and Community Services Victoria state that, "Overall, it is estimated that approximately two per cent of the overall workforce is engaged in the residential aged care and community care sectors. Not only do we need to increase worker numbers to cater for current shortages, a growing population and the impact of the baby boomers, we also need to replace retiring workers. Nearly half of all health care workers are over the age of 45, compared with 36 per cent for all industries. These shortages cut across all the health professions, and in the aged care sector, nurses and personal carers."²

Implementation of E-learning and Distance Learning Options within Aged Care Training

- The uptake of e-learning by smaller private and industry-based RTOs is slower than the larger RTOs, with 63 per cent of small RTOs currently not utilising e-learning or distance delivery options.³

¹ <http://www.pc.gov.au/projects/inquiry/aged-care/report>

² <http://www.agedcare.org.au/what-we-do/workforce/overseas-workers/Overseas-Workers-for-the-Aged-Care-Sector.pdf>

³ http://www.agedcare.org.au/what-we-do/policies-and-position/policies-pdfs/Rural_remote_policy05.pdf

4. The Australian Context

Participation of Indigenous learners in VET Courses

- Participation of indigenous people in VET programs remains disproportionately low. Only 4.7 per cent of Indigenous students were enrolled at the Diploma and Associate Diploma level compared with 11.9 per cent of the overall student population. Approximately 41.6 per cent of enrolments undertaken by indigenous students result in non-completion, compared to approximately 24.4 per cent for non-Indigenous students.⁴

Attracting and Retaining Learners in Rural Areas

The National Rural Health Alliance National Policy Position identified, “Difficulty in recruiting and retaining personal care workers.” It suggests that, “The Australian Government should adopt strategy that includes the needs of community care as well as residential care services and builds on the initiatives in the current National Aged Care Workforce Strategy. Particular emphasis will need to be given to recruitment and retention in rural and remote areas”.

It also suggests that, “The Australian Government should continue the funding of nursing scholarships targeting rural and remote Australia and make provision for flexible distance learning”.⁵

Identified Skills Shortage

Higher Education and Skills Group compiles a skills shortage list, “through industry and stakeholder consultation, economic forecasts and other intelligence on skills demand and supply. The list was developed in late 2011 and is considered current throughout 2012.”⁶

Included on the skills shortage list are the following occupations:

- Residential Care Officer
- Aged or Disabled Carer
- Personal Care Assistant
- Disability Services Officer.⁷

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Australia has a rich multicultural and indigenous population from which to draw aged care workers.
- Australia’s strong education system could be well placed to implement new strategies.
- The high demand for direct care workers provides strong vocational outcomes for students undertaking aged care and disability training courses.
- The implementation of the National Broadband Network (NBN) has created greater access to e-learning options.
- Recent developments in interactive software, multimedia and social networking, has enhanced the opportunities to develop e-learning options which adhere to sound education principles.

⁴ <http://www.dest.gov.au/archive/iae/analysis/learning/1/index.htm>

⁵ http://www.agedcare.org.au/what-we-do/policies-and-position/policies-pdfs/Rural_remote_policy05.pdf

⁶ <http://www.skills.vic.gov.au/skills-and-jobs-outlook/graphs---temp/Skills-Shortages-2012.pdf>

⁷ *ibid*

4. The Australian Context

Weaknesses

- Limited knowledge within RTOs of best practice in blended delivery methods.
- Limited funding to support e-learning within RTOs.
- Training for staff may be required.
- Potential resistance of teachers to embrace e-learning and distance education.

Opportunities

- To collaborate with best practice theorists and practitioners.
- To develop skills in recruiting and retaining students from rural and remote areas.
- To create a folio of strategies to disseminate to RTOs in Australia.
- To visit indigenous communities to view how distance education is being received.
- To expand knowledge in the delivery/assessment of skills-based courses.
- To cultivate links with experts overseas.
- To provide RTO's with strategies for addressing indigenous and culturally diverse learners.
- To provide additional skills to teachers who are new to e-learning and distance education delivery methods.
- To increase numbers of Personal Care and Disability Support Workers to address identified skills shortage.
- To enable more people to enter the workforce within a sustainable industry.
- To provide improved support for older Australians and people with a disability.
- To improve the delivery of aged care training via distance delivery within Australia
- To utilise the NBN (National Broadband Network) within Australia
- To create partnerships with rural communities to support delivery of distance education courses.
- To better utilise limited government funding.

Threats

- Reluctance of RTOs to embrace distance education.
- Reluctance of learners to embrace distance education.
- Access to suitable IT infrastructure.
- Level of knowledge of teachers.
- Changes in government funding priorities.
- Industry perception that face to face learning is superior.
- Lack of industry knowledge and associated fear of e-learning options.

5. Identifying the Skills Deficiencies

1. Gaining an understanding of best practice distance delivery and e-learning methods, to increase quality and accessibility of aged care training.

Method:

- Undertake a broad consultation with current practitioners of best practice methods of blended delivery
- Review current courses and their delivery methods
- Review retention and outcomes of current courses
- Engage in discussions with experts in the field.

Aim: To inform the Victorian education sector of the current best practice methods of blended delivery for possible future inclusion in education institutions in Victoria and Australia.

2. Gaining an understanding of flexible support options to increase retention and completion rate of learners undertaking aged care training.

Method:

- Discussions with course developers and teachers to gain an understanding of how the skills-based components of courses are being delivered and assessed
- Review partnership practices
- Participate in webinars and e-learning lab activities to develop knowledge.

Aim: to support delivery of skills-based courses in the state of Victoria.

3. Develop skills in engaging and supporting rural students in education.

Method:

- To develop skills in engaging and supporting rural students in education
- Analyse engagement and recruitment strategies being used
- Review success of current strategies
- Conduct interviews with researchers at relevant Universities to gain insight into their marketing practices.

Aim: To inform industry of the best ways to engage rural students in study.

5. Identifying the Skills Deficiencies

4. Gain knowledge of strategies to support the needs of culturally diverse

Method:

- Conduct interviews and review course material to develop knowledge of how courses/materials can be modified to address the needs of indigenous and culturally diverse learners
- Visit Maori communities to view how the courses are delivered and received
- Conduct interview with Maori and Inuit learners to gain feedback on the success of the courses.

Aim: *To inform the Victorian Government of the modifications needed to current course structures in order to address the needs of indigenous and culturally diverse learners.*

6. The International Experience

The Fellowship program was designed to explore the identified skills and knowledge deficiencies relating to qualified aged care and disability workers, particularly in rural areas.

Acknowledged overseas experts in the field of distance education and e-learning were contacted. Canada was chosen as it shares a similar demographic to Australia and a strong distance education focus. Canada and New Zealand were chosen as countries that are experienced in supporting the education needs of indigenous learners. The ISS Institute Fellowship program allowed the Fellow to identify best practice strategies that can be disseminated within the Australian education system via conferences, workshops and webinars. Dissemination of these strategies will contribute to the delivery of accredited successful e-learning courses.

The strategies and knowledge can be utilised to support distance education options for the delivery of aged care courses to rural and remote areas and indigenous learners; thus, addressing the identified skills shortage areas of skilled aged care and disability workers.

Destination: University of Canterbury,¹ New Zealand.

Contact

Hosted by Professor Niki Davis, Professor of e-Learning, Director UC e-Learning Lab, College of Education, Christchurch New Zealand. President of DEANZ

Overview

The University of Canterbury is located in Christchurch in the south island of New Zealand. The Faculty of education and School of Educational Studies and Human Development, “provides a range of courses at the undergraduate level in initial teacher education (early childhood, primary and secondary education) and in areas as diverse as adult and tertiary education; child and human development; inclusive and special education; learning and teaching; Maori and bicultural education; and in philosophy and sociology of education. Several of these courses are delivered through the Faculty of Arts. Postgraduate courses are available in educational assessment and evaluation; child and adolescent development; educational leadership; inclusive and special education; learning; philosophy of education and policy studies; and research methods in education. These courses culminate in the awarding of graduate diplomas, masters degrees and of PhDs to successful students”.²



Professor Nikki Davis and Fellow Sheila Douglas

Davis discussed the TPACK model of delivery. This model proposes that there are three forms of knowledge involved in the delivery of learning and that these forms intersect and cannot be viewed in isolation. TPACK also proposes that the learning takes place within a context. The application of this model can be seen in the examples of best practice in design and delivery of on-line and distance education listed below. In addition, the learning has been developed to take into consideration the context, in which the learning is taking place, i.e. rural and remote students, indigenous learners, cultural sensitivities and post-earthquake considerations.³

¹ <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/>
² <http://www.deanz.org.nz/home/>
³ <http://www.tpack.org/>

6. The International Experience

ICT used: Adobe Connect®, laptop computers, webcam, LEARN (University based learning site – powered by Moodle®).

Methodology used to deliver tutorials to PhD students included:

- Students attend tutorial where possible. Where not possible, students can access remotely
- For students at distance, laptop computers, webcams and Adobe Connect® are used.



The Fellow attended a course lecture. Davis and three students were situated at the University, another two at distance. The vision of the two distance students was projected onto a screen, the students were able to view their tutor and colleagues and contribute to the discussion.

Students often feel distance education can be isolating and lacks the human contact with their student co-hort. The ability to see and hear all students and for students to contribute in real time, ensured all students are able to feel part of a group and participate in group discussions.

The use of a virtual classroom provides the following distance education opportunities:

- When being broadcast in real time remote students are provided the opportunity to participate in a class being delivered at a central learning centre. Students can see and hear the lecturer and be involved in class discussions. Students can contribute to the session and ask questions of the lecturer
- Ensuring students unable to attend class could still participate
- Lecturer without student input can be recorded for broadcasting and be reused for following iterations of the course
- Lecturers can practice and edit their presentation to ensure it is correct. This opportunity is not available when facilitators deliver live
- Utilising a virtual campus system also allows remote students to meet and discuss coursework via ICT, where travelling to meet at a central location would not be possible
- Videoed sessions can be uploaded and viewed via YouTube®
- Provides opportunities for students to review content as many times as they feel necessary
- Students can review content prior to assessment
- Students with learning difficulties or English as a second language could review content at home privately, without drawing unnecessary attention to their additional needs
- Students with learning difficulties or English as a second language, can review content with support of family or friends
- Assessment: software packages (Adobe Connect®, Blackboard Collaborate®, Google Plus®) could be utilised to assess students learning at distance against the practical skills required of their course. These assessments can be uploaded to LEARN and be assessed. A rubric has been created for assessment of on line videos
- This method is both time and cost efficient. Retention of the recording provides evidence for audit purposes

6. The International Experience

- Audio of session is available in formats compatible with portable devices such as iPods. This allows students to access sessions whilst driving, walking etc.

Contact

Dr Arindam Basu - Senior Researcher, Health Services Assessment Collaboration (HSAC)

Basu suggested the following strategies when using ICT to support the needs of the learners, “Technology should be invisible and able to fade into the background. Students should be able to concentrate on the content”. These strategies embed sound pedagogical principles. This can be achieved via:

- Providing initial training and support in ICT
- Consistent navigation for all courses
- Minimal graphics
- Consistent design
- Small file sizes (easier for students to download).

Basu highlighted the importance for providing initial training and support to learners. The training required relates primarily to the technology used to deliver the training. Basu sighted the analogy, “when we started our learning at five years old, we learned to use the basic tools, i.e. pens and paper. The same applies now. Students need to fully understand and be taught to use, the basic tools i.e. the technology required to access the University’s LEARN program”.

Basu also suggested the implementation of a graduated apprenticeship model. This model starts with significant face to face support, not only course content, but in managing the technology. As students become more autonomous in their use of technology, support is reduced. Technical support staff encourage students to manage their own issues and gradually move towards greater autonomy in the use of the technology.

During discussion with Basu the following recommendations were highlighted:

Consider what content is suitable to be delivered on line:

- Course requirements with high levels of reading
- Journal articles
- Content that would normally be displayed on a whiteboard
- Students are able to review this information repeatedly where necessary and at a time that works for them.

Content to be delivered face to face where content requires debate, discussion or analysis.

6. The International Experience

Suggested design outline for course delivery:

- Students would have undertaken pre-reading supplied via LEARN
- Face to face session would include introduction by facilitator
- Followed by relevant questions, discussions, development of knowledge
- Collaboration between all parties – this can be done via tutorials, face to face contact, or virtual classroom
- Discuss application of knowledge learned
- 'Collegial conversational sessions' replace traditional university style lecturer
- Provision of face to face session transcripts for student unable to attend.

Contact

Susan Tull – Flexible Learning Advisor, PhD student

Tull's role is supporting lecturers to develop and deliver distance education and she provides support for existing staff and lecturers to develop online education. She trains lecturers in the use of LEARN, learning design and information technology. University of Canterbury has 730 lecturers and over 400 courses. Each course has a LEARN site.

Tull suggested the following strategies to support lecturers new to e-learning design and delivery:

- Developing a LEARN site for lecturers. The site allows lecturers to share their resources and information. Lecturers are able to view each other's learning spaces. Becoming familiar with the LEARN site encourages lecturers become familiar with the technology. They are motivated to work with the LEARN site as it provides them with additional support. The LEARN site provides contains forums, blogs and wikis to support discussion and information dissemination between the lecturers.
- Education on the use of basic word/office programs
- Education on the use of LEARN and Moodle®.

Tull suggested the following strategies when considering course design:

- Ability to access learning at a time that suits the learner
- Use of virtual classrooms (facilitated)
- Short, targeted video clips
- Encouraging students in the virtual classroom to type their responses. This allows students to craft their answer prior to it being made public. It can support shy learners, or those with language or literacy needs.

Tull stated that when she is designing a learning program, she, "envisages a 35 year old woman, sitting at the kitchen table, with a couple of kids, trying to study while she cooks dinner. She then asks herself: How do I address her needs? What will work for her?"

6. The International Experience

Destination: University of Canterbury, College of Education, Christchurch New Zealand (in partnership with Waiariki Institute of Technology – Rotarua)

Contact

Anne Marie Hunt – Senior Lecturer in Professional Studies and Practice Practitioner Specialist, Rotarua Regional Academic Co-ordinator

Program

Bachelor of Teaching and Learning (Primary)

This program is delivered by the University of Canterbury, Faculty of Education at distance, at the Waiariki Institute of Technology in Rotarua. The program was instigated by an identified need for primary teachers within the regional area.

The Bachelor of Teaching and Learning (Primary) had an intake of 46 students this year. Currently there are over 300 qualified primary teachers working within the regional areas serviced by this program, who have gained their qualifications through the distance education program.

Hunt identified the first stage of a successful distance education program as developing strong strategies for recruiting rural students. These include:

- Identify the local need – to the community
- Identifying the benefits of both course outcomes
- Identify benefits for students of studying in their local area
- Identifying the benefits of both the course outcomes and studying in their local area – to the local community
- Creating a profile in the local community by partnering with an existing education provider
- Maintaining a visible presence within the community.

Other suggestions regarding supporting indigenous students (40 per cent of current student cohort is Maori) included:

- Acknowledging and respecting the culture and language of the indigenous learners.
- Utilising Te Reo Maori (the language of the indigenous population of New Zealand) within the learning material where appropriate
- Using Te Reo Maori during delivery of content
- Acknowledging and respecting the role of Whanau (family) in the lives and learning process of the students
- Utilising Maori lecturers where possible
- Providing a Marae – (traditional meeting house) so students feel culturally valued and all students can learn about things Maori within a Maori context
- Providing on line study options - allows students to remain in their local community and continue to provide support to their families whilst they study

6. The International Experience

- Providing flexible support options for the skills-based components of distance education courses.

This program has adopted a blended delivery model, based on a mix of face to face and distance delivery. Students attend classes at Waiariki Institute one half day per week and complete the remaining course work by distance. Professional Studies lecturers in Rotoarua provide strong support for students in the Rotoarua region, including:

- One half day a week on-campus group support, plus professional studies/Inquiry courses
- Two on site intensive residential schools per year of up to two weeks teaching
- Noho marae (one night and two day) experiential learning experiences over three years on Tangatarua Marae at Waiariki's Mokoia Campus.

The initial week of a course is held in Rotoarua and all students attend. Lecturers who are based in Christchurch take part in this week via video conferencing. This allows students to familiarise themselves with the lecturers so they feel more confident in contacting the lecturers if they require assistance.

Students then return to their local areas. Ongoing face to face sessions are provided in their local areas, and lecturers travel from Christchurch to deliver these sessions. Subjects that are considered sensitive (i.e. sexuality and abuse) and practical subjects (i.e. dance and physical education) are delivered in the face to face sessions.

6. The International Experience

Destination: Open Polytechnic,⁴ Lower Hutt

Contacts

Graham Paine - Centre Manager, Applied Technology Centre -School of Workplace Learning

Brian McGhie, Manager, School of Health and Community

Program

Distance course in general trades, electrical and mechanical as well as level 5 qualifications for tradespeople who want to extend their qualifications. The basic courses delivered don't have an e-learning component. Higher level courses have an e-learning component.

IT used

It was considered that using IT may be daunting for the cohort. There was not a great uptake when offered previously.

Methods

Certificate III level courses. Students can start course at any time. The courses are delivered in a partnership model, with the partners being the learner's current workplace, the Open Polytechnic and a group training organisation. Students have learning plans developed with consultation and signatures of all parties. Course delivery is primarily paper based, with student sent a package containing relevant documents and course resource material.

Open Polytechnic follows up students by phone. Students confirm receipt of the materials and instruction is provided on how to utilise the paperwork and learning materials. The theory components of the course are delivered in this manner.

A list of practical skills to be developed is provided to both students and their employers. This ensures all parties are aware of the requirements of the course. Prior to moving on to the practical components of the course, the theory components need to be successfully completed.

Assessors from Open Polytechnic attend the workplace at regular intervals to undertake formal assessment. Written assignments are sent to Open Polytechnic for marking.

Students in similar regional areas are encouraged to form study groups. Open Polytechnic has developed strong relationships including employers, other polytechnic colleges and RTOs. These relationships allow the sourcing of appropriate venues for student to meet for study groups.

Open Polytechnic aims to employ mentors from each regional area to oversee the study groups. Mentors are required to be qualified teachers and are generally an experienced tradesman. The mentors support the apprentices with study skills, general questions about the course/industry. In some instances, literacy support has also been provided by the mentors.

A qualified tutor based at Lower Hutt campus is available two nights per week via phone. Apprentices know they can ring in at this time and speak to someone about their course, assignments or any issues of concern. Students attend block training, one week at a time.

An appropriate venue is provided within the student's region. Venues are generally other Polytechnic colleges or RTOs that have the necessary resources for the trades being delivered.

⁴ <https://www.openpolytechnic.ac.nz/about-us/>

6. The International Experience

Information and assistance regarding accommodation during this 'block', is provided. Assessors from Open Polytechnic attend these block sessions and undertake the practical assessment requirements.

Strategies for managing barriers – student study support sessions and mentors set up regionally. Blocks set up regionally, not just for access for students, but also so they can meet the teachers/ assessors and spend time with their fellow students.

Program

National Certificate in Pharmacy (Assistant, Level 3)

IT used

Moodle – provides link to resources and 'handy hints'. Access and submitting assignments is undertaken via Moodle. Outcomes of assignments are provided to students on line.

Overview of program

Students located throughout a 300 kilometre radius. Network of 20 pharmacists providing teaching and assessing around the country.

Methods

No actual content is on line. All material is paper based. Teachers don't need to have training qualifications. Assessors need to have successfully undertaking assessment training. Regional teachers and pharmacists are allocated to students. The assignments are paper based and marked by qualified assessors. Practical learning and assessment tasks are undertaken in the pharmacy. The student supervisor (always a Pharmacist) undertakes the practical assessments.

6. The International Experience

Program

LL&N Learning Teaching Solutions

Purpose/overview of program

Once assessed, students undertaking the above course receive a National Certificate in Career and Self Development and Certificate I in Foundation Communication. The aim is to raise prevocational language, literacy and numeracy levels. This course can be prior to, or parallel with, vocational courses.

Methods

Students receive set of workbooks (written by Open Polytechnic) as well as a basic dictionary and a cookbook from the Healthy Heart Foundation. Groups that would benefit from the program are identified. Currently groups are spread throughout regional areas of New Zealand.

Other polytechnic colleges, community groups, or church groups can apply to Open Polytechnic to run this program under their management.

There is not a requirement for teachers delivering this program to be qualified. All teachers receive training by Open Polytechnic in the delivery and assessment of the program and appropriate use of the provided resources.

Tutors undertaking assessment use the provided assessment tasks and marking guides. Open Polytechnic relies on the quality of the teaching and assessment material for the quality of the course. If it a group has been identified not conducting courses correctly, the group can be refused to deliver the course again. The assessment process and outcomes are moderated with Literacy Aotearoa.⁵

⁵ <http://www.literacy.org.nz/>

6. The International Experience

Destination: New Zealand College of Early Childhood Education (private RTO) ⁶

Contact

Michael Campbell – Innovation Manager.

Program

Diploma in Leadership (Early Childhood Education) and Certificate in Leadership (Early Childhood Education)

Overview of program

There was an identified need for early childhood teachers who wish to develop leadership skills. Previously these teachers only had two options: professional development courses that weren't accredited, and sometimes not recognised, or undertake a Masters of Education Program. The requirements of the Masters of Education Program were often not appropriate for these teachers and the content not related to early childhood settings. In addition, many teachers didn't hold the necessary degree level of qualification to grant them entry into a Masters Program.

ICT used

Moodle.

The programme is a two years part time, field based programme delivered via a blend of face-to-face, online and applied learning. Students need to be currently working within an early childhood education setting, and have at least one year's experience.

Delivery consists of 14 days face to face delivery (delivered in both Christchurch and Auckland) with the balance delivered online via Moodle®.

Delivery methods include

- Students are grouped into roles that currently exist in their workplace. These roles could include: co-ordinators, classroom teachers
- Tasks are set via their online campus
- Students work collaboratively to develop the tasks set
- Students are required to read articles provided, reflect on the article and post their findings on their online campus
- All online delivery is asynchronous, which acknowledges that students are adults, working and with family commitments. Asynchronous delivery provides flexibility as to when the students undertake their study
- A facilitator is available approximately four days per week. The role of the facilitator is to support the students, create discussions relevant to the learning, pose questions, draw out information, and ensure discussions and blogs remain relevant to the topics

⁶ <http://www.teacher.co.nz/Home>

6. The International Experience

- Leadership tasks, related to the workplace, are provided to students. These tasks are undertaken in the workplace. This approach involves the Learning Centre into the education process and encourages students to gain experience and knowledge that already exists within their workplace. This process provides the opportunity for students to engage fully in leadership opportunities and encourages Learning Centre staff to be involved in the learning program. Involvement in these workplace tasks forms part of the assessment of the course.

Program modelled on Kate Thornton's '10 points in blended programs for learners' and Kate Thornton was a consultant during the development stage of the course.

Assessment consists of the following:

- Completion of set tasks
- Posting to blog each month (a rubric has been developed for assessing blog posts)
- Engagement in set tasks.

6. The International Experience

Destination: Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT) – New Zealand



Christchurch Polytechnic

Contact

Mary Kensington Co-Head of School of Midwifery, Senior Lecturer and Rea Daellenbach, Research Co-ordinator

Program

Bachelor of Midwifery. The three year degree delivered via 45 weeks of delivery per year. The program aims to provide flexible learning options to students in rural communities and offers study options at their 'out of town satellites' of Nelson/Marlborough, West Coast and South Canterbury. Currently there are 95 students across the program.

Method

Blended learning options are utilised in the delivery of this course. They include a combination of on campus and on line study. The course is delivered in partnership with University of Otago in Dunedin. This provides flexibility for students who live outside Christchurch.

The LMS for the course was developed as a collaborative project between the two universities. This allowed both institutions to share resources.

6. The International Experience

Course model

- The Christchurch campus is utilised to deliver the initial one week intensive block of training. The aim of the initial block is for students to get to know one another and their lecturers, and provide initial face to face instruction on the practical components of the course
- Students undertaking the initial programs are also provided with instruction on the technology to be used (Learner Management System and virtual classroom). This ensures students are able to independently interact with the online portion of the program
- After initial block, students return to their local areas. Students in each area become a cohort
- Once per week the individual cohorts meet at a venue in their satellite area. CPIT organise the venues and often use local polytechnic colleges
- Lecturers who live in the satellite area, and employed by CPIT facilitate these weekly meetings. The facilitators deliver content, support and mentor the individual groups. Students are also provided with debriefing opportunities and encouraged to reflect on, and think broadly about their learning
- On occasions where the weekly tutorial group has to be cancelled (i.e. bad weather), the group are able to utilise the virtual classroom to conduct their meetings and maintain contact with others in their cohort
- The lecturer is also responsible for organising the practicum component with the local areas
- One month into the course, another intensive block (one week) is delivered at Christchurch. Lecturers from the satellite groups travel to Christchurch to areas attend
- Two units per week are delivered on line (asynchronously) using Moodle. Additional support for these units is provided via on line tutorials using Adobe Connect® sessions
- It is common for questions to be set within a tutorial. Subsequent tutorials will reflect on questions and answers provided by the students. This encourages students to undertake reading in between the sessions
- Recording of online tutorials allows students to review the sessions, or revisit them prior to exams.

CPIT have an increasing number of Maori and Pacifica students. To assist in supporting these students, a Maori midwife supports all first year students. This lecturer also communicates with the Maori students in the satellite groups. Kensington stated that, “the glue that makes this program successful is the small tutor groups, where students can connect with each other and the lecturer”.

Kensington stated the areas that she believes contribute to the success of the program within the regional areas are:

- Initial consultation: a consultation process took place within the regional areas to identify the specific needs of each area
- Building and supporting strong networks within the regional communities
- Demonstrating where the program supports the needs of the local area
- Staffing: having key people in each of the satellite centres. Whilst the course is managed from the main campus in Christchurch, the value of having key people within the regional centres was identified as crucial
- The recruitment of appropriate lecturers is important. Lecturers need to be able to work at distance and communicate effectively with senior staff

6. The International Experience

- Provision of ongoing support for the satellite lecturers
- Ensuring lecturers feel part of the organisation and receive appropriate support and acknowledgement.

This is achieved via:

- Monthly meetings (held via Virtual classrooms)
- Inclusion in lecturers CPIT's activities
- Provision of PD opportunities
- Acknowledgement of their worth within the programs.

Assessment

- During the first year of the program, formative assessment of the practical aspect of the course is undertaken
- Students complete portfolios of evidence and submit for assessment
- End of first year, all students come to Christchurch to undertake practical assessment
- Third year students are used to role play the 'birthing women' for the practical assessment. These students provide third party evidence for the assessor
- Two assessors work together to undertake assessment process. This allows for ongoing moderation of assessment, and a standardised call of competency.

6. The International Experience

Program

Bachelor of Nursing (blended delivery) Students can chose blended deliver and face to face sessions. Students undertaking the blended delivery option can access lecturers if they feel they would benefit. Post Graduate course delivered fully on line.

Methods

- Determining what content is best delivered face to face and content that would best be supported via online delivery
- Demonstration of practical skills is made available via video. Video content shows lecturers modelling best practice
- The library support lecturers to create content material, by providing access to resources and information. Copywrite issues are reviewed and a copywrite guideline is available
- Podcasts – students can listen to podcasts of relevant workplace examples
- Demonstration of practical tasks that involve communication skills can be provided via podcasts
- Provision of glossaries on the LMS
- Recording of tutorials allows for viewing at a time that suits the learners
- This addresses the needs of remote learners whose internet connections are not reliable
- Additionally, recording the tutorials provides support to students with language or literacy needs as they can review the tutorials as they feel necessary
- Providing narration on PowerPoint© presentations to enhance learning.

6. The International Experience

Contact

Dr. Lesley Seaton – Post Graduate Coordinator/Principle Lecturer, School of Nursing and Human Services

Program

Bachelor of Nursing

Seaton provided the following learning design strategies to consider when developing content:

PowerPoint® slides:

- Keep the slides simple
- Ensure initial point power for all units clearly outlines “why is this important” or “what is the purpose of this unit”
- Always use conversation language.
- Ensure you are using good instructional design. This would include:
 - » Ensuring you are providing clear instruction on what they have to do
 - » Use consistent formatting, navigation, and design components.
 - » Where a link has been inserted, indicate next to it, “if this link doesn’t work, paste the url (page code) into your browser”.

Communication with students:

- Utilise electronic communication (can be via virtual classroom, email, text) to ensure students feel engaged with tutor and organisation
- Provide students with quick response and feedback to their questions.

Strategies to engage and support lecturers in the e-learning process:

- Provision of professional development opportunities for lecturers
- Encouraging lecturers to support and identify with their learners
- Identifying the benefits of blended delivery for both the lecturers and student
- Assist lecturers to identify how effective blended delivery can be developed
- Assist lecturers to identify the purpose of the technology and its benefits
- All lecturer decisions based on sound pedagogical principles.

Cultural considerations

Seeton identified the following strategies:

- Talk to the cultural group, have them define themselves, don’t work with stereotypes
- Speak about bringing your own “personal” culture into the “aged care” culture in which you work.

6. The International Experience

Contact

Nicole Hannan – Literacy support tutor

Program

Provision of literacy support for students

Hannan outlined the following support measures:

- develop of foundation courses for students with English as a second language, covering numeracy and literacy
- Introductory course, delivered prior to undertaking further studies was seen of utmost importance
- Linking aspects of the course students will be moving on to (or are currently undertaking) as examples in the literacy support sessions
- Have teachers from the vocational courses develop appropriate vocabulary/glossary for the course. This way literacy support tutors can assist the students to build appropriate vocabulary to successfully undertake the vocational course
- Review the type of reading that will be required of the vocational course, and use this as a base to develop reading and literacy strategies
- Teach students to 'skim, scan and sift out' relevant material in what they are reading
- Teach students to identify what words they already know, what words they need to work on
- Encourage students to consider what strategies they could utilise to identify meanings of the words they may not understand
- Provide them with list of strategies to use
- Groups should be small in number and separate from the course they are studying. Students can receive learning support one on one from a qualified person, as well as use the resources in the Language Self Access Centre (see below)
- Students can receive peer support from classmates (these peer support classmates are paid at a minimal rate).

6. The International Experience

Contact

Kerstin Dofs – Manager, Language Self Access Centre

Program

CPIT provides a Language Self Access Centre. The centre provides:

- Self guided support to ESL students – aim is make learning as autonomous as possible by providing access to a range of resources and encourage use by students
- Access to hard copy resources that are held within the library
- Access to on line resources
- Guides that allow ESL students to find resources easily within the library (using colour coding instead of Dewey decimal system). These guides have been developed by the LSAC
- Commercial resources for self study
- Resources developed in house to assist teachers to support ESL students
- Whilst the aim of the LSAC is that students self study, a teacher is available to provide additional support where required
- Many course tutors will provide the LSAC with relevant activities from their courses. This provides relevant examples for students to work on within the self study sessions.

Dofs believes that it is vitally important to liaise with classroom teachers in developing literacy support strategies/programs. Some teachers are more 'on board' than others and the teachers who are on board have been involved in sharing the knowledge within PD sessions. Strategies that teachers can use to support literacy in the classroom:

- Deliver at a slower pace when appropriate
- Provide handouts to support the learning, including pictures. This avoids instruction being oral only
- Encourage students to use digital recorders to record the session
- Encourage students to utilise online literacy support programs
- Encourage students to undertake reciprocal reading within their learning. Within their group they take turns to be the leader. In order to teach something, you need to know it well. Consequently the leader needs to be prepared and by doing so, may strengthen their literacy and subject knowledge. The role of leader is rotated around the group. This method encourages peer support and peer learning.

Teachers at CPIT have undertaken the 'Words Add Up' course, or have undertaken a language support unit within the Diploma of Teaching and Learning. A Literacy Advisor provides strategies to tutors. Literacy Advisors may work with students on a one on one basis.

All students undertake a diagnostic literacy tool. Students identified as 'step 1 and step 2' are referred to learning services. Dofs has developed student resources and matching tutor resources at beginner and elementary levels. The student version is in plain English and embellished with pictures and icons.

6. The International Experience

IT used

References to sites that allow students to develop their skills, practice speaking and understanding.



Resources Learning Self Access Centre



Resources Learning Self Access Centre



Resources Learning Self Access Centre

6. The International Experience

Destination: Adult and Community Education Aotearoa conference in Wellington – ‘Community solutions – the business of learning’ 27th – 29th June, 2012

Contact

Professor Niki Davis – University of Canterbury e-learning lab (presentation in collaboration with Jo Fletcher – University of Canterbury)

Davis discussed the use of technology in learning and provided examples of its effective use. Presentation can be accessed via: Technology in Learning and Teaching – Tools not Toys.

In summary, Davis discussed the need for e-learning to be relevant to the learners’ current lifestyles. Many adult learners are already using mobile phones, instant messaging, the internet and Facebook within their lives. E-learning can be a natural extension of the learners’ current skills and comfort level with the technology.

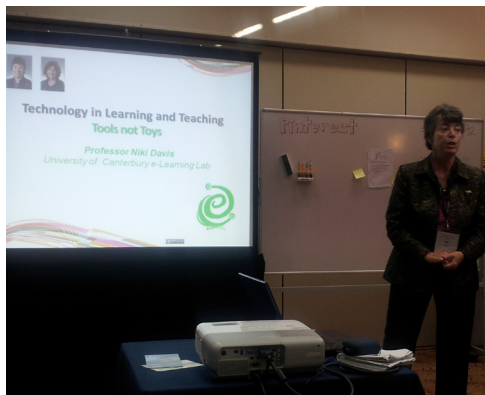
Davis also provided examples of where the technology used for learning had been seamlessly woven into the learners’ current job roles. In this way, the relevance of both the learning, and the use of the tools, was upheld.

The need to contextualise learning was highlighted. This was done via examples of employees where workplaces were remote, and working hours varied. The examples clearly demonstrated the benefits of technology in accessing these learners in a place a time convenient to them. Additionally, examples of cultural accommodation were highlighted.

The need for professional development opportunities for teachers was identified as a necessary step to the success of e-learning programs.



Adult and Community Education Aotearoa conference in Wellington – ‘Community solutions – the business of learning’ 27th – 29th June, 2012.



Professor Nikki Davis at Adult and Community Education Aotearoa conference in Wellington – ‘Community solutions – the business of learning’ 27th – 29th June, 2012.

Davis provided the following summary:

“E-learning contexts allowed learners independence to use the intranet and complete online workplace requirements. New technologies not motivational tools when used alone must be integrated into purposeful vocational related numeracy and literacy learning. Tutors need a thorough understanding of their students’ employment requirements. Tutors should be confident in the use of these technologies and be able to impart this knowledge to their learners in the workplace through ongoing professional development.” ⁷

⁷ [Prhttp://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/sites/aceaotearoa.org.nz/files/Technology%20in%20Learning%20and%20](http://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/sites/aceaotearoa.org.nz/files/Technology%20in%20Learning%20and%20)

6. The International Experience

Destination: Athabasca University (Edmonton Campus)⁸ Alberta, Canada

Athabasca University hosted 12 days of the Fellowship and developed an appropriate itinerary; along with visits to regional areas that best addressed the aims of the Fellowship.

Contacts

Dr Lisa Carter, PhD Dean, Faculty of Science and Technology - Host

Dr Kinshuk - Host

Lois Shaw, Senior Liaison Officer, Learning Communities Project – Host

Priscilla Campeau, Chair, Indigenous Studies Program Administrator Indigenous Education, Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dr Maiga Chang, Assistant Professor, School of Computing and Information Systems

Qing Tan PhD, Associate Professor, School of Computer Sciences

Sabine Graf PhD, Associate Professor, School of Computing and Information Systems

Moushir M El- Bishouty PhD, Post Doctoral Fellow

Ting Wen Chang PhD, Post Doctoral Fellow

Martin Reaney, Professional Services Coordinator

Carrie Anton, Assistive Technologist

Nancy Tarrant-Wood receptionist, Athabasca Campus.



Map indicating global spread of students undertaking distance learning courses with Athabasca University

Teaching%20-%20Tools%20Not%20Toys.pdfpresentation Title: Technology in Learning and Teaching – Tools not Toys.
8 <http://www.athabascau.ca/>

6. The International Experience

Student support: Learning Services Department.

The first point of contact for students is the Learning Services Department. Professors who develop a course provide this department with marking guides, lists of questions/answers, appropriate links to resources and methodology of working towards the correct answers.

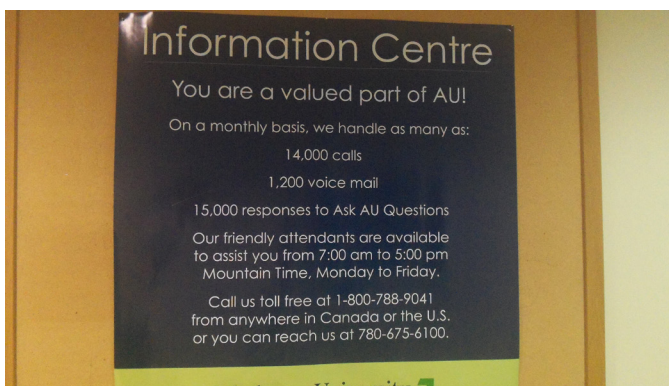
Learning Services Department staff are able to utilise this information via data base to address most questions from students. Where this support is deemed insufficient, the student will be referred to the appropriate academic.

All students receive tutor support. Tutors (all have PhD qualifications) are typically allocated a group of 50 students. Students receive tutor support via email and phone. In some cases Moodle is used as a method of communicating with tutors. Athabasca University's response time to student queries is between 24-48 hours. The School of Business has a help centre that is open 6 days per week from 6.30am to 9.30pm providing student support.

Where a complete text isn't required for a program, the appropriate excerpts are maintained within a library. Students can download the relevant material directly to their computer.

Student Advisors are available and provide the following assistance:

- Career guidance
- Choice of courses/subjects
- Development of learning plans
- Recognition of Prior Learning
- Identifying where courses may gain credits into other programs
- Referrals to external services, i.e. counselling
- Support with exam anxiety.



Information Centre – Athabasca Campus

Science Courses: Provision of practical delivery/assessment.

Science practical labs can be undertaken at the Athabasca Campus. Typically students attend the campus one week per subject. In other cases, prac labs may be organised via another university where appropriate. Some science courses send the requirement to the students, who undertake 'home labs'. Some face to face components and prac labs are delivered in collaboration with other universities.

Course delivery is provided either in paper based format or online, depending on the program of study undertaken. In some areas internet is not available, or is unreliable. In these cases, the courses will not be moving to an e-learning format.

6. The International Experience



Science Practical Lab

Centre for Indigenous Knowledge and Research. This program currently delivers 18 courses encompassing both undergraduate and post graduate qualifications. The following programs were developed to support ensure cultural sensitivity is addressed within these qualifications; formal steps are followed during the development of the programs.

Program

Graduate Course Indigenous Knowledge and Education. Students undertaking this course choose the online option. Students need to have access to computers and internet. A previous degree, and computer literacy are prerequisites for acceptance into the course.

IT used

- Utilises Canada's 'Supernet' ⁹
- Adobe Connect® and Skype® are used to deliver on line tutorials and lectures
- LMS: Moodle®
- Teleconferencing
- Videoconferencing
- Discussion boards
- On line journals
- Photogallery (students upload photos of themselves and of their local community)
- Student Café – Moodle®
- Forums – Moodle®
- (Goal is to provide paper based backup for all courses)

⁹ <http://www.thealbertasupernet.com/>

6. The International Experience

Delivery methodology

Edmonton campus provides co-ordination of the online course.

- Initial student introduction sessions are provided via the ‘forum’ option in Moodle
- Week by week study schedule provided to students
- To build a sense of community amongst distance students, discussion boards are used and a photo gallery is provided on line. Students are encouraged not only to upload photos of themselves, but relevant photos of the community in which they live.

Student support

Contact with Professors is available via discussion boards, dedicated email link and telephone. FAQs are provided on LMS. Students can meet and learn from each other via “student café” option in Moodle and video conferencing allows students and teachers to see each other and form trusting relationship.

Cultural sensitivities

- Following an initial idea for a course being created, academic/scholars from indigenous communities are employed to develop the program
- The proposed course is then reviewed by a staff academic who is an elder within the indigenous communities
- Course is then reviewed and edited, to ensure academic standards are being met, and to provide consistent pedagogy
- Strong relationships built with the elders of each community. These relationships provide Athabasca University the opportunity to explain to the communities the purpose of the program and how it will benefit the community
- This process provides opportunities for all stakeholders to get to know one another and build trust. Develops a collaborate process in the provision of distance education. Provides opportunity to learn the difference protocols of each community, and how to link with the appropriate people and elders
- Elders from the communities (both male and female) are a major stakeholder in the development and ongoing delivery of the courses (Centre for World Indigenous Knowledge and Research employs an indigenous elder who works nationally)
- Indigenous examples, contexts and scenarios are incorporated into the course
- Indigenous words used in online delivery are linked to a glossary
- Providing narration to demonstrate correct pronunciation is the next step
- Use of lecturers from indigenous communities
- Use of relevant learning materials developed by indigenous people
- Provision of online dictionary in Cree language.



“Home kits” to allow distance students to undertake practical tasks

6. The International Experience

Program

Learning Communities Project

Contact

Lois Shaw, Senior Liaison Officer from the Learning Communities Project

Destination: Learning Communities Program, Fort McKay

Contacts

Peter Fortna, Manager of Sustainable Development, Fort McKay Metis Community

Rod Hyde, Fort McKay Metis Community

Barbara Manke, Tutor Fort McKay Metis Community

The Fellow travelled with Shaw to Fort McKay Metis and First Nations Community, in the North-eastern part of Alberta. This area is 450 kilometres northeast of Edmonton.

Overview of Learning Communities Project

Due to its geographic location within the oil sands area, Fort McKay has developed its own companies that work with the multinational oil companies in the region. This has provided the opportunity for people from the First Nations Communities to develop business, create commercial partnerships with the oil companies and undertake work in the many areas the large oil extraction projects provides.

Fort McKay has seized opportunities for participation in the economy to create sustainable, long-term growth and development within Aboriginal communities. The oil sands companies have invested back into the Fort McKay community, which in one example, has resulted in the development of the Fort McKay Learning Centre within the main administration block. This area now provides a learning centre with tutors, computers, study equipment and both online and print based learning materials.

Aim of Learning Communities Program:

- To transform the workplace and communities
- To address personal goals with respect to career change, advancement
- To find new ways of creating learning communities in rural and remote areas
- For corporate sponsors to address problems attracting and retaining skilled workforce
- To identify and promote viable offerings from Alberta institutions.

The Learning Communities Project works with stakeholders drawn from different sectors, communities and interests. These include Athabasca Tribal Council, Big Stone Cree Nation, Little Red River Cree Nation, Metis General Council and e-Campus Alberta. The project aims to identify educational needs of the communities and provide education and links to address these needs.

6. The International Experience

The project also provides career guidance and support for learners. It looks to develop capacity within its student body and help youth, continuing students and elders to achieve their goals. Being part of the Learning Communities Project may also increase the confidence of the participants and provide access to existing networks and services.

Initial steps in developing the Learning Communities Project

The importance of working with the communities in a consultative manner and engaging with the right members of the community was identified as being a vitally important process and needs to be undertaken prior to any education supports being instigated.

All communities have a council and the Learning Communities liaised with the councils to gain and develop a relationship of trust and understanding. Learning Communities' staff spent time in 21 indigenous communities in Northern Alberta. The aim of this activity was to develop relationships of trust within the communities and identify the specific education and learning needs. Initially, this was achieved via a survey to determine what the specific needs were of the communities visited.

Communities have a Chief and Council which provides leadership and guidance. Elected elders from the council are utilised within the learning centre to provide guidance, support and motivation to the students.

Destination: Wabasca Cree Community

Contacts

Donna Yellowknee, Aboriginal Liaison Officer and Priscilla Auger, Learning Communities Community Coordinator

Overview

Athabasca University is an open university providing distance education worldwide. The university currently has approximately 72,000 enrolments in courses with a large percentage of these students undertaking specific courses only, rather than full programs. At any given time, approximately 550 programs are open for registration. Registration in programs can be undertaken at any time, and is not tied into specific program start dates. A high percentage of students are only taking a few courses, to address gaps in other programs being undertaken. These are variously referred to as 'drop in' or 'visiting' students.

Primarily courses are asynchronous, however some utilise videoconferencing and virtual classrooms.

IT used

- Moodle
- Adobe Connect
- Skype
- Interactive Whiteboards
- Videoed lecturers

6. The International Experience

Each centre has a Community Coordinator who is recruited from within the community to coordinate the promotion of learning within the community. In general, the community provides a venue (rent can be paid by the project) and the Learning Communities project can provide other support requirements. These may include computers, relevant information and resources, desks chairs, office equipment etc.

A 'Mentor Circles' program has been developed to provide additional support for learning within the communities. Elders and interested persons from the communities are provided with training in the Mentor Circles program and will provide the role of mentor within the programs.

The educational online program visited at Fort McKay runs full time and is aimed at students completing their High School Diploma. Students can work from home, or come into the centre to take advantage of additional support provided by the program coordinators and teacher.

Students are taught the regulated Alberta curriculum and are supported by the full time tutors. The centre has a wide range of support materials, resources and texts. The students can work independently, but still receive support, encouragement and direction from the full time teachers.

On line delivery material used is developed by Vista Virtual (paper based delivery) or Sunchild E-Learning Program. The Sunchild E-Learning program provides online learning specifically for indigenous students. Currently the program is supporting seven students in Fort McKay to complete their High School Diploma. Applied and activities based teaching methods are utilised to deliver the units. Where possible, activities are built around the culture and history of the students.

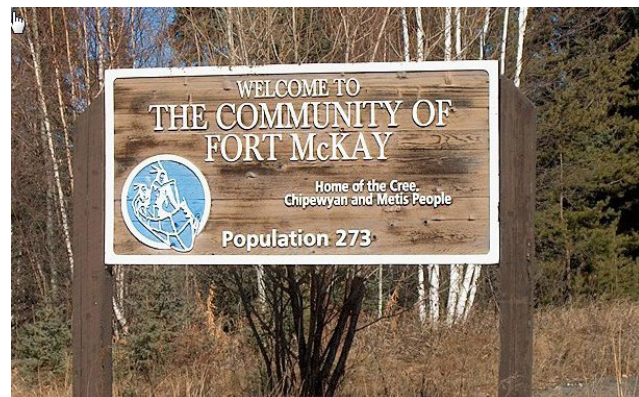
Formal assessment of the students is undertaken via Sunchild E-Learning Program or Vista. A portfolio of evidence is compiled to demonstrate competency against the requirements of the curriculum. In addition to formal documents, photos are often used of applied activities and artefacts that the students have created.

The centre currently doesn't use video as evidence, as students are not supportive of this.

The nearest college is Keyano College located at Fort McMurray – 65 kilometres away; however Keyano College provides a satellite centre within the community. This is housed in a separate building (Dorothy McDonald Learning Centre in Fort McKay). Older community members are able to complete their high school Diploma via this centre. Teachers from Keyano College support the students with delivery of program content. Additionally, content is delivered online using computers within the centre.

Formal education at these centres is only provided to the High School Diploma level. Accredited vocational courses have yet to be added to the learning centres. However, a student could use this centre to independently undertake any online courses or programs, within the centre primarily providing them with a place to undertake their study and computer/internet access. These students would need to be able to undertake their online courses independently.

Fort McKay also has a 'stepping forward' program which provides adults with career counselling. They work with community members to provide advice on correct vocational pathways that will best address their vocational aspirations.



Fort McKay Community

6. The International Experience

The Fellow also travelled to Wabasca and visited Big Stone Cree Nation on their Treaty Day. This community consists of approximately 7000 people, living both on and off of the reserve.

The Big Stone Cree Nation is an example of the Learning Communities Project in action, though still in its infancy. The day of the visit was very exciting as the desks and new computers that had been provided by the Learning Communities Project were being installed.

The Learning Communities project provides the rent for the venue (the Learning Centre), general education requirements such as desks, chairs, fax machines, and the six computers that were being installed.



Learning Centre



Information provided at Learning Centre



Lois Shaw, Big Stone Cree Centre



New computer equipment being set up at Learning Centre

6. The International Experience

The project also provides the wages for the Community Co-ordinator, Priscilla Auger. Ms Auger identified the range of support that she has been providing to learners within the community:

- Career counselling
- Advice regarding appropriate courses to take
- Advice on how to access appropriate courses
- Information on potential sponsorship, bursaries or scholarships
- Links to Alberta Learning Information System (ALIS). This online system offers a range of job related links including job profiling and job personality testing
- Support to students to undertake the ALIS testing and interpreting the results
- IT support and guidance in computer literacy
- Workshops on basic computer use
- Ongoing support and encouragement of students undertaking distance learning within the centre
- Access to phone and fax services
- Linking learners to other relevant programs available.

The provision of the new computers allows the centre to provide a supportive place for learning, along with computer and internet access and facilitator support. These resources will assist students to complete High School Diplomas, upgrading and advanced post secondary courses. Where students need additional support with the online content, teachers at the neighbouring elementary school will be used.

The provision of the learning centre also allows community members the opportunity to undertake vocational courses on line.

Northern Lakes College is 2.5 hours away, but has a satellite college in Wabasca. Within the Wabasca community there has been interest shown from at least four people in undertaking the Health Care Aid course. This course qualifies graduates to provide support for elders living within a residential care facility, or in their own home.

Wabasca community has recently built an aged care facility (known as a 'lodge') and is currently in need of additional staff to provide the necessary personal care support. The community also has a health centre staffed by nurses.

The community is working towards developing a collaborative relationship with the Northern Lakes College satellite. Trainers from the College will attend the Learning Centre to deliver the practical aspects of the elder care course. Video conferencing can also be used to provide the more theoretical aspects of the course. Where content specific support is required, the nurses at the health centre could be utilised, along with staff from the aged care facility, working in a mentoring capacity.

The practicum component of the course will be undertaken in the aged care facility, with staff from Northern Lakes College undertaking the assessment requirements. Mentoring from the Health Centre nurses could also be woven into the learning program.

6. The International Experience

Program

Access for Students with Disabilities (ASD)

Contacts

Martin Reaney, Professional Services Co-ordinator and Carrie Anton, Assistive Technologist.

The program provides support to students who self identifies as having a disability or chronic health condition.

- Staff includes a Professional Services Co-ordinator and an Assistive Technologist.
- Services offered to people with a disability include:
 - » Information on services and support available
 - » Outlining requirements to receive the services and supports that are available
 - » Providing recommendations for students' funding applications
 - » Assessments.
- Links to technical support (in some cases, specialised software can be demonstrated remotely to best suit the student).
- Adjustments to course and assessment requirements (this could include additional hours, scribe and/or private room for exams, links to adaptive technology, training on adaptive technology, having exam split into two or three sections or in an alternative format).
- Assistance with appeals.
- Development of Individual Support Services Plan.
- Provision of:
 - » Alternative format course materials
 - » Alternate layout (line spacing, page colour, font)
 - » Large print
 - » Electronic text (edited and unedited)
 - » Braille and Tactile Graphics
 - » Kurzweil format (KESI with(out) zones)
 - » Audio MP3 files
 - » Transcriptions of audio or video material
 - » E-text copy of text books, for people who can't turn pages or carry heavy books
 - » Captioning.
- Assistive technology including:
 - » Assistive Listening Devices
 - » Furniture (adjustable copy holders, desks)
 - » Memory and recall tools
 - » Note taking (digital recorder, highlighting, sticky notes, voice notes)

6. The International Experience

- » Organising ideas (concept maps, brain storming, organizing software)
- » Reading (screen reading, visual tracking, magnification, Braille and more...)
- » Spelling and Grammar checkers
- » Time management (calendars and alerts)
- » Writing (voice recognition, hand writing recognition, alternative mouse or keyboards).
- Screen readers.
- Software for voice dictation, text to speech, voice dictation and mind mapping.
- Paper format of e-learning content where appropriate.
- Speech to text including:
 - » Text To Speech E-text Reading Software
 - » Natural Reader (reads many formats including PDF)
 - » Read Please 2003 (uses copy/paste or import of e-text into its application)
 - » Text Aloud (reads many formats including PDF)
 - » Word Talk - Microsoft Word Plug in: a free plug-in for text to speech on Word 97 and higher
 - » Text to MP3 Conversion
 - » Spoken Text (MP3 creation service).

6. The International Experience

Research – the way ahead

Contact

Dr George Siemens, Associate Director, Technology Enhanced Knowledge Research Institute, Athabasca University, Society for Learning Analytics Research

Siemens discussed with the Fellow the concepts of data analytics and their use in developing personalising course delivery. This concept is well illustrated by the discussions below, where PhD students are working on various ways of analysing student data, with an overall aim to develop personalised/adaptive course delivery.

Contact

Dr Maiga Chang, Assistant Professor, School of Computing and Information Systems

Chan is undertaking research into technology enhanced education.

Project under development: Computerised short answer marking. The project allows for short written answers to be marked automatically. Reviews of the auto marking indicated strong correlations between the outcomes achieved in comparison with human markers, but at a fraction of the time.

Project under development: Virtual worlds. This project is developing an on line game designed to teach financial concepts. In the virtual world, students are required to make financial decisions such as obtaining a job, paying rent, paying utilities, and purchasing insurance. The impacts of the financial decisions made are displayed within the virtual world.

This allows students to experience the outcomes of both correct and incorrect financial decisions within a safe virtual environment.

Project under development: Trading Card Game. Students achieving high results within their course can be provided with an educational reward of a high ranking or valued card. This card can be used when playing the Trading Card Game.

Project under development: Annotation Behaviour Clustering. This project evaluates students' annotations that they make on their work. By evaluating the annotations, a student's learning and note taking style can be identified. The aim of the project is to identify each student's learning style. Once the learning style is identified, future content presented to them once they log into the LMS, will be provided in a manner that addresses the student's own learning style.

6. The International Experience

Contact

Qing Tan PhD, Associate Professor, School of Computer Sciences

Project under development: Developing an application to support students in their learning via the use of location based mobile learning. Students are profiled according to the following criteria:

- Location
- Interests
- Course they are undertaking
- Personal learning style (i.e. time of day that they prefer to study).

Specific learning objects are developed and tagged using the same profile criteria. Using location based mobile learning, a student undertaking a course can be located by the GPS system in their mobile phone. Once the location of a student is identified, learning content specific to their location, and the course they are undertaking, could be displayed on their mobile phone.

Learning content could be provided at the time of day the student prefers to study. An indoor application of this could be identifying when a student is near particular machinery or a particular workspace, and the learning content relevant to that location would be displayed.

Students could be notified when other students from their course are within the locality. Students could use this information to get together to discuss their learning. Location based mobile learning could be used where people are within a particular indigenous area, to provide information of the language, points of interest, main areas of interest for that area.

6. The International Experience

Contacts

Sabine Graf and Research Team consisting of Moushir El-Bishouty

Ting-Wen Chang, Herbert Molenda, John Schaub and Richard Tortorella

Project under development

Adaptivity and Personalization in Learning System. The finished product will be an 'Add on' to Moodle platform.

Aim

- To identify information about learners and their learning context
- Develop adaptive courses, based on information gained
- Provide information to learners about their learning behaviour
- Provide recommendations to teachers on how to support a range of learning styles/behaviours
- Not to develop new adaptive system, they already exist. Look at what is already being used and then provide adaptive courses.

Information the project is looking to capture includes

- The learners' context/learning styles, as well as the learning behaviour they are displaying whilst undertaking course content. Gathering information instantly and 'on the fly' is considered preferable to using a standard learning styles questionnaire
- The learners' cognitive abilities (working memory capacity) of students. The project is working towards the ability to track and identify the working memory capacity of students as they undertake coursework
- The learners' motivation in learning systems: adding tools to any course (motivators that are domain independent, content independent). These will provide motivation techniques to the course
- For students using mobile devices, identify the characteristics of the environment – is it loud, are they are home, or work.

Once the data is gathered, a visual report, along with information on what the data means, will be provided to teachers. The next step is the provision of recommendations to assist teachers to make their courses more 'adaptive' to the learning styles of their students.

The final 'add on' tools developed will be available to other universities that Athabasca University is in collaboration with; trials starting in October 2012.

Personalised courses based on the outcome of information obtained, could be adapted in the following ways:

- Learning objects and material can be adapted to address the personalised needs of students
- Adjustments of the learning material and unit activities provided (i.e. quizzes, exercises, reflections, application activities)
- Essential learning objects are not modified, however activities that do not fit within the learners context, can be modified. The modifications provided to the students are recommendations only

6. The International Experience

- Adjustment to the order of delivery of learning objects can be made to meet the needs of the students learning and motivation styles.

Contact

Dr Vivek Kumer PhD, Associate Professor, School of Computing and Information Systems

Project under development

Mywriter, a software program that can track the processes students are using when developing their work on computer.

The software program records:

- All key strokes used by the students. This allows analysis of the processes used by the student in constructing their work
- The number of significant changes made to the document, what grammar or spelling mistakes made, how many backspaces used
- Number of changes made as the student revises their work. This information can be used to determine whether the numbers of changes being made are reducing after suggested customisation has taken place
- When student have made a mistake, but corrected immediately (provides motivation for students).

Data can still be recorded when handwriting is being used, rather than keystrokes. This is particularly useful for students undertaking maths problems. The program produces a grammatical analysis in real time and can provide instant formative feedback to students, or summary can be developed to provide recommendations to the teachers.

Patterns across a classroom can be detected and future classes adjusted accordingly. The program also allows for evaluation of any previously implemented adjustments. The program will be integrated within Moodle.

The program is currently being trialled in school in Wellington, NZ. The student cohort involved in the trial have previously failed in English.

6. The International Experience

Destination: University of Alberta ¹⁰

Contact

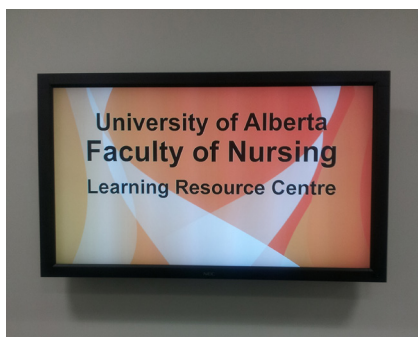
Wendy Caplan, MEd, Director, eLearning Services, Faculty of Nursing

Program

Graduate Level Nursing course, post RN. Initially this course was offered in flexible mode at PhD level. The course used text chat, then moved to using Elluminate® so audio could be included, as well as the whiteboard and video options.



University of Alberta



Practical Lab

Undergraduate courses are currently delivered primarily in a face-to-face model, utilising the new prac labs and equipment at the university. The prac labs also include COWS (computers on wheels). The mobile computers can be used by students during practical work to access information, review previously taught material and record outcomes. The University of Alberta does include some e-learning within its program and has branded its own learning site, which is powered by Moodle®.



Newly opened student practical lab



Newly opened student practical lab

¹⁰ <http://www.ualberta.ca/>

6. The International Experience

This site is used for:

- Accessing course materials
- Accessing course outlines
- Quizzes
- Submission and grading of assignments
- Accessing the University's library data base
- Accessing support material that may be useful across the full length of the course
- Linking to Alberta's health policy and procedures (these are linked via RSS feed to Alberta Health to ensure currency)
- Guidelines for clinical placement
- Lab guides
- Reading or article lists.

In addition, student research groups use the virtual classroom for collaboration.

The university has recently moved to videoing aspects of the course that are repeated within future iterations of the course. Currently the laboratory orientation process and procedures have been videoed. Previously lecturers took all new students through the orientation process as each group started. This is now videoed, with student access via the learning site.

Lecturers also utilise the learning site to access, store and share resources. Potential format for a course may be:

- Three synchronous sessions during the course. This could be a lecture or demonstration
- Student presentations via Elluminate®
- Using virtual classroom weekly for classroom discussion.

Outcomes

The Fellowship experience provided the opportunity to speak to experts within the distance education industry, both in New Zealand and Canada. When asked what the most important issues were when developing successful distance education courses, interviewees were consistent in their identification of the crucial issues that must be addressed.

Whilst each organisation has addressed these issues in unique and customised ways (see reports above) it is clear that the success of their programs hinge on consideration of all aspects of course delivery, not just focussing on the technology and course content.

There is an identified skills shortage for personal care staff within Australia. This is particularly evident in rural and remote areas. Drawing on the insights, experience and suggestions of professionals delivering successful distance and blended courses in New Zealand and Canada, provides a clear guide to best practice. Reviewing the strategies above, and contextualising them to the particular education facility and student cohort, can work towards the achievement of robust and successful education programs within Australia.

6. The International Experience

Crucial areas to be addressed

- Developing relationship with local community – identifying key people within the community and working with them to create the program
- Cultural considerations – liaising with indigenous people within the local community. Inclusion of indigenous people in the development of the program to address cultural needs. Inclusion of cultural language and practices within the program. Employment of indigenous teachers. Development of mentoring program within the community to support learners
- Being flexible and not presenting a 'one size fits all' program within a community
- Development of opportunities to develop peer support and social networks between remote and rural students (this can be face to face, or on line)
- Support for teachers, who are working at distance from the organisation's campus. Ensuring teachers are included as part of the parent organisation
- Ensuring teachers are provided with professional development opportunities regarding the use of technology
- Supporting teachers who are moving from the face to face classroom into facilitating on line. This can be done via:
 - » Professional development sessions
 - » Providing demonstrations of quality examples of e-learning programs
 - » Provision of training on the technology required to deliver/assess e-learning programs.
- Ensure that sound pedagogy theory drives the learning, not the technology. This can be done via:
 - » Providing clear guidelines of the purpose and expectations of material being delivered
 - » Providing the opportunity for discussion and collaborative sessions for learners
 - » Ensuring that content is interactive and encourages questioning and reflection
 - » Considering the context of the learning and adjusting to the specific needs of the student cohort
 - » Provision of pre-reading material prior to tutorials (whether face to face on within a virtual classroom environment)
 - » Use of problem based learning
 - » Encouraging students to utilise the technology available to create a learning community and contribute to discussions forums
 - » Using video or audio to provide examples of 'real' workplace situations as a basis for content
 - » Utilising social media where appropriate to enhance the learning.
- Provision of initial training to students on the ICT to be used
- Utilising software that has proven to provide students access to a wide range of resources
- Ensuring that sound pedagogical practice is the driver for course design
- Developing relationships between students and lecturers (using technology or course design)
- Ensuring student receive response to questions or concerns within a short timeframe
- Utilising the local aged care facilities to provide the practical placement and assessment component of the courses
- Being creative and inventive in the use of the ICT – looking outside the square
- Utilisation of the country's broadband network
- One area not identified by the educators interviewed, but observed by the Fellow, is the importance

6. The International Experience

of a passionate and learning-centred driver of the program.

Concluding Remarks

The focus of this Fellowship was the shortage of trained aged care workers and how best to create e-learning/distance education to address this need. However, it became apparent that the knowledge and strategies shared by the people interviewed are relevant and applicable to the development of any skills based educational course.

All courses researched were constructed on the same basic pillars. Drawing on the successful strategies shared by experienced course designers provides a sound foundation for future successful distance learning programs.

The aim of the Fellow was not only to engage in conversations with overseas experts and indigenous learners, but to develop a folio of practical strategies that can be utilised and customised to support quality distance education in Australia. This has been achieved.

The Fellow had envisaged that she would return from the program with information on a wide range of software programs that were currently being utilised. What became apparent was that a relatively small range of software is being used, but to its fullest extent and often in creative ways that support quality learning.

The aims of the Fellowship were met and in some cases surpassed, by the generosity shown by the education professionals interviewed. All were willing to share their extensive knowledge and experiences and were committed to providing assistance to others who wish to build quality distance education courses.

Provision of additional distance based aged care training courses will work towards addressing the ever increasing need for quality aged care workers. The opportunity to hear the stories, and share in the successes, of the educators interviewed was a privilege and appreciation goes out to them all.

7. Knowledge Transfer: Applying the Outcomes

- The Fellow delivered early findings of the Fellowship via webinar in New Zealand. This webinar was hosted by Professor Nikki Davis and opened to all members of DEANZ. Davis has invited the Fellow to undertake further webinars during 2013.
- The Fellow was a speaker at the 2012 ACFE Conference in Melbourne in October 2012.
- The Fellow was a speaker at the Converge Conference to be held in Melbourne in November 2012.
- ACPET have made opportunities available for the Fellow to be part of the ACPET education calendar during 2013.
- DEANZ has requested a follow up webinar and an article for the DEANZ magazine during 2013.

8. Recommendations

Government – Federal

- As an adjunct to the NBN rollout, provide funding to facilitate the delivery of two to three day workshops. These workshops would be designed to provide guidance on the development and delivery of distance education courses
- These courses made available for all RTOs, including ACFE providers
- Provide funds for the development of a website, providing a 'one stop shop' for information on the development and delivery of distance education courses
- Provide funds for the development of workbook/guidelines/support materials.

Industry

Community Services and Health Industry Training Board

- Auspice series of workshops
- Interact with industry and RTOs to support the dissemination of information gained by the Fellowship
- Promote distance education amongst RTOs and within the Community and Health industry
- Provision of opportunities to speak at State and Federal Conferences
- Promote website
- Promote workshops.

Aged Care industry

- Promote distance education courses
- Forming partnerships with training providers
- Support the delivery of distance education courses via the provision of placement opportunities
- Providing input into content development
- Provide input into assessment practices.

8. Recommendations

Professional Associations

ACPET

- Provide opportunities to deliver at ACPET National and State conferences
- Promote distance education
- Addition of sessions to current e-mentoring program. These sessions would cover the blending of ICT and sound pedagogical principles within distance education.

Education and Training

University, TAFE, RTOs and Schools

- Promote distance education
- Utilise suggestions from report to develop distance education courses
- Provide Professional Development opportunities for staff re design and delivery of distance education courses
- Share best practice
- Support future Fellows, whether from Australia or overseas
- Promote aged care as a career option.

Community

- Identify and promote the benefits of distance education courses within their communities
- Develop partnerships with training providers
- Participate in the development and delivery of future distance education courses
- Provide practical placement opportunities
- Promote aged care as a career option.

International Specialised Skills Institute

- Provision of further Fellowship opportunities for participants to increase their knowledge/capability within this area
- Auspice delivery of workshops.

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Athabasca University

<http://www.athabascau.ca/>

Alberta Supernet

<http://www.thealbertasupernet.com/>

University Alberta

<http://www.ualberta.ca/>

