Keynote Addresses

Keynote Address 1: Thursday, 9th December 2010 9.15am

Difficulties sharing: Designing for collaboration in online environments

Gregor Kennedy
University of Melbourne, Australia

Contemporary instructional theories often place a strong emphasis on the value of 'social' learning. These social aspects of learning are most obviously manifest in the classroom as group work and peer-based collaborative activities. In online environments, educational designers are spoilt for choice when is comes to technology-based tools that can be used to encourage peer-based collaboration. From a teacher's point of view, it is often relatively easy to include collaborative exercises in lesson plans and online courses. However, while embedding collaborative tasks in online learning environments is generally 'easy enough' to do and regarded as 'good' teaching and learning practice, students, for one reason or another, often have difficulties successfully negotiating truly collaborative activities.

In this presentation Gregor will discuss some of the difficulties associated with designing for online student collaboration. He will present the experiences he and his colleagues had in designing a wiki-based collaborative writing exercise for 750 first-year psychology students, and will reflect on some of the key outcomes of its evaluation. By drawing on this example he will explore some of the difficulties students have sharing and collaborating in online environments. This will lead him to (re)consider some of the key issues that teachers and designers need to be mindful of when designing for online student collaboration. Gregor will conclude the presentation by reflecting on how some of the defining attributes of emerging 'social' media and technologies can run counter to traditional teaching and learning practices within universities.

Biographical notes

Gregor is an Associate Professor in Health Informatics and Virtual Environments in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Science at the University of Melbourne. He has developed strong programs of research in the areas of educational technology and human-computer interaction, particularly in higher education settings. He has recently led a number of large-scale, empirical investigations of so-called 'Net Generation' students, and these have provided significant insight into how students use technology based-tools in higher education. He is an experienced educational designer and has been involved in the management, educational design and evaluation of over 40 technology-based learning and teaching projects for University staff and commercial clients. He has published widely in the area of educational design, evaluation of educational technology, and students' use of technology in educational settings.

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Keynote Address 2: Thursday, 9th December, 10.00am

Exploring e-learning design

Caringbah High School Students & Teachers, Australia

Macquarie ICT Innovations Centre partnered with Year 11 Students from Caringbah High School to explore e-learning design. Students explored concepts relating to the preservation of the Angkor Wat site in Cambodia including conservation, tourism and the local perspective. They investigated one concept and then shared their knowledge across a learning community using LAMS to complete a culminating activity. Students were trained as authors in LAMS and were supported to develop online learning sequences for their peers. They created and peer-reviewed these sequences, refining and sharing them across their learning design community. Critical thinking skills and deep knowledge, substantial communication and social support are some of the elements of the Quality Teaching Framework addressed by this project. Students and teachers reflected on their understandings in a variety of collaborative ways and developed deep understandings of the topic of Cambodia, explored ways of sharing knowledge and gained confidence in using the technical tools. Students also explored the traditional teacher-owned concepts of 'outcomes', 'learning activities' and 'assessment'. During this presentation the students will present their designs and discuss the learning outcomes and challenges of the project.

Biographical Notes

Concetta is a teacher and project leader at the Macquarie ICT Innovations Centre. The Centre's mission is to develop, implement and evaluate innovative ways of enhancing learning through the application of dynamic and emerging information and communication technologies. Concetta has experience as both a primary school teacher and corporate learning and development consultant and has also worked supporting social networking tools for teachers. The application of collaborative tools for learning is a core area of interest and she is currently leading the Learning Design project which uses collaborative tools and teaching strategies to allow students to design learning.

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Closing Keynote : Thursday 9th December, 3.30pm

Three great eTeaching ideas: Predict-Observe-Explain, Problem-based Learning, and Role Plays

Professor James Dalziel
Macquarie University, Australia

One of the core goals of the field of Learning Design is the sharing and adoption of effective teaching methods. While there is considerable theoretical literature on teaching methods such as Predict-Observe-Explain, Problem-Based Learning and Role Plays, there is less information about practical implementation of these approaches online, or Learning Design templates to assist implementation. This presentation will discuss the background to each method and requirements for face to face implementation, followed by discussion of ways to implement these methods online. Online implementation examples will be demonstrated using ready-to-use LAMS templates, together with advice on how to adapt these generic templates to a variety of different topic areas.

Biographical notes

James is the Director of the Macquarie E-Learning Centre Of Excellence (MELCOE) in Sydney, Australia, and also a Director of the LAMS Foundation and LAMS international Pty Ltd. He is known nationally and internationally for his research into and development of innovations in e-learning, and technical standards. James has directed and contributed significantly to e-learning projects such as the Meta-Access Management System project (MAMS), The Collaborative Online Learning and Information Services project (COLIS), and the Learning Activity Management System (LAMS) project.

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