An integrated Faculty model for engaging staff with online and blended learning

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Background

> Small multidisciplinary Faculty at an outer metropolitan campus
> Exponential growth in off-campus (fully online) student enrolments
> Pockets of good practice, but not always shared across disciplines
> Challenge to best utilise the LMS for active learning, rather than content repository
“Too often considerations about information technology have become the dominant factors in many strategies adopted by academic institutions. This has resulted in a rich information technological environment that fails to capture, motivate or retain the learners” (Prendergast, 2004, p. 2).
Faculty model

Four key facets:

1. Inform: visiting scholars program
2. Engage: intensive workshop program revisiting online teaching
3. Implement: Collaborative development of online units
4. Support: Community of Practice model for ongoing engagement
Stage 1: Visiting scholars program

> 2010: Dean & Deputy Dean undertook study tour of UK & Western Europe, making key contacts & inviting key innovators

> Established ongoing program of hosting visiting scholars:
  - November 2010: Gilly Salmon
  - July 2011: Alejandro Armellini
  - October 2011: David Nicol
Stage 2: Workshop program

> Upgrade of LMS (summer of 2010-11) provided opportunity to revisit basics of good online teaching

> Two workshops developed:

1. The basics of online teaching
   - Online communication, community building etc (based on Chickering & Gamson, Salmon etc)

2. Learning activities & assessment
   - Facilitating active learning, aligning assessment & feedback (based on Biggs, Boud, Nicol etc)
Stage 3: Collaborative development

> Learning design teams formed to develop / redevelop online units

> Based on Carpe Diem model of Armellini & Jones (2008)

> Teams can comprise:
  - Discipline groups or single academic
  - Learning designer
  - Subject librarian
  - Technology expert
  - Others as required
Stage 4: Community of Practice

> Plans to facilitate formation of Communities of Practice around specific topics

> Examples might include:
  - Teaching large online cohorts
  - Online assessment
  - Improving student engagement

> Not yet implemented
Results (1)

> Stage 1 (Visiting scholars) is an ongoing program
> Staff participation at scholars’ sessions has been very high
  - 62% participation for Gilly Salmon
  - 60% participation for David Nicol
> Stage 2 (Workshop program) also well attended (68%), with high uptake by sessional staff
  - Adapted program ongoing for new staff
Stage 3 (Collaborative design) rolling out S2 2011

- Well received by staff participating
- Staff enjoy brainstorming their ideas, mapping out their unit, revising objectives & assessment etc
- Yet to be seen how much of design is ultimately implemented
- How is success determined? i.e. one new activity? or fully implemented new design?
Results (3)

> Initial feedback from participants:

> The development process really works. I was delighted that in 2 hours, we mapped out the online version of [my unit]. It gave me a great feeling of comfort — and pleasure at the added value [learning designer] provided. (Discipline leader, PR)

> I really enjoyed today's session and this is the first time I thought that research units can actually be not boring, a lot of fun. I am glad to be involved. (Discipline leader & lecturer, ITSM)
Summary

- Work in progress of a Faculty-wide model
- High level support from Faculty management
- High level of buy-in from academic staff
- Optimistic about potential for improvement in online teaching
- Long-term or ongoing impact still to be determined
Questions?

Thank-you for your attention…

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