Engagement at the Epicentre

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Source: Geonet Canterbury Quakes
http://geonet.org.nz/earthquake/quakes/3529702g-maps.html
Downloaded 10/11/11
On February 22nd 2011 a major earthquake struck Christchurch forcing the evacuation and closure of Canterbury University. The institution was forced to suddenly confront significant damage and loss of physical teaching space and infrastructure on the second day of Semester One.

Source: Geonet Seisograph Drums - McQueens Valley (Banks Peninsula, Canterbury)
Accessed February 22, 2011
CHRISTCHURCH QUAKE DISASTER

CHRISTCHURCH EARTHQUAKE DAY 2

23 AFTERSHOCKS since the big quake with a MAGNITUDE GREATER THAN 4

75 DEAD 55 have been identified
20 remain unidentified
300 MISSING

More than 200 treated for serious injuries at Christchurch Hospital. Power out to 50% of homes.

SCENES OF DESPERATION

Christchurch Cathedral

BEFORE: The cathedral spire reached above Cathedral Square. It has been damaged by earthquakes on three occasions prior to this one: 1891, 1960, 1961

AFTER: 22 missing, 20 deaths expected. The building is dangerous and off limits.

Source: New Zealand Herald, Thursday February 24, 2011
At a glance...

- 9 departments, 12 lecturers
- 12 weeks’ snapshot
- Case study design
- Explored through lens of lecturers’ reactions to situation and their perception of student engagement
- Best practice frameworks used to identify elements of engagement
How to start or restart course

• Course quality delivery versus student welfare
• How to recreate/replace face to face to face virtually?
• Staff/student isolation, loss of campus space

Interventions:

✓ Extent of teacher experience made re-design easier
✓ Tents used but required adaptation of teaching style in flexible space
✓ Lecturer home as teaching space
DEAR EARTH,
You really think
THAT
IS GOING TO STOP
US?

Yours Sincerely,
The students of UC
How to engage students

• Most lecturers had not met the students in their course
• Only blended on-campus/distance courses ready to go... remainder needed redesign

Interventions

✓ Shared personal experiences through Moodle communication tools
✓ Used Moodle News forums to communicate (up 88.4% on previous year) and express concern for student welfare
✓ Anticipation of student queries (Q&A)
How to provide learning resources

• Lack of access to library textbooks
• Concern about student access to Internet
• Students overwhelmed with online resources

**Interventions:**

✔ Lecturers already developing the use of online as a blended strategy were in better position
✔ Well-organised course sites provided structure and continuity
How to provide learning resources

✓ Clear directions, outlines and summaries, modelling of tasks
✓ Course content multimodal – text, audio and video; Adobe Connect
✓ Audio and PPT preferred to video
Engagement in online tutorials

- No physical space to meet for tutorials

**Interventions:**

- ✓ Core of course became more tutorial focused
- ✓ Forum posts replaced face to face group work
- ✓ Feedback every week on forum discussions
- ✓ Created videos with PPT for demonstration of concepts
How to manage assessment

• Students unable to complete all planned work due to lack of resources and loss of face to face

Interventions:

✓ Scheduled early-course on-campus assessment removed and alternatives chosen
✓ Take-home assessment, online quizzes
✓ Assessment of tutorial forum contributions, sometimes chosen by students
✓ Assessed tutorial responses rather than written examination
Student feedback to lecturers

✓ Students positive about every second lecture used for discussion
✓ Students liked pace and content review features of online
✓ Students appreciated quick responses through forum communications
Lecturers’ perception and reflection

✓ Felt more of a connection with students
✓ Availability of course content online allowed late-enrolling students to catch up
✓ Blend of online and face to face seen as valuable
✓ Pedagogical intentions of traditional group work successfully replicated online
Lecturers’ perception and reflection

✓ Thought about what was/wasn’t working
✓ Thought more about pedagogy and need for students to take responsibility for learning – reason for better online tutorial responses
✓ Course modifications encouraged reflection on teaching and need to reinvigorate teaching
✓ Earthquake as great laboratory – had to think about theory and practice
Lecturers would retain:

- Forum discussions
- Adaptations to assessment
- Recording of lectures
- Use of audio with PPT to amplify/clarify points and encourage students to review and engage with their learning
Our perceptions as FLA’s

 ✓ Earthquake disruption helped lecturers to gain insights into course design/teaching strategies
 ✓ Risk-taking provided freedom to re-negotiate course’s essential elements
 ✓ Crisis forced lecturers to consider how to engage students in the virtual space
 ✓ More reliance on Moodle communication tools
Our perceptions as FLA’s

✓ Re-working face to face tutorials for online, major catalyst for innovative changes
✓ Importance of establishing and maintaining student engagement as centrepiece of design
✓ Lecturers able to use technology to facilitate student engagement rather than physical space
Thank you
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