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

## Debbi Weaver & Sue Kokonis

# 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

# The problem…

> "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

# Results (2)

> 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?

> 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

Thank-you for your attention…

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