

Abstracts

Keynote addresses



Through the looking glass

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In the future education will not look like it does today, or will it? In this talk I will take you on a fictional journey through the future with a glimpse of some of the technology tools that will become available. I will set the scene for the themes of the conference and offer some challenges around content creation and the impact of web 2.0 on knowledge and who owns it; consider the impact of globalisation on the appropriateness of the technological and pedagogical cultures we create, and the competition we encounter for overseas students as well as our own; and confront the way we will need to think about life and work in higher education as student populations increase and diversify, and demands for even more flexible modes of learning increase. Will there be a stronger business focus with industry incubation hubs and students as workers, and if so will the societal values that are debated and developed in today's institutions be maintained or lost?



Mobile and virtual presence in the learning community

Piet Kommers

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Advanced learning technologies attempt to facilitate students reaching their traditional (curricular) learning goals. Recently we have become aware that the overall model of classroom-based teaching and learning has limited potential to absorb new ICT didactics except, for example, electronic white boards and video conferencing for remote students. It is most likely that secondary and higher education will face 'new learning practices' to emerge further in the students' private time and learning at home. A key factor that can trigger new school-based innovation is the re-orientation of assessment methods. As long as assessment via centrally-orchestrated test banks are the goal, there is no need to change learning methods. If educational institutions accept these types of fixed goals, there is only a weak cosmetic stimulus for learners to accept school as a place to learn to learn. This tendency to revitalize schools as a learning community has increased at the time when information supply and information access are no longer the critical resources.

This keynote presentation focuses on three simultaneous trends:

- 1. Mobile communication and virtual environments that allow learners to widen their actual presence to web-based communities (WBCs).* These WBCs allow members to focus on an acute learning need. Typically they bridge formal education with existential or intellectual interests that exceed typical institutional education.
- 2. The shift from intra- to interpersonal expertise;* problem solving and creative thinking primarily manifests in the interplay among persons of various disciplines. If the job settings demand team players, it seems obvious that education should anticipate that, and promote cooperative learning projects.
- 3. The growing awareness that instruction has mainly focused on optimising external conditions, does not take into account the need to guide the learner to a more effective self regulation and self organisation.* The inclusion of cognitive learning tools like mind mapping, simulations and problem-based project work, has opened a large agenda to be explored where it is the individual learner who needs to build the attitude and skills for learning via web-based tools.

The emergence of mobile learning goes much further than flexibility. Essentially it is the precursor for the learner to regain ownership of learning. The mobile phone will develop further as 'the' mental-, personal- and communicative prosthesis for humans. Similar to the right to keep silent until your lawyer has arrived, it will be the right to learn and perform with artefacts such as your clothing, glasses and other personal items.

In this presentation, the contours of media-based life and the need for joining web-based communities will be exemplified and applied to learning in the coming decades.



A place to call a learning home

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The saying home is where the heart is, applies well to someone's learning home. If our students are to see our institutions as their learning homes, then what can we do to ensure their hearts are here, that they feel a genuine sense of engagement and belonging? In this session, we will explore ways that architecture, real and virtual, can be used to create this sense of learning home. We will look at challenges provided by diverse beliefs about what learning is and, indeed, what home is. Examples of such learning homes will be drawn from the University of British Columbia's new Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, and from other exciting projects found across Australia and the world.