

Meeting the Challenges of Sustainable Learning Support

Michael Griffith

Associate Professor, Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Australian Catholic University

Michael has been using blogging technology since 2005 to enhance his teaching of literature. He has a PhD (Sydney 1981) in Australian Poetry and a Certificate of Higher Education from ACU (2011). His research topic for the Cert. in Higher Ed was "Blogging in the University Literature Classroom: A Case Study". Michael has given academic papers on the use of technology in Higher Education at Blackboard Conferences in Chicago and Cairns. He has published widely in the field of Australian Literature and Spirituality and has recently begun publishing in the area of teaching with technology.

Diana Simmons

Academic Skills Unit
Australian Catholic University

Diana Simmons gained a Masters Degree in Applied Linguistics in 1991 from Macquarie University, majoring in systemic functional linguistics and literacy development. She has lectured in both these areas at Macquarie University, the University of Technology, Sydney, the University of Western Sydney and the University of Wollongong. Since 1999, on joining the Academic Skills Unit at Australian Catholic University, her work has focused primarily on tertiary literacy. The affordances offered by recent advances in technology are of particular interest to her, as they allow for literacy development through peer-to-peer as well as teacher-to-student interaction.

Simon Smith

BCompSc, GradCertHum, MBA
eLearning Team
University of Adelaide

Simon is currently employed as an eLearning Designer at The University of Adelaide. In addition to his current role Simon has worked in the tertiary education sector in South Australia, New South Wales, and Jiangsu Province China in the roles of Online Applications Specialist, Systems Administrator, and Lecturer. Simon's research interests include intercultural issues in education, large class and diversity issues, and electronic assessment within the tertiary education environment. Simon has a particular interest in semi-automated quality feedback and the design of media to increase perceived quality of feedback content.

Paula Williams

Faculty of Health Science
Australian Catholic University

Wai-Leng Wong

Systems Infrastructure
Australian Catholic University

BSoc Sc, Grad Cert Computing, Master in Learning Science and Technology

Wai-Leng has been collaborating with Michael in the use of technology for engaging students since 2004. She has worked in a wide range of roles including five years in the elearning area: provided support to lecturers in the use of LMS (for face-to-face and online units) and use of Web 2.0 tools, research support and copyright. Her interests are in learning design, pattern language and the use computer-supported collaborative learning.

Outline of focus area and summary of ideas to be explored

Universities and staff are under pressure to demonstrate improved performance and often with declining resourcing (Ellis & Goodyear, 2010). Currently the authors are involved in the design of a pilot "study" that will comprise students from two different faculties to use blogging technology as a way of enhancing their writing skills and their engagement with learning. Blogging was the technology of choice as there has been positive anecdotal feedback from students in a literature course. While the feedback has been positive, there have been a number of challenges with managing blogging and managing students' expectations in relation to timely

feedback. This project will also explore the role of peers in the community of bloggers, use of semi-automated quality feedback and informal support provided by academics and academic skills advisers. This cross-faculty model involves voluntary participation of students from a literature cohort and students from a health science cohort.

Range of views that panel members will represent

- Michael - using blogging - literary/creative aspects; assessment
- Diana - academic skills perspective; leverage blogging to improve students writing in particular academic writing
- Simon - semi-automated quality feedback with blogs - design, etc
- Paula – expertise in elearning and perspectives from a faculty that support large class sizes
- Wai-Leng computer-supported collaborative learning to support and enhance learning using Web 2.0 tools and technologies

Describe the intended audience

Staff in higher education institutions, colleges and schools looking at use of blogging as a strategy to engage students and improve students writing especially within context of large class sizes