Evaluating the Effectiveness of ICT Innovations in Universities

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Workshop: half day

Intended audience: University staff interested in evaluating the effectiveness of educational innovations (including the use of new technologies) on student learning; and those interested in developing these skills in others.

Objectives

- To explore underlying assumptions impacting on evaluation/ research of student learning
- To provide a step-by-step guide to the process of designing an evaluation of the effectiveness of an ICT innovation in higher education
- To outline a framework which scaffolds the development of an evaluation plan
- To assist attendees to apply the framework in developing an evaluation plan

Description

This workshop will provide attendees with information and resources to enable them to plan and carry out an evaluation of the effectiveness of an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) project. It arises from an Australian project aimed at improving the evaluation of student learning in teaching activities supported by ICT.

The approach taken is supported by the Learning-centred Evaluation (LCE) Framework, which has four main characteristics:

- it presumes that evaluation will occur in each of the major phases of an educational development project (design, development, implementation, and institutionalisation);
- it focusses attention on three aspects of learning:
  - the learning environment (*where* people learn, or the ICT innovation);
  - the learning process (*how* people learn)
  - the learning outcome (*what* people learn)
- it encourages evaluators to frame appropriate and answerable evaluation questions;
- it outlines the types of evidence and methods that may be appropriate for each question.

Attendees will work on a case study relevant to the workshop environment. Given one or two broad evaluation questions, attendees will use the LCE Framework as a scaffold to develop specific questions, by breaking down the lifecycle of an educational innovation into phases. The LCE framework will then be used to develop an evaluation matrix, where the specific evaluation questions are matched to sources of data which provide appropriate evidence to answer each of them. The sources of data may be both qualitative and quantitative.

Biography

Dr Rob Phillips is currently Senior Lecturer in Educational Design at the Teaching and Learning Centre, at Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia. He is responsible for online course development and interactive multimedia production, as well as staff development in the use of new technologies.

From 1999 to 2001, he managed an Australian Government staff development project on effective evaluation of student learning through Information Technology: "Staff Development in Evaluation of Technology-based Teaching Development Projects: An Action Inquiry Approach". Staff from 18 universities around Australia worked with mentors to develop evaluation plans and carry out scholarly evaluations of the use of technology in tertiary education.

Rob is also manager of the implementation of the WebCT Learning Management System at Murdoch, which is now used by three quarters of the University's students. He was President of the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (ASCILITE) from 1996 to 2000.

He has over 57 publications, including principal authorship of *The Developer's Handbook to Interactive Multimedia - A Practical Guide for Educational Applications*, Kogan Page 1997. His wide research interests cover university policy issues; the creative and innovative use of technology; project management in ICT developments; and evaluation of learning using ICT.