

## Implementing, developing and promoting LAMS@Macquarie

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### *Abstract*

*Since the formative days of e-learning in the early 1990s, when the first courses in higher education began experimenting with online learning, we have come a long way in understanding the related educational and professional development issues. The integration and adoption of the next generation of e-learning tools and systems nonetheless presents considerable challenges, some of which are predictable change management and technical issues, others are concerned with preferred pedagogies and processes. In the LAMS@Macquarie project we are undertaking the technical integration of a new e-learning system — the Learning Activity Management System (LAMS) — into the current online teaching platform at the University. The implementation includes a proactive educational development and promotional strategy to assist teaching and support staff. This poster reviews some of the issues to be addressed.*

### *Keywords*

*LAMS@Macquarie, Learning Activity Management System, technical integration*

### **Finding the balance**

The 'LAMS@Macquarie University Implementation Project' was established to integrate, develop and promote the use of LAMS (the Learning Activity Management System) at Macquarie (see <http://www.melcoe.mq.edu.au/projects/lams@macquarie.htm>). The project is conceived to run over a two-year period, and has initially been funded for twelve months (July 2005 to June 2006) through an internal University grant. During the project LAMS will be integrated into the University's Online Teaching Facility and linked to the Student Information System; to WebCT, the student portal and library e-reserve with the same sign on; to iLecture; and other online tools and enhancements.

The project includes a technical integration and an educational staff support program. Some of the many challenges presented by this project, here striking the right balance is important, include: promotion of the project with the best educational perspective for the context; balancing technical considerations with educational needs; understanding the conceptual models of e-learning held by individual staff in comparison with the new paradigm offered by LAMS; understanding collaboration, the best ways we learn together and generate new knowledge; user readiness to undertake further changes in e-learning given the rapid changes over recent times; ensuring the outcomes, whether technical or educational, are sustainable and well integrated.

### **Keeping the momentum**

The introduction of new technology in education is an opportunity to rethink traditional and habitual ways of teaching and learning. Maintaining the momentum to keep reinvigorating our teaching methodologies is a challenge for all educators. LAMS, more than previous e-learning technologies, challenges the traditional university lecture/tutorial model where most of the interactions are conceived as being between the learner and content, and the learner and the teacher/instructor. Using systems such as LAMS, we now have the tools to facilitate many more learner to learner interactions online.

The LAMS@Macquarie project will report on whether the promise of LAMS as a support for more collaborative, 'activity-driven' learning can be realised in higher education.

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