ICT-assisted multi-campus teaching: Principles and practice to impact equity of experience for students

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Background

- Array of ICT-assisted delivery options

- Panacea?

- Multi Campus Teaching challenges

- "Despite the growth of [MCT] little evidence exists to guide the development of multi-campus course delivery" (Ebden, 2010, p.1).

- Need for evidence-based guidelines and resources to support such initiatives at UoN.

Purpose

- To determine whether/how Australian universities are developing/using online resources to foster good practice and equity in relation to Multi Campus Teaching (MCT).

- Use results to inform the development of such resources at UoN.

Method

1. A web search for MCT policies, strategies and resources used by Australian universities:

   – First to determine whether the university was a multi-campus institution

   – Next, keyword searches, e.g. "multi-campus teaching" and multi-campus policy" to identify resources and documents

2. Staff interviews to gain insight into how policy and principles are interpreted and applied in practice 'on the ground' (esp. at UoN).

NB, It is acknowledged that publicly available information online may not reflect the internal policy, strategy and resource generation processes currently in action.

Results of web search

- 37 (of 42) universities in Australia have more than one teaching campus.

- 5 have policies, strategies and resources specifically addressing MCT

- 2 have developed policies and strategies to support specific technologies used for MCT.

- None of the 37 MCT universities had markedly comprehensive open online resources on MCT.
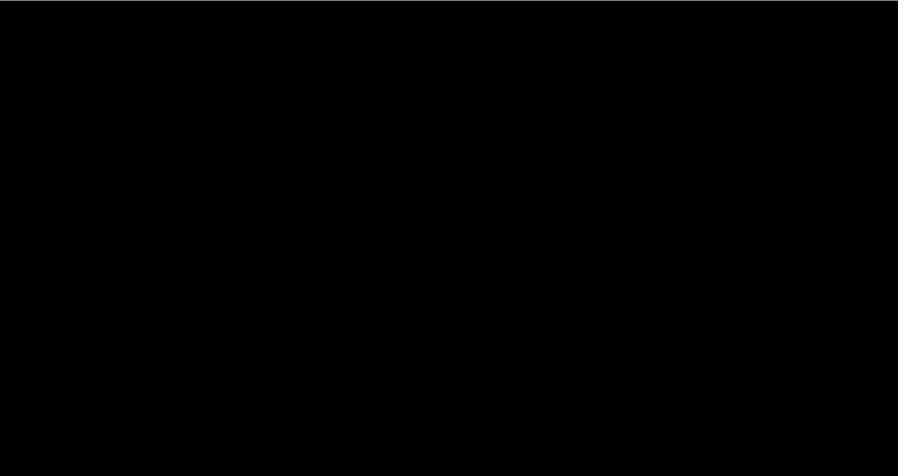
Common MCT principles and strategies

- **Equity and equivalence** –
- Teaching and learning standards must be equivalent at each campus.

- **Equivalent need not necessarily mean 'identical'**

- **Learning decisions should come before delivery decisions. i.e.** begin with consideration of the context and intended learning outcomes.

Interviews: How principles are applied in practice: (Equivalence)

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Interviews: How principles are applied in practice (different contexts and cohorts)

"I got no takers [for Chat] in the time slot. …

*I guess because they are at a **distance** from the campus and they've often got **other work commitments that preclude** them from always **being in one spot at one time**, so it's about them juggling their commitments …*

*So that's why the **asynchronous method** I think still **is more attractive to them** (LB)."*

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Interviews: How principles are applied in practice (Equivalence)

- Synchronous **Chat** used for talking circle:

    "We put a lot of store on the … relationship environment …

    ***Chat** was [used] to create that ..., and as a whole I think we achieved it"* *(MCTNO)*.

- *An 'equivalent' not 'identically taught' activity.*

Interviews: Principles and strategies that treat all equally

- "I **required all students** (at local and remote campuses) **to submit their assignments by email** (pdf) … I marked them by annotating the pdf" …

- "If a student emailed me a question I would copy the answer to all students – **it also makes sure all campuses are treated equally**." …

- "Having more distributed notes might also help … so there may be some advantages in teaching this way." (Lecturer WGM).

Conclusion and recommendations

- Growing body of literature on challenges of MCT.

- A small proportion of universities have comprehensive open resources that specifically address MCT.

- Few concrete solutions or comprehensive models to assist decision-making.

- Web & literature search results accord with Ebden (2010, p.1) that "despite growth of [MCT] little evidence exists to guide the development of multi-campus course delivery."

- More evaluation & sharing of outcomes across institutions needed to inform evidence-based guidelines and practice.

Further information and references

UTAS   http://www.utas.edu.au/university-council/university-governance/university-guidelines/teaching-and-learning-quality-issues-related-to-the-multi-campus-nature-of-the-university-of-tasmania

Griffith   http://www.griffith.edu.au/education/program-leaders

Ebden, M (2010). We're on a steep learning curve: The benefits and challenges of multi-campus university course delivery. In Devline, J. Nagy and A. Litchenberg (Eds.) Research and Development in Higher Education: Reshaping Higher Education, 33 (pp. 267-277). Melbourne, 6-9 July, 2010.

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