TEACHING @ SYDNEY

November 2012

The technology enhanced curriculum

This Sydney Teaching Colloquium session was structured around two sub-sections: Large Undergraduate Cohorts, and Innovations. From the range of speakers who presented in this session, two themes emerged.

The first theme was Excellence using University-wide supported technologies. Gareth Denyer (Molecular Bioscience) presented on a project designed to replace traditional laboratory notebooks with PebblePad based lab notebooks. He described implementing the change across one semester and provided a number of insights into the challenges in such a rapid transition across a large teaching team and student cohort. By contrast, Elizabeth Gresser (Year 4 student in Music Education, Sydney Conservatorium) described how she had used PebblePad. This personal and reflective report demonstrated the utility and value of PebblePad to individual students, while the whole cohort project reported by Associate Professor Denyer was a cautionary tale about hastening slowly. The contrast between the teacher's perspective provided by Gareth and the student's perspective provided by Elizabeth was valuable and provided much food for thought.

Other speakers included Ilektra Spandagou (Education and Social Work) who presented on using Adobe Connect to teach distance students with local students in a postgraduate Master of Special Education program, and Bruce Isaacs (Arts and Social Sciences) who reported on the development of digital objects within the Learning Management System (Blackboard) which facilitate teaching about the transition from analogue to digital media in film.

The second emergent theme was developing and using custom designed projects for technology supported learning and teaching. Some of the externally sourced solutions presented included Matt Todd's use of Open Source software such as LabTrove for Chemistry teaching, and commercial applications included Rosanne Quinnell's extension of Leica's SlidePath for teaching Botanical histology. In these examples, it was clear how important collaborations are in developing new technological solutions. Additionally, time for both conceptualising and development appeared to be essential in successful implementation.

Finally, Karen Scott (Sydney Medical School) presented ongoing research examining how medical students are using their 3G/4G devices in wards and at bedside in clinical settings. Preliminary findings suggest they are looking up clinicially relevant information and emailing

tutors and other students. A number of ethical issues such as patient consent, medical record security and privacy were discussed in the context of generational change and the response of both the hospital and the university to these changes.

Resources from this session of the Colloquium are available here.

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