Understanding the potential of learning design to support university teachers’ design processes

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Online learning

• Driven major change
  ➔ fully online, multi-campus, off-shore, f2f
• Dissatisfaction with quality
  – Good teaching?
  – Needs of students?
  – Staff want to do better
• How to *improve* teaching?
Who are our teachers?

- Researcher
- Discipline expert
- Teaching experience
- No teaching qualifications

Many are motivated to improve what they do
Criticism of support for teachers

- **Expert advice**: Too general
- **Descriptions**: Too specific
- **Prof. Development**: Not tailored
- **Instr. Designers**: Too few
Teachers as designers

• Poorly understood
• Focus has been on ‘approaches to teaching’
• Little known about
  – Their practices
  – Their thinking
  – Influences on what and how they design
Learning designs

Resources → Tasks → Supports

Learning Outcomes
Representation

Intended learning outcomes

In the online setting, students can choose to begin this journey in one of two ways:

- Students can explore the four central questions that are introduced online but elaborated in print, that is: What is at stake?, Where is the status quo?, What are the alternatives?, What happens when different knowledges speak to each other?, or
- Students can explore the issue presented on the website, Wildness, that introduces the four central questions in relation to a specific context.

Students can then explore any of the other issues in any order they choose. All issues are introduced through the four central questions (which serve as a scaffold to assist students when examining the literature). The issue of "Wildness" is the only one that has a visual interface on the web sites.

(Significance of order)

There was much discussion about this in the design phase of the materials about this. We wanted students to experience an actual site of negotiation, for example, like the Wildness which would be within every student's experience as well as the issue of stereotypical concepts from a white western paradigm.

However, to really understand how it could be contested, students needed to understand the key questions that were being asked. To resolve the issue, we have provided screen prompts on the subject web sites about where we recommend the students begin. But the choice is ultimately up to the students. We have found though, that this guided approach has worked well to date.

Critical activities

Because the understanding of different knowledge systems provides different perspectives or issues, the activities have been...
Graphical representation

Resources
- static
- dynamic

Tasks
- formative
- summative

Supports
- people
- documents
- software
Example

video -> predict

predict -> observe

observe -> explain

explain -> group

pairs
The Learning Design Web Site

www.learningdesigns.uow.edu.au
Learning Designs

- Not templates or recipes
- Are patterns or sequences which capture the design logic
- Must be adaptable and customisable
Next step

• Create and investigate tools to support teachers design processes and decision-making
• Embedded in the environment in which teachers work
• Investigate standards that can support the tools and process
The Process

discipline & pedagogical knowledge + learning design → unit of learning IMS LD

Teacher’s design process

learning management system

sharing, publishing, archiving
Preliminary research

Education
Nursing
Arts
Medicine
School-based PBL

✓ Readily understood
✓ Adaptable
✓ Assists communication
The Project

- **Phase 1: Investigations**
  - Teachers’ actual practices
  - Analysis of learning designs available
  - Analysis of IMS LD

- **Phase 2: Design, Development, Evaluation**

- **Phase 3: Final analysis**
Project outcomes

• Understand more about how university teachers design learning experiences
• Advance learning designs as supports for process and decision-making
• Embedded in the environment in which teachers work
• Apply and advance standards to enable software systems to use learning design
Conclusion

• Learning designs **address gap** in current support
• Provide **scaffold** to help teachers apply their professional and disciplinary knowledge to design high quality learning environments
• Next step is a **support system** that maintains these characteristics, and is **technically sound**
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Handbook of Research on Learning Design and Learning Objects: Issues, Applications and Technologies

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