Communities@work

Engaging Gen Y in community work studies through blended distributed delivery

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How did we engage Gen Y?

• Pedagogy
• Technology
• Collaborative & active learning
• Teaching partnerships
• Support & relationships
It’s been an interesting journey
let me share it with you

The day the students went missing

• Returned from secondment
• Empty classroom
• Students were bored
• Many felt restricted & undervalued
This is how we got them back

• The project based assessment was to develop a public awareness campaign on a youth issue
  Partysafe_finalmovie.wmv

The New Learning Technologies

• Enhance delivery
• Globalise classroom
• Create meaningful learning activities
• Equalise learning opportunities
In our rush to adopt the new learning technologies have we become too focused on how to use the technology instead of why?

Let’s start at the beginning
Our brief was to engage young people living in rural areas in community work studies.

The Learners

- Secondary school students in the vocational stream
- Disengaged young people
Challenges the engagement of learners were:

- Geographically diverse
- Remote indigenous communities
- Disengaged or at risk of disengaging from school
- History of poor academic performance
- Mental health & child protection issues
- Few expectations placed on the students
- Vet educators
- To educate or edutain
Some only chose community work because the other option was chemistry.

Our initial reaction...
Our response was to create a shared space that would nurture, stimulate and motivate whilst introducing students to community work.

Our strategy was Blended Distributed Delivery (BDD).
Blended Distributed Delivery
a definition

Gary Wood
Barrier Reef TAFE Manager
Learning Futures

Learning models that are based on pedagogy that centres on the needs of the learner and combine a variety of teaching and learning strategies that are aimed at maximising education and training outcomes for each individual learner.

Blended learning models that cross boundaries of distance of time by integrating information and communications technology into teaching and learning.
BDD Pie chart

- Not static
- Ever-changing representation of teaching and learning strategies
- Educators chose what blend best suits
Certificate II in Community Services Work

• A pathway qualification
• Delivered weekly to 4 NQ communities of Ingham, Townsville, Charters Towers & The Whitsundays NQ map
• Encompassing an area of 36 000km²
• In 3rd year of delivery in BDD mode

The Delivery Team

• 1 teacher & 3 tutors
• Focus on pedagogy not technology
• Experienced community workers
• Model behaviour, attitude & aptitude

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The Rules
Pedagogical Parameters of BDD

Technology is a tool not the Tool

- Is an essential ingredient
- Do not use just because it is there
- It needs to meet the student’s needs
- It has to be educationally significance
Technology is not a tool for economic rationalism

- Not about simple course conversion (Palloff & Pratt 1999)
- Students are not interested in learning via the new technologies if it is simply a repackaging of learning materials online
- “old wine in new bottles” (Lankshear et al 2000)

The internet is not a blackboard

Jonassen, Peck & Wilson, 1999
Technology verses Pedagogy

- **Knowledge construction** - not reproduction
- **Conversation** – not reception
- **Articulation** – not repetition
- **Collaboration** – not competition
- **Reflection** – not prescription

*(Jonassen, Peck & Wilson 1999 p. 16)*

Ref: Nick van Dem 2003
Supportive learning environment

Best practice for quality delivery with the new learning technologies reinforce a supportive delivery with the emphasis on care, support and quality relationships.

Inglies, Ling & Joosten (1999)

Ease of access

Whilst recognising that technology allows for greater equity, access and flexibility, it is to no avail if the student cannot access the technology.
The Audience

“The bottom line is that the technology should not drive the course. Instead, the desired outcomes and needs of the participants should be the deciding factors” (Palloff & Pratt, 1999, p. 63).

Choosing the right blend
Issues for consideration

**The Learner**

- Generation
- Motivation
- Confidence
- Life experiences
- Strengths & challenges

**Access**

- Computers
- Broadband
- Literacy
- Culture

**Online needs**

- Firewall
- Help desk

**Level of Interaction**

- Relevance
- Support or education
- Opportunities for engagement

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**The Learner**

“Constructivist learning should always begin from the student’s point of view”

(Oliver, 2000)

- Generation Y
- Wired, assertive, global, consumer and technologically savvy
Cincotta, ‘Dude, Where’s My Audience?’

Gen Y has been “raised on the revolution of broadband, mobiles, MP3s and the user-generated content explosion, young audiences are fast tuning out of traditional media” (p. 1)

To educate or edutain

“The modern lecture theatre now resembles a cockpit. I can do PowerPoint, podcasts, play DVDs, download whatever I want from the internet and project it on a cinema-size screen” (Winch, 2007, p. 2)
The Tools

Video conference

- Approached as a production
- 10 minute talking head
- Teacher not the font of all knowledge
- Facilitator and co-learner
- Teaching partnerships
- Student involvement
- Builds social connections
Communities@work Website

- Videostreams
- Toolboxes
- Learning activities
- Blog
- Centra
Blog

- Reflective learning
- Student submit group project assessments
- Review and comment
Toolbox

- Australian Flexible Learning Framework
- Constructs knowledge
- Engages in a simulated environment

Client audio
Harm minimisation

Video streams

- Asynchronistic tool
- Short presentations
- Variety of topics
Integrated Literacy Support

• Supports the learner
• Is taught in context
• Is strength not deficit based

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But all is not well
Behaviour issues

• Lack of attendance & commitment
• Motivation
• Focus

Sense of Belongingness

• No demonstrated social bonds
• No connection to any institution
Elaine

• Indigenous kinship ties
• Class envy

Brendtro and Long (1995) state,

“Today, having lost our tribes, we rely on a tiny nuclear family of one or two overstressed parents. Schools are now being asked to become the new tribes, but seldom are prepared to play this role” (p. 102)
Garbarino, 1992 maintains,

“school needs to be a refuge where their lives can be put back in balance”

(cited in Brendtro & Long 1995, p. 103)

Behaviour management strategy

• Non-judgemental & supportive
• Shared space
• Delivery team are not authoritarian
• Technology in use during class
• Only rule enforced is respect
• Learning collaboration

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Learning Collaboration

• Group project based assessment
• Engages students in learning communities
• Active learning
• Public awareness campaigns

The objectives of project-based assessments are “to give students an opportunity to do, rather than just hear about the subject of study. That is the key to active learning strategies”

(Jonassen, Peck & Wilson, 1999, p.27).

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Projects examples

• How to Party Safe – short film
• Youth water/fun park
• Drug & Alcohol awareness campaigns

Community Lakes

• Students surveyed youth
• Survey findings – young people wanted a water park
• Students presented findings to council
• Council successfully applied for funding
Police Citizens Youth Club

• Town meeting
• Identified lack of youth activities
• Formed group to seek funding for PCYC

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Through pedagogy, technology, teaching partnerships and collaborative learning the program has engaged a new generation of community workers.