



The case for centralised support for learning and teaching at universities

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Presentation Outline

- Background to this presentation
- Why we need central learning and teaching (CLT) / academic development units (ADU)
- What can a successful CLT/ADU offer?

Personal background

- Director, Learning and Teaching Centre, Australian Catholic University
- Director, Information Services (Learning and Teaching), Griffith University
- Associate Director, Educational Products and Services, Information Services, Griffith University
- Officer Commanding Army Learning and Training Centre (Brisbane)

Reflecting on my recent journey...

- From: *Director, Information Services (Learning and Teaching, Griffith University...*
 - A journey from
 - one institution to another
 - one role to another
 - one type of role to another and
 - a review of the learning and teaching support function!
- To: *...Director, Learning and Teaching Centre, Australian Catholic University*

Context

- Time of major transformation and change
 - Exist within a Global Economy
 - Increased international competition
 - Experiencing an Information Revolution
 - Leading us from an Industrial to an Information Age and a Knowledge Economy
 - Rate of technology uptake and transformation
 - eLearning now becoming mLearning..!

Context contd.

- Time of challenges and increased expectations:
 - Reported change in the student experience
 - Students (school leavers and mature aged) reporting different demands
 - *Your teachers don't use enough technology in their teaching and, when they do, they don't use it well enough!*
 - Changes in the way children educated in schools
 - K-12 – Situated and authentic learning experiences, more constructivist approach
 - More competitive national Higher Education market place
 - Caps removed
 - 'Funding per student' model
 - Increased national competition (traditional and non-traditional providers)
 - Impact of a change of Government (?)

Some points for consideration

- For most of us learning and teaching is our main source of income (80%+?)
- Students now, more than ever before, engage with a whole institution not a faculty or school
 - We need to provide a consistent whole of institution experience across the whole learning and teaching continuum from curriculum design and development to delivery
 - We can no longer be excellent in pockets and woeful in other areas, we have to have a consistent standard set, applied and adhered to across the institution
- In a buyer's market pressure is to decrease cost but maintain or increase quality
 - ...this challenge has to be approached in a deliberate and conscious manner and not left to chance

Some more points for consideration

- More competitive but increasingly regulated/quality assured sector
- We need to ensure quality and minimise risk
- Facing increasing competition from alternative providers and methods of delivery
- This will further impact upon that supply...forcing more competition for a scarcer resource (supply and demand)
 - *There's a tsunami coming. [But] I can't tell you exactly how it's going to break*
 - John Hennessy, President, Stanford University

Why an ADU/CLTs

- Need a coordinated 'whole of institution' response
 - ...that is grounded in learning and teaching theory
 - ...that is based upon the processes of curriculum design/development and delivery
 - ...that acknowledges that we are not meeting student learning and teaching experience demands
- We can't meet this challenge and change this fact in an uncoordinated way

What can a successful ADU/CLTs offer?

- A two-way conduit between the executive leadership and the practitioner
- *A resource aggregator and a force multiplier*
- *The information and innovation aggregator*

...ensuring that *lines of communication* and *forums for discussion* are not left to chance, that *discussion is informed*, led and the *information flow curated*

Acknowledgements

- *Benchmarking Performance of Academic Development Units in Australian Universities* – Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD), January 2011
- *A Guide to Support Australian University Teaching and Learning Centres in Strategic Leadership for Teaching and Learning Enhancement* – Australian Learning and Teaching Council, March 2010
- *Teaching and Learning Centres: Towards Maturation.* Di Challis, Dale Holt & Stuart Palmer, July 2009

- Questions, comments and feedback?

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