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The Higher Education Technology Agenda

Semi-Permeable Boundaries: Cross University Collaboration for Innovation Research

Two 2014 projects looked at shared innovation practices across RMIT University Colleges in the first case, and across schools from the College of Design and Social Context in the second.

The first project 'What on Earth are they Using: Beyond Blackboard Course Shells' looked at the different LMS practices across college silos and looked at factors where lecturers would choose to use alternate tools. Good innovation practice examples were shared across the university through blog postings at http://www.whatonearth14.wordpress.com and through a series of training workshops. A staff educational technologies survey was also conducted. Benefits from the project included individual reports of overcoming both isolation and fear of being caught doing something untoward. Unprecedented numbers at training workshops indicated the curiosity and demand for cross fertilisation of practices across colleges. Between blog content and workshops a new 'mesh' of informal networks formed across the university for the benefit of online education regardless of choice of platform.

The second project the Elearning Innovation Incubator (EII), aimed to link small groups of innovators across the 7 schools within the College of Design and Social Context (many of whom were identified in the first project). Lecturers who were leading innovators within their schools were brought together to form projects on cutting edge online applications of their choice. While these innovators started collaborating within their projects an overarching collaboration project was conducted on the EII project itself. This was done with support from corporate consultancy Collabgorge (www.collabforge.com). The EII project was chosen specifically for it's cross-school collaboration and lead to a series of recommendations and new practices with implications and potential flow-on effects for the whole university.

RMIT is Australia's largest university with over 80,000 students. As a result of the size and need for scale, the need for overarching systems is greater. This can unwittingly increase

siloed practice. This presentation looks at examples of openning up research practices across colleges and schools, examining the impact on dissemination of good practice innovation.

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