

SPECTRUM

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UTDC



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UTDC News

2010 was a significant year in the UTDC's history. The University Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010-2014 has initiated a substantial programme of work for the University and particularly for the UTDC. An important part of that programme was the review of the UTDC and SLSS conducted under the leadership of the AVC Academic in September (see page 3). This has made a number of recommendations that will be acted upon in the coming year but most importantly it has already seen the University reaffirm the value of our work and invest additional resources in academic development. The early part of 2011 should see the appointment of a new team of three academic development staff. Working in partnership with the SLSS this should see the Learning and Teaching Strategy action plan well supported in the coming years. The position of Director of the UTDC has been advertised internationally with applications due by February the 16th. Filling this role will provide certainty for the leadership of the newly revitalised unit. 2011 will also see the UTDC renamed to better reflect the range of activities we undertake and to more effectively communicate our identity throughout the university.

Despite the ongoing constraints of staffing, 2010 saw a number of operational successes. The *Student Feedback on Teaching and Courses Policy* was approved by the Academic Board in May and sets in place a framework for completing the quality improvement cycle with students. Among other significant changes the results of course feedback must now be shared with students and teaching feedback is being reported to Heads of Schools and PVCs. This is expected to see a much greater engagement with student feedback information as part of a wider use of institutional research and analysis in 2011. The UTDC is also piloting collection of feedback online at the end of trimester three 2010 for fully online or distance courses and based on that trial will be providing a full service to these courses from trimester one 2011.

Work with programmes to align courses with the university graduate attributes and identity clear pathways for student progression and achievement of their chosen major continued in 2010 in the Faculty of Commerce and Administration and also in the Faculty of Architecture and Design. The IPENZ accreditation of the Faculty of Engineering has recommended that that Faculty also engage in this process and this is set to commence in February 2011.

The number of workshop hours offered by the UTDC dramatically increased in 2010 with over 4000 session hours attended by over 1200 staff. This reflected increases in the sessions for Tutors, Programme (Re)development, and on Educational Technology. This latter growth was driven in part by the major upgrade to Blackboard 9.1, which was undertaken successfully in October and which sees the University well positioned to use the current tools provided by Blackboard (see page 2). We anticipate a strong set of development opportunities for academics in 2011 as our new academic development team take up their roles and start making their mark.

The Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Learning and Teaching (PHELT) programme was coordinated by Kathryn Sutherland in 2010. One of Kathryn's innovations was the introduction of monthly "Inspiration Afternoons" for the people enrolled in the second two courses, UTDC 502 (a research project) and UTDC 503 (a teaching or course portfolio). These Inspiration Afternoons have helped students in the two self-directed courses to keep on track, inspire each other, get feedback on work in progress and

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Comments and feedback on any article published in Spectrum are welcomed and should be directed to the editor: Stephen.Marshall@vuw.ac.nz

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UTDC News (cont.)

generally support each other's projects. Eight participants completed UTDC501 in trimester one of 2010, and there are ten people enrolled for either UTDC502 or UTDC503 or both in trimester two 2010, who will complete at the end of trimester three. PHELT is being offered in 2011 with the UTDC501 starting in trimester two. Staff can still enrol provided they do so before February 10th 2011.

The Developing Scholarly Habits project funded by the UTDC and the Ako Aotearoa Central Hub was very successful and is to be replicated in 2011 in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Building on this success Kathryn Sutherland has been awarded \$122,000 from the Ako Aotearoa National Project Fund to continue her research work on the experiences of early career academics in New Zealand. She will be assisted in this national project by Dr Pam Williams, former UTDC Research Fellow, and Dr Marc Wilson from the School of Psychology.

Amanda Gilbert was a Highly Commended Award Winner at the Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence 2010 for her joint authorship of the paper *Professional development: assuring quality in e-learning*

policy and practice published in the journal *Quality Assurance in Education*. Kathryn Sutherland's paper *Nurturing undergraduate tutors' role in the university teaching community* was voted the article of the year, 2009, for the international journal *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*. Kathryn and Linda Bowden also won the 2010 HERDSA Creative Presentation award for this presentation on the paper *Students' perceptions of the effects of coursework on their development of graduate attributes* that was reprised at the VUW HERDSA colloquium in September (http://www.utdc.vuw.ac.nz/events/herdsa/herdsa_abstracts_2010.shtml#Bowden). Stephen Marshall was part of a successful application for research funding in the 2010 round of the Ako Aotearoa National Project Fund with a collaborative project *Graduate Attributes – Are they driving learning? And who knows about them?* Stephen's research on organisational change using the e-learning maturity model was funded for 2010-2011 under the 2009 Ako Aotearoa funding round.

The UTDC also took pride in our support of this year's National Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award Winner Sara Kindon in

the School of Geography, Environment and Earth Sciences. Her success reflected the excellence of her teaching and the ongoing success Victoria has achieved with these awards continues to reflect the high standards achieved by individual teachers here at Victoria. The UTDC is working with the Victoria winners to draw on their expertise in ways that will further improve learning and teaching in the future. Victoria 2011 teaching excellence award submissions closed on the 31st of January and the winners will be profiled in the next Spectrum.

Looking at the year ahead, 2011 is likely to continue to present significant challenges to the University given the financial and policy environment facing tertiary education in New Zealand. The implementation of the Victoria Learning and Teaching Strategy and the outcomes of the Review offer significant opportunities for the UTDC as well as the responsibility to show a significant outcome from the additional resources we are being granted. We look forward to our newly expanded team providing the best possible support for the wider Victoria community as they engage with the learning and teaching in 2011.

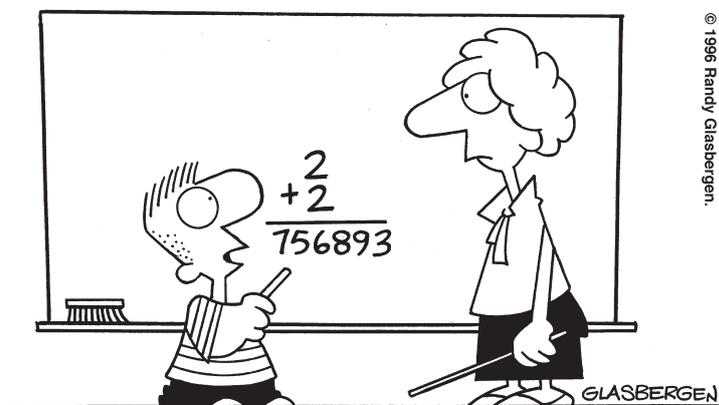


Blackboard Version 9

At the end of 2010 Blackboard at Victoria was upgraded to version 9. The new version of Blackboard has an updated look and feel, and several new features. The most prominent change in terms of the user interface is a significant reduction in the number of clicks needed to navigate or edit course sites, and the addition of a drag and drop functionality that allows instructors to quickly and easily change the order and location of items on the page. Action (*chevron*) buttons support quick access to editing, and contextual help links further improve usability.

In addition to the traditional course announcements page, instructors can now set up a course *Home page* with dynamic modules, such as *What's new* – listing resources and activities recently added to the site, *Needs attention* – course items that require interaction, *Alerts* that display past due date and early warning notifications, and *To do* items that display the status of course work and tasks. Blackboard has

also introduced an easier way of integrating multimedia Web 2.0 resources using the *Mashup* functionality. The three types of mashups currently available are Flickr photos, YouTube videos and Slideshare presentations.



“In an increasingly complex world, sometimes old questions require new answers.”

Another change occurred in the way Blackboard 9 handles file attachments. A course file repository is a new feature that allows instructors to upload files into one place in the course, from which they

can be linked to multiple course pages. Files added directly to course pages are also automatically added to the repository. There is a new option that allows instructors to simultaneously upload more than one file into the repository, using the Upload Package option.

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In terms of collaboration, the new version adds the ability for students to self-organise into groups or self-enrol in groups created by the instructor. Instructors can create groups sets (multiple groups) at once and set enrolment limits for each group.

Finally, we have added a direct link from Blackboard to *Turnitin* (an academic integrity and plagiarism site). Instructors can now set up a *Tunitin* Assignment in Blackboard, and specify whether students can see authenticity reports for their submissions.

Training videos and resources for Blackboard 9 can be accessed on the UTDC web site at <http://www.utdc.vuw.ac.nz/blackboard/bb9.shtml>

The UTDC and Student Learning Support Services Review

The review of the UTDC and SLSS was conducted in September under the leadership of the AVC Academic in September with an external panel consisting of Professor Geoff Crisp (University of Adelaide), Mr Geoff Pearman (Partners in Change, formerly University of Canterbury) and Professor Lorraine Stefani (University of Auckland). The terms of reference for the review were:

Having regard to the learning and teaching goals formulated in Victoria's Strategic Plan and Learning and Teaching Strategy, the review panel is asked to advise on the following issues:

1. *The scope, quality and coherence of the learning support and teaching development provided by the responsible units, including identifying any significant gaps in current functions and activities;*

2. *The extent to which current formal connections between and within staff groups in these areas should be further developed in order to facilitate the design and delivery of coherent, high-quality support for the learning and teaching at the University, with a particular focus on the whole student experience;*

3. *The effectiveness of current linkages between these services and academic schools and programmes and other relevant central service units;*

The review panel made 24 recommendations for the University, UTDC and SLSS. These will be explored in early 2011 and, in conjunction with the Learning and Teaching Strategy will drive the operational priorities for the centre over the next few years.

Recommendation 1:

That the position of Director of the UTDC be filled with a permanent senior level academic appointment (professor or associate professor) as soon as practicable.

Recommendation 2:

That provision be made for further appointments at lecturer or senior lecturer level to address specific teaching development needs that have been clearly identified.

Recommendation 3:

That there be an exploration of the feasibility of establishing adjunct positions for the UTDC staff in the Faculty of Education and vice versa for staff with relevant research interests from the Faculty of Education.

Recommendation 4:

That the key stakeholders and partners be clearly identified and regularly engaged with through formal lines of communication.

Recommendation 5:

That the UTDC engage particularly with the Deans, the Heads of School and the Programme Directors on a regular basis to negotiate specific and relevant projects in line with the Learning and Teaching Strategy.

Recommendation 6:

That the UTDC contribute to coherence in the implementation of the Learning and Teaching strategy by: ensuring effective communication and collaboration among those undertaking teaching and learning projects; and communicating that coherence in the annual report and through other internal communications.

Recommendation 7:

That the annual plan for the UTDC be made available to the Learning and Teaching Strategy Committee and the Academic Committee for comment before being approved by the Academic Office.

Recommendation 8:

That a means of measuring the outcomes and impacts of the services be established so that they can be reported on by the UTDC and reflected on the above committees and other units in the University.

Recommendation 9:

That the UTDC continue to contribute to an active tutor training programme in partnership with academic programmes and SLSS.

Recommendation 10:

That contributions from staff in the SLSS be included in new staff orientation programmes and in an appropriate way on the PHELT.

Recommendation 11:

That the desirability of nesting the PHELT Certificate into a Masters level qualification in the Faculty of Education be explored.

Recommendation 12:

That recognition of educational practice and achievement, including the completion of PHELT and other formal qualifications, be explicitly defined in the promotions criteria of the University.

Recommendation 13:

That the student feedback data be embedded in the University data reporting.

Recommendation 14:

That the name of the UTDC be changed to avoid an easily forgotten acronym and to reflect a new role for the unit.

Recommendation 15:

That the physical location of the UTDC in relation to its strategic function be considered as a part of future problem solving around the use of University space.

Recommendation 16:

That a model of student learning development with the explicitly stated goal of developing active and autonomous learning be reaffirmed and critically applied to all current operations.

Recommendation 17:

That, in the light of the model of learning development that has been articulated under Recommendation 16, and in the context of increased demand from more students, the sustainability of the current provision be considered and alternative ways of providing learning support be investigated.

Recommendation 18:

That a pre-emptive plan in partnership with specific disciplinary areas be developed that addresses known academic issues in those areas.

Recommendation 19:

That an explicit strategy be developed in partnership with Schools to work with students who might be developing a dependency on the support of the unit for their academic achievement.

Recommendation 20:

That a regular report is made by the SLSS to the UTDC of the top ten issues with which students present and that these are eventually published in Spectrum

Recommendation 21:

That the [SLSS] be renamed to be consistent with the model of active and autonomous learning that has been articulated.

Recommendation 22:

That a shift in the balance from generic to more discipline-based support be considered based on an analysis of learning needs in relation to course objectives and assessment.

Recommendation 23:

That a means of measuring the outcomes and impact of services be established that can be reported to other units in the University.

Recommendation 24:

That SLSS take responsibility for tutor training with input from UTDC.

First Lectures: starting as you mean to go on

In 2011 take some time to consider how to engage and involve your students in their learning. You will enjoy your lectures more and they will learn better. The first lecture of any course is, in some ways, the most important one. It's where you set the scene for students' learning, engage their sense of enquiry and critical thinking and create a culture that can colour the rest of the course. As an academic staff developer I have observed many first lectures. The following are my top ten examples of different ideas for that all important first meeting.

Interaction

Students often find the anonymity of a university education difficult. Research has shown that isolation and lack of contact with teaching staff can lead students to withdraw before they really get into their study. Here are some ways that you can help:

1) Meet and greet

Arrive in good time for the first lecture. Say hello to some of the students as they wait to go in. Tell them who you are and ask about what they are studying this year. Find out what they are particularly looking forward to about this course. You may even get some ideas for future lectures or tutorials. You won't be able to talk to them all but, if students see you are there, they will know that you are open to discussion.

2) Be available

Once lectures are underway, why not fix a time when students can come and talk to you informally? Some lecturers arrange to arrive early or to stay late after a lecture and conversations often carry on in the foyer as students take advantage of the opportunities to ask questions or just discuss their ideas.

3) Let students get to know you

How did you get here? Why did you decide to study? Who inspired you? Students are often intrigued by these questions. They not only begin to see you as a person but also to imagine themselves moving along a career path. You don't need to be personal, just place yourself in a context.

Relevance

Students need to know how the subject they are studying is relevant to them. Studies have shown the importance of relevance in learning whether it is to individual experiences, to future study or to intended careers. What can you do to help with this?

4) Showcase your discipline

What are the best things to come out of your discipline? How do people in your school make a difference? What are they doing now? What do they hope to do next?

These are some of the ways you might inspire students in your course: and it's a great example of research-linked teaching too.

5) Relevance to real life

Why not begin your lecture by showing how your subject relates issues and questions in everyday life? Some courses use books or resources which emphasise this link and even as a concept which underpins the structure of the whole course.

6) Link to prior knowledge

Students learn best when they can relate what they are learning to their existing knowledge and teachers teach best when they take what their students already know into consideration. You could begin with an easy quiz or simply a discussion on a relevant issue or idea. These will give the students something on which to base their initial thoughts or reading about the topic.

7) Inclusivity

Help students to feel as though they are part of a community within their discipline. Try to be inclusive: help students to see themselves as having a role to play within the process of learning. You can do this in small ways by encouraging them to think "as if" they are a lawyer, electronic engineer or a theologian. Alternatively you can design your course so that they actually gain that experience in the real world through projects or placements.

Active Learning

There are many ways to encourage active participation in lectures and, though it might seem time consuming, the students will gain more from this than from listening to you speak for the whole lecture. Remember, if you create an atmosphere where it is OK to question and discuss, your students will be more likely to participate. The first lecture is the time and place to start.

8) Create dialogue and discussion

Encourage students to ask and answer questions. Begin with easy concepts that may elicit many different responses. Reward ideas with enthusiasm and interest. Plan some follow up questions and thoughts for students to take away at the end.

9) Promote interaction between students

If you want to avoid the silence that sometimes follows a question, ask students to discuss their ideas in pairs or small groups. Then ask them to feed back. Collect ideas from all areas of the room: keep it fast-paced and light.

10) Participation

There are many methods for encouraging your students to participate. Relevant activities will help students to consolidate their understanding and develop their ideas. Try worked examples; opinion questions and debate; sketching an idea or concept map; student presentations; quizzes; group generated examples. Ask your colleagues what techniques they use.

Conclusion

So, rather than spending your first lecture with your students reading the course outline, take the plunge. If you want your students to be as excited and engaged by your subject as you are, give them a chance to see it as you do. If you want them to be critical thinkers, give them time to question. It may change to climate of your lectures for the rest of the course.

If you would like to discuss your first lecture, your teaching or your course with us we will be happy to listen and offer advice. Please contact members of the UTDC academic staff – we're listed on the front of this issue of Spectrum.



**Ako
Victoria**
its coming!

18th April 2011
Keep it free...