

SPECTRUM

Centre for Academic Development, Victoria University

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Digital Victoria: Developing Victoria's Vision for the Role of Technology in Learning & Teaching

Last year, the Senior Management Team received a report from the Emerging Technology Working Party, which recommended that:

“Victoria University make a high-level strategic commitment to embrace and embed digital technologies across a broad range of academic programmes in all faculties, recognising that this is a critical determinant of fully realising the goals and objectives laid down in the Learning and Teaching Strategy 2010-2014.”

In response, SMT have funded a three year strategic initiative, led by the CAD, with governance from the Learning and Teaching Committee. This strategic initiative is intended to help Victoria develop a vision and strategy for the role technology will play in learning and teaching, and to start addressing the barriers that are holding back technology innovation at Victoria.

AkoVictoria, the celebration of learning and teaching at Victoria, is going to be a key moment in the process of defining our vision. CAD hope that as many people as possible (not just academics) will come to the event and participate in the identification of key elements of the vision and the strategic priorities for Victoria over the next few years.

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Ako Victoria

Join with Colleagues & *Celebrate*
Learning & Teaching at Victoria

Thursday 14 June 2012

The Centre for Academic Development looks forward to welcoming you to Ako Victoria. This event is for all staff from across all four campuses to meet and focus on learning and teaching at Victoria University. This event will provide the opportunity to:

- highlight good practice in learning and teaching
- discuss the Victoria Learning and Teaching Strategy
- meet with other academics, managers and support staff committed to enhancing learning and teaching at Victoria
- share the outcomes of new learning and teaching research
- share innovations in the area of flexible learning
- reflect on the role of tutors

Please note AkoVictoria in your diary now

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/AkoVictoria>

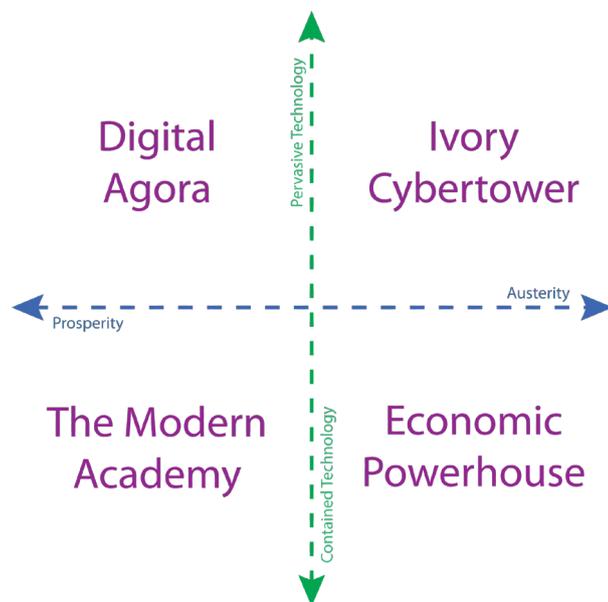
Digital Victoria (cont.)

In order to help frame the discussion about the role technology is playing now and in the future of learning and teaching at Victoria, a set of provocative scenarios have been drafted. We have been lucky to have an experienced futures scenario planner available to draw on in the person of Associate Professor Ian Yeoman, an internationally published author in the area of futures planning. Ian has worked with a group of Victoria staff experienced in technology and from a wide variety of backgrounds and roles to brainstorm ten scenarios. These have subsequently been written up into a set of four that capture many of the ideas from the session.

The scenarios will be presented in detail at AkoVictoria but here is a brief outline to stimulate your imagination. They are placed on a set of axes that reflect two of the major drivers identified. The horizontal axis focuses on the issue of money, running from financial prosperity to financial austerity. The vertical scale describes the impact that technology has on normal life, running from a sense of containment where technology is used but does not dominate daily life through to a pervasive integration of technology into individual lives and society in general. The four quadrants frame the four scenarios: The Economic

Powerhouse; The Ivory Cybertower; The Digital Agora; and The Modern Academy.

Scenarios are a tool for stimulating ideas, and are not meant to be an accurate description of the future, but rather help identify important trends or issues that can be responded to irrespective of the actual future we experience. None of these four scenarios will completely and accurately describe the future, but hopefully they will provoke our imaginations and stimulate a creative and positive engagement with the future vision for technology's place in the future of learning and teaching at Victoria.



Scenario Workshop attendees were: Irina Elgort; Jonathan Flutey; John Hine; Kevin Gould; Alison Stevenson; Eusebio Scornavacca; Alastair Smith; Suzanne Boniface; Mairead de Roiste; Sydney Shep; Peter Andrae; and Trish Wilson. Their work and that of facilitator Ian Yeoman is gratefully acknowledged by CAD.



Brainstorming scenarios.

Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Learning and Teaching 2012 Trimester Two

The first subject in the PHELT programme, Foundations of Higher Education (UTDC 501) will be running in Trimester Two this year. The first subject will use the theme of 'Ako' – learning and teaching as reciprocal and integrated – to explore research-based principles of learning theory, reflective practice and curriculum in the higher education context. This subject is designed to introduce staff to some of the critical theories that underpin policies and practices in New Zealand and internationally, and to apply these to their own teaching. Lecturers from CAD together with staff from SLSS will deliver the programme, which aims to support new staff wanting to develop teaching approaches which encourage student learning, and to provide experienced staff with new ways of thinking about their practice.

UTDC 501 may be taken as the first of two subjects for a PGCert or, from 2013, as part of a 120pt PGDip programme, which aims to develop professional practice and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, through reflective practice, critical engagement with higher education literature and individual research. For further information, please feel free to contact Bernadette Knewstubb (Bernadette.Knewstubb@vuw.ac.nz).

Tutors and demonstrators at Victoria

Amanda Gilbert

The beginning of Trimester One is a particularly busy time for the Centre for Academic Development. As well as welcoming new academic members of staff, CAD organises and runs training sessions for all new tutors and demonstrators. The University's Tutor Agreement currently stipulates that all tutors should receive three hours of paid training as part of their appointment into the role. This training is provided by CAD in collaboration with the Student Learning Support Service.

In March 2012, nearly 350 tutors and demonstrators attended the three hour CAD/SLSS tutor training sessions. With this many tutors to cater for, training is offered by Faculty or by discipline area with general sessions also offered for those who are not available for their own Faculty workshops. Sessions aimed directly at lab based demonstrators are also offered. Although the basic content covered is fairly similar, each session is coloured by the experiences and ideas of the group. It can be useful for tutors in one Faculty to get to know each other and to share ideas but, on the other hand, a diverse group of tutors leads to some interesting discussion about how ideas work in different environments.

Tutors and demonstrators are a hugely important feature of the learning and teaching environment at Victoria. As class sizes have increased the tutorial provides a key opportunity for students to consolidate their learning from lectures through discussion and application. The tutors are successful students in the discipline (if not the course itself) and their role is to support the students as they learn. In labs, demonstrators fulfil a similar role, providing feedback and encouragement as students grapple with the practical side of their subject. Many tutors and demonstrators are

aspiring academics themselves and are gaining useful teaching experience for their future careers.

As well as offering a basic introductory training session, CAD also encourages tutors and demonstrators to undertake further training and work towards a Tutor Certificate. Many tutors attend the marking and feedback workshops, conveniently offered at around the time the first pieces of work are handed in to be marked. Other workshops are also offered, including ones on working with diversity in tutorials, facilitating active learning and developing students' critical

ways of supporting tutors at Victoria. Firstly, we hope to see all tutors being encouraged to participate in the Tutor Certificate. Although tutors may not be able to be paid for all the sessions they attend, we hope that course co-ordinators will support their attendance. Secondly, PhD Scholarship students can negotiate with their supervisors and Heads of School regarding incorporating all tutor training hours into their 150 hours of 'service' to the University, helping to prepare them for their academic careers and providing their schools with better prepared tutors. Finally, CAD is looking forward



A tutor training session at Pipitea in March 2012.

thinking skills. Tutors can also take part in a teaching practicum in which they are videoed as they teach for five minutes before receiving feedback from their peers and a CAD facilitator. The certificate is awarded after the tutors have completed a series of workshops, participated in the teaching practicum and collected and reflected on feedback on their teaching by their students.

Acknowledging the importance of tutoring for developing the teaching skills of our future academic staff, has led CAD to explore different

to working with those who support tutors and demonstrators to ensure that students across the university are provided with the best possible learning experiences.

The next training sessions for tutors begin in the first week of Trimester Two. Dates and times are already posted online so, if you have any new tutors or demonstrators starting this July, please encourage them to visit the CAD website and register for their preferred session (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/webstruxure/dotnet2/cad/>).

Blackboard at Victoria

This year Blackboard at Victoria turns 10. As shown in the latest usage statistics, the use of Blackboard has been growing steadily for the first 5-6 years of its adoption, and is now reaching a plateau in terms of number of course websites and student enrolments. A recent large-scale university survey demonstrates that Blackboard is highly valued by the majority of Victoria students, and that they consider it to be one of the top two services (alongside the Library) that contribute positively to their ability to study and learn. Another key message from students is that this positive impact of Blackboard occurs when it is used effectively to enhance study and communications. Students want their Blackboard courses to have a clear structure and well-organised communications.

This emphasis on the quality of use is timely in the context of the University strategic initiative in the area of digital technologies. In the next three years the University has committed to developing a digital vision for Victoria, raising staff confidence and capabilities in using technology in their courses and encouraging and supporting innovation. In line with these objectives, we are aiming to promote effective use of Blackboard as a teaching and learning environment. In May, we are running a series of sessions (Tools on Tuesdays) for staff to share their current Blackboard practices and ideas with colleagues across disciplines. We are also undertaking a review of the pedagogical use of Blackboard, going beyond general usage statistics to more fine-grained

approaches of looking at the use of specific Blackboard tools and activities that improve student engagement.

As always, we are keen to hear from you if you have suggestions on improving our current initiatives or for new initiatives in this area.

