Different paths to the finish line or running a separate race: Contrasting institution, staff, student and 'expert' perspectives on online learning

Abstract:

In this keynote Barney Dalgarno will begin by painting an aspirational picture of 'best practice' in online supported higher education, across face to face, fully online and blended learning contexts. Drawing in theoretical and empirical research and current leading edge practices he will paint a picture of some of the utopian futures that educational technology and educational design 'experts' aspire to. He will then contrast this aspirational perspective with the perspectives of institutional leaders, academic staff and students. The argument will be made that the first step towards achieving our aspirational goals is to: a) understand institutional goals, values and constraints; b) appreciate the differing perspectives of research intensive, teaching focused and technology focused academic staff, and c) acknowledge the diversity of students and student learning needs. Only from this base of understanding are we able to create a strategy that addresses the needs and perceived needs of the various stakeholders while moving us closer to our aspirational utopia of quality technology supported learning.

Bio:

Barney Dalgarno is Professor and Director of uImagine, Charles Sturt University's Digital Learning Innovation Laboratory, a role in which he undertakes strategic leadership towards the adoption of innovative online learning practices across the university. As Associate Dean Curriculum Learning and Teaching in the Faculty of Education Prof Dalgarno has also led faculty and university wide initiatives in online learning, assessment, and transition and retention underpinned by technology and learning research over a number of years. Prof Dalgarno's research contributions have been in three broad areas: the relationship between learning technology and learning theory; learning in polysynchronous learning environments, including 3D virtual environments; and university teacher and student attitudes towards and use of learning technologies. He has obtained numerous grants and consultancies for research into learning and teaching including 5 OLT and ARC grants and has produced over 70 refereed publications. Prof Dalgarno received the prestigious ascilite fellow award in 2013 in recognition of his outstanding contribution in the exemplary use of and research into technologies for learning and teaching in tertiary education, and has also received ALTC Citations in 2007 and 2011. He is a lead editor of the Australasian Journal of Educational Technology.

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