



Queensland University of Technology
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Improving student engagement through the integration of blended delivery approaches in WIL

Project Team

Dr Deborah Peach
Rafael Gomez
Iwona Czaplinski
Marian Boman
Jack Williamson
Julian Kapitzke

WIL Teaching Team

Dr Deborah Peach
Rafael Gomez
Adjunct Professor Cliff Button
Dr Connie Susilawati
Michael Ryan
Professor Wageeh Boles
Professor Prasad Yarlagadda

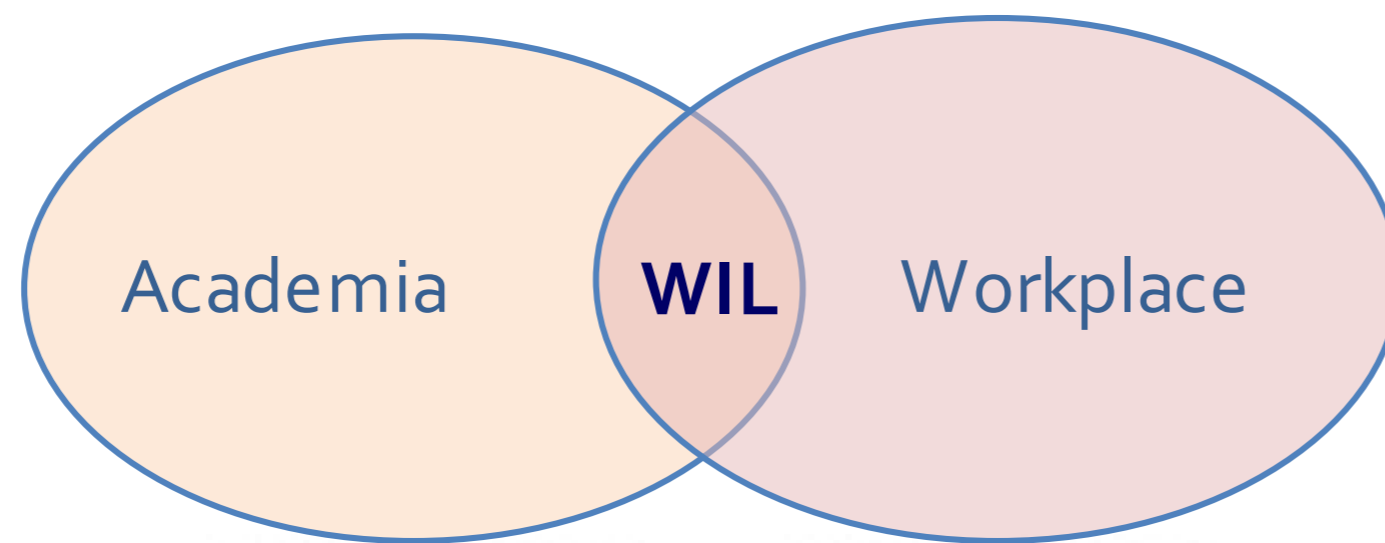
Contact Information

Dr Deborah Peach
Director WIL
Faculty of Built Environment
and Engineering
Email: d.peach@qut.edu.au
Phone: 3138 7702
<http://www.bee.qut.edu.au/wil/>

Students nowadays very much want learning that fits their particular learning style, which suits their high technological skills, and is at a time and place that suits them. It can be quite challenging to traditional systems of higher education management and organisation (Alison Johns ,UK Higher Education Consultant, Campus Review, 23 May 2011).

Context

In the disciplines of design, engineering, and urban development the WIL program is an opportunity for academic and practice-based professional learning to occur together within a work environment as part of a formal course of study. Students from these disciplines negotiate suitable work placements with industry partners and use this experience to address assessment requirements that focus on reflective practice, enhancement of employability skills, and development as a professional.



Purpose of the grant

The purpose of this grant was to redevelop aspects of the WIL unit BEB701 in order to increase the relevance of the content and student engagement. This involved reconceptualising the content around collaborative learning; building staff capacity in working with new technologies and thereby supporting the Faculty's Flexible Learning Strategic Plan.

Why Webinars?

- Webinars offer a way of:
 - overcoming students feeling isolated in large classes
 - observing the interactions of peers
 - students helping other students
 - facilitating social networking - a concept which is aligned to WIL and the professions
 - helping staff to efficiently respond to generic questions
 - empowering students to take a lead

The Pilot: Summer 2010

19 students
Design, Engineering and Urban Development
1 intensive face to face session + 3 webinars

The Roll Out: Semester 1 & 2 2011

350 students per semester
Design, Engineering and Urban Development
1 intensive face to face session + 3 webinars



Impact

Excellent lecture, thank you very much. A very convenient way to do it.

...just wanted to highlight my immense gratitude for the Elluminate sessions. As a student working full time and living a 160km round trip from Gardens Point campus, the ability to attend 'live' online sessions from a location off campus certainly made an impact to the quality of my learning. The additional ability to revisit the lectures and chat log at any stage after the live session was certainly an advantage.

Elluminate is awesome! I think it went really well - we have a great group :-)

It was good to be able to experience this new type of electronic learning.

The Elluminate sessions were surprisingly useful and easy to use.

Moving forward

Webinars are now integrated in all 5 WIL units. This integration has led to shifts in pedagogy and sparked other ideas for improvements to learning, teaching and assessment.

