

students, alumni, industry and community as key partners in the curriculum design process.

This paper articulates preliminary findings of participatory action research (Bradbury and Reason 2008; Kemmis and McTaggart 2005) that is exploring how design thinking approaches (Brown and Wyatt, 2010) are informing the practices of curriculum transformation. The participatory action research methodology is supporting a collaborative systematic approach to this inquiry, which aims to simultaneously develop understandings about curriculum design practice and implement improvements to practice.

Through the research, design thinking strategies (Kimbell, 2011; Design Thinking Toolkit 2nd ed, 2012) have been adapted to assist curriculum teams: to reframe curriculum challenges informed by building empathy and understanding of stakeholder needs; to take risks in reimagining curriculum possibilities; to open up thinking to potential curriculum innovation; and, to use prototyping and testing of curriculum solutions to inform choices in the curriculum design. The ambiguity and complexity of the changes facing higher education are requiring curriculum team members to apply different mindsets and ways of thinking to their curriculum practices and requiring participants with different skills to contribute to the curriculum design process. Findings from research to date on the application of design thinking strategies shows a change in focus from problems to the exploration and prototyping of constructive, creative and hopeful solutions (Brown and Wyatt, 2010). It also shows academics willingness to build deeper engagement with stakeholders (students, industry and consumers partners) in the design process, which is leading to greater empathy and understanding for stakeholder needs in design solutions.

Session J2

Panel Session

WHOLE OF DEGREE CURRICULUM DESIGN: TRANSITIONING STUDENTS IN, THROUGH AND OUT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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Curriculum design is multifaceted, trying to meet a range of expectations for the students, universities, industries, professions and regulatory bodies. In order for it to be truly effective the curriculum has to be designed in a holistic manner that provides scaffolding throughout the degree to engage students with learning using integration and sequencing (Kift, 2009). This whole of degree approach removes the silo effect of developing units of study in isolation, requiring collaboration between academics from across the whole degree (Lawson, 2014). This practice is seen to be beneficial for curriculum design in the majority of contexts

globally. However, this is a change of mindset for many academics who have engaged in curriculum design in the past, where common practice has been to individually develop and teach units and so a change management processes has to be implemented to provide support during the curriculum design approach. Taking Kotter's (2002) change management model, participative leadership is key to the success of these cultural changes.

Whole of degree curriculum design has many benefits for the different stages of transitioning into, through and out of university. Good practice for transition pedagogy is to provide students with explicit and consistent assistance to move from their earlier context to their new context (Kift, 2009). During the first year it is crucial that this holistic approach is adopted to ensure shared ownership and contribution. Convening the relevant stakeholders who, in partnership, design and implement a first year orientation and engagement program ensures conscious attention is given to designing "transition facilitative" learning environments (Wilson, 2009).

Whole of degree design creates a curriculum map to show students how they will progress throughout their degree. This facilitates making degree level learning outcomes and the standards for each stage of the degree explicit, showing students where and how they will be introduced to knowledge and skills that will then support them to further develop towards their degree level learning outcomes. This overview of expectations allows students to make judgements about their ability as they progress, "a necessary skill for lifelong learning" (Boud, 1995, p.11), as well as allowing for scaffolded feedback so that students can foster optimum success.

Capstone experiences can be used to assist in the transition of students from their university studies to the workplace; a transition "out" that can be as demanding as the transition "in" to university in the first year. They are also being increasingly used as a device to put whole of degree learning together to assess whether graduates are work ready in their chosen disciplines (Lee, 2014). Therefore designing effective capstone experiences requires an understanding of transition pedagogies and a commitment to a holistic curriculum framework that carefully positions skill acquisition and experiences from the first to the final year of study, and beyond (McNamara et al., 2011; Van Aker and Bailey, 2011).

This panel is compiled of a range of experienced scholars from Australian Universities, each who have developed practices at the grass roots, and then gone on to work at national and international levels to influence practice in the higher education sector. They will explore curriculum design for transition from an authentic perspective providing examples of theory in practice that they have unpacked through scholarship of teaching and learning. Participants will be provided opportunities to share good practice as well as discuss their contexts as well as new ideas for curriculum design.

References

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