The impact of e-learning champions on embedding e-learning
- in organisations, industry or communities

Case studies

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Acknowledgement

These case studies were prepared by Malcolm Jolly, Brad Shaw, Kaye Bowman and Carole McCulloch from GippsTAFE and Partners.
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Introduction

These case studies were developed between October and December 2008 as part of a study on *The impact of e-learning champions on embedding e-learning* research. They were funded and supported by the national training system’s e-learning strategy, the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (Framework) through the Benchmarking and Research business activity\(^1\).

Three of the 15 people interviewed in the national consultations phase of the study on the *impact of e-learning champions on embedding e-learning* were chosen as e-learning champions for the case studies: Greg Logan, Georgina Nou and Graeme Kirkwood. They each displayed the following qualities identified as essential criteria for being credible champions:

- demonstrating high competence in e-learning, in both theory and practice
- preparedness to share knowledge, skills and strategies
- exhibiting passion, enthusiasm and tenacity
- being focused on the end user and able to provide workable solutions
- having vision and able to communicate with many different kinds of people
- enterprising and able to solve problems
- modelling high levels of commitment.

These credible champions were chosen for their different approaches and as representatives of e-learning champions at work in a wide cross-section of industry, community and vocational education and training (VET) providers.

The three case studies in this report were undertaken by Brad Shaw and Malcolm Jolly from GippsTAFE and Carole McCulloch from Macro Dimensions, with advice and guidance from Kaye Bowman.

The nominated champions were selected to provide examples of an e-learning champion in action in three different contexts: an industry, a community, and a VET organisation. They also appeared to be having a significant impact within their sector. They demonstrated the characteristics, and engaged in the types of activities previously discussed as essential for being effective e-learning champions. This was confirmed during the course of each case study via testimonials from those with whom they have been working.

The case study champions were selected following extensive consultations with 15 e-learning champions drawn from across all states and territories of Australia.

The three case studies are:

1. **Integrating e-learning into the dual diagnosis mental health services industry** - a case study about Greg Logan.

   Greg is the Manager of the Education and Training Unit, which is part of the Victorian Dual Diagnosis Initiative.

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\(^1\) The Framework’ Benchmarking and Research business activity conducts benchmarking activities to determine the use, impact and uptake of e-learning within different learner groups, states and territories, RTOs, business and industry; and research to inform the development of policy and new direction: [http://flexiblelearning.net.au/research](http://flexiblelearning.net.au/research)
2. Impacts on Indigenous communities – a case study about Georgina Nou.
   Georgina is a freelance mentor currently working with the staff and learners in the Anangu Pitjan tjatjara Yankunytjatjara APY TAFE in regional South Australia.

3. Engaging the heads, hearts and hands of staff - a case study about Graeme Kirkwood.
   Graeme is the Professional Learning Leader at Tasmania’s Polytechnic.

Each case study explores and provides insights into:

- the e-learning journey of the champion
- the champion’s strategies for implementing e-learning
- outcomes and impact on those they influence.

These case studies form one component of the total research for The impact of e-learning champions on embedding e-learning - in organisations, industry or communities.

The other components of this research project are reported in the following documents:

Case study 1: Greg Logan

Integrating e-learning into the dual diagnosis mental health services industry

Greg Logan has a background in nursing and degrees in education. In his clinical role, Greg has worked with some of the most disadvantaged people in the community, those whose lives have been affected by mental illness and/or alcohol and other drugs. He has worked as a clinical manager in a number of public and private mental health and drug and alcohol agencies.

In 1996, he and a colleague developed one of the first distance education courses in the Graduate Diploma of Nursing (Psychiatric Nursing) using computer-mediated conferencing. Greg has gone on to embed e-learning into the work of a hospital organisation and then into a whole-of-state mental health services network.

This case study outlines Greg’s e-learning journey and provides his insight into e-learning practices from an organisational and VET perspective. It also explores how Greg approaches the implementation of e-learning, which includes resource acquisition, staff professional development and planning, and which is based on making a case for e-learning that fits an organisational rationale. Greg’s insights in terms of how the impact of e-learning is measured, as well as the characteristics an e-learning champion would possess, are also discussed.

Finally, his views on organisational management support are outlined. He believes that people who want to implement e-learning into their organisation require autonomy to do so. Greg also believes that if people have a shared vision, as well as being able to think outside the square, this will ensure that e-learning is sustainable. His views are underpinned by the notion of sharing knowledge and resources and his approach is one that encourages and inspires his staff and wider industry colleagues to maximise the educational potential that e-learning can provide to the dual diagnosis mental health services industry.
Greg’s e-learning journey

Monash University – getting started on e-learning

Greg’s e-learning journey began at Monash University where he lectured in the School of Nursing for nine years until 1999. During that time, he and a colleague developed the Graduate Diploma in Nursing (Psychiatric Nursing), which was offered online. This consisted of a printed resource book that incorporated readings and the learners logging on to asynchronous discussions. Greg used a Macintosh server and software called First Class, an example of client/server groupware, email, online conferencing, voice/fax and bulletin board system. The server consisted of a Macintosh in an office with four modems hanging off the back. Dial-up was the only way learners could make contact with Greg and his colleague at that stage.

Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre – implementing e-learning at an organisational level

Greg left Monash University to take up a clinical position as Hospital Coordinator at Delmont Private Hospital in Burwood before being appointed Tertiary Programs Manager at Turning Point Alcohol and Drug Centre in 2001. His role was to develop their Graduate Diploma in Alcohol and Other Drug Studies and to ‘get them online’. He received some funding through LearnScope² for professional development and also utilised flexible learning resources and resource support from TAFE Frontiers³.

Turning Point is the major provider of training to the drug and alcohol sector in Victoria. On an annual basis it is responsible for 1,600 clinical treatment episodes, conducting clinical research and delivering education and training to 380 learners in its registered training organisation (RTO) and higher education areas. In 2000, Turning Point gained RTO status and incorporated the Certificate IV in Alcohol and Other Drugs Work into their scope.

In 2001, Turning Point delivered 60% of their courses in metropolitan areas and 40% in regional areas. With teachers travelling approximately 30,000 kilometres annually, which included many overnight stays, it was an expensive exercise. Teachers had to be backfilled while they were away delivering the training around the state. These factors contributed to Turning Point’s rationale to use e-learning to deliver their courses. In 2003 they became an accredited higher education provider, offering a Graduate Certificate in Alcohol and Other Drug Studies.

Greg had 12 highly experienced and knowledgeable staff. All had minimal experience of information and communication technology (ICT), however, and used overhead transparencies and photocopied notes for their classes. Turning Point’s education and training services was ‘ripe’ for a change as there was a level of discomfort about the limited way education and training had been provided in the past. Greg had a vision of what could be achieved in terms of new courses offering accredited awards that utilised technologies and instructional media. This was attractive to staff management. Turning Point’s education and training services had previous success with change and management was supportive of utilising new technologies in education and training, thus committing resources to implement the change.

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² LearnScope was part of the Framework’s professional development strategy between 2000-2007 and was designed to increase the capacity of VET professionals in e-learning.

³ TAFE Frontiers was a government funded support service for e-learning, operating in Victoria between 1999-2005.
Planning
To define the scope of the implementation of ICT, Greg first identified market demand and then defined the extent of flexibility that could be offered in terms of a blended approach that included text, CD-ROM, online, as well as considering specified time frames. He next identified resource implications and provided leadership to support the implementation.

Making the case for e-learning
To analyse the cost effectiveness and benefits of implementing ICT at Turning Point, Greg considered the tangible/intangible benefits, which were underpinned by increased access, reduced travel time and responsiveness, and tangible/intangible costs, such as support, equipment, professional development and stress. He then identified the roles of personnel who were required for the successful implementation of ICT. These included:

- educators/trainers
- content experts
- computer 'nerds'
- educational experts
- ICT support personnel
- graphic designers
- editors/proofreaders.

Eventually, Turning Point had 18 members:

- 11 from education and training
- four from communications and publications
- two from information technology (IT)
- one from TAFE Frontiers.

Resource acquisition and implementation
The beginning of ICT at Turning Point also saw the purchase of data projectors, training in presentation software and the increase of internet usage. Funding was sourced for the acquisition of hardware and software, a digital video camera, an editing suite and CD burners. To assist with funding, Greg approached the Framework, LearnScope in particular, and ACPET (Australian Council for Private Education and Training). LearnScope made implementation possible through assistance with professional development, support and advice, as well as mentoring Greg. Learning resources using CD-ROMs were developed and produced and instructional videos were taped, edited and produced by staff. Seminars held at Turning Point were video taped, edited and transferred to CD-ROM for distribution to other alcohol and other drug (AOD) agencies.
Professional development

Over the next nine months Greg organised a series of professional development sessions for staff as preparation for the implementation of e-learning. Topics included:

- introduction to flexible learning
- writing for flexible learning
- animation
- web development
- online assessment
- instructional design
- evaluating flexible learning.

Some of the resources utilised were:

- templates
- TAFE Virtual Campus (TAFE VC)
- Flexible Learning Toolboxes
- online teaching resources
- applications for creating web-based programs such as Hot Potatoes and Quandary
- assessment tools
- evaluation tools.

To encourage group cohesion, Greg ensured they had weekly development meetings. He also recognised and utilised skills within the group and made certain that the group was congratulated for work well done. To encourage innovation, Greg adopted a ‘you want it, you got it’ attitude. By brainstorming solutions, sharing experiences, looking at what others were doing, joining online communities and ‘talking to our kids’, he was able to achieve this.

By the end of this process, staff at Turning Point had developed four online subjects in the post-graduate course, recorded on CD-ROM and distributed to 20 specialist seminars, and had begun developing animations depicting how drugs work in the body.

The staff involved in the program described increased confidence in using ICT and were initiating their own online developments. Greg’s legacy continued at Turning Point after he left, with more subjects provided online. Most of the educational materials developed by Turning Point include at least one form of ICT to increase interaction.

Victorian Dual Diagnosis Initiative and the Education and Training Unit

In 2006 Greg moved from Turning Point to the Victorian Dual Diagnosis Initiative (VDDI) Education and Training Unit, where he is currently the manager. The

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4 Toolboxes are high quality, cost effective interactive e-learning and assessment resources: http://flexiblelearning.net.au/toolboxes
Education and Training Unit is funded by the Department of Human Services and is based at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Melbourne.

The VDDI employs 50 specialist dual diagnosis clinicians across the state. They are grouped into four metropolitan dual diagnosis teams, the dual diagnosis rural forum and the Education and Training Unit. The aim of the VDDI is to increase the capacity of mental health and AOD agencies to assist clients with co-morbid mental health and drug and alcohol problems. The key activities of the initiative are:

- development of clinical and management tools
- development of local networks
- training
- modelling of good practice through consultation.

Greg is successfully implementing e-learning into dual diagnosis training throughout Victoria with the objective of training 6,000 mental health and AOD clinicians by 2010. Some of the new ideas and practices Greg has brought to VDDI include setting up an online social networking site, using the TAFE VC, using Elluminate to conduct tutorials and meetings, and putting training materials on CD-ROM.

In the context of the Victorian Dual Diagnosis Rural Forum, Greg has been a leader in encouraging and providing opportunities to access and training in online facilitation practices. This has made a huge impact on the way dual diagnosis training is delivered across the state. Greg has encouraged many of the rural dual diagnosis clinicians to become trainers/teachers with TAFE institutes and universities across the state, and many of these are online teaching positions.

Greg has also influenced the capacity of other clinicians in the psychiatric disability rehabilitation and support sector (PDRSS) by organising access to an online classroom, as well as helping to obtain online drug and alcohol training for many mental health clinicians. This training has allowed clinicians to pass on the training to other course participants. The e-learning capacity in the PDRSS has greatly increased in that many clinicians who were not comfortable using computers are now participating in online classes. These skills are also being transferred across the state to clinicians in many areas.

New practices have also been implemented as a direct result of Greg’s support. Greg was the first member of the Education and Training Unit team. Once he employed people to build his team, there was an expectation that the team would be participating in online learning and teaching. From the outset, they were on a huge learning curve as they were thrown into the deep end, developing an online course to be delivered within six months of the commencement of the team.

Some e-learning practices that Greg has explored and implemented have had a special influence on his team. One example is when he arranged for his team to participate in an online facilitation course run by GippsTAFE. This was the only course of its type and provided the team members with more confidence to be involved in e-learning.

Additionally, Greg has been an active member of the online teaching team, providing role modelling in online teaching and online course development. The team is currently in the process of reviewing their online units and Greg has encouraged them to consider new assessment and teaching tools such as wikis and blogs, something that they may not have considered without Greg’s influence.
**Greg’s impact**

**An organisational perspective**

The overall impact of Greg’s influence and work in the e-learning area at VDDI is one of creating an atmosphere where people are encouraged and given the latitude to explore, learn and develop new e-learning skills. His laid-back attitude and a ‘she’ll be right’ approach have allowed this to occur. As the resident ‘expert’ in e-learning, Greg alleviates any anxieties his staff may have towards e-learning by instilling a ‘we can do it’ and ‘everything will be just fine’ approach.

Greg has also been instrumental in developing the skills and knowledge required for e-learning for his team through the process of education and demonstration of e-learning tools. Greg has mentored staff to develop course content using Australian National Competency Standards. As part of the development of the dual diagnosis course, a great deal of work went into the original planning of content and delivery modes. Greg was able to draw on the expert knowledge of his staff and assist them to condense the content into a meaningful online package.

Over a six month period, Greg and his team developed an online educational package for dual diagnosis. The task for the team was to develop a course that could be delivered across the state. Without Greg’s skills and knowledge, the dual diagnosis course would not have met the task and certainly it would not have been able to be delivered in the timelines required. The way that training can now be delivered is incredibly advanced from the classroom concept, which most of the team was used to.

Greg has exposed his training team to the immense capacity of the World Wide Web, not only from putting educational content onto a website but also with such things as utilising social networking sites. The dual diagnosis website ([http://dualdiagnosis.org.au](http://dualdiagnosis.org.au)) was static and had not been updated for two years. He chose web 2.0 technologies as a better option and developed a dual diagnosis social network site for clinicians using Ning. The site is for clinicians to interact with and support each other and share dual diagnosis resources. It is a private network (ie it cannot be seen by search engines such as Google), so to become a member you must be invited or know the URL and apply for membership. People who want to join are screened to ensure they work in the dual diagnosis, AOD or mental health sectors, which minimises the risk of the wrong ‘types’ getting into the site.

Within one week of setting this up, Greg had many users. Within three weeks he had 300 people online and by week six, 500 people were using the site. Greg believes that this is an example of an online networking product selling itself, as it has created strong interest from all over the world from clinicians seeking quality dual diagnosis information. The online ‘word of mouth’ has encouraged people to join the site and it sells itself through people networking with each other. The beauty of social networking, Greg insists, is that people learn from each other.

Greg has nine administrators across the VDDI to share the load and to monitor and approve new clients. The site requires minimum maintenance. He spends about 15 minutes each day monitoring the site and each week puts an article of interest online.

Greg’s knowledge and availability to help his team made their learning about teaching in an online environment easier and their skill development grew almost without them realising. He was able to demonstrate the advantages that an online course can have to meet their particular class of learners, who were from across the state and unable to travel to a central learning environment. It almost meant that the team could have other educators from around the state participating and contributing to the learning of their learners.
Finally, Greg has been an inspiration to many dual diagnosis clinicians who want to implement e-learning into their courses, in terms of encouraging them to stretch the boundaries of what they thought they were capable of. This has positively impacted not only in what they have been able to achieve personally, but also the impact they have been able to make in their local area, particularly in the field of online learning, training and facilitation.

**Colleagues’ perspectives**

According to a colleague who has worked with Greg for several years, one of the strengths Greg possesses is to inspire colleagues and others to work toward the goals of the VDDI, demonstrating remarkable leadership, patience and determination.

Since working with Greg, his team has learned all about wikis and blogs and one staff member has even started her own blog outside work time. She can now create, develop and deliver courses via WebCT. The immediate team now uses Elluminate with confidence both in a teaching context, as well as for other communication processes surrounding its teaching. The team now functions as a state-wide training unit because of Greg’s influence in the implementation of e-learning technologies.

One dual diagnosis clinician remarks:

“I am now able to train in the use of online learning tools, as well as attend meetings, classes and facilitate online. This was the result of Greg organising and encouraging me to do an online facilitation course which he obtained funding for me to take part in. These changes in practice have been disseminated to a large number of those whom I am responsible for training in dual diagnosis treatments, including mental health and drug and alcohol clinicians. This result is replicated across the region in Greg’s influence on all dual diagnosis clinicians, in particular, the rural clinicians who are lone clinicians and have been extremely grateful for the innovative and supportive instruction Greg has provided.”

The clinician reinforces the point that while she had previously believed that e-learning is the way of the future for training, particularly for rural areas, it seemed like a faraway prospect for her to become involved, particularly in a facilitation role.

One particular dual diagnosis coordinator mentions:

“During my time working with Greg I have become far more aware of the capacity of computer programs and ways to maximise their use and potential. I believe that even though the team and I were all trained in Certificate IV in Workplace Training and Assessment, having someone to mentor us through developing an online package was essential. Greg was able to put theory into practice and support the team along the way. Greg personally taught me how to use Dreamweaver to develop the courses for online delivery, as well as to produce CD-ROMs for other training activities. These CD-ROMs have been well received in other in-service training that my organisation delivers, such as train-the-trainer and one-day workshop type events.

There is no doubt without Greg’s influence and skills and knowledge around e-learning I would not personally be able to produce half of the educational materials that I do and in the form in which they appear. I sincerely believe that Greg’s skills and knowledge and personal style of teaching make him an ideal candidate to be recognised as an e-learning champion. There is no doubt the current dual diagnosis course would not have got to where it is today without the leadership and coordination skills of Greg.”
Greg has also been described by colleagues as

“an exceptional creator of educational options”

with

“a clear vision and knowledge and [who] engages, inspires, guides and develops potential in others while remaining relaxed and gentle”

and that he has

“demonstrated a wealth of knowledge about the online training environment. Not only that, but he has been very willing to share this with us. Without both of these elements, I don’t see how we could have made anywhere near the progress that we have so far.”

According to another dual diagnosis clinician:

“Greg moved, quickly and positively, to engage with the key stakeholders in the dual diagnosis community and was instrumental in drawing them together, highlighting their commonalities, engendering a sense of community and engaging them in working collaboratively towards their common goal. Specific achievements include:

• the skills to identify, hire and harness some of the most talented available people to work with him in the VDDI Education and Training Unit

• working with central policy and planning persons around further developing and refining the goals and methods of the VDDI training component

• providing enormous, targeted assistance to myself and other VDDI workers to develop diverse resources (Screening and Assessment Manual/Clinical Treatment Guidelines) that provided necessary handrails to services and workers to further develop agency and clinician dual diagnosis capability and served as educational resources necessary for the delivery of worker training and education

• identifying GippsTAFE and other educational providers who had the necessary interest, structures and capacity to provide the required accredited education

• using diverse strategies to build VDDI colleagues’ understanding of the potential of e-learning and their capacity to deliver education and training via e-learning (for example, I am one of the VDDI workers who Greg funded to complete a TAFE module on e-learning), and

• engaging with a wide range of tertiary institutions to build their understanding of the need for and benefits of delivering education and training oriented to more effective recognition of and responses to people with dual diagnosis”

Another dual diagnosis clinician happily admits to having moved from being somewhat of a sceptic to a convert:

“It does help that Greg takes a realistic approach regarding the scope and limitations of the online environment.”

In terms of providing more scope to his ability to deliver programs in a more innovative way, another dual diagnosis clinician believes that their capacity to effectively deliver targeted education to a wide range of learners has been substantially enhanced solely due to Greg’s initiatives and actions.

Another work colleague comments that:

“Greg does, from time to time, ‘rattle our cages’ by suggesting different approaches and encouraging us to think about online facilities that we have not yet used. This helps to
lift us out of our self created “comfort zones”, which in turn leads to periods of increased learning."

Lastly, another dual diagnosis clinician emphasises that:

“Greg is a hugely constructive individual with large vision, great humour, little ego, huge work ethic and substantial flexibility, generosity and pragmatism. I consider him to be one of the most effective persons that I have had the pleasure to work with in my 34-year career and I believe, amongst his many achievements, he easily qualifies to be an Australian e-learning champion.”

Greg’s insights

New e-learning practices

Greg said that VDDI had no e-learning expectations of him and he implemented it into his organisation of his own accord. His initial brief came from the DHS who provided him with vague objectives that were face-to-face orientated. DHS is very happy with the e-learning approach and is investigating further use of Elluminate. The acceptance of the new practices by his peers has been variable. Some dual diagnosis clinicians are not convinced that e-learning will work. Greg reports that it is generally accepted, however, and that there is a flow-on effect occuring where e-learning is seen as a positive way to learn.

Characteristics that promote, influence and implement e-learning

Some of the characteristics that Greg sees as important for someone to promote, influence and implement e-learning practices include having patience, the ability to influence people’s approaches to e-learning and being enthusiastic. He also suggests that the person needs to be well-versed in the latest research into e-learning and that they need to have experience in e-learning. Being able to convince management of the benefits of e-learning, as well as being aware of where staff are in terms of their e-learning abilities, are also important traits. He stipulates that staff need ‘little wins’ followed by ‘bigger demanding stuff’.

In the health sector, all clinical interventions must be evidence-based. Greg has taken this same approach in e-learning development and shared educational theories, philosophies and resources with his team and the wider VDDI. This has ‘infected’ others with the e-learning ‘virus’ and encouraged others to take part.

Measuring impact

Measuring the success of e-learning implementation is evidenced by the number of people engaged in the dual diagnosis course. More than 120 people have enrolled in the course, with applications far exceeding available enrolments. The positive satisfaction rate amongst the participants indicates that it is a quality course. Greg says that in most cases, e-learning was not the participants’ ideal way of learning, but they became engaged and provided positive feedback in their evaluations.

Modus operandi of an e-learning champion

Greg has adopted the attitude of sharing his e-learning skills, knowledge and resources with others and says that anything he produces, he gives away. He suggests that to maximise the impact of e-learning ‘you have to keep talking about it’ and ‘let people know what you are doing’. Role modelling, forward thinking, commitment and having drive and resilience are all important factors in Greg’s eyes if e-learning is to have maximum impact on an organisation.
Management support

In terms of support, Greg believes he has been very fortunate in that the management of St. Vincent’s has been supportive of the e-learning developments. From his viewpoint, it is crucial that people who are attempting to implement e-learning into an organisation should have a degree of autonomy if it is to be implemented successfully. His view is that ‘bad managers micro manage – good managers give you the autonomy to do it’.

When it comes to sustaining e-learning in an organisation, Greg suggests that you need staff and management ‘who can think outside the square’, have a shared vision, and communicate well. To ensure continued support from St. Vincent’s and DHS, Greg has kept his manager well informed and has written several reports providing ongoing descriptions of their achievements. To ensure that e-learning is truly embedded and sustained in an organisation, he is adamant that staff must have a shared vision, be prepared to ‘keep it going’ and should also enjoy doing it.

When it comes to establishing guidelines for incorporating a strategy of implementing the key drivers of e-learning into organisations and the wider VET sector, Greg believes that it is very important for innovators to be rewarded and partnerships formed so that new knowledge is encouraged. It is also important that places or spaces to be innovative are provided. An example of this is providing a place where innovators can have ‘head space’ and then provide them with the resources they need to contribute to a project.

The ‘champion model’ can facilitate the uptake and embedding of e-learning into VET organisations. Greg believes that a champion should be enthusiastic, reward wins, make e-learning personnel feel confident, be able to ‘infect’ people with ideas, and be supportive.

Conclusion

This case study looked at Greg Logan’s e-learning journey which began during his time at Monash University. While at Turning Point, Greg’s vision of what could be achieved in terms of new courses offering accredited awards that utilised technologies and instructional media was recognised and achieved. His current role at VDDI allows him to consolidate his e-learning skills and knowledge and take them to another level. Figure 1 overleaf illustrates Greg Logan’s e-learning journey.
Some critical success factors that have helped Greg achieve the implementation of e-learning are:

- existence of a vision
- sharing of skills, knowledge and resources
- establishing networks
- comprehensive strategic planning
- trusting in people’s abilities
- identifying learners’ needs, market trends and staff roles
- coordination and monitoring
- human resource development
- inspirational leadership
- emphasis on a team approach
- displaying a positive attitude
- introducing new online learning technologies.

What has become apparent in this case study is Greg’s ‘can do’ approach to the implementation of e-learning. He is willing to share his skills and knowledge with others and provides support and encouragement to those who are keen to use e-learning as part of their teaching methodologies.

Greg has influenced organisational and personal uptake of e-learning through the provision of mentorship, guidance and professional development to his peers, and has successfully led a team to adopt and embed e-learning.
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References
Case study 2: Georgina Nou

Impacts on Indigenous communities

Georgina Nou is a freelance mentor currently working with the staff and learners in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara APY TAFE in regional South Australia.

Introduction

Georgina Nou is an explorer in the Lands of Australian Indigenous communities. She employs passion, energy and realism to impact on the educators in those communities. Georgina is an educator with the leadership qualities of an e-learning champion and a gift for inspiring others. She works as a consultant and change agent with many organisations to bring e-learning to Aboriginal communities in remote regions of the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Georgina is a developer and mentor for staff and learners in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara APY TAFE in regional South Australia. Georgina set up an e-learning model for the Diploma of Interpreting in 2008, and has had a huge impact on e-learning capacity among her peers and colleagues in the Lands.

As a champion of e-learning, Georgina runs her business with a passion to bring e-learning to Aboriginal communities through whatever organisational means she can. Inspired by early Canadian experiences, Georgina has an ‘I can work anywhere approach’ – a key enabler in her freelance champion/mentor model.

In this case study we explore the journey, the strategies, the insights and the impact that Georgina has had on the Aboriginal teachers and learners in the Northern Territory and the APY Lands of South Australia over the last five years.
Figure 1: Georgina’s impact in the Aboriginal community

Georgina’s e-learning journey

An inspirational benchmark

Georgina’s early experiences in the 1990s with e-learning were within the adult literacy context as an adult literacy coordinator at a community house and then in TAFE. She used all manner of software with lecturers, spent time as a community artist and explored multimedia and performance strategies working with many young people.

Georgina’s e-learning journey began with a small business course where she developed an e-learning business. Early on she discovered that online session rooms were being used effectively for education of First Nation people in Canada with the Sunchild E-learning Community. She took this idea to central Australia as an

Sunchild E-learning Community

In Canada, Aboriginal people have a lower high school completion rate than the completion rate for non-Aboriginal people. This leads to unemployment, poverty and unrealised potential in Canada’s fastest-growing demographic.

In 1999, members of the Sunchild First Nation considered the lack of education in their community and decided alternative methods were needed to reach Aboriginal learners. They discovered that:

■ Aboriginal learners faced unique challenges including family and legal situations, time away from class and relocating to new homes.

■ Many Aboriginal learners were adults. These learners wanted to upgrade and build a better future while meeting their current schedules and responsibilities.

Any successful education program would have to overcome these challenges with a new way of teaching. In addition, high quality education and experienced teachers would have to be brought to small numbers of learners in remote locations, without exceeding limited education budgets.

The Sunchild E-learning model was adopted as a solution: http://sccyber.net/www/history.php
The impact of e-learning champions on embedding e-learning: case studies

For Georgina it was a wonderful experience to step out in front with a ‘bit of madness’ and to engage the practitioners who were ready for change. It was critical along the way to showcase amongst innovative peers and to support them with ICT and management techniques.

In 2000 she was mentored in the use of Elluminate by Jonathan Finkelstein, leader in the Learning Times environment and in 2003 she established a virtual room for her Indigenous colleagues. Georgina sought learning opportunities for herself in becoming a skilled moderator in a virtual room and took this innovative practice to new levels for remote and isolated learners in the Northern Territory. It was especially implemented by the Deadly Mob for their Deadly Zone online meeting place.

Georgina had early conversations with technical people working ‘out bush’ and they were not very encouraging. She was told she’d never do any better than phone and email.

Georgina argued that they were wrong and challenged them because of the work that had been done in Canada by Sunchild who were facing the very same social, educational, geographic and telecommunication circumstances.

Engaging the disengaged

Georgina was employed at the Institute of Aboriginal Development (IAD) from 2004 to 2007 and has worked for the Deadly Mob Flex-eLearning Centre and the Anangu (Aboriginal) Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (APY Lands) TAFESA as an independent consultant and network leader.

The Deadly Mob Internet Cafe was funded by Networking the Nation and was an initiative of the Gap Youth Centre Aboriginal Corporation, where Georgina worked as the Flex-eLearning coordinator from 2003.

Georgina worked at the Deadly Mob Internet Café for three years until 2006 and from those beginnings she was able to follow up with the use of virtual classrooms for independent indigenous schools and local Indigenous people, a nationally funded project.

Learner engagement with technology increased as a direct consequence of this project. The experience also better equipped a school to apply for funds because they were able to demonstrate engagement.

During the project she had great success in engaging the disengaged learners in the use of computers for learning.

Georgina almost immediately began sessions with five schools, two of which were public high schools, where little was happening for children in the way of computer access and who were giving their teachers trouble. She had them working on their own projects including the use of PhotoShop and web quests using 16 terminals.

There were also three sessions with independent Aboriginal schools that had no access to computers. Using computers, they were able to do a range of fun and educational things. The reports always showed that kids came to school when they were having computers.

The Aboriginal young adults came from the town camps and the local Alice Springs area. They were picked up or came in the door for the Flex-eLearning program. Programs for young people were held in the morning.

Georgina also worked with staff at the Gap Youth Centre where the Deadly Mob Internet Cafe was located, and provided professional development centred on
activities to do with children to take them beyond what was happening in their traditional setting. Challenges presented themselves in the form of recalcitrant or disengaged teachers, but Georgina’s enthusiasm and support overcame their fears.

In the early years of work in the Northern Territory, such as Deadly Mob at the Gap Youth Centre Aboriginal Corporation in Alice Springs NT, Georgina introduced the Moodle learning management system to the Aboriginal organisations and libraries. In the early years, Georgina’s work for the Deadly Mob focused on engaging young disengaged Indigenous youth from the town camps using multimedia and computers to develop communication literacy and personal skills. Development of the Deadly Zone happened during the Framework’s E-learning for Creative Community Partnership’s project. The Moodle site known as The Deadly Zone meeting place gained approval and popularity among the Indigenous learners of the Northern Territory during 2005 and 2006.

Georgina managed a successful creative community partnership among her Indigenous peers as part of the E-learning for Creative Community Partnerships project funded by the Framework in 2006. During that year the Deadly Zone, an online meeting place, was created and managed as an integral part of the Deadly Mob.

Georgina points out that hundreds of young Indigenous people in Central Australia do not have access to adequate and appropriate secondary education. Significant social, cultural and educational barriers limit participation in mainstream education offerings. The Deadly Mob Internet Café in Alice Springs offers a e-learning program to engage marginalised Indigenous young people in pathways to life-long learning. Indigenous people living in the town, in town camps and from ‘out bush’ may walk in off the street and access engaging educational programs that meet their needs.

The success of such programs can be attributed to Georgina’s ability to engage with the community and provide them with useful, practical and relevant solutions. E-learning projects were conducted at 30 remote Indigenous communities. These projects provided training in multimedia, enabling participants to develop community web pages. In another example, the introduction of Moodle, a course management system, not only enabled isolated groups to sign up to online learning opportunities but also provided them with access to e-learning exemplars and online learning tools.

Challenges in the Lands

The journey has not been a smooth one. There have been many challenges, but Georgina has been resilient in her efforts to improve the capacity for e-learning in the Lands.

Some of the challenges she has faced along the way include:

- lack of connectivity – Indigenous people have little access to computers in the bush
- lack of staff – logistical issues are a deterrent
- lack of funding – infrastructure issues are barriers.

Georgina’s solutions to these challenges have enabled an uptake of e-learning technologies within her areas of influence in the Lands. These solutions have been borne out of enthusiasm and innovativeness – methods for ‘getting around the problem’ and for ‘keeping the edge happening’. These solutions have also been implemented with the needs of the learners and the organisation in mind, the use of

5 http://flexiblelearning.net.au/communitypartnerships
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an empathetic approach by ‘actively listening’ and being passionate about providing an online environment that suits the culture of the indigenous people of the Lands.

Georgina stipulates that the shame factor is not there to the same extent in the online environment as it is face-to-face with Indigenous people. She suggests that virtual worlds and online learning can be easier for the lecturers and the participants and that it suits Anangu learning styles: for example, demonstrating and listening.

This is part of the reason for Georgina’s successful impact in the communities. She understands the culture and has realistic views on how best to incorporate e-learning strategies that work and are appropriate. She provides consistent support and mentoring for those new to e-learning and encourages them to explore, implement and embed innovative practices.

Georgina claims that adopting innovative practices is not risky business, it is just good practice. She believes leaders need to lead learners into a self-directed, just-in-time learning experience, using approved and popular web 2.0 tools. Money and effort, she argues, are often wasted with face-to-face learning in the Lands. Many people do not turn up for cultural reasons. Online is more convenient and is proving to be engaging to people in the Lands.

Mentoring – a peer-to-peer learning approach

In recent interviews held with a panel of people engaging youth in e-learning, Georgina makes the point that access to computers in the Lands is now providing the potential for connections and engagement among young Anangu people who have previously been disadvantaged and disengaged.

Georgina has had great success in demonstrating the appropriateness of e-learning tools and strategies to teachers in the Lands who are then confident to pass this new skill on to others. A recent example of this is happening for teachers of the Diploma of Interpreting who are familiarising themselves with tools such as Moodle and Centra.

This year as part of the project, Georgina has identified some Anangu people to be the liaison people with the Anangu community to learn about e-learning and multimedia concepts, with the view of beginning to show other people in the community how to use new platforms and tools. There are malpas or helpers/assistants available to help TAFE lecturers. Georgina showed a woman from the Anangu community how to use PhotoStory 3 in an online session and then asked if she would be happy to show other people. During the next session online Georgina showed an older woman, who was a malpa from Mimili and she did a fabulous job.

Impact over three years for Indigenous communities in the Northern Territory

Georgina’s influence has spread far and wide in a variety of educational environments in the Northern Territory.

She conducted a six week program with Indigenous young people from high schools with music and art design in the Northern Territory, called Deadly Soundscapes. Georgina collaborated with people from a local media organisation who assisted the young people to write songs and record them in small groups. Each group then used computers to make album covers, promotional materials and posters and also had CD-ROMs cut. They performed at an event, including choreography as part of their act. This was a powerful and successful motivational experience for this group.

Between 2003 and 2006, Georgina continued to work with disengaged youth groups in her role as coordinator of the internet café and the Flex-eLearning Centre, working with the Northern Territory’s education department as well as the Larapinta Valley
The impact of e-learning champions on embedding e-learning: case studies

Community, Centre for Appropriate Technology (Batchelor), Irrkerlantye Community and the Institute for Aboriginal Development and educational and service organisations for Aboriginal people in central Australia.

Georgina has managed several projects with through LearnScope in the Northern Territory, developing skills of staff across Deadly Mob and Institute for Aboriginal Development in that time period, working with Reconnect and ASYASS (organisations that deal with Indigenous youth at risk) and working with young people and staff in online session rooms for Youth Pathways. Connections were made with young people in Tennant Creek and remote communities where the Deadly Mob out bush team visited.

**Impact over two years in the APY Lands – South Australia**

Georgina was one of the project leaders for Workplace Education in South Australia. Georgina’s next e-learning journey destination in South Australia was the APY TAFE as a teacher and developer for the Diploma of Interpreting. In this role she was influential in training and supporting staff in the use of online tools such as Moodle (learning management system); Centra (virtual classroom technology), GTalk and, more recently, Second Life (virtual world technology).

Over recent years and especially in 2008, Georgina really made headway for Indigenous communities. She made e-learning and online options available to increase accessibility and choice for people who have been disengaged from learning and who have fallen into the digital divide. With the Diploma of Interpreting, Georgina has been able to demonstrate that Indigenous people respond well to the online environment. She notes that the Indigenous people learn effectively, enjoy the communication aspect and really enjoy the program. This occurs across communities and the country. She also mentions that there are no problems relating to engaging with computers because the Indigenous communities are good risk takers and great hunters and explorers.

Georgina developed e-learning materials for the Diploma of Interpreting along with putting together the virtual library project. E-learning is now being used for training at Diploma, Certificate II and Certificate III, but staff have also embraced its use for staff meetings via Centra and the placement of learning objects on [http://apytafe.netspot.com.au](http://apytafe.netspot.com.au). Janet Skewes, Manager for APY TAFE at TAFE SA Regional, reports that they have been through ‘quite a journey’ with major changes being made to training.

Georgina values the opportunities to provide professional development in e-learning for staff at APY TAFE to help them make a shift in attitude. Her personal development journey in e-learning has enabled her to see the potential of such things as online platforms and web 2.0 tools for the people in the Lands. In particular, her professional development activities and mentoring support foster new initiatives from staff assisting to overcome isolation and break down barriers to learning. Staff from the Riverland, Adelaide and Armidale institutes are now engaging in e-learning with participants in the Lands.

During 2007 and 2008 Georgina brought new e-learning ideas and practices into APY to consolidate an educational focus for Indigenous learners. Web 2.0 technologies (PLEs (Moodle) wikis, social bookmarking and voice online tools) have been incorporated into the delivery of the Diploma of Interpreting, along with the implementation of virtual classrooms.

The latest impact of Georgina’s work at APY is the development of a virtual library of toolbox tasters, which is a collection of the engaging activities extracted from relevant Flexible Learning Toolboxes and is an important repository for people ‘out bush’ who
have limited access to books. The ‘mentoring framework’ approach that Georgina advocates works extremely well as a motivator with Indigenous people.

**A sustainable mentoring model**

‘Ngapartji Ngapartji, I give you something, you give me something.’

Georgina is passionate about sharing knowledge, skills and strategies with her peers and colleagues. This has proven to be a successful model emulated by those she has mentored. She assists one person and that person shows and supports another.

Georgina believes the whole mentor notion is really being carried on by Anangu champions in the community and that they are the ones who can best inform and show their folk about these new possibilities.

There is a consistent pattern to Georgina’s influence. She continues to work tirelessly in the Lands to demonstrate, encourage, enthuse and applaud.

“This last two weeks I have shown probably a hundred or so people from various places in the communities...all Indigenous people...some on important councils ...others newly back from Adelaide Wiltja (the school many from the Lands go to) and they are really keen on having some knowhow... they’re “ninti” (clever) with computers.”

This is how the impact is measured in the Lands – the more you give the more you get back.

In outlining the number of teachers who have taken up e-learning as a result of her efforts over the last few years, Georgina provides the following indicative percentages:

- Deadly Mob – five staff shifted from what they knew to somewhere new
- Institute for Aboriginal Development – 15 to 18 staff (40%)
- APY TAFE – 20 staff.

Being a champion does not stop. It requires a certain kind of tenacity and vision to move others to new levels of achievements in e-learning. Georgina’s journey continues as she mentors new groups of people in the Lands. Her passion and energy are now focused on bringing an awareness of the benefits of virtual worlds (Second Life) as engaging learning places for Indigenous learners. One technique has been through the use of young women working as malpas (helpers) for TAFE lecturers. The benefits of such an environment become immediately apparent for Anangu learners.

This ripple effect in mentoring is working well in the APY lands. Other teachers, managers and networks help create this ripple as they seek Georgina’s advice and mentorship.

In 2008, as part of a project Georgina identified some Anangu people to act as a type of liaison with Anangu in the community, to learn about e-learning and multimedia concepts and to begin to show other people in the community how to use new online platforms and tools.

According to one lecturer, e-learning had not been utilised in his area of employment. Now he runs a program of live online teaching, and he also hosts an interactive database, sourced from a special organisational website, where learners can find electronic versions of course materials, and to which they can securely post assignments, blogs, chats etc. He believes this is all due to Georgina.
**Georgina’s insights**

In terms of establishing guidelines for incorporating a strategy of implementing key drivers of e-learning into organisations and the wider VET sector, Georgina has this to offer:

- create a learning culture
- ensure that innovation is a core capability
- use partnerships to encourage new knowledge
- appoint leaders who are tolerant of risk strategies
- develop teams that are flexible and cross-functional
- foster the growth of communities of practice
- provide places or spaces to be innovative.

In terms of strategies employed to gain support and build momentum in moving e-learning forward in indigenous communities, Georgina recommends the following:

- establish a strong relationship with liaison people in indigenous communities
- remain present, available and accessible for remote learners
- give people a reason to implement e-learning to motivate them
- be patient and provide consistent support in ICT.

To maximise the impact of e-learning in Indigenous communities, Georgina recommends the following:

- be forward thinking and establish a new vision
- be committed with drive and resilience
- be a role model and lead by example
- run a project as a holistic approach to incorporate all new skill development into one project
- enthusiastically encourage staff to implement e-learning strategies
- find out what people need
- conduct regular online forums
- establish networks
- provide relevant activities and events
- showcase the achievements of others
- foster the growth of credibility among peers
- legitimise the research of others with payment
- provide constant information updates
- make e-learning realistic and relevant
- gain management support.

Sometimes operating as a ‘sole maverick’ in a vacuum makes it hard to reflect. Georgina believes that you need to have unqualified support and encouragement from others. Funding needs to be actively sourced and collaboration with management should occur so that new frontiers can be explored with the view of
making e-learning part of policy. She believes that you need to be excited about what you are doing so that you can keep the ‘edge’ happening.

**Georgina’s strategies**

Georgina has employed strong strategies to gain support and build momentum in moving e-learning forward in Indigenous communities.

Her impact is now consolidated through financial support, policy and strategic direction, action research and development approaches within her role at APY TAFE. Her drive for continuous improvement in the Lands enables her managers to see the return on investment (ROI) – the capacity building in e-learning – and they give her solid support in the form of hard money. Georgina draws on a range of expertise from critical stakeholders in the process of embedding innovative practices, and by inviting them to participate in the discussions and actions required to sustain e-learning practices in their organisations.

Georgina claims that you need to have a good relationship of trust with both Indigenous and mainstream people and to make stakeholders’ views accessible to the learners and ensure that the needs of the learners are understood by the stakeholders. Learners need to be able to access online learning day and night and also need a virtual library. They need to be engaged with meaningful online activities with a focus on life-long learning opportunities.

Georgina advocates a strategy of peer-to-peer teaching – ‘learners as teachers’ as an effective strategy in the Lands. For example, you could give a learner $20 for every person they tell about the learning (in the Lands) – a culturally acceptable strategy. Learners are often more technically ‘savvy’ when it comes to the use of web 2.0 technologies as they can draw on that field of expertise, especially when the teacher does not feel confident in that area.

**Georgina’s impact**

**E-learning capacity increases at APY TAFE**

Georgina has been a major influence on APY TAFE staff over the last few years and as a guide across various hierarchical levels.

Georgina was involved in the Diploma of Interpreting to develop the online support to the face-to-face workshops and then was instrumental in the e-learning project as the project manager – the desire for e-learning in TAFE SA was there. This was a one-off opportunity to exploit this energy and build on for the team to move forward.

Forward momentum has been a combination of infrastructure upgrades, staff development, ICT support from the Institute, hosting arrangements for the Moodle site and reliance on regular catch ups with Georgina to discuss the bigger picture and make decisions on ‘where to next’. Catch-ups with Georgina have been either face-to-face or via email. Georgina is a committed member of staff, contributing regularly to staff meetings with comments and advice regarding indigenous education and ideas for working with the APY Lands, and has supported the team through their individual e-learning journeys.

One of the TAFE SA lecturers influenced by Georgina says that he was capably guided into his first steps into e-learning and was much more confident with his new skills to encourage others in their use of e-learning tools. He also believes Georgina can very patiently and capably present hands-on sessions on the use of e-learning tools. Working with Georgina has taken him to a level where he can now co-host live online learning sessions in Centra or Elluminate and create web-based educational resources of various types.
E-learning as core business in APY Lands

The difference - the impact made - is in the move from a face-to-face (intensive workshops for day-to-day learning) traditional teaching model to a blended model. Staff use blended methodologies in day-to-day learning. It can be a mixture of taking sessions in the Moodle site to sessions using Centra.

The creation of the virtual library uncovered a lot of existing resources identified for the target group and staff are now saying they have too many. Twelve months ago they were asking where the resources were, and now they say they have too many. That is pretty remarkable.

Core business and methodology has changed with resources to support the process – another key element in sustained impact. This is the rich legacy that Georgina leaves behind and the pathways she opens up for the staff at APY Lands.

Talking the language of a teacher, a willingness to share previous experiences together with being able to offer tailored solutions were identified as being important. Combined with a ‘can do’ attitude this has led to a change in staff attitude towards e-learning.

Maintenance of the e-learning champion model

Continuing to move staff forward is not that easy. Some individuals may continue to move forward, but a number of staff will continue to need personalised support and mentoring. It is important to ensure that staff can embed new practices in other courses and in daily operations. There are successes - staff meetings are conducted in Centra and will continue to be, and the Certificate II and III in Business is delivered through a blended methodology, and will continue to be. Maximum impact is directly linked to supporting mainstream practitioners.

Not all staff are involved in the e-learning skill development associated with Certificate II and II in Business. They will need support. The whole collection of online resources is available in the virtual library, but access still needs to be encouraged. Staff meetings held online could include some reports from staff on how they are utilising those resources. In this way the momentum can keep going.

Demonstrations and workshops to introduce the virtual library into the APY lands will continue and Georgina will assist in developing the strategies needed to be put in place for 2009. E-opportunities for discussions will consolidate the whole notion of e-learning champions and their potential impact.

A champion who is a strong motivator provides an essential catalyst to the improvement of community capabilities in the use of e-learning strategies. This person needs to know when to pause for reflection and when to encourage, motivate, or inspire others. E-learning leaders are passionate people exhibiting a high level of energy that builds enthusiasm amongst others.

Overall impact

Georgina is an inspiring educator who talks the same language as the lecturing staff; and because of her e-learning experiences she has earned credibility amongst the staff. When working with the Indigenous communities, it is rare to find somebody who has said ‘Yes, this can be done’, with authority. Georgina has, within a very short period of time, managed to have an effect on all staff because of these characteristics. Now when Georgina says it’s easy, everyone thinks ‘well it must be easy’.

Georgina has considerable expertise in the e-learning area and is a first-rate classroom teacher with a very broad grasp of learner-centred pedagogy. While very
enthusiastic about online methodologies, Georgina never loses sight of the role that they play in a holistic approach to learning and is constantly planning ways in which they can be embedded in essentially face-to-face programs.

Georgina’s patience, enthusiasm, energy and positive outlook have not only inspired others to get through some hard and deflating experiences, they have actually contributed to a lasting change in their approach to living. Georgina helps others at all stages of their journey into e-learning. She has patience and tenacity and empowers those she mentors. APY Lands staff can now boast of new knowledge, new skills and implementation of new learning activities for their learners, thanks to her.

Practitioners interviewed identified a number of similar attributes that Georgina holds including:

- enthusiasm
- passion
- high energy levels
- technical skills/knowledge
- the importance for making the learning relevant and enjoyable for the learner
- her ability to sell an e-learning vision.

As part of the embedding process Georgina mentors others, constantly supports them, and aims to empower them as their level of skills increases and they become more familiar with the e-learning tools. She also encourages teachers and managers to share their knowledge with others.

One of the Malpa’s said:

“I can teach and help others in an easier way of learning using computers so that the Anangu people have a better understanding of how much easier life can be using technology.”

Conclusion

Georgina Nou personifies the passionate energetic change agent with a ‘can do’ attitude. She has left her unique influence on a large contingency of teachers and learners in the Lands of Aboriginal Australians in the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Her impact can be measured in the level of awareness, confidence and e-learning actions:

1. Large percentages of teachers are now more aware, more confident and more pro-active in the implementation of relevant e-learning strategies.

2. Many groups of young Indigenous learners are now more engaged, more confident and more likely to participate in collaborative and exciting learning environments, enhanced by e-learning activities.

3. Networks of other e-learning champions and mentors seek advice and enjoy a rapport with Georgina on matters of importance for Indigenous learning.

Georgina provides a legacy of strengths and capability building strategies along with a wealth of insights and recommendations for others to follow her lead. Her championship model provides a solid, realistic and practical means of facilitating the uptake and embedding of e-learning in VET organisations.
A manager described Georgina’s energy, commitment, creativity and enthusiasm as something that has had a major impact on many educators and young Indigenous people.

"Her application and demonstration of e-learning tools has been inspirational that has been shared with much love and passion."

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Case study 3: Graeme Kirkwood

Engaging the heads, hearts and hands of staff

Graeme Kirkwood
Professional Learning Leader
Tasmanian Polytechnic

Introduction

Graeme Kirkwood joined TAFE Tasmania in 2002 as Manager, Learning Development. Prior to this he managed his own education and training consultancy business for seven years. He has 20 years experience in the Tasmanian senior secondary school sector as a teacher, curriculum officer, department head and principal.

Graeme has been actively involved in initiating and leading change and knowledge management in the VET sector. He has co-authored several books, written for various journals, prepared submissions to government, regularly contributes to a number of online forums and produces papers for the Framework.

In 2003 Graeme was a Framework Flexible Learning Leader. His research project focused on exploring models of integrated, whole-of-organisation change aimed at enhancing client focus in training through increased flexibility. Graeme’s paper Selling Change focused on the stages of managing change in the Tasmanian VET sector with a particular focus on examining processes and structures for knowledge management as a key approach to supporting staff, sharing expertise and generating commitment to sustainable change.

The findings of his research directly contributed to the development and subsequent implementation of TAFE Tasmania’s two-year whole-of-organisation plan for flexible learning. The central aim of the plan was to improve the organisation’s capacity to meet clients’ needs by increasing flexibility.

This case study provides an overview of Graeme’s journey by outlining significant milestones achieved along the way. Consideration is given to some of the techniques that Graeme has employed to build the e-learning capacity of VET personnel.

Key characteristics considered by Graeme to be important for an e-learning champion are highlighted. Reference is made to anecdotes provided by various personnel interviewed for this report. This provides an insight into the way he has

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6 http://flexiblelearning.net.au/leaders
been able to build the e-learning capabilities of members of his organisation, particularly through empowerment and support.

Graeme has consistently endeavoured to contribute to the e-learning ‘big picture’. He is highly respected for his ability to communicate in an encouraging manner with practitioners and providing customised e-learning solutions that allow them to better cater for specific learner groups. These solutions are well researched, based on sound pedagogical practices incorporating a level of technology that is pertinent for the circumstance. The learner’s needs drive the solution rather than the technology being used to impose a solution.

He is passionate about the value of e-learning and emphasises the importance of providing high quality blended learning solutions that will provide sound educational outcomes for VET learners. Never one for ‘letting the grass grow under his feet’, Graeme is constantly looking for new opportunities and inspirations that will enable him to grow and develop personally. He is also on the lookout for new technological solutions that may assist with providing a better solution for the learner. He brings a level of energy, insight, commitment, willingness to share and practicality that is admired and respected by teachers, his peers and leaders. He serves as an inspiration to others.

**Graeme’s e-learning journey**

While working in the secondary school sector Graeme recognised the importance of ensuring that his teaching methods were empowering and relevant for the learner. As a believer that learning should be appealing and cater for the needs of the learner, it was during this time that Graeme developed an interest in providing learners with the opportunity to experience new learning environments.

The many lessons learnt in the secondary sector as a teacher of senior English have stayed with him throughout his working career, assisting to inform his thinking about how to communicate with and support learners and teachers.

While working in Tasmanian senior secondary colleges in the 1990s, Graeme was an early leader in the development of VET in Schools programs. This naturally led to an interest in flexible delivery, an interest that saw him establish a state-wide community of practice in 1994 known as the Flexibility Foundation. From there it was an easy jump into e-learning as the Internet and associated technology-based tools began to have a significant impact on education.

Following his time in the secondary school sector as a teacher, department head and then Principal, Graeme established a consultancy business. This move not only presented some challenges but also provided him with the opportunity to work and assist companies to implement change. The emphasis was on a whole-of-organisation approach to change management. Graeme also assisted companies to capture and share their internal knowledge. This work involved assisting with whole-of-organisation change and the capturing and sharing of the organisation’s knowledge.

In particular, Graeme was involved in the Australian Government Department of Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA) funded Small Business Professional Development Program through a range of research, evaluation and action learning projects in several states. The aim of the program was to test innovative strategies for increasing the involvement of small businesses in structured training. This inevitably included a focus on ways in which more flexible learning opportunities could overcome some of the barriers to training faced by small business owners. Two influential publications came from this work: *Where Business

During 2001 Graeme was involved in a research project, An Ethic of Care: Effective Programs for Beginning Teachers, for the Australian Government Department of Education Science and Training (DEST). This work primarily focused on new teachers entering the workforce, the issues they faced and the importance of providing meaningful support. The findings and recommendations reflect Graeme’s long-held beliefs that providing appropriate, meaningful support is not only important for new members of staff but is equally important when organisations are wanting staff to make significant changes to their existing practices or processes. This research provided useful background information for the work that he would be undertaking over the next few years with TAFE Tasmania.

In 2002 Graeme moved to the Tasmanian TAFE sector as the Manager of Learning Development, a time when the organisation was beginning a substantial process of restructuring. The previous Business Improvement unit was refocused as the Learning Section with a renewed emphasis on teaching and learning as its core business. During the initial stages of his appointment, Graeme was responsible for designing and leading professional learning processes for delivery teams, focusing on areas such as training package implementation, competency-based assessment, workplace learning, flexible delivery and learning design.

During 2003 Graeme became an Framework Flexible Learning Leader. One particular part of his leader’s research that greatly inspired and subsequently influenced his thinking during the development of TAFE Tasmania’s Flexible Learning Plan was his visit to Sunderland College in the UK. At that time, Sunderland College had commenced the implementation of a whole-of-organisation foundation for e-learning.

His project focused on models of integrated, whole-of-organisation change aimed at enhancing client focus in training through increased flexibility. The development of the plan took place over most of 2003. It was a collaborative exercise, particularly seeking input from those that were most likely to be affected. To build support for the proposal, consultation involved focus groups, forums and reference groups held across the state.

Two major reference groups were involved with the development of the plan: the Business Consortium (a group comprised of organisational managers chaired by the CEO) and the Learning Coalition (an advisory group on teaching and learning). Membership of the latter was made up of a vertical slice of the organisation involving the CEO through to and including teachers. Together these two groups clarified issues around definition, direction and the development of an organisational vision for teaching and learning.

To build the engagement of the people most likely to be affected, and to assist with the development of the plan itself, focus groups were held across TAFE Tasmania. Some 90 people were involved in the sessions that ran between 60 and 90 minutes with representatives from each of the Institute’s nine program areas.
Three questions were considered at each of these sessions:

1. “In terms of flexibility, where do you want your delivery area to be in three years time?”

2. What are the factors driving you there?

3. What barriers are you facing?

*This was an essential step in understanding the internal context for change, and ensuring the eventual plan had a solid grounding in the everyday reality of those responsible for delivery.*

(Kirkwood, 2004)

This activity also allowed the frontline practitioner to have their say in identifying key themes, issues and barriers to flexibility.

Graeme is a strong proponent for building inclusiveness while also wanting to model the types of behaviours he would like others to adopt. An online discussion forum was established to enhance the communication process. The forum provided the focus group participants with the opportunity to actively engage with the change management process over an extended period of time; as Graeme suggests, “to avoid the danger of focus groups being seen as a one-off exercise.”

Two discussion papers were prepared and distributed via the online forum as well as being disseminated directly to the reference groups. This served not only to demonstrate that ‘things’ were happening but also clearly enabled people to see what themes were emerging, provided the opportunity for feedback along with the drawing together of ‘snapshots’ of Graeme’s research as a Flexible Learning Leader.

Upon endorsement of the Flexible Learning Plan (refer Figure 1 overleaf), Graeme then commenced marketing the plan. Between December 2003 and the end of February 2004, 36 presentations were made across the state involving all campuses. Some 270 staff attended these sessions. By conducting all the presentations himself, Graeme was able to ensure that a consistent message was delivered and that there was minimal opportunity for people less committed or supportive to ‘dilute or filter’ the message.

Graeme has always had a ‘hands-on’ approach to building engagement and gaining support for change. This approach was used extensively when developing the Flexible Learning Plan and is a practice he continues to use when seeking to further the e-learning capabilities of staff. A number of people interviewed for this case study commented on his inclusive manner - the way in which he takes the time to talk and listen to people.

This personal approach to delivering the message gave frontline practitioners a genuine opportunity to engage in discussion and ask questions while also being able to hear about examples of current good practice taking place across the organisation.

The presentations emphasised that while there were some great things happening, there was a disconnection between them. Graeme suggested that,

"What we lacked was a coherent, whole-of-organisation approach to the implementation of flexible learning."

He also stressed that flexible learning was

“the means to an end, but not the end in itself.”
Graeme quotes the principle that ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’ and consequently developed a diagram that would be gradually built up during the presentations to clearly illustrate how all the components are interlinked.

The Flexible Learning Plan is multi-faceted - the parts are integrated and form a coherent whole compromising four goals, each of which has three major strategies contained within it. Graeme considers flexible learning to be ‘any combination of strategies which meets client needs.’ The four goals are: skilled, flexible staff; sharing good practice; blended learning options; and high quality learning environments. (See Figure 1 and Selling Change: a case study for an elaboration of the various components of the Plan.)

“The subsequent development and implementation of TAFE Tasmania’s Flexible Learning plan during 2003 and 2004 saw the organisation [TAFE Tasmania] reposition itself to improve the organisation’s capacity to meet its client needs.”

(Kirkwood, 2004)

Figure 1: Flexible Learning Plan


Graeme is a firm believer in the use of story telling and has been greatly influenced by Stephen Denning’s (2001) work The Springboard: How Storytelling Ignites Action in the Knowledge-Era Organisations. The use of such a practice was incorporated into the whole-of-organisation communication sessions that were undertaken.

During the marketing of the Flexible Learning Plan, a story was used to demonstrate the importance of knowledge sharing. A second story about the work that was being undertaken at Sunderland College in the United Kingdom was told to illustrate what could be done to add value to existing practices. Graeme recalls:

“The message was respectful of teacher’s work, rather than implicitly devaluing current practice, by suggesting that radical change is needed.”

The plan was very much about sending a positive message and building on the great things that were currently already happening.

To show that there was management support for the plan and that it would be resourced, two particular strategies were announced: the establishment of 30 Flexible Learning Champions; and the release of the good practices register. This took place during March 2004.
Flowing out of the Flexible Learning Plan were a series of integrated strategies addressing:

- professional development
- work practices
- recruitment
- knowledge sharing
- blended learning
- learning support
- resource development and content management.

(Kirkwood, 2004)

It is these strategies that have greatly influenced the work that Graeme has been undertaking with individuals and teams across TAFE Tasmania. Many samples have been identified, with several highlighted in the following section.

Graeme’s organisation expects him to ensure that e-learning is part of a broader aspect of learning, with an emphasis on a blended delivery model. In 2004-05, the focus was on planning flexible learning models, but in 2006-08, this developed into a broader focus on ‘engaging learning’.

Over the last three years Graeme has led the implementation of TAFE Tasmania’s Engaging Learning Strategy, a large scale initiative involving professional learning, communities of practice and one-to-one mentoring and support.

Graeme described the purpose as needing to strike a balance between the emphasis in training packages on competency outcomes and assessment needs with the need to maintain an equal focus on the centrality of effective teaching and learning. The strategy aims to build teachers’ capabilities to design and facilitate learning experiences and to utilise resources and environments that engage and empower learners. Three enabling goals target teaching skills, learning design and resource development, and empowering learning environments are contained.

Graeme suggests that e-learning has a significant emphasis in this strategy – not for its own sake but as a crucial tool to promote learner engagement and more active participation in learning.

He is currently a member of the Tasmania Tomorrow project and is closely involved in the establishment of the Tasmanian Polytechnic, one of the three new organisations that replaced TAFE Tasmania and Tasmanian secondary colleges from 1 January 2009.

The Tasmanian Polytechnic will focus on practical learning, with a vocational pathway, supported by academic courses for both Year 11/12 and mature age learners seeking employment outcomes or university articulation. (See http://tomorrow.education.tas.gov.au/home)

**The e-learning champion in action**

Graeme suggests that e-learning must be about connecting to the learner, it must engage, and the experience must be positive. For teachers, e-learning must be about providing something that is achievable, allowing them to undertake small steps that build on their current practices and be educationally sound. The dynamic is shown in the following diagram.
Champions need to ensure that the proposed solutions are customised to meet the needs of the teacher and the learner.

The e-learning champion needs to ensure that consideration is given to the teacher’s existing knowledge, level of understanding and current e-learning capabilities and that the e-learning experience is relevant to the requirements of a particular learner group and should be engaging thus allowing teachers to build their knowledge and skills in new and exciting ways.

Ensuring the proposed solution is capable of supporting sound educational principles and practices is an important role of the e-learning champion. Solutions need to ‘work’ and be reliable. The solution is not always about the use of ‘cutting edge’ technology or software.

Supporting the various people associated with the provision of the e-learning experience is essential. This support may have to be provided at a macro level or extend to working closely with individual members of staff. Recognising and celebrating the successes of individuals, sharing new knowledge and the individual’s e-learning experiences are important in embedding e-learning within the organisation.

Champions need to work to ensure that organisations provide appropriate support, thus enabling them to advance the organisation’s e-learning capabilities.

A recent activity that Graeme has been involved with is the Science, Information and Communication Technology and Mathematics Education for Rural and Regional Australia (SiMERR) project. The intent of the 15 projects funded between 2006 to 2008 by the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DoTARS) was to consider and address rural and regional issues associated with science, ICT, and mathematics.

The project Using ICT tools in VET to Develop Critical Thinking (managed by Helen Bound from the University of Tasmania’s BAVE program, Bachelor of Adult and Vocational Education), sought to undertake research to find out in what ways project-based learning and the use of ICT tools influence teaching and learning within TAFE Tasmania’s building and construction team.

This project typifies Graeme’s commitment to building the capacity of the teacher while enhancing the educational outcomes of the learner - in this case, the apprentice. The aim of the project is best explained by the following question that the project sought to investigate:

“How do trade teachers – many of whom have good trade knowledge but limited teaching qualifications - develop both the pedagogical and ICT skills required to design learning resources that challenge apprentices to think?”
This two-year project commenced in 2006 and involved two researchers and 22 teachers in the trade area of TAFE Tasmania.

The project commenced with an initial investigation designed to provide some baseline data relating to current levels of ICT skills, intention to use ICT and the teachers’ understanding of flexible delivery. An intervention strategy was developed, workshops were conducted, and the process for providing support was established.

The project was about moving teachers from things such as step-by-step instructions on how to hang a door to teaching by dissonance (eg Look at these pictures of doors. What do you think might be wrong with them?).

For this to take place, a lot of assistance was provided to teachers in developing resources, including making movies, developing games, preparing materials for uploading onto the institute’s learning management system and learning about a freely available open source authoring application ‘eXe’ (http://exelearning.org). This software avoids the need for people to learn complex programming, thus providing teachers with an easy way to publish materials on the web or to have their materials ready for inserting into a learning management system such as Blackboard.

From the teacher development perspective, the project worked through the issue of moving a teacher from a step-by-step approach to an approach that would encourage critical thinking in them.

“A number of pedagogical approaches were suggested that went beyond step-by-step teaching. Teachers were encouraged to come up with questions and activities to provoke apprentices to engage in critical thinking. As they designed activities to create dissonance in their learners, they began to feel more comfortable with their own feelings of dissonance.”

(SiMMER, 2008)

**Graeme’s impact**

Graeme brings to his position many important traits or characteristics that serve as a role model for others seeking to build the e-learning capabilities of people within their organisations.

**Influencing others**

That ‘Graeme has long influenced the way I now work…..’ was a common sentiment expressed by many of the people interviewed in the preparation of this case study.

Not only does Graeme draw heavily on his life experiences, he also makes extensive reference to other experts such as Ron Oliver. One teacher explained that because of Graeme he has learnt about and now is able to apply Ron Oliver’s learning model.

Others spoke about how Graeme has assisted them to move from being a traditional teacher to one that has actively embraced e-learning with their learners. Another interviewee, no longer with TAFE Tasmania, spoke of how Graeme’s influence was still significant to him.

Through Graeme’s influence and long-term commitment to building a sustained approach to e-learning, colleagues and teachers are now far more inclined to incorporate different approaches to their teaching, including:

- participating in communities of practice
- developing interactive e-learning resources
- using WebCT, wikis and blogs
The impact of e-learning champions on embedding e-learning: case studies

- developing a blended approach to delivery
- sharing resources and ideas with others
- building online communities.

Graeme suggests that it is important to target people when they are ready. Not everyone is ready at the same time and their personal motivation for moving to e-learning varies significantly. Developing the individual skills of people is important and necessary if long-term change is to take place.

Another interviewee described the impact in the following way:

“This Graeme’s support for my skill development has had a multiplier effect. I now use the skills to support others.”

When seeking to influence others it is important to connect with them. A peer commented:

“For the trade teachers, Graeme’s solutions are very practical yet for the highly academic he is able to provide the appropriate level of detail to appeal to their needs.”

A teacher stated that Graeme has:

“a great talent for being able to balance the detail, theory and the big picture.”

It was identified that Graeme has an excellent e-learning knowledge with the ability to effectively communicate. A teacher commented that:

“Frequently, I have been involved in workshops where Graeme has demonstrated how different technologies, web 2.0 applications or learning theories can be applied into everyone’s classroom. He has a knack of helping people to identify with an idea and then to envisage how they could use it.”

One interviewee outlined the way Graeme worked in the following manner:

“He provides information, offers suggestions of tools, develops/delivers or arranges professional development, and then disseminates and shares the knowledge.”

Serving as an inspiration

By seeking to provide high quality learner focused solutions, Graeme has become an inspiration to many.

Teachers’ comments include:

“I believe that many teachers have been inspired to make changes to their teaching practice as a direct result of the work that Graeme has undertaken.”

“I have long been inspired by Graeme. I find him a deep thinker, inspirational, highly supportive, inclusive in his dealing with people, a great communicator with the ability to develop the creative side of people.”

Other interviewees described Graeme as an inspiration. After seeking his assistance he would then work with them to make ‘things happen’. Another teacher said:

“Graeme has opened up to me a whole new way of delivering e-learning to apprentices. He has better equipped me to plan for the new learners that I am encountering.”

To be able to assist and guide people, Graeme spends significant time keeping up to date trialing new technologies, reading and thinking through solutions. A colleague suggests that:
“This provides him with wonderful insight, allows for forethought and demonstrates his enthusiasm for e-learning.”

Graeme has served as a role model to many people. A colleague provided the following:

“One example that comes to mind is his ability to work with different people in varying circumstances. At meetings Graeme may make a suggestion, start the conversation, and then pull back when people are engaged; he will then move more towards being a guide rather than trying to dominate the conversation.”

A peer acknowledged that Graeme is a great change leader and is able to alter his leadership style depending on the people he is dealing with and the particular requirements at the time.

**Influencing teams**

A teacher commented that:

“The particular strengths that I consider Graeme has given us are from his commitment to working with delivery teams to explore the issues around a problem and to then come up with innovative relevant solutions.”

Graeme worked with a team to provide an innovative solution based on the use of RFID (radio frequency identification) tags for the hospitality area. This project was geared towards learners with low literacy levels. The solution required learners to ‘wave’ a card with a picture of a piece of hospitality equipment over a scanner which would then automatically ‘fire up’ the computer providing video-based information on the item to the learner. Graeme supported the project through all stages. A hospitality teacher said:

“He stuck with the project right down to laminating and cutting out the cards with the teachers, where other “managers” may have left them to get on with it.”

Other examples were provided, including Graeme’s work with the trade teams, providing solutions to apprentices that are more engaging, and requiring them to think through solutions rather than being a passive learner. A practitioner recalled that:

“By working with Graeme I developed skills in creating video and audio products, including editing, learnt how to effectively use e-game builders and rapid web building tools such as eXe, began to work in virtual environments to explore their potential, refined my skills in facilitation on online delivery.”

Graeme is a firm believer in the importance of having people collaborate and share what they have learnt. He has facilitated whole-of-organisation themed professional development events. These events enable staff undertaking projects to showcase their work to other teams and build the organisation’s overall knowledge and understanding of e-learning.

His work in supporting TAFE Tasmania champions has meant that the e-learning message is spread far and wide and that he is better able to increase the number of teams being exposed to e-learning. Having acquired skills and knowledge, these champions are then better placed to influence others back in their respective work places.

**New technology**

Graeme is a big fan of exploring and experimenting with new technology. A particular strength he has is the way in which he is able to work with staff to build their confidence and capability with new applications.
Other comments from teachers and colleagues include:

“Graeme’s approach to working with individuals and teams helps to more easily build the acceptance of new technology within the organisation.”

“We now feel more knowledgeable and comfortable with new technologies and are able to seek out other resources from the websites and contacts.”

Knowing what is on the e-learning horizon, its likely impact or the opportunities it might provide, is important for an organisation. One interviewee described Graeme’s approach as:

“He is very strong at recognising trends and possibilities as he is well read/researched. This allows him to develop and work with staff on innovative projects that are exciting and new (something that people enjoy!).”

Other comments include:

“When I first saw Graeme demonstrate the ‘eXe’ tool I was left with the impression that it was easy to use and generated a great looking e-resource and that the learning design of a resource was of paramount importance.”

“Graeme is able to clearly articulate how the use of new e-learning tools and technology based approaches can enhance learner learning and make it more engaging. His is also very good at getting in and giving things a go.”

Graeme has assisted many teachers to become more familiar with different types of technology or has worked with teachers to enable them to explore and learn more about technologies, including virtual worlds, RFIDs, mobile learning, digital stories, and digital coaching.

**Connecting to what people do**

Graeme suggests that ‘e-learning must be about connecting to the learner, it must engage and the experience must be positive.’ For teachers it must be about providing something that is achievable, allowing them to undertake small steps along with building on their current practices.

In the SiMMER project Graeme helped design and deliver a series of workshops that explored the notion of how to support the learner in flexible delivery. It sought to develop creative solutions to the tension that exists in flexible delivery models that,

“assume apprentices can teach themselves when practical experience shows us that many apprentices have limited skills in self-directed learning.”

Knowing when to use the jargon or cite the academic research is a skill that has been highly developed by Graeme. A colleague described him as being well read with the ability to think through the issues, providing a range of possible solutions if required.

“He is able to draw out people’s needs and present them with options that are not just about the gadget but the benefits it will provide.”

One interviewee suggested that Graeme is:

“very much about experimenting, always being on the look out for new and innovative approaches.”

And another:

“Graeme has helped us put in funding, assisted us in incorporating new technology into our teaching along with assisting an industry partner to incorporate new technology into their induction program.”
Other colleagues described that:

“Graeme has been an acknowledged leader in e-learning both within the TAFE sector and with industry for many years. He is recognised within Tasmania and throughout Australia. Staff will regularly seek his input, request advice on how they can further build the capabilities of their learners in an interesting, engaging manner by using e-learning.”

Providing solutions

Graeme is able to act as an effective bridge between management and the practitioner, working with both when required. Thinking strategically yet acting locally was a phrase that described Graeme’s approach to doing things.

One way in which Graeme has assisted teachers to foster learner engagement has been through the use of games. The games are based on sound educational principles, actively engage the learners with their learning, and are constructed around the knowledge requirements of training packages. Graeme suggests that the needs of learners are constantly changing, hence the learning resources of teachers need to be forever changing.

Another resource to which Graeme greatly contributed was assisting a building teacher who was fairly new to the organisation to develop e-learning resources for the erecting roof trusses. The resources would need to appeal to learners with varying levels of understanding.

Figure 2: Online learning resource
The impact of e-learning champions on embedding e-learning: case studies

**Figure 3: Appealing to different levels of learners**

The teacher was supported and trained in the techniques for video production (preparing a script, filming, editing, mixing) and then incorporating the finished product into his teaching.

**Figure 4: Revision points**

Graeme assisted to secure external funding for backfill and training. A trade teacher said:

“*What I particularly appreciated was the way in which Graeme supported me to not only develop the resource but to then incorporate it into by teaching. It is one thing to have a resource but a very different thing to be able to use it correctly.*”

**Future e-learning champions**

E-learning champions of the future will need to have a range of soft and hard skills including a wide range of IT skills. The champion needs to be able to communicate at
many levels within an organisation while providing customised solutions to teachers for their learners.

Graeme suggests the champion should have first-hand experience of e-learning because knowing what it is like to be an e-learner is important. When rolling out e-learning solutions, those responsible need to promote answers that reflect the needs of the end user and not be solely geared towards the latest technology. It is more about ‘solutions that work’.

Graeme suggests that the most effective personnel for driving lasting change in e-learning are the ‘early majority’ rather than the ‘early adopters’. The early adopters are more likely to become isolated, being perceived as zealots and losing the support of their peers. The early majority he describes as the second wave, whose persistence carries others with them on the e-learning journey to adopt, implement and embed e-learning.

Graeme believes that it is imperative that e-learning champions can demonstrate outcomes and are also able to display credibility in terms of speaking convincingly about proven e-learning practices and, not trying to ‘sell’ e-learning merely for the sake of it. He is strongly committed to providing solutions that ‘engage learners and leave them with a positive learning experience. He notes that a longitudinal approach, where there is a ‘limelight to daylight’ transition for the project duration, followed by the sustainability of the finished product, is the ideal outcome and this can only be achieved through persistence. This should be combined with having a proven track record with ‘runs on the board’ in order to be able to promote and implement e-learning practices within their organisations and further into the VET sector.

The underpinning factor is that the e-learning solution must be reliable, and not fall. In addition, the solution is focused on the learner’s needs, delivering a solution when and where the learner wants it.

Gaining support and building momentum from others to move e-learning forward in an organisation requires identifying the right e-learning people at the right time and then the requirement to support them from the intial concept to development and then onto implementation.

He sees that a proven strategy is to showcase good e-learning practices based around a theme such as trades, or good learning design. Showcasing is also a great way to share e-learning skills, knowledge and resources, as well other Framework events.

Graeme stipulates that role modelling or leading by example is at the top of the list when it comes to maximising the e-learning impact within his organisation, as well as having e-learning personnel who are positive, committed, have drive and enthusiasm and are resilient.

To maximise appropriately supported e-learning Graeme argues that an organisation should include the integration of e-learning into its strategic plan.
From Graeme’s perspective, maximising the impact of e-learning in his organisation is achieved through:

- the recognition of e-learning champions
- showcase days
- an organisational e-learning strategy
- a good structure for at-the-elbow technical and resource development support
- having a solid systematic technological structure
- having an online content management system;
- using an online learning management system, such as Blackboard
- providing state-wide access to e-learning resources
- management support
- reliable systems that work.

**Conclusion**

Throughout his career in the education sector, Graeme has been passionate about making a difference - the need to provide sound educational opportunities to learners that are appealing and engaging.

He has a talent for being able to engage people at all levels of an organisation with a view to working towards achieving a new goal. He is able to develop the ‘big picture’, the vision, and present a compelling case for change as he is well-read and thus able to present his arguments in an articulate, reasoned manner. At the practitioner level, Graeme is able to effectively communicate to individuals providing tailored and relevant e-learning solutions.

Graeme’s work at TAFE Tasmania has contributed to the organisation reinvigorating its focus towards teaching and learning with an emphasis on being client focused. In meeting this objective, the organisation has the potential to offers its learners a wide range of e-learning solutions.

Over the last five years Graeme has consistently supported TAFE Tasmania’s practitioners by better equipping them to build and develop sound educational resources, change attitudes so that sharing the knowledge/learnings is part of the way in which things are done and then providing teachers with the tools to enable the new practices to be sustained.

While Graeme is always investigating and exploring new technologies for their relevance to teaching, he is very mindful of the importance of not imposing complex solutions if an easier approach will suffice.

The factors required to build the e-learning capacities of an organisation are many and varied. Graeme’s key considerations are to:

- develop a vision that is grounded in theory
- locate e-learning as part of the bigger picture
- ensure the message is consistent and convincing
- adopt a multi-faceted approach to change
- communicate clearly and to everyone
- keep everyone informed
- involve people throughout the process
- build leadership support
• provide solutions that work for an individual
• work with people starting from their level of understanding
• use language that is appropriate for the situation
• incorporate the use of graphics into presentations and papers
• use stories to sell the change
• respect staff and what they are currently doing
• achieve visible action early on
• encourage more flexible work practices
• resource the initiative
• treat e-learning as part of a blended learning solution
• acknowledge the barriers and concerns
• share the knowledge and build effective strategies around knowledge management
• provide solutions that work
• connect with reality
• spend a lot of time sewing seeds, but be patient - returns take time
• model what you expect
• celebrate the successes
• build the capability of staff.

Graeme seeks to engage the ‘heads, hearts and hands’ of staff in the e-learning process: the head through the use of resources; the heart through the passion and desire to provide flexible learning solutions for the learner; and the hands by supporting staff to enhance or build new skills.

“Graeme is unique; he is a rarity– a great leader.”

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