2024 Showcase 1 – Abstract

Hybrid delivery of a first-year science unit – an exercise in tension management

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The use of information technology in higher education has increased considerably since the turn of the century. Ease of internet access and the availability of affordable devices means university units can now be delivered partially or fully online. In synchronous, hybrid delivery, students can participate either face-to-face on-campus, or online remotely in real time (Raes et al., 2019). While there is noble intent in merging face-to-face and online cohorts to include geographically isolated students who cannot engage in face-to-face interactions (Al-Samarraie, 2019), inherent tensions associated with hybrid delivery have the potential to impact on students' participation. These tensions, framed within Croker et al's (2021) conceptual model "Joining via technology from … learning", are associated with a series of competing priorities, specifically:

- a focus upon information technology vs a focus upon people;
- supporting planned connections vs supporting responsive connections;
- balancing perceived gains (e.g. media facilitating exchange) and possible losses (e.g. deficit view/s, misrepresentation of students); and
- experience of students joining classes remotely vs experience of students joining face-to-face.

Management of these tensions - coupled with strategies to promote interactive rather than passive participation - should create conditions for a successful hybrid delivery.

This presentation:

- reflects upon the first hybrid delivery (Lismore + Online) of the unit SCIN1001 Nature of Science in Term 1 2024;
- offers the chance to participate in a brief online learning activity from SCIN1001; and
- proposes a suite of strategies to enhance hybrid delivery.

References

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