AASA E-learning presentations and workshop, Auckland, 1 October 2019

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Digital material, including presentations can be accessed here.

Background

Jolanda Morkel was invited to facilitate a workshop on e-Learning in Architecture at the AASA AGM in Auckland on 1 October 2019. This initiative followed on the AASA Online Learning and Teaching in Architectural Education Symposium and Workshop hosted by the School of Architectural Design and Planning, at the University of Sydney, and coordinated and chaired by Glen Hill, on 29 September 2017. At the time, participants agreed that the AASA can play a role in e-Learning, through:

- Support for innovative e-Learning e.g. collaborative projects between Universities, research, publication and dissemination of information
- Providing platforms for content creation, networking and sharing

The 2017 Symposium and Workshop outcomes are available here.

Introduction

The AASA AGM E-learning workshop on 1 October 2019 was preceded by an introductory session earlier in the day, during which Dr Douglas McLeod from Athabasca University and Jolanda Morkel from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology each presented an overview of the e-Learning innovations at their respective Universities, inviting AASA members to collaborate. Contact was recently made by six Higher Education Institutions, currently offering architectural programmes that are all or mostly online, in Australia, South Africa, the USA, and Canada. These are: Curtin University, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Boston Architectural College, Academy of Art University, South Illinois University, and Athabasca University.

As part of his presentation, Dr McLeod proposed the following areas of collaboration:

- Global studios (a global online lounge)
- Interactive curriculum
- Lectures
- OERs of all kinds
- Critics
- Students (who can easily move between our programmes)
- Research (AR/VR, AI, IoT)
- Resources

The E-learning workshop facilitated by Jolanda Morkel was attended by 18 participants. Between 10 and 12 completed the online polls that formed part of the workshop. The post-workshop online survey was completed by 12, of whom half (six) participated in the workshop. Jolanda started the workshop with an introduction to the global online landscape, focusing on the 2019 EDUCAUSE horizon report, in which current global trends, challenges and developments of Technology in Higher Education are recorded. The workshop was structured around two main themes, i.e. **which questions remain** and **what are the next steps**. Jolanda used Zeetings to allow participants to follow the slides on their own devices, and for access to the online polls.

Which questions remain

Workshop participants were invited to formulate 'how might we' questions. These were noted on post-its and displayed on the wall, organised according to the following nine themes: Student support, Access and equity, Studio pedagogy and culture, Cost and efficiency, Staff support and workload, Learning spaces and experiences, Authorship and intellectual property, Learning Design, and Student engagement. The largest concentration of post-its were found around the themes of Student support, Studio pedagogy and culture, and Learning spaces and experiences.
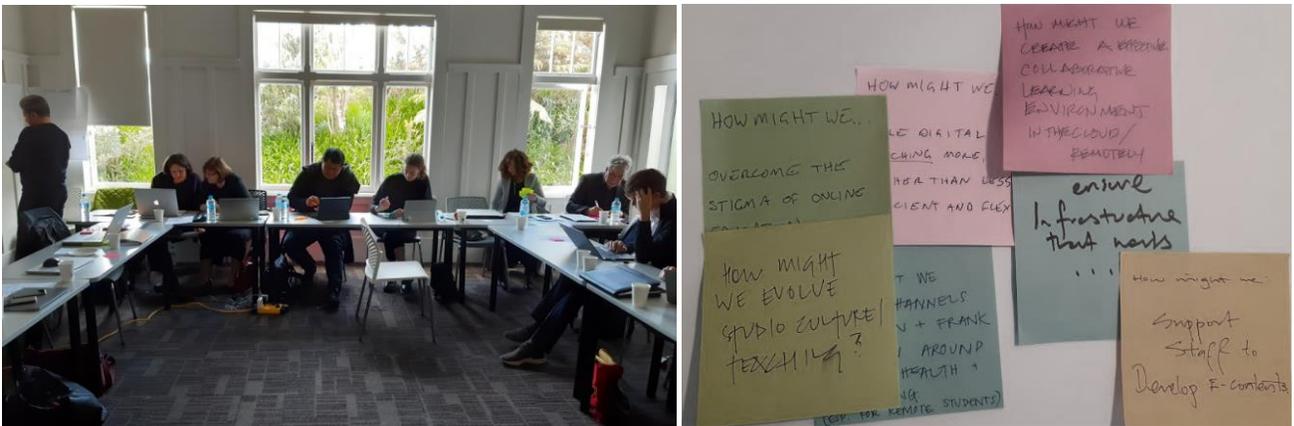
Below follows a summary of the responses - the complete list of inputs by participants, recorded from the post-its, can be found here.

STUDENT SUPPORT
How might we…
- ensure student-centred learning that adapts to student expectations
- help students manage stress, create channels for discussion around mental health and wellbeing, and providing pastoral care in online spaces
- enable online students to access other university events such as talks, exhibitions and social events, engage with student groups and feeling part of a community
- provide for hardware, software and other technology that students need; and access to workshops and printing

ACCESS AND EQUITY
How might we…
- promote access to students from disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds and help them be successful – overcome the digital divide
- ensure equal access to technology and infrastructure

STUDIO PEDAOGY AND CULTURE
How might we…
- optimise technology to create (real time) new visualizations of spatialized digital data, and improve student skills in virtual experience software VR/X
- use technology to address climate change differently

- promote blended learning by employing mobile devices for off-campus learning activities e.g. as sketchpads for quick site and project studies, and use digital tools to flip classrooms in studio
- enhance collaborative design studio sessions with real time feedback, and peer-to-peer learning
- include physical skills such as model-making, in online learning
- build an online design culture and evolve studio culture teaching
- value intellectual discourse in online leaning, and enhance design excellence
- develop the platforms we're using rather than adapting current methodologies
- keep content up to date and remain agile

COST AND EFFICIENCY
How might we…
- make digital teaching more, rather than less, efficient and flexible
- deliver studio to large classes with less resources

STAFF SUPPORT AND WORKLOAD
How might we…
- develop academic staff development courses/ training and support staff to develop e-(learning) content/s
- acknowledge (showcase) best practice in online L & T
- benchmark staff: student ratio, avoid increasing staff and student workload
- build the AASA as a community of practice rather than competing members, be humble and keen to learn

LEARNING SPACES AND EXPERIENCES
How might we…
- ensure/ design more direct and intuitive online environments, overcome the stigma of online education
- involve e-leaning students in well-supported spatial experiences
- create an effective collaborative learning environment in the cloud/ remotely, build a wider blended community

AUTHORSHIP AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
How might we…
- share or jointly produce learning material for use in multiple institutions
- avoid plagiarism

LEARNING DESIGN
How might we…
- design for integration of programmes running at different paces and timeframes
- optimise self-directed learning
- measure online learning outcomes
- explore building of physical and digital model building in the cloud/remotely
- avoid unconscious bias in assessing students, co-design assessment with industry
- provide quick and rapid modes of engagement that work around student and staff availability
- inspire students online
- provide students with serendipitous connections and communications

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
How might we…
- use digital means to engage student interest in deep content learning
- enable rich and passive/ social learning i.e. overheard conversations
- promote student engagement, also large cohorts

After a reflection on the questions that emerged, the discussion focused on student support, the accreditation process, and the importance of an embodied studio experience online.

Unfortunately, time did not allow further elaboration, but in response to the questions raised, the following approaches (illustrated with CPUT examples) could be considered for future exploration – refer to Jolanda's presentation here.

- **Employing LEARNING EXPERIENCE DESIGN to address these questions and challenges**

Drawing on related disciplines including instructional design, user experience design, human-centred design, service design, universal design, and interaction design, authentic learning experiences should be purposefully designed to integrate appropriate digital technologies. At the CPUT a blended academic staff development course 'Blended Learning Course Design' was first offered in 2017. This course is currently being redesigned as an online offering for CPUT staff. A course such as this might be developed into an online course for architecture/ design educators. Through collaboration it could become an open resource – let's discuss the possibilities. For literature on instructional/ learning (experience) design, also refer to the work of Grainne Conole, Diana Laurillard and Gilly Salmon.

- **Fostering a DESIGN THINKING MINDSET to address these questions and challenges**

In a study conducted at the CPUT, looking at thirteen e-Learning champions across different faculties, we discovered that the champions displayed characteristics that closely matched a design thinking mindset. Comparing this work to US research by Parker and Cruz, together we formulated design principles that may foster such a mindset (paper in press – see DEFSA 2019 presentation). These findings should be helpful for staff development or training initiatives. There are also opportunities for collaborative research.

- **Responding with a FLEXIBLE LEARNING approach to these questions and challenges**

Flexible learning is a student-centred approach. Research drawing on work by the University of Southern Queensland, adapted by the flexible learning unit at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, shows that, for a University to successfully implement flexible learning, it takes more than just the pedagogy. It demands flexible curriculum design, flexible admissions criteria, flexible delivery, and flexible support systems. This chapter reflects on the part-time blended programme at the CPUT, in terms of the flexible learning framework: Morkel, J.D., Cronjé, J.C. 2019. Flexible learning provision for Architecture in South Africa: lessons learned from an industry-university collaboration in Faculty Perspectives on Vocational Training in South Africa: Lessons and innovations from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology Ivala, E.N. and Scott, C.L. (Eds). Routledge - pre-print version here.

- **Adopting OPEN PEDAGOGY to address these questions and challenges**

Tony Bates recently updated his open source (creative commons licenced) book on e-Learning: *Teaching in a digital age - guidelines for designing teaching and learning*. It contains a comprehensive section on open education, that is worth exploring, towards possible future collaboration and shared outputs.

What are the next steps

The online poll conducted during the workshop, to help prioritise the next steps, produced the following result:
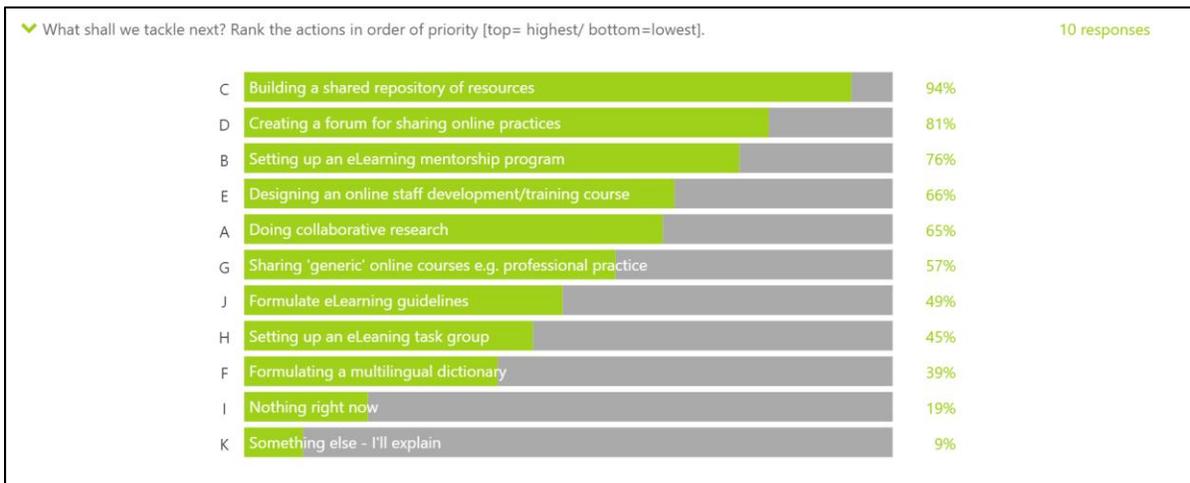
The top five next steps that were selected in this poll, are:

1. Building a shared repository of resources (94%)
2. Creating a forum for sharing online practices (81%)
3. Setting up an e-Learning mentorship program (76%)
4. Designing an online staff development/ training course (66%)
5. Doing collaborative research (65%)

Although the workshop time was limited, and it had to be drawn to a close after just over an hour, valuable questions were raised and pertinent issues highlighted. To make sure that all relevant points were captured, and considered for follow-up action, an online post-workshop survey was conducted, inviting AASA members to participate. Of the 12 online respondents, half had participated in the workshop.
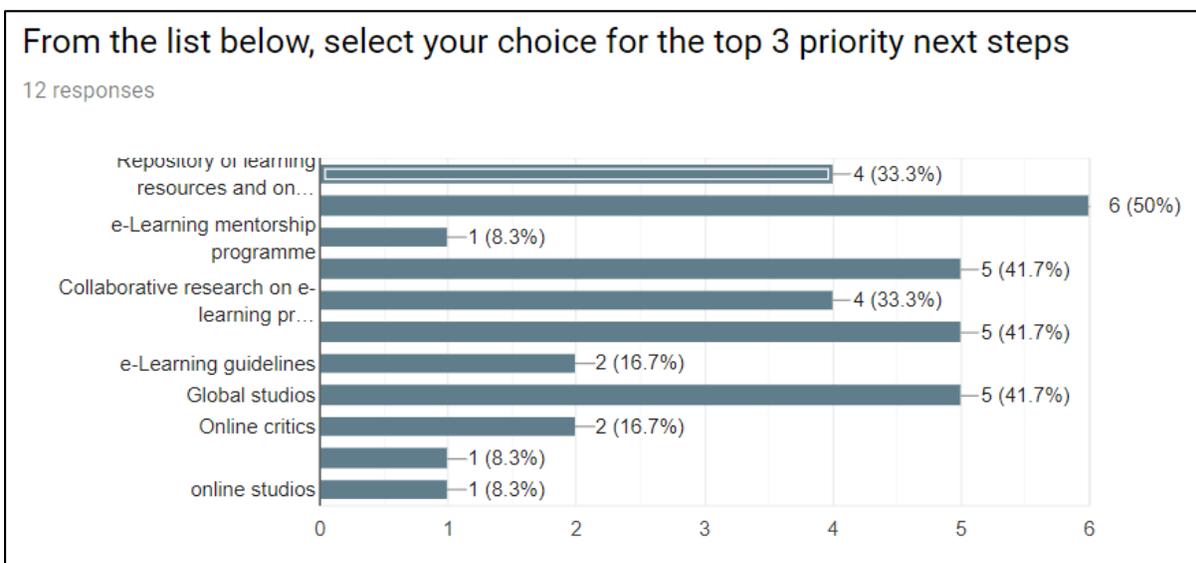
The top six items for follow-up, that were identified, are:

1. Repository of e-Learning methodologies and tools resources (50%)
2. Staff development course (41.7%)
3. Shared online courses (41.7%)
4. Global studios (41.7%)
5. Repository of online courses and online lectures (33%)
6. Collaborative research on online practices (33%)

Just over half of the online post-workshop survey participants indicated that they wish to be involved in follow-up initiatives. Others responded that they may consider involvement in the future. There were also some workshop participants who did not complete the post-workshop online survey, but indicated that they wish to be involved.

The top three items identified as next steps, that emerged from both the workshop poll and the online post-workshop survey, are:

1. Repository of e-Learning methodologies and tools resources
2. Staff development course
3. Collaborative research

Conclusion

The workshop was well attended and participants engaged in lively discussion.

> *'The research is very well structured! I love the open future vision and the T&L framework. Looking forward to contributing more, creating an innovative learning environment in support of blended/ online learning experience.'*
>
> *'It's wonderful to see the AASA leading and supporting the Architecture Schools in this critically important field. Thank you to Jolanda Morkel and the AASA! I'm sorry that I could not be at the AASA AGM this year. From all reports, it has been brilliant!'*
>
> *'From my limited experience and reflection on this question in our field, the fluidity of interaction (recorded, live, other) and preserving school-specific character (avoiding everyone doing the same) seem factors. Thank you for work in this area and I look forward to the findings.'*
>
> *(Online survey respondents)*

AASA members needing more information or those wanting to participate in follow-up initiatives, may contact Steven Feast. Jolanda Morkel is also available to continue conversations, whether face to face or online.

Alternatively, any further thoughts, questions, suggestions or requests may be shared <u>here.</u>

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