

D4 - Virtual classrooms

Informing principles

In Feb 2008 USQ made a commitment to mainstream the use of Virtual Classrooms into its core Technology Enhanced Learning infrastructure. This was based on several reports and the experiences of many individuals over the last 10 years.

There is increasing evidence that the skilled use of a blended learning environments using a number of media, technologies and interaction modes will result in both more effective and more sustainable educational than the use of unimodal methods. Virtual classrooms are an inherently integrating and collaborative media allowing:

- Report students to interact in a virtual classroom
- Blending on campus and external educational interactions
- Cross campus and multi-campus teaching
- Blending face to face and online interactions
- Text, audio, video and whiteboard interactions
- Lecturers, tutorials, demonstrations and student presentations

Goals

In 2008 and 2009 virtual classrooms will be used to:

- enhance educational experiences of external and remote students
- enable cross campus teaching
- enable recording and playback of educational events
- support student learning communities both within courses and within programs
- support communication and collaboration between people on all campuses and external people

Strategic alignment

- USQ Teaching and Learning plan
- USQ Strategic directions
- USQ Realising our Potential

Details of Faculty support for an 18 month period

The following strategies are being used:

- In S1 2008 continuing to work with staff who have used Virtual Classrooms the past
- Providing informal demonstrations and training
- Establishing one place where information can be provided and people can share their experiences and expertise
- Formation of the Virtual classroom working party to advise the USQStudyDesk Reference Group
- Formation of the Virtual Classroom at USQ users group
- Build up to a formal go live and use of Virtual Classrooms across the university in S2 2008

Tasks, timelines & budgets

Tasks	Timeline	Budget
Wimba and Elluminate trial in s3	S3 2007	
ICT strategy committee decision to use Wimba in 2008	14 Feb 2008	
Preparation of the contract with Netspot	31 March 2008	
Formation of the VC Working party	April 2008	
Pilot use of Wimba Live Classroom in teaching in S1 courses	April 2008	
Pilot training provided by Peter Evans	April 2008	
With DICTS jointly develop training for S2		
Demo of Wimba as a lecture capture tool	April 2008	
Providing training and assistance for S2 staff	June 2008	
Go live and launch of Wimba Live Classroom and Voice tools for S2	1 June 2008	
Rollout across the university in S2	21 July 2008	
Use of Wimba in S2		
Providing training and assistance for s3 staff	October 2008	
End of S2 evaluation	October 2008	
Use in s3	November 2008	
Evaluation and decision for S1 2009	Dec 2008	

Total Resources/ Budget Required

Level B academic (.2)

Required documentation and policy rewriting

Infrastructure

- ICT setup and support (firewalls and ensuring Wimba works in the USQ environment)
- Outreach documentation for USQAssist
- Possibly updating the minimum computing requirements for students

Supporting students and lecturers

- Basic setup and connection
- Trouble shooting

Professional development requirements

Training for staff

- Using Wimba Live Classroom as a participant (1/2 hour)
- Using Wimba Live Classroom as a presenter and advanced Wimba features e.g. user management, application sharing, quizzes (1 Hour)
- How to teach using Wimba including how to integrate Wimba into teaching (1 Hour)
- Support staff – training to offer assistance and troubleshoot (2 hours)

Scholarship opportunities

- Document and analyse the implementation process
- Document and analyse the way staff use Virtual Classrooms
- Surveys
 - Before and after use
 - Teacher, presenter and student

Communication plan

What we communicate	Who we communicate to	How we communicate	When we communicate
Project reports	SLC / LTEC / ICT Strategy	Email Status Report attached	Prior to meetings
Guidelines & project updates	Associate Deans L&T Dean of Students & ICT L&T Adviser Student Guild & Student Services Janet Verbyla (DVC – F)	Email update via ‘PRP Info’ newsletter.	Monthly
General developments	Other USQ staff	Virtual Classroom users group	As needed

Evaluation strategies

- Usage statistics
- Surveys
- Feedback from Virtual Classroom Users Group
- Feedback from Virtual Classroom Working party