

# **Together we are better: Leading a collaborative multifaceted team to co-create enhanced learning experiences for students.**

**Trish McCluskey**

Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia  
Trish.McCluskey@deakin.edu.au

21st century universities aim to produce scholarly and work-ready graduates who will become lifelong learners capable of surviving and thriving in an increasingly complex, technology driven world. To achieve this the traditional university learning experience is emerging from a transmission based, content centric model to a more transformative, learner centric and digitally enabled one. This change has necessitated the design and development of new curriculum models and tools and new ways of working across traditional silos. This in turn requires new knowledge and skill sets to successfully weave the many design threads required to create a quality, flexible and multi-modal learning experience for the contemporary student. Academic staff are often overwhelmed by growing demands on their time and many do not have the diverse skill sets required to develop innovative digital learning resources. Subsequently “professional staff are being required to take on new responsibilities and increasingly complex work” (Graham, 2012). This presentation will showcase an innovative, team based, course enhancement process at an Australian university that has resulted in a blurring of traditional academic and professional role boundaries and highlighted the diverse capabilities and skill sets required to create an authentic, engaging and digitally enhanced curriculum. The project involved a hybrid team (Pod) consisting of multi-media, academic, video production and project management staff assigned to work collaboratively with course teams to create authentic student learning experiences through the development of coherent learning outcomes and “cloud concepts” (Oliver, 2012). However, successful teams don’t just happen and the presentation will also reflect on the leadership and purposeful development of the team, through the design of agile, collaborative work practices and explicit identity formation and promotion. Rhoades (2010) claims that professional staff are often invisible, unrecognised and unacknowledged in the university and academic staff may view them as aligned with clerical support staff. A positive team culture was encouraged to value, share, and raise awareness of the different but complementary expertise that existed. The team worked to create a highly visible presence and proactive team dynamic to exploit the pedagogical potential of shared knowledge and digital technologies. They undertook targeted professional development and were encouraged to familiarise themselves with educational terminology and discourse to better meet the needs of teaching academics, industry and students.