

Creating opportunities for regional and remote students: personalising learning through the use of technology

Sally Clark

University of Notre Dame Australia, Broome, Australia
sally.clark@nd.edu.au

To create an educational system that is higher in quality, more accessible, more competitive and more sustainable, universities and other higher education providers are tasked to play a critical role in fuelling innovation, driving productivity and giving students the skills they need for future success. What does this mean for the higher education providers in remote settings and for potential students living in remote areas trying to pursue higher education opportunities? Further innovation and more creativity?

This keynote will share the journey of higher education qualifications provided through the University of Notre Dame Australia's, Broome Campus. Economic, geographic and demographic circumstances have underpinned the changes that have been requisite to the effort of providing education commensurate with other Australian Centre's of Higher Education. This journey highlights the challenges and successes, the innovation and the creative flair necessary to provide education to a diverse and dispersed student cohort.

The Kimberley is a remote region in the north of Western Australia. It has a landmass of 423,517 square kilometres with a significantly low-density population, one person per 12.5 square kilometres compared to an Australian density of 35 people to the same area. Nearly half of the Kimberley population is comprised of Indigenous peoples. Broome is the largest town in the Kimberley with a population of approximately 17,000 (40% of the region's population) and is the location of the University of Notre Dame Australia's, Broome Campus.

There has been no place for complacency in providing education to this widely dispersed student cohort. Innovation, motivation and an expectation for the use of technology has been required. We are not talking distance learning as it used to be; Workbooks in the post, CD ROMs or video tapes. We are now talking human interaction through the use of technology. Web based classrooms and real time contact is now the expectation from our remote regions and why should it not be? MOOCs are not the answer! Notre Dame is a university that prides itself on pastoral care and excellence in the provision of education. This key note will challenge you to consider that this personalised education can occur through the use of technology, not only for a widely dispersed population but for any context.