Online Teaching / Designing for Learning (Activity 1 & 2)

What were the main messages for you in the 'Learning to teach online' and the 'Why is online teaching important' videos?

I watched the videos “learning to teach online” and “why is teaching online important” with interest. They have assisted me to decide that the path I would like to follow this year, set up a unit on Moodle, is the correct one, but not in my time-poor way I had planned to go. Using online resources is more than just placing all information online, using the same assessment task as used in a face-to-face delivery and let the students loose on it.

It has become apparent over the past few years that online resource/delivery with all its benefits to students and teachers alike are developing fast and are here to stay, so we may as well jump on the bandwagon if we do not want to be left behind.

However, a fair amount of teachers at a TAFE are highly skilled in their own profession and do not have an educational background with all its information about pedagogy or multiple intelligences per se. And if they were like me they may have grown up with one computer for the whole school learning about MS DOS, not about the ‘more diverse, information sharing, dynamic learning environment’ a computer can bring into the classroom or home alike these days. The only educational background we may have had is the one we grew up in where things were taught either in industry (ie. hospital based nursing) or through rope learning in large lecture theatres. As stated in the video, “people teach in the way they think is best” and depending on their educational experience a teacher will either have adopted it as their own or may never stand in front of a class room.

The comment was made that students expect online delivery these days and no longer is it an optional, even though not all students are equally skilled in the use of digital technology or may have the means required to learn online. And what about the teachers who find themselves more and more pushed to use some form of online teaching. Staff development is available but most support is in the form of technical use for Moodle, how to set up a unit of competence, without the guidance of the best pedagogically road to follow. After all, most Moodle whizzes are highly skilled in IT programs and not in education. It should be “pedagogy over technology” but most of the time it seems the other way around.

So for me, the main message from both videos is as follows: To create a balance between face-to-face and online delivery I will need to take my time in setting up a (blended delivery) unit on Moodle, ensuring the following key issues stated in ‘planning your online class’ and ‘using online lectures to support active learning’ from COFA online:

* + The importance of pedagogy over technology. The technology has to add to students’ learning and challenge them, and not just be used for technology’s sake
	+ The need to constructively align assessment with learning outcomes as well as provide structured activities with online resources and in-class activities are essential
	+ The integration of digital literacy, or the ability to effectively and critically navigate, evaluate and create information using a range of digital technologies
	+ Strategic evaluation of which components of the blended class are better suited to the online environment. Students need to experience a seamless learning experience between the classroom and the online environment

For me this means learning a few new skills along the way, and for a person who loves lifelong learning this is music to the ears.