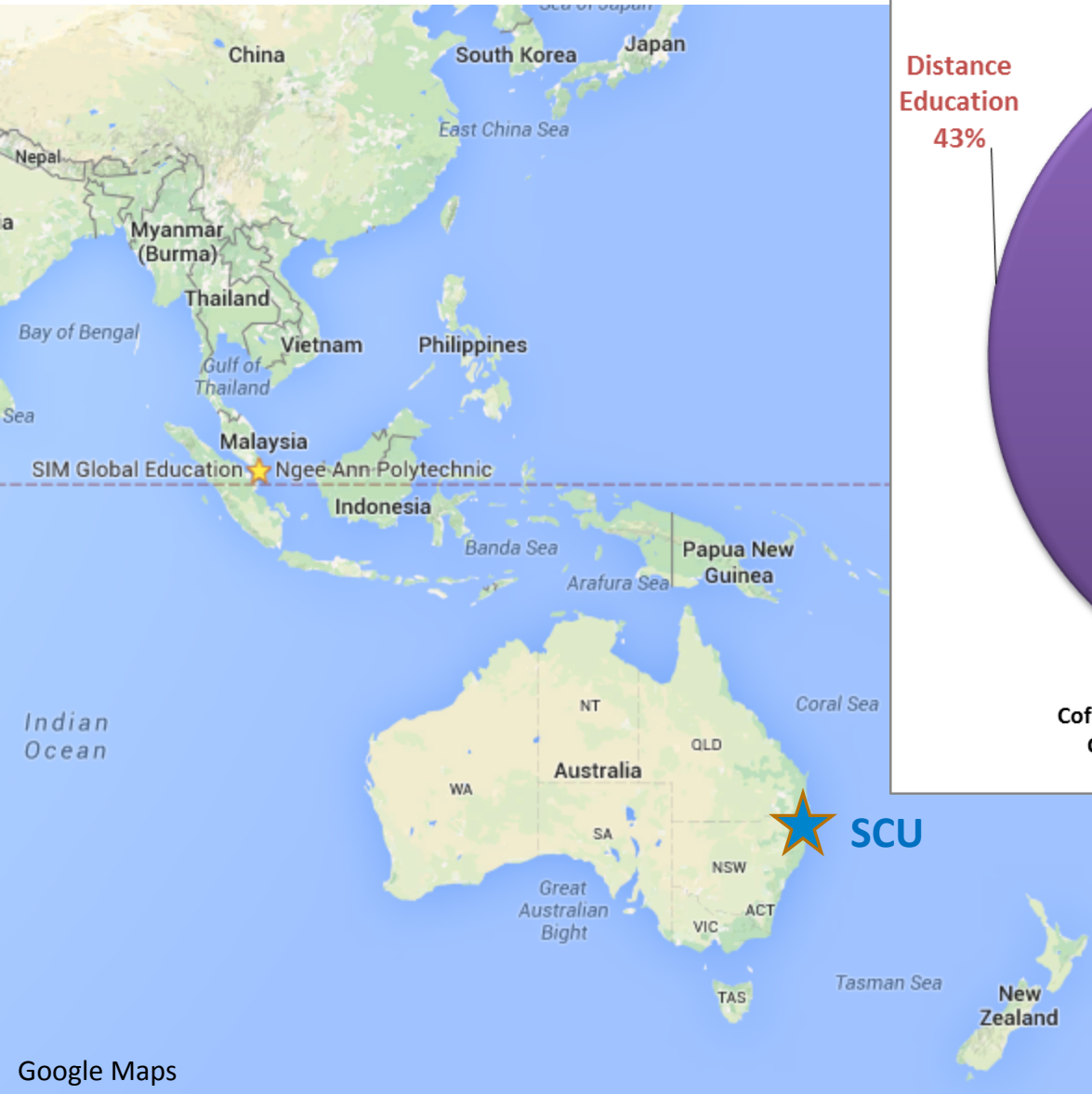


**Peer review in online and
blended learning
environments:
extending the learning
conversations in an Australian
regional university**

STEPHEN ROWE

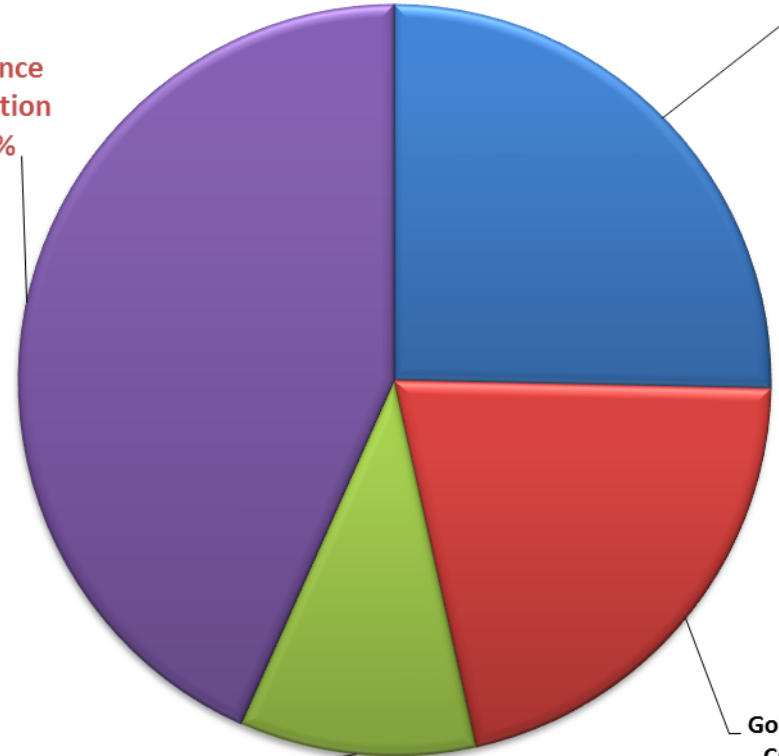
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR GAIL WILSON

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY



Yr: 2014
14,669 students

Distance
Education
43%



Coffs Harbour
Campus
10%

Gold Coast
Campus
21%

Lismore
Campus
26%



Outline

Issacademy.com



Background and (key) literature

The learning conversations

2014 OLT Project

2015 CTL Project

Conclusion

Key prior ALTC/OLT projects

- *Peer Review of Teaching in Australian Higher Education (2008)*
- *Social, Communicative and Interpersonal Leadership in the Context of Peer Review (2009)*
- *Peer Review in Online and Blended Learning Environments (2011)*

2014 OLT EXTENSION GRANT

Embedding a peer review culture in
online and blended teaching and
learning contexts at **2 universities**



3 project aims (2014 & 2015)

1. **Facilitation of professional development** in blended and online learning and teaching practice
2. **Enabling a sharing of practice** about learning and teaching in blended and online environments across two universities (**the regional university**); and
3. **Develop a culture where conversational peer review supports and encourages the development of professional practice** around learning and teaching for blended and online environments

(Informal) learning conversations

Focus on having a conversation rather than a discussion – it is important to ask questions and explore answers rather than provide knowledge or definitive explanations.

A conversation between two professionals which can promote learning - both peers are equally open to professional learning.

Both are peers, equals in the process, where the power relationship is one of equality.

Underpinning this approach is the idea of **a conversation that goes beyond an exchange of facts and ideas** – a conversation that can transform these, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought – a collaborative inquiry process.

There is also the idea of “reciprocity” – an opportunity for learning when both parties accept the peer review space that has been created as one for mutual or reciprocal learning.

Consider Peer Review a cycle ...



Approach ... Resource



Why? What is the purpose of your review?

What? What do you want to learn about your teaching and/or your students' learning?

How? What is the process?

Prompt questions: To guide the focus of your peer review.

Learning conversations: Approach to giving feedback.

Reporting: How are the results of the conversation to be communicated?

Follow-up: Questions and actions to think about after the review and learning conversation.

2014 OLT project

- 10 person project team: SCU (5), UQ (4), MQ expert
- Blackboard LMS site :
 - documentation repository, wiki & DF
 - meeting agendas & minutes
 - Ethics documentation
 - annotated bibliography to assist scholarship
 - Interviews, video case studies

2014 OLT project participation

- Invitations from School learning leader; promoted via email & School meetings
- 15 total: Southern Cross Business School (7), School of Population Health (8)
- Feb Orientations & Resource Kit led to reviewee/reviewer (self) selection
 - SPH: 4 pairs
 - SCBS: 2 pairs & 1 trio

All this activity was face-to-face on a single campus

2014 OLT project outputs

- Aug Dissemination workshops
 - SPH: 8 attendees
 - SCU: 40 attendees from all Schools
- Report to Sept SCU Scholarship of Teaching Symposium (76 attendees)

Aug/Sep SCU attendance provided incentive for 2015

- Paper to Oct European Conference on E-Learning
- Final OLT Extension Grant Report

2014 OLT project feedback

- Overall very positive (SPH and SCBS)
- All completed project, though several noted time issues
- All completed post-interviews (2 were videoed)
- 50% used wiki; others email or other tools more convenient
- **Value of informal conversations**

important lessons

Range of matters reviewed

- Trust in ability/expertise of reviewer
- Realising own “expertise”
- Value of being reviewer AND reviewee
- **Challenge of formalising the informal ... capturing the conversations**

2015?

- Potential SOTL publications
- Peer Review BB Wiki/BB Collaborate room:
 - build community of practice
exploration space (repository & literature)
 - initiation space
conversation space
 - reflective space

Build repository & annotated literature

What changed for 2015?

T&L

2014 participants to determine key dates

- Email & School meeting invitations to staff (early Feb)
- Orientations (same Resource Kit) mid-March
- **Conclude peer review conversations by 17 August (wk 9)**

Which Schools?

- **18 Participants from 4 (of 6) Schools:**
- Business & Tourism (8)
 - 3 former Business; 5 former
 - 4 groups of three
 - 2 across; 1 same School
- Health & Human Sciences (5)
 - 3 across; 1 same School
- Law & Justice (4)
- Education (1)

Orientation ... Resource Kit

Locations **face-to-face** at **two** of the 3 campuses AND **one online (Collaborate) – 18 volunteers**

- Gold Coast Beachside (17 Mar)
 - 3 volunteers + 3 project team
- Lismore (18 Mar)
 - 3 volunteers + 2 project team
- **Collaborate online (24 Mar) - recorded**
 - 8 volunteers + 4 project team
 - (accessed recording) 4 volunteers + 3 project team

Blackboard site

pairs/trios

Conclusions so far ...

process (7 from 2014 + 8 from 2015) with unique issues

outcome?

a self-sustaining community of practice?

All the best ... many small steps ...



Hope you find what you are looking for!

