EDUCATION FOR PRACTICE TOPICS:

Professional and Practice-Based Education at CSU

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Reference for this occasional paper:
Higgs J, 2011, Professional and Practice-Based Education at Charles Sturt University, Occasional Paper 1, The Education for Practice Institute, Charles Sturt University, Sydney.
Practice-Based Education (PBE) refers to grounding education in goals, content and strategies that direct students’ learning towards preparation for practice roles post graduation.

**WHY are CSU courses offered?**
To educate graduates for entry to a range of professions, occupations and industries.

Charles Sturt University provides an extensive range of courses to prepare highly qualified graduates for entry to a variety of professions, occupations and industries. Students can pursue studies in teaching, agriculture, the health sciences, policing, theology, social work, business, computing, communication, librarianship, veterinary science and many more fields. They are educated to make valuable contributions to regional communities and society and to become life-wide learners.

**WHAT is the place of PBE in CSU curricula?**
CSU courses utilise practice-based education to ground learning and teaching in the practices of graduates’ professional, occupational and industry roles. This approach situates the students’ learning and socialisation in their practice communities and engages with values, interests and criticality.

Practice-based education (PBE) provides a curriculum framework for these courses. Throughout CSU curricula, teaching, learning, assessment, curriculum design, the learning environment and infrastructure are geared towards grounding students’ learning in preparation for their practice or work roles and responsibilities in their occupation, profession or industry after graduation.

The key foundations of PBE are:
- Learning situated within practice-relevant contexts
- Learning through reflexivity, participation and dialogue,
- Learning in multiple communities of practice (including workplace, academic, multidisciplinary communities)
- Socialisation into professional, industry, occupational worlds, roles, identities and career paths.
- Engagement, through industry partnerships, in practice-based teaching and learning activities
- Development of capabilities and behaviours that will enable graduates to contribute to local communities and society as responsible citizens and professionals who display ethical conduct and duty of care.

**HOW are the courses implemented?**
Courses utilise a range of strategies featuring on campus, blended, distance, workplace learning etc.

CSU Curricula are shaped by:
- CSU’s Strategic Plan, emphasising the pursuit of excellence in professional, flexible, distance, and practice-based learning and teaching
- Curriculum priorities and conceptualisations framed by The CSU Degree Initiative/Curriculum Renewal
- The pursuit of continuous quality improvement
- Higher education trends, standards, expectations and imperatives
- Educational theory and practice, research and scholarship
- Good pedagogical practices

A rich array and blend of teaching and learning strategies are employed throughout CSU curricula including: simulated, workplace, peer, incidental, flexible, self-directed, distance and life-wide learning. A useful way of thinking about these PBE spaces is to use the terms Simulated PBE, Workplace PBE, Distance PBE etc.
Practice-based education at CSU for entry into practice in key professions, occupations and industries

**WHAT**

**HOW**

Industry – Contextualisation – Higher Education

Simulated Learning
Fieldwork Learning
Peer Learning
Incidental Learning
Flexible Learning
Self-directed Learning
Distance Learning
Life Learning
Residential Schools

**Blended Learning**

**Situated Learning**

**Practice-Based Education**

** WHY**

Professions
For Entry to
Industries
Occupations

**CSU Strategic Directions**

Engaging with and Serving Communities

**CSU Degree Initiative**

Educational Theory and Practice

Socialisation into the Profession/Industry/workplace

CoP - Communities of Practice
Blended learning

“is traditionally defined as the combination of face-to-face teaching and learning with online teaching and learning.” “It is a design approach whereby both face-to-face and online learning are made better by the presence of each other” (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008, p.5). Within CSU, blended learning includes a blend of print-based distance education materials, online learning/teaching strategies (through CSU Interact) and face-to-face teaching and learning strategies (e.g. residential schools, technological strategies that approximate interpersonal interaction e.g. video-conferencing, teleconferencing.


Curriculum

refers to the sum of the experiences students engage in and acquire as a result of learning at university and the factors that create these experiences. This includes explicit, implicit and hidden aspects of the learning program, and experiences that occur incidentally (alongside) the formal curriculum. The curriculum is intentional teaching, content and assessment as well as unintentional messages to learners created through role modelling by teachers and fieldwork educators, through assessment schedules, learning climate, infrastructure (resourcing, facilities, staffing, administrative and support systems), university communities and additional experiences (e.g. sporting, social) that are part of university life.

Distance Learning

involves learners and teachers interacting at a distance. Students have flexibility in the time and place of their learning. A variety of teaching and learning mediums are utilised (e.g. online learning utilising such mechanisms as online forums, wikis, blogs, podcasts, access to library resources, assignment submission). Distance learning often involves residential schools.

Workplace Learning

also known as work-integrated learning, practicums and professional practice, allows students to learn through the direct implementation of their professional roles in real workplace settings. Commonly such learning involves supervision to provide safeguards and ensure duty of care towards clients and students.

Flexible Learning

“offers flexibility in the time, place and pace of the study, the content, including at times, flexible entry and exit and differing assessments. It also allows for different learning styles and the option to collaborate or work independently. It can include recognition of prior learning, and learning can employ a range of technologies such as online teaching and learning as well as the more traditional methods of face-to-face and distance print based learning.” Source: http://www.csu.edu.au/division/landt/flexible-learning/standards/flexibleandblendedlearning.htm

Incidental Learning

occurs alongside intentional learning that arises from the explicit curriculum. Incidental learning can be unanticipated, fortuitous, unintended, unpredictable, associated, peripheral etc. It occurs best when learners are perceptive, receptive and reflective and teachers are good role models.

Peer Learning

means learning with fellow students and can occur in many learning modes. It is desirable in workplace learning to learn with peers who are sharing common experiences of exploring workplace experiences and expectations and facing the challenges and responsibilities of PBE in situations with real-world consequences.

Self-directed Learning

refers to the pursuit of learning by students based on their own initiative, goals and strategies. It may arise from the students’ initiative within a curriculum or the extension of learning beyond the curriculum.

Simulated Learning

Involves the creation of an approximation of reality (in particular the workplace, practitioner’s role, clients etc) so that students can learn in a replicated or virtual workplace environment. Such learning allows access to (simulated) workplace learning experiences where real world learning options are not available or readily accessible, when it is advantageous to supplement real world with additional simulated learning experiences, or when it is desirable for learning and role practise/exploration to be modified (e.g. made safer for student and client).