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The Future is Connection:

Collaboration, Creativity and Compassion in a Digital Society

Designing together: Using a boundary object to support collaborative unit design conversations

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Designing learning experiences in higher education requires the negotiation of multiple priorities; aligning learning outcomes, teaching activities, assessment design, student workload, academic integrity, accreditation requirements, and implementation feasibility (Bearman et al., 2016). Yet, these considerations are often distributed across documents, systems, and stakeholders, making it difficult to develop a shared understanding of a unit as an integrated learning experience (Bearman et al., 2016). Visual learning design representations can make pedagogical decisions explicit and support communication and reflection between academics and designers (Agostinho, 2011; Conole et al., 2013)

This Pecha Kucha explores the use of a visual consultation board using *Miro* at The University of Western Australia. The approach originated during the collaborative redesign of a unit, where two Learning and Assessment Designers and a Unit Coordinator mapped the assessment sequence as part of the student learning journey. The board connected the cadence of learning activities and assessments, feedback opportunities, student and staff workload, and relationships between tasks into a shared visual structure. Iterative conversations around the board informed changes to unit design. Reflection on this case study and feedback from the Unit Coordinator informed further refinement and adaptations of the board for consultations in other disciplinary contexts.

While the board began as a visual learning design representation, the presentation analyses how it became a boundary object through collaborative knowledge practices of those using it. Drawing on the concept of *boundary objects* (Carlile, 2002; Star & Griesemer, 1989), we argue that the significance of the board lies not simply in being digital, visual or adaptable, but in how collaborators used and changed the shared representation. Academic and professional collaborators made assumptions visible, developed a shared vocabulary for discussing unit design, negotiated priorities and revised the representation in response. Following Damşa and Muukonen's (2019) conception of shared knowledge objects as evolving through participant interaction, and consistent with Morrison et al.'s (2025) analysis of how boundary objects reshape meaning, language and practice across professional contexts, we contend that the board's boundary-object function emerged through collaborative interpretation, material revision, consequential design change and adaptation through subsequent consultations, allowing shared understandings to be established, revisited and reworked over time.

By tracing the development of the board, this session highlights the role of visual representations in supporting communication across academic and professional boundaries and considers how shared design artefacts can facilitate more coherent, intentional and collaborative approaches to curriculum design, especially among staff who may not share the same pedagogical expertise or terminology.

This Pecha Kucha offers practical insights into how visual learning design representations can support richer conversations about curriculum design by helping academics and professional staff discuss, negotiate, and align competing aspects of learning design. In increasingly complex educational environments, attendees will see how shared design artefacts can strengthen academic-professional partnerships, support more coherent and intentional decision-making, and enable successive curriculum conversations to build on, rather than restart, previous interpretations, decisions and design revisions.

Keywords: boundary objects, learning and assessment design, collaborative design, unit design visualization, higher education

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