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The Future is Connection:

Collaboration, Creativity and Compassion in a Digital Society

Beyond dissemination: Making educational innovation discoverable across a large university

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Universities generate significant educational innovation through curriculum initiatives, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and educational development activities. However, these innovations often remain dispersed across local contexts, limiting their visibility, reuse and contribution to organisational learning. While existing research has examined dissemination, knowledge sharing and communities of practice, less attention has been given to the organisational practices through which educational innovations become discoverable institutional knowledge. This practice-based qualitative case study examines project coordination as a knowledge mobilisation practice within the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Nexus Program. Drawing on documentary evidence and practitioner reflection, this study examines the organisational practices through which dispersed educational innovations were transformed into a discoverable institutional resource. This study conceptualises project coordination as an organisational practice through which knowledge mobilisation is enacted. By identifying, validating, curating, connecting and translating educational innovations across organisational boundaries, project coordination created the organisational conditions for educational knowledge to become discoverable. This paper argues that sustaining educational innovation in large, distributed universities depends not only on generating new knowledge but also on organisational practices that make educational innovations discoverable and reusable.

Keywords: educational innovation, knowledge mobilisation, organisational learning, knowledge management, project coordination, higher education, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Introduction

Universities generate significant educational innovation through curriculum renewal initiatives, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), educational development and locally developed teaching practices. Although these activities contribute to improving teaching quality and student learning, the resulting knowledge frequently remains embedded within local contexts, limiting its visibility, reuse and contribution to organisational learning.

In large, distributed universities, educational innovations often remain fragmented across faculties, disciplines and organisational units. Expertise remains hidden, successful practices are not readily reused, opportunities for collaboration are missed and similar initiatives are often developed independently. Universities have traditionally relied on dissemination through publications, repositories, conference presentations and showcases. Effective dissemination requires the translation, embedding and scaling of educational initiatives (Southwell et al., 2010), supported by institutional mechanisms that build and sustain scholarly teaching capacity (Malfroy & Willis, 2018).

Despite growing attention to dissemination, knowledge sharing and SoTL capability, less attention has been given to the organisational practices through which dispersed educational innovations become discoverable institutional knowledge. This challenge emerged within the Nexus Program at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), where educational innovations generated across multiple projects remained difficult to locate, connect and reuse.

This practice-based qualitative case study examines project coordination as a knowledge mobilisation practice by investigating the organisational work through which dispersed educational innovations became discoverable institutional knowledge. It addresses the following research question: How does

project coordination support the mobilisation of educational innovations across organisational boundaries?

Conceptual framing

Educational innovation beyond dissemination

Traditionally, educational innovation literature has positioned dissemination as the primary mechanism for sharing educational practices. However, Southwell et al. (2010) argue that dissemination extends beyond the communication of information. For educational innovations to achieve sustained institutional impact, they must be translated into new contexts, embedded within organisational practices and scaled beyond their original projects or disciplines.

Despite these advances, educational innovations are frequently difficult to locate and reuse within large, distributed universities. Innovations may be widely disseminated but remain disconnected from colleagues who can adapt or build upon them. Sustainable educational innovation therefore depends not only on dissemination, embedding and scaling, but also on organisational processes that make educational innovations discoverable. Discoverability extends dissemination by enabling educational knowledge to move beyond local ownership and contribute to institutional learning.

Knowledge mobilisation and organisational learning

Knowledge mobilisation provides a useful lens for understanding how educational innovations become institutional knowledge. Crossan et al. (1999) conceptualise organisational learning as a progression from individual insight to institutionalised practice through four interconnected processes: intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalising.

Dee and Leisyte (2017) similarly argue that organisational learning depends on knowledge moving across organisational boundaries rather than simply transferring information. Universities possess extensive knowledge resources, yet disciplinary structures and organisational differentiation frequently restrict knowledge flows, limiting the wider adoption of educational innovation. Knowledge mobilisation creates organisational pathways through which educational innovations become discoverable and reusable across the institution.

Project coordination as connective practice

Project coordination is commonly associated with planning, reporting and governance. However, project-based work in higher education increasingly extends beyond administrative functions to include connecting people, knowledge and institutional priorities across organisational boundaries. Third space and integrated practice literature characterise these roles as working across academic and professional domains, facilitating collaboration by navigating institutional structures, building relationships, integrating diverse expertise and connecting institutional stakeholders (McIntosh & Nutt, 2022; Whitchurch, 2026).

This paper conceptualises project coordination as an organisational practice through which knowledge mobilisation is enacted. Project coordinators identify educational innovations, validate and curate evidence, connect people and projects and translate locally generated knowledge into institutional resources. These practices align with knowledge management perspectives that emphasise connecting people, processes and organisational knowledge to support collaboration and knowledge sharing (Pinto, 2014). Through these practices, educational innovations become discoverable institutional knowledge that creates the conditions for organisational learning and institutional capability.

Context and methodology

Context

This study was conducted within a university-wide educational innovation program at a large research-intensive Australian university. Established in 2023, the program supports curriculum transformation, SoTL and educational development by connecting academics, educational developers and professional staff across multiple faculties through educational innovation, professional learning and scholarly activities. By mid-2026, the program had documented approximately 83 educational outputs, including scholarly outputs, educational resources and curriculum innovations. These outputs were distributed across multiple organisational units and communication channels, limiting their visibility and reuse beyond their immediate contexts. To address this challenge, the program implemented a university-wide educational innovation platform to improve the discoverability of such innovations.

Research design

This study adopts a practice-based qualitative case study design to examine project coordination as a knowledge mobilisation practice within a large university. It investigated the organisational practices through which dispersed educational innovations became discoverable institutional knowledge. A practice-based case study was appropriate because it enabled a close examination of organisational practices within their real-world context.

Data sources and analysis

The data comprised documentary evidence generated throughout the platform implementation process, including project plans, governance documentation, stakeholder communications, metadata records, platform artefacts and practitioner reflections. These sources capture the organisational practices that support knowledge mobilisation.

Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis. Following familiarisation, organisational practices were coded inductively and grouped into candidate themes. For example, inconsistencies in authorship, project descriptions and classifications were coded as verification and standardisation, contributing to the theme identifying and validating educational innovations. Themes were then interpreted in relation to knowledge mobilisation and organisational learning.

Reflexivity

The second author occupied the project coordinator role throughout the implementation and therefore worked as an embedded practitioner within the case. This position provided prolonged engagement with organisational processes and privileged access to documentary evidence while also requiring ongoing reflexivity. Interpretations were grounded in multiple documentary sources and supported by practitioner reflections and an auditable record of analytic decisions, ensuring that the analysis remained focused on organisational practices rather than personal experience.

Findings

Table 1 summarises the four organisational practices identified through the analysis and the documentary evidence supporting each theme. The following themes explain how these practices contributed to transforming dispersed educational innovations into discoverable institutional knowledge.

Table 1.
Organisational practices and supporting evidence

Theme	Organisational practice	Documentary evidence	Organisational outcome
Theme 1	Identifying and validating educational innovations	Project plans, publication lists, conference records, stakeholder correspondence	Reliable institutional dataset
Theme 2	Curating and connecting educational knowledge	Metadata records, thematic categorisation, platform taxonomy	Connected educational knowledge
Theme 3	Making educational innovations discoverable	Platform implementation artefacts, metadata, search categories	Institutional discoverability
Theme 4	Supporting knowledge mobilisation	Reflective documentation, stakeholder engagement records, governance documents	Conditions for organisational learning

Theme 1. Identifying and validating educational innovations

Educational innovations were initially dispersed across multiple organisational locations, including project reports, conference outputs, faculty websites, institutional repositories and individual academic records. Therefore, project coordination focused on identifying educational innovations, verifying project information and developing consistent metadata for project descriptions, authorship, keywords and output classifications. Rather than simply collecting information, these activities established a reliable institutional dataset capable of supporting knowledge sharing beyond individual projects.

Theme 2. Curating and connecting educational knowledge

As educational innovations were assembled, the relationships between previously disconnected projects became increasingly visible. Project coordination linked related projects, revealed opportunities for collaboration and exposed duplicated efforts and complementary expertise across organisational units. For example, project themes were grouped into cross-functional themes and linked to broader Nexus priority themes, making related work and expertise more discoverable. Through curation and thematic organisation, isolated educational innovations became connected institutional knowledge that could be more readily identified, interpreted and reused.

Theme 3. Making educational innovations discoverable

The educational innovation platform provided a central institutional mechanism through which educational innovations became searchable and accessible to staff. Platform implementation records demonstrated that discoverability depended on prior validation, metadata development, categorisation and thematic organisation rather than technology alone. Therefore, discoverability emerged from organisational practices that structured educational knowledge before it became digitally accessible.

Theme 4. Supporting knowledge mobilisation

The analysis identified a sequence of practices through which educational innovations could move from local visibility towards cross-boundary knowledge sharing. Identification and validation established a reliable institutional evidence base, while curation and discoverability enabled educational innovations to move beyond individual projects and organisational units. Consistent with Crossan et al.'s (1999) organisational learning framework, these practices created organisational conditions through which educational knowledge could move across institutional boundaries. Project coordination therefore enacted knowledge mobilisation by creating the conditions for collaboration and future organisational learning.

Discussion

This study extends third-space and integrated-practice scholarship by showing how project coordination enacts knowledge mobilisation, shifting attention from professional positioning to the organisational work that makes educational innovation discoverable (McIntosh & Nutt, 2022; Whitchurch, 2026).

Project coordination as knowledge mobilisation

The findings extend existing understandings of organisational learning by showing how project coordination enables educational knowledge to move across organisational boundaries. Rather than functioning solely as an administrative or governance activity, project coordination created the organisational conditions through which locally generated educational knowledge became available for wider institutional use. This finding builds on Dee and Leisyte's (2017) argument that organisational learning depends on knowledge moving across organisational boundaries and aligns with Crossan et al.'s (1999) proposition that organisational learning requires knowledge to become embedded within institutional systems and practices.

Educational discoverability as organisational work

The study also suggests that educational discoverability should be understood as an organisational practice rather than a technological outcome. Although the educational innovation platform enabled educational innovations to become searchable, discoverability depended on the organisational practices undertaken before implementation. This finding extends the knowledge management perspectives that emphasise connecting people, processes and organisational knowledge rather than relying solely on technological infrastructure (Pinto, 2014). Therefore, the platform represents the outcome of organisational knowledge mobilisation rather than its primary contribution.

From local innovation to institutional knowledge

Finally, the findings suggest that sustaining educational innovation requires organisational mechanisms that connect local educational practices with institutional knowledge. Rather than demonstrating organisational learning itself, this study shows how project coordination created the organisational conditions through which educational knowledge could be discovered across institutional boundaries. This interpretation complements recent work highlighting integrated practice and collaborative organisational structures as foundations for institutional capability (Fleischner et al., 2026; McIntosh & Nutt, 2022) and supports evidence that collaborative knowledge-sharing mechanisms strengthen institutional learning across disciplinary boundaries (Pharo et al., 2014).

Limitations and future directions

This study presents a single practice-based case situated within a large Australian university and examines the organisational practices involved in implementing an educational innovation platform rather than evaluating its long-term impact. Therefore, the findings explain how project coordination creates the organisational conditions for knowledge mobilisation but do not evaluate subsequent patterns of platform use, collaboration, or organisational learning. Future longitudinal research could examine how discoverable educational knowledge is adapted, reused and embedded in organisational practice.

Conclusion

Universities generate substantial educational innovation, yet much of this knowledge remains dispersed across organisational contexts where it is difficult to locate, connect and reuse. This practice-based case study illustrates how project coordination can contribute to transforming dispersed educational innovations into discoverable institutional knowledge through organisational practices that support

knowledge mobilisation across institutional boundaries. By conceptualising project coordination as a knowledge mobilisation practice, this study highlights the organisational work required to make educational innovations discoverable across institutional boundaries.

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