Bridging Cultures, Advancing AI: Insights from an International Higher Education Community of Practice

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In an era where generative AI (AI) is reshaping education at breakneck speed, how can institutions keep pace while also ensuring authentic learning? Our international Community of Practice (CoP) offers a compelling answer. Spanning Australia and Vietnam, this unique collaboration has not only navigated cultural differences but leveraged them to create a rich tapestry of AI integration strategies in HE. From unexpected synergies to challenging assumptions, our journey offers crucial insights for educators worldwide grappling with AI's transformative power.

Established in April 2023, our CoP has grown to approximately 500 members drawn from multiple campuses across Australia and Vietnam. This cross-cultural collaboration aligns with Wenger's (1999) Communities of Practice theory and demonstrates a novel approach to harnessing global collective intelligence in HE.

Our CoP has critically examined the impact of AI on HE, exploring its transformative potential and challenges in teaching methodologies, learning experiences, and assessment practices. Our discussions have extended to the ethical and environmental considerations of increased AI adoption in education, aligning with the growing need for sustainable technological integration in academia.

Key outcomes of the CoP include:

1. Development of AI-integrated curriculum frameworks and co-creation of staff training materials, enhancing institutional readiness for AI integration;
2. Design and implementation of innovative learning tools, such as AI-generated interactive personas, enhancing student engagement and outcomes;
3. Facilitation of research collaborations, resulting in both publications and multiple conference presentations;
4. Exploration of AI-enabled learning analytics for personalised learning, with initial implementation across different cultural contexts; and
5. Amplification of public awareness about AI in Southeast Asian education, as evidenced by extensive media coverage in Vietnam.

Our CoP's activities, including monthly expert-led meetings and weekly newsletters, have catalysed significant advancements in Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) research and practice. The initiative's success aligns with the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) and social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), supporting contextualised AI integration in pedagogy and andragogy across diverse educational settings.

Our CoP has overcome significant challenges, including sustaining engagement across time zones and sourcing diverse expert speakers, through dedicated leadership and strong institutional support. The CoP's impact led to its official recognition and the formation of a cross-school steering committee, further amplifying its influence and demonstrating its strategic importance to the institution.

This presentation will share key insights from our journey, including strategies for fostering engagement in a remote, cross-cultural CoP focused on rapidly evolving technology. We will discuss successful AI-enabled pedagogies implemented by CoP members, how challenges were addressed, and the impact of diverse cultural perspectives on AI adoption. A key lesson learned is the importance of balancing AI integration with maintaining academic integrity and authentic assessment in the rapidly evolving landscape of educational technology.

By sharing our experiences, we aim to provide a model for other institutions seeking to harness collective intelligence in shaping the future of AI in HE, while addressing critical issues such as appropriate AI use, systemic approaches to programmatic assessment, and the process of learning and teaching in an AI-enhanced environment.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, International Collaboration, Community of Practice, Technology Enhanced Learning

References

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