



Transforming Teaching aims to bring you regular news and articles on issues relating to learning and teaching, to inspire you with stories of good practice and to point you to helpful resources for your teaching.

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Recommended Journal

This edition's recommended journal is: **Journal of Transformative Education**

Focused on advancing the understanding, practice, and experience of transformative education. JTED offers articles that test, build on, & elaborate existing theoretical perspectives; demonstrate innovative & creative applications of the theory in practice; & explore international & cross-cultural issues of theory & practice of transformative learning. <http://jtd.sagepub.com/>



Shifts in time and space: Workload implications of moving from classroom-based to online teaching

In this article Diane Hockridge considers the implications on teaching workload of moving from classroom-based to online teaching.

My family and I are big fans of the BBC TV series Dr Who. In this classic TV show anyone who travels with the famous Dr Who has to be careful to avoid creating a "rift in the space-time continuum" as they gallivant through time and space. Those of you who aren't Dr Who aficionados may be wondering at this point what all this has to do with learning and teaching online. Well, it strikes me that those of us who move from classroom-based teaching to teaching in an online environment actually encounter a number of significant shifts in the ways in which we use and experience space and time for learning and teaching.

One of these shifts is: **online teaching requires a shift in the distribution of teaching workload over time.**

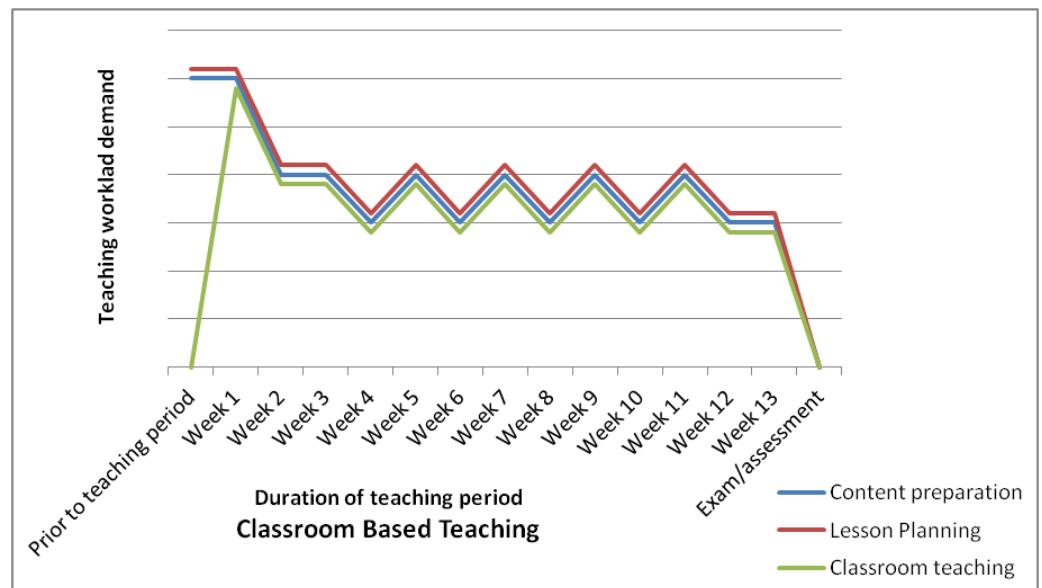
What do I mean by this? The graphs below attempt to illustrate the differing distributions of teaching workload over a teaching period. The first shows teaching workload for a standard semester length classroom-based subject.

This graph illustrates that in an average classroom-based subject with weekly lectures the workload for the teacher in terms of content preparation and lesson planning starts off somewhat higher prior to the start, and during the first couple of weeks of the teaching period and then settles into a pattern in which the workload tends to rise and fall slightly with weekly classes. This is representative of the habit of many teachers of focusing

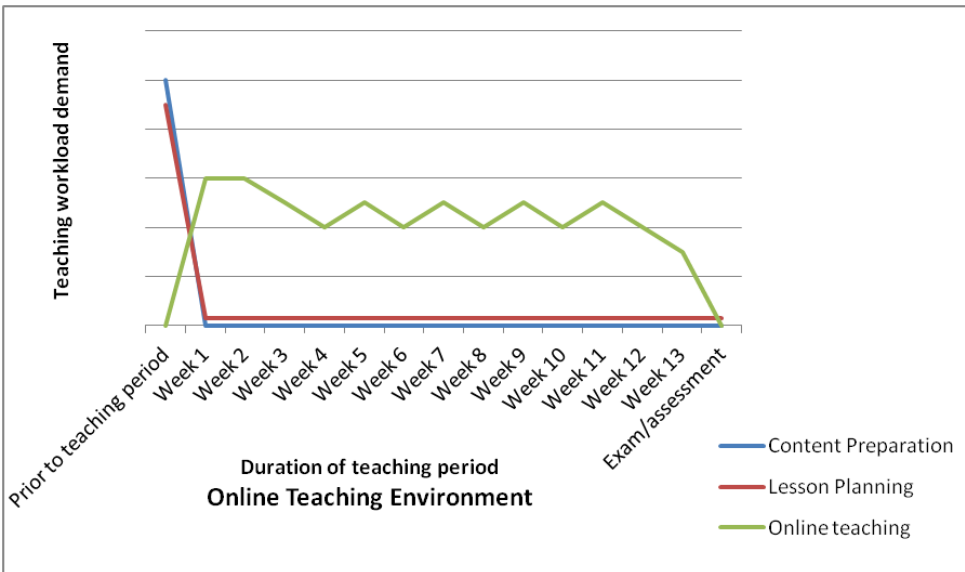
their effort on what happens in the weekly classes. Commonly, teachers will continue to prepare and modify content and lesson plans during the teaching period.

Now look at the second graph below (p.2) which illustrates the different workload associated with teaching an online subject.

You can see that the workload distribution is dramatically different. This is because for online teaching all the content preparation and lesson (or learning activity) planning needs to be completed prior to the beginning of the teaching period. The workload pattern for the online teaching responsibilities during the teaching period may be similar to that of the classroom teaching workload in the first graph, rising and falling according to



Shifts in time and space (cont.)



sure that they adequately compensate faculty members for the time involved in the ongoing delivery and management of the course during teaching periods.

Each SCD Member Institution has developed slightly different models for managing online learning which means that we don't have a standard approach or policy on faculty workload for teaching online. We do however have this expectation set out in the *SCD Standards for Distance Education Teaching & Learning*:

Standard 1.12:

Academic and support staffing for distance education in member institutions complies with Higher Ed. Standards Framework, 2011, 4.1: "The numbers, qualifications, experience, expertise & sessional/ full-time mix of both academic and support staff are appropriate to the nature, level, & mode of delivery, & the attainment of expected learner learning outcomes."

In implementing this standard it is reasonable to expect that each MI would:

- recognise and make allowance in budget and resource planning for sufficient academic and administrative staffing resources for distance education programs;
- develop and implement clear and fair policy and practices for academic staff on faculty workload, remuneration, ownership of intellectual property and materials;
- provide for any necessary staff development and training.

⇒ How are you managing these issues around workload expectations of faculty at your MI?

⇒ Are these teaching workload patterns reflective of your online teaching experience?

Please email any comments or suggestions to either Les Ball (lesb@scd.edu.au) or Diane Hockridge (dianeh@scd.edu.au). We may include your comments in the next issue of the newsletter.

the pace of the online activities and interactions.

There are a number of implications of these different shapes of teaching workload and I will mention just two here.

The first is that **individual faculty members need to factor this time shift into the ways in which they prepare to teach units.** Teaching faculty will need to ensure that they allow sufficient time to prepare the course materials and to work out in advance the desired flow of the course, the student learning activities and the role that they themselves will play in teaching in the online environment.

Faculty members often report as they move into online learning that the constraints of the online environment force them to consider more carefully the structure and flow of the course. Online teaching can free faculty from the weekly lecture or seminar schedule and allow for a different organisation of content. While challenging, this can also be a positive experience for lecturers, as Lester Ruth of Asbury Theological Seminary describes in this great article: "Converting my Course Converted Me: How Reinventing an On-campus Course for an Online Environment Reinvigorated My Teaching", *Teaching Theology and Religion*, 2006, vol. 9 no. 4, p.236-242:

Thinking about organizing a class by modules rather than a schedule of lectures was revolutionary. I saw that my previous class had been topic-driven. I had decided which topics I wanted to lecture on and had laid out

the class schedule based on the order I thought I should cover them ... The online trainers encouraged me to think of organizing the course by modules: natural subdivisions of a course around which sources of information, assignments, and discussions could be clustered ... I had to consider the flow of the course from start to finish, something I sometimes now call the course "plot." (p.237).

Ruth goes on to describe how he began asking questions like: What are the natural internal boundaries within a course's material? What should lead to what? What module should follow next and why? How can I structure and sequence the course to help students to achieve enduring understanding? He also describes how his online teaching experience has flowed over into changes in the way he teaches in the classroom.

It is not only the individual faculty members who need to adapt to the time shifts that online teaching brings, it is also **those who are involved in academic leadership and administration.** Since the workload distribution for teaching an online course is "front-end heavy", academic leaders and administrators who are responsible for managing faculty need to take this into account when scheduling subjects and planning faculty workload. They need to ensure they allow sufficient time prior to a teaching period for faculty members to prepare to teach an online course, particularly if it is a new online unit, or one requiring substantial revision. They also need to en-



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Please send any comments or suggestions for future topics for Transforming Theology to: dianeh@scd.edu.au.

SCD News & Events

SCD Professional Development Update

As a part of its ongoing review of Professional Development Days, SCD has amended its program for the final PD session for this year, to be held on 28 October.

In response to requests from Member Institutions, it has been agreed to make this day a time for Academic Deans to come together to consider their role and to develop ways in which the performance of that role may be enhanced. The role of the Academic Dean is becoming increasingly important in the management and facilitation of quality delivery of

courses. Therefore, this final PD Day of the year will be limited to the Academic Deans.

Academic Deans: PD Workshop

- Time:** 12.30-4.00pm, Monday 28 October 2013 (commencing with a light lunch).
- Place:** SCD Board Room, Suite 6B/5 Talavera Road, North Ryde.
- Preparation:** Academic deans are requested to complete the survey on the role of the Academic Dean prior to the workshop.

SCD Learning & Teaching Conference Report

Diane Speed, comments on the inaugural SCD Learning and Teaching Conference:

The conference attracted an enthusiastic response from the theological community, with participants from every state and territory in Australia as well as from Indonesia, New Zealand, and South Korea.

The conference was intended to carry forward the work of the Transforming Theology project. Taking different approaches, the plenary addresses and the short papers spoke to what it means to be engaged in the theological education of the person, raising questions about where it is all heading, identifying areas of particular challenge, exploring possible best practice in specific situations, and increasing our collective awareness of theology in non-Anglo-Saxon contexts. We enjoyed good fellowship and networked to good purpose.

We are now reflecting on what we've learnt about staging a conference on Learning and Teaching Theology as a research area in itself, so that we can look forward to having many of our friends with us again to advance our common concerns through our 2014 conference.

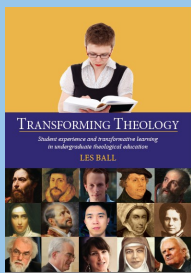
Les Ball notes that several key motifs emerged during the conference as issues warranting earnest attention and implementation.

- 1. The need for intentional, strategic and consistent engagement of the learner in the learning process** was a refrain running through the whole conference. It featured in philosophical papers and in papers illustrating practical methods of doing so in curriculum design and in teaching methods.
- 2. The importance of recognizing learners as learning resources in themselves** emerged clearly. The richness of the learners' lives provides a fertile field for the grounding of learning – it provides strong motivation, immediate relevance and personal integration of concepts.

3. The strategic importance of the teacher

While the centrality of the learner was prominent, the role of the teacher in planning learning strategies, directing pedagogic processes and assuming responsibility for the overall educative outcomes was reinforced. The role may change, the challenges may grow, but the high level of teacher responsibility remains.

These three elements are common to all teaching and learning contexts and modes. Whether we deliver to full-time, on-campus, face-to-face classes, in short intensive gatherings, in correspondence courses, or via the burgeoning array of online resources, the principles apply. The challenge for teachers is to develop ways of implementing such general principles in their specific settings.



SCD Conference

27-28 September 2013

Learning and Teaching
Theology: The Way
Ahead



Conference plenary

presenters: Rev Prof Dorothy Lee, Prof Robert Banks, Dr Les Ball, Prof Edwin Judge