

Learning Design for Transformation

Progressing "Carpe Diem" from Example to Practice

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Abstract

Since the year 2000, the Carpe Diem method and variations based on its core principles have been deployed across the world to enable fully collaborative ways of designing learning.

The methodology enables agile and effective collaboration between faculty, professional staff and other stakeholders for rethinking and refresh of packages of learning work. It enables 'future proofing' and the addressing of very high quality active and engaged online learning.

Our presentation panel at OEB 19 briefly outlined the approach including visioning the future for graduates, authentic assessment, threshold concepts, whole programme and course blueprinting, the deployment of researched pedagogies such as the 5-stage model (Salmon, 2013), active digital learning such as e-tivities, storyboarding and action planning.

We also provided some real and practical examples of how Carpe Diem can be versioned to enable educational transformation across disciplines and for key strategic purposes in an organisation.

We offer a summary of recommendations for those who wish to move beyond valuable learning design, to enable catalysts and create 'watershed' moments to scale-up and extend strategic renewal efforts.

There are extensive, openly available video resources and handbooks to be found at www.gilysalmon.com/carpe-diem.

Introduction: About Carpe Diem

The methodology is called 'Carpe Diem'—meaning 'seize the day'. Carpe Diem Learning Design was initiated to deploy agile project development for innovation, deploying well researched pedagogical processes and productively incorporating new technologies (Salmon, 2011, Salmon & Wright, 2014).

The collaborative processes engage academic, professional staff and many other stakeholders in new, supportive and more acceptable ways, providing them with a vehicle to

work together. It is a proven catalyst to enabling 'eye-opening' and even 'mindset' change towards new teaching and learning potentials (Vlachopoulos, 2018).

It also actively and successfully promotes teamwork, especially between academics, technologists and librarians (Sputore et al., 2016, Oakley, 2016). The methodology was extensively researched and then extended through a (UK) Higher Education Academy funded project from 2005 (Armellini et al., 2009) and has since continued to be adopted by many institutions and countries for online and blended learning (Usher, et al., 2018).

There are two types of Carpe Diem methods - one offering 'programme design', for whole degrees through future visioning, threshold concepts and authentic assessment (Villarroel, et al. 2017). The other tackles 'module or unit design' including detailed storyboarding (Salmon & Wright, 2014) and prototyping of online activities (e-tivities) (Salmon, 2013). Both are suitable for the refresh and redesign of courses (from campus to blend or online), the introduction of more constructive deployment of learning technology, as well as future proofing new developments.

Both deploy the key Carpe Diem principles of:

- Scaffolding and student-centredness (Salmon, 2011);
- Cross-professional and disciplinary collaboration, development and feedback (Salmon & Wright 2014);
- 'Start with the end in mind' i.e. future visions and missions, then creating a design brief for student outcomes and explicit value for students (Salmon, 2019);
- Visual and systems thinking, including storyboarding for pedagogical processes and curriculum structures (Lewrick, et al, 2018);
- Well researched evidence-led pedagogical processes including authentic assessment (Villarroel et al. 2017), threshold concepts (Land et. al, 2017, Currie, 2017, Timmermans & Meyer, 2017) and the 5-stage model, e-tivities and active online learning (Salmon, 2013);
- Fast, agile and action based collaborative developments, including rapid prototyping (Dilan & Aydin, 2019).

Carpe Diem for institutional transformation

In many institutions where Carpe Diems have been undertaken at scale, the approach has proven suitable for all disciplines and levels of learning. For example, Carpe Diem has a demonstrated impact on the quality of students' learning and their outcomes. Carpe Diem was extensively deployed at the University of Western Australia over 3 years (more than 300 teaching units and modules were designed or redesigned) resulting in collaborative transformation and an upturn in student satisfaction and experience ratings, hence directly demonstrating positive transformation impact (Oakley, 2016).

Stellenbosch University in South Africa started a strategic programme renewal process to enable all ten faculties to increase their use of ICT-enabled, innovative, future-focused, integrated and inclusive pedagogies. Stellenbosch chose the Carpe Diem Learning Design methodology as they were interested in the 'resource' definition of strategic change (Salaman & Asch, 2003), focusing on development of capacity through collaborative effort,

identifying the institution's core capabilities and existing strengths i.e. what it is good at, what makes it special, what can it do well and differently. A week-long programme and module intervention designed 10 new degree programmes. Carpe Diem visibly contributed to the Stellenbosch transformation agenda in terms of new teaching and learning approaches and aligned to the strategic intent (Salmon, Van der Merwe & Schoonwinkel, 2019). This is sustained over time through a strong commitment from senior management and dedicated resources for programme renewal using design approaches.

Further examples presented and explored during the OEB Panel

University of Northampton

Since 2013, the University of Northampton has been on a journey of large-scale pedagogic transformation. This process included redesigning the entire portfolio of programmes (Undergraduate and post graduate) to active blended learning (ABL). ABL combines sense-making activities with focused student interactions (with content, peers and tutors) in appropriate learning settings – in and outside the classroom. ABL focuses on engaging students in knowledge construction, reflection and critique, as well as on the development of learner autonomy. CAleRO (Creating Aligned Interactive Educational Resource Opportunities), a team approach to learning design, is Northampton's version of Carpe Diem. The CAleRO process was key to the success of Northampton's curriculum and assessment redesign at pace and at scale. By July 2018, every module and every programme had been redesigned, ready for the university's move to its new Waterside campus, which opened in September 2018. Our report articulates the rationale for using this process at Northampton, along with insights from staff on the impact that CAleRO has had on their practice and on the student experience (Farmer & Usher, 2018).

University Technology Sydney

The university is undertaking a major course transformation – a “learner experience transformation” (LXT) as part of its shift to a new learning management system. It is a collaborative process involving academics, students and professional staff, including members from the Library, Careers Service, English language support and media specialists. Examples of this process include mapping whole-of-course assessment patterns and re-alignment to ensure manageable workloads for students and ensure authentic assessment are prime. It also includes ensuring students' progressive development of graduate attributes such as teamwork and communication skills. See the video [lin:https://lx.uts.edu.au/blog/2019/06/07/lx-transformation-four-questions-shirley-alexander/..](https://lx.uts.edu.au/blog/2019/06/07/lx-transformation-four-questions-shirley-alexander/)

University of Derby

The University of Derby has provided online learning since 2011 offering everything from single modules and short courses for CPD to apprenticeships and full undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. As part of the institution's strategic framework launched in 2018, the university embarked on an ambitious project to bring a portfolio of campus programmes online across a range of discipline areas. This project merges seamlessly with regular programme review of our overall online programme offer.

The reflection of embedding online learning into professional practice of campus academics has confirmed our coaching model of learning design workshops and comprehensive induction programme into online design, development and delivery. The Carpe Diem programme and module-level workshop was introduced for the MSc Psychology conversion degree as the programme aims to foster a global and adaptable mind-set, through broadening horizons for aspiring psychologists and diverse professional employment opportunities. Bringing together the programme lead and module leaders, learning designers and developers, digital content producers, subject librarians, current students and alumni of the programme and career representatives, enabled us all to reflect on and improve our approach to curriculum design, development and delivery.

Recommendations

We offer some recommendations for other education institutions who want to initiate a similar transformation:

- Clearly communicate and demonstrate the strategic intent and senior leadership support for the initiative and include representatives from all faculties in the first big event to promote whole-institution collaboration and engagement.
- Brief participants on benefits and the value of short dedicated time investment, before the workshops so they can prepare, without overburdening them, and share the potential value of and outcomes intended for the workshops.
- Start at the academic *programme* level and then proceed to the *module* level Carpe Diem workshops, to allow academics to first visualize the ideal programme graduate before working on the module detail.
- During the module workshops introduce academics to easy to use but strong pedagogical concepts frameworks and quick ways of prototyping.
- During the workshops, ensure that there is ample opportunity for sharing and discussions amongst colleagues of the same faculty, but also across the faculties.
- Ensure that each faculty leaves the workshops with plans containing follow-up actions and activities for which they take ownership and responsibility.
- As soon as possible, include a workshop within the faculties for participants who did not attend the full Carpe Diem intervention event to introduce them to the frameworks used and to obtain their engagement in the action plans generated at the workshops.
- Formulate a plan to ensure regular follow-up, continuous engagement, support and funding to sustain the momentum and impact of the workshops.
- Consider some action research to enable and value their plans at the point they are delivered to students.

(Salmon, Van der Merwe & Schoonwinkel, 2019).

Summary and conclusions

Developing resilience and growth through acceptable educational change continues to be the goal of many higher educational institutions. As we move to even more challenges to relevance in concepts and modes of learning for students of the future, combining visioning,

systems thinking, creativity and collaboration with design approaches continues to be a key requirement and our best hope for accelerating transformation of higher education (Lewrick et al 2018, Salmon, 2019). An acceptable but collaborative ‘disruption’ through Carpe Diem-type interventions widens thinking. Following with practical and supported design thinking and prototyping has proven to be an efficient and effective way of directly impacting of institutional missions and hence on student learning experiences. That it also results in the desire for real and acceptable change across the organisation is now becoming a very important emergent property.

If large-scale interventions such as Carpe Diem are planned, it is worthwhile getting as many people as possible involved in the short sharp ‘seizing the day’ activities. The benefits are a sense of changing their minds about what is possible and great potential for new relationships and collaborations across the schools, faculties and whole institution through the shared vocabulary and embedded in visual ‘take-aways’. This impact goes well beyond outcomes usually experienced in regular professional development activities, and points to large scale scalability and transformation.

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Active Blended Learning at Northampton

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