

Managing the transformation to an e-learning organisation

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Douglas Mawson Institute operates over 4 campuses, has a diverse student body numbering approx. 17,000 with 78% studying part-time and is named after a famous South Australian explorer. Like its namesake, the Institute has a vision of leading and developing new frontiers in educational delivery through innovation, design and technology. To implement the vision, the Institute Leadership team has initiated strategies to support the transformation to an e-learning organisation. Major elements in the change model are: research and development; professional development; new technology infrastructure; and partnerships.

This paper is about one of the strategies to manage the change to an e-learning organisation and considers "practitioners as researchers". "Managers leading through learning" was a work-based learning project funded by LearnScope that provided the managers with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in online learning as an adjunct to the other strategies that are being implemented across the Institute to support the change to an e-learning organisation. The managers' project team was involved in work-based research and used their findings from the project to influence the strategic planning at both work group and institute level. My role in the project was as project manager and co-facilitator and so I, too, was a practitioner as researcher, focusing on the work-based learning model as a change agent. Like any new skill being learnt, "Leading through learning" presented the managers at Douglas Mawson Institute with as many challenges as opportunities. It really was and continues to be "work in progress"!