# HARRIET RIDOLFO INTERVIEW WITH STACY

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| NAME | RESPONSE | CODE |
| Harriet: | So should I just list the five questions and then come back to them, so you’ve got them in your head? |  |
| Stacy:R1 | Ok |  |
| Harriet | So the first one is just I’m going to ask you about your current role at CSU, then I’m going to ask you about your experiences of E-learning in your own practice and then the next question is around perceptions of enablers to implementing E-learning and then the opposite question is actually the barriers but you might all mingle it in, it doesn’t matter; and then question 5 is around your thoughts about the decisions of organisation leaders effecting E-learning implementation and then finally how you feel about your own what I’ve called E-competence.So it’s a semi-structured questionnaire but I’ve got probing questions and we can meander to suit, because I am interested in your lived in experience, your perception. There’s no right or wrong answer, you know. So that’s where I am as a researcher –  |  |
| Stacy:R2 | I do tend to have quite a scattered mind though, so feel free to push me back on track |  |
| Harriet | That’s absolutely fine.  |  |
| Stacy:R3 | You don’t want to be transcribing irrelevant nonsense. |  |
| Harriet: | Well it’s interesting what comes up though. So the first question then Stacy, is about your role, so things like maybe how long you’ve been in the role, who you report to, responsibilities, you know, things like that really. |  |
| Stacy:R4 | So I’ve been lecturing, I started off just marking and then I started teaching one subject online and that’s progressed to now teaching three subjects online and part of that has been updating and developing the content, delivering it, monitoring the forums and so forth. So basically I’m a sessional lecturer here at CSU with all the associated subject maintenance that goes along with that and I’ve been fully delivering and marking one of those subjects and the other two I’ve had markers for most of the time and then this last session I’ve been marking all of them myself as well. And then next session I will be delivering a creative arts subject face to face. |  |
| Harriet | So how long have you been linked to CSU then? |  |
| Stacy:R5 | I think it was about, it’s been a while now, about 2014, end of 2014 beginning of 2015 I think. So about three or four years. |  |
| Harriet: | Wonderful. And what subjects do you teach? |  |
| Stacy:R6 | So I’m teaching EML 102 which is written communication and that’s for first year AVT students and I also teach EL 120 which is a sociology subject for those same students and I teach EL 445 which his sociologies within individual society for the post-graduate PET and so yea, that’ s, and yeah they’re all online. |  |
| Harriet: | Mmm. That’s a good range isn’t it. So would you call yourself a sociologist? |  |
| Stacy:R7 | No my background is in fine art originally, I’ve got a degree in fine art, and then I have a graduate diploma in psychology and that incorporated some of the social psychology units so it’s a bit of a shift into sociology. There’s a few theorists in common, so in some regards I’m perhaps not as ideally qualified for it, like obviously a sociologist proper would be ideal. I think the principles of, you know, thinking about how humans functions in society, I just have to watch that I keep thinking about the broader structures because I’ve a habit of bringing it back to the individual quite a bit, so they’re sort of flipped around.  |  |
| Harriet | Yes. Yes. Whereas I’m interested in the interaction between but the psychologist I guess is interested in what’s happening inside, is that right? |  |
| Stacy:R8 | Yeah. You tend to think about how what social factors contribute to the development of the individual so, whereas with sociology you’re really interested in the system and how, the individual is really only interested in the way that they function within society. Certainly if you’re taking functionalist perspective I think probably some of the contemporary theorists would probably look at it a little differently.  |  |
| Harriet | Yeah. No that’s really interesting. That’s really interesting, you sound perfectly qualified. And actually I know, I QA’d some of your subjects, they’re really interesting because there’s a difference between talking about it and actually helping students to abstract and then write something and improve that writing is really quite a complex project. |  |
| Stacy:R9 | Yeah, I really enjoy it because you know, especially, I enjoy the sociology subject the most because it’s just that little bit out of my comfort zone I find it really interesting, you know, and sometimes a student will go “oh can I talk about so and so” and I go “ooh I haven’t read them” and so I dive into their work and so I find it really stimulating and so we have this sort of co-discovery, you know, I feel like I’m really working with them rather than kind of delivering stuff from above. Whereas with 102 you know, it’s like here we go, grab a ?#?#? and there’s not really many surprises there. I pretty much feel like I know what I’m doing and it can get a little bit repetitive at times. But then it’s nice to have that feeling of expertise in it too.  |  |
| Harriet: | SUre. It sounds like you’ve got a good balance with those two subjects and sort of being able to tick along and then focus a little bit on the ones where you’re learning yourself.  |  |
| Stacy:R10 | Yeah, you want that nice sort of, you’ve got to have that little expertise I think, although Darryl sometimes points out you know more than you think you do, you know. Like ‘you sure I should be teaching this, I’m not a sociologist you know’ .. but –  |  |
| Harriet | I’m sure he’s right. Oh that’s really interesting., thank you. Are you happy for me to go on to question 2? |  |
| Stacy:R11 | Sure. |  |
| Harriet: | So question 2 is around what are your experiences of E-learning or online learning in your own practice? So maybe something around, because I have a feeling you might have a bit of a technology background somewhere along the line, did I hear that right? |  |
| Stacy:R12 | Yeah, not formally. I did some work, like I’m very interested in computers. I’ve been using computers for a long time and I did some work with a company called Open Susa, they’re a free software arm of a general company called Susa. So Open Source software is all about software that is free for someone to own and manipulate and share so you can actually open up the code, edit it, change it, as opposed to proprietary software that you can’t do that with. So I’m really interested in that. There’s a saying that in an age where speech depends on software, free speech depends on free software. You know, you need to have control over your tools for communication so I’m really interested in open source software. So I developed a bit of technical expertise in that area. And I guess that’s probably where one of my key, I guess, issues with educational software comes in is that we use very much proprietary platforms and I tend to find them quite frustrating because there’s always limitations on what you can do with them, and so while I recognise at a formal level there’s a lot of reasons for that in terms of issues like security and support that we need at an institutional level especially for, you know, people like that, policing and so forth. Um, I just feel there’s a lack of investigation into the possibilities for more open options and it tends to put quite a burden on students, you know, you’ve got to have Microsoft word, you’ve got to have SPSS, so there’s all these expensive proprietary software that you need and they all need up to date hardware. You can’t run Windows 10 on old software, whereas there’s any number of options for free software that will run operating systems that rely on old hardware or limited hardware that’s very affordable and you know, you can –  | L13-16 II/LMSL19-24 II/ LMS/Students |
| Harriet | That’s your social justice side coming in, isn’t it? |  |
| Stacy:R13 | Yeah, which is probably a bit of a tangent really but I guess, you know, some of them have this kind of built in animosity to the software that I’m using and I think that has influenced my decision to use Wordpress with ?#??# Thinkspace, because Wordpress is open source software. So students have that ownership of their materials rather than locking it up into Pebblepad, so you know, you can have Pebblepad forever and I say, yeah but it still belongs in Pebblepad, you can’t ever get it out of there.  | L5-8 II/LMS /students |
| Harriet: | Yes, yeah. |  |
| Stacy:R14 | I mean you could probably copy and paste documents, but it would be laborious. |  |
| Harriet | No that’s’ interesting, so, I suppose some of the things that I was going to ask about were things like in your own practice, so within your teaching, maybe some of the sort of, you give me a bit of your philosophy in a way but maybe some of the technologies you are using and maybe how you think that aids your teaching if you like, and maybe helps the student, and I guess even, if I said to you could you define E-learning or online learning would you have a, would you be able to do that? Would you think –  |  |
| Stacy:R15 | It’s interesting actually, um, in discussion we often talk about dropping the E-learning because learning is learning, but I actually think it’s probably a valid distinction in that it’s pretty much everything that isn’t face to face and I think by definition because of the medium you’re using it does change how you teach. You don’t have people in a classroom face to face for a fixed number of hours, you know, we don’t require attendance, and that partly goes hand in hand with I guess the cohort, you know, the students that we teach are time poor, working people, you know, they’re fitting learning in on their own schedule so one of the key qualities of E-learning for me is that it can be asynchronous or synchronous depending on your needs, it’s very, you know, it’s versatile, it’s got those options. So yeah I guess I would define I suppose E-learning as online, through that internet medium where you’re using those various modes whether they’re synchronous in terms of giving a live presentation and for me that’s using Adobe connect, or if you’re using asynchronous communications so the forums and email. And I use all of those. I use email, I send out a weekly update, and that’s really just sending something into their space, whether they come and log in or not they’ll have something in writing in their inbox and I don’t know how much it gets read, you know, like everyone’s inbox is overflowing these days, and I use the front page of my sites as a bit of a blog, I tend to update them quite regularly. I like them to be a little bit dynamic. I don’t really like very static websites. There’s a bit of a balance there, you don’t want to be changing materials a lot but I like to have that front entrance page, have that sense of someone being present. One of the big challenges I think with E-learning is having that sense of presence, teacher presence, and peer presence is particularly problematic, and then I include some online presentations and we record them so that they can access the recording. And I always find that a bit strange because you’re kind of talking into the void, you know, you don’t – people will sometimes type a comment or two, very few of them use voice, they’re all a little bit reticent with the technology, and I tend to think why would you want to listen to me for an hour and because of the nature of this group of students I try to make the information available in a range of formats so the lecture tends to reiterate what they will find in the written materials anyway. It’s really just making it accessible and it sort of just pulls it together and bit of a run through of what I’m expecting to cover. But they really like it, I’ve had really really good positive responses and in some cases people say there should be more, which surprises me but hey. Yeah they like rich content and they tend to be quite , you know, the data indicates that the students are looking at it so… and I’ve lost..  | L1-5 definition of e-learningL10-13 definition of / qualities of e-learningL28-30 Complexity |
| Harriet: | Right so I was asking you about your experiences so we talked a little bit, you know you defined E-learning and you were starting to talk about some of the technologies that you use and I suppose, and you’ve just mentioned how you think E-learning – well actually you didn’t say necessarily it could improve your teaching practice but you said how you used it and I get the feeling that you’re an experienced face-to-face teacher and then came perhaps into the online space so you –  |  |
| Stacy:R16 | I had been teaching through with fine arts several face-to-face very much around a printing press smaller groups in that very workshop environment, you know, so that was my initial experience with teaching and then I taught some life drawing and some other arts so again very much workshop based, but then before I actually started here I’d been working writing online for a company called Out.com and I wrote their drawing sketching site for about 10 or 12 years and I tend to call it teaching because I would be giving people feedback on their work and writing tutorials step-by-step, you know, how to draw a horse or how to do eyes or whatever, you know, basic sort of directories of drawing techniques and things like that. And I wrote a book as well, so to me text and online teaching are quite inter-related, you know, when you’re developing online materials you use text a lot, it’s very text based, and so there’s kind of a continuity there for me between that that I’ve been doing and teaching online and yeah I actually feel it’s kind of a continuity so it’s going to be really interesting getting back into the physical teaching space and actually working with people face-to-face again, I’m not sure how that’s going to go. | L12-15 Teacher |
| Harriet | So do you find with your visual fine art background that you create videos and visuals in your content or –  |  |
| Stacy:R17 | Um, not as much as I’d like to. I tend to use, I’ve started doing a little bit but it’s kind of, it’s time consuming so I don’t have a lot of hours as a sessional staff member so when I did the initial makeover of the site of the subject I’d sort of do a few things here and there and I’m sort of always updating a little bit but I’m not really a designer as well. It’s funny because I actually got the MDs to create some content for me and they did a lovely job but what was really interesting I found was that I didn’t feel comfortable with it. I would lose my way in the presentation. They did all these lovely animations and things and I’d sort of forget what was coming next and I think it was because there was this kind of disconnection between myself and the material that I was presenting. It looked like it wasn’t mine anymore. Whereas the sort of amateurish slides that I’d produced with sort of graphics and things that I’d found some free software and did some clip art or whatever that appealed to me and my choice of colour scheme from my little windows I found it more authentic. So I do videos in terms of using Adobe connect to make little demos so we’re, you know if somebody is having difficulty say, for example, using anchors in Wiki tool in Blackboard I’ll just hop into Adobe and I’ll make a little video showing them how to do it or I often make little clips, like I will screenshot an image of a menu or something and circle the relevant bit so yeah I do make sort of functional, useful graphics rather than decorative things –  | L2-6 Teacher /workloadL11-17 CB / e-comp |
| Harriet: | I like what you said about owning your own content in a way linked to how you teach, you know, that’s interesting isn’t it in this world and idea that we’re going more and more online maybe with TOL in the sort of structure and the menu, all those have been built and perhaps some of the content the way that’s presented will also be done and you might not have any say at all in that which will be interesting to see how that works. |  |
| Stacy:R18 | What I find interesting there is this, you know, I remember being in a meeting and someone once saying that they’d been delivering the same slides for sort of 10 years and I was astounded. I thought ‘your material has not changed in 10 years, really?’.  |  |
| Harriet | Mine changes every single time I present it. |  |
| Stacy:R19 | I keep thinking one of these days I’m going to be finished but I never am, I actually did some work with You Imagine, I got a grant from them to do some online development with this subject and really to explore these materials. I was really interested in kind of breaking this stuff up and making it accessible and using the online tools to make little manageable sort of nuggets of information that people could use rather than having to digest an entire course. I’m actually at the moment pushing that stuff into Wordpress. Finally something that had been part of the original vision but you know, the frustrations with technology just kind of got in the way, it was the tools I wanted to use like there is this cool thing called HP5 where you can –  | L1-2 Teacher/ workloadL4-10CB / e-comp |
| Harriet: | Yes, love it |  |
| Stacy:R20 | Isn’t it wonderful?  |  |
| Harriet | Yes, I don’t know how to use lots of bits in it but it’s wonderful |  |
| Stacy:R21 | You have those issues with because it’s external content it does something with the security, you can’t, you know –  |  |
| Harriet: | I think Timeline works but that’s about it but you still have to fiddle around and that’s a classic example isn’t it, of –  |  |
| Stacy:R22 | I kept on coming and I thought ‘ok I want to do this’ aah, I can’t use CSS you know, Blackboard just drives me up the wall. But now we’ve got, I think there’s still some limitations with Thinkspace’s version of Wordpress, there’s a limit to what plugins and things you can use but it’s got a little bit more fun so I can use HTML and it’s a bit cleaner so I’m looking at some ways to use that. What was I going to say, I’ve forgotten what I was saying, um… about… making stuff  |  |
| Harriet | And changing it all the time -  |  |
| Stacy:R23 | Yes. OS with the grant, you know how it is, you know, you put your application in and you do the research and you come back and you say this is what we’ve found or this is what worked, for me I didn’t, you know we started running into issues around the effects and that and I thought ok I just want to make this stuff for these students and we’re going to use #?#?#? and see how it works but not be sort of formally research, you know what I mean, I’m interested in making things, making tools that work for people. And I could never get it finished because every session it’s be like “wow, I need to change this now” and so the people that you imagine were going hey are you going to finish this report and you go yeah, I will but first I need to fix this bit here because yeah, every time I delivered it there’d be new content ideas coming up, new holes or some student with a particular set of needs would sort of make me realise there’s something else that needs to happen here.  | L5-15 Teacher /workload  |
| Harriet: | Yeah.  |  |
| Stacy:R24 | Yeah, it’s really dynamic. And it was interesting actually because when I first started I was very anxious about using voice and videos, very uncomfortable about it, and we went down to Media to do like an introduction to our course and I never actually used it. I felt really uncomfortable with it, it was really stiff and awkward, and I thought how am I going to get around this, you know, but then I had a chat with Melissa Bradman it was, and she was doing videos for her subject site and she just had her headphones on. | L3-8 CB / e-comp |
| Harriet | Yes, stop making it so formal do a quick – yes  |  |
| Stacy:R25 | She was just chatting to the screen and so comfortable and I though that’s ok. It doesn’t have to be this fantastic production. And I think students now are increasingly used to that more formal presentation. Yes it’s nice to be polished but you look at all the YouTube stuff they’re watching that people are making, it’s often yes there’s some polished stuff there, but a lot of the time it’s really informal, people just –  | L1-2 CB / e-comp (cont from R24) |
| Harriet: | Yep I think the question then is about the timelines, you know, a quick YouTube video that’s at the right time is more useful than waiting for a polished and it’s a bit late or it’s – so can I just ask – you talked quite a bit about implementing within your own subject, so your experiences in that sort of research that you did, have you got experience of rolling out on a bigger scale or you mainly -   |  |
| Stacy:R26 | I haven’t been able to at this pint but we’re looking at doing that. The work that I’ve done with 102 has sort of generated a little bit of interest and so I think there’s a couple of other faculties sort of interested in making use of it and part of our sort of pitch with the grant for 102 was that we would make this stuff available so over the next session as I’m preparing for the next teaching session and I’m hoping to polish these up and sort of putting them into Wordpress and to give things a little final polish so I can go here you go, you know, open this up and then people can then come and use the materials. It’s taken a really long time to get to that point where I felt that I was happy with the content. A lot of the material that I’ve been building on, some of it had drawn a lot from sources so I had to rework a lot of that to make sure that it was all original and ensuring –  | L10-13 Teacher / workload |
| Harriet | Yes, yes  |  |
| Stacy:R27 | And also I guess, not only, I suppose you bring your own perspectives to a subject when you take it over, you know, you need to deliver according to obviously the course as it’s been designed, you know, you’ve got those learning outcomes to meet and that’s been prepared to work a certain way, but then you sort of, you know, you’ve got to connect your own experience with that as well and so there was a lot of the feel of the subject when I took it over was very, it was overly formal and I think a bit frightening to students so I sort of toned down the language. Although it talked about plain English it wasn’t really presented in plain English so I just needed to think about ways to make it more accessible. It’s interesting actually with language, when you, the need to use plain English and academic writing are really at odds with each other at times.  | L6-9 Student ie new category (& Teacher) |
| Harriet: | Mmm |  |
| Stacy:R28 | So it’s really important to be prepared to express things in really simple terms. There’s always a tendency to shift into that sort of academic register when you start throwing around words like ‘ontology’ and ‘epistemology’ because it makes you sound – you know that they’re useful terms and by just saying that word you immediately know the whole range of issues that I’m thinking about but to a student they’re sitting there going ‘…’ you know, so you’ve got to be really aware of your audience and be comfortable with operating at their level and –  |  |
| Harriet:  | And I think you have to be more knowledgeable to teach at the lower level because you’re paraphrasing the use of synonyms or explaining and that’s, you need to be more knowledgeable to be able to explain things in two or three ways and I know from the limited second language because I speak very bad school French, how I can say some of the technical things but I can’t chat to you about politics, you know, it’s much more complicated language, so if you’re teaching communication at a lower level I always think you need to know much more whereas if you’re teaching, that’s probably a bad example but if you’re teaching at a higher level you can assume some things.  |  |
| Stacy:R29 | Those assumptions are really problematic, like everything’s so, like you know, you build on – like you can’t talk about the subject of a sentence unless you know what a noun is, you know, you’re talking about the subject and the object and the verb and that’s meaningless, you know. When you want to talk about pauses, so you know, you say this is an independent pause, this is a subordinate pause, and that’s meaningless unless they know the component parts so, and you don’t want to – doing those itty bitty nuts and bolts of grammar is really boring and frustrating and problematic you know, so going back to the beginning because I’ve forgotten what I’m up to, it’s really interesting reading because as I say it throws some light on understanding the experience of students when you’re a student yourself, it’s really good to be a student.  |  |
| Harriet:  | Yes. Yes. And to be on the side of what you’re presenting yourself and you know, I suddenly think why did I do that, now I’m sitting on the other side I shouldn’t have done that it was a little tedious. It is very good to just constantly be learning and role reversal. |  |
| Stacy:R30 | Yeah, it really reminds you of, so I’m reading that and thinking yeah this is how they feel when they read that module |  |
| Harriet:  | [laughs] No, I know what you mean |  |
| Stacy:R31 | This is one of the areas actually where technology can be really useful, because you can use links to you know when you mouse over, and this is one of the frustrations of Blackboard, to do fun stuff like creating mouse overs and that you’ve got to do work around , you can actually ideally make the content more interconnected and sort of break stuff down in little chunks. So being able to move through content at their own pace I think is really useful. Um, problematic at times because what I find is we’re trying to serve a multitude of skills levels or there’s these connections you’ve got people who are really struggling with the material with people who are already quite expert so trying to meet all their needs at the same time is a real problem. Ideally a good learning platform should cater to that a little better than it does. I haven’t had much experience with other tools, I haven’t used Moodle for instance so I can’t really compare our methods, I just warn about Blackboard. | L1-6 Teacher e-compL12-15 II/ LMS |
| Harriet: | Yes. So I guess, questions 3 and 4 are the opposite of each other so what are your perceptions of enablers to implementing E-learning and what are your perceptions of barriers? And you’ve already started alluding to some of those but I wonder if we could kind of focus in on those a bit more. So I think what you were talking about with enablers was chunking and then that idea of linking and are there other things that you think help in terms of I suppose teaching online but in terms of actually implementing it I guess, so when you’re building you subject if you like –  |  |
| Stacy:R32 | Are you taking about how it works for me putting it all out there?  |  |
| Harriet: | Yeah |  |
| Stacy:R33 | I think probably one of the, the big enabler that I’ve had has been the librarians. Oh my god they are fantastic. Because one of the big things is there’s so much actual work to do you can feel a bit swamped, especially if you’ve got limited time and so I said to, I forget how it came about, whether I logged a job or if someone might have organised it for me, I’ve forgotten now, but they created a subset, an online tutorial that contained some materials, they even wrote a quiz that I could use so it was just a case of getting work done. And obviously their expertise in the library area and their materials are beautifully presented, very logical, so being able to have that expertise at my disposal and they really listened to what I was trying to achieve and then made the materials fit with what I was teaching so the exemplars are similar but slightly different to the essay questions so they’re really meaningful to the students, so it really gives them some clues if the student is paying attention it’s not doing work for them but they’re getting some really great clues about how to search for their research topics and they’ve provided some ongoing support. So having that expertise there in that subject matter that I can sort of build into what I’m doing is just fantastic. Because those research skills are really important and so that support was really awesome. So I’m not sure how to sort of explain how that works in terms of calling is something specific in an enabler but –  | L1-2 B5 / LibrariansL2-3 LM / workloadL10-14 B5/ LibrariansL18-19 B5 / librarians |
| Harriet: | But it is isn’t it, because it’s like you said, getting the work done, understanding your real needs and supporting you and you’re the owner and the expert of the subject and you know where you can be helped and they know how to help you and as a professional you don’t get any time, do you, being compared to others so that’s a really clever use of your time. |  |
| Stacy:R34 | It was great. And they were really effective. I think I had one or maybe two meetings with the librarian and she went away and sort of came back to me with this stuff and it was fantastic. So it was really effective. I own,, sort of, the quiz. They load it up and put it on the subject and then I’ve ben able to adapt it, I sort of tweaked a couple of questions. One of the tools that is nice in Blackboard is you can analyse questions. I think depending on the type of question it might give better results but I was able to identify questions that students are having difficulty with.  |  |
| Harriet:  | So had you written it well or was it – yes, is it you or is it them? [laughs]  |  |
| Stacy:R35 | #?# questions I was able to improve those. And we’ve had, yeah, ongoing support – one of the librarians does a live presentation and it’s interesting because you know, they sometimes don’t get a lot of response. He monitors a sub-forum online for subjects, doesn’t get a lot of response but my answer to that is that it’s still keeping librarians present and exposing students to their presence and that idea of people (a) being there and (b) just thinking about the fact that that resource is there to use. So even if they’re not actually using it in this subject, in the future you know, it’s just creating that sense of connection.  | L6-10 Student / presence – new category? |
| Harriet:  | Yes, I think that’s right. So that’s the wort of people and resources. So how do you think, or do you have any thoughts on how the organisation, so how does it help you, or does it, create and acquire and manage and transfer knowledge around E-learning? I guess you can say that, you know, the library did but in a way it may be completely irrelevant that it’s technology. There might be –  |  |
| Stacy:R36 | Yeah, I imagine that would probably work in any .. yeah, it’s a difficult one to express succinctly because you know, it’s this sort of large amorphous in that it’s such a, you know, when you think about the infrastructure there’s this kind of, you know –  |  |
| Harriet: | But I suppose if we brought it back, if this helps, sorry, did I interrupt you –  |  |
| Stacy:R37 | No…  |  |
| Harriet: | Things like policies I suppose or infrastructure or resources in place to help you with E-learning, I mean you already have but can you sort of remember, it might be too much a part of what you do, but those are the sorts of things that area meant to help you and I mean you’ve already mentioned that Blackboard was a bit of a barrier for you so that’s, you know, ideally, but within that you’ve accepted it and then…  |  |
| Stacy:R38 | Umm.. yeah.. I think, I’m not sure that the common support model has been entirely helpful because I often find that I don’t really know where to go. So thinking about like when I have an IT issue I don’t really know if it’s IT or learning and teaching which are apparently two different sections. So if I’ve got a problem with Blackboard that’s actually I think learning and teaching but then 9 times out of 10 they’ll escalate that to IT or something like that. I just find the whole thing really confusing. I don’t know who’s who and who I should ask about it. So I did find it helpful, we had, now I’ve forgotten her actual role/title, something like ‘online learning’ maybe, do you know who I mean? | L7-9 B5 |
| Harriet: | It wasn’t Julie Lindsay? |  |
| Stacy:R39 | No. I’m so bad with names… |  |
| Harriet:  | Judy O’Connell Carole Hunter? |  |
| Stacy:R40 | No… |  |
| Harriet:  | What sort of things did she do? |  |
| Stacy:R41 | So, she was basically I think making sure that stuff was done in terms of setting up subject sites, getting the subject outlines out there, I can’t believe I can’t think of her name… It’ll come to me in half an hour. Because she was really awesome. So don’t take my – yeah. And so she would send out an email going ok everybody we need to have this done and it would be a useful reminder. Even though you have it in your calendar you go yeah, I’ll get to that next week, so having someone – and she organised getting some content put across for me and just a few things like that that really took the pressure off because as you know, you know, when you’re marking and prepping for the next session at the same time it gets a bit chaotic. So having that one person – and then I had an issue I wasn’t sure about – I just went straight to her. So having that one person that you could, who was sort of your go to, and I think ?#?#? person, for all my failure at remembering names it’s very different having someone who’s got their face there with an email address rather than ask at CSU it’s an enormous box that it goes into and somebody’s going to answer it. You know, and I found in terms of staffing, like on an individual level staff have been amazing. You know, there’s so many people who would absolutely bend over backwards to help you, you know, I’ll contact IT with some crazy ‘something’s gone wrong’ and it’s been something really stupid and they’re really ok with that. I’m going ‘actually I am competent, really I am’ and they’re that’s fine, just do this. Alright. | L8-14 B5 dedicated EDL8-10 Teacher / workload |
| Harriet: | And you can forget it, because sometimes you haven’t done it for six months because it’s not in your fingers is it. So I think that’s sometimes the issue as well, you maybe do it once this year and then -  |  |
| Stacy:R42 | It’s not intuitive. A lot of the stuff isn’t intuitive with this software. It’s funny, when people think because you’re techy that you’re good at everything. You know, so I’ll be in a video and someone’s having trouble setting up the video and go ‘Stacy look at it’ –  | L1 II/LMS |
| Harriet: | Yes I was thinking electrical engineers, you can fix a car can’t you”? No, it’s sort of. There were some really good things in there, I know you think it went all over the place but I think there’s some good stuff.  |  |
| Stacy:R43 | I think staff sometimes do a great job despite the system. It’s not often that I see the system actually facilitating good work, you know, I think we have some good things, you know. Our policy library for instance, you mentioned policy. Our policy library is brilliant. I have an assignment where I have students looking for institutional policy and discussing whether or not it meets the students’ needs and they have real difficulty. And I said well what does that tell you about your institution and it’s policies. They’re having trouble finding one that fits that. So our policy library is brilliant. You know, you can find something. And I find that is probably, I don’t know what you’d call it, is that a system? What is that? | L1 Teacher / self-efficacyL4-9 LM / policy |
| Harriet: | It is, it’s a repository of sorts isn’t it.  |  |
| Stacy:R44 | Yeah, because if I am trying to navigate say a difficult issue with working out what’s equitable say with a student who’s having some issues and you know, there’s some questions around their situation so if I’m trying to navigate that equity I can go to policy, I can see what does policy say, what are my boundaries here? So I can follow this policy and still do this and, you know, that’s a good solution for everybody. Because you’re very aware, obviously that you’ve got those, you know, for me being compassionate and supporting my students is really important but you so want to ensure that you maintain standards. You know, you’re very aware of that as well so policy, good policy, helps you to do that I think. And in terms of online delivery I think it’s particularly important because you’re so distant from your students it’s not like they’re there sitting in front of you on a daily basis, you know. You can kind of trust what you see in an email, and I think that’s really important. I worry about the increasing move to kind of automate things and it take, they don’t like lecturing time being used for what seems like mundane stuff because lecturing time or lecturer time is expensive and they try to devolve that to, you know, administrative assistance. But for me it’s a little bit like what they say with teenagers, you know, you talk to them about the small stuff and they’ll come to you with the big stuff. And when you take away the small stuff you then lose any kind of connection with your students. You’re not only not seeing their faces, you’re not hearing their voices at all until they go ‘can I have an extension’ or they’re turning in some problem work and you’ve got nothing. You’ve got nothing to go on except what that work is in front of you, whereas those small dialogues that you have with your students about trivial things, whether it’s referencing, you know, that lets you know that they’re working. That lets you know that they’re interested or having difficulty or, you know, you get to see their emails and you can see what their English is like and so that’s your, one of the big things for an online teacher is that teacher student connection and it’s very, very fragile. And it’s amazing how little it can take to build it and how easily broken it is. And for me good technology should support that and I really want my institution’s policies to support me building that connection with my students and having that authentic connection so, you know, don’t take away communication. Yes it might be trivial for me to say to someone ‘oh you need to go and ask so and so about that’ or ‘this is how you cite that’. Yes they could be asking someone in the other team or some admin assistant about that issue but it’s a connection. There’s very few points of connection with this course.  | L8-15 LM / policyL19-21 Teacher / student connection (also Complexity?)L26-33 Student connection L34-35 II L36-37 LML45-46 Student connection |
| Harriet:  | Mmm. That’s really interesting. So you were talking about policy there and that kind of separates nicely into the next question, which is around, you know, it’s a huge question. So this one is about how you think the decisions of organisation leaders affect E-learning? |  |
| Stacy:R45 | Oh enormously. I guess your basic level is a choice of LMS. That’s huge. That’s your tool, that’s your office space. You know, that blackboard that I walk into every day, I really think about online space as a space, you know? That’s the medium I work with every day. So your decision to implement a particular package of software has an enormous impact on what my daily experience is going to be and my ability to deliver my material and connect with my students. It’s huge. And so something like Penopto, the decision to use Penopto over some other platform, you know, that’s affecting say the ability to embed certain content, you know, I haven’t used Penopto myself, I gather there’s certain issues with that. You know, that people have expressed in terms of what they can deliver. So yeah, with that project I was doing with 102 I wanted to embed little quizzes in the page and I can’t do it with Blackboard. I can have a quiz and they can go off to the quiz but I wanted it to be part of the page, I want it embedded, I want it to be contained and continuous and because of the way Blackboard software works I can’t do that. The choice to deliver something in Pebble Pad, you can’t edit HTML in Peddle Pag, it’s WYSIWYG – what you see is what you get – and so that really changes how you can manipulate your materials and how expressive you can be, whether you can make something look the way you want it to look to communicate your ideas. So yeah, those decisions are hugely important. I really can’t express it enough, you know, it’s not like – I think maybe some people who don’t use technology a lot see it as this thing that’s at arm’s length, you know, it’s like a notebook or something, a piece of paper and a pen, but for me an online website is really a space, you know, it’s where you communicate, it’s your classroom. So it’s really important that it’s effective. I really like to be able to again, deliver some personality with it, I like to be able to add a little bit of my own to it and some move away from that, you know, they like to template things. I remember talking to a web designer at a meeting a while back and he said oh year I’m going to do this and this and I’m like I hate people like you. See he wants everything to be uniform. It’s like you turn the institution into this hospital full of corridors that all look the same. Like if I’m on any one of numerous websites in CSU all the classrooms look the same. To me I want to know where I am without having to scroll up and check the heading, you know? I want to have some feeling to a space. And it’s funny because they do that quite well in physical spaces, you look at the libraries, you know, like Bathurst and Wagga libraries, a totally different feel. The buildings at Albury are just beautiful. You walk into any physical space and they can be really well designed and have a really nice feel but they don’t carry that through. They think of the website as this kind of corporate thing that has to be uniform.  | L1-8 II / LMSL22-29 II / LMS (&LM)L40-47 II / LMS /difference between physical spaces & online spaces |
| Harriet:  | That’s a really interesting observation. That is fascinating. I really like, I hadn’t thought of it like that at all., And there’s I suppose that opposing view possibly that I find sometimes in IT that people who are in the high positions have sort of got there through their ability to roll out standardised systems. And actually academia is all about providing the right thing for the student in the context, and that’s diametrically opposed often isn’t it? |  |
| Stacy:R46 | Yeah, yeah. I mean that Smart Learning, you know, that notion of the idea that you will lock everything in for five years? I find that horrific. I say keep them away from my subjects please. You lose the ability to be responsive. What I find really funny, whenever you talk about E-learning in particular you hear the phrase ‘content delivery’ and in any discussion about pedagogy people would immediately go ‘oh it’s not just about delivering content, we’re not just filling these pockets with ideas that will light the fire’, you know, they will be absolutely opposed to the idea of content delivery but as soon as you start talking about online learning – content delivery.  | L4-10 Complexity / content v pedagogy |
| Harriet: | Yes, yeah.  |  |
| Stacy:R47 | I find it really interesting that we’re not hearing that conflict. You know, like it’s what’s the word, like our intentions and our practice are not aligning. We talk a lot about how teaching is this integrative process, you know, we talk about Vigosky and this whole new zone of proximal development but then we’re delivering content with this lecturer who’s pre-recorded this expert video, you know? And I’m like how does that fit in with any good contemporary pedagogy? I don’t think that it does. | L1-7 Complexity / content v pedagogy |
| Harriet: | Mmmm… and do you have a space for feeding back to leaders, you know, the sort of moderation, how can you feed back and report on ?#?#? |  |
| Stacy:R48 | I’ve done one or two of the………….. [TAPE ENDS] |  |