



Creating a community of practice: negotiating the development of discipline based language and learning resources with faculty

Key Words

community of practice, collaboration, knowledge building, sharing practice

Abstract

Successful embedded language and learning pedagogy relies on collaboration among language and learning specialists with expertise in applied linguistics and subject area specialists with expertise in the knowledge and communication practices of their disciplines. A framework for these collaborations is that of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) where members with diverse expertise come together with a common purpose and commitment to achieve a desired outcome. Through their ongoing interactions, members learn from each other and develop a shared practice and knowledge base to address the problem or issue at hand. This paper will use a community of practice approach to examine engagement practices and informal learning and knowledge building (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 2003) among a team of discipline staff, language and learning specialists and e-learning specialists as they collaborated in the design of online learning materials to support students in writing the laboratory report genre in Physiology. The team met over a period of 9 months as the design of the website evolved. During this time, audio and video recordings of team members' interactions, with or without other artefacts, such as storyboards, were made. Extracts from this data set will be analysed from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1985) which enables language to be viewed in terms of the multiple meanings it creates, termed metafunctions. An analysis of interactions from the extracts will be used to illustrate how they build knowledge (ideational meanings in SFL) support social relations (interpersonal meanings) and link talk together (textual meanings). This analysis will be used to determine whether spoken genres (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Iedema & Scheeres, 2003) or patterns or routine ways of doing things can be identified which constitute a shared repertoire of resources (Allee, 2000) for enabling successful co-creation of discipline based language and learning resources.

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