TELT Seminar Series 2010 Weds 1st September

Exploring the affordances of the online learning tool, *UNSW Wikispaces*, in enhancing the group assessment experience for both students and tutors

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In this seminar we will report on the initial findings from a small research project investigating the large enrolment course experience in relation to group assessment and online learning tools, in particular *UNSW Wikispaces*. It comes under the umbrella of *Network Literacies,* which is a flexible project that has been developed within the School of English Media and Performing Arts aimed at allowing the UNSW community to develop their network literacies (see http://newsouthblogs.org/about/ for more information on the origins of the *Net Literacies* project). One of these literacies involves the use of wikis to support learning and teaching. The project also aligns with the FASS TELT Enhancement Plan and current university-wide assessment projects.

Large enrolment courses of over 500 students are becoming more commonplace within the Media degree program at UNSW and group assessment tasks have become a feature of many courses within the program. The course being investigated in this project is **ARTS1091 Media, Society, Politics**, which has 508 enrolled students, and the wiki site where the group assessment task has been completed can be viewed at:
http://arts1091.unsw.wikispaces.net/Global+Media+Mapping+Project.

One of the aims of this project has been to investigate the issues around the extent to which group members collaborate and contribute that are commonly associated with group assessment tasks. This becomes pertinent when considering the affordances of a wiki. According to the Australian Flexible Learning Framework (2010), "a wiki is a collaborative online space where people can gather to build content together and is intended for general public consumption. Wikis encourage participation and a strong sense of common purpose thereby developing valuable communication and teamwork skills. Using wikis supports asynchronous communication allowing learners to contribute at a time, and from a place that suits them." Given the public nature of a wiki and the ways in which it is able to foster a collaborative work environment, we would like to see whether these can enhance the group work experience.

In this talk we will outline the course aims and objectives in relation to the design and implementation of this first group assessment task. Focus groups, conducted with students and tutors, will also offer insight into the successes and failures of the use of a wiki in group assessment tasks.