Abstract:

This case study critically reflects upon the development of a scholarship of technology enhanced learning (SOTEL) research cluster in clinical sciences higher education. The research cluster has grown from an initial community of practice established in 2015 in the context of Paramedicine education (Cochrane, Cook, Aiello, Harrison, & Aguayo, 2016), to a collaborative transdisciplinary research cluster that now encompasses: the School of Clinical Sciences, Journalism, the Centre for Teaching And Learning, the AppLAB, and international research partners (Cochrane, 2019; Cochrane et al., 2018). The MESH360 research cluster (initially standing for the Multiple Environment Simulation VR Hub, but now covering the growing body of immersive reality enhanced learning projects) focuses upon the common domain of the exploration of immersive reality to enhance higher education to develop student creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving capabilities.

The research cluster is built upon the shared ontology, epistemology, and research methodology of the wider SOTEL research cluster hub (https://sotel.nz/about-the-cluster/). We established an ecology of resources to support the research cluster (Cochrane & Narayan, 2018), and encourage open educational practice via social media, publishing in open access channels, and regular project showcases. Outcomes from the MESH360 research cluster include: innovative curriculum design, journal articles, conference proceedings, 2 Vice Chancellors teaching innovation awards, a Prime Minister’s research scholarship, and award of a variety of internal project funding. The activity of the research cluster is curated in a ResearchGate Project at https://www.researchgate.net/project/MESH360 and on social media via the #MESH360 hashtag. While the activity of the MESH360 has been predominantly within the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences, we are seeing wider impact into Schools within the other Faculties at the university, and potential national and international collaborations.

The SOTEL model includes the following main elements:

- An online hub - The SOTEL Research Cluster [https://sotel.nz/]
- An annual Symposium showcasing SOTEL in practice [https://sotel.nz]
- The Pacific Journal of Educational Technology (PJTEL)
- The CMALT cMOOC and the MOSOMELT cMOOC
- A weekly webinar [series](https://www.researchgate.net/project/MESH360)
- Brokering international TEL networks such as the ASCILITE Mobile Learning [Special Interest Group](https://sotel.nz/about-the-cluster/)
- A series of TEL [workshops and showcases](https://sotel.nz)

The presentation will outline the above elements of the SOTEL Research Cluster. We believe the MESH360 research cluster model can be applied to a wide variety of higher education domains.

References


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