Digital Education Engagement Initiative

A team of senior leaders from various sectors within RMIT University's STEM College has worked together since March 2020 to organize events focusing on digital futures for social innovation in education.

The Digital and Education Working Group was established as part of the ECP Post COVID-19 ReStart Initiatives, with the aim to explore digital possibilities for literacy, education, public engagement, and social change. Initially including Professor Mark Sanderson, the group collaborated with Professor James Harland, Professor Margaret Jollands, Distinguished Professor Magdalena Plebanski and Professor Matt Duckham to brainstorm event ideas.

The group has since evolved into the Digital Education Engagement Initiative (DEEI) taking on new members, Professor Xavier Mulet and Professor Michelle Spencer while bidding farewell to Professors Mark Sanderson, Margaret Jollands and Kerryn Butler-Henderson.

DEEI has since organised 9 events and published 4 Briefing papers in collaboration with industry and external speakers with further initiatives in scope.

The Team

Professor James Harland,
Director, STEM Centre for
Digital Innovation,
STEM College

Distinguished Professor
Magdalena Plebanski, Director,
Biomedical & Health Innovation
Enabling Impact Platform, School
of Biomedical & Health Sciences

Professor Matt Duckham
Director, Information in Society,
Enabling Impact Platform,
School of Science

Professor Xavier Mulet,
Director, Advanced Materials,
Manufacturing & Fabrication
Enabling Impact Platform,
School of Science

Professor Michelle Spencer,
Deputy Director, STEM Centre
for Digital Innovation,
STEM College

Outcomes

Events & Briefing papers

Village: Helpful or Harmful?
(19 October 2023)
This roundtable discussion looked at best practice for managing staff and student anxieties in an uncertain world. Expert speaker from Howden Insurance Brokers (Aust.) brought an external perspective along with RMIT senior leaders in mental health.

Key skills sought by employers following the Global pandemic
(21 June 2023)
A discussion by industry speakers aimed to provide insights into what skillsets external organisations require as we move forward from the COVID pandemic. Speakers represented industries such as AWS, ANZGOG, Australian Council of Professions and Boeing Research and Technology.
Briefing Paper
- Key skills sought by employers following the Global pandemic.

Future of the Campus: What is the role of a university campus in post-pandemic times?
(25 November 2022)
In this event, the last of a series of three, a student, academic and professional staff, outlined their perspectives and ideas for the future of the RMIT campus.

Staff Experience of COVID: Creating a New Normal
(23 August 2022)
RMIT staff spoke candidly about their experiences, sharing insights into their difficulties and how they adjusted by turning negative situations into positive outcomes. Some topics included career interruptions, working from home while home-schooling young children, innovative online modes of teaching, skills-based education, returning to campus as well as brilliant ideas on how the future of the campus could look like.

Student Experience of COVID: What is the Silver Lining?
(17 May 2022)
This event highlighted the highs and lows of studying during the pandemic. Four students courageously talked about how they dealt with the disruption, new skills they learned and their views on what the role of the university should be in the future.

Teaching and Research: A Marriage made in..........?
(17 November 2021)
The debate on, "Teaching and Research: Marriage made in.............?" presented an expert panel of teaching and research staff who shared their views on what is more important, Teaching or Research or both....?

From Lab to Field: Digital Capabilities across STEM
(25 June 2021)
Two expert researchers discussed how data and technology had equally shaped both the food science and the biomedical science industry, as well as the important role of universities to produce digitally capable graduates.

Digital Education Engagement Initiative

Digital Innovation in Assessment and Feedback
(18 March 2021)
This event explored innovative approaches to adapt assessment practices in a digital landscape. The COVID-19 crisis has significantly altered various practices, with assessment being a key area affected. This event delved into assessment methods and associated topics like feedback, engagement, and student well-being. Two prominent researchers shared their inventive strategies and methodologies for assessment and feedback in the digital age.
Access the recording here.
Briefing Paper
- Digital Innovation in Assessment and Feedback (April 2021).

The Future of Digital/STEMM Education
(30 September 2020)
Expert speakers discussed integrating world-class practices in STEMM higher education into daily teaching. The event featured speakers from Telstra, Microsoft, Jisc, UNSW, and innovative minds from RMIT who discussed successful approaches to delivering STEMM education in the current landscape.
Access the recording here.
Briefing Papers
- Future of Digital/STEMM Education: A Higher Education Perspective (March 2021)
- Future of Digital/STEMM Education: An Industry Perspective (March 2021)
Jisc Interview
Professor Margaret Jollands contributed to the Learning and Teaching reimagined report in an interview conducted by Jisc (UK) following this event. Margaret referenced the two Briefing Papers during her interview.