

The implausible dream

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A recent conversation about WFA and the option of hybrid teaching and learning triggered a memory relating to transnational education and how changes in thinking - and of course the technology available today - has changed the landscape – for good – and in line with a dream (vision) that started many years ago.

Past context

In the mid-1990s I found myself teaching a masters' level program as a transnational project for *Griffith University, Queensland*. The student cohort was in Singapore.

The programme involved teaching eight (8) subjects each year in intensive mode on location in Singapore. It was an Australian award with up to 30-40 Singapore students at a time who attended over a ten (10) day period to accommodate their work commitments. It involved me flying to Singapore for twelve (12) days at a time – teaching on two weekends and three evenings – and being available throughout the week for student and learning support.

The programme was well received and included the option for students to come to Australia for one subject delivered in intensive mode. This was regularly taken up.

The technology of the time involved email communication, a basic dedicated website and the use of overhead projector slides for teaching that I would bring with me each delivery.

The mode was F2F intensive.

Middle context

In the early 2000s I (along with a colleague – *Professor Ian Bofinger*) developed the idea of a Virtual Conservatorium for *Central Queensland University* that provided the opportunity to deliver a music degree to anywhere and anyone using an online platform. It was presented locally, nationally and internationally.

We were able to deliver subjects on-line using a variety of software (some developed specifically for us) and placing students with location specific performance teachers and ensemble groups.

The model worked – though the technology of the time was basic and a bit ‘clunky’. In principle though, *The Virtual Conservatorium* became a reality and was both acknowledged and criticised within the Sector.

Ironically, and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic circa 2019, all conservatoria around the world found themselves delivering online – not such a silly idea after all. *It only took 19 years to catch on.*

The mode was hybrid.

Present context

In 2024 I am currently involved in a hybrid delivery of a Doctoral program (with *Associate Professor Tom O’Connor* and *Emeritus Professor Jim Mienczakowski*) for *Chiang Rai Rajabhat University* in Thailand. This is a transnational project of the University and currently has students enrolled in Melbourne, Australia.

The mode of delivery is hybrid – but mostly online using ZOOM and other resources to deliver the project and publishing student assignments in the form of blogs on a public website

See - <https://www.musicum20.com/blogs>

Using current technology with solid WIFI and associated equipment – the programme is achieving excitingly, good outcomes and a positive upbeat response from both students and teaching staff. Essentially – the dream of the 90s has now reached fruition – utilising soft resources and cloud-based storage.

What, at the time, was a dream – has now become a reality. The COVID-19 pandemic combined with the digital revolution that accompanied it (often referred to as the dual tsunamis) have made the notion of transnational delivery quite straight forward and in truth has enhanced the delivery and context.

What has taken some thirty (30) years to refine is in truth a dream coming true. The notion - If you want something to happen – first dream about it – and do everything in your power to make it happen. Dreams do come true.

Worth Reading – **WFA Working from anywhere and the digital nomad DN -**

https://www.musicum20.com/_files/ugd/6113ad_ee5ff055560e4dd4a36aac9c4bb289f3.pdf

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