Pedagogical principles for the design of virtual learning spaces in higher education

Edilson Arenas
CQUniversity, Melbourne, Australia
e.arenas@cqu.edu.au

Julianne Lynch
Deakin University, Warrnambool, Australia
julianne.lynch@deakin.edu.au

This paper focuses on effective learning spaces in contemporary higher education. Drawing on empirical data from a qualitative study of international students’ experience of blended learning programs conducted in three computing courses in two Australian universities, a range of issues and challenges are reported. Three pedagogical principles are then presented that respond to these challenges: 1. Enabling learners – learning how to learn in virtual learning spaces; 2. Programming for flexible learning – learning how to manage virtual learning environments; and, 3. Transforming learning – learning how to capitalise on the affordances of new technologies. The pedagogical principles are presented together with examples of types of practices that they support.