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**ASSOCIATION
FOR LEARNING
TECHNOLOGY**

ALT

Thriving in a colder and more challenging climate

Abstracts

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The educational and social impacts of Plan Ceibal – a new approach to the use of technology in education

Author
Miguel Brechner

Theme
Plenary session

The educational and social impacts of Plan Ceibal – a new approach to the use of technology in educationUruguay has deployed more than 450,000 computers to every pupil in state education from the 1st year of primary to the 3rd year of secondary school. 99 % of these students now have Internet connectivity in their school.

For example, as soon as all pupils have laptops and connectivity new challenges appear and the personalization of education becomes a real possibility.

Changes also take place in the role of the teacher, in the way learning is assessed, and in the way technology can be used to simplify the learning experience.

Miguel Brechner's talk will report on Plan Ceibal to date, and examine in detail its many social, cultural and educational impacts.

Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology

Author
Karen Cator

Theme
Plenary session

The U.S. Department of Education's National Education Technology Plan articulates a bold vision of powerful learning. Creativity and innovation are hallmarks of powerful learning and technology provides an environment for developing these skills. Ms. Cator will convene a discussion of the opportunities and barriers to leveraging technology for improving the opportunity to learn.

The elusive technological future

Author
John Naughton

Theme
Plenary session

Many of the most important technological developments in computing and networking have come as surprises – pleasant and/or unpleasant – to professional communities and commercial organisations, including those which are supposed to know what the future holds. How does this happen? Why are we so bad at anticipating the technological future? And what would we need to do to improve?

Open courses: Converting, launching, and letting go…

Author
Jo Axe

Theme
Invited speaker

Using one of Royal Roads University's latest open educational resource (OER) as an example, Jo will talk about the course and the process taken in converting it to an OER.

Leadership in a cold climate. Leading where the past is no reliable guide to the future. A reflection on the strategic leadership of people, technology and institutions in UK HE.

Author
Ewart Wooldridge

Theme
Invited speaker

Ewart Wooldridge will focus on the potential discontinuity of change facing universities across the UK as a result of funding and legislative measures of governments. In that scenario, we have to 'unlearn' old ways of thinking – about how we see technology in the context of strategic leadership,and about how we stimulate new ways of being entrepreneurial, collaborative and efficient. The session will take delegates through a way of categorising our responses to such major drivers of change. It will offer a new model of leadership for universities. Ewart will draw on an extensive programme of research conducted by the Leadership Foundation over the last 7 years and his own intensive practical experience of leadership in this and many other sectors.

JISC's support for learning and teaching in a changing educational environment

Author
Malcolm Read

Theme
Invited speaker

JISC has helped promote significant innovation in learning and teaching over the past ten years. This talk will focus on how we can help institutions improve student satisfaction through the effective use of ICT in the changing HE and FE environment. Topics to be covered will include improving student feedback, e-assessment and the growing value of open educational resources. This will also be placed in the context of the creation of a new JISC as a separate legal entity and our planned work in support of learning and teaching over the next few years.

The city as the learning environment: making change happen in Leicester's schools

Author
Josie Fraser

Theme
Invited speaker

Josie Fraser works for Leicester City Council, which is rebuilding or remodelling each of the secondary schools in the city. Her role is to ensure that the investment made in technology supports the City's aspirations, which are to:

- create school environments in which young people feel engaged and believe in themselves;
- provide teachers with world-class learning environments in which they too feel valued and inspired;
- root schools in the centre of their communities so that they become hubs that help re-vitalise areas.

Josie will talk about:

- the current social, economic and technological drivers shaping learning technology in the schools sector;
- the city-wide strategy and the practical steps that will transform learning with technology;
- what Leicester's young people have told the council about their own technology priorities.

On being public…how social media reshapes professional identity.

Author
Anne-Marie Cunningham

Theme
Invited speaker

Social media has created opportunities for all of us can to spend a lot more time in public than we used to. Professionals who have grown used to working in confined spaces, with distinct boundaries, are learning how to be in the digital world at large.

In the past three years I have inhabited these spaces as a professional in public: an educator and a doctor. What are the opportunities and challenges this has brought me? I will describe my personal journey, but consider the wider implications for professional identity of increasing opportunities, and sometimes pressure, to maintain a public profile.

I Have a Blind Student in My Maths/Science Class, Should I panic? How to promote inclusion for blind students.

Author
Dónal FitzPatrick

Theme
Invited speaker

For many students the realisation that mathematics and science are part of the curriculum engenders panic, worry and (let's be honest) downright fear. these emotional responses are exacerbated in the case of blind learners who, because of a lack of access to tools and technologies to help them, are somewhat marginalised when it comes to taking courses in these areas. The presence of a blind student in a class, whether said class is provided in person or virtually, often elicits the same reactions in the person giving the class. Phrases like "how will I present my material", "how will I get my message across" or "how will I read their homework" are questions which I often have to deal with. In this talk, I aim to show how a blind learner can approach the study of Science, Technology, engineering and Mathematics, and more importantly, to attempt to outline some strategies for teaching this information in a manner which is accessible and inclusive.

Well, the kookaburras thought it was funny anyway! Gilly Salmon explores innovation in UK and Australian Higher Education.

Author
Gilly Salmon

Theme
Invited speaker

Kookaburras are best known for their unmistakable call, which sounds uncannily like loud, echoing human laughter ; good-natured, but rather hysterical. Have you heard it around your university?

Kookaburras adapt to a wide variety of wild and human habitats. They are feted by Australian people, (the first owners of the land as well as settlers) for their ability to kill snakes (as well as, more recently, pre-dead barbecue meat!).

Gilly Salmon shares pictures, stories and kookaburras from dipping and diving in search of innovation in UK and Australian Higher Education. She identifies some 'snakes' that she was considering offering up. She marks out some similarities, differences and lessons for the future…

The ROI of Online Collaboration: Doing More With Less

Author

Rajeev Arora

Theme

Invited speaker

It's an exciting time for education and training. Teaching, learning, and collaboration are evolving from traditional classroom lectures and activities to online courses, collaborative ad-hoc discussions, and easy access to information and experts. To achieve their academic, administrative, and financial goals, today's educational institutions are investing in online collaborative technologies that go beyond web conferencing or the virtual classroom to also facilitate the business of education. The time has come to blend pedagogy with sound business decision-making. Learning for the digital age must be less structured and more informal, self-enabled, interactive, and collaborative. The early success of new tools, like social networks, video, wikis, podcasts, IM, and more, show a demand for learner-driven education. At the same time, educators are resource constrained and must economically find and leverage relevant content and peer expertise to develop new practices with these 21st century tools–while maintaining high-quality teaching and learning. On an organizational level, a collaborative approach can help increase competitive advantage, drive peer-to-peer learning and engagement, support strategic planning and decision making, and enhance productivity for faculty and staff. With ever-decreasing budgets, academic institutions and training organizations must balance important educational impacts with bottom-line revenue implications, including a rapid return on their investment in technology. Hear how educational organizations at all levels are implementing integrated collaborative technologies that enable them to:

- Enhance teacher effectiveness and learning experiences

- Increase learner comprehension, engagement, and satisfaction

- Increase retention and completion rates

- Facilitate adoption of learning technologies

- Increase operational efficiency and productivity

- Leverage existing technology investments

- Reduce travel and physical infrastructure costs.

Remembering Robin Mason

Author
Sonam Penjor

Theme
Invited speaker

Learn how to be effective with web conferencing – Tips and ideas about planning and delivering online meetings, classes and conferences.

Author
Steve Milligan

Theme
Sponsor session

During this session you will learn how to:

- Set up online events / clases with ease & confidence;

- Make your online events / classes more effective & successful;

- Ensure you have maximum participation, interaction & engagement;

- Achieve better results, lower cost with optimal resources.

Collaborate works with many corporate and learning organisations to improve the flow of knowledge by enabling them to reach out and engage with thousands of learners.

The Future of Learn

Author
Stephen Clarke

Theme
Sponsor session

One of Blackboard's leading Solution Engineers, Stephen Clarke will be presenting Blackboard's vision for the future of Blackboard Learn and how openness will be a driving force for change.

Stephen will take a deep dive into the innovations you can expect from Blackboard Learn and take a sneak peak at the road-map for the new look and feel SP.8 due for release later in 2011.

Bringing content directly to the Learn platform has been a key driver in 2011 and we will showcase how educators can save time by using integrated content from publishers like McGraw-Hill, Cengage, Macmillan, Pearson, and John Wiley & Sons.

Improving Learning Outcomes and Increasing Effectiveness with Innovative eLearning Solutions

Author
John Baker

Theme
Sponsor session

New tools now make it easier to design, launch and expand your online programs. With dashboards, analytics and more, hear how you can enrich the overall teaching and learning experience. Desire2Learn provides the tools to:

- Link learning objectives with outcomes
- Leverage communication through mobile web access and Desire2Learn Campus Life
- Enable rapid course development with the Instructional Design Wizard & Drag-and-Drop Course Builder
- Utilize advanced analytics to assess student, course and program success
- Empower presenters using Desire2Learn Capture, the newest Desire2Learn webcasting tool

Join us to hear how different types of tools can help you build pedagogically sound courses.

Launch of the new LSIS Technology toolkits

Authors
Nigel Ecclesfield
Terri Kinnison
Peter Munday

Theme
Sponsor session

In this workshop delegates will have the opportunity to try out the new Generator, the toolkit for FE organisations improving through the use of technology. Find out how LSIS will continue to support the FE sectors through Leadership development, research and peer support. Come and meet colleagues from the Leadership and Innovation team, E-maturity team and Technology Exemplar network to exchange ideas and help us plan a strategy for challenging times and new opportunities.

Extend your digital educational content with EQUELLA

Author
Garnet Berry
Mike Fedarb

Theme
Sponsor session

Pearson is the world's leading education company, offering collaborative teaching and learning solutions for on-campus, online, and blended learning environments. Our session will focus on the Pearson Platforms solution, our award-winning digital repository, EQUELLA, which is revolutionising the way institutions search, create and manage content online. We will take a closer look at the way the features of EQUELLA 5 can benefit your institution, while showcasing the different implementations of the repository within our European client institutions.

Using Hypermedia Annotations to Teach Vocabulary on the Web

Author
Bahman Gorjian

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
hypermediaAnnotations, learnerExperience, plainText, secondLangaugeLearming, vocablaryRetention, WBBL

This project measured the effect of using hypermedia annotations on short and long term vocabulary retention in teaching vocabulary through Web-based language learning (WBLL) activities. A total of 62 university students were randomly assigned into two homogeneous groups; and then both groups were given a pre-test. Both groups covered 12 expository passages selected by the researchers from the BBC website. The subjects had to sit for an immediate quiz to measure the short term effect of the treatment and finally, at the end of the course and a two-week interval, subjects sat for their post-test. Findings revealed that there was a significant effect of the hypermedia annotations on the retention of vocabulary in the short term ($p < .05$). However, the post-test results indicated that the effect of the treatment in the long term faded away and the significance of the means was not sufficiently high to reject the null hypothesis.

Learning the lessons about large scale e-portfolio implementations – introducing the ePI research study.

Authors

Gordon Joyes
Angela Smallwood
Lisa Gray

Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

e-portfolios, FE, HE, implementationModels, large-scale, processes, professionalOrganisations, thresholdConcepts

Although there are various instances of large-scale implementations of e-portfolios by Further and Higher Education institutions and professional organisations, knowledge of the specifics of their implementation journeys remains relatively unshared and unanalysed. To capture the lessons learnt and to inform future implementations at institutional level in FE and HE in the UK, the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) funded the e-Portfolio Implementations (ePI) study from August 2010 to May 2011. This built on a prior research study of over twenty e-portfolio projects funded by JISC 2007-09 which revealed core threshold concepts (Meyer and Land, 2003) related to e-portfolio implementation (Joyes, Gray and Hartnell-Young, 2010). The ePI study has used this threshold concepts perspective as a framework to identify different 'slices' of effective e-portfolio use within twenty Higher and Further Education institutions and professional organisations in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. These institutions have collaborated within a wiki to develop implementation case studies which have informed the study's analysis of critical institutional drivers, strategies and implementation processes, enabling the team to identify key themes for successful implementation. The paper will present the e-portfolios implementation toolkit that has been developed as an outcome of the study. The toolkit is a new addition to the JISC e-portfolio infoKit (2008) and has been specifically developed to support e-portfolio managers, practitioners and senior managers with large-scale e-portfolio implementations.

References

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Joyes, G., Gray, L. and Hartnell-Young,E. (2010). Effective Practice with e-Portfolios: how can the UK experience inform implementation? Australasian Journal of Educational Technology 26(1): 15-27. www.ascilite.org.au/ajet/ajet26/joyes.html (accessed August 26, 2010).

Meyer, J. and Land, R. (2003). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Linkages to ways of thinking and practicing. In Improving Student Learning – ten years on. ed. C. Rust, Oxford: OCSLD.. www.tla.ed.ac.uk/etl/docs/ETLreport4.pdf (accessed June 20, 2010).

Open Learning Exchange – collaborators wanted

Authors

Chrissi Nerantzi
Denis McGrath
Huw Morris

Theme

Broad tents and strange
bedfellows

Tags

collaboration, costBenefit,
deMonetisation,
earlyAnnouncement, Efficiency,
openEducationalPractices,
OpenLearningExchange,
respondingToChange,
savingMoney, sharedServices

Government funding for Higher Education (HE) in the UK will decline over the next five years. To tackle this challenge, a range of new providers of HE and related services are being encouraged to help universities to reduce costs and increase revenue streams. We all have to do more, better and with less. Surviving and prospering under this new regime necessitates, (re-) using and sharing resources and expertise creatively within and beyond institutional boundaries.

Is "open education" the way forward for a sustainable HE sector? Open online courses, both small and massive (MOOCs) (Downes 2010) are appearing. Open Educational Resources (OERs) are created, shared and repurposed under Creative Commons (cc) to economise and maximise innovation; there are open access journals too. Are we going towards Open Educational Services (Meiszner 2010)? If so, should we start looking for strange bedfellows? We are… are you?

We recognise the value of bringing experts into our classrooms. However, how many contacts do we have? Can we repeatedly count on their goodwill? What about practicalities and costs? Could we use technology instead to source and 'teleport' experts virtually into our face-to-face and online classrooms?

We propose the creation of an online Open Learning Exchange for webinars and remote guest speakers for under- and postgraduate provision, based on a Mutual Credit or Timebanking approach, similar to that used in the third sector (Seyfang and Smith 2002). A database of, and for academics and industry experts, working like an exchange scheme – trading your expertise for expertise needed in one of your sessions, similar to formal credit based skills or resource networks, in informal, community and other professional contexts. Nothing comparable exists within the HE Sector.

Could this model benefit universities, industry and students? Would it strengthen links between universities, industry, communities and the third sector; creating and extending flexible, efficient networks and affiliations, providing opportunities for collaboration, reinvigorating teaching and learning whilst simultaneously reducing costs?

Come along to discuss this idea and explore together how we can develop it into a concept and a real service so that we can all thrive in these challenging times.

References

Downes, S. 2010. New Technology Supporting Informal Learning. Journal of Emerging Technologies in Web Intelligence 2(1): 27–33.

Meiszner, A. 2010. The Open Education Movement. 24 April. Available at www.openedworld.net/index. php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=25 (accessed January 6, 2011).

Seyfang, G. and Smith, K. 2002. The Time Of Our Lives: Using time banking for neighbourhood renewal and community capacity-building. London: New Economics Foundation.

"If you're walking on thin ice you might as well dance". Making the most of available technologies to promote student choice.

Authors
Kirstie Coolin
Stuart Wood

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
browne, choice, data, IAG, learner, linked, opendata, participation, widening

UK Education institutions, support services and students are facing significant financial and cultural challenges. Despite these, it remains critical that the UK produces world class, highly skilled employees to underpin the economy (Browne 2010). Substantial increases in tuition fees will mean that students need the best information available to make informed choices. It is therefore vital that information about courses together with peripheral information about the labour market (LMI), transport, location, finance, is current, accurate and informative. The University of Nottingham's JISC-funded SALAMI project is asking the question 'How can Labour Market Information be collected and used in ways that cut costs, enable shared services and achieve more for less effort?'. Many different users are collating and viewing LMI, each downloading, interpreting and describing data for their own purposes resulting in significant duplication of effort (Booth and Coolin 2010). The educational landscape is changing. These challenges offer an opportunity for creativity to thrive in a new business environment where hitherto peripheral technological approaches are considered as long term viable business solutions. Shared services will help meet the needs of careers professionals and curriculum planners, providing the information element and enabling them to concentrate on offering quality one-to-one guidance. The session will cover how SALAMI has developed shared web services for learners, employees and institutions through using and joining sources of LMI, open and institutional data. New combinations and 'mashups' of Information Advice and Guidance-related (IAG) data are providing new, dynamic routes into intelligence thus empowering learners to explore and personalise the pathways into education and employment. The demonstration will present the mashups and IAG web services developed with an emphasis on user journey which attendees will have a hands-on opportunity to try out. Attendees will learn how open data mash ups for IAG can:

- Reduce the duplication of effort collating and using LM intelligence

- Enable more agile and employer responsive curriculum

- Enhance information about learning and employment opportunities for:

  – Information, Advice & Guidance

  – Course search

  – Curriculum planning

  – Curriculum gap analysis

  – Workforce development

  – Regional planning

  – Employer and business engagement activities.

References

Browne, J. 2010. Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education Booth, J., and Coolin K. 2010. Shared Aggregation of LAbour Market Information: Baselining LMI use amongst SALAMI Project partners

Embedding Graduate Attributes in University practice

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

e-portfolio, employability, futureproofing, graduateAttributes, longTermValue, PDP

The work of the QAA Enhancement Theme "Graduates of the 21st Century" [1] emphasises that the value of a degree extends beyond subject knowledge – to include the "qualities that graduates acquire during the course of their learning that are based on personal experiences and social values." (Moir 2010) The University of Edinburgh has developed a key set of graduate attributes [2] that we believe every student should develop during their time at the University. These are being mapped within a "graduate attribute framework" so that the key skills and attributes acquired by the students may be more easily recognised and valued. The results of this are being embedded within the individual degree programme specifications to add subject-specific perspectives and ownership.

The School of Divinity currently has a compulsory first year "academic skills" course. This course is solely online, with content (including library, IT, writing skills) provided as a series of modules containing resources and exercises. The course has been re-designed for AY11/12, retaining its primary function of basic skill development, but focussing on the mapping between the modules and the graduate attributes. In addition, students will be introduced to graduate attributes in their wider sense and how they fit into the University experience.

The course content for the academic skills course will continue to be provided via the University's WebCT VLE. However, the University is also introducing an e-Portfolio tool (PebblePad) as a core component of PDP. This will be called at strategic points, to provide the scaffolding for students to recognise and reflect on their development.

This new approach will be evaluated through the use of course questionnaires and focus groups in the forthcoming academic session and consideration will be given to further embedding to ensure that students recognise its value and continue to engage throughout their academic life.

This paper will describe our experience of embedding the graduate attributes into the academic skills course.

[1] www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/21stCGraduates/default.asp

[2] www.employability.ed.ac.uk/GraduateAttributes.htm

References

Moir, J. (2010). First things first: the first year in Scottish higher education. Graduates for the 21st Century outcomes & publications www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/21stCGraduates/outcomes.asp

Effective use of an asynchronous online voice system on Moodle in blended language learning

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

earlyResearch, learningDesign, voiceInteraction

Interactive online voice interactions promise to enrich and add social presence to the text interactions that currently define online education systems. Reliable and easy-to-use online voice systems for teaching tools are scarce, and whether or how these online voice tools bring positive effects on the learning process is not known. This presentation reports on an empirical study that examined the effects of the systematic application of an asynchronous voice recording system integrated into the Moodle LMS. The study was conducted in a foreign language education context in which oral training is an essential component of the expected learning outcomes.

The online voice activities were implemented over one semester at a university in Tokyo in two undergraduate English course classes comprising Engineering and Science major students (n = 127). The students were required to do two kinds of online voice recording, namely, reading a short text and reading a mini-speech aloud, as weekly out-of-class assignments. The asynchronous voice mode was designed to achieve the same results as were expected in synchronous oral communication in face-to-face classes. Pre- and post- course online questionnaires to evaluate this intervention were conducted. The survey included questions that rated the system usability using the System Usability Scale (Brooke, 1996) and asked about changes in attitudes towards speaking English. Quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data indicated that the students found the voice system to be usable enough to meet course objectives. The online voice assignments were associated with positive changes in the perceptions of the students with regard to speaking English. However, from a human-computer interaction perspective, half of the students were reluctant to use an online program, whereas the rest were willing to do so.

The study concludes that asynchronous online voice activities can effectively support beginner-level foreign language learners in developing their oral abilities. The study also suggests the needs for improving specific areas of online voice systems such as sound quality and connectivity problems, as well as seamless integration into a learning management system such as the use of a stable linkage to the grading function and a friendly interface design.

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Miyazoe, Terumi, and Terry Anderson. 2010. Empirical research on learners' perceptions: Interaction equivalency theorem in blended learning. European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning, www.eurodl.org/?article=397.

Project SOAR – Student's Online Attention and Reading lists: navigating the river of student attention

Author

AJ Cann

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

blendedLearning, caseStudy, collaboration, effectiveness, evaluation, libraryServices, socialNetworking, studentsAsProducers, web2.0

Do students engage with academic reading lists? And if they do, in what format do they like their books – paper or e-books? After secondary education and strategies they have adopted to be successful at A level, many undergraduates fail to engage with non-assessed extension tasks when they transition to HE. A generation ago the sources of information available to students were comparatively few: lectures, journals and reading lists of carefully selected books. In some disciplines, literature has remained the focus of study, but in others, science in particular, online information has out-competed traditional sources. As the ubiquity of online interactions has increased with services such as Facebook and Twitter, important information becomes submerged in the chatter. Non-assessed reading to broaden knowledge does not compete effectively with just-in-time sources such as Wikipedia.

I surveyed 550 undergraduate students and discovered that only 30% claimed to have read any of the books on the reading list given to them. 25% claimed to have read an e-book in the previous year but only 5% of these used a specialized e-book reader such as a Kindle or iPad application (survey results will be presented in graphical form).

To encourage students to engage with reading lists, I created a low cost interactive website with a familiar Amazon-style format allowing students to leave star ratings, reviews and recommendations (SciReadr.com). This low cost solution is based on WordPress and Google Forms. Working in partnership with the university library, student's union and a student society, I began a series of regular face to face student-led meetings in the format of a book discussion group to reinforce the online component of the project, held as casual twilight sessions in informal learning spaces in the students union.

Responses to the website indicate that the face to face element of the blended program is more important in driving engagement than the online element. The role of technology in driving engagement will be discussed.

References

Crook C. Addressing research at the intersection of academic literacies and new technology. International Journal of Educational Research. 2005 43 (7-8): 509-518.

Enhancement Academy; a new model for change?

Author
Chris Turnock

Theme
At the sharp end

Tags
change, collaborating, implementation, networking, planning

Attempts to develop use of technology at Northumbria University to enhance learning have often been characterised by a limited degree of adoption by staff. A successful application to participate in the Enhancement Academy, a Higher Education Academy initiative, provided an opportunity to take a systematic approach to facilitating wider adoption of newly implemented technological developments. The focus of the project was to build on a recommendation of the previous HEFCE Benchmarking exercise to make enhanced use of the institutional VLE and other technologies by engaging with colleagues across the university to explore strategies that facilitate adoption of new technology by both staff and students. The project has focused on two particular technologies that became available for use by both staff and students in the summer of 2009, namely the Blackboard Assignment Handler tool and PebblePad.

This paper will focus on the nature of the change model developed and implemented by the project team rather than the chosen technologies. The change model involved use of a 'hub and spoke' approach consisting of a network of school nominated champions facilitating change supported by the centrally based team. The model's key features, which included facilitation of collaboration between project team and school champions and other key colleagues plus support for both staff and students across the university using the two newly introduced technologies, will be described. Information on the project's initial successes and failures in facilitating the tools' adoption will be provided as well as evaluation data on project impact in facilitating adoption by staff and students of the two chosen technologies within a higher education institute.

Opening ICT Boundaries: Facilitating cross-institutional student collaboration

Authors

Chris Turnock
Erik Bohemia

Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

collaborationWithIndustry, learningBetweenCountries, onlineCollaboration, OpenSourceTechnology, studentCollaboration, web2.0

The Open ICT Tools project, funded by JISC infoNET Trialling of Online Collaborative Tools for Business and Community Engagement programme, piloted and tested open source technology for facilitating engagement with external university and industry partners by using two cross-institutional international student collaborative projects undertaken within the Global Studio. Global Studio is a cross-institutional teaching and learning collaboration conducted between Northumbria University and international universities and industry partners based in the UK, Australia, USA, Netherlands and South Korea since 2006. Global Studio aims to equip design students with skills for working in globally networked organisations, in particular skills in intercultural communication and collaboration.

The project's challenge was facilitating communication and multimedia data exchange between Northumbria University and participating external educational and business organisations using open source technology without compromising the security of either Northumbria University IT infrastructure or the partner organisations.

Project aimed to build on the ICT infrastructure at Northumbria by identifying and trialling a diverse range of open source collaborative ICT tools to:

1. Support engagement between the university and its external collaborative business and educational partners.

2. Be embedded within current university IT infrastructure.

The project took place during the 2009/10 academic year, with two collaborative learning projects involving 5 industry staff members from the two participating business partners, 179 undergraduate students, one postgraduate student, and 8 academic staff members from the three participating universities.

The paper describes the range of technologies considered for use in the project, such as Plone, MediaWiki, Joomla, WordPress and Skype plus rationale underpinning choice of technologies for trial in the Global Studio. Evaluation of chosen technologies involved surveying students during and on completion of the two Global Studio cycles plus interviewing technologists responsible for installation and maintenance of identified technologies, educationalists facilitating use of the technologies and students using the technologies. Evaluation focused on how each chosen technology enabled and/or constrained effective collaboration on global learning projects.

In conclusion, the paper examines the extent to which the Open ICT Tools project has met project aims and considers areas for further development work.

The value of 'soft skills' for blended learning

Authors

Liz Bennett
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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

blendedLearning,
criticalFriendships, onlineLearning,
RogerianPrinciples

When a traditionally face to face course was redesigned for limited day school contact supported with online methods, the teaching team wanted to ensure that the 'soft skills' of group work and critical friendships were not lost in the new model. This presentation reports on how the team planned and implemented activities that supported the formation and development of critical friendship groups. Rogerian principles of empathy, openness, transparency, equality, respect, communication, honesty, integrity, maturity and commitment underpinned setting up and nurturing the groups (1965). The groups' tasks included reviewing a draft version of an assignment. They also were asked to share resources with other members of the group and to explore the value that other students' skills and knowledge bring to the learning process. Online tools including email and wiki were used alongside the institutional VLE. The paper describes and analyses the activities for the blended learning model. Careful planning was required to avoid becoming focused on delivery of material and losing the social and informal aspects of learning. Critically face to face time was allocated to discussing the value of the friendship groups using Tuckman's model of group processes to inform this process (1965). The paper is particularly relevant to other practitioners moving to 'blended model' of learning where there is limited face to face contact and increased use of technological tools to support the learning process.

References

Rogers, C. R. (1951) Client-Centered Counselling. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Tuckman, B. (1965) "Developmental sequence in small groups". Psychological Bulletin 63 (6): 384–99

Camels in Wales! – finding riches in a barren climate

Authors

Steve Woodward
Trevor Price
Haydn Blackey

Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

collaborativeApproaches, communitiesOfPractice, ePortfolios, onlineAssessment, PDP, socialSoftware, technologyEnhancedLearning, vleReview

This paper outlines the experiences of Welsh Higher Education Institutions engaged in a University of Glamorgan led community of practice, which was established using the JISC Collaborative Approaches to the Management of e-Learning (CAMEL) model as a means of "collaborating, scavenging and sharing to increase value" across the Welsh HE sector.

Collaborative approaches to the development of technology enhanced learning resources are phenomena that have been increasingly used throughout the 21st Century (e.g. Burge, 2001 and MacDonald et al. 2005). With higher education facing increasing austerity measures, collaborative approaches, which suggest more efficient ways of working, look increasingly attractive as University staff seek to minimise costs whilst maintaining the quality of the learner experience with ever diminishing resources. This paper will explore how this has been achieved through the establishment of the Welsh ELESIG regional group as a model that can be deployed in regions throughout the UK.

During the summer and autumn of 2010, the CELT Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) team at the University of Glamorgan was provided seedcorn funding to host a series of four CAMELs. The purpose of these CAMELs was to share Best Practice and to nurture collaborative relationships within the group of Welsh Universities who had participated in the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales Gwella project (HEFCW, 2008).

The four CAMELs were themed in areas of common interest across the sector in Wales. These were e-Portfolios/ PDP; Online assessment; Social software; and Virtual Learning Environment review. This paper will review the context to the work and will offer a reflection on what was learnt to inform future practice and future collaboration in Wales.

We will conclude by showing how the experiences of a collaborative approach can lead the sector to deliver longer-term efficacy and efficiency. We will use our evidence to argue that the value added of collaboration between HEIs in Technology Enhanced Learning can overcome the nugatory competition which might occur during times of financial pressure when HEIs are competing in other elements of their delivery.

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ePortfolios in Teaching and Teacher Education: Friend or Foe?

Author

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

challengesForTheFuture,
educatingTeachers, ePortfolios,
professionalDevelopment,
recordingAchievement

Portfolios of authentic evidence for professional competencies have formed part of teacher training for many years. More recently aspirational teacher educators across Europe have successfully embedded ePortfolios in teacher training programmes (Granberg, 2010). However, research into varying aspects of ePortfolios in teacher training has not yet examined the transition of the ePortfolio from teacher trainer to professional teacher. This research examines the expectations of newly qualified teachers in this transition and considers the changing role of the ePortfolio for recording continuing professional development (CPD) for teachers at a time when the context of CPD for teachers is changing.

This paper reports a longitudinal research project (= 3 years) at Nottingham Trent University, UK, part funded by Training and Development Agency. The aim of the study was to consider the potential of the eportfolio as a CPD tool for newly qualified teachers (NQTs). The theoretical framework underpinning this research is that of self-regulated learning (Bandura, 1991). Relationships are also drawn to the theory of situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991), which emphasises the idea that what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned. The methodological framework is that of action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Reason and Bradbury, 2008). Both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analysed. In order to gain a multiperspective account and rich contextual data on the tool and its use, a range of experiences were sought from primary and secondary senior teachers (= 103 schools) across the East Midlands and primary and secondary teacher trainees. In addition newly qualified teachers from schools across the East Midlands who developed a multimodal, authentic and reflective ePortfolio while at University have been interviewed. The analysis of the data has provided opportunity for critical reflection and evaluation of whether the ePortfolio meets the expectations of NQTs and whether there is a role for the development of this tool for teachers in the current climate. The key finding, supported by school senior teachers, is that this is an appropriate tool developing an authentic evidence base for developing professional identity, however the evidence from NQTs suggests schools are not yet ready for this tool.

Key results will be presented that have significance for future activities for both Higher Education Institutions considering ePortfolios for trainee teachers and for schools looking for new ways to support staff in developing a lifelong learning resource evidencing professional identity for teachers. The results which link to future activities will be presented. These are wide ranging and include: consideration of ePortfolio tool; purpose of ePortfolio; training and support for teachers; consideration of how an ePortfolio will link to the career of teachers including 'Threshold'; and how ePortfolios provide opportunity for formative feedback to facilitate the development of evidence of the pursuit and achievement of personal and professional development throughout teaching careers.

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Embedding an ePortfolio in Professional Practice

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

assessment, collaboration, CPD, efficiency, ePortfolio, evidence, implementation, peerSupport, professionalDevelopment

The Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK) [FGDP(UK)] at the Royal College of Surgeons of England, is a standard-setting, educational body for General-Dental-Practitioners (GDPs). In 2010 the FGDP(UK) implemented a customised version of PebblePad, called Touchstone, to respond to the ever increasing demand for quality and effectiveness within healthcare-sectors. This e-Poster presents the impact of Touchstone on the effective use of evidence in the workplace through practitioner examples and reflections.

The FGDP(UK) approach focussed on the requirements of the ePortfolio (attractiveness, security, innovation and fit-for-purpose); to support the undertaking of Continued-Professional-Development (CPD) (Stewart 2004) and to enhance outcomes of patient care by improving practice through reflection and evaluation (O'Sullivan 2006).

Touchstone's primary purpose is for individual members' to plan, manage and record their CPD: "At last, all of my records can be kept in one place, rather than in a shoe-boxes!"

The collaboration functionality enables networking at divisional and national levels, e.g. commenting on government and regulatory-body papers provides the FGDP(UK) with information for formal responses and future policy development: "Touchstone provides an effective way of disseminating clinical governance frameworks with the relevant committee."

Other uses include developing reflective-practice on educational programmes and the production of e-Portfolios for assessment: "I find it easy to link my evidence together, doing this on paper now seems impossible compared to Touchstone."

Sharing learning and experience is a valuable peer-review function, which can validate the individual's learning (Ghaye 2010); the focus is rightly on demonstrable achievements, but individuals need to go through the process of learning, reflection and evaluation to produce outcomes for validation.

Implementing an electronic-system into professional practice is about communicating the identified purpose(s) behind the adoption and clearly highlighting the potential to all intended audiences. The following points summarise the key lessons learnt:

- Identify system requirements (technical and pedagogical)
- Build strong working relationship with the vendor(s)
- Pilot the system with as much a variety of users/audiences as possible
- Plan structured induction activities: "Doing the set tasks helped me get familiar with Touchstone. Once I was comfortable with the basics it gave me confidence to explore further."

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Promoting the use of Web 2.0 Tools in European Vocational Education & Training

Author

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

actionResearch, discoveryLearning, europeanProject, onlineDelivery, trainingForTeachers, vocationalEducationAndTraining, web2.0

Background

The SVEA* project is aimed at cultivating new training strategies and educational management processes through the use of Web technologies, open source software, cloud computing and open educational resources. It is a collaborative project involving five different European regions and is based on the belief that education, in seeking to 'thrive in a colder and more challenging environment', will adopt the cost-effective affordances of the Web as part of that process. It also believes that this is the logical direction for future educational delivery anyway.

Approach

This paper describes how the SVEA project, funded under the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, aims to prepare the 'teachers of the future' to adopt and apply Web 2.0 technologies in the collaborative and learner-centred teaching of adult learners. It will present a sample of online training modules for teachers in the educational use of Web 2.0 tools and will briefly discuss how it has identified the best of breed tools for presenting educational resources online.

Reference will be made to previous work that explored the educational use of Web 2.0 tools.

Results

The SVEA project is currently midway through its 2 year development. The delivery platform is in place and the draft training modules are complete. All partners met in Wales in January 2011 for a 2 day workshop that evaluated both the modules and the delivery platform. This paper reports on the outcomes of that process. The next phase will see the modules and platform tested with VET trainers in each of the five European regions. An external evaluator, Haydn Blackey from the University of Glamorgan, will be reporting on the quality and effectiveness of the outcomes.

Conclusion

The SVEA project is a practical attempt to promote the use of the affordances of the internet for the benefit of education. It aims to contribute significantly to cost-effectiveness and sustainability as well as guiding teachers in the use of Web 2.0 technologies in the delivery of effective collaborative learning.

*SVEA is the German Acronym for the project which, when translated, stands for 'Promoting Web 2.0 Uptake in Vocational Education and Training'.

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Wiki Views: evaluating music students' experience of using social media to document community music education practice

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Mary Troup

Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

aCurriculumForExcellence, benefits, changingLearnerExpectations, collaboration, communitiesOfPractice, effectiveness, evaluation, experience, marshallingEvidence, mobileDevices, onLineLearning, peerSupport, research, selfDirectedLearning, sharing, web2.0, workBasedLearning

This paper presents work in progress at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama to evaluate community music students' experience using web-based tools and music technologies to create educational materials designed to make their practice visible and accessible, and to increase learning capacity (Project Zero 2006) The findings presented are interim results from a 3 year longitudinal study involving 34 students, 8 community groups and 2 RSAMD lecturers. The study started in October 2009 and is investigating potential benefits of developing a wiki featuring collaborative documentation of community music projects. It uses a participatory action research approach to give learners ownership of the research process (Wadsworth 1998).

Musicians today need to develop the capability to work as teaching artists in varied settings, building partnerships with classroom teachers and community workers who often lack confidence in performance arts. In this study, RSAMD Community Music students, staff, mentors and work-based groups participate in a wiki-enabled Community of Practice providing learning opportunities in creative music-making for stakeholders and enabling interaction between groups, thus avoiding isolation which can be commonplace during project placement. The wiki, Music Matters, has been established to serve as a community resource. Students are given support to develop skills using the wiki, using music notation software and mobile recording devices to document processes involved in devising their work, which they can post on the wiki, enabling them "to develop into critical users and active citizens of the information age as well as capable knowledge workers" (Beetham and Oliver 2010)

Analysis of evidence collated from focus groups, self-assessments, interviews, cognitive maps and reflective journals will be presented to summarise students' views of learning involved, barriers faced and benefits gained, leading to fresh insights regarding the value of digital technologies to foster collaborative learning and generic skills. (Wenger et al, 2009) Colleagues in primary, secondary, and tertiary education have recognised Music Matters as a sector-leading initiative, with the potential to become a resource for teacher education and continuing professional development by embedding performance arts processes into cross-curricular learning and teaching methods within a Curriculum for Excellence, utilising learner-created materials as exemplars.

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User-centred development of Sakai's survey tool

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

collaboration, electronicSurveys, engagement, openSource, pedagogicChallenges, Sakai, staffDevelopment, technicalChallenges, VLE

This paper reports on a pilot project to test and implement the survey tool within an institutional VLE (Sakai). The success of the project may be attributed to three factors: the development process was steered by the needs of a group of early adopters (around 40); participants were motivated by designing their own surveys with support from the project team; a survey to evaluate the pilot project itself was designed in collaboration with participants to allow them to experience effective survey design.

The project used a mix of methods: three face-to-face workshops, email communication prior to and after the workshops, a supporting site in the VLE, and the pilot project survey to capture structured feedback at the end of the project. The workshops aimed to demonstrate how the tool worked, to observe how participants interacted with the tool, and to gather feedback (including reporting of bugs). All the feedback gathered was logged and acted on wherever possible and all reported bugs were fixed. The email communication allowed participants to ask specific questions when designing their real surveys in their workplace.

The project achieved not only its main aim: to develop an improved survey tool with features and functions requested by users, but also a number of benefits often neglected by IT pilot projects. Firstly, having an improved survey tool is a good start; but the ultimate goal of the project was to enable users to design effective surveys in practice. This was achieved by collaboratively designing the project survey during the workshops. Secondly, there was increased use of the Surveys tool: by the end of the project, 66 completed surveys had been delivered and more people have since started using the tool. Finally, the project encouraged broader use of the VLE, including exposure to and integration with the podcasting service.

The development approach used in this project may provide fresh thinking to similar IT pilot projects in order to engage and motivate users, and explore their needs. In terms of limitations, the approach needs to be further explored due to the relatively small number of participants involved in this project.

Implementing and trialling an award-winning mobile phone interface to the Sakai VLE

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

authentication, classroomVoting, collaboration, handheldDevices, mobileLearning, openSource, Sakai, sharedServices, VLE

In recent years, mobile devices have begun to be used more and more to access learning resources and this trend is set to continue (Educause, 2009); evidence suggests that mobile devices maximise productive learning time (Motiwalla, 2007) and facilitate access to institutional services including VLEs (Educause, 2009).

The University of Oxford uses the open source Sakai as its institutional VLE. JISC funding was secured in 2009 and an award-winning (UCISA, 2011) mobile portal ("Mobile Oxford") was developed incorporating an interface to certain tools within Sakai. The intention was not to provide a mini version of Sakai but instead to offer something familiar to users of various phone applications ("apps") and concentrate on the tasks that work well on a phone. The tools targeted to be enabled via the mobile platform are: Polls, Tutorial Sign-up, Resources (documents, images etc.), Surveys and Announcements.

The approach adopted was to develop a mobile platform which relays requests from a browser running on a smart phone to the VLE. When queried, the VLE sends information back to the mobile platform, which then constructs a web page and forwards it to the user's phone in an optimal format.

One of the biggest challenges was authentication: users should not have to authenticate every time they wish to access Sakai – we opted for oAuth which is a system used by Flickr amongst others. The idea is that after a single 'normal' login, a user's phone will be able to access the VLE for a year without further authentication; we manage the security implications by granting reduced access to tools in the VLE.

During the academic year 2010/11, we ran a pilot project which attracted 101 staff users to the support site in the VLE. Lunch-time sessions were held to demonstrate the interface and outline the pedagogical possibilities of mobile access. We will report on a case study in Medical Sciences in which students worked collaboratively and used their phones synchronously to respond to a set of revision questions presented using the Polls tool.

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The space in the middle: neither VLE nor PLE

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Theme
At the sharp end

Tags
APEL, employerEngagement, ePortfolio, PLE, PLS, responsiveCurricula, VLE

Seemingly the virtual learning environment (VLE) is dead (Stiles, 2007), though its role in the 'amplification of the dissemination of content' (Johnson et al, 2006) appears unabated. Never-the-less, the intrinsic shortcomings of institutionally controlled learning technologies and the rise of Web2.0 and its social learning foot soldiers suggest that the transition to personal learning environments (PLEs) is simply a matter of time.

Drawing upon extensive action-research and case studies from over 30 institutions a picture emerges of a technology sharing some characteristics with the VLE and others with the PLE – represented as a Venn diagram this technology is the space in the middle: and the space discussed in this presentation.

Typically institutional technology is provided by the institution; content within it is both created and controlled by agents of the institution. Further, the institution controls who has access to the system and the content within. The PLE is an idiosyncratic collection of tools and services notionally owned by the learner, as is the content which is broadly under the learner's control.

The technology in the middle, referred to here as a Personal Learning Space (PLS), is provided by the institution to serve certain purposes for which both the VLE and the PLE are unsuitable. For the learner the PLS provides structure and scaffolding to support the process of learning, whilst for the institution, the PLS supports large scale assessment of both process and product – whilst also supporting anonymity, peer review, iterative feedback and external moderation. All without undermining personal control.

Whilst the institution controls primary authorship on the system, visitors –internal and external – are invited by any users who own and control content they create. Other than by force of law the content cannot be viewed without the learner's permission, and this permission applies to the smallest granules of content which can be shared with anybody, within or beyond the institution. Though sharing many characteristics with eportfolios the emergence of the PLS as a more sophisticated genre of personal learning technology is explored throughout this session.

The research suggests that the PLS works in sympathy with the VLE and the PLE; indeed most definitions would suggest that the PLS is a part of the wider PLE. However, some claims for the PLE cannot be resolved without the PLS; and neither can many of the strategic responses institutions are making to the seismic economic upheaval. This presentation then will conclude with a review of how institutions are drawing upon the PLS to service processes such as APEL, distance provision, placement learning, responsive curricula, employer engagement and cost reduction!

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From painful paper to digital and dialogical; the rapid development of an effective e-APEL process

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

assessment, CPD, effectiveness, efficiency, evidence, experience, informalLearning, learnerAcceptance, longTermValue, mainstreaming, mentoring, preservation, problemSolving, productivity, professionalDevelopment, recordingAchievement, reusability, savingMoney, savings, scalability, selfDirectedLearning, simplification, technology, tools, workBasedLearning

An analysis of the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) process at a major teaching university identified that the existing process was slow, costly and cumbersome – three descriptors that have no place in the emergent economic and education environment. Drawing upon funding from a Lifelong Learning Network the university sought to develop an electronic process that:

1. was more efficient for tutors

2. was more informative, supportive and consistent for learners

3. provided successful applicants with a head-start in developing a personal learning space (from which multiple portfolios could be constructed over time).

The first point demanded notifications, feedback 'banks' and the use of familiar tools. The second could be addressed through an informative website, a simple application process with supporting materials and the opportunity to develop applications in response to iterative feedback. The final requirement arose from an institutional entitlement to a personal learning space.

With a broad set of aims in mind the project team drew together experienced APEL experts from key academic areas, registry and the learning enhancement unit. Working closely with the eportfolio team a prototype was developed within 2 weeks of the start of the project. The prototype was then tested with a 'convenience' sample of academic and support staff acting in the role of applicants. Feedback from the group was fed directly back to the development team and within 5 weeks of the project start a completed product was successfully tested with students.

This demonstration will allow participants to emulate exactly the process that APEL applicants take. Namely, use the eP4APEL tool to:

- self register for an eportfolio and eP4APEL account

- make an initial application and receive feedback on it

- make any necessary changes and add supporting evidence

- receive further feedback and support to develop a successful application

- receive an offer of credit

- transfer to the university and continue to build upon the 'portfolio' of evidence

The eP4APEL tool is independent of the 'eportfolio system' using OAuth to negotiate accounts between both tools and web-services to convey data and updates. Evidence is saved as Leap2A objects.

Scavenging digital stories – collaborations between patients, teachers and learning technologists.

Authors

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

digitalStories, digitalStorytelling, learnerExperience, learningObjects, professionalDevelopment, reusability, scalability, sharing, staffDevelopment, training

Digital storytelling is being introduced across Health and Social Care at the University of Bradford to give Service Users (patients) a voice in the curriculum. This initiative brings their authentic voice into the classroom, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Digital stories, (audio, still images, film) help students understand patients' experiences of living with different issues and how health services impact on their lives. The digital stories complement 'live' patient visits to the classroom and are enriching Bradton (a virtual community) that is used across the curriculum. These digital stories are reusable, flexible resources that enable students to take control of their learning.

The project aim was to produce good quality digital stories quickly and easily. We wanted to create cost effective, sustainable resources that captured patients' experiences for students. Academic staff needed to be able to create these stories with minimal technical input and support.

We used a flexible, iterative methodology which allowed us to explore different ways to make the process more efficient, based on freely available, simple to use, multi-platform technologies (e.g. Audacity, PhotoStory3, iMovie).

Initially each stage of creating a story was very time-consuming. For example, successfully capturing the patient's interview relied on the relationship and trust that existed between the interviewer and patient. Whilst academics were able to capture audio/video data from service users they struggled to learn to use new software to edit and produce a finished product independently. Learning Technologists started working alongside the academics to assist them with using the software.Finally, the academics provided the learning technologists with the recording and transcript for editing, resulting in a product returned to the academic for minor alterations. This approach,involving a more discursive element, produced results quickly and efficiently because staff were utilising their most appropriate skillsets. Currently academics work with patients to provide content which the Learning Technologists adapt for publication.

Evaluations demonstrated that students achieved a deeper understanding of different medical conditions and hospital experiences. This presentation will focus on cost-effective strategies and techniques to support this form of student learning.

Using Collaborative Online Tools to Enable & Support Internationalisation of the Curriculum

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

businessAndCommunityEngagement, collaborating, collaborativeOnlineTools, internationalisation, pedagogy, sharing, technicalChallenges, web2.0

During times of increased economic pressure, it is important to demonstrate that innovative use of technology not only reaps educational benefits but offers tangible financial savings. At the same time, globalisation and internationalisation require collaboration and it is important that today's graduates have the necessary skills and knowledge to play a role in this ever-changing environment. Web2.0 tools can enable this global collaboration and increase the value to all parties.

The poster illustrates how a range of collaborative online tools supports internationalisation of the curriculum in two UK universities. Northumbria University and the University of the Arts approached globalisation and internationalisation in very different ways, both being innovative in their use of collaborative online tools. Emergent advice and guidance is shown.

The School of Design at Northumbria University introduced multi-disciplinary and international teams of students to international businesses to collaborate on real-world product design problems, supported by their academics. This was a formal part of the curriculum, important for students to demonstrate their ability to tackle complex problems.

The University of the Arts developed a Community of Practice for Photojournalists with post-graduate students on the MA in Photojournalism joining an online community. This was the first time that Web 2.0 tools and techniques had been used in this way with this community.

Product/multimedia design and photojournalism are very different examples of global industries that require graduates to be aware, and have experience, of working internationally. In the Design discipline, different peoples have varying product requirements and express these in many ways. Product Designers work and co-design in multinational teams. Photojournalists, on the other hand, work in communities across the globe often in stressful and delicate situations. They require awareness of ethical issues surrounding modern photojournalism and use this to inform practice.

Our evaluation demonstrates that all stakeholders benefited from using collaborative online tools. Students became aware of international issues, used a variety of technologies and gained new skills from working in a global environment. Academics benefited by using collaborative tools in new contexts and being exposed to different methods of curriculum delivery. The business partners gained from using the tools by being involved in the education of their recruits and getting their 'head into a different space' as Oakley, Intel Corporation so eloquently put it.

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Pandas, Skeletons and Angels in the Classroom:Learning In a Virtual World.

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Theme
Research and rigour

Tags
learnerExperience, secondLife, virtualWorlds, web2.0

The potential of online virtual worlds, such as Second Life, as learning environments continues to be of interest to academics. In the first instance, they appear to offer particular opportunities for remote learning in Art & Design where the requirement for an effective set of tools to support real-time visual interaction is a prerequisite. Previously, eLearning material has been mostly text based, (sometimes incorporating images or sound) and did not support the learning paradigm common to Art & Design, ie: studio-located, project-centered and critique/tutorial-based.

More recently, a thorough knowledge of social networking communities, as a means of maintaining a 'personal brand', is emerging as an increasingly essential skill for those working in the creative industries.

In 2008 a five-credit module (under the European Credit Transfer System) titled "Virtual Environments: Is one life enough?", designed to be delivered entirely in an online virtual environment, was taken as a pilot by academic staff interested in eLearning. Then it was offered to Art & Design undergraduates as an elective module. Delivery has continued each semester and the module has been taken by four different groups to date. In semester one of the 2010/11 academic year additional places were offered to members of the wider Second Life community. They joined the undergraduates to create a broader experience for all.

This paper explores how the blend of experiences in a live virtual classroom impacted on the learning experience by describing the development of the module and then focusing particularly on feedback from students. It highlights the learning experiences of the participants and makes suggestions for teaching in virtual worlds. It also reports the experiences of the lecturers delivering the module.

The module is designed to explore the affordances offered by social media for promoting a 'personal brand'. The aim is to introduce students to the use of web 2.0 tools such as blogs and micro-blogs, wikis, virtual environments and online social networking to engage with their peers and the potentially wider audience of their professional discipline.

Iconic notions in e-learning: Expanding the Planet Project's pattern language

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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
collaboration, design, learnerVoice, learningDesign, patternLanguage, sharability, sharing, tools, web2.0

The IT environment, particularly web 2.0, suggests collaboration and sharing of successful practice and materials, among all stakeholders. In that light, the Pattern Language Network (Planet) project, which ended in March 2009, worked to create an Alexander-esque pattern language for e-learning. The project did generate an array of 'patterns' for the representation of practice in, and for application to, e-learning work. The product of the project was clearly valuable and useful, and the design of the project was exemplary.

This poster proposes an expanded version of the Pattern Language Network's pattern language for e-learning in the era of web 2.0. Working from a graphical representation of the notion of a pattern language as implicitly defined by Alexander et al. in "A Pattern Language" and explicitly defined elsewhere, this expansion is based on the notion of a "formal learning design expression" (a reworking of the "formal financial expression" proposed by Jaron Lanier in "You Are Not a Gadget"), which would afford tailored access and voice to all stakeholders, including the learner and the tutor. This calls for the identification of the whole range of iconic perceptions, values and beliefs that impact on e-learning work, similar to the intent of the Alexander work regarding architecture.

Salient notions are taken from the design world and useful equivalents are framed for e-learning work. For example, working from the process view, the notion of "story arc" in literary criticism is recast as "task arc", "acquisition arc" and "knowing arc". Several heuristic combinations of notions are also entertained here. For example, the English Language Teaching notion of "scaffolding" and the WIRED notion of "gadget" are intertwined in a provocative open framework. To date this work has generated a tentative framework for an expanded pattern language for e-learning; that framework is presented here.

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Web 2.0 Tools as Coaching Technology for Enhancing Labor Negotiations Skills Building in Virtual Learning Environments

Author
Bob Barrett

Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
coaching, negotiatingSkills, onlineLearning, or, or, or, or, virtualLearning, web2.0Tools

As more colleges and universities begin to offer more courses in the virtual learning environment, changes are needed to ensure stimulating learning. Not all academic courses can be easily transformed onto the online learning platform without some modifications or enhancements, performed by technology, to supplement these changes. Educators have identified the need for more interaction in labor negotiations skills building courses. This is usually taught by a skilled negotiator (instructor) and student practice is usually incorporated into the course activities. However, how can these negotiations skills be observed and used by students, while they learn to enhance their ability to negotiate successfully? As a result, instructors are using an additional level of technology with the incorporation of Web 2.0 tools. These tools can afford the instructor a variety of technological approaches for use in the VLE.

We explain how Web 2.0 tools were used in a Labor Negotiations class to help students understand the various communications needed on the behalf members of management and labor (union) members. We discuss how the tools were used in the dynamic communication process of labor negotiations and how they enable students "realize" the intensity and impact of labor negotiations in today's marketplace. The audience will learn how the tools to helped instruction and helped learners record various practice sessions for the instructor to view for critiquing and evaluation. Further, the instructor can then offer feedback using the tools to help improve the student's negotiating skills, as well as to motivate the student with personalized coaching. This enables the instructor to offer more rigour in the academic learning environment, while helping the student learn from practice sessions and experience how dynamic the labor negotiation process can be. Finally, instead of just reading assigned materials in a course, the student can view labor negotiation skills being offered by their instructor and other members of their course as the class undertakes mock simulations of contract negotiations sessions. Possible use of the tools in other subject/skills areas such as foreign language, medical diagnosis or mock trials preparation for law students is discussed.

Re-visiting Storyboards for E-learning

Author

Simon Fitzpatrick

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

educationalDesign, instructionalDesign, instructionalStrategy, learningDesign, storyboarding

This hands-on workshop will enable delegates to employ a range of strategies to design and develop effective e-learning materials. Our aim is to show how effective storyboarding is an essential part of the development of high quality e-learning.

The key to effective learning is good planning, identifying learner needs, evaluating tools and approaches and delivering an appropriate solution – in terms of e-learning, the well-established and successful Netskills workshops on e-learning cover this process in some detail. In commercial and educational e-learning many developers appear to forget the basics and lose themselves in 'rapid' development or new technology 'overload'. Rapid development is desirable but not at the expense of quality: rapid or agile development promotes course development within an authoring environment and whilst many instructional designers (IDs) are comfortable designing and developing the learning process within this type of tool, recent experience suggests that the rapid approach can lead to blander, 'mass produced' e-learning material that is not always relevant or appropriate to learner needs.

Most instructional designers agree on the significance of storyboarding as the link between instructional strategy and course authoring – the main benefits are:

- The involvement of users as co-developers
- The ability to visualise the learning process
- Accountability in the form of an audit trail of requirements

There are numerous ways of achieving this in practice along with a diverse range of tools – we therefore suggest that whilst 'rapid' development is attractive, the process of design through storyboarding and the iterative consultation with the Subject Matter Expert (SME) will ultimately lead to a better quality output.

In this workshop, therefore, delegates will be able to examine the process of developing an instructional strategy by working through learning scenarios in small groups and then following them through the storyboarding process and into the authoring environment. Where possible we will explore a range of styles and processes as well as looking at a range of storyboarding tools.

After feeding back to each other, the workshop will conclude with a short discussion.

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ePortfolios for Learning

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

artifacts, eportfolio, learnerExperience, lms

Advocates of ePortfolios claim they are the biggest software evolution in education since the creation of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs). They have become a primary tool for students, faculty, staff and institutions to document their accomplishments and move forward in their life-long pursuit of learning and student success by reflecting on those accomplishments. Join us as we explore the Desire2Learn® ePortfolio, a powerful, yet intuitive platform for collecting, organising, reflecting, and presenting learning artifacts that integrate seamlessly with the Desire2Learn® Learning Suite. ePortfolios for reflective learning, for the collection of artifacts as evidence of learning, for showcase or presentation, and for assessment will be presented using real stories from nursing, hospitality, education and professional development implementations. Participants in this session will leave with a deeper understanding of ePortfolio technology and the use of this technology for the advancement of teaching and learning.

Learning Repository: Content Efficiency and Re-use

Authors
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Craig Ross

Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
distanceLearning,
educationalResources,
learningObjectRepositories,
learningObjectRepository, LMS,
onlineLearning

Learning object repositories for storing and sharing learning materials make sense from a purely theoretical perspective, so how do real implementations find value using them? This session will explore the savings and efficiencies an organisation can discover through use of a learning object repository. Drawing from experiences of learning repository users worldwide, this session will explore real use scenarios demonstrating how organisations have developed more open sharing cultures, saved on storage costs using a central location for learning material storage, updates and access.

In addition to exploring the Desire2Learn® Learning Repository, this session will look at several repository projects focused on Open Educational Resources (OERs), how those projects have developed, and the future of learning object repositories with respect to OERs.

Participants will develop a sound understanding of what a learning object repository is, how it can be leveraged and why they should be implementing them at their institutions.

Are we training future teachers effectively to use technology enhanced learning?

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

CPD, educatingTeachers, FE, professionalStandards, staffDevelopment, training

Future teachers need to be appropriately skilled if they are to use technology expertly to enhance learning and teaching. (DeGennaro, 2010; Futurelab, 2010) This paper reports perceptions of recently qualified teachers and trainers in the lifelong learning, adult and community education sectors noting that information and communication technologies (ICT) standards required of qualifying school and University teachers vary considerably.

Concerned that National Occupational Standards for the Life Long Learning Sector includes only the briefest of references to exploiting technology in learning and teaching (LLUK, 2011), the Association for Learning Technology's Further Education Committee (ALTFEC) surveyed recently qualified teachers. We wanted to know whether respondents felt their teacher education programme equipped them with the skills and knowledge to use ICT appropriately in a range of learning, teaching and training contexts.

The majority of 235 respondents had completed an in-service programme (84%) at a range of providers including the employing colleges (68%) and a few universities. Relatively few gained in ICT confidence (37%), nearly half (46%) believed there had been no change or reduced confidence. A significant proportion (42%, n = 100) claimed their tutors rarely or never modelled using ICT in learning and teaching and only 29% (n = 67) felt it had been effective. A large number (66%) claimed they received little or no formal training in ICT and that levels of support were poor (60%). Many learnt more from peer interactions (83%) than from the programme team.

Qualitative responses included a demand for, "much more emphasis on ICT through expert teaching," and observed that, "… too much prior knowledge was assumed," and that, "our tutors, although very good in their subject specialism, were not really IT orientated." It was suggested that ICT be used, "for interactive presentation/delivery of lessons," and that there should be, "better use of and modelling of IT and its implementation."

ALTFEC proposes that teacher educators incorporate regular and effective modelling of technology enhanced learning and provide quality training and support in the use of ICT in learning and teaching that leads to evidential and assessed activities if future teachers are to be suitably equipped for the 21st Century.

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Stakeholder Engagement, Employability and the Responsive Curriculum

Authors

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Peter Bird
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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

changeManagement, curriculumDesign, employability, influencingTeachingPractice, institutionalTransformation, jisc, learningTechnologies, solvingChallenges, systematicDesign, workBasedLearners

Background

This paper will describe how four different universities are working together to develop curriculum design processes that are responsive to the changing needs of both employers and learners, and closely involve them in those processes through the innovative use of technology.

The paper is an action research study of how these universities, two years into projects within the four year JISC Curriculum Design and Delivery Programme, all take radically different approaches but benefit by sharing common issues and goals through a structured schedule of CAMEL meetings. (See www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearningcapital/camelbelt.aspx)

The presentation will focus on the core lessons about technology enhanced curriculum design that came from the CAMEL meetings and how this has added significant value to the work of each of the individual projects and strengthens the transferability of the outputs to other institutions.

Approach

Manchester Metropolitan University has a particular focus on responsiveness to employer needs and is mapping the curriculum to those needs in close collaboration with specific industry sectors and the professions. Bolton University has the goal of optimising the employability of its students through the involvement of both employers and students in the design process. Leeds Metropolitan University is using coaching as a means of allowing students to become independent adult learners and having a significant input to the design of their own curriculum. Staffordshire University, recognising the range of curriculum innovation initiatives that are going on at any one time, is creating a technology facilitated institutional curriculum design system that integrates those initiatives and optimised the benefits they deliver.

Results

The presentation will describe the common issues have emerged from discussions between the projects and how the sharing of solutions has added significant value. It will do this by providing brief examples of the outcomes of this collaboration that relate to the use of Enterprise Architecture, institutional change management, quality assurance processes and sustainable stakeholder engagement.

Conclusion

The paper will demonstrate how each of the institutions has faced significant challenges in their new approaches to curriculum design using technology, but also how working together has greatly assisted them in meeting those challenges.

Skype education: learning in partnership.

Authors

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

international, partnership, pedagogy, schools, Skype, sustainability, teachers, Universities

Background

Academics, learning technologists and professionals in local schools have been working closely together to develop a cost effective and sustainable technology for web-conferencing to unite learners within undergraduate initial teacher education programmes (trainee teachers in Partnership schools) and Foundation degree (teaching assistants) programmes and local primary schools. The project has been led by an emphasis on teaching and learning, rather than the technology. A further aim has been to work with technologies which are freely available to partners in this country and abroad. Skype is seen as having significant potential to sustain learning widely on a geographical basis as well as through a variety of institutional settings. Such technologies afford learners greater opportunities to create content in learning spaces which extend beyond the traditional boundaries of the physical classroom. This project explores the ways in which Skype can be used to support and enhance learning in formal contexts by widening the scope the learning experience beyond the classroom.

The Education White Paper ('The Importance of Teaching') published by the government in November 2010 presents a number of changes for schools, and University-based teacher education departments. There are also considerable changes to the funding structures for Universities and teacher education departments. Schools themselves have increasingly limited finance for technology enhanced learning. Accordingly cheapness, sustainability and flexibility are important considerations.

If the government is committed to the concept of 'localism' Skype offers opportunities for the development of local educational networks: for example, between Universities and primary schools. This paper charts the professional and practical concerns and opportunities involved in the use of Skype within a network of University and local primary schools in the Midlands.

Description of approach used

Monthly Skype sessions have been undertaken from July 2010 – July 2011 by academics and trainee teachers at the University of Derby to pilot ways of interworking between the University and local primary schools. This has been augmented by additional sessions with students on a similar course in Germany to investigate ways of developing awareness of international issues, including awareness of other cultures.

The use of Skype has been sampled through observations and mp3 recordings of each of the sessions. Additionally quantitative surveys have been completed by approximately sixty trainee teachers and sixty teaching assistants to monitor the use of Skype and a range of other technologies in school. A growing network of ten schools has acted as a focus group earlier in 2011, to identify best practice from the point of view of schools. The details have been summarized and analysed using thematic analysis.

Results of work done

Early indications suggest that few primary schools use Skype as a tool for learning, but that those who have participated in this project have seen the benefit from the children's point of view. Trainee teachers have commented that Skype brings the school classroom into the University classroom and therefore has made sessions more relevant and effective.

A manual of how to use Skype in the primary classroom has been developed jointly between academics, primary teachers and learning technologists to chart the possibilities for using Skype to develop the learning of trainee teachers and learners in local partnership schools. All professionals involved have reported on how this has changed the nature of teaching and learning, whatever the age of the learner.

Conclusion

Implementation of the technologies has been bottom-up, organic and learner-led, with some developments completely unforeseen by the project team. The Skype pedagogies have developed in a sustainable and viral way at very limited costs to the schools and Universities involved.

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A model of blended teaching which encourages collaborative learning

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

changingLearnerExpectations,
collaboration, design,
educatingTeachers, effectiveness,
enquiryBasedLearning, HEA,
implementation, jigsawClassroom,
longTermValue, onlineCommunities,
onLineLearning, peerSupport,
planning, productivity,
respondingToChange,
selfDirectedLearning, sharing,
subjectCentre, support, VLEs

This ePoster will discuss a model of collaborative learning which enhances traditional tutorials. During the first semester of the academic year 2010-2011 a project was funded by a grant from the Higher Education Academy to develop and implement a method of collaborative learning for first year philosophy tutorials by using a Moodle Forum and Moodle Wikis in addition to face-to-face tutorials. This project was inspired by Aronson's "jigsaw classroom" technique, which is a way of turning groups into small groups, allowing all students to become subject experts and to teach and be taught by their peers. Students in tutorial groups of fifteen were split into three sub-groups of five students, with each sub-group being given a particular question about the tutorial topic to focus on each week, and each sub-group having a dedicated wiki, viewable only by that group. Tutorial materials were delivered via a Moodle Forum and the three Moodle Wikis prior to the tutorial and students were encouraged to post answers to the tutorial questions before attending a tutorial (Moodle is the VLE used at the university). During the tutorial, each sub-group had ten minutes to discuss their answers and nominate a spokesperson. Each sub-group of five then presented to whole of the tutorial group and taught them what they had learned. By the end of each tutorial, each individual student had built a model answer to whole of the tutorial topic, covering more ground than would have otherwise been possible. This poster will discuss the project findings. It will display detailed feedback from students in the form of written comments. Students said that they felt comfortable discussing new ideas, that they felt this model of learning was enjoyable and that it facilitated productive learning. The tutor found that students engaged with the academic subject from an early stage and were more confident in their academic abilities than in previous years. The combination of using wikis with face-to-face meetings facilitated a scaffolded approach to learning and teaching, with the tutor intervening less as the course progressed, suggesting that this model is worth adopting for other courses.

From lecture to laptop: using Echo360 personal capture to create short screencasts for teaching and learning

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

effectiveness, efficiency, evaluation, lectureCapture, marshallingEvidence, podcasting, screencast, video

This session will demonstrate how the Echo360 Personal Capture tool is being used on the Me2U project (www.sussex.ac.uk/elearning/me2u) at the University of Sussex. As more institutions adopt lecture capture systems to record teaching sessions and other events, the amount of video and audio material created to support student learning is on the increase. A limitation is that systems are in fixed locations, so are generally used to record standard teaching sessions. Using a laptop-based version of the system, however, enables tutors to create learning resources wherever they feel most comfortable, whilst retaining the advantages associated with using a centrally-supported system. The Me2U project has explored the role that one such tool – Echo360 Personal Capture – can play in student learning. Teaching staff from a range of disciplines have created short recordings that are integrated into their modules. Through analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, we have established that students value the recordings and that they help to scaffold their learning. The project has also evaluated the extent to which lecturers find the tool useful for teaching. We will demonstrate how Echo360 Personal Capture can be used to create a screencast by recording the session itself. Participants will be taken through all stages of screencast creation, from configuring the system to the way in which recordings are integrated with the University's virtual learning environment (based on Moodle). The session will also include an evaluation of the project and the resulting recording will be available to participants after the session. We will conclude by giving participants the opportunity to discuss the benefits and issues of using short screencasts to support teaching and learning and, in particular, the role that institutionally-supported (and potentially scalable) systems can play in this area of learning. Participants will have the opportunity to:

- appraise the Echo360 personal capture tool and its integration with an institutional VLE;

- recognise the value that students and staff place on short recordings;

- assess whether the use of tools like Echo360 Personal Capture might increase the use of audio and video by teachers in their institution.

Using Dialogue to build Sustainable Capacity in a Challenging Climate

Author

Christine Davies

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

convincingSceptics, CPD, dialogue, educatingTeachers, implementation, professionalDevelopment, sustainableCapacity, training

In this paper, we explore approaches to capacity building informed by a clear developmental strategy at institutional level. As part of a JISC Building Capacity Project at the University, a plan was developed to implement changes in staff engagement with technology for learning and teaching. The research approach adopted was highly staff-focussed, and involved appreciative inquiry with a significant discursive element influenced by Laurillard's 'Conversational Framework' to create andragogical opportunities. This dialogical approach facilitated the introduction of specific technologies to improve the learner experience, in line with institutional objectives, including augmenting the existing dissemination of good practice and maintaining support for innovations in learning and teaching.

The paper will report on the outcomes of the research: initial findings indicate that the one-to-one dialogues used to communicate with academics have promoted good relationships with institutional core staff and staff in faculties, and have led to the exploration of several new technologies within different subject areas, with a focus on free and open source tools and resources. These included: online mind-mapping as a planning tool for individuals and groups; screen-casting to make instructional videos; blogs for reflection on practice; text-to-speech software to assist literacy and extend accessibility.

The conversational approach utilised has helped achieve some of the key objectives of the JISC Building Capacity Project. It has led to significant re-thinking of curriculum design within departments, and has resulted in learning and teaching practices that show a new engagement with technology.

The paper concludes by looking at ways that institutions can build on the approach taken to sustain the development of staff and build future capacity in the face of the cold and increasingly challenging climate facing Higher Education.

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Problem Based Learning with Xerte Online Toolkits

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

constructivism, oer, pedagogy, problemBasedLearning, sdl, socialLearning, xerteOnlineToolkits

Variant forms of Problem Based Learning have been in use at the University of Nottingham for many years, and a number of systems exist to support the creation and delivery of problem based learning cases, particularly in Medicine, where the approach is common. It is used much less in other areas, but is highly relevant to teaching in a wide variety of subject areas.

Recent developments to Xerte Online Toolkits build on recent work with the school of Veterinary Medicine and Science and the Royal Veterinary College, and current work with the School of Pharmacy, to design and implement support in the tools allowing teaching staff across the University to more easily exploit this compelling and simple pedagogy.

The Xerte development team have been working to develop a generic, flexible framework for the development of problem based learning cases, and have drawn from a number of areas in the University to inform the design. The team have been looking for opportunities to expand the areas in which these approaches are practiced, and to help disseminate best practice. Problem based learning in this context refers to a number of related approaches where students work together in small groups.

The School of Veterinary Science and Medicine have been collaborating with the Royal Veterinary College to create self directed learning scenarios for group work using Xerte Online Toolkits. The software has facilitated collaboration between the two institutions in the production of materials, and made it easy to publish these as open materials in a 'Virtual Veterinary Hospital' on WikiVet, contributing to an international community. In teaching, student feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and the impact on student learning has been shown to be very positive.

This demonstration will provide an overview of the problem based learning template in Xerte Online Toolkits, with specific reference to the materials produced by the School of Veterinary Medicine and Science, and discuss the experiences from the point of view of learning technologists, teaching practitioners and students.

More than the sum of its parts… the value of collaborating on e-learning resources

Authors

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

collaboration, developer, elearning, resourceDevelopment, subjectSpecialist

The JISC-funded Life-Share project investigated embedding digitisation skills and strategies within the White Rose University Libraries. The aim was to use a digital lifecycle model and identify the range of skills and knowledge required for digitisation at each stage of the cycle. The project team then wanted to create a reusable digitisation toolkit for the wider libraries and archives community that would create a map of these skills and knowledge as well as links to available training.

As e-learning advisers we were asked to work with the project team to design and develop an innovative and informative toolkit that served the needs of those new to the digitisation process as well as experts within the field looking for a reference base. A tall order for any e-learning project; a mixture of a reference and e-learning resource, catering for the needs of a wide and varied audience.

One of the themes of this conference is Broad tents and strange bedfellows – collaborating, scavenging and sharing to increase value; we did all these things and from an initial stance of minimal shared knowledge and experience. With hindsight it is clear that it was this lack of shared practice that made the working relationship a success. As e-learning advisers our lack of subject knowledge led us to question, even interrogate our colleagues causing them to re-evaluate their perception of the novice user. In turn, their inexperience of e-learning allowed them to question our approach and stretch our abilities.

Feedback on the toolkit has been extremely positive. Users have commented on the quality of the design and navigation. The combination of textual information, case study videos, and interactive tools has proved very popular. The toolkit is to be included in Digipedia, the UK Guide to the Digital Content Lifecycle.

This demonstration will be presented by a member of the project team and the e-learning developers providing an overview of the resource, highlighting the collaborative approach to the design and development. Time will be given for group discussion focussing on the challenges faced when e-learning developers work closely with subject experts.

Walking in the Cloud – Exploring new worlds from a VLE perspective

Authors

Maria Tannant
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Tony Reeves

Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

challengesForTheFuture, cloudServices, guidelines, implementation, legal, openSource, ownership, policy, respondingToChange, strategy, web2.0

Employing a strategy and implementation process to embrace cloud technologies that complement and enhance the institutional VLE.

Cloud technologies with Web 2.0 engagement offer institutions very attractive and low cost alternatives to expensive VLEs, but do they offer the total solution?

With the help of participants, this workshop explores the implications Web 2.0 technologies have when hosted externally by cloud services such as Blogger, WordPress, Google Apps, FaceBook, Flicka, YouTube, Vimeo to name a few. These services have the potential to provide extremely attractive and powerful online spaces for multiple uses such as informal learning, collaboration and professional identities/portfolios but in what legal capacity can institutions promote such technologies?

The workshop will draw on guidance and policies from Educause, University of Bath, IBM and JISC as well as a particular emphasis in the arts, drawing on policies employed by the University for the Creative Arts.

In two sets of breakout groups (students/instructors) workshop participants will explore how these cloud technologies are being used in a learning context and what the implications may be to the inherent legalities with copyright, intellectual property, data protection and ownership; as well as the possible damage and litigation to the institution if due care to avoid the above has not been taken.

Workshop participants will share their findings from the first round and then breakout to discuss avoidance techniques to overcome these legal challenges from both a learner's perspective and institutions, again in separate breakout groups respectively.

The workshop outcome will help institutions have a deeper understanding of cloud technologies from a legal standpoint. Participants should be better informed to make decisions about where specific learning takes place i.e. the cloud or the institution's VLE. This in turn should give workshop participants greater awareness to the student voice, which states much of learning happens in the cloud (Sharpe et al 2010) and prepare them for this legal challenge.

This output will be written up and made openly available on the ALT website.

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An investigation into the use of web-casting as a possible intervention technique to help deal with the late arrival of International students on Masters programmes.

Author
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Theme
At the sharp end

Tags
easilyAccessibleTechnology, enhancingStudentExperience, informingInstitutionalPractice, interventionTechnique, studentIntegration, webCasting, wideningParticipation

The purpose of this study is to explore the feasibility of using web-casting as a possible intervention technique to help deal with the problem of international students who are unable to attend University on day one of their programmes. This is often compounded by the fact that registration can be delayed, thus denying early access to the institutional VLE. An initial review of both the educational and learning technology literature indicates that while the use of technology to support induction and transition is an established focus of research, the impact of newer, widely available webcasting applications on the late arrival experience of international students is less well known.

To put this 'lateness' into context the University planning department was contacted to provide data which allowed this to be quantified. This highlighted the extent of the problem across the University and validated the rationale for the original project investigation. As the cost of computer hardware has become more affordable and mass communication services have increased around the world the prospect of using low cost solutions was thought to be a practical method of helping International students to make the transition from home to University.

Information was collected from a variety of companies producing appropriate web-casting solutions and this informed our decision about which products to trial in our webinar sessions. At the end of each webinar survey data was collected to allow us to gather the views of those present with regards to the viability of using such technologies whilst being at home.

Based on the trials and collected data the following benefits were considered:

- Accessibility to the equipment and ease of use?

- How much online interaction with lecturer and peers would take place?

- Effectiveness of offline access to archived webinar material?

- Would it reduce stress and help with transitioning from home to here?

Although raising many questions it is worthy of a full scale investigation including an exploration of how webcasting can be combined with a range of web 2.0 tools to ensure a smooth transition and enhance the future success of late arriving international students.

Supporting Aboriginal learning: Exploring challenges faced by Aboriginal students enrolled in post-secondary education

Authors

Jo Axe
Kyla McLeod

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

blendedLearning, caseStudy, learnerExperience, studentRetention

Background

Taking a case study approach, this paper explores the experiences of Aboriginal students at a university in Western Canada that specializes in blended and online programs. When Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are compared, Aboriginal students withdraw or take leave from their program in greater proportions. Statistics Canada (2010), reported that the percentage of Aboriginal people with a university degree in 2006 was 6%, much lower than non-Aboriginals at 23%. Given these facts, it is imperative we explore ways to increase retention of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education. In the context of this paper, the term Aboriginal refers to the indigenous peoples of Canada, also known as First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Approach

Hardes (2006) and Hutchinson, Mushquash and Donaldson (2008) discussed barriers to Aboriginal student success in post-secondary education, including family responsibility and financing. The impact of these challenges could be minimized by the use of blended and online educational platforms that allow students greater flexibility and can result in increased retention rates (Lorenzo and Moore, 2002). Because individuals can study in their home communities, these types of delivery models can reduce the financial impact and allow students to fulfil family responsibilities. With this in mind, through interviews and focus groups, ways to reduce the impact of student identified challenges were identified.

Results

While the study is still in the early stages, it is clear that careful implementation of educational technology is imperative for student success. Identifying obstacles to learning and challenge-mitigating strategies will lead to an enhanced learning environment, which in turn could positively influence Aboriginal student retention and contribute to a meaningful experience for all classroom participants.

Conclusion

This paper discusses challenges found by Aboriginal students working in a computer-mediated educational environment, and highlights some of the solutions aimed at increasing retention. While the study focused on challenges encountered by Aboriginal students, it is likely that the findings will have wider implications. By providing a heightened awareness of issues faced by Aboriginal students, as well as spotlighting some key solutions, this study will underscore the importance of targeting appropriate technologies when designing blended and online classrooms.

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Analysing the use of recorded lectures by students

Authors

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Wim Jochems

Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

learnerExperience,
recordedLectures, Reporting,
webLectures

More and more universities around the world record their lectures and provide them as additional educational online resources to their students. This increase in number of recorded lectures is party made possible by the introduction of the introduction of turn-key integrated recording systems that reduce the need for manual editing and recording.

Surveys (Traphagan 2006, Veeramani and Bradly 2008) report that students appreciate the recordings. But little is known about the actual usage of recordings by individual students. How do students locate the sections that they want to view, how much of a recording do they view and when do they view them?

Our research focuses on the goals that students have while viewing the recordings and how the recordings can be adapted to better suite their needs.

The research combines data from surveys and interviews with the data provided by the recording systems. These systems keep log files with detailed information about the use of the recordings by the students. Data mining is being used to analyse the logs and to discover structures in the actual usage of the recorded lectures by students.

During the first phase of the research 1,122 students were approached to participate in an online survey about their use of the recorded lectures. The survey for each student focussed on one specific course per student, out of a total of seven courses included in the survey. The students had participated in that course during the previous months. The survey was kept compact so that the students could complete it within 15 minutes. The total response rate for the survey was 46%. Additional information was collected using half hour interviews with students.

The analysis of the log data so far both confirms and contradicts the answers of the students in the surveys. It enables us to create reports and key figures for all 8,000 recorded lectures currently in the system. In the next stage of the research, the dataset should enable us to create the reports needed to derive the actual goals of students and to suggest improvements for the recording lectures.

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From Challenge to Change: Effective Assessment in a Digital Age

Authors

Sarah Knight
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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

assessment, challenge, digital, feedback, implementation, JISC, planning, practice, sustainablechange, technology, technologyenhanced

Assessment lies at the heart of the learning experience: how learners are assessed shapes their understanding of the curriculum and determines their ability to progress. At the same time, assessment and feedback form a significant part of practitioners' workloads and, with increased numbers, reduced budgets and higher learner expectations, continue to be a matter of concern for many institutions delivering higher education.

Technology has a role to play in many aspects of assessment practice, including feedback. However, for technology-enhanced assessment and feedback to be fully effective, designs need to be pedagogically sound, constructively aligned with intended learning outcomes (Biggs, 1999) and able to add value to the learner's experience (NUS, 2010, JISC, 2009).

Thus a major theme of the workshop is to explore how the use of technology can be linked to principles of good practice in assessment and feedback, such as the 12 REAP principles (www.reap.ac.uk) or the 2010 NUS Charter on Assessment and Feedback (www.nusconnect.org.uk/ asset/news/6010/FeedbackCharter-toview.pdf). The workshop will draw on the work of leading theorists on assessment for learning (for example, Nicol 2010, Gibbs and Simpson 2004) in making these connections as well as recent JISC-funded projects that have focused on technology-enhanced assessment and feedback, as described in Effective Assessment in a Digital Age www.jisc.ac.uk/digiassess (JISC, 2010).

Workshop participants will be engaged with short presentations and a series of hands-on activities that focus on moving them from their current challenges towards sustainable change that makes the most advantageous use of 21st century technologies in ways that offer disciplinary, cultural and institutional relevance.

The workshop is highly participatory and will offer delegates an opportunity to explore ways in which assessment can bring about more effective learning in their context, making use of resources associated with the Effective Assessment in a Digital Age guide and the JISC-funded Effecting sustainable change in assessment practice and experience (ESCAPE) project based at the University of Hertfordshire (http://jiscdesignstudio.pbworks. com/w/page/12458419/ESCAPE-Project).

Delegates will take away the Effective Assessment in a Digital Age publication, together with a set of Challenge to Change cards. All materials from the workshop will be available for use from http://bit.ly/jiscassess

References

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Managing Information and Change in Higher Education

Authors

Fleur Corfield
Peter Bird

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

bottomUp, enterpriseArchitecture, governance, managingChange, sharedExperience, topDown

Background

It is apparent that change management is a key issue in introducing learning technologies into Higher Education institutions (Salmon, 2005). But what happens when a project encompasses not only new technologies but aims to transform the whole curriculum with the resultant impacts on the information systems, academic and business processes at the very core of the institution itself?

This paper describes how two universities have addressed the issue of managing change across their institution and how managing information is core. The paper is an action research study, based on the universities experiences half way through their 4 year JISC projects, which are part of the Curriculum Design and Development Programme (CDD). It is designed to help stakeholders engaged in managing change understand issues they may encounter, regardless of their methodology, and how they can be mitigated.

Approach

Staffordshire University reviewed problems encountered in its management of curriculum change and identified poor communication between projects and prioritisation of project objectives over those of the institution as root causes. A Programme Office was created to address inter-project communication issues and an Enterprise Architecture developed to embed institution-wide considerations in project activity. The project team has been using a bottom up approach to demonstrate the benefits of the Programme Office.

Manchester Metropolitan University started from a similar position to Staffordshire University, trialing curriculum changes in four subject areas and looking at Quality Assurance using process modeling, with the aim of influencing wider change through stakeholder engagement. After baselining the current situation, their executive decided that overhaul of the complete undergraduate programme was needed to make the curriculum more responsive to stakeholder needs. This was very much a top-down initiative.

Results

The paper will discuss how the different approaches at the different institutions has still resulted in them having to address similar issues, how they resolved them, and plans for moving forward. Key issues for Staffordshire University include loss of Senior Management, driving Enterprise Architecture from the bottom up and governance. For Manchester Metropolitan University, major issues have been managing change over ambitious timescales, a tendency to protect established systems, availability of supporting information systems, and staff and trade union resistance to radical programme overhaul.

Conclusion

The paper will contrast the bottom-up approach of Staffordshire University with the top-down strategy of Manchester Metropolitan University. It will show that both institutions have faced similar issues but by sharing information, have been able to support each other in finding solutions that can help to inform the whole sector.

Can technology save us? The experience of the Cascade project

Authors

Marion Manton
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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

costBenefit, design, effectiveness, efficiency, funding, implementation, institutionalProblems, longTermValue, problemSolving, productivity, reducedFunding, respondingToChange, savingMoney, scalability, technology, VLEs

With cutbacks in funding, technology is increasingly offered as a blanket solution to the challenges we face, without necessarily suggesting where, how, and why it should be used. The JISC funded Cascade project, began in 2008 as the introduction of the government's ELQ policy saw the Department for Continuing Education at the University of Oxford facing a projected 1.5 million reduction in teaching funding. This project was designed to investigate how technology could help the Department respond to this reduction in funding through identifying efficiencies, improving services, and supporting innovation across the broad area of curriculum delivery.

With a focus on VLE support, generic content, online assignment-handling, online enrolment and payment and course design, the project worked across areas familiar to learning technologists but with particular emphasis on measurable outcomes against efficiency, service improvement, and innovation.

This paper will cover how the project:

- identified the areas where technology could have the greatest impact;

- implemented technology innovations across Departmental practice; and

- assessed value to make the case to sustain and embed activities.

In the context of a traditional organisation, changing student expectations, and high pressure for success, it was not always the anticipated areas that delivered the most value, nor was it easy to predict which stakeholders were most likely to engage. This was a complex project with a number of challenging factors including: a wide range of stakeholders; the need for synergy between organisational process and technical innovation; and the inherent complexity of change management. However, despite this, the project has effected ongoing changes in the running of the Department, which are already delivering savings and service improvements.

The technical and organisational lessons learned by the Cascade project will be of interest to any institution or department seeking to use technology to achieve similar objectives.

The future of Library Induction

Authors
Carol Elston
Jade Kelsall

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
elearning, induction, library, multimedia, resource

General cut backs and staff redeployment were the driving force behind the development of a new online Library Induction. This web-based resource was introduced as part of a blended solution during the 2010/11 induction period with Faculty Team Librarians (FTLs) continuing to provide face-to-face induction sessions but also using the online induction resource as part of their presentation, signposting it for reinforcement and reference after the session.

It is envisaged that the online resource may play a more major role in the induction process for the 2011/12 cohort. How do students feel about this, is it a problem or do they prefer this method of learning? Recent student focus groups have endeavoured to gauge student preference as well as gain feedback on the online induction resource. Equally, how successful has the resource proved with respect to saving staff time and potentially money?

This poster will demonstrate visually the multimedia aspects of the resource with annotations highlighting both staff and student response to this new method of delivering the Library Induction.

Work is ongoing to enhance and improve the resource and the short presentation will endeavour to answer the questions raised, share our experiences and demonstrate future developments.

Assessing the introduction of EVS technology for in-class teaching: what lessons can be learnt to thrive from the experience?

Author
Amanda Jefferies

Theme
At the sharp end

Tags
academicEngagement, costSavings, electronicVotingSystems, studentSatisfaction

Assessing the introduction of EVS technology for in-class teaching: what lessons can be learnt to thrive from the experience?

Through the academic year 2010/11 the University of Hertfordshire has been supporting the introduction of Electronic Voting Systems (EVS) to nearly 4,000 students. The project seeks inter alia to encourage academics to explore creatively the use of different styles of assessment and to move towards a flexible approach to assessment which does not always assume the pattern of a final examination assignment structure for all modules. This presentation reports on the use of EVS with undergraduate Computer Science students and shares the lessons learnt from inviting a majority of modules to synchronously introduce their use for the second semester.

The use of EVS has already become widespread in some institutions (Draper and Brown, 2004; Kennedy and Cutts, 2005) but their take-up is not always valued beyond the typical student engagement nor do EVS necessarily lead to an overall reduction in costs for the host School. Student satisfaction and their enjoyment of EVS may be a useful marker of success, (Lorimer and Hilliard, 2008); however, the broader aims of this project wanted to delve into the nature of student engagement with EVS and see if their use could lead to measurable savings overall. These savings were envisaged as being primarily time savings through a reduction in the assessment burden for staff, reducing their marking load or replacing an examination with regular EVS tests. For some programmes engaged in the wider project there would be the expectation of higher student retention rates (Nichol, 2007).

Supported by a central university team the local group of academics in Computer Science were offered plenty of hands-on support via training, online 'how to' videos of, for example, downloading student lists and the support of the Learning Technology Development Unit. In this presentation the nature of this support will be evaluated and the cost benefit analysis considered. There will be the opportunity to discuss how far the introduction of the EVS has led to greater student engagement and possible wider savings.

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Supporting Technology Enhanced Learning in Turbulent Times

Authors

Anu Sharma
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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

challengesForTheFuture, efficiency, implementation, institutionalProblems, LT, organisationalLandscape, planning, problemSolving, productivity, strategy, VLEs

In the face of funding cuts and limited resource allocation, it is becoming increasingly challenging for Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) support teams to cater for and deliver sustainable e-Learning initiatives across institutions.

Considering this scenario, it is suggested that TEL support teams should become more proactive in providing an increasingly needs-driven service. Furthermore, the sustainability of TEL initiatives and the development of local School-based strategies to support this process are equally important.

Within this presentation, Brunel University's Learning Technology Team (LTT) describe their recently launched 'School Learning Technology Consultation' initiative. This initiative was developed to enable the LTT to liaise with key stakeholders of TEL across the institution in an effort to understand key needs and requirements across the range of Schools and departments. Stakeholders included Deputy Heads of Schools, academics, administrative staff and students.

The rationale underpinning this methodology is two-fold: allowing LTT support to become increasingly needs-driven and forward-thinking, as well as a mechanism to inform strategic development.

The study has provided a useful insight into the work of academic Schools. Some key outcomes include identifying the potential for TEL design interventions, identifying important collaboration opportunities with central support teams and raising the profile of TEL within Schools.

However, the initiative also has wider-reaching implications, in helping to inform the development of both the new institutional Learning & Teaching Strategy and associated local (School-based) TEL strategies. Furthermore, the process has already helped to inform and shape the implementation of Brunel's next VLE.

Having engaged the academic Schools, the next stage involves the review of their TEL strategies, informed by the evidence base gathered. By giving Schools greater ownership and using evidence-based inputs to both facilitate dialogue and inform academic School strategies, we promote transformative change which is far likely to remain sustainable and drive higher value pedagogically-informed outcomes in the future.

The session will outline Brunel's approach to this study and some key outcomes. Most importantly, it will highlight practical considerations for other institutions considering a similar approach.

A plug and play eLearning application integration

Authors

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Hal Herzog

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

benefits, CampusPack, cloudServices, collaboration, Elgg, enterpriseArchitecture, evaluation, futureproofing, implementation, IMS, JISC, learningPlatforms, learningToolsInteroperability, mitgatingRisk, openSource, organisationalLandscape, PebblePad, PebblePad, problemSolving, sharing, technology, tools, VLEs, WebPA

Background

We will demonstrate the work of the JISC funded project: Creating Environments for Learning using Tightly Integrated Components (ceLTIc – www.celtic-project.org). The project runs from July 2010 to December 2011.

Description of approach used

The primary objective of this project is to investigate how elearning applications can be more tightly integrated with virtual learning environments through the use of the IMS Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) specification. A range of popular open source and commercial elearning applications are being used to both identify priorities for integrations with VLEs (or other host systems) and also to evaluate the benefits which can be derived from adopting this approach.

Some priorities that we have already identified are: Single sign-on mechanism; Automatic creation of user accounts; Automatic creation of modules/groups; Passing of marks back to the VLE 'gradebook'; Passing communications to the students via the VLE

LTI also brings benefits for instructors, system administrators and developers. Instructors can build out links to third party elearning applications tools without needing to involve system administrators; system administrators only need to add support for LTI and a range of third-party elearning applications become available for integration into the VLE and finally developers of third-party applications only need to produce and maintain a single integration instead of the many as is currently the case.

Structure of session and activities

- Introduction – 5 mins – Describe LTI and benefits

- Basic/Full LTI demonstration – 15 min (mixture of Campus Pack, Elgg, PebblePad, WebPA, Blackboard, WebCT, Moodle)

- Issue Arising/Audience Question – 10 mins
  This will not be a hands-on demonstration.

- Intend outcomes for participants

- Understanding of the benefits of using LTI and a contribution to the on-going debate about what functionality is important when seeking to tightly integrate elearning applications with VLEs.

The Albert Expert IT Skills Rating System

Author
Rebecca McCready

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
courses, design, implementation, iTSkills, managingLearnerExpectations, online, ratingSkills, supportingLearning, technology, training, transferableSkills, websites

How much of an expert are you? We ask this of all our students before they complete any one of a range of academic IT skills sessions as part of their degree programme.

The Albert Expert rating system has been developed to help students judge how good their academic IT skills are. These advanced skills include managing complex word processed work including dissertations, analysing and presenting data, delivering professional presentations, and creating and using databases. All courses teach tools and techniques that, when used effectively, will help students to be efficient, effective and professional.

To get a personal rating, students are invited to complete a short questionnaire that rates their skills on a scale of 1 (novice) to 5 (expert). They can compare their rating against the ratings assigned to course materials, allowing them to judge how easy or difficult the section is likely to be for them, and thus pace themselves throughout the course and manage their expectations. Linked throughout the courses are additional tasks and commentaries to challenge the most capable students, whilst not overwhelming the less experienced.

Initial feedback on the Albert Expert rating has been very positive, and further work is planned to embed it into more teaching materials, link suggested learning opportunities into the rating questionnaire feedback, and to promote use of it or a similar technique further afield.

This rating system was inspired by the Anorak Test developed by the Higher Education Academy's Economics Network (The HEA Economics Network 2010). Whilst the Albert Expert rating system has been specifically created for our teaching materials, its general principles and applications are much broader and could be adapted into other learning environments.

This presentation will go through the questionnaire and its development base, the application of the rating within course materials, and feedback and comments received from students.

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Institutional VLE Choices: We're all in this together.

Authors

Melissa Highton
John Norman
Dave White
Richard Forrest

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

cost, efficiency, moodle, OER, onlinelearning, open, opensource, Oxford, sakai, sustainability, VLE

This symposium aims to attract and persuade. If you are reviewing your choice of institutional VLE anytime soon and your university offers mixed models of traditional and blended teaching or has a remit for the creation and dissemination of knowledge, you may be interested in hearing what we have to say.

Your institution's choice of VLE can limit your ability to be responsive, flexible and open. Before attending this symposium please consider: How sustainable is your current position? How much does it really cost? Is your voice heard? As part of this community are you contributing new thinking and rigour to the development of tools? Does it make a difference to your students and staff which technologies you choose?

Speakers from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and will describe and debate the benefits that Sakai and Moodle have brought to the institution. Drawing on institutional strategies for OER, open source software and online distance learning we will explore 'flavours of openness'. With contributions from OSS Watch, Sakai Foundation and Sungard HE we will present the different open community models which support and sustain development (of staff, students,content and software) and encourage participants to consider models of cost, value and giving.

This session will focus on the use of opensource software at an institutional level with a focus on what you can do to tailor technology to support the way that teaching and learning happens rather than asking academics to change their working practices in order to fit an off-the-shelf system.

Fostering Academic Competence or Putting Students Under General Suspicion? Voluntary Plagiarism Control of Scientific Papers by Means of a Web-based Plagiarism Detection System

Author

Kerstin Eleonora Kohl

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

academicPapers, anonymousCheck, didacticConcept, plagiarism, plagiarismDetectionSoftware, voluntaryPlagiarismControl

In view of the increasing number of cases of plagiarism and the ease of use of on-line published texts, universities are faced with a considerable challenge to prevent and take action against plagiarism in academic student papers. In reaction to plagiarism, web-based plagiarism detection systems are increasingly used to check submitted papers– this checking entails various problems, for example the percentage of plagiarism found is only an indication of the actual extent of plagiarism and not all types of plagiarism can be identified.

To cope with this problematic situation the Voluntary Plagiarism Check (VPC), an alternative preventive university didactic concept, was developed at the University of Education, Freiburg (Germany). It focused on the development of individual skills. Students were able to submit their academic papers (e.g., an undergraduate paper, final thesis) anonymously. These were then tested with the plagiarism detection system Ephorus. Following interpretation and summary of the findings by the project team – plagiarism as well as referencing mistakes – we advised the students on a suitable approach to academic writing based on their own typical mistakes. The VPC was conducted as a three-semester research project and was later evaluated. About 500 academic papers were tested. In 90 % of the undergraduates' work incorrect and/or missing citations were found. This high percentage decreased among students in later semesters. Instances of plagiarism were detected in about 40 % of the papers when the texts of advanced students (≥ 6th semester) were tested. At the same time the length of the plagiarised texts decreased.

Around half of the students stated that it was acceptable to copy single sentences or short passages from other sources without citation; they did not consider plagiarising on a limited scale as cheating. A similar number of students admitted to having doubts about whether they could write a good paper without plagiarising. Almost all students said they had experienced considerable uncertainty, stress and fear while writing academic papers. The project results offer new insights into Internet-focused working strategies, on student justification for plagiarism and attitudes to literary property and on frequent mistakes. In addition to showing that there is broad acceptance among students of the VPC, the results can be taken into consideration in curriculum development and in developing courses to meet the needs of students.

Development of a simulated Internet for education

Author
Andrew Smith

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
distanceLearning, multiuser, packetTracer, remotePractical, routerSimulation, simulatedInternet, situatedLearning

This paper describes the early stages of research and development of an educational environment designed to enable learners to participate in remote, group based large-scale activities based on local area network and wide area network technologies working on a range of systems and within different learning situations such as class group work, remote group work and independent learning. The environment specifically covers routing, switching and wireless principles in the domain of computer networking. This is accomplished using the 'multiuser functionality' feature found within the Cisco Academy programme, Packet Tracer application.

The initial research explores how a 'virtual Internet' could be implemented to enable learners to engage with the scale/complexity of the Internet without interacting with active routing infrastructures thereby interfering with others. Different communities of interest from Cisco Systems as well as their Academy Programme academic affiliates have contributed to the development of the resource as well as to research into how individuals participate in learning as a result of using this software.

This paper tells the story of the iterative action research process with two initial learning situations of 'remote many' participation and 'in class many' participation in a large scale networking exercise. As research is still in the early development process, this paper explores the experiences and observations gathered from engaging with the two learning scenarios, describing how each interaction exercise was perceived by participants and their educators.

Initial findings from both activities indicate that the concept of an 'Internet on the Internet' to deliver simulated practical learning has considerable potential and brings an alternative dimension to the practical learning experience. Research is ongoing, with the work in this paper informing the continual iterative process.

Investigating Innovative e-learning initiatives and Virtual Schools

Authors

Nick Jeans
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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

design, earlyResearch, effectiveness, evaluation, evidence, implementation, inclusion, informalLearning, institutionalProblems, International, learningPlatforms, mobileDevices, mobileDevices, movingLearnersBetweenSectors, planning, problemSolving, research, research, sharing, tools, virtual, web2.0

A new research project to investigate Virtual School and College Education (VISCED) has just been launched with the support of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme. Partners in the project (from the UK, Belgium, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Italy and Greece) are making a worldwide inventory of innovative ICT-enhanced learning initiatives and major 'e-mature' secondary and post-secondary education providers for the 14-21 age group (including Virtual Schools and Colleges). There is a focus on learners with inclusion issues and facilitating access to higher education. Success will be achieved by adapting, piloting and transferring innovative approaches which already exist in other countries outside the EU (or in the EU) but not widely known. The review will be validated by pilots at five schools in three countries. The outputs of this work will be analysed to identify success factors and teacher training recommendations – for policy-makers, advisors, government, education authorities and the e-learning industry. Further details at http://visced. referata.com/wiki/Main_Page

The workshop will review what the research has revealed so far. The project started shortly before the deadline for submissions, but by September, we will have a wide range of exemplar initiatives from around the world, which we think are relevant for schools and colleges in Europe. We will discuss problems in transferring projects directly from one country's environment to another and inviting participants to contribute their own experiences of successful large-scale initiatives.

Participants will be actively involved in contributing to the research by describing e-learning initiatives that they know of or in which they are directly engaged. The session will involve delegates doing some active problem solving in a cabaret style space, sharing relevant initiatives and the issues involved in transferring them from one institution, country or education system to another. The initiatives described will be those that offer useful lessons for anyone interested in wider applications of learning technology in secondary and further education. The workshop should therefore help participants solve problems in the context of their own organisation and suggest innovative ideas to try out at their home institutions.

Getting in on the Twitter Action? Using Social Media to Build Your Professional Network

Authors

Bex Lewis
David Rush

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

communityOfPractice, Our, professionalDevelopment, respondingToChange, socialMedia, socialNetworking, suggestions:

This paper reports on attempts by a digital steward (Wenger, White and Smith 2009) within a university to increase her expertise in the deployment of social media for education (Conole and Alevizo 2010), through collaboration by means of social media with digital stewards in other institutions. The development of collaborative communities can be described with the framework of ideas associated with the notion of a Community of Practice (CoP). It was envisaged that a CoP of utility to a digital steward might be established through intensive activity with a social media tool and for this Twitter was chosen.

This activity has continued for some two years and has latterly been cast as an action research project with the aim of learning lessons of help to others similarly placed having a need to promote digital technology with limited resources. Data has been collected about the extent of various types of interaction through Twitter. Observations have also been made of the cross-linking between social media tools that arises organically as one tries to make effective use of a single tool.

Several categories of data relating to Twitter use have been analysed in order to find indications of community formation. For example the similarity to the stated interests of the observed Twitter account of the interests of the account's followers characterises the commonality (or lack of) purpose of the group. Further insight has been gained through examination of the extent of: interaction, both electronic and non-electronic, with followers; the retweeting of tweets by the account holder and the followers; and the accessing of linked material on other social media sites.

One implication of this work is that in an era of readily accessible social media there will be less utility for people to come together in a defined social space, but that they will rather start by using these facilities to create what might be called a personal CoP. Secondly it has been found that one social media tool by itself is unlikely to be adequate to create an effective social network; rather, several interlinked media must be used.

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D-ICE for Change: Applying Organisational Development Guidance to IT Projects

Authors

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

Change, ITImplementation, OrganisationalDevelopment, PolicyMaking, Stakeholder, Strategy

This paper reports from the recent cross-institutional JISC-funded project 'BODGIT' (Bringing Organisational Development Guidance into IT), which was part of the larger EMBED IT project hosted by SEDA (JISC, 2011). The implementation of new IT platforms or software is rarely regarded as a change project, but this workshop will encourage delegates to consider the application of Organisational Development strategies when undertaking such implementations.

All change projects involve people, and commonly heard phrases when attempting to implement new systems are: '… but this is the way we've always done it', 'but it was a good deal…', 'why do I have to change?', 'why is the change not faster?', and 'what are the benefits?'. Often new schemes are tainted by previous failed 'initiatives' because a strategic and overarching policy approach has not been taken. With IT initiatives particularly, software systems are often implemented without strategy, policy or detailed project planning. Using the case study of a software implementation which was proving difficult, three universities were involved in discussions and workshops investigating opportunities to apply Organisational Development principles.

This paper will draw out the general findings from across the institutions. Different change models were discussed, including the PESTLE and MORTAR and DICE models. Of key importance when undertaking any change project is the need to undertake a stakeholder analysis, whether those stakeholders be institutional, personal, or corporate. We will demonstrate the 'Stakeholder Straplines' exercise, drawing upon discussions from the workshops, and consider the differing approaches/tactics that need to be undertaken with different kinds of users: enthusiasts, pragmatists, traditionalists and New Luddites, especially with the current pressures upon staffing time.

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JISC website: www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/staffroles/embedit.aspx

Not future-proofed but future-focused: graduate attributes and the digital university

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Theme
At the sharp end

Tags
digitalCapability, digitalIdentity, digitalLiteracy, graduateAttributes

Many universities are rethinking their definition of graduate attributes, and offering a new set of aspirations in which digital capabilities play a prominent role. Ideas of employability, citizenship and graduate identity are being re-interpreted for a digital age, in which knowledge is ubiquitously available and relationships are increasingly managed online. This paper reports on work undertaken at the University of Plymouth to explore students' own perceptions of digital literacy, the devices and practices they rely on, and how they expect the university experience to support their developing capabilities. The results show that while students have diverse preferences and expectations around technology use, there is a common need for consistency and clarity about digital practices at course level. Students want 24/7 access to course information and learning materials, but they also need opportunities for reflection and review of their own strategies for study. They value e-learning experiences where these are clearly relevant to their long-term goals, and they recognise the need for teaching staff whose own confidence and competence are high.

The paper also presents a number of initiatives that the University has undertaken, and shows how a focus on digital literacy can complement other high-level strategies such as employability, widening participation, and supporting regional development. On a more theoretical level, the paper draws on literatures of both digital literacy (e.g. Lankshear and Knobel 2008, Leahy and Dolan 2010) and learners' experiences of e-learning (e.g. Gilbert et al 2007, Sharpe et al 2010). It concludes by asking what are the responsibilities of higher education in the digital age, both to students as individual participants and to the wider community in which they continue to act as gatekeepers of knowledge and professional practice.

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Tutor Engagement in Technology Enhanced Learning and Teaching in Higher Education: Some warming stories about change

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

challengesForTheFuture, narrativeMethodology, professionalDevelompent, respondingToChange, tutorVoice

The aim of this paper is to share warming stories about tutor engagement with new technologies, with a view to inspire teachers and institutional leaders. It adheres to the premise that dispositions and attitudes towards change are, to a great extent, learned informally, in non-educational contexts. From this position it sets out, through a storied approach, to foreground such informal learning and expose it as accessible to all. This marks a strategic shift in gaze from the student's to the tutor's learning experience, acknowledging that 'teaching is not just something [academics] 'do' for a living, but it is in fact who they 'are' [and] central to their identities.' (Sappey and Relf, 2010, p.6).

The paper supports Cappelli and Smithies' (2009) view that 'a 'top-down' vision rarely works and instead it is the community who realise the vision and begin to set the agenda.' (p.73). It is concerned that despite substantial evidence that bringing about changes in pedagogic practices can be difficult, there is a gap of convincing approaches to help in this respect (ALT, 2010). In this context, this project takes a 'bottom-up' approach and synthesises several life-stories into a single persuasive narrative to support the process of adapting to digital change.

This research adopts a narrative methodology as the approach most likely to acknowledge the complexity of people's lives and to honour 'lived experience as a source of important knowledge and understanding.' (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p.42) The researchers formulated a 'generative narrative question' (Flick, 2009) to gather life-stories from a small sample of faculty colleagues who had declared themselves to have adapted comfortably to digital change. Participants' personal stories were then systematically collected and analysed to form a single, compelling narrative. The project identifies the small, every-day, motivating moments, cultural features and environmental factors in people's diverse lives which may have contributed to their positive dispositions towards change in relation to technology enhanced learning.

It is expected that this narrative will serve to support colleagues in other institutions to warm up to ever-changing technological advances and that the issues raised will stimulate a lively discussion.

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Experiences of Teaching in Real-time Virtual Classrooms

Author
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Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
interpretativePhenomenologicalAnalysis, teachersExperiences, teachingOnline, virtualClassroom, webConferencing

The use of web conferencing software has grown rapidly in the past few years with the increasing use of accessible and easy to use tools such as Elluminate Live!, Wimba and Adobe Connect. Increasing numbers of lecturers and tutors are delivering and supporting real-time learning in these media-rich environments in a wide variety of ways, as use of these tools becomes embedded in institutional practice. It is likely that many teachers of the future will choose to, or be required to, facilitate learning using web conferencing.

To support successful learning in a real-time virtual classroom teachers may require adjustments to practices adopted in other contexts, including re-consideration of pedagogic design and the development of new approaches for facilitating interaction between learners and between learners and teachers. Although guidelines for good practice with web conferencing have been produced (e.g. ALT, 2010; Chatterton, 2010), and research has been conducted to suggest appropriate pedagogical strategies in such media-rich real-time environments (de Freitas and Neumann, 2009), to date there is little evidence available which provides an insight into the challenges and benefits of teaching in a real-time virtual classroom.

This paper reports on recent research undertaken to gain an insight into teachers' experiences with web conferencing. It draws on findings from an interpretative phenomenological analysis of in-depth interviews with four experienced Higher Education professionals who have used web conferencing to support postgraduate learners. Participants were asked about their experiences of teaching in web conferencing settings and encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt from these experiences. A selection of findings will be presented to the conference. These will illustrate the tensions that can occur between the personal pedagogic preferences of teachers and what they actually do in practice in a web conferencing environment, and reveal some of the challenges of supporting interaction when 'normal' channels of feedback are restricted.

The findings will be of interest to others teaching in, or considering teaching with web conferencing. They may also be of interest to those with an academic development role and system developers working to support our teachers of the future.

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The impact of large scale online delivery; how it works in practice.

Author
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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
costSavings, largeScale, online

In current economic climate higher education institutions are looking for ways of teaching and learning more efficiently. One solution appears to be larger cohorts studying online (Fildes 2010). This model of large scale online delivery is something that the University of Huddersfield has been working with for the last 3 years.

The Open University has been a leader in the field of online distance education for the last ten years (or more). However the Open University institutional context is entirely different from that of traditional place based education such as University of Huddersfield. The Open University students make their choice of course knowing that that they will need to operate in a distance medium and Open University staff have a set of roles, policies and practices to support distance delivery which have been accumulated over many years of operation.

An ethnographic study was undertaken to explore the impact that scaling up provision had on pedagogy and to compare how the institutional context impacts on online pedagogy (Coffey 1996).

The key issues which emerged where dubbed "lowest common denominator", "one voice", "playing the room" and "nanny state". They consisted of some closely inter twined issues relating to the technological skills and confidence of both students and teachers and the need for a consistent approach when delivering large scale provision.

The analysis also indicated how the nature of the institution impacts on pedagogical processes in that students in place based institution have very different experiences and expectations of learning are different from those who sign up for a distance learning provider such as the Open University where a higher level of autonomous learning is necessary.

The conclusion reached is that scaling up is no panacea for the challenges of delivering more for less. Indeed it introduces a reduction for some students in levels of interactive features of the learning platform and also introduces a new cost in the form of an additional layer of administration, tutor training and tutor support.

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Representing the curriculum: re-imagining learning

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

courseInformation,
curriculumDesign, KIS,
learnerExperience, learningDesign,
learningMaps, representation, xcri

This symposium will debate how technology is transforming course information and other curriculum representations, such as learning designs, learning maps, and multimedia learning 'tasters'.

Participants will complete their own mapping exercise to show how different representations of the curriculum are produced and used at their institution. Each panel member will then provide a 'model' representation and describe the institutional processes surrounding it.

Challenges and alternative solutions will be invited from the floor. As a collaborative group exercise, the symposium will produce a checklist of features that support sharing, reuse, interoperability, educational dialogue and learner engagement in the representation of the curriculum.

The ideas we will explore arise from experiences of using technology-supported design to meet broad learning and institutional challenges. In many institutions, information about learning programmes is poorly articulated and managed. Paper-based quality processes do not translate easily into student-centred materials; information from marketing and evaluation is often unavailable at critical decision points; learning outcomes are not always aligned with other aspects of the course. Rethinking curriculum information can therefore lead to more responsive, flexible and relevant learning experiences. However, there are challenges in transforming core processes that bestow academic identity and credibility.

Panel members offer a diversity of approaches and institutional contexts. One has expertise in course-related information management and will argue that standardised data can support institutional change, as well as streamlining production of Key Information Sets. Two have developed rich representations of the curriculum in digital media, and will argue that this can support more meaningful dialogue among curriculum design teams, and better communication with learners. One will consider how different design views can provide 'scaffolds' for design, planning and implementation, supporting teams to make effective use of the available tools and pedagogies.

Participants will achieve a good understanding of the challenges of curriculum representation, the potential benefits of managing information systematically, and the variety of means by which learning pathways and programmes can be represented. In working towards a shared 'ideal' for curriculum representation, participants will contribute to a collaborative outcome that will be made available via the JISC/HEA Curriculum Design Studio.

Developing Open Educational Resources for Interprofessional Education

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

copyright, IPE, licensing, OERs, pedagogicalDesign, repurposing

This paper reports on the development and use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) for Interprofessional Education (IPE) in Health and Social Care. IPE occurs when students learn about each other's professional practice to enable more effective collaboration and improve health outcomes (Barr, 2002).

The Medical School at the University of Leicester has been working with De Montfort University and the University of Northampton to develop materials for IPE for over 10 years. These materials have been robustly evaluated and contain face-to-face classroom resources, models of different types of practice learning in communities and in hospitals, and simulated events (Anderson and Thorpe, 2010; 2008; Anderson et al., 2009).

The UKOER programme has generated an opportunity to convert these materials into OERs. This innovation is conducted as part of a JISC and HEA funded project called TIGER (Transforming Interprofessional Groups through Educational Resources, www.northampton.ac.uk/tiger).

In the presentation, we will demonstrate the type of materials that have been converted and released as OERs, which will go live in the summer 2011. We will showcase examples of how academics at the three institutions have or are planning to incorporate these OERs into their teaching practice. We evaluate the experiences, views and perceptions of developing and using OERs on the academics, learners and practitioners using mixed-methods including an online questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Qualitative data is currently being analysed using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Joffe and Yardley, 2004). Key lessons learnt from the process will be shared.

We have so far identified significant pedagogical design challenges in converting materials into OERs. For example, facilitation for effective student interactions is essential in an IPE course. Designing OERs with sufficient clarity for facilitators requires highly detailed pedagogical 'wrap-around' information to be included in each OER. There are also challenges in design for repurposing and converting contextualised resources into generic content. Copyright and licensing problems, particularly associated with video content, have also been highly challenging. We discuss how the TIGER team has addressed these.

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Technology to Support IPR and Licensing Competency

Authors
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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
Copyright, CreativeCommons, IPR

A range of re-usable and repurposable tools have been funded by JISC, via the Open Educational Resources (OER) programme and the Strategic Content Alliance (SCA) to assist with facilitating greater efficiency and competency in Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and Licensing. These tools include the SCA IPR and Licensing ELearning Module, the OER IPR Support Risk Management Calculator and Creative Commons Compatibility Wizards. These resources are freely accessible and usable online and are accessible via the Support Centres, JISC Advisory Services, JISC Website and the Strategic Content Alliance and its sponsors. This approach demonstrates the value of shared services across the public sector and real cost savings. As IPR is often seen as a barrier to development, especially in the education sector, the use of these tools may significantly benefit the sector in facilitating the use of third party materials and the sharing of own materials. This session will include a demonstration of these tools and in particular show how this suite of tools, and the principles driving their development, can address issues across the UK education sector associated with risk management, licensing and better IPR awareness.

Digitally literate institutions: a holistic approach

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

digitalLiteracy, educatingTeachers, futureGraduates, institutionalChange, JISC, learnerDevelopment, learnerExpectations, learnerExperience, lifelongLearning, organisationalLandscape, skills

Digital literacy is the sum of capabilities that equip an individual to live, learn and work in a digitally mediated society. University and college students expect their learning experience to equip them for an age of digital knowledge. The Learning Literacies in a Digital Age (LLiDA) study (Beetham et al. 2009) found that while many courses were integrating digital media and online learning resources, and while many institutions provided for basic ICT skills, there were few examples of digital literacy being supported across the learning experience. The JISC Supporting Learners in a Digital Age (SLIDA) study (Sharpe et al. 2010) explored ten institutions where a more integrated approach is beginning to emerge, and identified digitally confident staff in all roles as a priority. A series of national workshops is capturing best practice in this area including institutional and subject/discipline differences.

This poster illustrates how a strategic approach can enhance digital literacy and graduate outcomes. Areas of provision are linked to workshop materials in support of organisational and curriculum development, and to relevant case studies and exemplars. These materials are all available from the JISC/Infonet Design Studio under open license for repurposing and reuse.

Discussion around the poster will provide opportunities for conference delegates to learn about ongoing JISC activities in the area of digital literacy, to share different approaches to development, and to log-in to the Design Studio for a hands-on tour of the materials available.

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Infecting academia! Where to base TEL support: in academic departments, in the university centre, or both?

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

central, champions, diffusion, earlyadoptor, innovation, intervention, networks, Staffdevelopment, support, technoligists, transformative, viral

Introduction

We ask the question: are funded central support and staff development models (Author B, 1995) changing academic practice? Do academic staff perceive the use of central support teams and local champions as pivotal to their adoption of TEL tools to transform learning?

In addition to these recognised and funded support mechanisms most tertiary educational organisations rely strongly upon the unspoken yet well known "infection model." Whereby the local champions and central support services work closely with the early adopter demographic to help spread the message and benefits of TEL, using peer pressure. Are these two approaches mutually exclusive? Or do HEIs require both models to help embed TEL (Author A, 2000)?

Method

This paper investigates the perceptions of academic staff in 4 autonomous Schools in a research-led University. Questionnaires and focus groups examine how, and to what extent, teaching staff are influenced by three forms of support – peer viral, in-school professional, and central professional.

Results and conclusion

Findings will be data-driven, and will shed light on the respective strengths of these three mechanisms both individually and when employed together. The presentation will stimulate the audience to reflect on the most appropriate mix of support for their own institution.

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DeFrosting Professional Development: Reconceptualising Teaching using Social Learning Technologies

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Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
2.0, communities, development, educational, of, practice, professional, technology, web

In this paper we discuss the impact of redesigning a lecturer professional development course with the aim of embedding a community of practice model supported by the use of mobile web 2.0 technologies. This approach was based upon a model developed to support thirty mlearning projects between 2006 and 2010, which also informed the institutions' new elearning strategy developed in 2009. Participating lecturers were brought into the course as participants in an intentional community of practice (COP) investigating the pedagogical application of social learning theories and frameworks, facilitated by the course lecturers who took on the role of technology stewards guiding the COP in the appropriation of mobile web 2.0. Three examples of participants' journeys of discovery throughout the course are highlighted to illustrate the impact of this approach to professional development. Reflections on the first 2010 iteration of the course are then used to inform the following iterations in 2011.

A model for enhancing asynchronous text-based computer-mediated communication through peer facilitation: Recommendations from an empirical study

Authors

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

asynchronousOnlineDiscussions, computer-mediatedCommunication, learnerInteraction, onlineInteraction, peerFacilitation

This paper explores peer facilitation as a means to improve asynchronous text-based computer-mediated communication (CMC). CMC refers to the process by which people interact through the use of networked computers to create, exchange, and perceive information (Jonassen, Davidson, Collins, Campbell, & Haag, 1995; Romiszowski & Mason, 2004). Although CMC technologies include both synchronous and asynchronous tools, the later especially online discussions have the added advantage of allowing communication to occur at anytime (Gunawardena & McIsaac, 2004; Lo, 2009; Romiszowski & Mason, 2004).

However, the benefits of asynchronous online discussion can only be enjoyed if students are willing to interact with each other in the first place (Ng, Cheung & Hew, 2009). Research has shown that peer facilitation improved asynchronous text-based communication among learners (Gilbert & Dabbagh, 2005; Seo, 2007). In other words, peer facilitation improves learner-learner interaction in asynchronous online discussions. However, these studies did not elaborate on the actual types of peer facilitation techniques used. This study aims to address this gap by proposing a model for encouraging learner-learner interaction in peer-facilitated asynchronous online discussions.

A case study approach was adopted. Data were collected through interviews with the participants and online discussion transcripts. Two case studies involving graduate students from two blended post-graduate courses were involved in the research. Content analysis of the online discussion transcripts and interview data was done to examine the online interaction of the participants and identify the peer facilitation techniques used in the discussions.

The findings suggest that peer facilitators could encourage learner-learner interaction in asynchronous online discussion by initiating, sustaining, and generating in-depth interaction. The first phase – initiating interaction could be achieved through the use of peer facilitation techniques such as "general invitation to contribute" and "open-ended questioning. As for the second phase – sustaining interaction, techniques such as "considering others' viewpoints" and "showing appreciation" could be used. Finally, for the final phase – to generate in-depth interaction, the technique "challenging others' viewpoints" could be used.

The findings will contribute to an in-depth understanding of how learner-learner interaction in asynchronous online discussions can be facilitated by students themselves.

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How personal can personal response systems get?

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

clickers, e-voting, mobiles, PRS, SMS

Interactive voting in lectures has been proven time and again to engage students with the subject matter and foster deep learning in face-to-face sessions in numerous disciplines(1)(2).These encouraging results led some institutions to further developments such as the University of Edinburgh EVAF web-based system(3) which allows students and teachers to review votes cast during interactive sessions thus supporting independent learning, reflection and feedback preparation.

While the principle still stands, there is nowadays a choice of implementations ranging from investing in separate individual personal response systems (PRS) to having personal response apps on the student's phones, or simply encouraging students to use SMS voting to send their responses.

While SMS texting is more readily available, it opens the discussion about the value and acceptance of formal and informal learning in formal settings – having a whole amphitheatre of students using their mobiles in class is a definite no-go for some lecturers. Are they truly justified? On the other hand, a PRS comes with additional constraints, among which financial ones. Yet are these restrictions significantly diminished once a cost-benefit analysis replaces an accounting one?

This practical demonstration will show a range of advantages and limitations – both pedagogical and technical – of all of these technologies and will enable participants to make informed and appropriate choices for their individual teaching contexts. We will demonstrate two SMS systems (Martin Hawksey's integration of the Learning Apps textwall into PowerPoint (4); and Poll Everywhere) and a PRS one (eInstruction) both using dedicated handheld voting devices and mobile devices. We will highlight the level of engagement of students which all these technologies allow – particularly focussing on the range of activities and questions supported by each tool – and we will report on the informal feedback received from students after using such technologies throughout a semester. Workshop participants will have the opportunity to experiment with all the technologies, compare and contrast them, and share their experience.

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Institutional strategies for sustainable TEL development: Meeting the challenges of the new economic climate

Author

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

challengesForTheFuture, changingLearnerExpectations, collaboration, convincingInstitutions, convincingSceptics, costBenefit, effectiveness, expectationsOfInstitutions, funding, futureproofing, futureRoles, implementation, institutionalProblems, longTermValue, marshallingEvidence, mitigatingRisk, organisationalLandscape, planning, problemSolving, productivity, professionalDevelopment, reducedFunding, respondingToChange, rigour, savingMoney, scalability, scavenging, sharedServices, sharing

The 2010 Browne Report and the 2010 Spending Review in England, along with similar developments in the other nations of the UK, have established a tough economic climate in which HE institutions must now operate. With the deregulated market place, institutions will be required to do more to attract and meet the expectations of students who are increasingly using technology in their studies before HE. Institutional services will be expected to sustain and develop current service levels, with technology enhanced learning (TEL) playing a key role in supporting and enhancing the student experience. How do we do more with less in sustaining and developing further our institutional TEL services?

Drawing on the recommendations of reports such as the Online Learning Task Force's HEFCE report (Jan 2011), this symposium will discuss the merits of a range of institutional strategies for sustaining and developing TEL services, touching on the following themes:

- Rationalisation (making cut-backs in support staff provision) and/or reorganisation of existing roles to do more;

- Outsourcing of service provision and/or pursuing institutional collaboration through shared services;

- Pump priming to support new services (e.g. distance learning; links with industries to develop new/ innovative programmes) and/or integration and embedding of existing provision.

The session begins with a brief overview of findings from the UCISA 2010 TEL Survey and identifies challenges facing the HE sector. A chaired panel discussion follows involving representatives from the case studies that accompanied the UCISA Survey. The panel will debate themes arising from the Survey findings in scoping out the future of TEL support provision. The audience will then break into facilitated discussion groups to identify scalable strategies for institutional TEL support provision. The Chair will co-ordinate feedback from the discussion groups and further comments from the panel.

Participants will:

- Gain an understanding of common challenges in delivering TEL services across an institution;

- Explore strategies for institutional development and extension of existing services, informed by the recommendations of recent HEFCE publications;

- Identify opportunities for their own institutions in enhancing and developing their support provision with a focus on enhancing the student experience.

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Tracks in the snow: finding and making sense of the evidence for institutional transformation

Author

Gill Ferrell

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

changeManagement, culture, evaluation, evidence, marshallingEvidence, organisationalLandscape, transformation

The problem of analysing large-scale transformation and attributing change to specific interventions is not new. We often struggle to deliver evidence that new pedagogic approaches deliver benefits when we cannot separate them from other changes e.g. tools, teachers, physical environment and support mechanisms that impact learner motivation and achievement. Now more than ever we need to demonstrate the value of technology-enhanced learning yet the tracks of our research designs are being churned by the stout boots of process change or flattened as the heavy machinery of institutional restructure ploughs through.

In the new climate many innovators are adopting 'guerilla' approaches to transformational change. By providing targeted solutions to institutional problems they align themselves with wider initiatives and win gradual support for their broader strategic goals. This makes capturing evidence of their success all the more difficult. Process maps/efficiencies and organisation charts/headcounts often seem measurable and tangible in ways that good educational design does not. This paper suggests a means of capturing an holistic view of institutional transformation based on the premise 'Change happens one conversation at a time'.

We will look at the nature of institutional cultural transformation starting with some established models and seeing how the models fit the experience of a range of recent innovation projects. We will suggest some ways in which common technologies can be used to capture the 'lived experience' of how institutional culture is manifest in day-to-day life and how these artefacts may be used to measure transformation. Participants should take away a model they can apply to their own institution and ideas for evidencing the impact of their work.

The aim is, after the thaw, when we find ourselves in a different place, we understand the landscape we have traversed as a community rather than trying to separate the tracks.

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Future proofing learning technology – Our experiences of institutional embedding and collaborative working

Authors
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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
funding, policy, stratrgy

With the impending change in education funding there is a greater need for learning technology innovation and interventions to be both sustainable and embedded into practice. Whilst the sector saw a growth in Learning Technologist (LT) provision with the introduction of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF), further investment is by no means certain in what will be a competitive environment for all institutional funding.

Before the funding landscape changed across the sector we, at the University of Plymouth, were facing institutional budget deficits and subsequent challenges. We were able to treat that season as an opportunity to adapt to the changing landscape and implement a number of processes to ensure learning technology remains mainstream to institutional practice, whilst allowing our 3000 practitioners the freedom to experiment and investigate new areas that will impact our 30,000 students throughout the University and across a wide ranging inner city and rural partner college network.

Rather than 'riding the storm' we have adapted to new needs in a new climate, in a new age by:

- Introducing a 'hub and spoke model' of LT provision where there is a central LT team, LTs in each faculty and an externally funded LT research team, all fulfilling different roles in the tension between mainstream embedding and cutting edge innovation

- Developing methods of managing expectations, moving the learning technologists role from content developers to staff developers

- Developing practical ways of working (including communities of practice) across the institution in a changing funding landscape to meet institutional and national priorities by embedding national strategies, recommendations and good practice in areas such as e-assessment, e-portfolio, podcasting and exploiting web2.0 technologies

What we learnt in that initial season about these new needs and how we have positioned ourselves to meet them has helped us to flourish in the current landscape the sector now finds itself in. Knowledge of the processes we have adopted and associated implementation issues may be of benefit to other institutions and so we will report on and discuss these experiences in this session.

Open Educational Resources (OER) do save time and students do use them

Authors
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Theme
At the sharp end

Tags
and, design, implementation, increase, nottingham, open, planning, resources, sharing, sharing, support, teachers, teaching, to, ukoer, value

In implementing the Open Nottingham programme, the University of Nottingham has strategically embraced an agenda of open access to teaching. With benefits such as efficiency savings, promotional opportunities and enhancement of the student experience, Open Nottingham is designed to foster increased use, re-use and publication of Open Educational Resources (OER) by staff and students across the university. It aims to improve the understanding of what impact OER has on teaching and learning and to measure the effectiveness of open resources as a promotional tool.

Open Nottingham is centrally funded and has senior sponsorship. It is an established part of the University's Five Year Strategy and supports a number of the institution's published objectives. For example, the expansion of the institutional repository 'U-Now' is listed as a goal under the Social Responsibility objective. Providing access to a rich supply of resources has a direct impact on student satisfaction through the Excellence in Education objective. Open Nottingham also feeds directly into the Internationalisation strategy of Knowledge without Borders.

Much is spoken about the potential for OER to help institutions realise cost efficiencies and to broaden the educational experience of their students, but much less is proven. This presentation helps to address that balance by providing evidence that OER does save time, does reduce costs, does broaden the horizons of students and can help to advance pedagogic practice.

This presentation offers two case studies focused on the use and re-use of OER at Nottingham. The first includes survey results from 51 students from the School of Geography which demonstrate how re-using openly licensed third party materials can save time with no compromise on quality. The case also includes survey results that demonstrate that students are using OER to learn about their subject, to revise and are citing them in assessments.

The second case study shows how 45 students at Nottingham's campus in Ningbo, China have been using open resources to support their studies, to learn how to evaluate academic resources and to support them on their journey to becoming global citizens.

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Fishing Through the Ice: Connecting the Worlds of Learning and Work

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

collaboration, emloyers, employability, implementation, learning, learning, work-based

Employability and efficiency are key drivers for UK Higher Education Institutions in light of current Government Higher Education policy and the economic context. At the same time, Universities are challenged with responding to student demands in a competitive HE marketplace. How can these be reconciled to safeguard value-added services for students?

The University of Nottingham's Centre for International ePortfolio Development SAMSON project is sharing services to promote student employability and to streamline how information is shared between students, universities and employers for the benefit all.

This presentation will describe three pilots which address communication and collaboration between the parties involved in work placement and Career and Professional Development to demonstrate how a more joined-up and satisfactory experience can be realised for students, employers, academics and administrators.

Developing the Mahara ePortfolio system at the University of Nottingham to support Biosciences Masters students on industrial placement has resulted in more productive employer interest in the work-based project and a tangible increase in quality engagement, freeing up practitioner time to ensure students are pastorally supported, focussing on improved retention and achievement.

Engineering Foundation Degree students at the University of Derby are using PebblePad to record their Personal and Professional development. Students share aspects of this with their employers who gain access and provide feedback through an ePortfolio-neutral portal which they helped design.

A shared placement service using federated access is enabling the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University to run a joint placement recruitment service for SME postgraduate placements for a European project.

The success of these pilots is achieved by focussing on a piece-by-piece implementation of ePortfolio functions and targeted engagement activities and user analysis. Users only see targeted information when they need to see it, and using existing systems removes the need for large-scale system implementation and training. Use of open standards and federated technologies allows learning information to flow to the relevant systems and be accessed securely and appropriately.

This presentation will identify the methods used to secure successful engagement from academics, students and employers for targeted work-based learning techniques for a 21st Century workforce.

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Using Audio Notetaker as a lecture capture tool to enhance the delivery of learning and teaching

Author

Timothy Morgan

Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

benefits, blendedLearning, changingLearnerExpectations, distanceLearning, educatingTeachers, effectiveness, efficiency, implementation, lectureCapture, onLineLearning, openAccess, professionalDevelopment, respondingToChange, sharing, support, technology, tools, VLEs, workBasedLearning

Background

Institutions are exploring more systematic use of 'technology-enhanced' and 'blended' approaches to delivery of learning and teaching. We had been looking at the issue of lecture capture and were aware that some dyslexic students use a lecture-recording tool, Audio Notetaker, which allows much more interaction and therefore engagement with the recording than a standard media player. For instance, they can review audio phrase by phrase, select key quotes for assignments, and reduce content to key concepts and thoughts.

We were interested firstly whether this kind of software could be used by the lecturer as a capture tool, as it allows greater control over what is included in a VLE upload than other solutions. We were also interested whether the general student population, rather than just dyslexics, could benefit from using the audio note-taking approach.

Description

The publishers supplied a new version of Audio Notetaker which allows us to capture the lecture in the background without any extra effort by the lecturer. We used this to record a variety of lectures, workshops and seminars, editing them where appropriate and then uploading them to the VLE.

All students can view files using the downloadable viewer, and some have their own copies of Audio Notetaker. Initial student feedback has been positive.

There have been unanticipated benefits; for example being able to refer students to recorded Q and A sessions on assignment briefs and placement requirements on professional courses, has been particularly useful.

Structure of session and activities

This is not a hands-on demonstration, but it will be easy to follow what is happening as the software is very visual.

- Brief outline of the context of the trial

- Demonstrations of:
  - how to record a lecture
  - how to easily edit your lecture before uploading on to the VLE
  - how students can work with the recorded lecture

- Outline of future applications of Audio Notetaker for student research projects

- Open discussion

Intended outcomes for participants

To understand how Audio Notetaker can be used for recording & editing lectures and the ways students use the material produced.

Emerging Practice in a Digital Age – institutional approaches to changing practice

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

caseStudy, collaborativeLearning, convincingInstitutions, costBenefit, CPD, design, disruptiveTechnologies, educatingPractitioners, effectiveness, efficiency, embedding, emergingPractice, evaluation, evaluation, evidence, handheldDevices, implementation, institutionalImplications, institutionalProblems, JISC, learnerAcceptance, learnerExperience, learningAndTeaching, legalAndEthicalAspects, locationAwareTechnology, mainstreaming, mobileLearning, mobileTechnologies, personalOwnershipOfTechnology, planning, professionalDevelopment, QRCodes, quality, quickResponseCodes, respondingToChange, socialLearning, technology, training, uptake

This workshop will provide an introduction to a new JISC guide 'Emerging Practice in a Digital Age' aimed at promoting effective practice by practitioners in higher and further education in use of technologies sometimes considered to be disruptive. The workshop will explore how universities and colleges are using social software, mobile technologies, virtual worlds and other innovative technologies to effectively improve the quality of the learner experience. It will consider the institutional implications of using and embedding these technologies for learning and teaching, including what support staff and learners require, legal and ethical aspects and quality assurance/enhancement processes.

There has been rapid and exponential growth in personal ownership of technology and in the use and development of new technologies. The sometimes viral nature of their adoption presents new opportunities and challenges for institutions and practitioners. The emphasis and locus of control has shifted away from the provision of hardware to enabling learners to use their own devices to support their learning. Learners are making use of the social and collaborative opportunities afforded by these new technologies in their everyday lives and in their informal learning. This workshop will explore how institutions are harnessing the technologies and experimenting with their use in formal learning situations, moving from small-scale innovations to evaluated and embedded practice. A case study from the University Campus Suffolk (UCS) will explore the systematic design and implementation of an institutional project designed to enhance the likelihood of staff embedding effective location aware (mobile learning) activities in their teaching. The technology solution is QR Codes, a low threshold technology, while the applied implementation framework is based the Collis and Moonen (2001) 4 Es model. The case study identifies the drivers for mobile learning at UCS, the coordinated approach across a number of teams, and the emerging impact. The discussion will draw on the participant's earlier activities and a set of group activities providing a collective critique of the UCS approach in terms of its strengths and weaknesses and a set of recommendations from participants exploring how we can make things happen with respect to mainstreaming disruptive technologies at institutions.

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Preparing for a Thaw – Seven Questions to Make Sense of the Future

Authors

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Theme

Preparing for the thaw

Tags

challengesForTheFuture, conjecture, foresight, futureproofing, respondingToChange

Asking questions about the future is a timeless human activity that is brought to the fore in times of change. Learning technology is clearly situated in our wider environment and how we engage with it is bound up with our culture and history. This means that when looking to the future, the 'wisdom of crowds' is likely to provide as rich a picture of what is to come as expert opinion.

In this workshop we will follow Ratcliffe (2002), who declared "foresight is largely a matter of conjecture, and at the heart of conjecture lies conversation" by introducing participants to a simple conversational technique known as "Seven Questions" (Amara and Lipinsky, 1983). Seven Questions uses a series of open questions with just-enough structure and a framing to encourage respondents to look beyond current technology fashion or economic gloom, and to identify the issues that they see as important as Learning Technologists. Following a brief introduction, workshop attendees will then apply the technique through peer interviews, recording responses for later analysis by the workshop facilitators. We intend that attendees will take back to their institutions and projects a practical understanding of the application of "Seven Questions" as a method to stimulate creative discussion and a tangible example of what it can produce.

The facilitators will blog a personal view (on the JISC CETIS website) on the collected responses on the same day as the workshop. Further online contributions over the period of the conference will also be encouraged.

Attendees' experience and perspectives during this session will contribute to a more thorough analysis and presentation – considering key themes, points of agreement and disagreement etc – which will be published on the JISC Observatory shortly after the conference, along with the anonymised raw material.

This workshop will be of particular interest to practitioners and those with an institutional and policy role. It will appeal to those who are interested in methods to stimulate creative discussion in their institutions and who value opportunities for the co-creation of insight.

Background on "Seven Questions": http://hsctoolkit.tribalhosting.net/Seven-questions.html and www.speculist.com/archives/000019.html

JISC Observatory: http://observatory.jisc.ac.uk/

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Led by the Knows? Critically reading learning technology case studies

Authors

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

CPD, evaluation, evidence, marshallingEvidence, methodology, professionalDevelopment, research, rigour, training

Background: Case studies are generated by research activity, by trials, projects and initiatives, and often find their way into published collections of case studies. They can then be used as 'raw material' by book publishers, funding agencies and advisory bodies in learning technology as effective ways to test concepts, influence policy and inform practice. However no-one involved in the process, from the original researchers and developers, through the editors and publishers to the practitioners and managers, seems to take a step back to question what inferences are made by readers and how these inferences are shaped, deliberately, accidentally or unconsciously, by the forces, processes and choices along the way.

Ideas to be explored: Two sets of case studies relating to learning technology will be distributed to participants. These will form the basis of the activities and discussions within the workshop. Questions include:

Individual case studies: what is missing in any specific case study? how and why is a case study different from a conference presentation or a journal paper?how have the images, graphics and design shaped the readers' perceptions of the case studies?

Case study collections: how has the editorial or introduction shaped the readers' judgments about the case studies? how were the case studies selected for a specific case study publication? what is missing in a collection of case studies? what should a writer write and how should an editor edit? what seems to be the purpose of a case study collection?what should we infer from a collection of case studies? what confidence can we have in our inferences and their relevance? what are the spread, depth and quantity of case studies around a given topic needed to substantiate an argument or make a point? what are funders trying to say; what have they not said, what has not been selected?

Intended outcomes for participants: This workshop is intended to enhance the ability of participants to critically evaluate case studies and transfer insights into the context of their own organisation. Participants should leave the workshop better equipped for the informed and critical reading of learning technology case study collections.

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The challenge of managing staff in the workplace: exploring the affordances and opportunities of machinima for supporting managers in higher education

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

collaboration, CPD, CPD, design, development, immersiveLearning, institutionalProblems, machinima, professionalDevelopment, resources, staffDevelopment, support, tools, training

In any organisation, a key role of management involves handling staff grievances and maintaining discipline in a fair and consistent manner (Hook et al. 1996). In order to do this, it is generally recognised (in accordance with the principles of industrial relations) that fair procedures are in place and observed (Industrial Relations Act 1990). To this end, it is important that managers are familiar with such procedures and able to follow them appropriately and fairly.

To date, the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) has provided all managers with relevant training in this area through regular, mandatory face-to-face workshops. Covering a wide range areas including gross misconduct, individual grievance, academic misconduct and poor performance, these sessions are run at regular intervals throughout the year and attendance is mandatory. However, while this conventional training strategy has proved effective in disseminating relevant information and guidelines to managers, weaknesses have been identified in its failing to provide timely ongoing support as disciplinary issues arise.

To remediate this support gap, a cross-disciplinary team in the DIT – encompassing professional trainer/subject matter expert, higher education managers, elearning developers and audio-visual experts – are exploring the affordances of virtual technologies by developing an online resource which supports managers in their handling of disciplinary and grievance issues. Drawing from a series of realistic scenarios which were subsequently developed into "screenplays", multiple technologies are currently being used in the implementation of this tool including Articulate Studio 9.0, and Microsoft PowerPoint. To enhance the interactivity, immersion and realism of this scenario-based tool, embedded machinima are being developed using the virtual world Second Life (www.secondlife.com).

This e-poster will describe the rationale for developing this resource – with particular reference to theme 4 of the conference and the challenges facing higher education organisations today at the human resource level – and underpinning design strategies and technologies. Lessons learned to date and future work on the project will also be outlined.

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Designing for learning with open educational resources

Author

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

carpeDiem, curriculumDesign, design, learningDesign, OER, OERs, openEducationalResources, openness

Carpe Diem is a well-researched and well-rehearsed workshop for academic course teams to design learner-centred online courses together (www.le.ac.uk/carpediem). Based on earlier work by Professor Gilly Salmon, Carpe Diem has been developed, delivered and evaluated by the Beyond Distance Research Alliance at the University of Leicester over the past 5 years. More than 50 Carpe Diem workshops have been delivered at 16 institutions in the UK and worldwide. The impact and benefits of the approach have been well documented in the literature (Salmon et al, 2008; Armellini and Jones, 2008; Armellini et al, 2009; Armellini and Aiyegbayo, 2010). Carpe Diem shares some features with other interventions, such as Oxford Brookes' 'Course Design Intensives' (Dempster, 2008).

The increasingly high profile of open educational resources (OERs) across the sector and the University of Leicester's participation in three OER projects since 2009 (OTTER, OSTRICH and TIGER) have influenced the design and delivery of Carpe Diem workshops at Leicester and beyond. In particular, the 'storyboards' of modules and programmes have seen the incorporation of OERs from multiple sources and in different formats. A resource audit, conducted early on in the design process, helps identify the materials needed for the course and where they can be obtained from as OERs. Course teams' awareness of the availability of OERs has been raised enormously as a result of this change.

Drawing on experiences at Leicester and at other universities in the UK and globally, we show how 'designing for openness' informs and enhances Carpe Diem workshops today. By the end of the session, participants will be familiar with this approach to learning design and the pedagogically sound inclusion of OERs in the curriculum. Examples of designs with open resources will be shared and discussed. We will invite reflections on how openness is likely to inform, and perhaps shape, the curricula of the future.

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Learning Design, Teacher Spontaneity and the Coordination of Activity

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

adaptability, design, implementation, IMSLearningDesign, planning, reusability, scavenging, sharing, technology, tools

The IMS Learning Design specification attempts to map the practice of teachers in organising and coordinating learning activities online. In specifying a sequence of activities which can be instantiated by a server, runtime environments for IMS learning design (e.g. the CopperCore server) have typically added a layer of inflexibility to the specification by compiling design files in such a way that those files cannot be changed at run-time. Whilst the dynamic adaptation of learning design files is not precluded by the specification, the run-time facilities have imposed this as a technical limitation.

In this paper we argue that whilst the distinctions that have emerged in the work on IMS learning design (and its predecessor the Educational Modeling Language) are valuable, the technological infrastructure of its implementation have contributed to difficulties in the adoption of the technologies and the comprehension of the principles of Learning Design by teachers. This technological infrastructure, which largely dates before 2005, is in the process of being transformed by new technological environments built around web APIs and JavaScript. These new technological environments present possibilities for the dynamic authoring and adaptation of sequences of activities within the broad schema of IMS Learning Design in a way which is more adaptable and accessible to teachers.

Amongst the technical developments surrounding the growth of web APIs and JavaScript is the increasing popularity of 'widget' technology. Using the Apache Wookie widget server, we demonstrate how learning activity sequences specified through an IMS Learning Design file and using Wookie widgets can be sequenced and adjusted both at design-time and during run-time. In particular we highlight how recent developments to Wookie widget technology permit this by making widgets 'event-aware', whilst also allowing for dynamic and late-binding of JavaScript libraries.

In conclusion, we argue that web APIs and JavaScript together with Wookie widgets can bring the sequencing of Learning Activities easily 'to-hand' for teachers, allowing them to improvise in the light of classroom events, and according to individual learner needs.

Migrating to Moodle in a year

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

automation, blackboard, caseStudy, deployment, development, freeSoftware, integration, learnerExperience, migration, moodle, openSource, userExperience, vle, webct

Making things happen: After taking the decision in 2008 to move from the proprietary VLE, WebCT/Blackboard, the University of Kent adopted Moodle in 2009 and has fully integrated it with its Student Data System, Online Prospectus, and Timetable system to enable automatic module creation and enrolment.

This presentation will consist of a case study covering the challenges faced in deploying, integrating and supporting a fully integrated VLE used by 18,000 students across multiple campuses and various countries. This transition has provided the technical capacity and staff support that has seen VLE usage increase from less than 50 % of Kent's taught modules to over 90 % in two years.

This presentation also provides an overview of the tools and processes developed, and the feedback gathered from stakeholders to shape these tools, which allowed Kent to switch VLE in a single summer with minimal interruption of service. In addition the presentation also covers the wide array of support applications built in-house that further demonstrate the power and flexibility an institution gains, and associated cost savings, when using an open source VLE.

We will be introducing our data synchronisation system, Connect; the Migrator that helped us move content from our previous VLE; and the Rollover application, which is a Java-based version of Moodle's Import feature designed to handle larger courses. The Migrator in particular has now been used by several other Universities to rapidly speed-up their own switch away from WebCT and to Moodle. If time permits we will also demonstrate some of our other in-house developments, such as "simple file upload", CLA management software, and a front-end for our Adobe video streaming server.

We aim to address the organisational, financial, and technical concerns of delegates who plan on moving to Moodle; inspire other institutions to achieve more from their VLE; and show how an open source VLE can offer considerable cost savings whilst maintaining freedom of choice.

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Peer observation for distance learning e-tutors: evaluation of a cross-programme trial scheme

Authors
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Theme
Research and rigour

Tags
distanceLearning, earlyResearch, onlineTutoring, peerObservation, peerSupport, professionalDevelopment, sharingPractice, staffDevelopment

This short paper discusses the methodology and outcomes of a trial peer observation programme for distance learning e-tutors which was introduced in the spring and summer terms (2011) across three online distance-learning programmes at the University of York. The trial aimed to scope out a framework for peer observation, which could be used to support the professional development of e-tutors and their skills development.

Building on the insights from the COOLAID and PROPP models, the trial was designed to support tutors in developing their skills through a process of mutual exchange between observer and observee. The observee selected the focus and materials for the observation – in this way establishing ownership for this process. As a departure though from established models, participants who opted in to the trial were assigned to random pairings in the role of observer and observee, bringing colleagues together from different disciplinary backgrounds. This was intentional in exposing participants to different pedagogic perspectives on tutoring skills.

Evaluation was focused on which combinations worked and which did not, and the range of contextual information that should be shared prior to the observation in order to support an effective exchange between participants. Whilst guidance and assessment criteria was made available, participants were encouraged to develop their own strategies for delivering feedback.

This paper reports on the findings from the research, which are drawn from structured interviews with observers and observees after the completion of the observations. The interviews explored the process of peer observation, focusing on the development of the informal contract between participants, which determined the focus and criteria for the observation. The research also explored the richness of the dialogue between participants and the opportunities for learning which arise from this process – specifically the actions arising from the observation exchange which contribute to the professional development of e-tutors.

The findings will contribute to the emerging evidence base on peer observation and will help to inform the development of an institution-wide programme for online tutors at the University of York – influencing the way that the programme is structured and how guidance is offered to participants.

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Making the case: demonstrating how your innovation is good value for your learners, your colleagues and your institution.

Author

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

dissemination, evaluation, implementation, return-on-investment

Many working in the field of learning technology have a hunch that the innovations introduced to enhance learning also increase efficiency for the institution. However articulating this in a persuasive way is difficult. Measuring the tangible impact a new process has on stakeholders can be problematic and palpable outcomes of change can be difficult to capture. Often we are not doing something directly comparable to previous practice, yet there is still an expectation from colleagues that direct comparisons can be made. In tough times, the temptation for those resistant to change is to avoid risk and continue doing what has always been done. Persuading sceptics to change from, for example, a paper-based process to a digital one can be arduous. If better metrics were in place to make comparisons, we may see increased uptake of the innovations we believe in. In an era when institutions are under mounting pressure from a variety of stakeholders to increase efficiency and reduce costs, it makes sense to evaluate return on investment. A key challenge is how to evaluate and present findings that persuade a reluctant audience.

The workshop will introduce research undertaken for an educational software company focussing on the software's impact on enhancing learning whilst increasing efficiency for learners, tutors and institutions. Practitioners (lecturers and learning technologists) from 15 institutions in the UK and Australia were interviewed. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and questions focussed on processes the software was replacing and the impact this had upon:

- Administration (e.g. reduction in paper, improved tracking of assignments);
- Practitioners' time (e.g. reduction in travel);
- Improving the learner experience (e.g. timely feedback).

The workshop will introduce the methods used and share the challenges in identifying the benefits of one process over another. Participants will discuss measuring impact and demonstrating tangible improvements. Participants will be encouraged to contribute their experiences, offering practical solutions to identified challenges.

The participants will:

- Examine and share methods of measuring effectiveness;
- Develop a series of questions to take away for use at their institution;
- Discuss effective dissemination to key institutional decision-makers.

Ways of Using eTextbooks in Higher Education

Author
Rose Leighton

Theme
At the sharp end

Tags
attitudes, ebooks, etextbooks, higherEducation, iPads, tabletPCs, teachers

Previous research on eTextbooks often focuses on experiences of students with eTextbooks offered as a substitute for paper books (Berg, Hoffman, & Dawson, 2010; Estelle & Woodward, 2009; Levine-Clark, 2006). Both the content of the eTextbook and the role the lecturer plays are not often looked into, even though lecturers are an important link in the usage of digital material (Nelson, 2008).

In this study a theory on the ways lecturers want to use eTextbooks was developed based on research by the Dutch Secondary Education Council (VO-raad 2010) and on interviews with experts on the subject of eTextbooks. The following ways of using eTextbooks were expected to be found:

- The eTextbook is a replacement of the paper book; nothing else will change.

- Transfer of knowledge will take place in eTextbooks; lectures can be used for other purposes

- The eTextbook allows teachers to compose their own ideal multimedia course materials.

- The eTextbook contains all information about a module (like an electronic learning environment).

- The eTextbook is a social tool; students can use it to learn together.

Twelve lecturers of the Media, Information & Communications programme at the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences explored, during two weeks, several examples of eTextbooks, that were selected according to criteria found in previous research and in interviews with experts. Then interviews were held in which the participants elaborated on how they felt each type of use would suit them and why.

The results show that the participants see three ways of using eTextbooks. They (1) would like to be able to compose their own multimedia eTextbook based on multiple sources, they (2) want possibilities to interact with that eTextbook (e.g. quizzes, updating) and they would like to (3) use the eTextbook as a social tool, that enables students to be in touch with eachother and their lecturer. The participants felt these ways of using eTextbooks do not rule eachother out, they are mutually reinforcing. These findings show that these lecturers are not likely to use eTextbooks that are an exact substitute of the paper book.

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Are we in open country?

Authors

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

change, content, oer, openeducation, practice

Before about 2008, it seems, most UK higher education took place behind closed doors. Now we seem to be in open country. The harsh wind of public scrutiny blows through our lecture halls. Ideas have been set free to roam in social media. The terms open content, open courseware, open scholarship, and open research have galloped into the everyday discourse of academia. But what exactly does 'open' mean? Is learning open to all, or just wider open to the few? Is it open to the market forces that increasingly dominate thinking about university education, or openly shared in a democratic knowledge free-for-all? While the rush to release continues, critical thought about has lagged somewhat behind.

In our work with open content projects, we have observed many benefits to the open release of academic content, though the benefits as well as the barriers are often tied to existing modes of institutional practice. What we have failed to observe as yet, is a change in practice among academic staff. We also worry that despite impressive statistics for access and download of open learning resources, we know far too little about who is using content, and to what advantage. And we are concerned at the increasing tendency to conflate the availability of content with access to learning.

While the OER movement concerns itself with infrastructure and discovery mechanisms, the funding system and arguably the infrastructure of UK HE is being torn apart. What, if anything, can OER and the emerging body of critical thought surrounding it contribute in the expected wasteland?

This panel session will explore these issues within an open debate, triggered by a series of blog posts from the presenters that will combine to create a discursive introduction. Themes we expect to arise include:

- Why are our institutions suddenly talking about being open?

- What will an academic career look like if everything you write is made openly available?

- How should/could we accredit open learning i.e. learning achieved

- through access to and study of open educational resources by independent learners?

- What will learning be like if all educational content is openly available?

Standards-based Assessment – Creating Innovative, Interesting, Interoperable Resources Using QTIv2.1

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

adaptiveQuestions, assessment, feedback, interoperability, openSource, openStandards, repurposing, reusability, standards, support

At the time of writing, the Question and Test Interoperability specification version 2.1 (QTIv2.1) is expected to become final in the next few months. This marks a significant stage in the development of the specification, which is currently the only standard for assessment resources. In the UK, the JISC has funded a number of projects supporting QTIv2.1 over the last few years, and these have led to the development of tools for rendering and creating questions, and the accumulation of a body of expertise in creating resources using QTIv2.1 and converting resources in other formats into QTIv2.1. The flexibility of assessments specified using QTI is particularly important within HE as an increasing number of coursework assignments are being converted into electronic assessments. In order to maintain the quality of feedback, sophisticated use of the arbitrary complexity of answer conditions and associated feedback messages becomes necessary.

This workshop will begin with a brief demonstration of some assessment scenarios and question designs from a variety of disciplines. A range of tools will be demonstrated, including:

- Editors for creating and editing questions

- Editors for creating and editing tests,

- Tools for converting questions in popular formats to QTIv2.1,

- Renderers for running the questions and assessments, both stand-alone and embedded in VLEs.

A hands-on session, which will occupy the majority of the workshop, will then enable participants to try the tools for themselves. The tools and examples used in the workshop form part of a new support site designed to assist users in adopting QTIv2.1 and can be freely used and, where appropriate, downloaded from the site.

Participants will be able to explore the range of questions offered by the QTI specification, particularly the support for adaptive questions and the ability to target feedback at specific misconceptions. This is of considerable importance given the recent upsurge of interest in the provision of rich feedback to aid learning. They will also have the opportunity to experiment with the conversion tools, using samples provided or their own collections of questions.

XtLearn: Collect from anywhere, share with anyone

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

benefits, collaboration, collections, design, distanceLearning, effectiveness, efficiency, FE, funding, futureproofing, institutionalProblems, learningObjects, learningPlatforms, OER, onlineCommunities, onLineLearning, openContent, peerSupport, problemSolving, productivity, quality, reducedFunding, replacingNationalCentralServices, repositories, research, reusability, rigour, savingMoney, savings, scalability, scavenging, schools, sharedServices, sharing, socialBookmarking, socialNetworking, technology, tools, VLEs, web2.0, workBasedLearning

Practitioners are faced with a huge variety of content sources with different search/browse techniques, different formats, compatibility issues with learning platforms; rights issues to resolve, and differences in the techniques/terminology involved in using that content in local operating environments. These overheads – particularly significant for those without advanced IT skills – represent an additional burden to the work of evaluating the content itself. Content suppliers, meanwhile, face a complementary set of problems.

These issues create constant pressure towards central, homogenised services for content, dominated by large organisations, with supply often tied to learning platform or determined by funding agency. But such sites are themselves numerous and can be perplexing. Adding a layer between source and practitioner can reduce channels for informed support, feedback, and other options/services. Crucially, valuable communities of practice which build up around specific content sources can be lost during the process of aggregation into monolithic repositories.

In this demonstration, participants will be introduced to a new approach. Modelled on social bookmarking, but incorporating features of significant and specific use to educational practitioners, the service enables users to gather resources from any useful source (including their own) into customisable collections which can be shared with colleagues and learners.

By differentiating between the URLs of resource information pages and the end resources themselves, the system provides different presentation options for peers and learners. Compatibility with educational interoperability standards, including Scorm, and with VLEs, such as Moodle, is built-in. Clear licensing information provides reassurance that all resources, free or subscription, can be used appropriately. Other features include detailed usage reporting and Shibboleth authentication.

Gathering/collecting of resources is achieved via a browser button (enabling any web page to be added to a user's collection), or via a "collect" button within the resource information pages of selected content sites. Users can also view and copy other users' collections and resources.

Participants will learn, in an environment where funding is limited and much competed for, how this flexible, powerful approach can preserve diversity, widen choice, lower the resource management burden and provide an efficient, secure way to use free and paid-for content.

Open STEM: open educational discipline-specific resources for professional development in HE

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

CPD, disciplineBased, educatingTeachers, HEA, JISC, learningDesign, OER, OMAC, onlineCommunities, professionalDevelopment, selfDirectedLearning, staffDevelopment, UKPSF, web2.0

In 2009/10 the University of Exeter obtained HEFCE funds for a JISC-managed Phase-1 project called Open Exeter to develop an institutional infrastructure for OER (Browne & Newcombe, 2009). It concluded that for OER to become sustainable institutionally "all the elements of OER must be seen as an integral part of scholarly endeavour" and that "the OER agenda should be formally incorporated in accredited staff development programmes" (Browne et al, 2010). Subsequently, the presenters in their role as academic developers at the University of Exeter obtained further funds for a HEA-managed Phase-2 OER project called Open STEM to develop discipline-specific professional development resources for educators in HE.

This demonstration will present the fruits of the work from the Open STEM project. These include professional development activities and case studies drawn together in an overarching pedagogical package, suitable for use and repurposing by academic developers and individual academics. Our evaluative studies show that discipline-specific resources can significantly help to improve the engagement of HE teachers with the UK Professional Standards Framework.

To promote a sense of exploration as an individual through these resources, our Educational Technologist has built our pedagogical package in the Open University's VLE "LabSpace" and coupled this with Prezi, a free online canvas-based presentation tool, as a front-end. We will demonstrate these resources and the benefits of this approach for self-directed exploratory online learning. Participants with a network-enabled device and a free LabSpace account will be able to engage in a hands-on exploration of these resources and we will provide physical copies of a selection of our academic development activities with which delegates can engage. We will conclude with some narrative evidence regarding the effectiveness of our discipline-specific resources for academic development.

Our primary aims are that delegates use, evaluate, repurpose and share our array of openly available academic development resources and that educational technologists experience an effective, visual method for reducing the linear nature of a commonly-used VLE.

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Effectiveness of technology to support work based learning: the stakeholders' perspective.

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

onLineLearning,
professionalDevelopment,
workBasedLearning

Higher education provision typically requires learners to physically attend sessions on campus. The economic climate has changed significantly over the past few years in the UK and globally. Inevitably changes to student funding and the increased competitive nature of the job market have impacted on University teaching. The use of work based learning (WBL) is an alternative flexible form of learning that attempts to tackle these issues. It enables students to learn whilst they work, addressing the funding issues, and enhancing their employability through the acquisition of higher professional qualifications. Often such WBL programmes are designed, delivered and supported from the view of the student and academic staff with little consideration of other stakeholders such as employers, workplace mentors and professional bodies and the input they can bring to enrich the learning and teaching provision. This paper presents the findings from a survey conducted among stakeholders from all four pillars of WBL, namely the learner, the academic environment, the workplace and the external context. Online questionnaires and interviews were carried out with students, tutors, program leaders, employers and professional bodies from four postgraduate programmes at the university. The results show that while there is a reluctance to embrace technology among some academic staff, students are generally positive about using the technology. The survey also demonstrates that there is a lack of creativity and imagination in the use of technology, where often platforms such as virtual learning environments are used simply as repositories for presentation slides, handouts, etc. The results of the study conclude or rather remind all involving parties to pay more emphasis on quality of online program delivery by embracing technology and use it in novel and imaginative ways to provide a learning and teaching provision fit for the twenty first century.

Cloud Learning with Google Apps for Education

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

cloudLearningEnvironment, cloudServices, collaboration, educatingTeachers, google, handheldDevices, learnerExperience, learningPlatforms, OER, schools, sharing, uncourse, web2.0

This workshop will explore the potential of the Google Apps for Education suite to create a "Cloud Learning Environment". Key topics will include:. Institutional scale of adoption and feedback from the recent "guug11" community event. Economic and contractual considerations for cloud services. Disruptive applications of the Google technologies. For institutions that have "Gone Google", the relationship between Google Apps and the Virtual Learning Environment. Feedback to Google on future directions for the Google Apps suite This will be a highly interactive session, with delegates being encouraged to propose and vote on topics for discussion using the Google Moderator tool. Whilst this will not be a hands-on session per se, delegates will benefit from having a passing familiarity with the Google Apps tools.

Over 10 million students now use Google Apps for Education, the free cloud computing service from Google. William Florance leads on Google Apps for Education in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Loughborough University migrated 17,000 students to Google Apps in December 2009 with near universal take-up of Google Calendar, and two thirds of students using Google Docs for collaboration. Over 5,000 former students have used Loughborough's ground breaking Google service for alumni – effectively a user driven e-Portfolio. Martin Hamilton led this project and also organized the Google Apps for Education UK User Group ("guug11") community event in February 2011. Mark Allen from Ed in the Clouds has used Google Apps to build collaborative learning environments for around 12,000 school children, some as young as four. Even before they can write, pupils can be publishing material to the web and submitting their work for peer review, and yet the tools also need to be accessible and intuitive to the most techno-phobic schoolteacher.

Through attending the workshop, which will include considerable discussion after a brief introduction, delegates will develop a deeper understanding of: institutional considerations that may apply where cloud services are concerned: educational applications of the Google Apps suite ranging from schools to Universities: areas where Google Apps offers a radically different proposition to conventional institutional IT systems; working with Google.

Providing structure and promoting personalised learning within an 18 day wilderness walk: Following a PebblePad pathway

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

authenticAssessment, eportfolio, evidence, experience, learningDesign, personalLearning, planning, preparation, webBasedLearningSystem

Outdoor Education courses at La Trobe's Bendigo Campus provide diverse opportunities for students to develop skills to work in the outdoors. One of the final activities that students undertake at the end of their first year Outdoor Education Degree is an 18-day walk in the Australian High country – The Long Walk. The walk is designed to facilitate the transition from student participant to a position of future educator and leader in outdoor education activities. The transitional process cannot easily be captured using traditional modes of assessment, and so this presentation details the use of innovative learning and assessment tools designed to support and record the learning journey resulting in highly personalised expressions of the experience which are both formatively and summatively assessed.

The new learning design was based upon authentic assessment (Darling-Hamond and Snyder 2000) constructed from the perspective of making things happen when preparing for an extended journey. This created a focus on social constructivist learning approaches which encourage students to make meaning of their own learning (Jonassen 2000) through a process of active reflection and integration (Kolb 1984) and individualised representation of their learning experience.

Students were engaged in developing a self regulated learning process (Butler and Winne 1995) through the development of personalised action plans within the PebblePad personal learning system. The Action Plan set personalised timelines for the completion of their tasks, including a preparation and research webfolio (eportfolio) that provided evidence of the completion of various tasks involved in preparing for the long walk.

A key element of the assessment design was the scaffolding of tasks (Sutherland, Brotchie and Chesney 2011) that engaged students in personalised representation of their learning through narrative accounts enriched by video, images, audio and comments from others. At the completion of the walk students returned to the webfolio to reflect on their experience and draw on information to finalise an authentic artefact of their experience.

This presentation further reports on the outcomes of the students' and lecturers' experience of engaging in the new learning design. Analysis of student feedback on the new assessment tasks indicates students thrived on the capacity to represent their learning in an individualised format and engage in self-regulated learning.

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eSubmission – UK policies, practice and support

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

assessment, design,
educatingTeachers, efficiency,
esubmission, evaluation,
evidence, feedback,
futureRoles, implementation,
institutionalProblems,
marking, planning, policy,
recordingAchievement,
savingMoney, staffDevelopment,
technology

Background

eSubmission is being implemented in universities within the UK. The term eSubmission is used very widely to cover a range of activities which include:

- eSubmission

- eMarking and eFeedback

- eReturn

- Plagiarism deterrence and detection

The process of implementation is generally occurring in departments and Schools with institutional changes in policy and practice following afterwards. This paper provides a snapshot of current policy and practice in UK Higher Education (HE) and identifies the key issues relating to administrative efficiencies, assessment regulations, enhancing feedback and academic attitudes to online making. Esubmission, eMarking, eFeedback and eReturn can save time, save trees, save the energy used for travel and save storage space. eFeedback can enhance learning if it provides more legible, timely and comprehensive feedback to learners (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006) There is usually a mixture of practice between "e" and paper in the assessment process.

Description

An online survey was circulated to the Heads of E-Learning Forum (HeLF, 2011). This forum is a network of senior staff in institutions engaged in promoting, supporting and developing technology enhanced learning. It has over 125 nominated Heads from UK Higher Education institutions. The survey was developed by a group of HeLF representatives who are currently implementing eSubmission in their institution.

Results of work

Only 21% of institutions have an institution-wide policy on eSubmission with 18% have separate regulations and 24% included in existing regulations. The most common technologies used are Turnitin integrated within the VLE or the institutional VLE rather than "home-grown" technologies. Academic attitudes to eSubmission are more positive than those for eMarking and eFeedback. The variety of staff development includes 82% face to face and 82% how-to-guides with 58% providing online video/screencasts. Examples of good practice were identified as well as a range of issues. The survey results were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods.

Conclusion

Effective eSubmission has the potential to increase efficiency in organisations by improving their business processes and eFeedback may enhance learning. The survey outcomes, sample guidelines and examples of

good practice can inform institutional adoption and changes in policy and practice.

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Dynamic Learning Maps: fusing curriculum maps with personal learning

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

2.0, changingLearnerExpectations, costBenefit, curriculumMaps, design, institutionalProblems, integration, JISC, learnerVoice, planning, professionalDevelopment, recordingAchievement, reflectiveLearning, sharing, Web

Background

This session is a demonstration and 'hands on' session using Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). DLM provides a new way to present and navigate curricula, with interactive and participative features, intended to match the changing experiences and expectations of many modern learners. DLM has been developed at Newcastle University in a recently completed project in the JISC Transforming Curriculum Delivery through Technology Programme.

Curriculum maps have important roles in supporting learning, teaching, quality assurance and curriculum management (Harden, 2001). Some of the specific drivers for DLM include improving understanding of complex curricula, identifying gaps and unintended duplication in teaching, promoting 'cross-modular leaning' and supporting generic skills and personal development.

Approach

We developed DLM to provide a navigable map of formal curricula, with support for personal preferences for displaying these in a range of ways including hierarchical text, lists and visual mind maps. DLM also supports personal and community-driven maps, which are clearly differentiated from the core curriculum. Learners can extend their maps and make connections between topics. Personal reflections and files can be added to topics in the maps. The technical approach is to use standards (RSS, XCRI, Leap2A etc) to integrate with other systems and draw in existing data sources (e.g. module catalogues), where these are available.

Activities

1. Demonstration of Dynamic Learning Maps (10 mins) -Participants will be provided with handouts with supplemental information about DLM, a practical user-guide and a summary of evaluation findings.

2. 'Hands on' use of DLM (15 mins) -Participants will be able to try out DLM on their wifi enabled laptops/mobile devices OR work in a group with one of the facilitators to develop a map.

3. Plenary and Feedback (5 mins)

Intended outcomes

- Understand how technology can enhance curriculum maps

- Be able to identify ways in which personal learning can be linked with interactive curriculum maps

- Understand the key benefits of dynamic learning maps to stakeholders

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Moving from Quality Assurance to Quality Enhancement: A Toolkit for Technology Enhanced Learning

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

assessment, blendedLearning, caseStudy, design, educatingTeachers, enhancement, evaluation, evidence, expectationsOfInstitutions, futureRoles, HEA, implementation, institutionalProblem, mitigatingRisk, onLineLearning, planning, QAA, Quality, qualityAssurance, rigour, scalability, staffDevelopment, technology, toolkit, web2.0

Background

With the increase of student fees and the increasing use of blended learning it is becoming even more important to ensure quality assurance processes enable and support the effective use of e-learning.

The Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement in e-Learning Special Interest Group (QA-QE SIG, 2011) is a group of practitioners, both academic and professional support staff, interested in using technology to enhance the quality of learning, teaching and assessment. The SIG is funded by the HEA and has members from institutions throughout the UK. The SIG has produced a Commentary and Critique of the QAA Code of Practice: Section 2 (QAQE SIG, 2011). The SIG Steering Group have also been developing a Toolkit to provide a "framework and tools for academics and support staff to use when considering employing technology to enhance course delivery. It enables practitioners to:

- Ensure that all aspects of the course design, delivery and maintenance processes are addressed by their institution's quality assurance procedures; and

- Effectively harness the potential of the quality assurance procedures to drive forward the enhancement of the students' learning experience.

The toolkit is designed to meet the broad continuum of delivery patterns from blended delivery to fully online distance courses." (QAQE SIG, 2011). Four Institutions have used the Toolkit and their findings informed its further development.

Ideas to be explored or skills to be acquired or problems to be addressed:

The Toolkit has 3 sections on Planning and Design, Monitoring of Implementation, Review and Redesign.

Participants will:

- Develop an understanding of the Toolkit

- Discuss the implementation of the Toolkit in the context of their institution

Intended outcomes for participants:

Participants will work in groups to develop an action plan of how they could use the Toolkit in their own context and institution.

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The Virtual Masterclass: a sustainable approach to international professional CPD

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

collaborativeLearning, distanceLearning, professionalCPD, sustainability

This presentation reports on the design, implementation and evaluation of an online 'Masterclass' for young trainee haematologists. The Masterclass was based on collaborative/peer learning and made use of existing, relatively well-tried tools and methods, However this group of participants had relatively little experience of either online or collaborative approaches. The Masterclass formed part of a European-funded project "Harmonisation of Haematology Training across Europe" (H-Net). 25 trainees took part, divided into 5 groups each with a 'mentor' (an experienced haematologist). Groups were mixed: no two group members shared the same nationality (all discussions and materials were through the medium of English). Mindful that both online and collaborative learning might well be unfamiliar to participants, care was taken to prepare them for the experience. Trainees and mentors met face-to-face on one occasion for three hours prior to the commencement of the Masterclass. Study materials based on real, complex cases were prepared by experts in the different sub-areas of haematology. Cases were divided into weekly sets of slides, each set ending with questions carefully designed to stimulate discussion. In all, six cases were studied over a six-month period, divided into blocks of between two and six weeks. While study material was presented weekly, groups were required to produce reports at fortnightly intervals. Following each case, case authors received the groups' reports and at a set time made an online presentation (recorded and made available for further viewing) discussing the case and giving feedback to the groups. Three tools were used in an integrated way; a social networking site (NING) for the main learning and discussion; a conferencing tool (Elluminate) for feedback; and a portfolio/content management tool (Confolio) to store study materials, background literature and group reports. Evaluation, based on data gathered on three key aspects (the quality of learning; the experience of the learners; and the cost in time and resources of preparing materials and mentoring groups) suggests this is a sustainable model of international, online, collaborative learning for young medical professionals. The factors which contributed to its success will be analysed and their applicability to other professional groups discussed.

Exploring the use of ipads for assessment and feedback – an institutional snapshot

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

assessment, feedback, ipads, mobileLearning

This short paper will look to disseminate the findings from an institutional project looking at the use of tablet PCs (Apple Ipads) to enhance the assessment and feedback process. Many educators have positively heralded the arrival of a new generation of tablet PCs into the classroom. The easy-to-use nature and variety of educational apps available on the iPad has made this portable device one of the most discussed educational aids of recent times. However, currently there is very little research offering critical and theoretical discussion into the effective educational use of such tablet PCs; the ways in which they can enhance education as well as the identification of any possible limitations of their use. Throughout the 2010/11 academic year Middlesex University has been investigating the use of e-assessment and e-feedback across the Institution. A small number of action research projects have been looking into the affordances and constraints of iPads when used by faculty in the context of e-assessment, e- feedback, and e-reflection. The projects have been conducted within a range of disciplines including: sports science, nursing, psychology, education, and business studies and draw on different themes, such as mobile marking, video and audio feedback, and significantly shortening the feedback loop. This presentation will critically discuss the projects highlighting benefits as well as challenges faced by faculty when embedding such technology within their work practices. The challenges include: costs, compatibility issues, and issues with the hardware.

School trip photomarathons: Engaging primary school visitors using a topic focused photo competition

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

engagement, informalLearning, motivation, museums, photos, schoolVisits

The aim of this study was to explore the potential of photomarathons as a fun and engaging way to support students making connections between what they learn during a museum visit and what they learn in school or other contexts. Sixty primary school pupils aged between six and eleven took part in a photomarathon activity during their trip to the Roman Baths. The children were split into three groups. During their visit each group undertook three one-hour activities, namely: a photomarathon, a hands-on artefact exploration activity with a museum education officer, and a school-group handheld audio tour. For the photomarathon activity the children worked in subgroups of three and, for 15 to 20 minutes, took photos on three themes around the museum. At the end of the available time the children submitted a set of photos, one photo for each theme. Photo galleries for each theme were then generated and made available on a website for the pupils. The students voted for the best photo in each theme gallery, and a small prize was awarded to the members of each team that took the winning photo. A week after the visit the children were asked a number of questions concerning their visit. The photomarathon was spontaneously mentioned by 41% (23/56) of the children as the best activity in their visit to the Roman Baths, which was more than any other activity they engaged in during the visit. Overall, of the three activities the children liked the photomarathon the best. There were no age differences in how engaging the children found the photomarathon activity and all children regardless of age were able to take photographs.

Learning Through Online Discussion: A Framework Evidenced in Learner's Interactions

Author

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

groundedTheory,
learnerExperiences,
marshallingEvidence,
onlineDiscussion, rigour

Online learning, often supported through online discussion, is not only a popular means of supporting off-campus learners, but increasingly has a place within campus-based learning courses. Laurillard (2002) and others suggests that there are assumptions being made about learning through online discussion that have yet to be fully tested and therefore there is a need to examine this area further. Tutors and learners may benefit from having a greater insight and understanding of how engaging in asynchronous online discussion presents opportunities for learning on an individual and a collective basis.

This research study focused on learners' engagement with online discussion and their perceptions of how engaging in online discussion impacts on learning. This paper revisits learning through online discussion and proposes a framework which emerges from the analysis of learners' experiences. A grounded theory approach was used in the collection and analysis of six learner case studies within a higher education setting, exploring learners' interactions in online discussion, and their perceptions of learning through online discussion. Insights into the learners' interactions were provided by the learners themselves through semi-structured interviews. The grounded approach to the analysis of the interviews enabled the learners' voices to be heard in terms of what they thought about learning through online discussion.

The insight enabled through the depth of description from the learners and the examination of the online interactions led to the development of a framework for learning through online discussion. The framework raises the importance of articulation as a key process in learning whilst highlighting the opportunities for collaborative informed thinking by engaging with the ideas of others.

The focus given to the learning process through the framework will be of interest to tutors and learners who use online asynchronous discussion environments for learning.

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Analysing tools to support future learning Programming

Authors

Maryam Kheir Abadi
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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

experience, learningObjects, methodology, research, technology, tools

Teaching programming to 1st year undergraduates in large numbers is challenging. Currently online supported learning is becoming more dominant, even on face-to-face courses and this trend will increase in the future. This paper uses Activity Theory (AT) (Leont'ev 1977) to analyse the use of tools to support learning. Data collection took place during 2008-2010 at Kingston University and involves over one hundred responses. This has been analysed into activity systems (Engestrom 2008) offering a detailed analysis of the use of a number of tools being used (in AT these include physical tools, such as technologies including books, and non-physical tools, such as conversation). When teaching programming to large numbers of students it is difficult to offer one-to-one attention and the reliance on such tools becomes more important. For example, in student responses a good Integrated Development Environment (IDE) is shown to make learning easier and more enjoyable whereas a bad IDE makes the learning experience poor.

Teaching materials, and access to these, were often mentioned positively. These included online communication, discussion boards and video lectures. Using AT offers sufficiently rich detail to identify key interventions and aids the redesign of the learning process. For example, the choice of an IDE for a specific language can have a larger impact than is initially apparent. This paper will report on the data collected to show where simple improvements to the use of tools may have a large impact on students' abilities to learn programming.

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The use of e-book readers in foreign language learning

Author

Natalia Auer

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

design, devices., educatingTeachers, handheld, implementation, informalLearning, languages, mobileLearning, teacherPractice, technology

Technology increases the exposure to a foreign language (Chapelle, 2009). In order to design and implement technology for Foreign Language Teaching, technology has to be informed by research on Foreign Language Learning. This poster presents work-in-progress results of a pilot study aimed to determine how mobile technologies can support foreign language learning.

The study draws on a metacognitive approach for foreign language development (Vandergrift, 2004), which stresses the use of metacognitive strategies: prediction, monitoring, problem solving and evaluation for successful comprehension.

The study addressed the following questions:

- How do foreign language learners use e-book readers' features to assist them in comprehension?

- How do foreign language learners adapt and change their learning styles to mobile learning?

- How can mobile technology be used to enhance foreign language comprehension?

This longitudinal study collected data over a four-month period of 6 students from a Spanish course at a Danish upper school for adult education. The study comprised an introduction to the technology, including the hardware and the software, showing some Internet addresses where e-books both in text and in audio format are available and the files supported by BeBook 'One' e-reader, the model used for the study.

Data was collected via two online questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The first survey focused on the usability of the e-book reader, the second survey focused on the actual use of the e-book reader as a learning tool. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998) and NVivo software. Quantitative data collected from the questionnaires were analysed using univariate analysis.

Analysis of the questionnaires and interview findings revealed four emergent themes: Reading and IT strategies, portability and reading-while-listening mode. Students made use of metacognitive strategies to assist comprehension as defined in Vandergrift (2004). Moreover, they valued portability in foreign language learning since it enables spaced learning. According to Karpicke & Roediger (2010), spaced learning enhances memory. Furthermore, students perceived the possibility of simultaneously listening to and reading a text very useful to learn pronunciation and to increase attention which is an appropriate strategy for language acquisition (Richards, 2008).

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How can we use YouTube to benefit teaching and learning? Lessons for Teachers of the future in Higher Education

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

criticality, deeplearning, educatingTeachers, futureRoles, HigherEducation, professionalDevelopment, training, userGeneratedResources, video, YouTube

This short paper reports on a project undertaken to understand ways of using YouTube to benefit undergraduate teaching and learning. The paper builds on previous work which identifies a model showing ways YouTube can be used to enhance critical teaching and learning (Clifton and Mann 2010). The model is demonstrated through a website which can be used in training delivery or self-directed learning. This will be of interest to those who aim to integrate multimedia delivery, such as the use of YouTube, in their face to face or blended learning delivery. The model offers guidance for those who wish to integrate YouTube sites into online subject guides and VLEs.

Training workshops, giving the opportunity to explore this model, were delivered to groups of staff and students in a range of faculties in one University. Attitudinal data was collected through online questionnaires completed by participants before and after the sessions and observational data was collected throughout the sessions. Emergent thematic analysis of the data collected revealed a number of key lessons for Higher Education teachers of the future. Examples of the potential of YouTube to enhance learning, as well as potential limitations are proposed. Findings show some key differences in attitudes to user-generated resources and knowledge. Differences between staff and student approaches to using YouTube provide useful insights to inform teaching development and training. This study has the limitations of the speed of increase in digitality and the rate of change in this field increases the potential for any research to become quickly outdated from its context. The research was successful as an evaluation of attitudes to using YouTube as a learning resource. The findings are useful both as basis for further research and as material for training to develop teachers of the future.

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Working with Academic Staff on Podcasts: Scaling creative collaboration between technologists and academics

Author

Morris Pamplin

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

caseStudy, collaboration, e-Learning, evaluation, iTunesU, lectureCapture, m-learning, mobileLearning, onlineLearning, podcasting, scalability, video

Mobile learning is a hotly debated topic; mp3 players, phones and tablets form a major part of our every day lives, and yet they have not fulfilled their potential on campuses (Reader et al 2010). While e-learning and m-learning may not be universal, and may not have caused quite the disruption in teaching and learning practices which they heralded (Blin and Munro 2008), however, podcasting is now established as an important medium in higher education.

The results of many pilot studies are encouraging, demonstrating that students value the effort academics put into podcasting, that they access recordings, and that this can improve their learning. The number of universities which have implemented institution-wide podcasting initiatives is growing rapidly. Academics' reactions to using the technology are also often positive, even while they realise that the benefits are not instantaneous (McLean and White 2009). There are a number of theoretical models for educational podcasting, cataloguing the different forms and types of podcasts and levels of engagement with them. There are therefore plenty of models of good practice for initiating and implementing educational podcast projects.

This paper argues that podcasting presents unique challenges to academics and learning technologists, many of which have been documented in case studies (e.g. Robson and Greensmith 2009, DeSantis et al 2010). Conventional change management strategies, however, do not address the issue of how to scale the need for support, encouragement and creative collaboration between academics and other staff (Islam 2008). Aside from issues of media storage and digital asset management, support staff also need to explore ways of working with academic colleagues to create flexible and engaging content. This paper suggests that there are many creative alternatives to the lecture capture method, while recognising the time constraints that result from podcasting's emerging status as a supplement, rather than alternative, to other teaching methods.

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Is the VLE reborn?

Authors

Gill Ferrell
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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

costBenefit, curriculumDelivery, earlyResearch, efficiency, JISC, learnerExperience, mobileLearning, openSource, reducedFunding, reliability, remoteLearning, scalability, sustainability, vLE

Despite well-publicised reports of its demise, evidence emerging from the JISC Transforming Curriculum Delivery Programme projects across further and higher education suggests that the VLE (or adaptations of it) are very much at the forefront of curriculum innovation. Rather than being sidelined by 21st century technologies, does the VLE in fact play a key role in curriculum development? In short, is it time to rethink the role of the institutional VLE?

Based on published outcomes from a range of very different projects in FE colleges and universities (JISC 2010), the symposium will encourage delegates to 'think differently' about the institutional VLE, covering topics such as:

- Is the VLE simply one system among many for supporting and managing learning or should the VLE be positioned at the very heart of curriculum development?

- Can the VLE be made flexible enough to support individual needs? Do we need to look for alternatives in some contexts?

- Can the VLE be a tool for innovation? Is its current use limited by our perceptions of what a VLE can do?

Representatives of project teams that have focused on rethinking or reconfiguring their VLE will represent a wide spectrum of views. Arguments that the VLE is at the heart of institutional practice will be opposed by alternative approaches to supporting and managing student learning. In the process of presenting their case and answering questions from the floor, a panel of four representatives will outline attempts to develop the VLE in their own institution or department to achieve particular ends – for example, reducing costs and time spent on administrative tasks, improving the experience of remote learners, overcoming challenges of increased student numbers and poor engagement, and opening up new ways of delivering the curriculum. The session will be chaired to enable audience members to bring forward their own views on the future of the VLE.

Delegates will take away a short publication on outcomes from the JISC Transforming Curriculum Delivery through Technology Programme and will have the opportunity to engage with VLE-based innovations that may be applicable to their own context.

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Unlocking the Hidden Curriculum: Using Augmented Reality as an Engaging and Immersive Learning Resource

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

biodiversity, FE, handheldDevices, immersiveLearning, JISC, learningPlatforms, mobileDevices, mobileLearning, schools, selfDirectedLearning, smartphones, tabletPCs, technology, tools, web2.0

This session will describe a JISC-funded project exploring the use of 'Augmented Reality' (AR) as an academic resource, enabling learners to interact and engage with biodiversity data on the University of Exeter campus. Augmented Reality technologies enable detailed, computer-enhanced layers to be added to the physical world, offering potential to provide significant contextual and immersive learning experiences for a range of audiences, including undergraduate students. These technologies are predicted to become widespread in coming years (Johnson et al, 2010), with Hamilton & Olenewa (2010) noting AR offers a discovery-based approach to learning, with opportunities for an immersive experience (Hawksey, 2010).

To form the basis of the technical implementation, the Layar AR application was selected; discussion will cover reasons for this choice over other technological platforms, along with its shortcomings and the difficulties of implementation.

The University of Exeter is a unique location rich in flora and fauna, and has been conceptualised as a 'living laboratory'. Following work with undergraduate Biology students to develop a dataset featuring 30 species of plants and animals, a pilot AR application was tested with a small number of undergraduate students and interested others – with some exciting outcomes, but also highlighting technological and conceptual challenges. Despite these issues, it has been possible to test the potential of AR with several different groups, supporting both the formal and the informal curriculum and engaging both with the University and the wider community. Feedback from students, educationalists and other stakeholders has been very positive, with much further interest and excitement amongst industry professionals across the world. Additionally, we are working to establish trials with local interest groups covering our three distinct user groups – undergraduates, the general public and primary school children – to gain feedback on ARs interest and user-friendliness.

The contents of a toolkit of educational resources will be highlighted, enabling practitioners to understand the potential and future uses of AR technology, whilst also providing support materials to enable the development of current technology within new contexts. Whilst this relatively infant technology is yet to achieve mass-market awareness amongst target audiences, the rapid pace of innovation offers inventive applications and user-interface improvements every day, all suggesting that this technology has real potential for informing high quality learning.

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The Bloomsbury Media Cloud – a shared digital media service

Author
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Theme
Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags
cloud, collaboration, media, podcast, service, shared

In January 2010, JISC awarded funding to a consortium of six medium-sized HE institutions to develop a shared media service. The Bloomsbury Media Cloud project builds upon a portfolio of shared licenses and collaborative approaches to support learning, teaching and research, and aims to establish a media platform that participating institutions can use to store and promote digital media.

The main objective of the project was to identify and use Cloud-based tools and open access technology to store and distribute digital content, particularly podcasts and vodcasts. The project investigated a range of options, including the creation of a shared iTunes U site and establishing a consortium-wide media service. The suitability of a shared platform that meets the needs of the consortium partners was reviewed.

As part of the project, the team developed a number of podcasts and vodcasts featuring interviews with pro-vice chancellors, academics, researchers and students. Documentation of those recordings resulted in several good practice guides to assist staff/students in producing quality media to support learning and teaching, institutional promotion and marketing. The consortium is now using the open-source media platform MediaCore as a repository for digital content and as an environment to showcase new and existing material. As a hosting solution, a cost-efficient, Cloud-based infrastructure was selected for improved resilience and scalability.

The consortium has considerable experience in managing a successful shared e-learning service over seven years. This new addition to its portfolio is now ready for deployment across the partner institutions. Lessons learned from the project show that users are finding the flexibility of the tool a vast improvement on alternatives for media distribution (e.g. iTunes U) and repositories (e.g. SharePoint). Initial evaluations from consortium members indicate that not all participating institutions currently have a need for a media service as they either are locked into existing arrangements with system providers or do not produce digital content. It is anticipated that such members will benefit from cross-institutional sharing of content. The flexibility of the Bloomsbury Media Cloud service can complement, replace or integrate with existing services, making the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Authoring rich, adaptable learning resources using GLO Maker

Author
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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
authoringTool, generativeLearningObjects, GLOMaker, learningObjects, learningResources, oERs

Background

Developing high-quality learning resources is a perennial challenge for technology enhanced learning. The increasing emphasis on open educational resources (OERs) has added a requirement that these resources should be reusable and adaptable. There is a need for authoring support that is well grounded in pedagogical theory. The GLO Maker authoring tool was developed to meet these demands.

Description of approach

GLO Maker produces generative learning objects (GLOs). These are multimedia learning resources focused on one clear objective that are designed to be reusable and adaptable. The 'deep structure' of pedagogical functions is represented in the 'drag and drop' Planner interface. The tool then automatically produces a default set of screen layouts that represent the surface structure for this design (these defaults can be overridden by the teacher/designer). Each layout organises a set of multimedia components, e.g. text, pictures, animations, audio and video; the assets are added using a simple interface. These 'generative learning objects' can be loaded back into GLO Maker by local tutors who wish to adapt the learning objects.

Structure of session and activities

The structure of the session is a demonstration of GLO Maker with commentary. The demonstration will illustrate the main features of GLO Maker including: the reusable learning designs in the tool; using the drag and drop 'Planner' interface to plan or adapt a learning design, and using the 'Designer' to turn this into a working learning object. The demonstration will also illustrate how the output is delivered as XML driven Flash that can be delivered on the Web or an institutional VLE. The demonstration will be accompanied by a full commentary that explains both the features of the tool and the conceptual underpinnings for these features.

Intended outcomes for participants

An appreciation of GLO Maker as a practical tool that they can use, and its conceptual underpinnings. The participants will be pointed to the extensive online support provided in the GLO Maker Website – www.glomaker.org/ and community Wiki – http://glomaker.wetpaint.com/.

One Year On: Nottingham Trent University's SHARE Project reflects on the challenge of engendering a digital sharing culture

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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
convincingInstitutions, efficiency, implementation, institutionalChange, learningAndTeachingStrategy, learningObjects, learningResourceSharing, organisationalLandscape, professionalDevelopment, repositories, respondingToChange, staffDevelopment, training, VLEs

At ALT-C last year, the JISC funded SHARE (Supporting Harnessing and Advancing Repository Enhancement) Project, presented a paper on the policies and processes it was developing to encourage staff at Nottingham Trent University (NTU) to share their learning resources via learning repositories implemented within its Virtual Learning Environment. This project has now ended and this paper reflects on the challenges and successes with respect to the interventions outlined last year.

In these economically challenging times, higher education institutions are beginning to consider processes that can help to develop learning that is more efficient specifically in the area of Open Education Resources (OER) (OECD 2007). Recently, the Online Learning Task Force's (OLTF) report to HEFCE highlighted in its recommendations the importance of OER,

Investment is needed for the development and exploitation of open educational resources to enhance efficiency and quality (OLTF 2011, 7). However, university engagement in learning resource sharing varies. For example, some institutions such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Open University, have developed a high profile in this area where as other institutions may appear to have a lower profile but have tried to engender a culture of sharing via institutional strategic interventions (Connole 2007) for embedding e-learning, as exemplified at NTU.

This paper reflects on how training and support over the last year has influenced staff engagement in a culture of sharing, by developing illustrations of best practice, raising awareness of OER, particularly JorumOpen and Merlot (integrated within NTU's VLE) and developing knowledge of copyright issues, specifically Creative Commons licenses. It contemplates on how the project's link with JISC's OER programme has affected technology enhanced learning at NTU in the area of open course design. Examples of how schools within the university have strategically addressed the issue of resource sharing, encouraged by an incentive project set-up by SHARE are provided. The paper concludes by reviewing evaluative data on attitudes to sharing resources inside and outside of NTU and the use of learning repositories, collated from a questionnaire and a focus group of learning repository users.

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Demonstration of the ALLE learning resources for Digital Literacy

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

aLLE, digitalLiteracies, gloMaker, learningObjects, oers

Background

Students now have extensive access to online resources. However, they often lack critical and informational skills required by formal education to selectively retrieve and use this online material. The JISC-funded Anytime Literacies Learning Environment (ALLE) project has developed resources to assist in developing these digital literacy skills (http://alle.tvu.ac.uk/), using the LLiDA Framework (www.academy.gcal.ac.uk/llida/) as a basis.

Description of approach

ALLE provides flexible learning in the form of learner journeys; each comprises a series of learning objects which enables learners to develop their learning and literacy skills. Three journeys are available: The Academic Journey, the Library Journey, and the Digital Tools Journey (http://hermes. tvu.ac.uk/learnerjourney/index.html). Existing interactive, multimedia materials (Open Educational Resources) are combined with new learning objects created using the GLO Maker learning object authoring tool (www. glomaker.org). The learning objects are brought together in a cohesive and structured framework which provides a single access point to all the materials.

Structure of session and activities

The session will outline the challenges these resources were developed to meet and how ALLE meets the challenges. The demonstration will show the three different 'learner journeys' and how the individual learning components are structured, yet linked within these journeys. The demonstration will illustrate components for selected digital literacy skills. It will then show how the components can be rapidly adapted (Boyle, 2009) by individual teachers to meet their particular curriculum and learner needs using the GLO Maker tool. This is particularly important in areas such as the Library Journey where tutors or librarians may want to adapt the resources to reflect the local situation.

Intended outcomes for participants

Appreciation of the rich resources for digital literacy available from the ALLE project and how they can access embed and adapt the resources to support their own learners in personalised digital literacy acquisition, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Matchmaking Learning Technologists and Flourishing Collaborations: The Case of The Bloomsbury Colleges

Authors

Tim Neumann
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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

collaboration, costBenefit, practitionerResearch, reflectivePractitioner, sharedServices, technologyAdoption, technologyManagement

In 2004, six medium-sized Higher Education (HE) Institutions, financially and academically autonomous colleges of the University of London, discovered the power of collaboration and formed The Bloomsbury Colleges (TBC). Since then, Birkbeck College, Institute of Education, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Royal Veterinary College, School of Oriental and African Studies and the School of Pharmacy expanded their co-operation to a wide range of academic and administrative activities, many of which where driven or facilitated by one of the consortium's celebrated successes: BLE, the Bloomsbury Learning Environment, a collaboration of the colleges' e-learning advocates, thus showcasing the beneficial power of the learning technologist role.

The ePoster outlines the organisational setup of the BLE collaboration, how learning technologists contribute to the diverse activities across the consortium, and what we can learn from this: The presentation will illustrate various benefits, from capturing economical savings to improving practice, and it will illuminate the significance of learning technologists as networkers, consultants and supporters of intra- and inter-institutional collaborations, positioned between management, administration, technology, teaching and research.

The most visible output of our collaboration is the virtual learning environment, which is used by five of the colleges in a shared licence agreement. Similar agreements are in place with other learning technology products, such as blogs and wikis, lecture capturing, and web conferencing. Building on these economic and administrative benefits, the colleges share their awareness-raising, training, maintenance and support efforts – and they go the extra mile by starting, co-ordinating and running funded research and infrastructure projects. Our recent Appropriate and Practical Technologies project introduced a research-informed methodology for implementing technological innovation (Neumann et al., 2010) and has sparked several spin-off projects. The methodology now forms the underlying approach to learning technology adoption and staff development at the colleges.

Several awards and recognitions, such as a Learning Technologist of the Year commendation (Schmoller, 2010) and an appraisal from HEFCE (Webley, 2009), provide evidence for the thoroughness and success of the TBC and BLE collaborations, which we believe can serve as a model and last but not least puts the Learning Technologist profession into the limelight.

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Design and Development of a Learning Design Suite to promote Technology Enhanced Learning within the Learning Design Process

Authors

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

curriculumDesign, design, learningDesign, learningObjects, onLineLearning, planning, repositories, research, sharing, technologyEnhancedLearning

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) has become a fundamental consideration in the design of academic programmes. In this presentation Brunel's Learning Technology Team introduce a facility, entitled the Learning Design Suite, to facilitate the promotion and integration of TEL at different stages of the programme design process. The Suite is a deliverable from Brunel's participation as an institutional partner in the JISC-funded Open University Design Initiative (OULDI).

The intention of the Learning Design Suite is two-pronged. Firstly, the Suite provides programme design teams with an interactive learning object which they can use to learn more about the curriculum design process. Secondly, the Suite contains an online resource database which showcases examples of good use of technology in learning and teaching, which the design teams can consult during their course design activities. In addition, a guide has been created for each resource to give the reader a brief overview of the resource, its benefits and also how it can be applied in an educational context.

The presentation will include a demonstration of the Learning Design Suite and how the resources have been categorised to provide easy access to appropriate tools & case studies which the academic staff users could utilise to enrich their programme. The dissemination of the resource within the Schools and its uptake by course design teams will be discussed.

Squaring the Triangle: Institutional Compliance, Academic Freedom and the Student Voice

Author

Alice Bird

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

change, High, initiatives, institutional, institutional, policy, representation, stakeholder, stakes, TEL

This paper will explore synergic and conflicting influences impacting on high stakes technology enhanced learning initiatives, in the current higher educational environment. Financial restrictions and requirements to assure quality are promoting institutional policies of compliance. At the same time, the academic community continues to exercise the right to freedom in choosing approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Meanwhile, students are demanding influence on policy backed up by NSS results and higher tuition fees.

The current exploration of triumvirate influences is drawn from a three-year case study aimed at implementing electronic submission of coursework at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). The paper highlights synergies and conflicts impacting on the direction and outcomes of the case through three main stages; feasibility study, pilot study and early stage implementation.

The findings from the case provide an insight into the additional responsibility of institutional project leaders to achieve consensual conclusions when working to meet the needs of three influential stakeholders of equal status.

At LJMU, development of institutional policy is ongoing. However, it is hoped that the findings to date will promote a better understanding of issues in 'squaring the triangle' when faced with influences of institutional compliance, academic freedom and the student voice.

The Development of a Rich Multimedia Training Environment for Crisis Management: Using Emotional Affect to Enhance Learning

Authors

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

affectivePresentation,
behaviouralCapture,
crisisManagementTraining,
eventNetworks, goldCommanders

PANDORA is an EU FP7-funded project developing a novel training and learning environment for Gold Commanders, individuals who carry executive responsibility for the services and facilities identified as strategically critical e.g. Police, Fire, etc., in crisis management strategic planning situations. A key part of the work for this project is considering the emotional and behavioural state of the trainees, and the creation of more realistic, and thereby stressful, representations of multimedia information to impact on the decision-making of those trainees. Existing training models are predominantly paper-based, table-top exercises, which require an exercise of imagination on the part of the trainees to consider not only the various aspects of a crisis situation but also the impacts of interventions, and remediating actions in the event of the failure of an intervention. However, existing computing models and tools are focused on supporting tactical and operational activities in crisis management, not strategic. Therefore, the PANDORA system will provide a rich multimedia information environment, to provide trainees with the detailed information they require to develop strategic plans to deal with a crisis scenario, and will then provide information on the impacts of the implementation of those plans and provide the opportunity for the trainees to revise and remediate those plans. Since this activity is invariably multi-agency, the training environment must support group-based strategic planning activities and trainees will occupy specific roles within the crisis scenario. The system will also provide a range of non-playing characters (NPC) representing domain experts, high-level controllers (e.g. politicians, ministers), low-level controllers (tactical and operational commanders), and missing trainee roles, to ensure a fully populated scenario can be realised in each instantiation. Within the environment, the emotional and behavioural state of the trainees will be monitored, and interventions, in the form of environmental information controls and mechanisms impacting on the stress levels and decision-making capabilities of the trainees, will be used to personalise the training environment. This approach enables a richer and more realistic representation of the crisis scenario to be enacted, leading to better strategic plans, and providing trainees with structured feedback on their performance under stress.

Leadership, scholarship and learning technology: sustaining teacher engagement in innovative practice

Author

Linda Creanor

Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

leadership, learningTechnology, professionalDevelopment, scholarship

When times are tough and change is rife in higher education, implementing and sustaining pedagogical innovation becomes an even greater challenge than normal. Against this background of uncertainty, a robust, cost-effective model is required to underpin a culture of scholarship and creativity, particularly around the use of learning technology. This short paper will outline the approach adopted by one Scottish university to the strategic embedding of innovation.

Informed by research on transformational change as it relates to higher education (Chapman, 2002) and the concept of situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), a framework for continuing professional development has been developed based on a distributive leadership model which acknowledges and recognizes leadership irrespective of position (Lefoe, 2010). The purpose of the framework is to map a scholarly journey from new lecturer to experienced teacher, with opportunities for continual engagement in innovation.

A key aspect of the framework is the Caledonian Scholars and Associates initiative which has been inspired by similar developments internationally. It aims to encourage lecturers at different stages in their careers to take ownership of innovation and address learning and teaching priorities in a creative way, with an appropriate use of technology. Submissions are peer reviewed by international experts who are familiar with the University and the aims of the initiative. On becoming Caledonian Scholars and Associates, either as individuals or in small teams, lecturers are acknowledged as opinion leaders and change agents in learning and teaching, thus developing their own leadership capacity and improving the quality of the student experience. In addition, the evidence-based approaches supported by the initiative help those involved to develop a scholarly profile and go some way towards addressing a number of promotion criteria.

By emphasising the role as much as the project through providing clear status and recognition, it has been possible to increase staff engagement in embedding innovation with minimal resource implications. Drawing on findings from two evaluations of the 53 participants and 38 projects, this paper will outline the impact of the initiative since its launch in 2008 and reflect on its future sustainability in an increasingly challenging HE environment.

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Representing and sharing learning designs: A design support environment

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

collaboration, educatingTeachers, learningDesign, productivity, professionalDevelopment, reusability, semanticWeb, sharing

In this workshop participants will work with a prototype intelligent tool, the Learning Design Support Environment (LDSE), which has been developed to facilitate innovation in teachers' practice through collaboration and sharing, particularly in a climate where time and resources for individual experimentation are increasingly frozen out.

Ideas to be explored

The aim of the LDSE is to assist teachers in

- Representing, analysing and testing their own learning designs,

- Adopting and adapting others' learning designs,

- Sharing the fruits of their own teaching ideas and experience.

To provide such support, the LDSE contains formal (systematic) definitions of the key terms and concepts of learning design and includes a knowledge base: a representation of the relationships among these concepts, based on findings from the research literature on the design of teaching and learning (e.g. Littlejohn and Margaryan 2006; David 2009; Donald et al. 2009; Laurillard and Masterman 2009). However, given the fluid, context-sensitive nature of many concepts, the LDSE also uses semantic Web technologies (Charlton and Magoulas 2010) to enable the teaching community to develop its own definitions and, hence, progressively develop the knowledge base as a collective artefact.

Through working with the LDSE, participants will have the opportunity to test how effectively they can represent their pedagogic intentions in a learning design. They will also have the opportunity to redefine some of the properties stored in the knowledge base, explore the advice and guidance on offer from the LDSE, and reflect on the LDSE's pedagogic analysis of their design.

Intended outcomes

Participants will:

- Develop a critique of the idea of a community-owned knowledge base for learning design;

- Contribute to an understanding of how such a tool might support collaboration and reuse in learning design;

- Gain insights into the potential role of an AI-based tool in promoting greater rigour and precision in the articulation of educational concepts.

The workshop will be facilitated by members of the project team, and also complements the symposium proposal submitted by Beetham et al.

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Embracing a new approach to delivery in the digital age.

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

caseStudy, EBL, newApproaches, onlineLearning, podcasting, respondingToChange, screencasting

This paper documents a project at Sheffield Hallam University in the Faculty of ACES, Information Systems group during the academic year 2010/11. The project aimed to investigate an alternative approach to the traditional lecture model. The module 'Business Analysis in the Workplace' was used as the vehicle for the project. It is a level 4 undergraduate module delivered on a range of computing degrees designed to introduce students to business processes, analysis skills, communication skills and data modelling techniques. Traditionally, the module has always been organised each week with one lecture timetabled for over 100 students followed by smaller workshop groups on average with group sizes from 15 to 25 students in each. Influenced by Donald Clarks keynote speech 'Don't lecture me!' at Alt-C (2010) and several academic journals, books on the use of the lecture this paper documents a case study of an alternative delivery approach. The traditional delivery approach of one lecture with one workshop was changed to one workshop with e-learning support, adoption of key principles from the enquiry based learning approach and use of audio/visual learning technology to deliver key subject content. The paper outlines the approach, the benefits that the approach provided and discusses the issues/challenges that it raises from a practitioners perspective. A short summary of results is given taking into account staff feedback, student end of module reviews and grades achieved. Reflecting on the case study experience and interpretation of outcomes; the paper suggests a number of opportunities for further research and development.

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Students as Change Agents in a Digital Age

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

changeAgents, collaboration, curriculumDesign, futureRoles, learnerExperience, managingChange, respondingToChange

The student experience, and relationships between students, their institutions and learning, should be at the heart of the role of technology in learning and teaching in the digital age. A recent NUS/HEFCE report recommends that, 'All institutions should have an ICT strategy … and students should be actively engaged in the process of developing that strategy'.

This session will review innovative and effective ways in which groups of highly engaged students can realistically go much further than developing strategy, by acting as change agents with regard to technology provision and utilisation, and curriculum review and regeneration. This is a powerful means of working, since many 21st century students are well-informed, aware of the potential of the technologies they use, and creative in the ways that they work. In collaboration with staff, they are fully capable of making decisions, leading agendas for change, finding solutions to problems, and acting responsibly to improve the use of technology with their peers.

Case studies from a range of institutions and sectors will illustrate how students have been taking responsibility for change in many different ways. Such ways of working go far beyond the complaints of students in the NUS/HEFCE data that many staff need additional training in technology use; students themselves take on this training role, develop resources, undertake research, strongly influence the forms of technology that are made available for learning and teaching and student support, act as peer and academic mentors and contribute to the professional development of staff. In addition, they make an effort to understand and respond to the diverse needs of their peers.

The cases illustrate a theoretical model of student engagement in bringing about change in learning and teaching and exemplify different ways in which students can be empowered to influence practice. These range from students having a voice, to being involved in feedback and making recommendations through institutional structures, to being actively involved in bringing about changes in provision through technology. To support the practical implementation of change agents in new contexts, guidelines for establishing 'students as change agents' initiatives will be presented, alongside discussion of the challenges, pitfalls and overall benefits and excitements of staff and students working in partnership to promote new ways of working with technology.

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Stepping beyond the paradigm wars: Pluralist methods for research in learning technology

Authors

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

paradigms, qualitativeResearch, quantiativeResearch, researchMethods, researchTraining

This paper outlines a problem we have found in our own practice when we have been developing new researchers at post-graduate level. When students begin research training and practice, they are often confused between different levels of thinking when they are faced with methods, methodologies and research paradigms. We argue that this confusion arises from the way research methods are taught, embedded and embodied in educational systems. We set out new ways of thinking about levels of research in the field of learning technology. We argue for a problem driven/ pragmatic approach to research and consider the range of methods that can be applied as diverse lenses to particular research problems. The problem of developing a coherent approach to research and research methods is not confined to research in learning technology because it is arguably a problem for all educational research and one that also affects an even wider range of disciplinary and interdisciplinary subject areas. For the purposes of this paper we will discuss the problem in relation to research in learning technologies and make a distinction between developmental and basic research that we think is particularly relevant in this field.

The paradigms of research adopted have real consequences for the ways research problems are conceived and articulated, and the ways in which research is conducted. This has become an even more pressing concern in the challenging funding climate that researchers now face. We argue that there is not a simple 1 to 1 relationship between levels and most particularly that there usually is not a direct association of particular methods with either a philosophical outlook or paradigm of research. We conclude by recommending a pluralist approach to thinking about research problems and we illustrate this with the suggestion that we should encourage researchers to think in terms of counter-positives. If the researcher suggests one way of doing research in an area, we suggest that they should then set out an opposing research approach from another perspective or paradigm. We link this conclusion to the provision of research training and the kinds of curricula that might be offered and we argue against the superficial and box ticking 'coverage' of different standard research perspectives e.g. 'qualitative methods' – 'qualitative methods'

Breaking the ice, an instructional design approach for institutional growth

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

instructionalDesign, learningDesign

Background

This session describes the introduction of an instructional design (ID) process to systematically create new undergraduate and postgraduate educational modules.

BPP have hired a number of instructional designers to develop an ID model used within other parts of the Apollo group for the UK HE sector, drawing upon Apollo's international resources. The approach replaced a previous module development model that failed to deliver courses as quickly as hoped following BPP's receipt of degree awarding powers.

Description of approach used

The project introduced designers to project manage the development of learning activities, with subject matter experts (SMEs) and teaching tutors contributing their subject knowledge rather than leading the course construction.

Underlying pedagogic assumptions include a desire to develop comparable experiences, for those students studying via all course models, whilst allowing for the most appropriate activities to be designed.

The process aims to create learning modules that offer a number of characteristics, including consistent online course navigation, high quality multimedia and a focus on tutors as facilitators of learning.

Results of work done

The introduction of the instructional design process has:

- Created a process for rapid design of educational activities.

- Facilitated the design and development of new modules.

- Allowed for the organisation's learning and teaching strategy to come to fruition, including the full integration of learning technologies.

- Minimised administrative work for SMEs, allowing for designers and tutors to specialise on their areas of prowess.

- Led to lessons being learned regarding international collaboration.

- Changed the balance of who 'owns' programmes between the institution, SMEs and the centralised design team.

Conclusion

Future developments will be considered, including:

- A research project that is underway to evaluate the process via data sources such as student feedback, achievement and interviews with SMEs and designers.

- The continued evolution of the ID process, including its introduction to

the Schools of Law and Health.

Discussion will be encouraged, including:

- What, if any, differences exist between 'Instructional' and 'Curriculum' Design.

- The future of international collaboration on HE module/programme development.

- If centralised 'instructional design' is becoming more common within institutions.

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Are we getting warm yet? The realities of utilising new technology in teaching new lecturers

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

design, educatingTeachers, effectiveness, implementation, institutionalProblems, learningDesign, marshallingEvidence, planning, staffDevelopment, web2.0

This action research study, by teachers of a PgC in Learning and Teaching in HE (PgCLTHE) explores issues in designing authentic learning and assessment activities for the institution's new lecturers. Authenticity is defined as engaging in a learning experience as a student would, with the intention that new lecturers can then re-contextualise this experience in their own future practice, not only the pedagogies, but also the technologies. The PgC LTHE adopts an action research methodology (Coghlan & Brannick 2010). New teachers, as students, participate in action learning sets (ALS) to recognise the benefits of peer support and feedback and the role of social and collaborative learning, appropriately supported by technologies.

Our action research looks at one of the programme's learning and assessment activities – engaging in shared blogs to support reflective practice (Moon 2000) about the professional values of teachers (UKPFS 2006), with a particular angle on the challenges encountered when students engage inequitably in the blog activity. As action researchers we experienced the action learning cycle from different, but complementary perspectives – a lecturer with many years teaching experience but little experience of using technologies, and a new tutor with many years experience of using technologies both as a student and as a learning technologist. Although neither of our perspectives foresaw the design of this reflective activity as being problematic, the reality has required us to re-assess our own practice in designing learning/assessment activities that utilise learning technology.

This research takes a constructivist perspective to explore our experience, student feedback, and our own reflective practice on re-designing what was a face to face learning/ assessment activity into an online collaborative environment, and it explores the assumptions that designers bring to this task based on their prior experiences and emotions.

This short paper will present findings from the study (including focus group data and reflective accounts) and ideas for further re-designing of the blog as a learning activity based on an exploration of the study outcomes.

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Implementation and sustainability of a global ICT company's programme to help teachers integrate technology into learning and teaching in Germany, France and the UK

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

blendedLearning, onlinePlatform, publicPrivatePartnership, sustainability, teacherProfessionalDevelopment, technologyIntegration

This paper will discuss the implementation of the professional development programme "Intel® Teach" in Germany, the United Kingdom and France, as a public-private partnership. The programme is designed to help school teachers effectively integrate technology into learning and teaching and to help students develop key "21st century skills." The implementation of the programme, which has so far involved over 400 000 teachers spread across the three countries since 2004, followed different models in the three countries, as a result of differing national education policies, systems and needs. Data from the external evaluation of the programme in Germany is used to examine the factors on systemic level, which affected the implementation, effectiveness and sustainability of the programme. These factors are grouped into three categories: i) concept transfer, ii) experience transfer and iii) establishing of standards.

Exploring these factors provides a framework for analysing how the changing conditions in the three countries and the global trends in education will influence the further development of the programme. Recent developments in the programme will be discussed, including:

- open-source solutions
- integration of new features (including e-Portfolio);
- improved collaboration and sharing.

The paper will also address the introduction of new content and approaches that target specific current issues in teacher professional development, for example:

- project-based approaches;
- collaboration in the digital classroom;
- technology-based approaches to assessment;
- educational leadership.

The experience from the implementation of the programme through public-private partnerships in different countries shows how such collaborations can shape the educational landscape in a way that makes educational provision more effective and efficient, and of greater relevance and value to students.

The Making Assessment Count (MAC) Consortium – Maximising Assessment & Feedback Design by Working Together.

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

assessment, change, collaboration, consortium, cross-sector, efficiency, experience, feedback, JISC, realisation, reflection, sharing, sustainable, tutor, value, VLE, web2.0

The Making Assessment Count (MAC) project started at the University of Westminster in 2008. It sought to align staff and student expectations of feedback and support greater use of feed-forward approaches. A baseline analysis of staff views in the School of Life Sciences suggested that students did not make strategic use of the feedback they received. A similar analysis of the student position revealed that as a group they felt that the feedback provided to them was often insufficiently helpful. To address this dichotomy, a MAC process was developed in the School of Life Sciences and trialled with a cohort of about 350 first year undergraduate students. The process was based on a student-centred, three-stage model of feedback: Subject specific, Operational and Strategic (SOS model). The student uses the subject tutor's feedback on an assignment to complete an online self-review questionnaire delivered by a simple tool. The student answers are processed by a web application called e-Reflect to generate a further feedback report. Contained within this report are personalised graphical representations of performance, time management, satisfaction and other operational feedback designed to help the student reflect on their approach to preparation and completion of future work. The student then writes in an online learning journal, which is shared with their personal tutor to support the personal tutorial process and the student's own development plan (PDP). Since the initial development and implementation of the MAC process within Life Sciences at Westminster, a consortium of universities has worked together to maximise the benefits of the project outcomes and collaboratively explore how the SOS model and e-Reflect can be exploited in different institutional and subject contexts. This paper presents and discusses an evaluation of the use of the MAC process within Life Sciences at Westminster from both staff and student perspective. In addition, the paper will show how the consortium is working to develop a number of scenarios for utilisation of the process as a whole as well as the key individual process components, the SOS model and e-Reflect.

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Games for creative course design: embedding learning technologies

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

course, courseDesign, design, games, gamesBasedLearning, instructionalDesign, learningTechnology

Background/overview

There is growing use of games-based approaches in teaching and learning, whether through the use of digital or traditional commercial games in a course setting; or the creation of specific educational games aligned to learning outcomes. This has the potential to bring increased engagement and a sense of fun to the learning process, whereas the initial design of the courses themselves (both traditional and games-based) remains a laborious, haphazard or long-winded process; with crucial decisions about delivery mechanisms and learning technologies taking either a back seat, or – more dangerously – leading the design.

This workshop draws on the experiences of using a board game to teach course design skills for distance learning courses at the University of Leicester; and shows how a simple, games-based approach can quickly introduce participants to course design problems and issues, and assist them in appropriate selection of learning technologies to support delivery. This approach can lower barriers for newcomers to course design approaches, and allow quick, efficient choices of learning technologies to be made.

The workshop and structure

The idea of the workshop is to discuss and try alternative ways to get course teams to open their minds to the possibilities, and appropriate use, of learning technology. This will be achieved through an example games-based activity between groups, occupying the bulk of the session; followed by a discussion of the approach, highlighting issues and advantages.

00-10″: Introduction and overview of games-based approach to course design (University of Leicester case study)

10-45″: Game-based activity, in groups. Focus on course frameworks, use of online and offline modes, and choice of learning technology.

45-60″: Discussion and reflection on session, looking at learning technology choices made.

Intended Outcomes

The workshop aims to:

1. show how games-based approaches can be used to stimulate creative curriculum design;

2. discuss the pros, cons and opportunities of face-to-face and online approaches;

3. explore the contextual application of learning technologies to course delivery.

The Distributed, Web 2.0 VLE? Incorporating External Content Platforms into the Institutional VLE

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

distributedPlatforms, futureproofing, learningPlatforms, longTermValue, onlineCommunities, openSource, repositories, reusability, scavenging, sharing, socialNetworking, tools, VLEs, web2.0

The use of institutional Learning Environments has been growing steadily over the past decade and it now seems likely that there are few education institutions in the developed world that don't have some VLE provision (OFSTED, 2009), especially in Further and Higher Education. However, there are also an increasing number of software platforms 'in the wild' that provide educationally useful functions that are either better than those in most VLEs, e.g. Blog facilities, tagging/bookmarking or Photo/Video sharing, or don't have equivalents in the VLE, e.g. Twitter (FutureLab, 2006). This concept of incorporating the systems that people may already be using to generate and share content is one that has recently been taken up by VLE developers themselves, particularly in the Open Source world. For example, the current version of Moodle, 2.1, utilises an extensible repository model that allows users to draw material from external services such as Flickr and YouTube.

One the authors of this paper highlighted that the blurring of boundaries between the 'locked-down' institutional platform and the more organic platforms on the Web was both a great opportunity to use the best tools available and also a potential source of technical and legal/moral issues (Glover & Oliver, 2008). While it doesn't seem likely that the institutional VLE will disappear entirely, it is likely that more of the facilities will be delegated to other platform, perhaps invisibly to the user (Stiles, 2007). This paper will take a brief look back at that original paper and show how that vision has proved both correct and incorrect. It will then show how lecturers at City University London have been making use of external online tools and how the authors and their team have been surfacing this content in the institutional VLE, Moodle, in a structured, attractive and coherent way. The paper will conclude with some recommendations for other institutions about advantages and pitfalls of the approaches taken, suggested platforms to use or avoid, and how best to integrate external content into the institutional VLE. This paper is based upon observations and non-systematic research, rather than a formal research process.

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Accessibility issues in the context of UK Open Educational Resources programme

Author

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

accessibility, OER, teaching, ukoer

This paper discusses accessibility issues in the context of the HEFCE-funded Open Educational Resources (OER) programme, launched in April 2009 as collaboration between the Higher Education Academy and Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) with funding provided by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). UK-based Higher Education Institutions have received support to explore issues such as processes and policies, intellectual property rights, cultural issues, technical requirements and data management. The paper will explore the challenge of creating and repurposing accessible open educational teaching materials and focus on the ways in which this challenge is being addressed within the UK OER programme.

The paper will address accessibility issues which are specific to Open Educational Resources. On the one hand, OERs are embedded within the ethos of open education and open access, which emphasise the need to widen access and remove educational barriers, including any barriers related to accessibility. At the same time, the main difficulty with regard to producing accessible OERs is that the creator of the resource has to design the material without knowing the context of the users of the resource or without being able to control of the environment in which the resource is downloaded, re-used or re-purposed. Overall, we know little about factors which might motivate OER creators and re-users to embed accessibility within their teaching materials for developing accessible OERs. The paper will address those issues by examining approaches to accessibility taken by project holders in the context of UK OER programme. The prevailing attitude was that of viewing accessibility as an afterthought and a labour-intensive element of the OER workflow, with only a small number of projects focusing on a more holistic approach embedded within the framework of reasonable adjustments and best practices.

So, what do you do…? How to 'show off' a Learning Resources Department.

Author

Claire Donlan

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

effectiveness, evaluation, evidence, expectationsOfInstitutions, FE, infographic, marshallingEvidence, quality, rigour

Background

The issues facing the Learning Resources Department (e-learning and LRC library services) were that staff, teaching and management, had diverse ideas about the resources that were available.

Also after a Self-Assessment Review with senior management, it became necessary to show our success in an appealing way. While recognising the importance of facts and figures, there was a need to present the information in a dynamic fashion.

Description of approach used

Firstly, to raise awareness to curriculum departments, a presentation was produced to show in a dynamic way the high quality learning resources that we can provide for all staff and their students. The 10 minute presentation was delivered at Directorate meetings by six staff to cover all aspects of e-learning and library services. Secondly to present the key facts, data and statistics, in a concise, appealing format. Data was collated in a Word table then used to produce infographics. Two infographics 'Learning Resources Centre: In Numbers' and 'Mbro Blackboard: In Numbers' were produced in Adobe Illustrator. To make it easier for staff to produce infographics without high level IT skills, an 'infographics package' was created with a selection of images and icons which can be used in PowerPoint or Publisher.

The ePoster will show aspects of the presentation that was used in the curriculum liaison sessions and highlight the aspects that received positive feedback. The ePoster will also show examples of the infographics created for displaying data and information in an innovative way.

Results of work done

The use of dynamic forms of presentation have enabled the Learning Resources Dept. to engage more teaching staff in the use of resources and technologies. There has been an increase in demand for staff training.

Conclusion

In order to have impact and success in Learning Resources depts. it is essential to raise the awareness of staff and students about the high quality resources that are available. Learning technologies can be used in dynamic and innovative ways to achieve this outcome.

Understanding the Challenge of employer engagement: technologies and processes to meet the needs of work based learners and of their employers.

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

challengesForEducation,
changingEnvironments,
changingStructures,
employerExpectations,
expectationsOfInstitutions,
newBusinessModels,
organisationalLandscape,
processStreamlining,
respondingToChange,
shapingOrganisations,
workforcedevelopment

By extending educational opportunities, the UK seeks to ensure a future which is economically competitive and socially cohesive. An increasing number of students are benefiting from education later in life, bringing diverse experiences, skills and needs and adding value to employers and society. In this context educational institutions face a variety of challenges around working with employers and work based learners: recognising and accrediting prior learning and experience; sharing learner achievement records securely; supporting remote learners; assessing performance and professional development; and managing mutually beneficial partnerships with employers. This involves working more closely in partnership with the employers and professional bodies in curriculum development to ensure that high-level and relevant sector skills and competencies are attained and developing more flexible and creative models of delivery to support the development of autonomous, lifelong learners. This challenging context also provides considerable opportunities for innovation: a number of institutions are exploring how technology can support them in meeting the expectations of employers and learners. The aim of this interactive workshop is to explore some of the challenges and approaches to how technology can support work based learners, employers and practitioners. This will be done through a poster networking and peer-mentoring session where further and higher education institutions within the JISC Life Long Learning and Work Force Development programme will facilitate discussion under three themes (2 projects per theme):

- Making accreditating prior experiential learning work for work based learners. Using E-portfolios and portals to build trusted relationships

- Technologies to support work based learners, including placement students

- Delivering a curriculum that meets employers needs

Delegates will leave the workshop with a greater understanding of the challenges around providing flexible and responsive opportunities for work based learners and how technology can help support this mode of delivery.

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Moving 5000 courses to a new VLE – a migration design model based on templates to speed the process

Author

Helen Whitehead

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

design, implementation, learningDesign, migration, planning, savingTime, VLEReview, VLEs

The University of Nottingham has around 37,000 students and, in existence on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), up to 9000 staff accounts in 3 countries, and 5000 live modules or courses. We have recently undergone a VLE Review and selected a new VLE to be available from autumn 2011. The number of courses presents a major challenge when migrating to a new VLE. This paper describes a project to analyse typical courses delivered through the University of Nottingham's existing VLE (WebCT). We looked at tool use and content from a sample representing learning spaces from each School in the University (including international campuses). Data analysis has established patterns of use of the VLE within the University and we have used these, informed by learning design and pattern design theory, to develop a migration model based on levels of VLE adoption and then to create a limited number of templates which will be used in the new VLE and offered as part of the migration of courses. The templates are also designed to scaffold best practice. In this workshop we will show how this template approach saves time and resources in migrating courses, providing a supported efficient way for academics to migrate their own courses, and for our implementation team to approach migrating others. It also provides a framework for writing support documentation. Participants will use the practical models and templates to apply to an example migration of their own courses or a typical selection provided.

The workshop will provide an introduction to the model and its associated templates, followed by hands-on group work analysing a sample of typical existing courses (participants' own or an example selection provided), applying the model to choose and adapt template(s) and using the resulting template(s) to create a migration plan, followed by final discussion.

At the end of the workshop participants will be able to analyse online courses in a VLE of their choice and utilise a migration model to adapt or produce templates as a practical and time-saving tool to support VLE migration or online course creation in their own institution.

CCPlayer: A personal desktop learning environment for IMS Common Cartridge packages

Author

Niall Barr

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

Based, Cartridge, Common, Computer, Educational, IMS, IMS, Interoperability, Learning, Open, QTI, Resources

When creating digital content that is to be shared across different systems it is important to use standards that are supported by multiple platforms. Using a widely supported standard also increases the likelihood of the content being reusable in future when current software systems have been superseded.

The IMS Common Cartridge is a specification for sharing educational content consisting of web and other documents, quizzes, forums and web links in a standard form that can be potentially imported into almost any Virtual Learning Environment. A number of major educational publishers have indicated support for the Common Cartridge format, and content providers including the Open University have made a large amount of material available in CC format. The Open University's Common Cartridge content is freely available from their LearningSpace site.

CCPlayer is a new open source, cross-platform tool for previewing, and using Common Cartridges without the need for a full VLE. By delivering the package content from the local disk through the user's preferred web browser it provides a similar experience to a VLE without requiring access to a web server. The main purpose of the software is to provide teachers with a simple way of previewing Common Cartridges that they are considering integrating into their teaching, however it also has potential users as a tool for learners who wish to access Cartridges off-line. CCPlayer provides equivalent behaviour, as far as possible, to a conventional VLE, however it runs on the user's desktop computer, with no requirement for an Internet connection.

A second purpose for the software is to provide a full open source implementation of a Common Cartridge player that can be used as a reference, or a source of code for others wishing to implement this specification. Java was chosen as the language for developing CCPlayer because it is widely used in universities teaching purposes, and therefore can be assumed to be a language which will be understandable to most professional programmers. The code is released under a the Apache 2 open source license, allowing reuse in both commercial software and in other open source projects.

References

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Searching for Open Educational Resources Online: the challenge of usability and relevance

Author

Isabelle Brent

Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

C-SAP, design, JISC, marshallingEvidence, methods, OER, research, subjectCentres, survey, teaching, usability

In recent years educational policy has promoted the development and use of Open Educational Resources (OERs) in higher education, however awareness and take up of such resources remains low. This paper reports on a survey and user-testing session that is part of a C-SAP research project on the discoverability of methods-related OERs within the social sciences. The survey looked at what online sources are currently used, criteria for searching and what was considered to be important in designing a new collection of resources whilst the user-testing session focussed on responses of teaching staff to different OER repositories. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of the results for promoting the more widespread use of OERs.

Results from both the survey and user-testing suggest a contradiction between what respondents say they want from a collection of resources and the strategies they currently employ to find materials. What is wanted is described in terms of quality controlled resources (vetted materials, classified by librarians and subject to peer review). However, most respondents make use of a small number of well known general sources such as Google and Wikipedia which have no such quality assurance.

At first glance these two themes seem inconsistent; however they reflect the increasing inter-penetration of online search strategies between the academic and non-academic world. Whilst expressing a desire for a traditional quality controlled academic system, respondents take for granted aspects of popular websites such as personalised recommendations and an easy to use interface. It is proposed that relevance and usability are more important to users than quality alone because people are used to exercising judgement over the quality of online resources (of all descriptions) but will not stay on a website that is difficult to navigate and does not give relevant search results. Given that awareness of OERs is currently low, far more attention needs to be given to the usability of OER sites and the relevance of search results if these resources are to become more widely used in higher education.

PDP and E-portfolios: How does it all hold together?

Authors

Daniel Clark
Louise Frith

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

change, e-portfolios, employability, institutionStrategy, mahara, pdp, pebblepad, personalDevelopmentPlanning, policy, studentExperience

This ePoster (and supporting presentation) will outline an investigation into how e-portfolios can be used to support Personal Development Planning and will provide advice and guidance to those who are interested in developing e-portfolios in their own institutions.

We will present a summary of work undertaken by the University of Kent's Curriculum and Educational Development team to embed PDP into the curriculum. We shall analyse PDP practice at Kent by referring to Clegg and Bradley's 3 models of PDP; professional, employability and academic (2006). Kent's PDP approach is summarised as diverse, discipline-led (Peters 2006) and aimed at helping students to make sense of all of their experiences at University. The presentation will then focus on four main reasons for introducing an e-portfolio tool to support students' PDP; retain discipline-led diverse practice, ensure PDP remains a 'student-owned' activity, make PDP a visible and tangible element of the Kent student experience, and give students a tool which they can use to communicate their experience to others (Yorke and Knight 2004).

Kent has a proven track record of implementing, maintaining and developing open source educational software, and this was a key factor in the decision to run a one-year pilot using Mahara. Mahara provided the flexibility to integrate with key systems at Kent, and make required changes or improvements in-house, supporting current and future strategies, whilst retaining full control of structure and resources that would fully support PDP.

We will explain how evaluative data from focus groups, exit questionnaires and forum discussions identified that successful delivery of PDP via an e-portfolio is dependent upon factors such as; institutional commitment to PDP; an intuitive interface that encourages student engagement; integration with other University information systems; and the means of sharing and collaborating with other users.

In summarising our findings, we will convey both the successes and obstacles we encountered as part of our work; forming the basis a step-by-step guide for those interested in using an e-portfolio to support PDP. Our conclusions will convey how the process can be held together.

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Data Mining for Information and Insight

Authors

Stephen Powell
Owen Watson

Theme

Making things happen

Tags

academicReview, analysis, assessment, buildingOnResearch, CETIS, challangesForTheFuture, Coeducate, curriculum, curriculumDesign, database, decisionMaking, efficiency, evidence, extracting, findings, IEC, inform, institutionalProblems, JISC, LearningOutcomes, longTermValue, miningData, modules, opportunities, overAssessment, savingMoney, studentExperience, visualRepresentation

This paper will discuss how 'data mining' has been used to inform curriculum design activities in the context of ongoing academic review within a Higher Education institution. By data mining, we mean the practice of extracting data from existing sources and analysing it with the intention of creating useful summaries and representations to improve the efficiency and quality of the university activities. At the University, the academic review working party identified a set of key curriculum requirements based on perceived weaknesses and inefficiencies in the current curriculum design. This is articulated by programme specification documents and module descriptors. The working party identified a set of questions that would enable the decision making process to be better informed at the module level and focussed on understanding the student experience in terms of learning outcomes, assessment load and student experience. This was achieved through interrogating the institutions module database through a series of queries that brought together data from tables containing different categories of information that describe a module. Extracted data was then analysed using a range of techniques including developing a range of expressions to represent the data in a communicative way and presented in a series of charts. The charts produced were used by senior managers to help understand the implications of the decisions being made about curriculum design requirements and refine them. In particular, this included gaining a better understanding of resource requirements required to re-write modules when standardising aspects such as the number of learning outcomes and assessment requirements across the university. It also provided information to inform the discussion about aspects such as potential 'over assessment' within modules which concurring with a previous qualitative analysis of the module database. The approach developed has only scratched the surface of the potential for data mining to inform decision making across the institution related to curriculum design. There are many other opportunities where existing sets of data could be interrogated to provide visual representations and statistics to better inform and stimulate critical discussions around the workings of the university.

YouTube in the classroom: Exploring the opportunities and barriers to the use of YouTube in teaching introductory sociology to mature and international students.

Authors

Nick Pearce
Elaine Tan

Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

blendedLearning, scavenging, socialMedia, video, web2.0

The use of open education resources has become more commonplace in classroom teaching and this has been an observable and growing trend. The accessibility of the same materials further reinforces the change in roles of the teacher, from gatekeeper of knowledge to learning facilitator. Our research question is that if a student has free and easy access to the same materials that are being used to teach them in class, how does this affect their perceptions when they are presented with this material in the classroom environment? What are their perceptions regarding the perceived value for money, efficacy and authority of the material?

This research specifically investigated the use of open education videos in the classroom environment and their incorporation into an associated space in the virtual learning environment. The research questions of this investigation surrounded the practical, technical and pedagogical issues that arise from the incorporation of these resources within class and online course materials as well as exploring student perceptions about the use of this material in the class and online.

Students' autonomous use of Turnitin – evaluating an institutional deployment

Authors

Carol Shergold
John Davies

Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

evaluation, implementation, informationLiteracy, marshallingEvidence, plagiarism, productivity, scalability, selfDirectedLearning, studySkills, Turnitin, VLEs

Turnitin is an originality checking and plagiarism prevention service whose use is widespread in Higher Education. It is a 'text matching' tool that compares work submitted to a huge database of files and indicates where there are strong similarities. The way in which Turnitin is implemented in institutions varies greatly, ranging from use as a purely forensic tool to which students do not have access to use in a formative manner to help students with their referencing and citation skills e.g. Davis and Carroll (2009).

The University of Sussex has adopted a formative, student-owned approach to the use of Turnitin for the academic year 2010/11. All Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students are subscribed to a site within the University's VLE through which they can submit any work to the Turnitin service. Key features of the implementation are that:

- submitted files, Turnitin scores and reports cannot be accessed by tutors;

- the "Essay Checking Turnitin Site" is designed so that students can use it autonomously and find answers and support within the site.

- By 1st June 2011, 3,203 students (29% of those subscribed) had made over 9,000 submissions.

- We ran a web-based survey for students who have visited the Turnitin site, and carried out semi-structured interviews to provide richer qualitative data. The key issues were to:

- investigate the extent to which students have found the tool useful;

- identity when they submitted work to Turnitin in relation to their assessment process;

- explore how students used the score and Originality Reports generated by Turnitin.

From the survey, we found that around a third of respondents had made use of feedback from Turnitin to improve their academic writing prior to submitting their assignment. In general, students reported that they had found the site easy to use, although some students found the Similarity Report difficult to interpret.

We will present a summary of the survey data and illustrate the key issues with the use of interview material. We will discuss the extent to which this implementation of Turnitin has supported students in their academic writing, and propose improvements.

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Physician, teach thyself!

Authors

Sally Holden
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Luke McGowan
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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

learnerExperience,
medicalEducation,
staffDevelopment

The eLearning Support Group (eLSG) at Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry (PCMD) continues to support staff and students in their learning and educational practice across the medical, dental, clinical science and graduate education programmes. A key feature of all doctors' education should be preparation for their roles as teachers of the future. However, this area has often been neglected or given a relatively low priority in medical education programmes. This is certainly not the case at PCMD. This important area of medical education is addressed through the Peninsula Medical School (PMS) UG medical and later the PG curriculum with focused Doctor as Teacher (DAT) Special Study Units for UGs and an innovative PG programme in Clinical Education. Additionally, a range of staff development activities and online approaches which help clinicians work with students (and each other) are also a vital part of the eLSG's work.

This ePoster will give an overview of how learning technologists are working with UG, PG students and core staff to develop learning materials, innovative approaches and online systems which improve all the processes by which doctors learn to become more effective teachers.

Key points will be illustrated with examples from the DAT work which continues to grow as students become increasingly interested in developing eLearning materials. Online staff development tools which have been designed to enhance the working practice of clinicians in acute and primary care will be illustrated. Various aspects of the Clinical Education programme will be used as an example of how a blended learning approach can help PG participants understand how UG/PG medical education can be enhanced.

Clickers in the classroom: encouraging student engagement and interaction with personal response systems

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

caseStudy, clickers, educatingTeachers, engagement, feedback, futureRoles, handheldDevices, implementation, learnerVoice, studentcentred

The 'Clickers in the Classroom' project aims to improve the learning experience for students at Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) by increasing attention and deepening the learning of students. Students demand interesting and up-to-date technology as part of their learning as they become ever more comfortable with technology as part of their everyday lives.

To provide valuable learning experiences for students and to support lecturers in teaching, the Learning Teaching and Technology Centre at Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) investigated the implementation of personal response systems or clickers as potential solutions for encouraging interaction, feedback and peer-learning within class groups at the Institute. This project seeks to make recommendations on how clickers could be used to solve to issues of student engagement and feedback into the future. The ePoster will show the life-cycle of this project where lecturers from various disciplines were invited to submit strategic plans to embed clickers within their classroom teaching. Proposals were evaluated according to criteria highlighting strategies for student interaction and peer-learning, then clickers awarded to lecturers across institute. This poster concentrates on two examples of work with clickers from the College of Business and the College of Sciences & Health.During the spring semester 2011, lecturers will document their ongoing work with clickers and contribute to a regular blog. The blog will publicly share the experience of the lecturers as they use clickers in teaching. Notably this blog has already attracted readers from National University of Ireland, Galway and from clicker evangelist Derek Bruff, Vanderbilt University. An end of semester report will capture the experience of DIT lecturers and investigate the impact of clickers on student engagement, feedback and interaction. To support this and gain insight into the student experience of clickers in the classroom, students will be polled and asked to give feedback through focus groups. The clicker's blog and final report will propagate a series of case studies on clicker usage and experience at DIT. The findings from the reports will provide recommendations for the future usage of clickers in teaching practice to support engagement and feedback at DIT.

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E-moderating student-directed learning: shifting responsibilities or developing abilities?

Author

Panos Vlachopoulos

Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

asynchronousDiscussions, e-moderating, learnerExperience, learningContracts

In formal higher education the desired shift in a new student-centred pedagogical paradigm is very often circumscribed by inappropriate learning design as well as by pre-established and pre-conceived power relationships between the teacher and the students, in the centre of which are oppressive assessment techniques.

The work presented in this presentation reports and compares the results of two small scale exploratory studies that aimed to address the following questions: a. What are the features of learning design which will effectively promote student-directed learning in online distance education? b. What features of facilitative "nudging" are effective for promoting student-directed learning in online distance education and by whom?

Data was obtained from two groups of fully online distance learners (total no = 24) studying in two different postgraduate programmes in the United Kingdom and in New Zealand. All students kept a structured reflective learning journal, which was analysed using qualitative content analysis. Further data was collected through the administration of an online questionnaire, which specifically asked students questions about features of tasks and features of facilitation techniques which affected their learning.

The results from the two studies suggested that there is ample and enthusiastic proof regarding the benefit for learners when learning design allows learners to scrutinise draft work produced by fellow learners, and offer helpful comments to improve the quality of the draft. However, it was found that for this peer reviewing process to work online and at a distance, especially due to time delay in the interactions and the lack of visual cues, the learner should be carefully prepared to act as a facilitative commenter rather than as a judge and an assessor. Therefore, it is imperative that careful consideration should be given in the design of a preparatory workshop that aims to develop the approach required in appraising and commenting on draft work, and in offering constructive suggestions. All of the above arrangements were found to work better when student-directed activity was carefully "ring-fenced" (after Vlachopoulos & Cowan, 2010) and free at that time from pro-active inputs by teachers. Implications for e-moderators in such online learning arrangements will be discussed.

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Curriculum Mapping: From theoretical model to practical implementation

Authors
Andy Beggan
Simon Wilkinson

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
curricula, curriculumMap, objectives

Curriculum mapping is a term that has been on the rise over the last ten years and is creating much interest. It has the potential to revolutionise how students, staff, universities and professional bodies view and understand curricula. There is already pressure from quality and regulatory bodies for a more sophisticated form of curriculum management. With fields such as Medicine, Nursing and Engineering requiring the storage of thousands of learning objectives at multiple levels of detail, curriculum mapping can be a daunting task for some institutions. The problem is exacerbated by currently poor support in most VLEs and few commercial solutions. There is even debate as to which type of system should be used to map a curriculum: student management system, virtual learning environment or e-portfolio. Added to this there is resistance from academics to perform the mapping process, seeing it as yet another task on an already burdened workload.

This presentation will start with a discussion of some of the theoretical issues surrounding curriculum mapping. What sorts of maps are needed and who will use them. A model will then be presented as a flexible way of mapping multiple types of objects (objectives, resources, questions) at multiple levels of detail. A practical demonstration of how this model has been used within the University of Nottingham's Medical School will show the use of curriculum mapping within a virtual learning environment. The presentation will conclude with a look at how the University of Nottingham's e-assessment system TouchStone has been linked into the curriculum map through the use of a web-services API. This extension into e-assessment has facilitated a number of new maps (reports) including: question-objective sampling, personalised student feedback and group cohort/objective performance. The emphasis has been on encouraging academics to map once at the correct level of detail and then to programmatically obtain multiple views/reports of this data for different purposes.

Understanding the Development of Learning Technology Support Staff to Push Beyond Maturity

Author

Jebar Ahmed

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

CPD, staffDevelopment, VLE

This is a longitudinal study that monitored the use of Learning Technology within a University School over a period of 5 years. It follows the implementation and promotion of what was originally just the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), from early adoption to a level of relative maturity where web 2.0 tools and e-submission were also made available. This study makes use of qualitative and quantitative methods to explore how learning technology can be supported in Higher Education settings, with specific focus on the development of those that support learning technologies as time progressed. Usage data from the VLE was collected and analysed alongside the content of each module, where each module was allocated a score. Semi-structured interviews were periodically conducted with academic staff and analysed using a thematic approach. Analysis of student feedback from annual course committees and student panel meetings was also used to provide data from a student perspective. This provided a holistic view on the needs of both staff and students. Findings indicated that support strategies were initially capable of targeting large groups of teachers effectively via staff development workshops which led to an increase in the use of the VLE. Pushing beyond a level of maturity meant that LT support staff required additional skills to provide course teams with bespoke and specialised advice, an aspect often overlooked in strategic models. Once adoption of the VLE across the school had reached its peak,

Findings indicated that the skill-set of those providing support evolved from technical expertise to one that incorporates a good understanding of relative pedagogy i.e. contextualisation. LT support staff had to have an insight into the courses that are taught in their department, ascertained through their involvement in student panel meetings, course committees and other quality systems. More importantly, their knowledge needs to be supported through CPD activity. This should be in two areas; a) research on tools, techniques and trends; b) teaching and learning through courses such as a PGCE – Teaching Certificate and additional higher qualifications that will enable LT staff to understand their unique and dynamic role in the educational environment.

Designing, Creating and Implementing four online language learning Moodle Courses for 500 Japanese university computer science students: lessons learned and pitfalls to be avoided.

Author
Peter Ruthven-Stuart

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
collaboration, contentBasedLanguageLearning, design, efficiency, grassRootsTELL, implementation, languages, learningObjects, moodle, onlineCourseDesign, planning, reducedFunding, reusability, VLEs

The presenter will explain how he designed, created and now manages four online language-learning Moodle courses for 500 first and second year Japanese university computer science students. The context of these courses is a Japanese higher educational system that has been, by European standards, slow to harness the benefits of technology (Bachnik). Few of the 700 or so universities in Japan employ people dedicated to the promotion and support of Technology Enhanced Learning. This lack of initiative on the part of HEI leadership has created a vacuum, which is being filled by faculty members who have both pedagogical and research interests in the use of technology in education. This has engendered an ad hoc approach to integrating technology, but also one that facilitates innovation in that it is not constrained by institutional policies or government diktats. This Japanese approach could be a grassroots model for TEL that has relevance in these more constrained financial times.

There are three important features of these required courses. First, they are entirely online with no blended classroom component, although students may visit the course supervisor should they prefer face-to-face support. Secondly, each of the fifteen units in each course is designed to complement the students' majors. Collaborative writing tasks are the third significant feature of the courses.

The audience will hear about the three stages that led to the courses going live. The design stage required an analysis of students' needs coupled with an assessment of what could be done given the limited resources. In the creation stage, eight language teachers all with experience in the subject areas were employed to create content that fit specific lexical and subject requirements. The third stage entails the supervision and implementation of the courses as students interact with the content. Students' feelings about the courses have been gathered via surveys, interviews and focus groups. While most students benefit from the courses, some students experience technical and cognitive issues that negatively affect their learning outcomes. Drawing on this data and his experience, the presenter will discuss both the positive and negative aspects of online course creation and management.

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Applying Web 3.0 Semantic Principles to VLE courses. To Boldy Go Where No One Has Gone Before.

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

innovation, learnerExperience, moodle, programmeDesign, semanticWeb, userExperience, VLE, web3.0

The integrated design and case-based learning (CBL) approach of the City Law School's (CLS) Bar Professional Training Course (BPTC), blends knowledge with skills and offers a much-needed real-life feel to the programme, but it can lead to disorientation and a visually cluttered presence on the virtual learning environment (VLE).

The university's Strategic Learning Environment (SLE) vision provided scope to include supplementary software to the VLE's (Moodle 1.9) in order to meet user needs and to overcome the structural constraints. The project's aim therefore was to allow manipulation of VLE content whilst accommodating a CBL approach and to be adaptable to a variety of user preferences.

The project specifically explored the potential of the emerging Semantic Web to support teaching in complex fields. Semantics is based on communication and refers to the meaning of information rather than its syntax. The semantic web offers learners a wealth of related content and meaning through associated relationships "in disparate systems [that] will be continuously evolving" (Daly, 2009). A semantic approach was adopted to store information about each learning asset, to identify relationships between them in the form of metadata and then allow these assests to be displayed in ways that users can adapt to meet their individual needs. This lead to the development of the Programme Overview Browser (POB) (www.staff.city.ac.uk/~sbbf539/demo/).

The POB is scaffolding that offers constant support within the educational programme and is learner-centred because of its adaptability (Yelland and Masters, 2007). It complements the CBL design principles of the CLS BPTC with its multiple access to numerous legal scenarios and links to web-based and other online educational engagements. Learners can exploit POB's adaptable search and arrange facilities in different ways at different points on the programme to plan their work, to seek direction and ultimately for revision. Thus POB surrounds the educational programme not merely individual learner's engagement with it.

Using the same data set user's are able to tailor their visual interface not only within the VLE but also with the taught programme's content which has shown to support higher order thinking and collaborative learning outcomes (Card et al.,1999; Hutchin, 1995). This content manipulation clarifies interrelationships amongst the curriculum, institutional resources, online and face-to-face engagements as well as offering routes through this complexity with the aid of processes of deconstruction without compromising the detail of the simulated legal environments.

POB also draws on theories of "chunking", to reduce cognitive overload; "by grouping information into a meaningful, memorable pattern, we reduce the number of individual (and potentially arbitrary) things individuals have to memorize, and increase the chances of understanding the concepts." (Creating Passionate Users, 2007)

The demonstration will include:

CONTEXT – Explanation of the scenario and the issues encountered;

DEMOMONSTRATION – Illustrations of how POB resolved educational as well as programme design issues;

DISCUSSION – Exploration of further applications of the theoretical and technical underpinnings of POB

The session will not be 'hands-on' due to time constraint.

Intended outcomes:

SHARING the POB project's semantic web theory, and

SUGGESTIONS of its application to other online educational environments.

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Our students all have mobile phones: what do they have and how are they using them for learning?

Author

Claire Bradley

Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

mLearning, mobileLearning, mobilePhones, studentsMobilePhones

Mobile phones are ubiquitous and their use has become integrated into our daily lives and activities. But how are our students engaging in mobile learning and what is their attitude towards it? This paper looks at the mobile phones that students have, and how they are using them to support their learning. It presents findings from a cross-university survey, and also draws on previous research data to provide an insight into the current practice and views of students towards mobile learning. The questionnaire revealed that nearly half (41 %) of the students are using their mobile phones for a range of learning activities. Examples of the activities they are engaging in will be given, showing how they are appropriating the increasingly powerful devices they have. The paper provides a useful insight for educators who are interested in introducing mobile learning activities with their students, at a time when the future of mobile learning lies in making use of the devices that students have.

Understanding and Influencing the Role of Digital Storytelling in Teaching Practice

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

digitalStorytelling, educatingTeachers, international, professionalDevelopment, socialConstructivism, web2.0

Digital storytelling offers a means to engage in critical thinking and reflection (Benmayor 2007), empowering students to find their voice and increasing motivation (Sadik 2008). While often used to develop reflective personal narratives, digital storytelling can equally be applied to development of fictional or non-fictional stories, capturing historical events, from life in the community to life between the pages of a book. And everything in between … Like traditional narratives, digital stories focus on a subject and feature a particular point of view. Its key components – scripting, storyboarding, moving image, stills, text, audio narrative, music – can have a powerful impact on the development of core reading and writing skills. Digital Storytelling also offers students and teachers the opportunity to develop wider digital and cultural literacies. Although the exploration and use of Digital Storytelling in English classrooms has been patchy, the session will illustrate models of innovative practice within a European and global context. The session will also report one of the principal aims of the research: to develop, through Digital Storytelling, a creative, participative and multi-modal methodology whereby teachers will acquire new skills and confidence with on-line learning tools and video production while at the same time motivating new generations of young readers to access literary texts in stimulating and socially participative ways, for example through the production of book trailers.

The research was conducted across five partner countries as part of READIT, an EU Lifelong Learning Comenius Programme project. It explored secondary school teachers and students' current experience and expectations around Digital Storytelling and engagement with reading and writing. It was undertaken both through international survey and teacher-led classroom action research spanning Denmark, Italy, Romania, Scotland and Turkey. The session will highlight the pedagogical and technological skills and training needs as well as the pedagogical priorities identified for teachers' professional development. The session will end with a discussion of the implications of the research for providers of initial teacher training, continual professional development and learning-technology support, as well as for educational management and teachers if classroom practice relating Digital Storytelling is to be developed and widened.

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Supporting digital literacy skills with HE students: what we have learnt

Authors
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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
aLLE, digitalLiteracies, evaluation, oer

The JISC-funded Anytime Literacies Learning Environment (ALLE) project (http://alle.tvu.ac.uk) has created a bespoke online environment to support HE students' learning and literacy skills acquisition. The design of the environment has been informed by the LLiDA 'Framework of Frameworks' (www.academy.gcal.ac.uk/llida/) and it is a flexible learning resource in the form of a structured online digital learner journey. It comprises a series of learning objects on discreet topics, brought together in a cohesive 'wrap around shell' which enables learners to embark on their own interactive journey, and helps them develop their learning and literacy skills (http://hermes.tvu.ac.uk/learnerjourney/index.html). It has been designed as an Open Educational Resource (OER), and authored using the GLO Maker learning object authoring tool, which will facilitate easy reuse and adaptation of the journey and its components by other tutors and institutions. The learner journey is in 3 parts, the digital tools journey, the library journey and academic journey. It has been used by students at two Universities, each using a contrasting approach to scaffold learners' digital literacy skills acquisition. The University of West London (UWL) has scaffolded the learner journey within the curriculum, whilst at London Metropolitan University students are being encouraged to use the journey according to their needs.

The use of the learner journey at both Universities has been thoroughly evaluated using a mixed method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data. A pre-test questionnaire asked students to provide baseline information, about their background, their ownership and use of digital technologies, and to rate their perceived skill levels in the areas covered by the learner journey. A post-test questionnaire asked students to re-rate their skills again afterwards, and student Focus Groups followed up issues arising and provided more in-depth feedback. The tutors have been interviewed to obtain their views on the intervention.

Evaluation data gathered from the pre- and post-test questionnaires reveals that students at both Universities had increased skill levels in the topics covered by the learner journeys by the end of the Semester, but that the scaffolded approach at TVU has produced more striking results. Our findings will be useful for anyone embarking on developing student digital literacy skills.

In the presentation we will briefly demonstrate the learner journey, and report on the findings and outcomes of the project focusing on key messages emerging from the rich evaluation data gathered.

If the lecture is recorded, what's the point of the lecture? Comparing staff and student views about lecture capture

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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
distanceLearning, eLearning, evaluation, learnerExperience, lectureCapture, podcast, staffSurvey, studentSurvey

"The whole concept is ill-conceived and driven by a bizarre combination of unreflective use of technology, poor understanding of the student experience and the [...] seemingly endless desire to control what academics do."

- Staff response

"I find that I understand something better after going over it twice or three times, so I would use both the recording and the lecture"

"...the recordings have been invaluable to my current high grades."

- Student responses

At Queen Mary University we have run a lecture capture pilot for two years. Although it is an opt-in service and uptake has risen steadily, some fears and anxieties remain, particularly from staff.

In our evaluation, we ran surveys among staff and students. 'The gap between students' perception of technology and that of faculty continues to widen' (New Media Consortium Horizon Report 2008, 7) and in this e-poster we take the results of the surveys and map where student views concur or conflict with thoughts of teaching staff.

Attendance is one of the most pressing worries for many staff and there were concerns that face-to-face lectures might become obsolete (Folley 2010). We found that students' views may allay those concerns, as they see recordings as a supplement rather than a substitute for lectures, and value face-to-face interactions (Von Konsky, B.R. et al, 2009).

83% of students indicated that recordings had no affect on their attendance. We received extensive comments from students who expressed why they valued both the live lecture and recording.

95% of students responded that lecture recordings help their studies and comments focussed on lecture capture as an aid for comprehension and revision, while lecture time was necessary to ask questions and engage with teachers and peers (QMUL Podcasting Survey 2011).

10% of staff who made recordings reported a decrease in attendance; while 33.3% said there was no significant change (QMUL Interview 2011). Others used recordings for distance learning or revision only.

This e-poster will summarise the main points of difference and convergence from staff and student feedback and will contribute to research about the impact of lecture recordings on student learning and attendance.

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iTunes U: Corporate channel of free educational resources

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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
iTunes, iTunesU, OER, openEducationalResources

iTunes U is a subset of the iTunes store, enabling universities and other learning institutions to make available free learning materials in text, audio, and video formats. It launched in 2007 for US universities and 2008 for European universities. To date, over 800 universities have joined, as well as schools, museums, and other educational institutions. Universities pay nothing for their iTunes U site, but they supply the server space, content, and manpower to produce and store content. In August 2010 Apple reported downloads had topped 300 million. (Apple 2010). Geng Marshall and Wilson(2011) found that participation in iTunes U brought large quantities of traffic to their podcasts, and that both current Oxford students and external learners including teachers reported educational benefits from listening to and viewing the podcasts.

The fact that iTunes U is run by a corporation makes it a curious player on the free educational resources field. iTunes U material is not exactly open, yet it is free; the distribution system is in a sense proprietary, yet works by means of free, cross-platform software; its single-point search function is superior to those of browser-based repositories, and its ease of use and reputation for good quality material result in high download numbers and a great many satisfied users. In their paper Open Educational Resources – Opportunities and Challenges for Higher Education, Yuan, MacNeill and Kraan (2008) include iTunes U in the category of open educational resource (OER) Tools and Services.

The University of Leicester Beyond Distance Research Alliance SPIDER project (Sharing Practice with iTunes U Digital Educational Resources) is studying the iTunes U implementation of four universities: Open University, Nottingham, Oxford, and Leicester. The project is modelling good practice and reporting on the impact of iTunes U-distributed materials. This presentation will outline the philosophical and practical steps to be taken by a university considering iTunes U deployment, report on impact, and compare iTunes U with other channels of OER distribution. In the current colder and more challenging higher education climate, it may be the strange bedfellow of a large corporation that will produce unexpected and greater benefits for learners.

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Enhancing synergies between technologists, learning support specialists and academics utilizing Open Educational Resources

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Theme
Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags
bestPractise,
openEducationalResources,
participatoryDesignPrinciplesAnd-
Practices,
technologyEnhancedLearning

A workshop designed to equip learning technologists with strategies for collaborating with academics and learning support professionals in the adoption and adaptation of open educational resources (OER) for learning and teaching. This workshop is particularly relevant to professionals working in higher education, with many institutions seeking to improve the quality of their teaching provision within a climate of continually diminishing resources and greater student expectations, and reflects recent recommendations from the Online Learning Task Force report (January 2011) for greater integration of the OER agenda in Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL).

This workshop will draw on lessons learned from recent projects effectively engaged in the deployment of OER. Participants, who typically have a responsibility for supporting TEL, will have the opportunity to engage with multiple perspectives on best practice for collaborating on OER design and development with teaching practitioners working across settings of formal or informal learning, undergraduate or postgraduate education, and lifelong learning.

The workshop will take the following format.

1. (10 minutes) An introductory discussion that will:

   Establish a context for the development and use of OER in today's challenging educational climate, sharing and highlighting potential issues

2. (30 minutes) Four scenario-based activities to be explored in small groups, focusing on how best to maximise collaboration between learning support specialists and academics, including:

   Design principles and practices for the transformation of traditional educational media design and delivery utilizing OER

   The "ah, buts" explored, managing barriers and challenges to OER development and use

   How and where to source valuable and useful OER at a glance

   Openness, or the intellectual property and copyright issues of OER

3. (10 minutes) A plenary discussion, calling on participants to share the outcomes of their small group collaboration on the scenarios supplied.

4. (10 minutes) Full group discussion, consolidating and sharing best practice for ways forward

As a takeaway, participants will leave the workshop with a clear understanding of the resources available and the information pertaining to support networks for encouraging good OER practice among their colleagues at their home institutions.

Supporting education students on school placements with mobile devices

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

educationStudents, mobileDevices, studentPlacements, traineeTeacher

This presentation reports on a small project that is exploring the affordances of mobile technologies to support students writing their postgraduate projects when they are in a placement setting. Students typically struggle with the placement/academic work balance and rush their research project at the end, and have reported disappointment with their grades. They find it difficult to develop the level of academic skills required by the assignments, including research skills and critical review of appropriate literature, as there is very limited time to teach these skills.

Key intervention points have thus been mapped according to the students' school experience and academic preparation for the project, and we will post key readings onto the course VLE, and engage the students via txttools, a medium for sending and receiving SMS messages. These key readings and supported 'chat via text' will focus on very short bursts of information over 24 hours, aimed to support student writing over the period. Thus the students will have the opportunity for critical engagement with their peers and tutors at key points on their placement experience and scaffold the preparation of their academic work. SMS was chosen because it was available and accessible technology within the school setting, it was familiar, and data in txttools is secure (Twitter was rejected because of the potentially sensitive information being shared).

Students were also asked to capture the stages in student writing over their placement in the form of filmed research diaries, so that we can capture previously 'invisible' aspects of our students' lives outside the classroom (students were loaned Flip Video Cams if they required them).

By analysis of the video diaries and focus group interviews afterwards we will identify a framework for key interventions that will provide staff supporting students in other contexts with insights into the key 'tipping point interventions' that make a difference to the student experience. Whilst other projects have focused on facilitating communication with students on placements with mobile devices (e.g. Wishart, 2011), we have focused on supporting students' academic skills, and hope to see this reflected in their project grades.

During the presentation we will outline the framework developed and the findings from the student and tutor evaluation, showing what was successful, what wasn't, and what we have learnt from the project.

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Building on MoRSE: Enhancing Learning in the field

Authors

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

fieldtrips, mobile, personal, situated

The Mobilising Remote Student Engagement Project (Linsey et. al., 2010) was a JISC funded project jointly hosted by Kingston University and De Montfort University concluding in October 2010. The aim of the project was to develop a situated understanding of the impact of mobile and personal technologies on student practice, beyond the institution (field trips and placements). This paper focuses specifically on fieldtrips and how the findings and lessons learnt from the project have been applied to post-project Geography and environment fieldtrips. Findings from the project included:

- Over 75% of the students reported that the use of the technologies made the fieldtrips more enjoyable and that they had a positive impact on their motivation to study, with a similar percentage agreeing or somewhat agreeing that the use of the technologies had an impact on their understanding.

- the Importance of preparatory sessions in advance of fieldtrips that introduced approaches for using personal and mobile technologies for supporting learning activities. There was a strong indication that the students did not have an appreciation of how their personal technologies might be used.

- Positive contribution of student mentors for supporting students, especially in terms of using personal and mobile technologies. One student reported for example that "It is less daunting [than] going up to lecturers; it is less pressurised having [to] formulated the best sort of question to approach a lecturer…".

- The role of technologies for enabling the collection of primary data, its processing through to its analysis and interpretation while still in the field.

The paper will report on how fieldtrip learning activities were further developed through the use of student generated support resources; the re-development of preparatory events to include realistic field activities and; the re-thinking of reflective field based blog activities. In addition the paper will report on the post-project impact on student approaches to learning, especially in terms of dissertation work, and the impact of using an additional virtual mentor. The evaluation instruments (pre and post field trip questionnaires and interviews) developed for the MoRSE project will be used for ongoing study.

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Strategic thinking for strategic change: the response of a Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice to the call for critical and situated technology use.

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

learnerExperience, learningDesign, professionalDevelopment

The Postgraduate Certificate in Professional Practice (PGCPP) in higher education is organised through the Centre for Learning Innovation and Professional Practice at Aston University. Although it does not contain a stand-alone module in technology- enhanced learning, part of its purpose is to address learning technologies in the context of good professional practice in higher education. To date, the use of new and emerging learning technologies within the process of studying a particular Programme has been somehow limited in that it promotes the use of institutionally supported learning technologies as a mechanism to develop technical skills (IT literacy) as opposed to promote a critical and situated technology use (Critical Digital Literacy). The Programme team decided, therefore, to revisit and restructure aspects of the core modules for next year's delivery. The new learning design will aspire to provide a variety of learning tasks and extended practice opportunities for the participants to most effectively develop as critical users of learning technologies in their own disciplines.

The poster presented here illustrates a conceptual learning design framework that would encourage the implementation and critical evaluation of new and emerging technologies in learning, teaching and assessment practice in higher education. A review of relevant published reports (e.g. TLRP Digital Literacies, Literacy for the Digital University) has been conducted to inform the formulation and rationalisation of the framework.

The poster graphically presents the issues of the tasks and assignments (e.g. limited online teaching observation opportunities, limited use of multimedia in being creative in creating assignments etc), that were identified from the old structures, and explains the limitations for the development of Critical Digital Literacy. It then moves on to demonstrate the new tasks and assignments, to explain the rationale for their suggested implementation in the core modules, and to identify any challenges experienced by tutors and participants. The poster concludes with some key research questions in the area of digital literacies that the Programme team aims to address as part of the implementation of the new learning design.

SET for success: Socialisation and E-learning Technology to facilitate first year transition

Author

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

academicSupport, studentExperience, transition, VLE

Background

This short paper discusses the growth of targeted online support for incoming students at the University of York, through the development and outcomes of 22 departmental induction sites delivered through the VLE in 2010. Building on the outcomes of research into the first-year experience (Yorke & Longden, 2008), and user feedback from the sites, this initiative has informed our understanding and ongoing approaches to supporting students' transition to HE.

Description of approach used

A range of staff- and student-led design approaches were employed by departments to develop their own induction sites, informed by the success of the Biology department's site which has been running since 2007 (Walker & Britcliffe, 2009). Taking their template and practice as a model, participating departments were supported in developing their own customised support sites, targeted towards their students' identified academic and cultural needs and addressing specific departmental aims.

A flexible support framework developed a community of practice across the institution to support the successful launch of 22 sites in August 2010. Initiatives included a series of collaborative meetings, bespoke training, online information and resource sharing and individual mentoring and project management support. Use of transition sites has been evaluated through usage stats, student surveys and focus groups and staff interviews and lessons learned have been used to inform ongoing and new site development for the 2011 intake.

Results of work done

Results indicate positive student responses to sites with high levels of usage and feedback about the areas of support that they found most useful. The paper will discuss the impact of departmental engagement strategies and implications for mixing official sites with social media such as Facebook.

Conclusion

Transition sites delivered through a VLE have proved an effective tool to extend the relationship between academic departments and incoming students and have demonstrated the potential to address issues of retention and conversion of applicants. The findings of work carried out have contributed to establishment of revised guidelines and a transferable framework for developing transition support, with strategies for creating effective communication channels with students and creating links between departmental and central support and advice. This paper will contribute to the emerging evidence base across the sector on transition support.

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A Framework for Co-creating Open Scholarship

Authors

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

Boyer, co-creating, epistemicCognition, futureRoles, marshallingEvidence, openEducationalPractices, openScholar, pahContinuum, research

A recent edition of ALT-J made a call for papers that looked at 'theoretical approaches in digitally-mediated environments.' A key part of this call was to use the Boyer Model of Scholarship as a frame of reference. The authors felt that there were limitations to this model which could be addressed in light of the recent moves to develop Open Scholarship (Anderson 2009).

Our concern with Boyer is that he suggests a separation between researchers, who 'build new knowledge through traditional research' and teachers who 'study teaching models and practices to achieve optimal learning.' Boyer identifies four 'Types' of Scholarship, those of Discovery, Integration, Application and Teaching (DIAT), but places the responsibility for 'creative work in established field,' with the traditional researcher role (Discovery). Furthermore this model implies a linear flow concerning how new knowledge becomes a part of teaching, implying that the teaching is mostly instructional, with a limited view of how new and emerging pedagogies might be utilised.

The Learner-Generated Contexts Research Group has been concerned to develop a co-creation approach to learning and find this separation curious. We argue that using the PAH Continuum (Luckin et al 2010) enables more flexible approaches, through a mix of pedagogy, andragogy and heutagogy, allowing for a wide range of technology uses, which also changes the relationship to research.

We look at how we might both apply a co-creation approach to Boyer's model, inspired by the Open Scholar movement, and also make DIAT more iterative and less discrete. Consequently we have both extended Boyer's DIAT system to include Co-creating as an additional type and changed some 'measures of performance' to enable an iterative process of scholarship to emerge which also involves learners. We also examine how network effects (Haythornthwaite 2009) 'enable generative network effects to occur' on scholarship and how applying Epistemic Cognition (Avramides 2007) to evolving subject frameworks might enable the co-creation of research agendas.

The Co-creation Model of Open Scholarship is presented in a table designed to simulate debate on this subject.

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Bringing tools and services to hand for teachers with W3C widgets

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

learningDesign, mobileLearning, onLineLearning, opensource, reusability, scenario, sharing, technology, tools, VLEs, widgets, wookie

The session will demonstrate the innovative use of W3C widgets in education. These provide access to activities that are configurable to the users context while maintaining sufficient control by the teacher. The system is based on the Wookie widget server (Wilson, Sharples and Griffiths, 2008), now Apache Wookie, which can be integrated easily into most web-based platforms. This was developed in the context of Learning Design (Griffiths and Liber, 2009), and the PLE (Johnson and Liber, 2008).

The iTEC environment makes use of this fast evolving technology in real teaching and learning situations. This will be demonstrated to show:

- a directory of W3C widgets which are useful to educators. This constitutes the iTEC educational application store.

- the application store integrated into two example platforms: Moodle and Liferay

- a simple mechanism whereby teachers add widget based activities to their courses

- examples of how the system has been used to provide support for iTEC scenarios which are currently being piloted across Europe.

During the demonstration the presenter will draw attention to the innovative elements which widgets can provide. In particular, this will focus on the way in which widgets can:

- enable teachers to easily configure the learning environment they are using, while they are teaching.

- provide a curated collection of activities to support learning scenarios

- be used to provide learning activities which can be accessed from a range of different platforms and applications.

The way in which the system is being used to deliver classroom activities across Europe will be described, and way in which it can be effectively used for innovative learning scenarios will be discussed.

The outcomes for the participants will be

- an understanding of what the iTEC widget store provides

- how the tools and resources it offers can be used flexibly in teaching activities

- the innovative functionality which it makes available

- how it can be used in learning activities

- the educational advantages which it offers

The system will remain accessible to participants over the Internet following the demonstration. The session will close with time for questions.

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The digital practitioner: practice and attitudes in a challenging future

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

achievement, assessment, challenging, co-creation, collaboration, digital, engagement, environments, Instructional, JISC, LLIDA, performance, policy, practices, practitioner, professional, Research, Technology

While there has been an increasing focus on digital literacy for learners e.g. work by JISC in the UK and Wesch in the USA, other strands of work including work on self-organised learning by Mitra, Open Scholarship by Anderson and the development of collaborative networks by Haythornthwaite, look at the collaborative nature of learning and teaching. Luckin's use of the Russian term "obuchenie" where learning and teaching are happening simultaneously, characterises these approaches. These positions are challenged by Donald Clark and others seeking a replacement of lecturing by instructional technology based on the experience of learndirect in the UK and of corporate training, most widely developed in the USA e.g. Rossett, Lewis and others.

Within the present political and economic climate in the UK and overseas, the focus on digital skills has become linked to focus on the economics of learning and the unfulfilled promise of using technology in ways that reduce the cost of learning by reducing staffing and estates.

Technology, from this perspective, is seen as increasing outputs while reducing costs. These approaches follow the analyses in the Leitch Report and, more recently, the RSA/LSIS report on further education at 2020 in the UK and reports from the OECD and other international sources that see educational outputs as aggregates of individual performance and achievement set against the cost of provision.

We propose to explore the tensions in these positions by contrasting digital practice in the context of instructional technologies and corporate training with those approaches owing more to Mitra's SOMEs (self-organised mediating environments), Laurillard's dialogic learning, and others, where the focus is on learning relationships. This will be illustrated by reference to Cochrane's use of technology stewards.

Drawing on work in Wales and recent research conducted by LSIS, we will engage participants in an activity which explores their attitudes to technology and how these attitudes shape their responses to both the technology and its use in their practice. Starting from this point, we will explore how these attitudes and practices will influence and be influenced by, the changes envisaged in technology and post-compulsory education by 2020.

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Developing a framework for digital literacies using a model of apprenticeship

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

collaboration, design, digitaLliteracy, longTermValue, respondingToChange

Higher Education is currently working in a context of reduced funding and technology support, but recognises digital literacy as a key driver for improving the experience of our students. This paper will report on the findings and framework which has been developed from an ongoing research project between Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom and Botswana University, Botswana. The framework is designed to identify an apprenticeship approach to exploring students' development of digital literacies through supporting academics in the development of their digital literacy skills. This paper builds on a presentation at ALT-C Conference 2010 (Eyitayo, 2010).

In the paper we will reflect on the successes of the project and the limitations. We will explain the rationale behind the framework and the theory behind the development. In developing the framework we have researched tools already available, but have found that these are focussed on checklists of skills rather than discipline specific development of digital literacy skills that relate to academics' community of practice and how digital technologies are changing research, teaching, publication, and reputation management. In taking this approach we have drawn on Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, ie in defining the impact HE tutors may have on developing the confidence in digital literacies by modelling digital literacy skills within their own discipline, hence if we can improve the tutors' sense of self- efficacy in this area this will impact positively on the student experience (Bandura 1982). We have also drawn on Lave and Wenger's (1991) apprenticeship model arguing that disciplinarity provides an authentic community of practice.

The term 'digital natives' (Prenskey, 2001) or the 'Net generation' (Tapscott, 1998) have been used to reflect the digital capabilities of undergraduate students over the last decade. However, as Bennett, Maton and Kervin (2008) point out the development of such terms, and the underpinning beliefs can result in false expectations in the digital literacy capabilities of students by lecturers in Higher Education.

As our project has developed we have moved from self-audit tools to developing an approach of working with academics using discipline-specific focus groups to understand the digital literacies that they, as experts, need in their discipline which, once developed, they can share with their students. This model offers benefits for Higher Education in that it is learning which is situated in a specific context, in this case discipline specific and hence is likely to be more meaningful for students because it will be modelled by people they are learning from. It is our intention to continue to develop this survey so that we have a tool that can be repurposed for different emphasis in different disciplines. In our view disciplinarity underpins digital literacy skills eg database skills required by Fine Arts are not highly valued in other disciplines such as Education. In order to build disciplinarity into the framework in a principled way we have used discipline specific focus groups to identify and elaborate those skills which are valued in the discipline.

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OASES – An On-line Accessibility Self-Evaluation System

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

accessibility, accessibility, convincingInstitutions, costBenefit, educatingTeachers, efficiency, funding, futureproofing, futureRoles, inclusive, institutionalProblems, learning, longTermValue, mainstreaming, mitigatingRisk, productivity, professionalDevelopment, respondingToChange, rigour

OASES – An On-line Accessibility Self-Evaluation System

The On-line Accessibility Self-Evaluation System (OASES) is a free online tool to help staff in different roles see their influence on inclusive accessible practices. The number of disabled students is increasing year on year (DIUS, 2008). The traditional way to meet their needs is to provide support over the barriers of traditional teaching and learning. A more sustainable approach is to reduce the barriers at source.

"Institutional e-maturity is the capacity of a college or learning institution to make strategic and effective use of technology to improve educational outcomes" (Becta, 2006). OASES is based on the hypothesis that the accessibility maturity of an organisation has a very close correlation to the e-maturity of that organisation. The fundamental guarantor of good accessibility practice is the extent to which technology is embedded in the culture, resulting in accessibility becoming a shared collective goal rather than relying upon the enthusiasm of a specialist individual or a team. This leads to a 'maturity model' of accessibility practice where one of the main determinants of maturity is the extent to which staff in all roles, and learners, contribute to inclusive practice.

Facilitators will introduce OASES and discuss how it can be used to advance individual and organisational accessibility maturity. Each participant will have on-line access to OASES and will engage in an anonymised survey most relevant to their institutional role. Results will be analysed, general trends and gaps identified with relevant resources signposted. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss results and gain insight from a personal, organisational and more general perspective. Participants will leave with a personal and organisational plan as to key steps they can take towards accessibility maturity. The ITQ for Accessible IT Practice is one key development pathway and will also be introduced to participants.

The workshop is intended for anyone who is involved with learner support, either directly or indirectly. It would be beneficial if, prior to attending the workshop, participants could reflect on policies and procedures in their own working environments and what steps are currently taken to address accessibility and inclusion.

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Can one tool change the culture of an institution?

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

collaboration, distanceLearning, lectureCapture, onlineConferencing

Online conferencing environments (OCEs) have become increasingly popular following our growing awareness of our carbon footprint, and recent economic events – we all aim to "thrive in a colder climate" (as the ALT-C 2011 theme encourages us to). There are many flavours of OCEs available today: client-based / cloud-hosted, proprietary / open-source, Java-based / Flash-based. But what if a University was moving towards using only one such single solution for much more than what the packaging says?

This demonstration will highlight how Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro has been used at the University of Leeds during a pilot project. We will start by outlining the selection process, which included a comparison with alternative options such as DimDim, WiZiQ, WebEx, GoToMeeting, as well as the more recent DabbleBoard, BigBlueButton and Slideshare's zipcast functionality. We will then highlight the advantages of implementing a single online tool rather than individual ones for lecture capture, web conferencing, marketing and collaboration. Connect Pro's real strength lies in its possible applications to a variety of learning and teaching scenarios – from live student interactions to asynchronous reflection activities – and the potential of offering students a consistent learning experience throughout their studies.

We will show how the technology enabled the further exploring of areas identified as crucial in the development of the institution – enhancing the internationalisation element of a programme/course through live conference and classroom interaction with overseas guest speakers. In one other example, the tool was used over the course of a module to facilitate discussion in live lectures and provide a permanent record of the lecture audio-visuals and narration. Students accessed the chat function during the lecture using laptops or mobile devices and asked questions which were addressed by the lecturer at convenient points. As the trial progressed, students began to answer each others' questions using the chat function, illustrating a potentially powerful means of student-student interaction in large lecture settings.

Workshop participants with Apple devices will be able to interact by installing the free Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro app. A web link will also be available during the session for other Flash-enabled devices.

Back to pen and paper? Well, sort of…

Authors
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Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
engagement, interactivity, smartPens

Educational institutions everywhere take great pride in motivating students and staff to be creative and collaborate in formal, non-formal and informal settings, as well as reflect, share and build on such collaborations. Recent technology – namely smart pens – has made it significantly easier to engage learners and tutors alike with familiar tools – pen and paper, albeit the 'smart' variety – and to track, feedback on, and acknowledge the true value of this engagement. Combined with available online solutions for file sharing, handwriting recognition and collaborative work, smart pens constitute a straight-forward solution to a long-standing challenge.

The practical demonstration will focus on how adopting smart pen technology can lead to an improved learning and teaching experience. This technology can be used as a cheap substitute for interactive whiteboards, therefore addressing the need for expensive hardware in all classrooms. Examples from Arts and Medicine will illustrate this point.

The session will also show the applications of smart pens to keeping a laboratory log book – an important area for all Science and Engineering degrees. Currently, students are required to keep a log book to record their progress in laboratory – and project-based modules. These log books are usually summatively assessed at the end of the module as it is impractical to collect them in during the module as students need them to regularly update their progress – thus making it very difficult to provide effective feedback to students.

Online log books in the forms of blogs and wikis can alleviate some of these problems, but in some subjects, students may not have access to a computer or may need to quickly scribble down a particular circuit design or chemical compound. The adoption of smart pens means that students can keep a physical log book and then easily submit electronic copies for regular feedback. The added benefits of hand-writing recognition and collaboration add an extra dimension to project-based learning. The use of smart pens also means students can keep the physical log books while the University can archive electronic copies (which also saves archive space).

An investigation into the use of 'social software' delivered via mobile technology to enhance the experience of prospective students in the face of University cutbacks.

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

enhancingStudentExperience, mobileComputing, mobileDevices, smartphones, socialSoftware, transitionToUniversityLife, wideningParticipation

The phenomenon of student attrition is an increasingly challenging problem confronting higher education especially in these days of economic uncertainty and cut backs where universities have to review many of their services including the provision of supporting students making the transition to University. This transition from school or college to University can be quite daunting for prospective students. The more information applicants can get and the more interaction they can have with the university and their fellow applicants the more likely they are to make informed decisions concerning their choice of programme. The aim is to support the transition into university by helping to overcome the anxieties and concerns that new students face between accepting a place on the course and the first few weeks of induction.

The study looked at alternative and modern ways of building a 'community' of interested parties who could help to overcome these anxieties by way of discussion fora, website support, mobile apps and FAQ's all built around programmes, modules, staff and student experiences. The term 'social software' has been used to cover a range of software tools such as Blogs, Wikis and social networking websites which provide opportunities to share and collaborate in educational and social situations. These social networking opportunities could clearly be used to provide an interface between tutors and undergraduate students but are less well researched. For this investigation we were concerned in seeking the views of pre-university students in the use of a social software tool that would allow collaborative authoring of a 'living document' by giving users a facility to share and receive feedback on any aspect of University life. Students from many of our partner institutions, under the umbrella of the Greater Glasgow Articulation Project, will be encouraged to participate in the creation of this shared resource.

The project is currently underway with the web environment and social tool running and being evaluated with the mobile app in development. Initial preliminary student feedback has been positive, demonstrating the potential of a range of web 2.0 tools and apps to help ensure a smoother transition to University.

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Throw your hands up in the air and jump

Author
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Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
humanInterfaceDevice, kinect

Human Interface Devices are becoming mainstream. It is not so long ago that we would stare at Tom Cruise flicking through information in 'Minority Report', and sigh thinking we would never be able to do that ourselves. Nowadays, devices like the Microsoft Xbox Kinect can be bought off the shelf for less than a standard day return train ticket from Leeds to London (not an Advanced Saver one, though).

But is this new Human Interface Device (HID) just a gimmick or does it have real potential for 21st century education? More importantly, how can they help us "thrive in a colder climate"?

This demonstration will show several applications of Kinect which could be used with a wide range of age-groups. Participants will see examples of this technology applied to presenting in a more engaging manner, to learning physics, recovering after strokes, learning about the human body through Kinect augmented reality applications, automatically transcoding sign language into written text, and becoming more literate, to name just a few.

Moreover, this session will also show how easy it is to get started programming for Kinect – while some educators can find this prospect daunting, they should not lose sight of the fact that their students may have a completely different view, and through developing their programming skills, they will be acquiring analysis, synthesis, and groupwork ones, too, as well as their creativity and a deeper understanding of the world (things that everyone will find beneficial).

So is it possible that expensive simulations and technology suites can be replaced by Kinect technology and a lot of in-house creativity? Can students become more engaged with the subjects they are studying without big investments in new facilities or support? Given the right tasks, the presenter thinks so.

Online conferencing in the age of the 24 hour digital society

Authors

Simon Kear
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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

24HourDigitalSociety,
onlineConference

Economic and social needs leading to global awareness, together with the affordances of the internet and digital media, have given rise to the 24-hour digital global society. Information and interaction in the developed world – and increasingly in less developed countries -is available 24 hours a day, accessible almost anywhere, and takes little notice of distance. In fact, making high-quality learning material available to those in remote areas at low cost is a driving force especially in the developing world, and this is increasingly taking the form of international collaboration across time zones (Iqbal et al 2010). In an interdependent networked world, around-the-clock access to information and services related to every aspect of education has become the norm.

The advantages of online academic conferencing are well established. Increased networking, low cost, convenience, and reduced environmental impact were reported to this conference in 2010 (Bird et al 2010).

Between 13 and 15 April 2011, the Beyond Distance Research Alliance and the Australian Digital Futures Institute jointly delivered an online conference named Follow the Sun. Follow the Sun gave us the chance to see whether the non-stop online conference offered these advantages and more, and was now to be a part of the 24-hour digital society.

Following a rich traditional of delivering innovative conferences, Follow the Sun took the online format – with its proven success in transcending physical or geographic borders – one stage further. The conference was delivered as a non-stop, 48 hour global event delivered over three consecutive time zones with hosts in the UK, USA and Australia, allowing delegates from around the world to take part as and when it suited them, regardless of their own location.

Following a brief outline of its structure and delivery, his short paper focuses on Follow the Sun as a case study of 24-hour collaborative online learning, by examining questions such as: Did delegates take advantage of its always-on format to engage synchronously with its content? Were relationships formed between delegates traditionally separated by time zones and working patterns?

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Developing a virtual research environment for postgraduate research students in chemistry

Author

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

chemicalEngineering, chemistry, cloud, collaboration, convincingInstitutions, dataManagement, intellectualProperty, onlineCommunities, postgraduateSkills, reducedFunding, researcherDevelopment, socialMedia, VRE

This ePoster will highlight the difficulties of developing a virtual research environment at the University of Bath's Doctoral Training Centre in Sustainable Chemical Technology with limited resources, and how they have been overcome.

A virtual research environment, or VRE, is at its simplest a collection of online tools to support researchers in their work. Definitions of VREs are therefore as diverse as the researchers who use them, but will typically include collaboration, data sharing and access to powerful computers for simulation and analysis (see e.g. Allan 2009).

Our VRE also has a role beyond simply facilitating research. The Researcher Development Framework (Vitae 2010), produced in consultation with the research councils, describes the qualities expected of researchers at various stages of their careers.

Starting at phase 1 they should "[have] a web presence as a researcher." By phase 3, researchers should "establish and lead virtual research environments" and "collaborate and communicate research virtually." Since the RDF is an example of the criteria on which our students will be assessed in their future careers, as a major Doctoral Training Centre we should be stimulating the development of these skills.

In meeting these combined needs, our VRE must strike an appropriate balance between security and flexibility. Self-hosted tools, such as the conventional institutional VLE, provide control and security but can be inflexible. Popular tools in the cloud, such as Google Documents, provide a diverse array of different features, but there are concerns over whether they are appropriate for confidential or sensitive information.

By focusing on the needs and current practice of our users we hope to achieve the best of both worlds. We have combined a self-hosted platform, based on the open-source Sakai Project, with training and advice on the many publicly accessible tools on the open web to create a cost-effective and flexible environment in which to learn about research collaboration and perform high-quality chemistry and chemical engineering research.

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Supporting Openness and Sharing in an Institutional Context

Author
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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
oer, open, sharing, standards, vle

The development and implementation of Open Educational Resources (OER) has continued to grow nationally and internationally, stimulated in part by strategic national initiatives such as in the US (US Department of Labor, 2011) and UK (HEFCE, 2009). This has been matched by the debate over many aspects of OER including ethical issues, purpose and technology (e.g. Cormier, 2009; Browne, 2010). This paper will focus on an investigation of the processes and support needed to enhance sharing and openness in learning resources within an institution, and through this provide a foundation for potential engagement with OER. In particular the focus will be on the role of standards (see Gonzalez-Barbone and Anido-Rifon, 2010) and technologies for addressing issues of openness across a spectrum ranging from oft referred to resource 'silos' through to public facing resources and OER. A number of these issues had surfaced in an institutional learning technologies review. The paper will report on trials with IMS Common Cartridge and SCORM across two VLEs including the use, editing and remixing of open resources through the VLE and with a range of authoring environments. The paper will also consider the role of institutional metadata schema, content systems and federated search.

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HEAT in a Cold Climate: evaluating high quality, cost effective solutions for embedding inclusive learning

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

disability, inclusion, technologies

The proportion of disabled students enrolling in HE is increasing. Research estimates that approximately 8 to 10% of students in HE are disabled, that is 240,000 students in the UK. Disabled HE students tend to have lower qualifications on entry and are less likely to attain a good degree than those who do not report a disability (DIUS 2009)

Approach

Since 2006 JISC Techdis has managed four rounds of the HEAT Scheme. Eighty five projects have been commissioned over four rounds of the scheme with a mean value of only £1400 per project. The scheme provides staff working in Higher Education with small quantities of technology with which to develop or uncover an aspect of good inclusive practice. These small targeted projects have been effective at making larger changes in HE.

Surveys of previous participants (20 questions covering three main areas to be evaluated – impact, dissemination and links to other work) were undertaken. Follow-up telephone interviews took place to gain more insight into staff time impact on students wider impact value for the team and how they were inspired.

Results

The survey showed 97% of projects had successfully uncovered or developed an aspect of inclusive practice. 64% of project holders successfully obtained other funding as a result of their HEAT project.

The scheme has impacted in terms of inclusive practice on approximately 4,000 students (2,000 targeted in the original bid and a further 2,000 since). 64% of respondents obtained other funding as a result of the HEAT funding. Projects have impacted not only in the department but across and between institutions and even on professions.

Results from the current round four projects based in Wales (completing June 2011) using technologies including videoconferencing, video repositories, e-books and smartpens will also be reported.

Conclusion

Results and analysis has shown that relatively modest amounts of funding, carefully disbursed and with appropriate support in place, can result in disproportionately effective outcomes and developments. High quality and cost effective inclusive learning and teaching practice is essential if a level playing field in education, employment and life chances is to be achieved.

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Experimentation, Exploration and Efficacy: RSS in support of student research

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

changingLearnerExpectations, Digital, earlyResearch, educatingTeachers, learnerVoice, Literacies, RSS, selfDirectedLearning

This short paper presents the comparative case study of the use of Really Simple syndication (RSS) feeds to automate provision of recent, relevant and academically credible research sources to students in both undergraduate and part time professional postgraduate taught (PPGT) programmes of study ascertaining an initial perspective on the level of digital literacy utilised by students.

Previous research (Beetham,2005, Lippincott, 2007) and anecdotal evidence, suggests that PPGT students perceive the learning journey in a different light to that of the undergraduate student body with student feedback evidencing that PPGT students are time restricted when undertaking study and frequently declare challenges in locating appropriate research data to provide their studies with validity, reliability and rigour. Students then place a reliance on the module tutor and central university resources to provide additional guidance to locate resources that in turn also impacts upon the time available for efficient and effective study. The teaching tool of the RSS feed of cutting edge research material relevant to the programme and module (e.g. research modules in all programmes) automatically delivered electronically to the student as an additional source of information is intended to enhance the independence of the student and ameliorate the challenges faced without replacing the study skill of critical review.

The paper explores the potential efficacy of this practice, from the student perspective, in a cross-faculty, comparative situation. Tutor and student feedback provides the basis for consideration of potential future adoption, or not, of RSS as a suggested method of automated real-time data acquisition and sharing. Consultation evidences that this utilisation of RSS is not currently in use within the university virtual learning environment

The research questions are: What value if any does this add to PPGT learning, what technological difficulties are experienced by academic and student in utilising this technology, how can we develop strategies to identify and present appropriate sources to students via RSS feeds, to what extent, if any, will the strategic PPGT learner utilise such provision?

The findings of this research (currently in the data collection stage) focus on student voice to enable organisations and managers to address technical challenges.

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Visualising the holistic assessment experience – The use of Google tools to support effective design.

Authors

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Theme

Research and rigour

Tags

assessment, change, curriculum, design, development, effectiveness, efficiency, experience, feedback, Google, holistic, realisation, sharing, sustainable, value, visualisation, VLE, web2.0

Effective programme design and delivery has become increasing fragmented with individuals struggling to support the holistic student experience and the development of graduate attributes (GAP project). These problems are exemplified by the design of assessment and feedback, whereby there is often coursework bunching, a limited diet and poor opportunities for the effective use of feedback (The Escape Project, 2008; Higgins et al., 2002). Institutions need to take a step back and review the fundamentals of assessment and feedback design at the programme level and how, in such challenging times, effectiveness can be maximised whilst enhancing the both the staff and student experience.

As part of the newly formed central Educational Development Unit at the University of Greenwich, a process for visualising the design of assessment and feedback via an open-source Google tool was developed to help inform successful programme design based on the principles developed by the JISC funded ESCAPE project. Course leaders were asked to complete a simple course diagnostic questionnaire built using Google Forms and the data automatically feed into a programme database. This culminated in an automatic report that graphically displays assessment diet, landscape and importantly an experiential timeline. The timeline, based on a Google Motion Chart, interactively displays assessment periods, type and weighting concurrently for each course within a programme. Staff are then able to interact with the assessment parts of their programmes and see graphically, in real-time, the consequences of their design decisions. By linking this process to the face-to-face curriculum design workshops, staff are better informed about their programme's design, thus permitting the evidential-based development of a supportive holistic curriculum that is aligned to both the staff and student experience and good assessment practice.

Here we will provide an evidence-based report on how both staff have received this process and how it is possible to systematically enhance the design of assessment and feedback practice using an easily scalable, and transferable technological solution.

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Getting the bloggers to write: Can group blogging provide effective social and emotional support?

Author

Steve Wheeler

Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

blog, blogging, collaboration, education, group, media, project, social, social, support, teacher, work

Social media has opened up new opportunities for participatory learning in all sectors of education with greater opportunities than ever for students create and share their own content through social media tools.

Blogs have already been harnessed to support professional mentoring and to promote deeper engagement in learning through collaboration and reflection. (Hramiak, Boulton and Urwin, 2009; Kop 2007). This paper critically evaluates the use of group blogs to offer social support to small communities of education students and to encourage critical reflection and collaboration. Post-experience e-mail questionnaires revealed that the participating students (n = 30) were generally positive about the group blog, with some reporting that it gave them added support beyond the boundaries of the traditional classroom. Some commented that the blog enabled them to connect and communicate with peers they would not normally interact with, adding a new social dimension to their learning. Others thought that their use of the blog enabled them to achieve better clarity of thinking, evidently through their engagement with dialogue with other members of the group.

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Hearing myself think: can digital posters be used to develop academic literacies?

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

academicLiteracies, digitalVoice, posters, screencasting, userGeneratedContent

Digital posters are created by students in workshops using screencasting software. Level 5 Business Studies students use this to capture simple, clearly structured representations of their research onto which they layer their spoken commentary. Their structure is described using only images, which help them to keep their thinking open. The students used digital posters to develop their academic literacy: their capacity to study independently and to confidently articulate their understanding. Elbow (2000, xiv) writes of two mentalities for writing: one that is generative and another which is critical and needed for reviewing ideas. Whilst these can "push" against each other, they can flourish "if we make separate arenas for them." Digital posters are intended to offer students with a separate creative and reflective arena, thereby supporting a shift from personal expression to development of a more public, academic voice in the discourse of their studies. This echoes the idea of 'bridging' identified earlier in this work (Middleton et al. 2010). The potential scalability of the approach was a further important driver in refining it due to the threat to learning development resources. The research aimed to understand the extent to which digital posters had developed students' academic literacy and their understanding of the module content. Action research is being used to support an ongoing critical review and revision process, now in its second year. Eight post-workshop focus group interviews involving all students have been used to examine the role of this task within the module. The findings suggest that digital posters can provide students with a means to draft, reflect on and manipulate their developing ideas. Students reported that the method was accessible, engaging, and intellectually liberating. It allowed them to focus on shaping their own ideas, offering a practical means to demystify and engage them in academic discourse. Future research aims to validate the approach by evaluating the digital poster method to develop academic literacies by colleagues in the faculty.

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ePEI: Web-based counselling system to support educators during the Instructional Design process

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

design, educatingTeachers, evidence, implementation, learningDesign, methodology, onlineCommunities, onlineTool, pedagogicalCounselling, peerSupport, socialNetworking

In this demonstration we present e-PEI, a Web-based online counselling system intended to support educators in the instructional design process. To date, when educators engage in the instructional design phase they find limited support from specifically developed tools or computer-aided systems. The ePEI system intends to address the above issues from a web2.0 design perspective in which more or less expert users participate to the enrichment of the knowledge base through direct insertion of instructional design advices as well as by ranking and commenting on the received feedback. PEI is Piano Educativo Individualizzato, i.e. Personalized Instructional Design Plan. e-PEI is a Drupal-based collaboration and content management environment. In the demonstration we will show how the two main e-PEI users interact with the system to build and use instructional design knowledge. The two main e-PEI users are 1) instructional design experts who interact with the system giving instructional design knowledge and 2) educators who interact with the system to receive help related to the instructional design in a specific situation. The knowledge base model underlying the system is designed to be maintainable and extensible. It is built around a core knowledge formalised through a set of decision rules that produce instructional advice, indications and further references to relevant resources. Such knowledge is initially set up by instructional design experts, but is also commented, ranked and revised by more or less expert users of the system i.e. educators that make use of the system to access the counseling services. The knowledge base uses a core of initial knowledge, simple to update and to comment and rate, which is then expanded with more dynamic elements of knowledge, as a consequence of the users' interaction with the system. The adopted design approach is intended in the long term to combine the co-construction of instructional knowledge by educational experts and its extensibility by less experienced users who make use of counselling. The co-costructed knowledge base can also be used to turn users' engagement into a thematic social network for instructional counseling.

Towards a personalised learning mesh: The implementation of a low overhead, multipath learning tool.

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

costEffective, e-learning, learningStyles, lectureCapture, personalisedLearning

Many studies have shown that students today live in an environment of multiple, simultaneous, short-lived stimuli which they access from wherever they may be. However institutional teaching is still based on traditional, long, sequential, attended presentations. In order to bridge that gap, there have been a number of moves over the past few years to develop and integrate lecture capture into the learning environment. Many of these systems are large and require a major commitment from the institution in terms of licences and infrastructure. Given the constrained financial environment for many academic institutions, these systems are not a viable option for many.

The authors have extended their normal lecture capture activity in their teaching to form an integrated learning resource. The captured media is mounted into a content management system which allows the media to be repurposed along with other content to provide an integrated support tool for student enquiry and self study which better matches their unstructured social experience.

The paper describes the development of the pilot system based on a minimal hardware requirement and limited post processing. The evolution of the system pilot is described and the development of the specification which then led to the live prototype is discussed. Issues that impact on the effectiveness of the prototype are covered and the strategy (based on classroom feedback) for developing the prototype into a full system for deployment across a range of desktop and mobile platforms is introduced.

At the sharp end of learning: the Peninsula Dental School's Virtual Patient System

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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
dentalEducation,
formativeAssessment,
virtualPatients

The Peninsula Dental School Virtual Patient (DVP) system is breaking new ground in dental education and uses an innovative approach in learning technologies. The eLearning support group at Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry have worked with dental academics to design and develop a suite of simulated patients which are used to enable "realistic" clinical encounters. The main aims are to develop and enhance history taking, diagnostic and treatment planning skills in the first cohort of the BDS programme which graduates in 2011.

At this hands-on session delegates will be given the opportunity to interact with the patients within the DVP system. These are virtual representations of real patients of the Year 4 lead who have consented to be filmed, photographed and recorded. The patients have a range of clinical conditions including oral cancer, cleft palate, hypodontia, facial palsy and bruxism. Many of these cases are complex with patients undergoing extensive surgery and restorative dental treatment which students are unlikely to come across early in their career yet it's important that they know about issues contained within them.

We will demonstrate how formative assessment of students' examination, history taking, charting, diagnostic and treatment planning skills is used. The Virtual Patients' mouths and dentition can be examined, various diagnostic criteria can be assessed and the patients' dental charts can be completed. Participants will be able to make a diagnosis of the patient's case and develop treatment plans which will then be assessed by the system.

During this session the DVP design, the underpinning pedagogical models and the evaluation and findings to date will be covered with illustrations using the live system. The DVP is used within the dental curriculum by blending other face to face "real" experiences with patients, colleagues and tutors. Delegates will be encouraged to think about and discuss how virtual simulation can be used to facilitate real learning in dental education and other subject disciplines.

Extraordinary times, extraordinary challenges, extraordinary fellows

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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
fellows, fellowship, institutionalChange, oer, openEducationalResources, openUniversity, ou, score, supportCentreForOpenResourcesInEducation, synthesis

The Support Centre for Open Resources in Education (SCORE) was established at The Open University in 2009 funded by HEFCE and has as its aim to bring about significant change in attitudes and practice with respect to Open Educational Resources (OER) in the UK. Key to achieving this are the SCORE Fellows, around twenty in number and selected through a competitive process from universities and colleges across England, the Fellows spend six months to a year working on projects that use OER to bring about change in their place of work. The Fellowship Programme, that will be the focus of the paper, brings together perspectives from a range of institutions and highlight the ways in which OER is being used to reach beyond traditional HE.

In this short paper session the authors will look beyond the individual projects and will present an analysis of what the Fellowship Programme as a whole has achieved – the assumptions challenged, the insights gained, the new models introduced, the boundaries straddled and the theories put to the test.

OER has shown itself to be an extraordinary tool for change. One of the most interesting findings from the work of the Fellows has been the ability of OER to redefine the boundaries of the academy. One Fellow has been using OER to move from educating teachers of English as a foreign language working in formal settings to upskilling informal volunteers who are helping their friends to learn. Another is using OER to enable knowledge to be captured from a shrinking set of government-employed specialists and taken up by "Big Society" volunteers. Both of these were groups well beyond the reach of HE previously.

It is counter-intuitive but the experience of SCORE Fellows has been that, at a time of critical belt-tightening for HE, giving stuff away for free that helps people learn makes better sense than ever before.

The session will conclude by identifying some of the issues that are preventing OER from having a bigger impact and suggest ways they might be addressed.

Information on the SCORE Fellowship Programme can be viewed at www. OpenEd.ac.uk/current_fellows.

Effectiveness of online technologies for laboratory-based work

Author
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Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
distanceLearning, effectiveness, experience, laboratory, onlineCommunities, onlineTutoring, podcasting, respondingToChange, web2.0

A particular challenge in online learning (especially within the applied sciences) concerns attempts to replicate the real-life, laboratory-based practice that face-to-face students usually experience (Baharav, 2008). The aim of this project was to evaluate the role and effectiveness of online technologies for enhancing learning, teaching and assessment on an existing Masters module in exercise physiology, taught solely online via distance learning. Video-conferencing, instant messaging and vodcasts were used in an attempt to bring alive the workings of an exercise physiology laboratory in a meaningful and realistic manner for these online students. For the assessment, students were required to plan and design a bespoke battery of tests to determine a 'real' (as opposed to a hypothetical) athlete's physiological profile, and provide feedback on results. Students viewed initial vodcasts of the athlete (a male tennis player and volleyball player), then engaged in instant messaging, to gain further information about the athletes' specific requirements. The proposed battery of tests was carried out on the athletes and broadcast live via videoconferencing. Edited video clips of these tests were also available for students to view asynchronously.

To evaluate how the online technologies used in the module aided the students' understanding, enjoyment and motivation, an online questionnaire was completed by 12 students enrolled on the module, with telephone interviews carried out on a further 5 students. Based on the data analysed to date, students on the online module found that communicating asynchronously, via for example email and discussion board, was preferable, and more favourable in terms of enhancing understanding and enjoyment of the module, than was synchronous, real-time communication. In particular, students were reluctant to use synchronous opportunities to interact with the athletes or with fellow students, preferring to engage with more familiar asynchronous tools. Reasons given for not engaging with live interaction in laboratory-based sessions included time constraints, lack of familiarity with the technologies, and not wanting to be intrusive of the athletes' time. These initial findings suggest that familiarity with specific technology may be a significant barrier when providing opportunities for real-time, student-to–student communication in pursuit of developing communities of practice (Wenger, 1998).

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OERs: Disruptive or Sustaining Innovation for Institutions?

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

businessmodel, disruptiveinnvation, institutions, oers, openlearning

This paper applies Clayton Christensen's (2008) disruptive innovation framework to examine how OERs could be used to support disruptive or sustaining innovation in institutions. According to Christensen, sustaining innovation is carried out by companies to improve their existing offering. A disruptive innovation, by contrast, often exploits a new technology and/or business model, to create an entirely new market, typically by lowering the price or designing for a different set of consumers or different needs of existing customers. In either case it eventually leads to a disruption of the existing market and market leaders.

Currently, HE institutions are facing the challenges of funding cuts and rising tuition fees; simultaneously, we have the rapid development of OERs and Open Education initiatives. These could be used either to sustain an HEI's current position or to develop potentially disruptive new business, financial and revenue models for free or lower cost and flexible HE provision. Disruptive innovation theory offers possible business solutions and organisational strategies either to create or to respond to disruptive open educational service provisions. For example, institutions could launch up-market sustaining innovations by creating high quality OERs to enhance their image, attract students (e.g. MIT & the OU) and provide better learning experiences or they could use OERs to create low end market disruption reducing the costs to target those who are not able to go to universities or look for simple and straight forward courses rather than complicated university degrees (e.g. the OER U).

In this paper, we will review an online module developed by academic staff in the Institute for Educational Cybernetics (University of Bolton) for Educational Technology Masters students in China. This online open course disaggregates content, learning support and assessment; while course content is free, staff time is paid for, and in this case, delivery is shared by both the English institution and Chinese partners to reduce the cost. We will offer some insights on how the initiative progressed and the lessons learned. We will also discuss how further a business model could be built giving away content for free.

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A collaborative workflow for the participatory design of open educational resources in lifelong learning.

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

collaboration, design, distanceLearning, learningObjects, lifelongLearning, OER, openEducationalResources, openSource, participatoryDesign, userCentredDesign

A recognition of the importance of participatory design is fundamental to the sustainability and quality of open educational resources, as is a commitment to the use of open technologies that encourage active learning (Kahle, 2008). Despite the growing global influence of OER few projects have explicitly addressed the role of the end user in the design and development workflow.

This ePoster illustrates the OER workflow process used by colleagues in the University of Bath's Division for Lifelong Learning involved in the JISC-funded phase 2 OER project OSTRICH (OER Sustainability Through Teaching and Research Innovation: Cascading across HEIs). Building on lessons learnt from its parent phase 1 project OTTER (Open, Transferable and Technologically-enabled Educational Resources), the team at Bath modified the CORRE OER framework developed by the University of Leicester to satisfy three key requirements:

(a) the need to create a significant percentage of OER content for a distance learning course from scratch, using the open source elearning tool Xerte Toolkits;

(b) the lack of a central institutional OER team at the University of Bath meaning that responsibility for content gathering, rights clearance and validation lay with individual academics and departmental teams;

(c) the desire to adopt a collaborative and participatory approach to the design and creation of OER that involves academics and course leaders, instructional designers and learning technologists, and students.

Our ePoster will outline the design and development workflow adopted by the team at Bath, focusing on an iterative process involving input from students on a supported online course in Management and Leadership. This feedback was collected using open and closed questions in an online survey together with qualitative interview data gathered via the web conferencing tool Elluminate. The ePoster will make reference to the role of Xerte Toolkits in fostering collaboration and sharing amongst the team, and providing an accessible and interactive learning environment for users. We anticipate that incorporating a participatory design framework alongside the use of open technologies such as Xerte may begin to address the need to engage and motivate learners, particularly those who have traditionally been excluded from higher education (Light and Luckin, 2008).

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A web based shared space to support student transition from FE to HE

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

articulation, onlineStudentSupport, transition, wideningAccess

This presentation describes the development, evaluation and enhancement of an online "shared space" designed to provide support to students making the transition from FE colleges to study Creative Technology courses at university. This project is part of, and builds on, the work of the Greater Glasgow Articulation Partnership (part of a national network developing a framework for articulation).

Staff on these courses identified issues relating to student retention. Articulation was considered strong with students transitioning from FE into years 2 or 3 of the degree programs, but completion and final destination required improvement.

A problem faced by students in the early stages of their transition is that until they have enrolled they cannot access many of the online student support resources provided by the university. These include the university's virtual learning environment and course management system, which proves an effective way of delivering course specific information to those already enrolled. This creates challenges in terms of making the students aware of important information relating to their transition, and additionally an opportunity to instil a sense of belonging at this early stage is lost.

To combat this problem an open-source web environment which provided an externally accessible resource for applicants was developed. This enabled staff to provide prospective and new students with information relevant to their transition. It also allowed staff to maintain control over access to this information as only applicants and current students were able to login to the site.

The web environment was piloted on the 2010 intake of students. A survey was conducted which revealed that the website had good uptake and that all of the students found it useful. The most useful areas were identified as course specific information – 70 % and the help resources – 86 %. Further information extracted and combined with a WAMMI analysis allowed the website's content to be modified to improve its usefulness and relevance. The activity is now focused on enhancing and extending the content of the website to provide improved support to the next intake.

OER: Community reuse, impact and resource creation in health sciences.

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

Community, Educational, Engagement, Health, OER, Open, Resources, Reuse

Much has been written about the potential benefits of OER initiatives for the institution and groups that engage with them (D'Antoni 2009). Here we discuss the benefits of wider community engagement arising from OER release within health sciences. We have been developing and releasing health-related OER for approximately 9 years. However, much of our research and evaluation has focused on the benefits of the reuse of materials within the host institution, such as meeting identified learning needs and reducing duplication. We have also collated evidence for the reuse of these materials from other HE institutions across 20 countries worldwide (Windle and Wharrad 2010). However, the release of these resources under a Creative Commons licence has led to significant discovery and reuse by unintended stakeholder groups such as patients, carers, health practitioners, patient groups and charities; sometimes with powerful impact. In many cases this has led to on-going engagement with such stakeholder groups, with some adopting our community-of-practice centred development approaches (Windle and Wharrad 2010) in order to create and release their own OER. Thus, a virtuous cycle is created in which unintended reusers in turn become advocates and resource creators. The cycle is completed by the fact that the resources created provide contextual resources for reuse by the original intended learner groups within HE.

In this paper we will follow aspects of this virtuous OER cycle through a number of case studies involving community reuse within the health service and charitable sector. We will explore how factors such as advocacy by the original creators lead to the discovery and wider reuse of the resources. We will discuss the attributes of the resources such as their authenticity and realism that supported this wider reuse. We will also explore the drivers that have encouraged community groups themselves to become involved in resource development, the barriers that need to be overcome, the qualities of the resources that have been developed, and evaluate their adoption back within the HE curriculum. Lastly, we will discuss the impact and sustainability of such community-based reuse-creation and sharing cycles.

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Smartphone feedback: pervasive exchanges and interventions

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

audioFeedback, feedback, innovation, mobileLearning, smartphone

The capacity of academics to provide effective feedback on student work remains a challenge despite ongoing demands (HEFCE 2010). Innovation with audio feedback has gone some way to address this (Rotheram 2009); however, despite the personal connectivity and meaningful engagement this affords, academic responsiveness and creativity are often constrained by dependence upon a tethered connection for its distribution. This is, therefore, at odds with the need for feedback that is dialogic (Nicol 2010). Common portable and connected recording devices, in the form of smartphones, allow formative spoken exchanges to be captured, freeing the academic to devise new forms of manageable feedback which can be distributed immediately so that exchanges can be revisited by the student when they decide it is useful to do so.

This paper describes how a personally owned smartphone is being used to provide feedback to local and international Engineering students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels to promote dialogic engagement around project and dissertation work. It reflects on the advantages and disadvantages of pervasive technology in meeting the needs of staff and students. Students are being surveyed and interviewed to reflect on their ongoing experience during the academic year.

Initial findings from this study are positive. Students appreciate the quick turnaround of the feedback and the "refreshing" quality that is characteristic of this "interesting format". One student noted that, "It's not often we get that type of personalized feedback from any tutors unless we chase for it individually, so it's good that everyone got it by default." However, another was frustrated that the 'app' did not produce audio in the standard MP3 format. The academic reports that pervasive technology brings benefits to managing the marking process, turning work around in a timely way, integrating it with domestic life at times of high pressure, and in promoting dialogic engagement. However, pervasiveness needs to be managed to ensure that a life-work balance is maintained.

Smartphone recording apps support a more fluid and responsive feedback process, not only helping to deliver feedback, but possibly helping to redefine feedback itself as an ongoing dialogic and formative process.

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Capabilities of educational software/web sites (in Access and Design) for students with Special Educational Needs in mainstream secondary schools in United Kingdom and Greece

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

educationalSoftware, educationalTechnology, educationalWebsite, ICT, inclusiveTechnology, specialEducationalNeeds, universalDesignForLearning

This study investigates the capabilities of educational technology for students with special educational needs in the context of mainstream schools in UK and Greece.

The first chapter of the paper is a literature review on the subject of Information Communication Technology (CT) in general education whereas the second part consists of a literature review concerning ICT in Special Educational Needs. The literature research on capabilities of educational software and educational websites regarding design and access is the next chapter followed by the presentation of the context which is mainstream secondary schools and the analysis of the capabilities of educational software and websites used in mainstream secondary schools in the United Kingdom and in Greece.

The findings of an interview with an ICT teacher in a support service in UK will be also presented.

Finally, the comparison and evaluation of the two cases and the recommendations that can be formed as a result of the investigation of the two cases as well as final conclusions will complete this study.

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Remodelling Computer Science Education to develop Metacognitive Adult Learners

Authors

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

activePortfolio, andragogy, constructivism, heutagogy, learnerExperience, plagiarism, studentMonitoring

We expect our academic models to produce graduates who are adult in their approach to learning, with a constructed mental model of their own knowledge, and who are metacognitive in considering their learning and future development. However, evidence from our national statistics and employer feedback indicates this is not the case for all but the best students. Employers, in particular, are indicating that graduates are not continuing to develop their skills, take on new learning, or re-skill to move into new technologies, resulting in a growing skills gap in computing and IT [1], [2]. We would argue that our existing 19th century pedagogical model is at fault and that the primary goal of a higher education system should be to produce graduates who are metacognitive and able to carry forward their skills into lifelong learning, necessary to meet the demands of a rapidly changing and evolving knowledge economy. In order to do this effectively, we argue a need to change the educational model and to move to an andragogic or heutagogic approach, engaging with students as adults in charge of their own learning and at the centre of the learning experience, and acting as clients to a professional service offered by academic tutors. We would wish to free up resources for the learning and assessment process, by using appropriately designed learning objects in a monitored digital environment to provide evidence of student activity and progress, and giving the student control of the process through the production of an active portfolio and CV [3]. Evidence of student learning can be provided by a combination of monitoring information and verified on-line assessment, with appropriate controls in place to deal with plagiarism, personation and other forms of cheating. If we can free resources from traditional lecture and tutorial models, to support more interactive, student-led activities, and use current learning and communications technologies to support this, we can permit greater personalisation of the learning experience and wider choice for students. Building systems to support this approach will permit academic focus on intellectual and metacognitive development of students, and better prepare students for lifelong learning.

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Smarter Working – Make better use of your technology.

Author

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

ACL, cloudServices, collaboration, costSavings, distanceLearning, FE, handheldDevices, HE, mobileDevices, mobileLearning, mobileTechnologies, productivity, savings, scavenging, workBasedLearning

Your mobile phone now possesses several thousand times more computing power than used to land a man on the moon. Let's do more than use it to make a phone call or send a text to help with teaching and learning. As remote workers providing support for e-learning developments, JISC RSC staff use many varied solutions for their own working practices and also for showcasing the potential of available solutions for tutors and students benefits. This demonstration outlines a range of solutions that impact on all education sectors, from ACL, WBL, FE and HE provision. It will showcase the use of free and quick solutions for allowing staff to improve communications, record data, access resources and create entirely new resources for students. The demonstration suggests ways for enhancing student's learning experience through the efficient use of existing technologies. Studies have shown poor student engagement with department guided reading materials (Saunders, 1982). Concerns like this could be reduced through the use of appropriate free and easy mobile technology solutions, managed by tutors with effective outcomes for students. In one FE college, SLDD students appreciate being able to receive audio via bluetooth. This is typical of the positive feedback coming from classes where tutors are creatively exploring the full potential of 'pocket' computing power. Many of the tools shown in this demonstration can be downloaded immediately to appropriate devices while others can be accessed and explored further through the demonstration accounts and links.

Using VLEs to Support Learners in Virtual Worlds

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

benefits, caseStudy, design, effectiveness, immersiveLearning, implementation, JISC, mainstreaming, OER, planning, reusability, savingMoney, sharing, technology, tools, VLEs

Virtual worlds have been the focus of increased attention in education in recent years, with a number of dedicated conferences and special issues in leading journals (. One area that has received only limited attention is how educators use web-based systems to scaffold and support learning in virtual worlds and the potential benefits of the blended use of these technologies. A supplementary issue is the need to be able to share and reuse virtual world eLearning materials and content – including the supporting web-based materials. Improved understanding of the effective blended use of web and virtual world content may result in economical benefits alongside the pedagogical.

The 3D and web worlds may be blended in a number of ways. Carefully structured web-content can prepare students for and guide them through a range of exercises and activities in the virtual world. Web-content may be accessed directly within the virtual world, providing a more direct connection between in-world activities and online guidance. Or a system such as SLOODLE might be used to explicitly blend eLearning across 3D and web-based platforms.

SLOODLE provides a range of tools for integrating the open source Moodle VLE and Second Life or OpenSim virtual worlds making it possible, for example, to build immersive settings around existing VLE content, and to use the VLE to provide greater accessibility to immersive content (Livingstone, Kemp & Edgar 2008).

This session will demonstrate a range of methods and tools for blending eLearning across virtual worlds and VLEs. This will draw on case study material from a recent JISC funded multi-institutional collaboration exploring these issues in the contexts of engineering, computing and medical subjects using Second Life variously for simulation, discussion and role-play activities.

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Do students like individual feedback videos?

Author

Philip Wane

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

benefits, caseStudy, changingLearnerExpectations, feedback, institutionalProblems, problemSolving, productivity, quality, scalability, video

This is an action research study of the perceived value of individual video feedback to students at Nottingham Trent University. The quality and timeliness of feedback has been identified as an issue within the Higher Education sector. It is likely to become one of increasing importance to both institutions and individuals as students begin to pay increasing levels of fees.

The author, Philip Wane of Nottingham Trent University, has provided individual feedback videos to several cohorts of students and is currently conducting larger scale research into the perceived effectiveness of video feedback to undergraduates. The results of the larger scale research will be available by the time of the conference. Feedback to-date, which has been gathered as part of the module feedback process, has been very positive but the author is currently conducting a more systematic survey into the apparent popularity and effectiveness of video feedback. This includes interviews with a number of other staff who have also experimented with video feedback and the collection of quantitative data from a web based survey (census) of students on two modules where video feedback is offered. Advocates of multimedia feedback propose a number of advantages with Maggi Savin-Badem (2010) and Tom Lunt & John Curran (2010) examining the value of audio feedback, and Russell Stannard (2009) focussing on screencast videos.

The aim of the action research is to gather further information on the possible benefits of video feedback, to identify possible issues with the approach, and to outline some best practice guidance to fellow academics. Questions to be addressed include; do students like video feedback, do they perceive it to be effective, and what kinds of barriers might be encountered by staff, including issues of scalability, confidentiality and ensuring that quality assurance processes are satisfied. To-date the video feedback has been offered as a supplement to traditional feedback but might it be possible to replace traditional feedback with video feedback as part of an integrated e-assessment approach if the research indicates that it is suitable to do so?

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Designing, planning and implementing learning technologies through engaging teachers

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Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
design, earlyAdopters, experience, implementation, innovators, moodle, openSource, planning, training, vle

Introduction

City University has recently moved from WebCT Vista to Moodle. This paper focuses on the rollout of Moodle within the School of Health Sciences. To portray the existing teaching needs and establish features within Moodle that could enhance academic teaching, a group of 'champions' were set up to run pilots and represent the needs of different departments. This group determined the design, planning and implementation of Moodle, as well as the training and support offered throughout the school.

Method

The champions all had characteristics of either 'innovators' or 'early adopters', as described by Rogers (2003). The nature of this group meant that most (but not all) used WebCT Vista optimally. Engaging with champions provided the opportunity to evaluate current teaching and the way that WebCT Vista was being used. This helped understand and influence how the new VLE could be used to enhance the teaching being delivered, such that the new system was optimally utilised.

Results

Templates were developed to promote a similar look and feel across modules and create a minimum standard that students could expect. The pilots developed by innovators were used to promote examples on how the system could be utilised. Early adopters who are usually seen as role models within their community (Rogers, 2003) were of value in promoting Moodle. They helped organise group training and offered ongoing support to individuals within their department.

In some cases there were signs of resentment towards the innovators who developed their modules to such a high standard that students demanded the same across their entire programme.

Conclusion

In a large school, setting up a group of champions across different departments, enabled a gateway into the pedagogic similarities and differences across them. This provided the opportunity to identify how Moodle could utilised to enhance the learning experience and influenced the structure of training offered to different departments. What it did not do is provide a means of identifying those that had low engagement with VLEs in their teaching or highlight reasons why. Such a lack of awareness can affect the implementation plan.

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Supporting Learning in Immersive Virtual Worlds with VLEs

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

benefits, caseStudy, design, effectiveness, immersiveLearning, implementation, JISC, mainstreaming, OER, planning, reusability, savingMoney, sharing, technology, tools, VLEs

Virtual worlds have been the focus of increasing attention in education in recent years, with a number of dedicated conferences and special issues in leading journals. One area that has received only limited attention is how educators use web-based systems to scaffold and support learning in virtual worlds and the potential benefits of the blended use of these technologies. A supplementary issue is the need to be able to share and reuse virtual world eLearning materials and content – including the supporting web-based materials. Improved understanding of the effective blended use of web and virtual world content may result in economical benefits alongside the pedagogical.

The 3D and web worlds may be blended in a number of ways. Carefully structured web-content can prepare students for and guide them through a range of exercises and activities in the virtual world. Web-content may be accessed directly within the virtual world, providing a more direct connection between in-world activities and online guidance. Or a system such as SLOODLE might be used to explicitly blend eLearning across 3D and web-based platforms.

SLOODLE provides a range of tools for integrating the open source Moodle VLE and Second Life or OpenSim virtual worlds making it possible, for example, to build immersive settings around existing VLE content, and to use the VLE to provide greater accessibility to immersive content (Livingstone, Kemp & Edgar 2008).

This ePoster will draw on case studies from a recent JISC funded multi-institutional collaboration exploring these issues in the contexts of engineering, computing and medical subjects using Second Life variously for simulation, discussion and role-play activities. A separate demonstration session will provide more guidance on how to exploit the lessons learned.

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Impractical laboratory assignments: the SWIFT alternative

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

bioscience, genetics, geneticScreening, healthAndSafety, laboratory, medical, practicalSkills, secondLife, virtualWorld

First year medical students need to learn how samples are tested for inherited genetic conditions, such as Cystic Fibrosis. The advantages of laboratory practicals, such as engaging students in the process of investigation and enquiry, and enthusing students about science generally, are well established (Dupin and Joshua, 1987). However, it is impractical for a cohort of 230 students to individually conduct these complex genetic tests; instead, groups of 12-20 watch a laboratory demonstration.

SWIFT (Second World Immersive Future Technology) is a three-year research project at the University of Leicester funded by the Higher Education Academy. The project builds on previous work with virtual laboratories (e.g. Cobb, Heaney, et al. 2009), using the virtual environment of Second Life® (SL). Participants access SL on a computer, are represented on-screen by an avatar that can move around the virtual world, carry out activities, and interact with other participants' avatars. We created a virtual genetics laboratory in SL with 27 benches for students (as avatars) to conduct simulated genetic screenings.

SWIFT uses an action research methodology to develop learning activities in the virtual environment that add meaning to students' real laboratory experience. The project investigates the effectiveness of a virtual genetics laboratory for teaching and learning. Our previous SWIFT experiments (Rudman, Lavelle, et al. 2010) found participants reporting a high level of realism and engagement in the virtual exercise. This prompted the investigation now of new pedagogic features impossible in the real laboratory, such as individual tuition and 3D representations of molecular behaviour in the context of a sample being processed.

The whole 230 student cohort took a knowledge test, with questionnaires and interviews for SL participants. Results indicate a small but measurable learning gain when using the virtual lab. As before, most students reported a positive experience, helping them understand the course and acting as a revision aid. It is difficult to quantify learning gains accurately since both experimental and control groups received regular teaching. Therefore, for our next experiment students will be allocated to either a paper exercise (group work to manufacture a medically important protein) or an equivalent virtual world exercise.

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Improving Student Employability using Active Portfolio – the GWizards Approach

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

academiaIndustryEngagement, activePortfolio, employability, learnerExperience, socailEnterprise

A major issue in current Higher Education practice is the development of employability skills within the graduate community. Reports from Sector Skills Councils, such as e-skills UK [1], highlight employer concern at the ability of new graduates to make an effective contribution in the workplace with any immediacy. Various projects have been developed looking at academic-employer engagement, internship schemes, and various placement models, all of which have had some beneficial effect. The University of Greenwich School of Computing and Mathematical Sciences (CMS) has developed a new vehicle for this activity, called GWizards, which seeks to re-engage the university with the local community. In particular, this involves working directly with all types of organisation to identify project activities of mutual benefit. This mutual benefit is determined by opportunities for students to gain experience in the workplace, organisations to gain practical technical help for little or no cost, and academic staff to gain project experience and publishing opportunities. To facilitate this process, CMS has developed credit bearing modules on its programmes that link to these employability opportunities, so students have the chance to follow directly relevant project work within their academic studies to earn academic credits for practical work, and also to be engaged in the management and control of these activities both internally and externally to the university within a student-run company structure. This company will operate within GWizards in a standard enterprise structure, run by a student executive board responsible for hiring and firing student employees and all enterprise operational activities, and will take on internal and external contracts on a professional basis. The information related to these activities will be reported and recorded in an active portfolio [2], maintained electronically by the student, who will also take the responsibility to collect evidence of their activities, in terms of customer report and feedback, prototype or service development reports, and academic supervisor feedback. This active portfolio provides the fundamental information for a technically detailed CV, describing the students' knowledge and experience in terms of employability skills, while also providing the academic evidence necessary for the application of credits towards degree study.

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Appreciative Deveopment Communities in Adult Community Education

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

collaborationj, educatingTeachers, futureProofing, futureRoles, learnerVoice, onlineCommunities, professionalDeveopment, savingMoney

This is an action research study of the use of technology by tutors and managers in a large adult community education service. This service covers a large shire county and has 23 centres and 150 outreach centres which makes face- to-face meeting time consuming and expensive. There are over 300 tutors many of whom work on fractional contracts.

In a previous piece of research tutors and managers within the service were invited to apply for funding to run a supported experiment with their learners or colleagues. This proved to be successful with a number of experiments run. These were evaluated by the experimenters and their learners or colleagues. The findings of this research have been presented at 2 conferences.

We are now building on this research by setting up a community of practice (COP) to use joint practice development (JPD) to enhance the supported experiment approach. We will arrange a face-to-face session to raise the concepts of COP and JPD. We want to encourage the "experimenters" to share their ideas and concerns with each other. Experimenters will then be encouraged to collaborate via the internet and tools such as webinars. Appropriate paperwork will be developed to record the process. A moodle course will be used to share information, set up discussion groups etc.

The results of the supported experiments will be recorded by the experimenters on a standard format. The reports will then be subjected to a narrative analysis to determine key themes arising from the research. Experimenters will also be asked to submit all supporting documentation which might include: lesson plans; new handouts, video clips and audio files. A final face-to-face meeting will be held to share successes and evaluate the research.

At the end of the research process the successes and imitations will be measured against the hard and soft indicators identified at the start of the research. The work will be linked to appropriate theory. We are currently building a new model that links the key features of communities of practice, joint practice development and appreciative inquiry: "appreciative development communities" is our working title for this model.

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Using Asynchronous Video and Mobile Technologies to Enhance Learner Engagement with Formative Feedback

Author

James McDowell

Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

assessment, asynchronous, feedback, mobile, technologies, video

The opportunity offered for reflexivity is often cited as a key benefit of asynchronous text-based approaches in online learning communities (e.g. Garrison & Kanuka, 2004), however opportunities for reflexive discussions between learner and tutor within the framework of the assessment and feedback process are often limited (MacDonald, 2006), and, where feedback is summative, can lack the timeliness of formative feed-forward (Glover & Brown, 2006). Moreover, text-based modes of communication can place limitations on the engagement of learners within the creative and numerate disciplines, and can also act as a barrier to inclusivity for learners with dyslexia (Woodfine, Nunes & Wright, 2005).

Research exploring alternatives to asynchronous text-based approaches to enhance learner engagement with formative feedback has focused primarily on the use of audio (e.g. Ice, Curtis, Phillips & Wells, 2007; Doolan & Simpson, 2010), while technical considerations such as file-size and bandwidth have previously restricted the use of video. Technological developments mean that greater consideration can now be given to employing both video and mobile technologies to promote engagement with formative feedback within a conversational framework (Laurillard, 2002), facilitating opportunities for reflexive learning while retaining the benefits of those visual cues associated with face-to-face scenarios.

VERiFy, a teaching and learning project at the University of Huddersfield, is examining the emerging potential for asynchronous video to (i) enhance the assessment and feedback process through the integration of mobile technologies, (ii) encourage greater learner engagement with formative feedback, and (iii) offer greater inclusivity for learners with dyslexia. Adopting an action research methodology, the introduction of a video feedback loop system has enabled the asynchronous exchange of video-feedback, facilitating a feed-forward conversation between learners and tutors around work-in-progress; a series of case-studies explores the learner and tutor experience of the intervention.

This short paper presents the findings from the evaluation of the first phase of the project, conducted with learners and tutors in Computing, concluding that while asynchronous video offers great potential as a mechanism for engaging learners with formative feedback, particularly those affected by dyslexia, there are still obstacles to overcome before even tech-savvy Computing students fully embrace mobile learning.

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Arduino culture – Creative collaboration inside and outside of school

Author

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Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

actionresearch, Arduino, collaboration, communities, CPD, development, digital, electronics, engagement, formal, informal, innovation, international, of, opensource, practice, professional, sharing, vocational

Background 'Arduino is an open-source electronics prototyping platform based on flexible, easy-to-use hardware and software. It's intended for artists, designers, hobbyists, and anyone interested in creating interactive objects or environments' it says on the Arduino homepage. My experience has opened my eyes to a supportive, innovative community of people willing to give up time and spend many hours developing ideas. This community is exactly like we would want to foster in schools. Where teachers and students work together, sharing ideas openly because they are interested and engaged. Description of approach used How do we bring two worlds together. An action research project has started by looking at the engagement of professionals involved in Arduino development. Interviews have been conducted to ask why are they so keen? This has been compared with teachers involved in 'Teachmeets' – informal 'unconferences' – what drives them to attend and present? To investigate further, activity days have been held at the Open University in the North East, where schools brought groups of students for project days. These were led by members of Arduino community and their enthusiasm spread to the teachers. This research has compared informal and formal learning by comparing informal and formal learning by teachers. We have studied two communities of practice outside of school. Through observation and interviews we have attempted to identify drive of Arduino enthusiasts and teachers at Teachmeets. Research is ongoing and will conclude with comparison of the informal learning with 'traditional' formal professional development for teachers. Structure of session In the pecha kucha style, participants will be given the background to the action research, the methods used to gather the views of the Arduino enthusiasts and teachers. It will summarise the current findings and share the next stages of research Intended outcomes Participants will learn about the informal learning within the Arduino and Teachmeet communities. This will be compared with the current formal learning within schools. This research will inform the professional development being offered to schools. When the thaw comes, better professional development will enable highly-motivated students and teachers for the future.

References

Lave, J., Wenger, E. 1991. Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation. Cambridge University Press ISBN 0521423740 Examples of the Arduino community creativity can be seen at websites such as, http://tinkerlondon.com/now/

The Paradox of Openness: The High Costs of Giving Online

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

budgets, cloudServices, collaboration, cost, ethics, finance, funding, infrastructure, OERs, openness, organisationalChange, ownership, planning, politicalEconomy, schools, strategy, teachers, value

This symposium will examine the paradoxes of giving and receiving online in education in a changing economic climate. Each of the panellists will address briefly topic areas within the symposium theme, followed by an opportunity for present and at distance audiences to contribute, concluding with a 25 minute plenary discussion.

Symposium delegates will be provoked to reconsider the costs of participation online by paid and unpaid participants in 'open' discussion and sharing of resources.

Open Educational Resources exist within communities that create, use and sustain them (Downes 2007). When 'communities' in Higher Education break down due to redundancy and casualisation of labour what happens to OERs? Are they sustained? Can they reach out to other contexts?

All areas of education, including the school sector, currently face significant financial challenges and uncertainties. Institutions are increasingly reviewing the provision of devices and services, and looking at learner owned devices and commercially owned 'free' cloud-based services. What is the real price of an education system supported and transformed by embedded learning technologies?

Ownership in the age of openness calls for clarity about mutual expectations between learners, communities and ourselves. Ideas and content are shared easily through open platforms, and yet attributions can be masked in the flow of dissemination: does credit always go where it is due?

Openness in the production, sharing and reuse of education/resources is meaningless in the face of neoliberalism. Where coercive competition forms a treadmill for the production of value, openness/OERs are commodified. Control of the educational means of production determines power to frame how open are the relations for the production or consumption of educational goods or services, in order to realise value. The totality of this need, elicited by the state for capital, rather than the rights of feepayers, parents, communities or academics, shapes how human values like openness are revealed and enabled within HE.

Scarce research monies focus attention on impact factors, arguably stagnating practice. For publications, Open Access can increase wider societal impact but at the expense of career progression. We explore the tensions, paradoxes and professional costs on societal benefits, individual agency and academic progression.

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Skills and Education Planning Tools

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

convincingInstitutions,
expectationsOfInstitutions,
institutionalProblems,
sharedServices

MUSKET is a project in the JISC Institutional Innovation in Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development programme. The developed tools support employer engagement and workforce planning requirements by providing a CRM based integrated view of employer based, professional and tertiary sector education. The tools help employers in accrediting their in-house training with universities through work-based learning and also assist universities and students to compare courses from two different educational institutions for credit transfer by finding the percentage similarity between courses. The tools also allow non-technical specialists to import MS Word documents containing course descriptions from professional providers, employer in-house training and HEIs, and provide semantic markup to export information into the JISC eXchanging Course Information Course Advertising Profile (XCRI-CAP) standard.

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Association for Learning Technology Learning Technology Manager Salary Summary 2010

Author
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Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
learningtechnologymanagersala-rystudy

The salary survey was conducted from 16 to 23 September 2010 on behalf of the Association for Learning Technology (ALT) by ALT member, Dr. Rich Ranker, at Lancaster University. The purpose of the survey was to shed light on the following questions: 1) What are the salary ranges of those who report themselves to be managers of learning technology organisations in HE and FE the UK? 2) Is salary related to Region, Institutional Grouping, Job Titles, Number of Staff Supervised, Operational (i.e., non-salary) Budgets Managed, Level of the Line Supervisor, or Grade? The survey was distributed under the auspices of ALT and was also kindly distributed to the HE-based members of the Heads of eLearning Forum (HeLF). It contained 11 questions. There were 75 respondents. The results of the survey will be presented.

Institutional approaches to developing digital literacy

Authors
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Theme
Making things happen

Tags
digitalLiteracy, learnerExperience

This workshop focuses on the institutional policies and practices for developing students' learning in a digital age. The workshop is an opportunity to engage with the case studies of how institutions are enabling effective learning in a digital age, produced by the Supporting Learners in Digital Age (SLiDA) project. This project draws on a developmental framework of effective learning in a digital age (Sharpe & Beetham, 2010), mapping institutional practice against the key stages of the model.

The role of the institution is an important contextual factor in influencing how learners develop the digital literacies to be effective in a digital age. Nine institutions were carefully selected to contribute to the project research questions, and for their established work in translating learner experience research findings into teaching and learning practices. Data were collected over a six month period through multiple interactions including ongoing conversations with a consultant, document sharing, online workshops, and culminating in a site visit where staff, and where possible students, were interviewed.

The resulting case studies demonstrate a range of strategies that institutions are adopting to support learners to develop the access, skills, strategies and attributes they need to learn effectively with technology. Although we uncovered many distinct policies and practices, there were five key aspects that most institutions shared. This workshop will explore the concrete outcomes from a selection of the case studies which have most impact on the development of digital literacy e.g. Abingdon & Witney College has invested in a universal e-learning induction programme, Birkenhead Sixth Form College has made the use of personal devices across the curriculum the central tenet of their approach to supporting learners' use of technology, and the University of Salford is developing curricula that encompass the development of digital literacies within the context of their distinctive curricula in media, creative arts and business.

In this workshop, participants will use the case studies to explore how institutions can collect their own evidence and make use of existing research, to better understand the extent and valued of their existing practice and any gaps in their institutional provision.

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mobileSCORM – are e-learning standards still relevant?

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

mLearning, mobileLearning, SCORM

Background

The SCORM standard has become synonymous with elearning. The paper positions SCORM – the main standard for traditional e-learning – in an increasingly mobile world. This is a critical issue since many mlearning projects try to mimic traditional elearning (typically in shorter form) on mobile devices.

Description of approach used

Before we can have a real discussion about mlearning we need to understand whether it is simply an extension of what we have now on computers or a different thing altogether. The session starts by defining mobile learning (based on current literature and research) and looking at different projects around the world making use of it. This will provide a look at how organisations are dealing with today's pedagogic and technical challenges, placing it firmly within the "at the sharp end" theme of the conference.

Review outcomes

The outcome of the review is a contextualising matrix that connects learning characteristics with types of mobile learning. This will challenge the way that mlearning is seen (as devices to access the internet in the classroom or a way to deliver traditional elearning) and offer a way of adapting the design of mlearning projects to the learning characteristics they intend to trigger.

Conclusion

The paper proposes extensions to SCORM which would help it adapt to some of the emerging lessons coming from m-learning projects. The relevance of standards and the nature of mlearning will form the basis of the discussion.

A ground-breaking approach to the assessment of student e-Portfolios using the Law of Comparative Judgement.

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

accreditationBody, assessment, assessmentForLearning, awardBody, coursework, eportfolio, ePortfolio, evidenceBasedAssessment, qualifications, ranking, rankOrder, web2.0, webServices

This workshop will look at a UK government sponsored pilot project called Project e-Scape and two innovative approaches that this project took in its use of e-portfolios. In particular, it will look at the project's use of 'storyboard' portfolios to build holistic and iterative views of learner progression, as well as the projects use of The Law of Comparative Judgment to assess portfolios of work. In 2004, a team at Goldsmith's College, University of London, embarked on a five year pilot project – Project eScape – to investigate the use of e-portfolios to dynamically capture live project-based student coursework. The pilot has since been extended into several other countries including Scotland, Ireland, Israel, Singapore and Australia. A key development through the latter stages of the project was the development of a web-based Comparative Pairs Assessment Engine, which enabled more subjective assessment criteria, such as creativity and collaboration, to be judged through the implementation of the 'Law of Comparative Judgment', as initially described by L.L. Thurstone in 1927. Uniquely, the integration of a web-based Comparative Pairs Assessment Engine within an e-portfolio context, made this innovative and highly accurate form of assessment available globally for the very first time. This workshop will be comprised of two sections: – A brief presentation that will provide an introduction to The Law of Comparative Judgment and its implementation through Project eScape; and – A hands-on session where the delegates will have the opportunity to take part in a live comparative pairs assessment session. Depending on the number of delegates attending the workshop, for the hands-on session they will be put into small groups (3-4 maximum) with shared access to a computer. We will give them a login to the judging system, giving them access to samples of student work so they can try out the judging process. The overall aim of the workshop will be to demonstrate how simple it is to implement this form of assessment in relation to student work. It will also look at the more recent research done into the accuracy of this approach when compared against traditional paper-based/hand marking.

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Pollitt, A. and Crisp,V. 2004. Could Comparative Judgements Of Script Quality Replace Traditional Marking And Improve The Validity Of Exam Questions?

Managing Change in the Development of Sustainable Online Assessment Practices

Authors
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Theme
Research and rigour

Tags
benefits, convincingSceptics, design, evaluation, implementation, methodology, planning, research, respondingTOChange, scalability

Many studies have shown that students today live in an environment of multiple, simultaneous, short-lived stimuli which they access from wherever they may be. However institutional teaching is still based on traditional, long, sequential, attended presentations. In order to bridge that gap, there have been a number of moves over the past few years to develop and integrate lecture capture into the learning environment. Many of these systems are large and require a major commitment from the institution in terms of licences and infrastructure. Given the constrained financial environment for many academic institutions, these systems are not a viable option for many.

The authors have extended their normal lecture capture activity in their teaching to form an integrated learning resource. The captured media is mounted into a content management system which allows the media to be repurposed along with other content to provide an integrated support tool for student enquiry and self study which better matches their unstructured social experience.

The paper describes the development of the pilot system based on a minimal hardware requirement and limited post processing. The evolution of the system pilot is described and the development of the specification which then led to the live prototype is discussed. Issues that impact on the effectiveness of the prototype are covered and the strategy (based on classroom feedback) for developing the prototype into a full system for deployment across a range of desktop and mobile platforms is introduced.

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Innovative approaches to e-portfolio use in Higher Education

Authors

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Theme

At the sharp end

Tags

accreditationBody, assessment, assessmentForLearning, awardBody, coursework, degree, eportfolio, ePortfolio, evidenceBasedAssessment, HE, preDegree, qualifications, qualifiedTeacherStatus, TDA, teacherTraining, web2.0, webServices

This demonstration will case study implementations of social media and on-screen assessment within a web services based e-portfolio solution in the context of degree entry and full degree courses at Heriot Watt University, Edinburgh and the Pilgrim Partnership, Bedford.The e-portfolio tool used by both institutions (MAPS from TAGDevelopments) offers highly innovative approaches to the e-portfolio building process that enables a richer view of student learning and capability including:

- Journal Tool – an educational blog designed to capture student self-reflection and to facilitate collaboration with other students through the use of social media.

- Red Pen Tool – a unique on-screen marking tool that enables any digital evidence file, text, illustration, presentation, video or audio; to be annotated and marked through a web-browser.

The first case study will illustrate how the Journal tool has been embedded in the practice of degree level students at the Pilgrim Partnership. It will demonstrate how the students find the system simple to use, and how they value the ability to tag Journal evidence directly to the QTS Standards.The second case study will focus on the use of the Red Pen Tool to facilitate assessment of degree entry courses at Heriot Watt University. As part of this course, students are expected to generate a portfolio containing a wide range of digital evidence that will be captured in a range of different file formats. The Red Pen Tool has streamlined the process by collating the evidence and enabling the tutor to annotate and mark the portfolio digitally through a unified browser interface. The main aim of this presentation will be to illustrate how easy it is to employ innovative tools to provide a richer view of student learning and progression. The sessions will encourage interaction between presenter and audience, actively encouraging the audience to share their own positive and negative experiences of using e-portfolios in an HE/ITT context, with the presenters sharing their views on how the Journal and Red Pen Tool enrich the learner experience, offering these views for debate by the delegates, so that the session is dynamic and two-way.

Influencing uptake of open educational resources (OER) in clinical settings

Authors

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Theme

Making things happen

Tags

clinicalEducation, community, eLearning, enhancing, healthcare, leanerExperience, nhs, oer, practiceContexts, resources, sharing, student, teachers

Background

Healthcare students train extensively in practice, however significant technological and cultural barriers to sharing resources exist. The NHS eLearning Repository (NeLR) hosts healthcare elearning materials, whilst Jorum is the UK national repository for further and higher education. The Pathways to Open Resource Sharing through Convergence in Healthcare Education (PORSCHE) project encouraged an infrastructure for sharing across NHS and HE domains and aimed for seamless access to resources for staff and students. The Accredited Clinical Teaching Online Resources (ACTOR) project represented a consortium of 5 partner UK HEIs, delivering postgraduate programmes in clinical education, supporting the academic development of clinicians and others involved in teaching students of human and animal healthcare.

Approach

PORSCHE attempted to resolve technical issues: NHS staff could not upload resources to Jorum, while academic staff could neither download nor upload to NeLR, preventing effective discovery and sharing.

ACTOR concentrated on building an informed community able to share content relevant to clinical education programmes licensed with Creative Commons. Using the MEDEV good practice risk assessment toolkit, resources were mapped against institutional policies and procedures in consent, IPR, copyright and quality assurance, and guidance was offered for improvement in local policies and procedures. Actively engaging in developing and disseminating resources and strategies to the wider clinical education development community, through workshops and online events, the projects aimed to facilitate easy sharing of resources in practice contexts. The ACTOR community was used to test the outcomes of the PORSCHE project and together they actively disseminated good practice in sharing across clinical and academic settings.

Conclusion

The success of the projects will be determined by:

- The ability to showcase the same OER in eLearning healthcare education from both clinical and academic contexts.
- The establishment of the basis for a long term partnership between NHS and academia demonstrated by sharing of appropriately licensed content
- Widespread uptake of MEDEV good practice risk assessment and NHS eLearning Readiness toolkits via an effective and sustainable community of practice
- Raised awareness over consent issues in using clinical recordings in teaching
- Acknowledgement of the value of sharing in enhancing student experiences in clinical placements.

References

www.medev.ac.uk

So what? Evidencing the value of curriculum innovations with technology

Author
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Theme
Research and rigour

Tags
Becta, benefits, caseStudy, convincingInstitutions, costBenefit, curriculumInnovation, effectiveness, efficiency, evaluation, evidence, FE, HE, JISC, learnerVoice, marshallingEvidence, methodology, planning, research, rigour, savings, technology, videoInterviews

In designing their evaluation, projects were encouraged to think ahead to the kinds of impact they would like to achieve, to use these to derive potential 'measures of success', and then consider what would make credible evidence of impact. The perspective of different stakeholders was envisioned as part of this process.

Approaches to evaluation

On the basis of 15 very different projects, it is not possible to draw conclusions on the 'best' approach to evaluate curriculum innovations. This paper will, however, outline some of the evaluation approaches used. For example, a number of projects applied or adapted action research, and a typical evaluation cycle based in action research will be described. The potential benefits of applying appreciative inquiry, engaging an independent evaluator and of traditional formative evaluation will also be outlined.

Conclusion

One of the drivers of evaluation within the Transforming Curriculum Delivery Through Technology Programme was to learn lessons from within the programme that could be evidenced and shared outside the programme. While the programme did not necessarily advocate the strict levels of rigour associated with randomised controlled trials, there are many examples of highly effective evaluation methods, techniques and findings. Furthermore, the programme's approach of supporting projects in self-evaluation has the potential to both provide evidence of what does and what does not work, but also to raise evaluation capacity within the sector, and hence improve future evidence generation.

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What works? Mobile learning lessons from around the world

Author
Geoff Stead

Theme
Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags
authoringTools, caseStudy, changingParadigmsForLearning, constructivism, educatingTeachers, emergingLessons, handheldDevices, international, internationalCollaboration, internationalLessons, learnerVoice, medical, mobileDevices, mobileLearning, respondingToChange, thoughtPiece, workBasedLearning

Mobile learning appears to be reaching a convergence point. After several years of creative, disruptive and technological tension there is an emerging consensus of how mobile technologies can add real and meaningful value to today's learners, as well as increased standardisation across different devices.

This convergence is steering us towards opening up institutional infrastructure, allowing students to use a range of personal devices for learning, and encouraging practitioners to adapt their teaching to embrace a more diverse range of tools, and approaches.

The solutions are by no means simple or straightforward. "techno-hype" and "supplier enthusiasm" often drown out the more important, generic evidence. Sometimes local problems can only be solved with local solutions whatever the global enthusiasts tell you.

The authors will present the case for this convergence, drawing on both technology and pedagogy via lessons learned from a range of mobile learning projects happening across the world, right now. These projects will be introduced, drawing out key success criteria and exploring some of the more significant differences to inform our practise in the UK. The demonstration will cover some of the technologies and pedagogies used, as well as providing unique insights into both the successes and failures.

Projects covered will include:

- Military medics from 22 countries collaborating to develop shared mobile learning tools and resources for use in humanitarian and disaster relief scenarios

- African schools using mobile phone technology to leapfrog their lack of more basic resources, and very traditional pedagogies

- Technology collaborations with multiple nations to empower teachers and develop open, extensible mobile authoring tools

Delegates will have the opportunity to discuss these and other m-learning projects helping us all reflect on emerging trends, and our own skills and practice.

Taming IT… One Click Closer

Authors
Mike Worth
Steve Gayfer

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
CPD, ILCT,
JointPracticeDevelopment

Can Joint Practice Development enable practitioners to make learning technology work for them to enhance learner experience and improve efficiency? (Laurillard, 2008)

This action research study aimed to test Joint Practice Development (JPD) – a process of knowledge transference based upon relationships of equality, mutual trust and respect – as a means of developing teachers' use of IT.

The methodology included:

- An on-line survey to establish a datum point.
- Before and after video interviews with managers and participants.
- Working as peers with participants to build trust-based relationships that would enable effective transfer of knowledge.
- Using participants with a range of IT skills, including colleagues with whom we had established work relationships and those with whom we had not worked before.

Implementation

To gain a fuller insight we, as researchers, engaged in the process of JPD with 4 practitioners from 3 institutions to address the issues they had identified. These included:

- Devising and delivering a sign language vocabulary of woodworking terms.
- Filming and delivering a practical painting and decorating module.
- Creating on-line quizzes to inform assessment for learning.

This approach enabled us to better understand the issues around the establishment of trust-based relationships and helped us identify the following findings:

- Lecturers value the support of peers very highly.
- Collaboration between colleagues with pre-existing trust-based relationships yields positive results quicker than new partnerships.
- Self-esteem and equality are essential to positive outcomes. One participant said, "I wasn't made to feel like an idiot."
- Participants' individual initiatives develop a sense of ownership, which is essential to effective Continuing Professional Development activities. (Becta, 2009)
- Practitioners are keen to learn new skills, especially if these are gained through fulfilling their own projects.
- Sufficient time is essential to establish relationships and to see schemes through to completion.

Although a very small study, results suggest that JPD could be an effective vehicle to improve teachers' IT skills. Notions of ownership and management support for bottom-up initiatives are worthy of further research to understand better how these can be used to further facilitate JPD activities.

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Online models for lecturers:TPACK the Dutch way

Authors

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Theme

Teachers of the future

Tags

curriculumDevelopment,
distanceLearning, redesign,
staffDevelopment, support, web2.0

When lecturers use technology in their education, this has an effect on the content they are teaching and the way they are teaching this content. So, how to make sure lecturers take a successful approach in this situation? The TPACK model by Mishra & Koehler (2006) could be the answer. Mishra & Koehler distinguish three forms of knowledge: content, pedagogy and technology. In order to effectively integrate technology for pedagogy around specific subject matter, lecturers have to be aware of the dynamic relationship between all three components.

To support lecturers in working according to the TPACK model five institutes of higher education in the Netherlands have set up four online modules in which lecturers learn how to effectively integrate technology into their education. The design of the modules is based on the TPACK model but while working in the modules participants are also stimulated to use TPACK when designing and executing their own teaching.

In the modules the participants contribute a real life teaching situation they would like to change or improve. Next, they explore the theme of the module (e.g. collaborative knowledge-building) and tools that can support the change or improvement they have in mind. Based on their findings they make a choice for a tool. They then redesign their course using the insights they have gained. The final step is implementing the redesign and evaluating the effect. During the modules the participants give each other feedback and they share their knowledge by means of videoconferences, writing blogs and creating wikis. The process is moderated by experts.

The modules will be made available for (free!) download in October. During the demonstration we will present the didactical approach. After that you will get access to the modules so you have ample opportunity to experience hands-on the set-up of the modules. You are also invited to execute some of the assignments. This way you will be able to assess whether the approach and set-up are of interest to your institution. We will finish the demonstration by discussing your experiences and the implications for implementation of the modules in your institutional context.

References

Mishra, P., & Koehler, M. J. (2006). Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge: A Framework for Teacher Knowledge. Teachers College Record, 108(6), 1017-1054.

Towards a winning approach in developing meaningful preservice teaching practice

Author
Maura Mbunyuza-de Heer Menlah

Theme
Teachers of the future

Tags
constructivism,
teacherProfessionalDevelopment

The paper seeks to ignite a debate on the central place of Teaching Practice in the training and education of teachers and the role of LT in it. Using South Africa as an example, the author envisages greater scrutiny of the current structure with the aim of filling in the gaps. There is a need for more visibility of Higher Education personnel in the field, directly or through technology, as student teachers participate in the school programmes in different parts of the country. The ePoster argues that technology is not merely included as a set of gadgets but the approach needs to be thought through for example by embracing the use of open distance learning.
The Higher Education Qualifications Committee (HEQC) is the body that is responsible for the accreditation of qualifications in South African institutions of Higher learning. One of the requirements of HEQC is that teacher education programmes should provide students with adequate teaching practice before they can be accepted as qualified teachers. Among other points of emphasis is the need for contact between the student teachers and their lecturers. This is imperative be it that training is through distance or contact teaching. Qualitative research was conducted among the Teaching practice students of the University of South Africa (UNISA) as well as with the Principals of the schools where these students were placed for Teaching Practice. The research comprised of one to one interviews, document analysis and a questionnaire. The HEQC document as well as the structure of the model used at UNISA were studied for any differences between the two documents to plan how well these can be harmonised to produce a programme where students can benefit from both theory and practice. The theoretical framework used is constructivism. With qualitative research it is possible to probe for deeper understanding and through constructivism such an aim may be facilitated. The researcher aims to contribute to social transformation of teachers, the schools and society. Triangulation will be used in this study to converge perspectives used to collect data. (Padgett, 2005) finds triangulation as best suited to establish accuracy in such environments. The research suggests a winning approach as one based on a well planned relationship between the placement schools and the university to give direction and support to student teachers.

Curriculum Design: An approach for successfully embedding Technology Enhanced Learning in the curriculum

Authors

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Phil Alberts
Maria Papaefthimiou

Theme

Broad tents and strange bedfellows

Tags

educatingTeachers, learningDesign, or

Research-led Brunel and Reading Universities have been developing and adopting an innovative approach for embedding technology enhanced learning within their teaching and learning processes, more specifically at the stage of curriculum design. The focus of the institutions was to address a common need – to educate lecturers to think more profoundly on ways of embedding learning technologies as part of their teaching. This would lead to an enhanced student learning experience, and one which better meets the needs of the 'digital natives'.

This presentation provides an account of the institutional approach developed by Brunel and Reading as part of their involvement in the Open University Learning Design Initiative (OULDI) project, http://ouldi.open. ac.uk, which is funded by JISC. The approach consists of three steps:

1. Identifying 'touch points' during the curriculum design process, and possible interventions where advice and support to academic staff is deemed necessary.

2. Workshops for academic staff, with the aim of introducing a new methodology for learning design. This methodology aims at providing support and guidance to programme / module designers in making decisions about creating blended learning activities.

3. Exposure to a range of learning design tools (such as the OULDI toolbox http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1882) and other resources to enable academic staff to make informed decisions about creating or adapting blended learning opportunities, and to document and evaluate the academic staff user experience.

After describing the approach, the presentation will give an account of the commonalities and variances of the approach as implemented in the two institutions, and describe its impact on the teaching process. Case study narratives are used to provide evidence of the participants' experience and perception of the approach. Other evaluations of each of the above stages will be described, and gathered recommendations will be listed. The presentation concludes by discussing some of the benefits observed, such as improved stakeholder engagement, stronger collaboration within course design teams, and increased opportunity for creativity and innovative design approaches.

Further information can be found at www.brunel.ac.uk/about/acad/apdu/ researchprojects/ouldi, www.open.ac.uk/blogs/OULDI/?page_id = 277.

Fostering academic skills development through an online hub: an integrated approach to skills provision across the University of York

Author
Wayne Britcliffe

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
academicSkillsDevelopment, Collaboration, informalLearning, learnerVoice, scalability, selfDirectedLearning, support

Background

This paper reports on the University of York's progress in establishing an institutional hub for academic skills provision, integrating contributions from different academic and service providers and presenting them in one location. The hub has been designed to facilitate students' access to support resources at any point in their studies – from registration (transition) to graduation – addressing a range of key skills which are essential to their academic development.

Description of Approaches

Using the institutional VLE as the location for the hub, the University has developed a collection of self-directed tutorials and learning resources, addressing key areas such as academic integrity, critical reading and academic writing skills, which are intended to complement formal skills support delivered on formal programmes of study. The design of tutorials has taken account of the 'information-age mindset' (Frand, 2000) of students making the transition to higher education, with preferences for autonomous learning, personalised learning, interactivity and exploratory learning through trial and error. The resources offer opportunities for independent learning with feedback on performance, and are intended to be engaging and fit for purpose in promoting skills development.

Results

A review of student engagement with the online resources has been conducted using a variety of research methods such as usage statistics, survey responses and feedback directed through focus groups. Our preliminary findings indicate a high level of take-up of the resources by students, with individuals reporting enhanced confidence levels in mastering key skills such as academic writing. Academic staff have also responded positively to these centrally maintained resources, viewing them as a useful supplement to formal teaching and learning materials delivered through their programmes of studies.

Conclusion

Evaluation of the skills hub is on-going, but our preliminary findings concur with the observations of Nelson et al (2006), that the use of institutionally supported technology can be transformational in helping students to take charge of their learning, ensuring that they know where to go and how to access services and resources. The hub has also been effective in bringing together learning enhancement initiatives at the centre and establishing shared design principles for self-directed learning resources.

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Flexible Service Delivery

Authors
Alex Hawker
Malcolm Read
John Slater

Theme
Making things happen

Tags
efficiency, flexibleDelivery, JISC,
sharing, Tools

Miguel Brechner's talk will report on Plan Ceibal to date, and examine in detail its many social, cultural and educational impacts.

Author index

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