# Association of Learning Technologists 20th Annual Conference, 10-12 September 2013, University of Nottingham: Building New Cultures of Learning

## Introduction

This report is a write-up of the sessions I attended, which were chosen for relevance to the work of the Faculty's Learning Innovation Unit. It is based on my personal notes, the session outlines and associated references, with the intention that these can be followed up to support the work of the unit. Most of the sessions were based on individual case studies or small research projects so it cannot be assumed that the findings are representative of the higher education community as a whole.

The conference covered five themes (by chance and not design, my selections fell into the categories of 'It's all about the learner' and 'Making innovation work'):

- **Openness** (Open Educational Resources (OERs) and MOOCs (Massive Open Educational Courses))
- **Global learning cultures** (collaboration, crowd-sourcing, competition in the global market, educational policy and politics)
- **Making innovation work** (pedagogic strategies for using technology effectively and institutional practice)
- **Big data** (student analytics, making sense of the data, predicting the future)
- **It's all about the learner** (as pioneers and change agents, and partnerships (learning contracts and lifelong learning))

## Welcome address: Pro Vice Chancellor, Alan Ford, University of Nottingham

Nottingham University is committed to Open Educational Resources (OERs) for widening access purposes, for efficiency gains, as a promotional tool and to enhance the student experience. Its Open Nottingham programme includes the following:

- Moodle, as its virtual learning environment
- an institutional repository (with resources created under Creative Commons Licences) called U-Now
- the Xerte Online Toolkits for creating online resources
- an online assessment tool called RoGō which includes a web interface for creating questions (14 types available) and delivers the assessments, results and reports
- the Nottingham Open Online Course (NOOC) called *Perspectives on Sustainability,* available to all students and staff, including their campuses in Malaysia and China. This course runs for 12 weeks and can lead to formal credit through the Nottingham Advantage Award

The University also uses iTunesU and YouTube Edu, has a virtual campus in Second Life and joined FutureLearn (a consortium of universities offering free online courses) in early 2013.

## Keynote: Rachel Wenstone, National Union of Students

This keynote focussed on the importance of the student voice in shaping the student learning experience, and emphasised the need for higher education institutions to involve and empower their students, and treat them as partners in their learning process.

## Theme: Making innovation work

### Meaningful online discussion activity for distance learners – Melanie Kime (Leeds University)

This session focussed on a taught, online two year part-time distance learning postgraduate programme in Applied and Professional Ethics, with modules divided into units. It was launched in 2010, and averages 10-20 mature professional students from across the globe per year, using Blackboard 9.1. They use high quality teaching materials in an accessible format which were developed specifically for the course. The challenge was to support the development of critical thinking skills, which they did through:

- atmosphere: collaborative, constructive and open style
- dialogue: student:student and tutor:student/s
- critical engagement: with content, tutor and student points of view

Live webinars were tried but dismissed because of problems with:

- scheduling across time zones and conflict with personal/professional commitments (when course was supposed to be flexible)
- bandwidth and hardware accessibility
- staff resistance to facilitating a webinar and being on video

The solution was Blackboard discussion boards, using:

- induction session including netiquette and assessment criteria – two discussion activities per week, with 10-20% for engaging with the discussion work ( i.e. how much engagement with other students and how many times), content isn't assessed
- week of preparation (web document including links to readings, discussion instructions and individual exercises)
- meaningful question to start off discussion (liken this to the 'first rung' of the ladder, with tutor facilitating climbing up the rungs)
- scheduling to suit all students ('synchronous asynchronicity')

They have now introduced a few webinars for students to meet their tutors, and have personal tutorials using Skype.

### iPads in distance learning: learning design, digital literacy, transformation – Terese Bird and Ming Nie (University of Leicester)

To meet the needs of international students working in inaccessible places (e.g. war zones or on submarines) where access to the internet is intermittent, a bespoke app was developed for optimising course content for an iPad with built-in 3G (bought by the university for the students, who then liaise with Apple). Students had access to a downloadable course book (created by the instructors), a VLE to upload assignments, and to ten free apps. The screen of the iPad had panels representing podcasts, videos, etc. Induction was by a paper document (based on the premise that students did not have sufficient knowledge of the hardware/software to get started), supported by a YouTube link on how to use the iPad.

Research questions surrounding the pedagogic challenges associated with mobile learning included:

- Did students have a sufficient level of digital literacy to make the most of mobile learning?
- Could intermittent access to a course support deep learning?
- Was it possible to undertake academic research electronically instead of on paper?
- Was collaboration possible?

Early findings were that an optimum level of digital literacy couldn't be assumed, and that iPads didn't support discussion or facilitate engagement. Some countries operate an embargo on American goods and services (i.e. Apple and Amazon), so all content had to be loaded on to the VLE. These shortcomings have been addressed in subsequent cohorts, and the intention is to use this as a model for other distance learning programmes.

**References**


The 7Cs of Learning Design Toolkit.

Mobile Learning InfoKit, which includes frameworks for mobile learning: Laurillard's conversational framework; Park's pedagogical framework for mobile learning; Koole's model for framing mobile learning.

Nie, M, Bird, T, Beck, A, Hayes, N and Conole, G *Adding Mobility to Distance Learning – PLACES Case Study*.

JISC InfoKit on Mobile Learning.

University of Leicester, Institute of Learning Innovation, Delivering University Curricular: Knowledge, Learning and Innovation Gains.

Gilster, P (1997) *Digital Literacy*, Wiley and Sons.

Full ALT-C 2013 presentation.


## From 0 to 88,000 hours – implementing lecture capture at scale – Ben Steeples (University of Essex)

After experimenting with audio-only recording, Essex adopted Panopto in 2012 and use an in-house website, showing a timetable and whether or not a teaching session is being recorded. Recordings are available in a variety of formats and staff can edit their recordings. There is also an option to management their rights and ownership. Everything is recorded under the former SENDA legislation (whether disability supersedes employees' rights is still not clear), although sensitive staff are not captured. They manage risk in four ways:

1. Signs outside all the recording rooms – invitation to e-mail if someone has a problem with this.
2. Students agree to honesty statement before accessing the recording, i.e. not to upload to other sites.
3. Don't record tutorials or exams.
4. Staff can opt-out:
    a. If they do nothing, their recordings are open to all students.
    b. Can chose at any time to restrict their recordings.

Staff want to see the analytics. Students want more lectures recorded. Sound quality is an issue, as is storage (currently 50,000 hours = 11TB storage, moving to 200 rooms = 80,000 hours = 35TBs) so files are only stored for two years because of the space limitation.

There are plans to give staff more rights, but there needs to be training on rights, in terms of information on OER (open educational resources) and academic freedom.

**References**


Karnad, A (2013) *Student use of recorded lectures: a report reviewing recent research into the use of lecture capture technology in higher education, and its impact on teaching methods and attendance*.

## Keeping ahead of the curve. Technology and our ever-changing consumer – Graham Taylor and Colin Loughlin (Desire2Learn and Surrey University)

Desire2Learn was commissioned by the NUS to carry out research into students' technical skills and their attitudes towards technology enhanced learning. The results are published in four parts (see references below). For this session, a panel of four students were interviewed about their experiences of higher education to provide authenticity. In summary, they want to see:

- technology being used for learning, but sometimes even basic use of the VLE and a coherent structure are missing (it is clear that staff just roll over last year's content and don't check it for currency)
- integration of external systems
- personalised learning
- the use of mobile technology
- collaborative learning
- Facebook group for interacting with other students about the course
- an exciting interface for the VLE
- an online induction for information systems, including the VLE, to be available online because a one hour induction at the start of the year is not helpful – too much information to take in and not available at the point of need

Other comments from the panel included:

- students only use e-mail for administrative purposes
- some Cambridge students deactivate their Facebook accounts for part of the year to focus on their studies
- if students do an online test in the same room, they can see when another student gets in wrong, so they go for the right answer
- GIS staff know how to use the software but don't know how to teach it

**References**

National Union of Students (2012) *Student Experience Research 2012, Part 1: Teaching and Learning*.

National Union of Students (2012) *Student Experience Research 2012, Part 2: Independent learning and Contact Hours*.

National Union of Students (2012) *Student Experience Research 2012, Part 3: Subject Differences*.

National Union of Students (2012) *Student Experience Research 2012, Part 4: First Year Student Experience*.

## Carpe Diem Collaborative Learning Design – Gilly Salmon and Janet Gregory (Swinburne University of Technology, Australia)

Salmon's model for collaborative learning design first appeared in 2001 and has undergone many iterations over the years. Prescriptive techniques do not work; this model is based on principles, with a focus on outcomes and working backwards. The workbook (see below) is available under a Creative Commons licence.

**References**

Carpe Diem: A Team Based Approach to Learning Design.

Carpe Diem Workbook.

Full ALT-C 2013 presentation.

### Are virtual worlds still worth the effort? – Rose Heaney, Remy Olasoji, Clare Duguid (University of East London)

This institution has been using virtual worlds since 2009 for simulating laboratory experiments, crime scene investigations and healthcare but interest has been waning (also waning across institutions as evidenced by this single paper on virtual worlds at ALT-C in 2013 compared to numerous papers on the subject a few years ago). Reasons seem to be high overheads to develop and operate in virtual worlds, a team required to run it, and availability of more accessible alternatives. East London used Second Life but because there is now only one discipline using it, they are now experimenting with OpenSim, an open source platform.

They use it for their podiatry students to gain experience before their clinical placement. However, the use of textchat takes away from realism, so they are now delivering in real time, using real speech – which requires the tutor to be in the virtual world.

In summary, virtual worlds are now a niche activity.

### One Hundred and One Things about Video in Education – Sandra Partington, *et al* (City University, London)

This is the story of the steps behind City University's decision to select Kaltura as their institution-wide solution for providing innovative use of video in their teaching. Staff had started to use YouTube and Vimeo but they wanted their own solution, which had to meet the following criteria:

- help people make things easily
- share them
- safe and controlled space – for all film
- all viewable on any device

Some of the requirements included mobile learning, providing audio/video feedback on submitted assignments and the creation of reflective portfolios.

**References**

City of London, Technology for Teaching and Learning.

### Building a community-informed framework for assuring quality in distance learning programmes – Richard Walker and Wayne Britcliffe (University of York)

At York they have a Distance Learning Forum at institutional level for DL programme teams to disseminate good practice. Their programmes have different delivery modes:

- access to course resources and discussion space
- online weekly discussion groups
- online problem-based learning
- online tutorials

Using best practice guidelines from the QA standards for distance education and UCL's quality framework (see references below), an interactive online resource, with embedded links to quality standards,

exemplars and case studies from other distance learning programmes was developed, with the option for staff to share and update the content – i.e. a 'living resource'.

So far the framework has been used to support the development of two postgraduate programmes, with experienced distance learning programme leaders and central support staff working alongside a novice programme team, from validation to launch of the programme.

The framework uses six themes of quality, and is available to use and adapt, under a Creative Commons licence.

**References**

Quality Framework for Distance Learning Programmes.

ALT-C paper.

UCL (2008). Web based MSc Programme in International Primary Health Care: Quality Framework. In (Eds.) M Jara, M Fitri and S Cranmer (2008) *Evaluation of E-Learning Courses*. London Knowledge Lab., Institute of Education, November 2008, Appendix 7. ISSN 1753-0385.

Quality Assurance – Quality Enhancement in e-Learning Special Interest Group (2011). *A Toolkit for Harnessing Quality Assurance Processes for Technology Enhanced Learning*.

## TELUS about it: collaborative approaches to staff development – Sarah Horrigan (Derby University), James Little (Leeds University), Anna-Leiza Barthorpe (Sheffield University)

TELUS (Technology Enhanced Learning at the University of Sheffield) is a cross institutional initiative (with Leeds and Derby Universities). The challenge was how to deliver quality staff development (something in between specific in-depth expert sessions targeted at small groups and centrally run sessions offering an introduction to a broad range of technologies) that met the needs of the academic community. The aims were to:

- raise the confidence and develop the skills set for staff in terms of technology-enhanced learning
- introduce new technologies, applications and models
- offer a safe environment for experimentation

Sheffield is a 'Google' university (using docs, hangouts, calendar, sites), so staff already had access to a lot of the tools. Skilled professionals from the three universities were involved, and best practice was modelled in the design of the programmes (see Bath and Bourke's reference below). Training needs analyses were conducted and fed into the programme design so that participants effectively owned the programme. Industry experts are brought in to cover some of the programme, and library colleagues cover digital copyright. There is online groupwork and moderating skills are covered. Attendance is compulsory. The programmes are designed to run in parallel with the development of new online programmes so staff gain the skills on learning design and practical techniques that they need at the time they need them.

Two programmes are offered:

1. TELUS 1, a blended learning model, delivered flexibly because of the time constraints on academics; it is theme based, and actively encourages the creation of a community of practitioners.
2. TELUS 2, a fully online course, goes deeper into understanding the concepts introduced in TELUS 1; it offers the experience of being an online student, and encourages staff to make links from the course to their own teaching practices.

The key to the success of this was seen as engagement at every organisation level and ownership of the collaborative approach.

**References**

Bath, D and Bourke, J, *The blending of blended learning: An experiential approach to academic staff development*. Proceedings Ascilite 2011: Changing demands, changing directions, December 4-11, 2011.

## Academic perceptions of differences between teaching face-to-face and online teaching – Sue Folley (University of Huddersfield)

This study looked at the experiences of both early and late adopters as they moved to online teaching. Results showed differences in:

- perceptions of the teacher's role
- the teaching approach
- building relationships with students online
- workload and time

Recommendations from the study included the importance of peer support, and being an online student to understand the needs of the online student. It isn't just about using new technologies; it involves changing teaching practices, changing role from orator to facilitator, and developing a social presence.

**References**

Redmond, P *From face-to-face teaching to online teaching: Pedagogical transitions*. Proceedings from Ascilite 2011, 4-7 December.

## Technological innovation and workloads – Belinda Tynan (Open University) and Yoni Ryan (Queensland University of Technology)

This study looked at the perceived workload associated with online and blended learning (where blended learning is the norm in Australian universities and is generally regarded as a positive experience). Early studies suggested that cost savings could be made by changing the curriculum design and using teaching assistants to run the tutorial sessions, but the reality is that developing engaging online resources and using innovative technologies comes at an academic cost and this isn't acknowledged in most current workload models. The time spent on teaching activities is increasing both during and between semesters and constant changes in technology means activities are becoming more complex as more options are introduced (e.g. continual additional functionality in the VLE).

There is a desperate need for support: staff want administrative support for uploading content and they want immediate IT support. There is a suggestion that research into technology enhanced learning could go into the REF. Maybe it is time to revisit the job description of academic staff?

Tynan *et al*'s (2012) report (see reference below) recommends that workload models must change or new models of delivery need to be adopted (where academic subject experts produce core learning materials supported by 'teaching only' staff).

**References**

Tynan, B, Ryan, Y, Hinton, L and Lamont-Mills, A (2012) *Out of hours. Final Report of the project e-Teaching leadership: planning and implementing a benefits-oriented costs model for technology enhanced learning*.

## Making learning possible – net based learning at Dalarna University – Anna Munters and Inger Lindqvist (Sweden)

This university (approximately 17,000 students) is apparently well known for its net-based courses (although it delivers campus-based courses too). The Next Generation Learning Centre, consisting of 16 people, supports the delivery of the net-based learning, with an emphasis on pedagogy that regards communicative interaction as vital. Technology is chosen for its appropriateness for supporting learning and facilitating interaction and not because it is the latest technology. (They don't call it 'distance learning' because they think that distance makes no difference; their emphasis is on closeness, accessibility and flexibility.) The centre aims to:

- develop educational skills
- run several platforms
- evaluate and provide tools
- provide support

They provide 8 am-10 pm support Monday to Friday. The platform is open access, but doesn't allow contributions, and uses a standard template for everything. The recordings include questions from students; staff can premake their lectures in a studio and sign language can be included. Videos are uploaded to YouTube and iTunesU. All videos are automatically tagged with metadata (including author, date, time, place, course, title). They also set up webinars just for student use, and they train teachers how to present.

Three basic needs for the learning process are met through the following:

- information exchange (Fronter Learning Management System for organising their courses, adapted for visually impaired students)
- seminars and meetings (using Adobe Connect)
- recording/streaming lectures (Videochat – a bespoke system)

They use these tools synchronously, same time, any place. Their students and staff interact more in a virtual seminar via Adobe Connect than on campus. Students have access to recurring introductory courses for all systems for the first four weeks; there are also equivalent courses available for teachers.

Their site includes a virtual café, which is a support room, for technical pedagogic questions. They attribute their uniqueness to the large number of innovative staff who are focused on change and development, pedagogical support, support from management, and a focus on synchronous, collaborative ways of working.

## To iTeach or not to iTeach – how academics use iPads for teaching and their perceptions of the devices' affordances – Olaojo Aiyegbayo (University of Huddersfield)

Most students own mobile devices so there is growing pressure on academic staff to integrate these technologies into their curriculum design and teaching practices. This small scale study (12 participants) looked at how academic staff used the iPad for their activities in:

- teaching and learning

- research
- administration

Huddersfield provide their staff with iPads but the students don't tend to have them so the staff don't use them for teaching. They don't know how to use them: there is IT support but no teaching support. See reference below for the outcomes of the project.

**References**

British Journal of Educational Technology iPad project.

## Open implementation practice for wide-scale e-Portfolio use – Gordon Joyes and Kirstie Coolin (University of Nottingham)

Implementation of e-Portfolios at institutional level can be a problem because the contexts and purposes for use are often different so the knowledge acquired isn't easily transferable. Nottingham's e-Portfolio implementation strategy was informed by JISC guidelines (see references below). Key features were:

- community of practice approach (showcasing and sharing practice)
- support from senior management

Nottingham had experience of using e-Portfolios in terms of implementation but not with embedding e-Portfolio work within the programmes. Nottingham is an 'open source' university so Mahara was chosen.

Nottingham has been running a one year pilot, including 1500 users and in 12 university-wide contexts (including their Malaysian campus). Their Centre for International e-Portfolio Development provided support for individual implementations, using the JISC Toolkit for resources, and strategies for forming a community of practice were drawn up, e.g. community blog, face-to-face meetings, individual interviews by an educational advisor to check progress and deal with any issues – resulting in rich case studies.

**References**

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.

JISC (2008) e-Portfolios infoKit.

JISC (2012) e-Portfolio Implementation Toolkit.

## Theme: It's all about the learner

### eLearning Design and Development: a journey through murky waters – Mary Sweeney (University of Leicester)

A module on e-learning resource design and development and student support was developed as part of a PG Cert in Academic Practice in Higher Education, based on principles from

- reflective practice – using Brookfield's 'critical lenses'
    - own view
    - students' view
    - peers'/colleagues' view
    - theoretical perspectives in educational literature
- constructive alignment – Biggs
    - teaching learning activities
    - intended learning outcomes
    - assessment
- student approaches to learning (surface and deep learning) – Ramsden

The module includes face to face and online tasks during the module, and three assessment tasks that go into an e-portfolio. There is a focus on 'what students do' to help the participants reconceptualise and re-examine their approaches to teaching online. The module involves the design, creation, implementation and reflection on an interactive online learning resource, and looking at the skills and knowledge required to create the resource and to teach online. The module is broken down into sessions, some face to face and some online (using blog/wiki/calendar/OERs). Staff get an increment in salary for doing the module. For details, see The Learning Design Construct.

**References**

Kandlebinder, P and Peseta, T (2009) Key concepts in postgraduate certificates in higher education teaching and learning in Australasia and the United Kingdom, *International Journal for Academic Development*, (14)1, 19–31.

Biggs, J and Tang, C (2011). *Teaching for Quality Learning at University*, (4th Ed) Maidenhead: Open University Press McGraw Hill Education.

Ramsden, P (1992) *Learning to teach in higher education*, London: Routledge.

Brookfield, S *Four Lenses: Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*.

Gonzales, C (2009) *Teaching in 'blended' learning environments: How are conceptions of teaching and eTeaching associated?*

### Digital Practice – a framework for engaging staff learners – Elaine Swift

Evidence suggests that there is disparity between assumed and actual digital literacy among both students and staff in higher education institutions. At this particular institution, digital literacy (including social networking) is seen as a core teaching competency. Using Sharpe *et al*'s framework for digital literacy, the concept of 'Digital Practice' was developed. This pyramid framework begins with 'functional access' at the base (ensuring access to reliable equipment, accessible learning spaces and resources), moving up through 'skills' (gaining confidence and expertise through guidance and practice), and 'practices' (matching technologies to teaching needs) and finally 'creative appropriation' (creating their own learning environments and social contexts).

Taken from an excerpt from the Digital Practice Framework (Sharpe *et al*):

Upskilling of the teacher requires scaffolding and encouragement to engage with communities of practice.

1. Initial stage: Awareness of available services and systems, helpdesk support, clear signposting for initial support and interaction with other practitioners to learn what's available and achievable.
2. Practice driven: Contextualised support, basic courses, individual tutorials and clear signposting to support.
3. Problem-based: Spotlights, guidance on application of knowledge, themed workshops, examples of good practice.
4. Creative practitioner (content as product of their own practice): contributor to communities of practice (digital practice communities, special interest groups, mentoring) and dissemination of digital practice (blogs, showcases, learning and teaching conferences)

Forms are available online to support the use of this model.

**References**

Sharpe, R, Beetham, H and McGill, L (2009) *Framework for developing digital literacies*.

JISC The Design Studio: Digital Literacies.

Higher Education Academy (2011) *The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education*.

Futures for Higher Education: Analysing Trends *Higher Education: Meeting the Challenges of the 21st Century*.

## Experiencing online learning: developing staff capacity and capability – Janet Gregory (Swinburne University of Technology, Australia)

Staff engaged in developing online teaching skills need to experience what it is like to be taught online. Gregory and Jones (2009) suggest that teachers tend to use the same techniques that they are comfortable with in the classroom and apply these to the online environment, thereby missing out on the new possibilities available. They need the practice of being an online student to begin to appreciate the changes in behaviour needed to deliver a quality online student experience. It is important to recognise that teaching online may be unfamiliar territory for most staff and might involve an element of risk taking.

This course is voluntary. No workload allowance is given, but it is popular and used as CPD by staff. It sets out to demystify the online learning experience. It is student centred and interactive. The design was based on Salmon's 5 stage model for e-moderation; the experience was located within the teacher's context and enabled them to reflect on their practice; and it was delivered in five weeks. For staff it was a different way of learning for them. Results from interviews suggest that staff found attendance gave them increased confidence, they were able to apply what they learnt, it was useful to gain a student's perspective and it was good working with colleagues. They still wanted technical support.

**References**

Salmon, G (2011) *E-moderating: The Key to Teaching and Learning Online*, 3rd Edition. Routledge: New York and London.

Gregory, J and Jones, R (2009) 'Maintaining Competence': a grounded theory typology of approaches to teaching in higher education. *Higher Education,* vol 57, 769–785.

McQuiggan, C A (2012) Faculty development for online teaching as a catalyst for change, *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, *16*(2), 27–61.

### Kritikos Student Community Visual Media Search Engine – Stephen Bullough (School of Engineering, University of Liverpool)

Students' internet search results are lost every year. Given the time that students take to find relevant and quality resources, this is a waste of time. Under a JISC funded project (ENGrich), the Kritikos visual media search was developed, involving 300 students. These students tend to use websites instead of books. Based on the Google search engine design, this search engine allows for searching of multimedia and document files (showing file types as a glance), and allows for rating options. Students can create their own favourites and can gain a reputation for sourcing good quality resources. The activity generated is stored in the Learning Registry; this includes information on the number of hits and ratings. Students' usage data is stored in the analytics. [If FET is interested in this, there would be a cost involved as it involves building a Learning Management System (LMS).]

### Engage students in creative multimedia content production: a new pedagogic strategy using web 2.0 learning technologies – Pandeli Glavanis (American University of Cairo)

This session was about student-centred learning, facilitated by educational technology, and the production of digital content as part of student assignments. This content may be produced as a result of collating information from primary and secondary sources, fieldwork, online resources and adding a written context, i.e. requiring different skills, which staff do not have time to teach, so there needs to be time set aside and scaffolding provided in the syllabus for students to acquire both digital and literacy skills. Hence this Classroom Action Research (CAR) project, where students were out in the community and, with the help of technical support, produced digital artefacts which were assessed on the content and the multimedia output. As an example, see Youth Voices Rise.

The students used a PB Works class wiki, which included their course materials and their digitally produced content. See Welcome to SOC203: Social Problems of the Middle East.

### Raising the profile of technology use amongst learners: taking control of digital literacy development – Stuart Redhead (University of Exeter)

Based on the premise that students have the hardware but don't know how to use it to support their academic studies, and institutions don't generally offer support for this, this iTest was developed to test their digital literacy levels.

The iTest (available under a Creative Commons licence) contains thirty categorised questions on how students currently use technology. It gives a snapshot of the student's current digital literacy skills and assigns a profile to them: digital guru, media mogul, career builder, information junkie, digital dodger, online networker. It provides information on how they can improve their skills and share their digital practice. Tutors can extract information on a cohort's digital preferences; they can also use the individualised information when making up teams for groupwork; and they can provide technical support where it is needed.

The results of the project indicated that where students used the new technologies they were provided with to support them in an assessment, they were able to identify the specific skills they gained from this and had higher satisfaction levels with the module. This suggests that digital literacy skills can be increased by using technology in a variety of ways and for different purposes.

**References**

Kennedy, G E, Judd, T S, Churchward, A, Gray, K and Krause, K L (2008). First year students' experiences with technology: Are they really digital natives? *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology*, 24(1), 108-122.

The i-Test.

## Getting the most out of your VLE – Suzanne Helen Wright, Andy Beggan, Indre Petrauskaite (University of Nottingham)

Nottingham migrated from Web CT to Moodle in September 2012, with the focus now on normalising technology enhanced learning across their programmes. They have been criticised for using their VLE as a content repository so this is seen as an opportunity to change teaching and learning practices in the institution. They use Equella (a digital repository for uploading and reuse of content), Kaltura (recently) and RoGo (their e-assessment management system for creating and delivering online assessments). They have rolled out a template for the VLE; they can see all their modules. Their focus is on people who want to teach but are nervous, and they find it productive to get other academics to do their job as their colleagues will listen to them.

They see students as change agents so working with the Student Union, they took a student-centred approach to gathering feedback from the student body during the 2012–2013 academic year. The first stage involved benchmarking exercises, focus groups and online surveys, followed by engagement activities and development opportunities for improving the student experience. In response to the findings, they are now looking at CPD activities for academic staff, continued student engagement, integration of the VLE into University systems and curriculum design.

## The eLearning Unit, how can we help you? Reflections on the Learning Technologist's role in the context of the newly-formed, central Learning Technology team – Tunde Varga-Atkins (University of Liverpool)

This was a practical session looking at how learning technologists perceive their roles in the team. They have a blog and a twitterfeed (elearninglpool).

## Flipping the classroom with just in time teaching and peer instruction: case studies from the sciences and business – Bentley *et al*, (University of Huddersfield)

Cited was Gibbs' *Twenty terrible reasons for lecturing* as an argument for not delivering didactic lectures. Four case studies from different disciplines used technology to deliver information before the class, and then used the classroom time for engaging with the students in a more interactive way to encourage a deeper approach to learning (the 'flipped classroom').

Typically, students were given a variety resources (videos, written articles/chapters, etc) to work through before the class. Just in Time Teaching (Novak *et al*, 1999) was adopted in the classroom, i.e. students did a short online test just before the lecture so that the tutor could see what needed to be clarified in the classroom. Then Peer Instruction (Mazur, 1997) principles were used to generate group discussion, supported by an electronic voting system for question/answer activities.

The questions considered were whether students engaged with the work set before the classroom session, did they do better in their assessments, did it affect attendance in the classroom, and what did students prefer?

Students liked the reading preparation, and being able to watch videos repeatedly because it was difficult to cope with the pace of a live lecture. Activities involved voting, then peer interaction, followed by a revote to see if positions had changed.

## References


Mazur, E (1997) *Peer Instruction: A User's Manual.* Prentice–Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Novak, G N, Patterson, E T, Gavrin, A and Christian, W (1999) *Just-in-Time Teaching: Blending active Learning and Web Technology*. Prentice Hall: Saddle River, NJ.

Bates, S and Galloway, R (2012) *The inverted classroom in a large enrolment introductory physics course: a case study*, Higher Education Academy.

## Miscellaneous

### Internationalisation – Terese Bird

In China, students don't have access to all the resources needed. They use agents who search for the best institutions, narrow it down to four and then see what they can access online (e.g. videos, documents – they like to read anything in English). They get Chinese sub-titles added to the videos.

### Gloria Visintini, Director of Technology Enhanced Learning (University of Bristol)

In an attempt to try and change the *status quo* in the face of resistance from staff based on misperceptions of technology-enhanced learning, more opportunities for discussion have been introduced, and more pilot studies encouraged. Work is done on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, and there are lots of organised events. They make use of discussion forums, blogs and wikis. Improvements to equipment and resources for staff were needed. It has involved working with IT staff and engineers, and hasn't always been easy.

**References**

Salmon, G (2005) Flying not flapping: a strategic framework for e-learning and pedagogical innovation in higher education institutions, *ALT-J*, 13:3, 201–218.

Caroline Graham
E-Learning Development
Learning Innovation Unit
Faculty of Environment and Technology

October 2013