Changing landscapes: The challenges of IT and digital skills training in the changing HE landscape
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Introduction

About this guide

Within higher education the IT and digital needs of both staff and students are constantly changing. Fulfilling these new requirements and ensuring that staff and students develop the appropriate digital skills they need to learn and work in today’s digital world is a challenge for us all.

There are many drivers for these changes. Staff must continue to adapt and change in response to the new expectations placed on them – by both new systems and technologies, and by increased student expectations. Student expectation is an area of focus for all institutions. Students expect to be able to access learning, information and services anywhere, at any time and that staff will have the necessary skills to support them in their learning and deliver effective services. There is also a need to ensure that students develop the employability skills they need to work in a digital society, and IT skills continue to be a core aspect of this.

This guide has been put together by the User Skills Group (USG) of the UCISA Digital Skills and Development Group to provide examples of good practice, which demonstrate the approaches taken to tackle the challenges of IT and digital skills training in this changing HE landscape.

There are eight case studies which address at least one, and often more, of the following key themes:

- Use of mobile or innovative technologies
- Challenges of flexible delivery – such as blended and online
- Doing more with less resources
- Proving value added by training
- Use of shared or collaborative services

The case studies cover training and support for many types of staff – academic, technical and professional support staff – as well as for students. Each case study describes the project or activity and the approach taken, considers its effectiveness and any lessons learnt. Future developments, and the possibilities for adoption elsewhere, are also included.

We hope that you enjoy reading these case studies and find inspiration from them which you can apply in your own institution.

Acknowledgments

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- Lorraine Barclay, St George’s University of London
- Iain Cameron, University of Aberdeen

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Winner – Nottingham Trent University

Digital practice in action: developing digital skills through flexible delivery

Anna Armstrong, Digital Practice Adviser

Abstract

The focus of this case study is the approach taken to enable a large group of staff to develop the digital skills and knowledge required to confidently deal with a high volume of telephone calls and use software to fill vacant places in Clearing. The group had a mixed skill set and a short amount of time to gain new skills. Using the flipped classroom approach, factual and contextual information was delivered through online activities, allowing for the maximum amount of classroom time to be dedicated to gaining practical digital skills.

Introduction

Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is a large teaching and research university with around 28,000 students. In August, NTU’s remaining undergraduate places are filled through the process of clearing. The busiest time in clearing is when A level results are released and students without a place look for a suitable course. Clearing telephone calls peak on A level results day when NTU receives around 14,000 calls. A large number of existing NTU staff volunteer to help take calls during this period and are given responsibility for offering places.

Each year, NTU’s Centre for Professional Learning and Development (CPLD) designs and delivers training for clearing call centre staff. Previous training approaches had not prepared staff effectively as it had focused on the use of technology, taken largely out of context, so staff found it difficult to put their learning into practice. Acknowledging that staff take on a high level of responsibility, and that clearing is a very busy and critical period, in 2012 CPLD took a revised approach to training.

What was done

There was a complex mix of new digital skills and business processes to be learned.
A large cohort and mixed learner profile

150 staff from mixed roles volunteered to answer clearing calls and match applicants to vacant places. The group comprised both confident, experienced staff, and novice colleagues, who were nervous at the responsibility.

A lot to learn in a short space of time

NTU’s admissions team stipulated that training was compulsory and could be a maximum of three hours in duration. Learners had to gain and apply a complex range of new digital skills in the context of the relevant business processes, so it was clear that a traditional face to face workshop would not be an effective way to support this group.

The approach

We wanted to provide support which would build confidence in trainees and maximise classroom time for hands on practice and development of digital skills. By taking a flipped classroom approach, factual and context setting information was transmitted through online activities before the classroom session. Learners then arrived ready to get going with problem solving practical activities which needed more tutor support.

1. Self directed online activities (compulsory, 30 minutes)

The online activities were delivered through NTU’s virtual learning environment (VLE), which offers a selection of learning tools and allowed us to demonstrate good practice in using the VLE for learning. We recognised that completing online CPD can be challenging, so took the following approaches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Enable flexibility. Activities released two weeks before workshops. Line managers asked to ensure staff had time to complete the work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliar mode of learning</td>
<td>Clear communication. Intuitive layout, clear navigation. Front page kept simple, signposting using familiar language, conversational tone. Sources of support were highlighted and, surprisingly, were not needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Effective learning experience? | A positive and supportive online experience provided through mix of varied activities:  
- short chunks of clear written text, consistent format  
- short educational videos  
- interactive quizzes with automated feedback  
- diagrams  
- videos of experienced colleagues talking about what the job is really like  
- photos of the call centre  
- seating plans and rotas |
| Mixed skill set | Format allowed access to as much or as little information as required. For some it acted as revision, for others it provided a full introduction to clearing and their role, and a flavour of what it is really like. |
| Anonymity | A video message from Head of Admissions provided a warm welcome, a thank you to volunteers, set the learning in context, emphasised importance of the work to the University and the importance of completing all the online activities. |
Intuitive front page with clear signposting

What’s it really like? Videos of experienced colleagues

Clear, illustrated pages minimised online reading tasks

Short, frequent assessments with automated feedback
2. Practical workshop (2.5 hours)

The workshop focused on developing staff digital skills and applying the business processes learned online. For novice staff there was a lot to learn, including operating computerised telephone equipment, call queue software, headsets, three web based online forms, interpreting entry requirements and qualifications, matching callers to vacancies, and responsibility: offering or declining places at NTU.

Our first challenge was to check understanding and completion of the online work. On average, 80% completed the online activities. To help those that were unable to, the workshop started with a lively quiz designed to revise the key points of the online learning. Using electronic voting systems (EVS) all learners could take part anonymously (encouraging honesty and participation) and two way feedback between the tutor and learner was increased. It allowed the trainer to understand areas which needed more support and the learners to see where their knowledge needed refreshing.

A supportive, safe and relaxed environment was created through small class size, encouraging questions and discussion, and providing Help cards. These were a great success and were given to all 150 staff in the live clearing call centre.

A practice based approach ensured that digital skills were always gained in context and illustrated with realistic scenarios, maximising opportunity for understanding and application of new digital skills. We worked closely with admissions colleagues to develop realistic scenarios and to obtain feedback on how the scenario should have been handled.

Learning was scaffolded through a series of increasingly complex activities. Controlled and structured practice was provided by:

- A tutor demo, learners watch and follow, ask questions or discuss
- Individual skills practice, resolving realistic scenarios, reflection, trial and error in a safe environment

Finally, a large chunk of the workshop was devoted to a simulated call centre exercise. This allowed learners to bring together their knowledge and digital skills in a realistic environment, noisy and unstructured, whilst remaining supported. This was daunting and challenging for everyone, but feedback showed that this was the most worthwhile activity in the training, and many have asked for more time on this in the future.

Practise in a Clearing Call Centre environment

30 minutes each
We provided a number of additional support opportunities:
- Drop in sessions for more call centre simulation
- Online Q&A discussion board
- Access to software training environments

Resourcing

Key to the success of the work was good working relationships between CPLD, Admissions and Information Systems. The following resources were used:
- Design and delivery: 1.5 FTE over three months, plus seven days delivery
- 15 workshops + two drop ins delivered over three weeks
- Support and quality assurance by admissions expert
- Workshops delivered in IT teaching rooms
- TurningPoint software, voting handsets and receiver
- Prioritised IT support during delivery
- VLE online course (Desire2Learn)
- Wimba Create to create consistent web pages from Word
- Flip cam video recorder
- A large bank of unique scenarios created with Word mail merge
- Google forms for evaluation questionnaires
- Selection of Creative Commons Licensed images/videos

Evaluation

The work was formally evaluated through:
- Reactionary feedback from learners at the end of each workshop
- Training impact evaluation after clearing was over
- Broader project lesson learned document

Evaluation showed that staff were prepared effectively for their role, and highlighted a number of opportunities for future improvement.

Impact on the University

Our admissions team report that the development invested in staff has resulted in an improved conversion rate, better caller experience, less errors in making offers and a more relaxed call centre experience.

Impact on target audience

Online activities and resource
- 98% of learners said they got a flavour of what to expect in the clearing call centre.
- 92% said it allowed them to concentrate on practical activities during the workshop.
- 88% said they could intuitively find what they wanted in the online materials.
- Learners encouraged each other to complete the activities. They saw it as a fun experience and in some cases like a game. They aimed to get the highest score possible in the assessments, reinforcing learning.
“The online resources were invaluable. An excellent source of information and something that could be tapped into at any time. Very flexible which is needed at such a busy time of year... In the past I had found that information obtained during the training sessions could sometimes have been forgotten by the time my shift came around.”

Workshop
The practical elements helped build confidence and it gave learners the opportunity to hear good and bad calls encouraging reflection on their own practice.

“For first timers workshop is invaluable. Gives the opportunity to test equipment and participate in simulations which I feel is necessary as it builds confidence so when you do it for real the positive benefits are directed at the most important thing ‘clearing applicants’.”

Use of technology enhanced learning
“This is the best training course I have attended at NTU (I have been here for seven years). The test with voting buttons was inspired and really improved and clarified my understanding of the content of the course.”

“The way the training was delivered made it fun, with quizzes, etc.”

Drop in sessions
“There was a lot of time to spend on practice calls, which was extremely useful and made me more confident.”

Unintended impact
A number of unintended and value added benefits came out of this approach.

Professional services staff were exposed to an alternative mode of learning, increasing their digital literacy and improving their understanding of the student learning experience at NTU. Value has been added to colleagues’ professional practice. For example, improved telephone and customer service skills have been reported.

The online resource evolved into a one stop shop reference source for staff throughout the clearing period. Learners regularly revisited the online resources for information, forming new digital habits.

As a sustainable resource, it is being developed in line with feedback, and was reused this year.

Leading by example, we have inspired CPLD colleagues to utilise the VLE for learning and teaching.

Problems encountered, lessons learned and future developments
Some staff computers did not play the online videos and some staff in open plan offices did not have headphones to listen to the videos. We produced video in alternative formats and added closed captioning. In future we intend to use YouTube to host the videos and use the closed captioning function to add subtitles to all videos.

Essential training data was deleted by IT colleagues and technical developments were in progress during training which affected trainee confidence. Formerly, staff development was not recognised as a key part in success for clearing, so CPLD was not involved in project planning. Following our input into the lessons learned report, CPLD will now be involved on the project board to influence timelines and actions.

Some trainees did not complete the online learning. In future, a learning contract could make clear the responsibilities and emphasise the importance of engagement with all aspects of training. We may offer a dedicated IT room for trainees to leave their desk and complete the online work without distractions.

We experienced some conflict and disengagement in workshops when experienced and novice staff were in the same group. In future, refresher and novice sessions will be offered, but in classes where there are mixed abilities, pairing up experienced staff with novices can facilitate peer teaching/coaching.

Using EVS was a great success, so we plan to utilise it more in future. For example, a team quiz. It allows for a change of pace in the workshop, and adds a fun and dynamic element, increasing active learning.

Lessons learned from this work have fed into the design of an improved package of support during Summer 2013.
Transferability

Some key points for adopting this approach in other institutions:

- Design: focus on the practice at the heart of the task. Show how digital skills are used to carry out the practice.
- Provide lots of opportunity to try things for real (bring own work or provide realistic and challenging examples to implement).
- Consider alternative delivery formats.
- Reveal the real life experience of those that have gone before you.
- Build clear communication channels and good working relationships with IT departments!
- Provide lots of support through online and face to face channels.
- Don’t underestimate the amount of time it’ll take to develop online resources.

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App Swap Breaks: pedagogy, mobile devices and learning discourse over breakfast

Fiona MacNeill and Joyce Webber, Learning Tech Advisers

Abstract

Use of mobile technology at the University of Brighton has increased significantly in recent years. Many Schools are providing staff with mobile devices and, at the same time, conducting a number of initiatives exploring the use of mobile devices in learning and teaching.

With a palpable desire to capture this undercurrent of enthusiasm, the eLearning team were keen to provide a stimulating forum whereby people could meet in a relaxed, café environment, to share ideas and experiences, regardless of expertise and without the restraints of a rigid format. The App Swap Breakfasts met the criteria we were looking for.

Description and context

“All our courses will be supported by innovative and creative use of technology for learning, teaching and research with a focus on the use of mobile technologies…”

(University of Brighton, 2012, p.9)

The University of Brighton is a leading post 1992 university with a student population of 22,000 and 2,600 staff. In 2012, the University leadership produced a strategic plan showcasing the goal for an institution wide digital transformation (UoB, 2012) with an emphasis on the use of mobile technologies. This codified focus was coupled with a number of school specific initiatives based on the use of mobile technologies. These projects ran the gamut from device provision to app development and, as with any large institution, the management of these projects was decentralised, with opportunities for osmosis between stakeholders few and far between. The University’s policy with regard to the ownership of mobile devices, from an IT support perspective, further diversified the ecosystem with a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) approach. In addition, the speed of device and app development does not fit comfortably with established forms of IT support such as triage and training sessions; a new mode of support was required.

The eLearning team is comprised of four Learning Technologies Advisers (LTAs), covering five campuses, and two systems administrators, overseeing the virtual learning environment and other web applications, in support of learning and teaching at the University.

The App Swap Breakfast concept was partly inspired by Etienne Wenger’s notion of Communities of Practice (Wenger, 1998) and Fiona MacNeill’s first hand experience working on the formation of mobile device orientated peer learning communities in the United States. The primary ethos of the App Swap Breakfast concept was to promote a sharing atmosphere and to stimulate uninhibited peer encouragement. The event concept also focused on the use of devices in the support of learning and teaching and the provision of consultative device support as opposed to hands on triage, to encourage attendee self sufficiency in response to rapidly evolving technologies. Furthermore, as a response to the BYOD approach, these events were device agnostic, although due to school based purchase decisions and the prevalence of educational app availability, Apple devices were in the majority.

Resourcing

The University’s Eastbourne campus was identified as the pilot location, as it had two Schools actively engaged in the promotion and use of mobile technologies in support of learning and teaching. The Eastbourne campus had already seen successful use of iPads in the School of Sport and Service Management for student video presentations (UoB, 2013), as well as similar uses within the School of Nursing and Midwifery. The initial pilot featured three events spread...
throughout the winter term in 2013, and was jointly led by Joyce Webber (LTA, Eastbourne and Hastings) and Fiona MacNeill (LTA, Falmer). The event sessions were held in one of the two campus restaurants; attendees were given breakfast vouchers to use as they wished and this, and the morning timeslot (9.00am), proved popular. The event steadily gained repute with over 20 attendees at the second event in the inaugural set.

During the following term App Swaps were repeated at Eastbourne with the addition of the Falmer campus. At Falmer the tone of the event differed, being held in a disused café area and featured a basic breakfast buffet, providing more of a drop in feel with attendance based upon levels of interest in different themes devised for each session.

It rapidly became apparent that the LTAs needed to be engaged in wider collaborations in order for these events to be sustainable in terms of both staff and equipment resourcing. An early partnership, which developed at Eastbourne between the LTAs and the principal technician for Health Professions has proven to be a particularly fruitful collaboration, both for sharing resources and for facilitation of on going investigations into Mobile Device Management.

Although it would have been easier to use pre-existing equipment in a classroom space, an important stipulation from the beginning was that App Swap Breakfasts have a distinct relaxed and discursive environment, which the eLearning team felt would not be achieved in a classroom setting. The ideas behind this concept can be traced back to notions of the “ubiquitous learning environment” (Jones and Jo, 2004), which emerged in the early 2000s, based upon earlier concepts of ubiquitous technologies (Weisner, 1991, cited in Jones and Jo, 2004). In essence we were trying to capture the idea “of pervasive (or omnipresent) education (or learning). Education is happening all around the student but the student may not even be conscious of the learning process” (Jones and Jo, 2004).

At Falmer, a collaborative relationship was formed between Fiona MacNeill and library based Assistant Information Adviser, Betheny Hewitt, who has co-hosted all Falmer App Swap events and handles campus wide event communications.

The complementary breakfasts were funded by the Customer Services section within the Information Services department.

In order to provide a sustainable support model, there was an implicit caveat that Information Services would not assume responsibility for the triage, upkeep and maintenance of personally owned or university provided mobile devices, beyond basic productivity setup provisions.

Impact and evaluation

After three terms of successful App Swap Breakfasts on the two respective campuses the time was opportune to examine the impact of the event. In September 2013, an online survey was conducted of the 32 people who had at any time attended an App Swap Breakfast. The survey was designed to assess practices prior to the App Swap Breakfasts and whether the events had resulted in increased knowledge, informed device use and any more subjective benefits such as increased peer sharing and support.

Of the 32 people surveyed: 24 were academic staff, three were administrative staff and five were support staff. App Swap Breakfasts were publicised as open to academic, administrative and support staff with a noted emphasis on academic themes and interests. There were 11 survey respondents, a response rate of 34%; the role breakdown of the respondents was: eight academic, one administrative and two support.

Key observations

Although the group of staff affected is relatively small when compared to the staff populations of both campuses, some early signs of changes in practice can be observed in the academic staff respondents.

Of the academic staff surveyed, 75% stated that their use of their mobile devices had increased as a result of attending App Swap Breakfasts and 50% of academic respondents indicated that they had made use of their devices in the classroom in a teaching capacity. In addition, of those who had used mobile applications in their teaching prior to App Swap Breakfasts (3 out of 8), 90% of respondents indicated that they had learned a little bit more, learned about a few more functions or learned a great deal more about the apps they used for teaching as a result of attending App Swap Breakfasts. Furthermore, across the entire group of staff surveyed, 82% stated that their awareness of university support for mobile devices increased [sic] as a result of attendance.

To quote one academic staff respondent, “there were many applications that I was not aware of which were already in use elsewhere in the university – great to exchange ideas of best practice” [sic]. This demonstrates that the format is effective for outreach and communication with end users.

1 Approximately 450 academic staff at Falmer and Eastbourne campuses.
A softer benefit is the relationship between attendance of App Swap Breakfasts and mobile device/application advocacy. Of all respondents, 90% said that in the previous six months they had *shared apps and ideas with colleagues in your own school or department* and 27% had *shared apps and ideas with peers at other institutions or at conferences... networking events*. This should also be compared with 82% of all respondents stating that they have over the past six months *shared apps and ideas with friends and family*; this really illustrates the interesting domain these devices occupy as productivity and entertainment devices with modes of use, which extend to both work and leisure – a further move toward the aforementioned ubiquitous in terms of device usage. Also, as further evidence for the influence of App Swaps on *sharing* behaviours, when asked a follow up question related to apps shared, *did you learn about the apps you shared at the app swap breakfasts?* 100% of respondents stated that *yes* they had learned of them through attending.

As with any event of this type, there is always the risk of preaching the benefits of technology to the converted. A review of survey respondents’ device ownership may partially support this criticism, as the majority owned their own devices: five personally owned, three university owned and one borrowed from a school based loaner pool.

However, it does not follow that simply because a person owns a device they know how to make use of it in a work based context. The aforementioned domain between work and leisure that these devices occupy means they may have initially been purchased for utilitarian reasons (e.g. a phone, a notepad) or for entertainment purposes (e.g. an eReader, a multimedia viewer) but, as yet, the teaching, research and productivity potential of the device have been untapped by the user.

Another facet of our survey, which is worth noting, is the perception of the importance of mobile devices to student experience and institutional goals. 80% of respondents rated the importance of mobile resources to the student experience at the University as *Quite important* or *Very important/Essential*. In addition to the institutional commitments stated in the strategic plan (UoB, 2012) the University also has a key goal of saving paper as part of our commitment to being a Top Five Green University. This is demonstrated by our recent achievement of a First Class Honour from *People & Planet Student Network* (People & Planet, 2013).

To summarise, respondents seem to be keenly tapped into wider University goals through their perception of the potential benefits that these devices can offer.

**Problems encountered and lessons learnt**

Over the course of the initial two terms, the key logistical issue was the lack of wifi coverage in staff office locations (an observation raised by a respondent in the survey), although a network modernisation project is currently underway. Wifi availability has also proved to be an integral factor when considering the choice of event locations and one which affects possible project expansion.

At both sites, although our present App Swap Breakfast venues have proved popular, there have been issues with their use during term times. Due to the shared nature of these spaces, sound and busyness were recurring issues. In future, further consideration will be given to the timings of the App Swaps at Eastbourne and Falmer App Swaps will continue to be held in the early mornings in an exclusively bookable space.

As well as broader, campus to campus geographic considerations, there were also on campus geographic limitations. The rotation of locations on the larger campuses will be integral to the events’ continued success.

Staff resourcing for the events has presented some challenges as, initially, this was an additional, non-core project. This mainly affected our ability to effectively publicise the event due to workload balancing. However, this was largely offset by the formation of collaborations beyond the eLearning team and we hope to continue this trend by bringing in new people based upon expertise and interest. Furthermore, as a result of the goals outlined in the strategic plan, and our eLearning Development Group’s (internal steering group) focus on mobile technologies this academic year, the project has emerged as a core training and staff development fixture.

**Future developments**

The aim is to continue with development of the sessions, reporting their progress in our eLearning blog.

At a local level, these events will be organised at other sites, which were not included in the initial pilot.

A forthcoming digital literacies project as well as ongoing implementation of Electronic Management of Assessment will both benefit from this new initiative.
Transferability

App Swap Breakfasts as a project have transferable potential and, in addition to their standard format, have already been appropriated as a conference event (UoB internal event). There has also been interest more broadly within Sussex after Fiona MacNeill gave a presentation at a recent Brighton TeachMeet (TeachMeet Brighton, 2013). An outline of key transferability suggestions is included below.

- **Pilot**: pick a small population, such as a single campus, school or department, to trial the event. If you have prior knowledge or can conduct a survey to gauge device ownership and interest beforehand that is very helpful. Also, consider the venue's proximity to teaching spaces for ease of transit.

- **Exclusivity**: limits are not placed on how many people can attend, but we do note that we can only provide a free breakfast for the first ten attendees to arrive. This motivates a sense of punctuality for arrival times, and also emphasises the importance of the event, naturally limiting attendance within the bounds of the venue.

- **Inclusivity**: due to the BYOD environment, we focus on free apps and apps which are available on multiple device platforms. We also revisit and optimise use of established apps by investigating changes and improvements after developer pushed updates and operating system updates.

- **Wildcard**: it is helpful to bring in special guests, whether they are from other campuses, institutions or are coming to show something specific; mixing it up a bit helps to stimulate conversation and debate.

Conclusion

Findings from the survey, together with anecdotal feedback, have been positive and offer encouragement for the future of the App Swaps. The pilot identified problems which the Learning Technologies Advisers have been able to resolve, avoid or plan for, and a format has been developed which can be replicated: one that is ideally suited to the ethos of mobile technology.

References


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Runner up – University of York

Support for Google Apps for Education at the University of York

Michelle Blake, Head of Relationship Management

Introduction

The University of York was one of the first institutions to implement Google Apps for both students and staff. Our support has comprised three main phases:

- support before migration
- support during migration
- support after migration when using Google has become business as usual

We are now leading the way in the widespread use of the resources it provides, and in the user engagement and support activities undertaken.

The University of York’s decision to migrate to Google Apps for Education was taken in 2011. This project involved migrating our mail and calendaring services but, more importantly, it meant introducing a change in the way people approached their work. This was particularly the case with staff, which is evidenced by the number of support calls by user type.

Description and context

Support began before migration with awareness raising presentations to each department. Advice was given to Departmental Computing Officers and other support staff to ensure all users understood the actions that were required of them in order to ensure that there would be no loss of data as a result of the migration process. Our support for the migration included providing support on the day a department moved to Google with staff being on hand in the department to help staff at their own computer. This support was provided by a cross section of staff including user facing staff, our communications team, technical IT staff and academic liaison librarians.

We established a Google Site (https://sites.google.com/a/york.ac.uk/google-apps-training/) relatively quickly with some useful information for users that could help them with new ways of working. Now that we have now been live with Google Apps for over a year, our engagement is centred on Google knowledge sharing events where we enable people in similar roles across the University to share new ways of working. This work has become a pivotal role of our Applications Support and Training team.

We are actively engaged in promoting the functionality of Google Apps, and working with departments and individuals, to identify and implement new solutions to existing needs. This approach has aimed to empower people to solve their own problems, working with them to learn new skills, rather than providing finished solutions. This is documented on the Collaborative Tools Project Blog (http://collaborative-tools-project.blogspot.co.uk/) for example:

- Estates (http://collaborative-tools-project.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/building-dashboard-with-google-apps.html) use Google spreadsheets, database functionality and mobile technologies to manage work lists, ensuring that they can provide improved quality of service, and monitor this, to provide evidence to meet ISO requirements. In addition, they’ve established means to provide information to local suppliers, ensuring timely and cost effective provision of required goods.

- In Archaeology, Blogger and Google Sites are used for work submission and Hangouts are used to enable recording and streaming of seminars. (http://collaborative-tools-project.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/using-google-hangouts-on-air-to-stream.html).

- In Education and Philosophy students are using Google Sites as part of their assessment (e.g. self assessment information (http://collaborative-tools-project.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/using-google-sites-for-self-assessment.html) and dissertations).
- Departments including Social Policy Research Unit, Education and Archaeology use Google Plus and Blogger for marketing, building communities and collaboration within and outside the University (e.g. on funding bids [http://collaborative-tools-project.blogspot.co.uk/2013/03/using-google-plus-to-share-research.html]).

- **Accommodation** used Google Spreadsheets to change the student room transfer system ([http://collaborative-tools-project.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/using-google-spreadsheets-to-improve.html](http://collaborative-tools-project.blogspot.co.uk/2013/02/using-google-spreadsheets-to-improve.html)) from a paper based error prone system to a more effective and efficient service, including automated features, that allows the team to have oversight of the entire process.

- **TFTV** are creating a room booking system to ensure students get equal access to valuable studio time.

These case studies are used to help staff across the University to think about their own processes and how they might change them. They are showcased at our Google Knowledge Sharing events, which are aimed at staff and have directly reached over 300 people, and received very positive feedback.

We have also worked with the Student Ambassador for Google at the University to support their role of promoting Google and its use to students.

**Impact and evaluation**

We have received very positive feedback about Google Apps from all groups of users. For our student population Google Apps for Education presented huge benefits.

“Since the adoption and roll out of Google...students at the University have benefited from simple yet effectively integrated products, providing tools to support their studies. Group sessions, tutorials and meetings organised over Google+ Hangouts and assignments produced using Drive have eased engagement with course work. Links between Calendar and Gmail have allowed students to plan and organise more effectively. Thanks to Google Apps, the University of York continues to dynamically progress in the light of improving technology, truly setting it apart.”

Student Google Ambassador

In addition, a video on using Collaborative Tools at the University of York has also been produced, starring our Student Union Academic Officer talking about the benefits of using Google. This video is aimed at our new students, who may not have used Google Apps previously.

We also received positive feedback from staff across the University. We asked for feedback following on from the migration to Google which can be seen in the graphs below.

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“Thank you for Google – it’s changed my life”
“I like being able to access it from anywhere, with any device”
“The movement to Google Apps as a helpful, intuitive and reliable service is absolutely the right decision, and will be an invaluable step forward compared to other universities”
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The overall view was very positive in terms of moving to Google with over two thirds of users rating it as an improvement, or at least the same, compared to our previous systems. Over 50% of users said that their experience had improved over time. It should be noted that this feedback was gathered early on during the migration.

The Collaborative Tools blog, where staff from across the University have been able to showcase their innovative uses of different tools, demonstrates the impact that Google Apps has had on day to day work. There is evidence that it has impacted on administrative workflows, work practices, how academics engage with students and everything in between.
Feedback from our Google Knowledge Sharing events has also been extremely positive. Below are a selection of quotes from post migration events and Knowledge Sharing events.

“Very well put together and presented, and questions answered well.”

“Great course! Have recommended it to all my colleagues.”

“Really, really great workshop, the best I’ve been to for a very long time. Thanks all of you for doing this.

“Great session, I benefited from it significantly and would recommend people to attend the session.”

“Thanks for a very useful and insightful session.”

“I want to formally write to thank you for all your work on developing our Google Apps mark system. Whilst initially developed to allow our demonstrators to record student marks from home, we can already see how we can utilise this for collating and processing so many other marks within the department. We are also impressed with the other functions this is now serving as secondary functions, such as monitoring attendance of Tier 4 visa students for us to remain compliant with the UK Border Agency requirements. I’m sure many other departments will be able to utilise similar systems to their advantage!”

Finally, an important impact has been the working relationship with Google themselves, as well as the wider Google HE user community. This has been extremely beneficial in terms of sharing good practice with other institutions. The user community has also been able to discuss issues directly with a Google representative and express both positive and negative views in a constructive way.

**Problems encountered and lessons learnt**

The process of migration took a considerable amount of staff time. The best results occurred where we spent time with a department to go through the change and to support them on the day of migration. This was particularly true of administrative staff, some of whom have been at the University a long time or may be less flexible in their approach to using IT. This investment of staff resource should not be underestimated.

Even with the awareness raising sessions, many staff did not appreciate what a change moving to Google would be and wanted to be able to continue using mail and calendar applications in exactly the same way. Do whatever you can to prepare your users for different ways of working and, if possible, talk to them to understand how they are currently using existing tools.

Don’t underestimate how much support is required. This has applied to both the migration itself and supporting staff, but also now that we’ve entered *business as usual*. While our students have adapted quickly to using Google, it has been a bigger challenge, both in terms of a change in culture, and in terms of mind set, for a lot of our staff. People need help adapting to different models. In the past, people had frequently shared passwords. However, with Google, this would be a breach of terms and conditions. This meant new ways of working for many individuals and groups. Investing time supporting people was successful; even spending relatively small amounts of one to one time with those who were initially resistant to change resulted in positive results.

Just because there may be materials already available online, it doesn’t mean that they are a good fit for your institution. There are also issues of accuracy and currency. Therefore, we developed our own local web based documentation, which has been useful in supporting our users. However, we would caution against spending too much time developing these as the Google environment can change so quickly.

Having a Google test environment has been beneficial in order to try things out before we turn them on. One of the challenges in moving to Google is that things can change very quickly with little to no warning. We do not have the same amount of control as we might have with another system. This has meant we need to ensure we react quickly and keep a watching brief on what is happening, and understand how that might impact on our local materials, e.g. for training purposes. We established a Google Steering Group, which allows decisions to be taken much more readily.

**Future developments**

We continue to organise Google Knowledge Sharing events and we plan to do some targeted events that may focus either on a particular tool or type of use. For example, we are planning to run events that focus on mobile devices, advanced Google Apps sessions, purely social media or marketing oriented sessions and others, based on recurring requests from University staff.

Our IT training model is changing more generally from application based to task based. Google will form part of this, as the training will centre on helping users decide which is the best tool for the task they have to do — for example,
when writing a report users could select Word, Google Doc or PDF. The selection of the tool will depend on what they need to do. For example: who the report is going to; do they need to work with others on it; might they use a combination of tools?

We have established a small group of administrators from across the University and hope to engage with them to help develop the range of support services we offer. One area that we have identified, and would like to work with administrative staff on, is their workflows. In many places, they are still using the same tool they’ve used for many years, and the workflow is not LEAN and could be made more efficient. We hope to inspire ideas by adapting the case studies from the Collaborative Tools blog for this purpose.

Transferability

The Google Knowledge Sharing events, which we have been running successfully at the University of York, could easily be rolled out at another institution.

The format of Knowledge Sharing Events is:

- Introduction presentation(s) How Tos, Common problems, New Ways of Doing Things, etc.
- *Did you know about?* presentations
- In each of the above we have online materials available to back up the content and discussion
- Open Q&A
- *Ask an expert* surgeries at the end to talk over your idea/problem which often results in follow up meetings

Attendees have often reported that they came to the event to learn one specific thing, but the thing they learned about, which they didn’t know about at all, would be a game changer for them. This accidental success can only happen if there is a wide variety of topics, if people can interrupt and the presenters are happy, to some degree, to be attendee led.

Other institutions could also easily set up a blog, and other tools, to capture use of Google Apps. This helps create case studies that can then be used to inspire others, and also at training events.

Transferability tips

- Quickly collate online resources collaboratively, making them relevant to your organisation. We use Google Sites for staging information so that people could find and use useful information early.
- Use a blog to regularly publish case studies, how tos, anecdotes and thoughts.
- Participate in relevant social networks (Google+ Communities etc.). Ironically, this can help in making connections and raising awareness internally as well as with the wider world.

With more universities moving to Google Apps we could set up a community which actively encourages sharing of case studies across institutions. Google already has its own online communities, e.g. mailing lists, and this could be a logical extension of that.

Author’s contact details

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Applications Support and Training team

Tom Smith, Mike Dunn, John Hawes, Amanda Bacon, Peter Halls
University of Sheffield

ScHARR Bite Size: Learn Something New in 20 Minutes

Andy Tattersall, Information Specialist

Abstract

At the School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR), at The University of Sheffield, we run an innovative series of informal 20 minute staff development sessions that introduce staff and students to new ways of working and resources. The sessions have two clear strands: one focused on teaching and the other on research and showcasing new technologies, experts and ways of working. The evidence shows that this organic approach is working — staff and students are starting to use many of the tools that Bite Size has covered.

Introduction/background

ScHARR Bite Size are lively, informal 20 minute taster sessions held in the department of the School of Health and Related Research (ScHARR), University of Sheffield, with a dual focus on research and teaching. Co-organised by Andy Tattersall and Jenny Freeman, Bite Size has been running since 2010 and, to date, there have been over 70 sessions on everything from social networks to how (not) to display data. The sessions all begin at 2.30pm on various days of the week and are open to any members of staff from the Medical Faculty and beyond. This variable day format is designed to allow part time staff the opportunity to attend at least some, if not all, sessions. Bite Size cakes are provided and there’s always time for a quick ten minute discussion and Q&A afterwards.

Description and context

In 2010, Andy Tattersall began developing 20 minute staff information sessions introducing new technologies to support and enhance teaching and research. He saw a need for professional development, delivered in a format compatible with heavy workloads and busy schedules. The first two sessions were run in late 2010 and were very well received. Simultaneously, Jenny Freeman was developing sessions on learning technologies for teaching. Jenny contacted Andy about fusing together these two and Bite Size was born.

Bite Size are short development sessions: staff and students (and, indeed, anyone in the University) bring a hot drink and we supply cake! They include a 20 minute presentation, using technologies such as Prezi, webinars, videos and interactive demonstrations, with time for discussion. The 70 or so sessions so far have covered topics on teaching and research practice, emphasising emerging technologies, resources and innovations in teaching and learning pedagogy and practice. They directly link the technologies and innovations to learning and teaching activities. According to University of Sheffield Senior Learning Technologist Graham MacElearney, since his Bite Size session, ScHARR has become the biggest departmental user of MyEcho in the University; MyEcho allows lecturers to record a voiceover alongside their lectures.

The team use their expertise in marketing, promoting Bite Size within ScHARR and the wider university, using blogging, Google Sites (https://sites.google.com/a/sheffield.ac.uk/bite-size/) and uSpace. They developed screencasts and podcasts of sessions enabling staff to watch/listen later: http://youtu.be/-QO6PNqRjwA.
Learn Something New in 20 Minutes

Ideas, new ways of working, resources and technologies to help you work smarter

ScHARR Snack Size

Research Teaching Support

20 Minutes

Claire Beecroft & Andy Tattersall
Digital Copyright - Staying on the Right Side of the Law with Creative Commons and Beyond
12.30 – 1PM
25th Sept
Eric Wilkes Room
Regent Court

Did you hear about the student who was asked to leave his institution after heavily plagiarising content?
Conversely did you hear about the academic who caused his University embarrassment and lost important library content after sharing licensed materials?
Whether you learn, teach or research, copyright law watches us all, and in a digital age the chances of breaking that is greater than ever. This session will look at how to stay safe on the Web without compromising on content.

Bring a https://sites.google.com/a/sheffield.ac.uk/bite-size/ Andy_tattersall - subscribe to the calendar scharrbitesize@gmail.com
Resourcing

SChARR Bite Size are a team of four individuals. Originally started by Andy Tattersall, who was joined shortly afterwards by Jenny Freeman, it soon became apparent that despite the informality of the sessions, curating, administering and delivering Bite Size was becoming a significant task. The addition of Ursula Laubscher as Bite Size administrator was much needed. Ursula's addition has been crucial to the series' smooth running and her duties have included room bookings, chasing speakers up for abstracts, purchasing the cakes, setting up the teaching rooms and helping promote the series via posters and email communications.

Shortly afterwards, University Teacher Claire Beecroft joined the team to offer support and pedagogical expertise.

Impact and evaluation

To evaluate Bite Size we conducted a web based survey using Google Forms; a part of the Google Apps suite we have at the University. A total of 54 people responded, the majority of whom (39/54) said that they had attended a session. The most common reason for non-attendance was a lack of awareness that Bite Size existed (8/15; 53%). Other reasons included lack of time (3/15; 20%), working part time (2/15; 13%) and not feeling that they had anything to learn (2/15; 13%) (Table 1).

Almost all respondents felt that short sessions such as Bite Size were an effective way of learning (49/54; 90.7%) and more than half of respondents felt that it was very important for them to learn about new developments and tools, with only a single member of staff responding that this was not important.

The great majority of Bite Size attendees felt it had helped them in their work (34/39; 87.2%) and they would recommend it to colleagues (37/39; 94.9%) (Table 1). Session duration was felt to be about right (35/39; 85.2%), and this was stated by most as being the most popular reason for liking Bite Size (30/39; 76.9%). Other reasons included were: content (25/39; 64.1%), the cakes (with nearly a quarter citing this reason for liking Bite Size (9/39; 23.1%)), the informal nature of the sessions (5/39; 12.8%) and their interactivity (5/39; 12.8%). Bite Size has been deliberately located in our department to make it easy for staff to attend but, interestingly, only three attendees cited this as a reason for liking Bite Size.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attended a Bite Size session:</th>
<th>39 (72.2%)</th>
<th>15 (27.8%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39 (72.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 (27.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If no, why not (n=15):</th>
<th>2 (13.3%)</th>
<th>8 (53.3%)</th>
<th>3 (20.0%)</th>
<th>2 (13.3%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work part time; it’s on the wrong day</td>
<td>2 (13.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Didn’t realise they existed</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 (53.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (20.0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t think I could learn anything</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (13.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If yes, has Bite Size helped you in your work?</th>
<th>34 (87.2%)</th>
<th>4 (10.3%)</th>
<th>1 (2.6%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34 (87.2%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you recommend it to a colleague?</th>
<th>37 (94.9%)</th>
<th>2 (5.1%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>37 (94.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think about the duration of the sessions?</th>
<th>35 (85.2%)</th>
<th>4 (14.8%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Just right</td>
<td>35 (85.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too short</td>
<td>4 (14.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## What do you like about Bite Size?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>30 (76.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>25 (64.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakes</td>
<td>9 (23.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>5 (12.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>3 (7.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking opportunity</td>
<td>2 (5.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## What do you dislike about Bite Size?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not in depth enough</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too short</td>
<td>4 (10.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not recorded</td>
<td>3 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overrunning</td>
<td>1 (2.6%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout its history, Bite Size has been attended by a good mixture of staff and postgraduates, and many have made Bite Size a routine date in their diaries. As exemplified by the comments below, the combination of the short time slot, cake, exciting tools and ideas, and examples of their grassroots application is what makes Bite Size such a successful format:

“They do not take much time out of the day, so I do not feel bad about going to ones on topics that may not be directly relevant to my own work. I always learn something and it gives me an insight into lots of aspects of work that people are doing”

“Gets to the point. Allows me to meet real researchers, as I’m from the Library. Useful model for training we might try to offer”

“They are a good, quick intro to a new tool. Because they’re given in person you have the chance to ask questions. I like the social aspect of it – meeting other colleagues you might not know”

We have received several correspondence from various individuals and organisations wanting to start their own Bite Size series. People have contacted us from Scotland, and as far as Australia, to ask advice about the 20 minute model. More recently, we were contacted regarding a series that had been running at the University of Leeds to support researchers called Mini Master Classes that last for 20 minutes. The Mini Master Classes were inspired by ScHARR Bite Size: [http://minimasterclasses.wordpress.com/](http://minimasterclasses.wordpress.com/).

### Problems encountered and lessons learnt

The only problems with Bite Size we have found is location and timing, in spite of its convenient location being only cited by three respondents as a reason for liking Bite Size. Location is key for any event, but one that lasts for 20 to 30 minutes is even more so. The further a colleague is away from the venue the less likely they will attend, especially if they think they could miss the first few key minutes. ScHARR Bite Size worked well, as the majority of its 250 or so staff were no further than five minutes away.

When the model was trialled within the Faculty of Medicine, at a series of venues which were much less convenient for staff to get to, we noticed much lower numbers. Since the launch of Bite Size in ScHARR, we had mostly seen healthy attendance numbers. The Faculty had much larger numbers they could appeal to and invite. With the case of the Faculty, we found that it was much harder to advertise to a larger audience and, given the large geographic area it covered, it soon became apparent that staff were not prepared to travel longer distances.

Timing is essential and 2.30pm seemed a natural mid-afternoon break for attendees, although, more recently, we have trialled the idea of running sessions at lunch time and this has increased numbers. Another timing issue is which days to run Bite Size. Most recently, we have found that increasing numbers of staff are working part time. Running Bite Size on the same day alienates any colleagues or students who are not in on that set day. To counteract this, sessions are run on alternate Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

One final issue has been how often to run Bite Size. Initially, it was monthly or every three weeks, but we found that eventually had an impact on attendance, possibly due to attendees’ assumption that another interesting session would follow shortly.
Future developments

Bite Size has always looked to evolve whilst keeping the key components of short duration and informality in place. These developments have included recording and screen casting the sessions, in addition to delivering them live over the Web and attempting live video editing, whilst a presentation was delivered. Nevertheless, despite Bite Size’s tendency to embrace technologies, the real winning component is its simplicity, and that it works best delivered face to face. Learning and development opportunities have grown, thanks to the web, but there is still enormous value in being in a physical space with an expert.

There are no plans to turn Bite Size into a fully online learning format, but selected sessions will be delivered online, where possible, and where demand for the session is high.

Transferability

Because of the content delivered at Bite Size it has become apparent that the model can be applied in a multitude of settings, not just within the academic arena. Most Bite Size sessions can be delivered elsewhere – these include anything from data security and Prezi, to web conference tools and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Sessions that focus on health related topics, such as the database Medline, will not transfer, but could easily be replaced by a subject specific database relevant to that department. In addition, several sessions have been delivered by experts based centrally within the University. Given that many experts based centrally in any large organisation are always looking for opportunities for outreach, the request to deliver a Bite Size session has almost always been welcomed.

For Bite Size to have a greater chance of success it needs champions who are well renowned within their organisation. Ideally, to launch a Bite Size series in a new department, you need staff who are experienced in teaching, change management, and are open minded towards to technology and ideas. They need to be natural networkers who understand how to use both traditional and contemporary forms of communication.

We would recommend this Bite Sized approach to any department struggling to get staff engaged with new technologies. This approach is unique within our institution and, to our knowledge, there is no other programme like it for facilitating knowledge acquisition and transfer amongst a group of professionals who are expected to be outstanding educators and world class researchers. The evidence that we have accumulated so far indicates that staff value these sessions and find them informative, engaging and effective.

References


Authors’ contact details

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Jenny Freeman, Associate Professor, University of Leeds
Claire Beecroft, University Teacher, ScHARR, University of Sheffield
Using the iPad to deliver and enhance distance learning at Manchester Metropolitan University

Damien Keil, Programme Leader

Abstract

In 2012 the Department of Exercise and Sport Science began using iPads to deliver their distance learning undergraduate programme in exercise and sport science. Ebooks for each module contain interactive quizzes, apps, video (both external and in house), as well as links to summative assessments on the University's VLE. Initial evaluations show that students consider the iPad/ebooks to provide a rich learning experience, commensurate with an improvement in grades in relation to previous years. The project team has resolved issues relating to copyright, performance rights, eBook distribution and tutor engagement. The stages of the project are outlined in Fig. 1 below.

Introduction

The Department of Exercise and Sport Science at Manchester Metropolitan University have been delivering a distance learning (DL) undergraduate degree in Sport/Exercise Science for over 15 years. In recent years the programme has increased in popularity. In the early days of the programme, students’ primary learning resources consisted of paper workbooks and DVDs containing lecture slides and, often, dated videos that were distributed by post. More recently, the paper workbooks were replaced by PDFs that were delivered to students through the University's virtual learning environment (VLE). Whilst the VLE was also used to develop formative and summative multiple choice tests for students, staff closest to the programme recognised that students’ learning experience could be further enhanced by appropriate use of technological developments, both within and outside of the University.

It is interesting to reflect back on the process that we have followed and note how closely this matches with Puentedura’s (2006) SAMR model (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition). Here the first two stages are encompassed by our initial use of Wimba to create new learning resources. Along with the realisation that using the iPads could have dramatic effects on our material, came the opening into the two higher transformation stages of the model. We are now using this as a model to aid staff development when creating material.
The Project

Over two years ago, the Department committed to developing the programme further by the appointment of a dedicated eLearning Technologist. Initially, Wimba was used to give the existing resources for first year students an eLearning makeover; making them more integrated, useable and interactive. However, early in 2012, the release of iBook author and the ever increasing number of educational Apps led the project team (Programme Leader, eLearning Technologist and the Department’s Learning and Teaching Co-coordinator) to believe that the use of iPads could enable them to create a far more interactive experience for their students.

By September 2012, the first eBook (Exercise Physiology) had been created using iBook Author, and this was closely followed by eBooks in Biomechanics, Psychology and Practical Skills – the latter to complement the residential week that the students spend in the Department. The ebooks contain a mixture of text, images, in house videos, links to external websites and videos, interactive quizzes and apps. In house videos include previously created instructional videos (Burden and Parker, 2008) and clips from teaching activities delivered to students on the campus based sport and exercise programme. Most of these resources, including some external videos from, for example, the Khan Academy, are embedded within the eBooks. This enables some of our students who, for example, are posted overseas to study without the need for a wifi connection. The ebooks also contain links to the University’s VLE, where a wifi link is required, when students need to contribute to a discussion or complete/submit their summative assessments.

Each ebook is authored by a specialist in the area from the department, edited by the Programme Leader and then developed into an ebook by the Project’s eLearning Technologist. To date, in addition to the four ebooks created for level four students, two (Exercise Physiology two and Biomechanics two) have been created for level five, and the remainder required for level five/six will be created by 2015.

Each new cohort of students (43 in 2012 and 68 in 2013) receive their iPads, paid for by the department, when they attend their department induction in October. They then download the ebooks to their iPad from an Amazon S3 server, either using the University’s wifi on campus during induction or later when they return home.

Project evaluation

Students are required to complete a short evaluation questionnaire as the final task in each ebook, and they are also encouraged to express their opinions on the learning experience offered by the ebooks when they attend the residential towards the end of each year. Evaluations of the Exercise Physiology and Biomechanics ebooks show that the majority of students enjoyed using the new resource, and the vast majority found them useable and the content of high quality (see Figure 2).

Students considered most of the features of the ebooks to have aided their learning (see Figure 3), with the embedded external video content as the most valued feature. For the Exercise Physiology eBook, students subsequently reported that the Khan Academy videos were especially useful. Interestingly, about 20% of students found the note taking feature, that allows students to make notes and study cards and email them to themselves, to be a feature that didn’t aid their learning at all.
Figure 3. Opinion of students on the different features of the ebooks.

As part of their ebook evaluation students also provided the following quotations:
“Great resource, all of my learning so far was based on it…”
“Enjoyed it, the content is starting to make me think.”
“More videos like the khan 1 [sic], as this was brilliantly explained and very helpful!!”
“Really enjoyable to learn in this manner and it’s very suitable for my learning style. I’m extremely impressed.”

Specifically relating to the Biomechanics ebook, students expressed that they would prefer more formative quizzes within the ebook, rather than having to link to the VLE to access these, and the author of the level five Biomechanics ebook has already included more in the new resource.

Encouragingly, students’ grades have also improved in relation to students who used the previous PDF/Wimba presented resources. In particular, in Exercise Physiology, grades for each of the multiple choice summative tests improved in relation to the previous year.

Project issues

The eLearning makeover of the undergraduate DL programme described above will not be completed until ebooks have been created for the remaining level five units and the level six units, sometime in 2015. Considerable resource has already been invested in the project. In addition to the appointment of the eLearning Technologist, colleagues have authored the ebooks outside of their normal hours and, as a consequence, have received remuneration. The Amazon S3 server, which hosts the ebooks, costs approximately £200 per year, and the cost of 40 iPads in 2012 and 60 iPads in 2013, has been considerable.

The Project team had to overcome a number of other issues, in addition to those described above, that they were able to solve by allocating additional financial resource to the Project. To prevent the infringement of copyright, all materials contained within the ebook needed to be created by the author or other colleagues within the University, or the creator’s permission gained before material could be included. Creative Commons was found to be an invaluable search tool for images and videos, and the vast majority of external colleagues, whose work was not tagged as Creative Commons, were happy for their material to be used in the ebooks when they were contacted.

In house videos which included contributions from tutors and/or students could be inserted in the ebooks without copyright infringement. However, the performance was owned by the person appearing in the video and, as such, they needed to waive their performance rights before the video could be included. The University’s Legal Department drew up a document based on the Recording Lectures: Legal Themes guide provided by JISC that explained related terms to colleagues and allowed them to waive such rights. No colleagues refused to do this and the Project team also assured them that no clips would be included in the ebooks without their final permission.

A further issue that has arisen since the replacement of PDFs/Wimba resources with iPads/ebooks is a change in the communication habits of the students. In previous years, module tutors received numerous communications from students, for example, checking answers to formative questions, particularly prior to summative tests. Since the introduction of iPads/ebooks, the frequency of communication between students and tutors has decreased. The team think this may be due to the content of the ebook and VLE offering improved information, but also need to see if this behaviour develops into a trend in subsequent years before deciding whether to address it.
**Project future**

The Project team have developed a model for the creation, delivery and evaluation of what, based on initial evaluations, they think is a quality learning resource. The eLearning makeover described above could certainly not have begun without the appointment of a dedicated eLearning Technologist and considerable backing and resource from the host department. In addition, the project team consider that the success of the project can be partly attributed to its three members’ clearly defined roles and the setting of SMARTER objectives, which are reviewed during fortnightly meetings.

In the near future, the Project team would like to see the University sign up to iTunesU, which could be used to host and provide a more structured organisation for the ebooks. This would remove the need for, and therefore the cost of, the Amazon S3 server and enable further marketing of the programme through, for example, freely available ebook samples.

**Project advice**

Other institutions are also beginning to use the iPad to deliver their DL provision. However, to our knowledge, we are the only undergraduate programme to offer our blended provision in this way. Development of our pedagogical vision over the time of creating the ebooks has certainly led us up through the four stages of Puentedura’s (2006) model. It has also led us to consider an eLearning makeover (also using iPads) of our postgraduate provision. Whilst this would also require the creation of ebooks for separate units, such resources would place more emphasis on the design of tasks that use existing resources, for example journal articles, and place less reliance on the creation of knowledge based text. As Salmon (2011) suggested, the focus moves away from content delivery and towards interaction, with the emphasis on students rather than staff.

In fact, as Cochrane (2012) highlighted in his longitudinal investigation of mobile learning, the underpinning factor leading to success in mobile learning environments is an ontological shift by instructors from traditional deliverers of information to facilitators of learning. Interestingly, Cochrane also highlighted that this shift needs to occur in the learners as well, with a move from being receivers of information to active agents involved in the construction of knowledge.

We think this raises an extremely interesting point: if we are to adopt a constructivist, or even a communal constructivist, pedagogy (i.e. students constructing knowledge for themselves and others; Leask and Younie, 2001) we need to consider at what stage our learners are at in Salmon’s (2011) five stage model of teaching and learning.

One could argue that communal construction would only occur in the last two stages and, therefore, tutors are going to have to design their learning environments in such a way as to scaffold the progression of students to these later stages.

In summary, should other institutions wish to adopt a similar approach to providing blended DL, based on our advice, they would first need to create a team that has strengths in pedagogical design of DL material, and technical knowledge and skills. Inclusion of enthusiastic staff, in particular the programme leader and the backing of the department/University, particularly from a financial perspective, is also imperative to success. Further details of our project can be obtained from our website, including sample ebooks (www.sportscienceonline.com).

**References**


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Information Services Power Hour programme

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Abstract

Approximately five years ago, in what were, at the time, two separate new initiatives at Heriot-Watt University, end user IT training and Information Skills education became more structured when an IT Training section (based in the Information Technology section) and an Information Skills group (based in the Library) were established.

In the early days, staff from these areas collaborated informally to complement the training offered by each side, e.g. the Library would offer courses on researching and structuring an essay and IT would offer a *Word for your thesis* course.

Following the restructuring of the University support services (approximately two years ago), IT and the Library were combined into a new team – Information Services (IS) – to support the research, learning, teaching and administrative activities of students and staff across the University.

This provided exciting opportunities for integration and development of the existing end user education programmes.

Introduction/background

From 2006, the IT Training section and the IS Skills group developed a series of learning opportunities for staff and students at the University.

These ranged from tutor led workshops on Excel; Word; PowerPoint; Access; Dreamweaver; Banner (the Student Administration System) etc. from IT, as well as a selection of online courses and the occasional webinar through to library induction sessions; information skills (searching, referencing, citing references) and EndNote web taught courses from the Information Skills group (initially our Subject Librarians).

In the Summer of 2012, following the formation of the new Information Services directorate, the staff that had previously been in IT Training and the Information Skills group formed the IS Skills Development Group. During this time, they got together to plan a new integrated workshops programme – and the result was 2012/13 Power Hours.

This was a series of one hour presentations (usually running at lunch time) on topics that can support staff and students in their work at the University.

Description and context

2012/13 Power Hour programme

Expanding on the informal collaboration between IT and the Library workshop providers of previous years, we widened the scope of the programme in 2012/13 to include sessions presented by staff from other areas of the University, e.g. Student Support and Accommodation; Centre for Sport and Exercise; Heritage and Information Governance.

Both staff and students were welcome at these sessions – and they were offered on a drop in basis and also as closed sessions, for various groups of staff and students, on request. Most of the attendees were students.

Over the past five years, attendee numbers taking advantage of the IT Training and Information Skills education opportunities had increased steadily and the combined programme in 2012/13 saw this trend continuing.

A few of the Power Hours were also delivered in our Scottish Borders Campus (as well as Edinburgh, where we are based).

In July and August 2013, we took the opportunity to offer some of the sessions to staff and postgraduate students. This helped raise awareness of the programme with academic staff and gave them the chance to find out what the sessions covered, and will hopefully result in them recommending the sessions to their students.

During the Summer of 2013, we analysed the feedback from the 2012/13 programme and revised the programme, as appropriate, ready for 2013/14.
2013/14 Power Hour programme

During the autumn semester, we offered 61 workshops which ran over a period of 11 weeks. The workshops fit into the following categories, and topics are:

- **Academic writing**
  - Report writing
  - Style in academic writing
  - The write stuff
  - Writing a literature review

- **Citing, referencing and avoiding plagiarism**
  - Citing and referencing
  - Endnote
  - Endnote online
  - Understanding Turnitin

- **Finding and evaluating information**
  - Library essentials
  - Google Guru
  - Critical thinking and evaluation
  - Critical reading of a journal paper
  - Literature searching and review
  - Dissertation afternoon
  - Keeping up to date
  - Making your publication open access
  - What is my h-index?

- **Presentations and posters**
  - Poster design
  - PowerPoint for posters
  - Presentation skills
  - PowerPoint for presentations

- **Study and lifestyle tips**
  - Making the most of your academic mentor
  - Mindmapping with MindGenius
  - Tips for effective study
  - Study support software
  - How to manage stress
  - How to stop putting things off
  - Teamworking
  - Keeping control of your personal information
  - Time management
  - The exam survival guide

- **Word for your thesis**
  - Add a bit of style
  - Divide and conquer
  - Links and footnotes

We also introduced more twilight sessions for 2013/14, as well as extending the provision to distance and overseas learners, through increased use of our VLE – we have set up an IS Organisation in Blackboard, with all of the Power Hour courses represented in it – and this has been made available to all staff and students. We also have more staff piloting Webinar sessions.

Details of the 2013/14 Power Hour programme can be viewed at [http://www.hw.ac.uk/is/skills-development/power-hours.htm](http://www.hw.ac.uk/is/skills-development/power-hours.htm).

There is also increased integration of parts of the programme into other development opportunities within the University, e.g. the post graduate research training – see Research Futures at [http://www.hw.ac.uk/AEteam/Research_Futures/Research_Student_Events.html](http://www.hw.ac.uk/AEteam/Research_Futures/Research_Student_Events.html).

**Resourcing**

To date, resourcing the programme has not incurred any additional staffing costs, as the courses are taught by staff from across the University. Most of the sessions are taught by Information Services staff – including our Subject Librarians; the University Effective Learning Adviser; a Desktop Support Specialist and the Liaison Services Manager. We have also secured the services of lecturers from various Schools; Student Support and Accommodation staff; staff from our Academic Enhancement unit and also from Heritage and Information Governance.

We have access to two classrooms in the Library at the Edinburgh campus for delivery. One room is suitable for lecture style delivery to up to 40 attendees, the other has ten desktop PCs, suitable for tutor led IT training sessions. Both rooms have a Smartboard. Neither room is used exclusively for course delivery, but they are primarily for IS staff and student use. The courses are delivered during the main teaching times of the year. During exam times, students are given access to the teaching rooms for extra study space.
In addition to the design and delivery of the sessions, our own staff liaise with staff around the University to secure presenters, timetable the programme and market it. The programme is heavily marketed at induction events through contacts in various Schools, posters around the University, our website, online blog and twitter, and display screens in the campus Library.

We minimise the printing of marketing materials to keep costs down.

During 2013/2014 we will need to develop staff involved in delivering Power Hour to ensure that we can increase access to the programme from off campus. This will require the acquisition of high level skills in course development and delivery via our VLE, as well as online delivery skills required in a Webinar environment. Staff development will require a significant amount of time, but relatively little additional financial outlay.

**Impact and evaluation**

Evaluation forms are handed out at each session and these are reviewed at the end of each semester.

We collect feedback on:

- course content
- relevance
- level
- duration
- appropriateness of support materials

We also collect data on level of study (UG or PG), year of study and school, and how they found out about the course etc.

Feedback is generally very positive.

Feedback informs the review of the programme and helps identify which courses need to be revised, updated or discontinued. It also highlights gaps where new courses need to be developed and informs our marketing activity.

The main impact of the programme is seen in improved confidence of students in researching and presenting their work. Staff that have been with the University for several years also think that the programme has contributed to reducing the number of individual queries being raised with our support staff, e.g. Library Service Desk, Subject Librarians, IT Helpdesk. Unfortunately, we do not have enough historical evidence to prove this – but we have started to collect information so that this can be quantified in the future.

**Problems encountered and lessons learnt**

Problems we have encountered include:

**Identifying the best time to deliver sessions.** Almost all of the sessions started at 12:15 pm in 2012/13 (when there are relatively few lectures on). However, there are still a significant number of students in class at this time. In 2013/14, we have offered more sessions at other times of day, e.g. twilight.

**Meeting user requests for courses.** We get requests for courses (particularly software training) on applications that we do not have expertise in (although it may be something that a student is using on a course). We are increasingly turning to online training solutions to try to address this.

**Parity of experience for all end users.** The programme has been developed by staff on the Edinburgh campus (which is where most of our students are based). We are now working on ways to make the programme available on all campuses and to distance learners. The time difference for delivery of programme via Webinar to other campuses is also a related issue.

**Videos to support courses.** It takes a lot of time to develop good quality videos – and they can be out of date relatively quickly, especially if a vendor changes the name of a product or a screen layout. Where possible, we try to locate YouTube videos that are suitable and add these to the VLE support materials.

We are currently piloting a lynda.com kiosk on the Edinburgh campus. We were initially drawn to this product by the quality of the IT training videos, but it covers a much wider range of subject areas that are potentially useful for staff and students.
Future developments

- We have started work on increasing and improving our use of the University VLE to deliver and support courses. The aim is to provide high quality content through this rather than just putting course slides and notes on it.
- Increased use of Webinar delivery where appropriate. This will help make our courses available on other campuses and to independent distance learners.
- Development of staff on other campuses to deliver locally, supported by centrally produced VLE materials.
- Acknowledgment/certification for course attendance. This was done previously by IT Training, but not by the Information Skills group. We are investigating the possibility of offering certification for x number of hours development attended. This will have an additional administration overhead to maintain data on who attends what etc.
- Collaboration with other areas in HWU to offer HWU Award, e.g. for courses taken, volunteering, representing HW in, for example, sports/music; community involvement etc.
- Continual improvement and development of the programme to meet user needs.

Transferability

With appropriate staff development, at least parts of the programme could be tailored (if necessary) and delivered locally on other campuses. This is already the case with induction sessions, where presentations and session structure have been shared across campuses. In general, there are fewer staff on other campuses, so it is probably not possible to offer as extensive a taught programme as we have on the Edinburgh campus — which is where the Webinar and VLE support will be useful.

The programme could be adapted by other institutions to suit local needs relatively easily.

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Albert Expert: digital literacy tools to support the strategic student

Rebecca McCready, Learning and Teaching Adviser

Introduction

Those delivering IT and digital skills training must overcome a number of challenges at higher education level. In particular, the usually misguided perception by both staff and students that they already have the relevant and honed skills necessary to manage complex assignments at advanced study. Students continue to grow in confidence when using technology, but lack the sophistication to use the appropriate tool for the task, or even know what that tool might be. This confidence does not equate to competence and, specifically, an appropriate and mature skill set, yet skills teachers must work harder to persuade students and academics that the skills training remains relevant and necessary.

In addition, discerning students who learn strategically will often undertake activities only when motivated by assessment or clear gain; skills must be taught at the point of use and be reinforced with relevant and meaningful application; and skills must prepare students for employment as well as enabling them through their degree (Knight and Yorke 2006, Newcastle University 2008, UK Commission for Employment and Skills 2009, McCormack 2011).

In response to these challenges, and for nearly 20 years, specialist staff in the Faculty of Medical Sciences at Newcastle University have created a range of learning and support resources for students. Timetabled teaching sessions that use tailored and relevant materials are delivered using a comprehensive, fully accessible, open access website at point of use and are supported with feedback, clinics and assessment. Skills are taught through problem solving tasks, which encourage students to think logically, apply knowledge and develop skills, rather than being given precise instructions that limit the need to think.

The Albert Expert Rating System

To address the perceptual gap between confidence and competence, a rating system called Albert Expert has been devised (McCready 2011). Skills throughout the teaching website are rated on a scale of one to five, where one is novice and five is expert. This allows students to pace themselves; underpins skills needs assessments, which set expectations and identify learning opportunities; and provides us with a record of perceived capability, which we use to further refine our teaching.

The rating system is integrated into the tutorials in a number of ways:

- As a skills rating assessment at the start of all tutorials (Figure 1). Self assessment is an important tool in the development of skills (Knight and Yorke 2006) and we can analyse the anonymous responses against previous cohorts, different cohorts and expected knowledge areas.
- Ratings for each section of every tutorial (Figure 2), to manage students’ expectations and pace themselves.
- As support for both the advanced learner and the novice throughout the tutorials, as Be an EXPERT links to further information, or Ask Albert links with detailed instructions (Figure 3). Many tasks also have an accompanying video to support students in a way that more closely suits their learning preference (McCready 2007).

2 http://fms-itskills.ncl.ac.uk – also available through JORUM.
A comprehensive online database covering skills and resources is used to generate a comprehensive skills catalogue to access all resources against any task or technique. This database also powers the skills assessments, and generates a list of skills at the end of the tutorial for students to include in their eportfolio. Separate detailed skills audits also exist for use outside tutorials.

Development implications, issues and impact
The rating system took less than one week to put together, but several years to fully implement. Once a core set of skills was assigned against the scale:

- a logo and name was devised;
- an initial 32 question online self assessment, covering Word, Excel, PowerPoint and general IT skills, was developed, which provides a rating for each section and an overall rating;
- each section of all the tutorials were rated;
- all other resources were rated, including How Tos and FAQs;
- Ask Albert and Be an EXPERT resources were incorporated into materials;
- the skills catalogue was developed and implemented;
- skills assessments and skills lists were developed and incorporated into tutorials.

The rating of new resources, and the integration of help and expert links, is an integral part of the development of tutorials, making the system easily sustainable. Rating skills is relatively straightforward once a critical mass has been established.

The skills catalogue must be updated following the addition of, or significant change to, resources throughout the site. Minor changes usually take about ten minutes to implement, but major changes require a day to go through thoroughly.

Students have positively rated the system and the Be an EXPERT links for providing guidance and extending learning opportunities (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

**Figure 4. Feedback on the rating system throughout the tutorials.**

![Graph showing ratings of Albert Expert Document Inspector](image)

**Figure 5. Feedback on the Be an EXPERT links throughout the tutorials.**

![Graph showing ratings of expandable 'Be an EXPERT' links](image)

**The Albert Expert Document Inspector**

We provide increasing amounts of feedback on completed work from tutorials, summative module assessment and ad hoc support. To manage this increasing workload, we have developed software called **The Albert Expert Document Inspector** (Figure 6) that can analyse and assess the formatting and document management of Word documents against a series of predefined best practice guidelines. The software produces detailed feedback and can summatively assess work, in a quick, efficient and timely manner.
Development and implementation

The software was developed over a ten week period by a Computing Science graduate via the University’s Work Experience programme, at a total cost of £2,400, not including core staff time and on costs. The software is built around feedback and standards that have been developed over the years to support our teaching, feedback and assessment.

The software is easily adaptable: pre-defined tests and parameters are coded within the software, and an XML file is used to describe which of the tests are used to analyse the document. A number of XML files are available in the software so that a range of tests, from a high level overview to extremely detailed, can be run on one or more documents at a time, altering the amount of feedback provided. The software can also assess work, in addition to providing feedback, and marks are output to an Excel file. Feedback comments are stored in an editable XML file, and are output as a Word document, with links to the skills catalogue for further information.

Issues and impact

The software underwent rigorous and extensive testing during development against thousands of previously assessed documents, and provides more accurate and comprehensive feedback and assessment than we can, as it does not suffer from fatigue. It has reduced the time spent marking by more than 90%; equivalent to about 28 working days a year. There remains a workload associated with using the software, which includes the topping and tailing of documents to remove content that should not be marked and the double marking of assessments. We are currently working with the University’s Business Development Directorate to market the software to other HEIs.

The Certificate of Attainment

Students need to be knowing students (Knight and Yorke 2006), understanding the purpose of what they are learning and how this will be useful, relevant and important, as well as having a heightened awareness of what it is that they are learning – the skills, competencies and aptitudes – so that they can make better use of them in the future. Students also need help to claim complex achievements that are not traditionally assessed (Knight and Yorke 2006), that are difficult to describe accurately or appear, on the face of it, to be standard and expected.

The Certificate of Attainment accredits demonstrable skills acquisition by students, following classroom achievement, assessment results or both (McCready 2012). The Certificate recognises and rewards achievement, raises awareness of skills sets and encourages and motivates learning. Students are awarded a certificate if they demonstrate sufficient ability in a range of IT skills, including document management, data handling and creating and delivering presentations. The Certificate details the skills covered, and students are encouraged to use it when applying for jobs, as well as using the skills for any relevant non-academic work.
The Certificate is available to Biomedical Sciences and Psychology undergraduates and postgraduate students. The scope and assessment varies, depending on the structure and skill demands of the course.

**Development implications, issues and impact**

Proposals for the Certificates were based on existing curriculum provision and then taken to the relevant Board of Studies for agreement. Administration of the Certificate is done entirely by us.

A record of attendance and completion of work and assessment is recorded against the class list. It is important to ensure that standards accredited through the Certificate are maintained and, therefore, we must either directly assess the skills (either formatively or summatively), or know that it has been assessed to a pass level through another part of the course (for instance, a presentation or completion of data analysis). This requires a level of coordination with the School Office, and we have awarded certificates covering only a sub-section of the skills, to ensure that students receive the Certificate where possible, but without compromising credibility.

In 2012/13, the Certificate was awarded to 99% of the Psychology stage one cohort and 35% of the Biomedical Sciences cohort. This difference is due to lower attendance and no summative assessment of skills for Biomedical Sciences, as well as the Certificate being issued in stage three rather than stage one.

Psychology students have responded positively to the Certificate and the skills. Opinions were gathered from Psychology stage one students shortly before the Certificate was issued.

- 54% of respondents (n=77) agreed or strongly agreed that the skills had helped them with their academic work.
- 15% of students had already used these skills for non-academic work.
- 12% had already used the certificate as part of a job application or interview.
- 63% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the certificate was of value to them.

Students were also asked what motivated them to learn the skills covered by the Certificate. Assessment ranked the highest motivator (59%), with the Certificate receiving 49% of the votes (Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Responses from stage one Psychology students before receiving the Certificate of Attainment (n=77).**

Students have been very positive about the Certificate, and have actively requested it, asked for a reprint, or provided evidence in order to receive one. They are most able to make use of a certificate that accredits a wide range of complex skills early on in the curriculum. However, the presence and location of a certificate should not dictate the timetabling: sessions must be delivered at point of use if the skills covered are to be of any value.

**Conclusion**

We have developed a coherent programme of study, assessment and recognition that comprehensively supports students through their skills development process (Figure 8). We analysed the pathway and addressed gaps with appropriate and timely services, and have worked with skills specialists and discipline leads to ensure that the offer is tailored, targeted and valuable.
References


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“Viral training”: encouraging trainees to become trainers with reusable training resources

Simon Davis, E-Learning Adviser

Abstract

The University of York’s E-Learning Development Team (ELDT) has developed a range of high quality resources and activities for centrally delivered training sessions. Impact is maximised by providing trainees with reusable resources and session plans that they can adapt and contextualise for reuse in their own educational practice in a range of settings.

Description and context

Central e-learning support teams are frequently required to deliver training in a range of media skills, including video production, audio editing and podcasting, graphic design and image manipulation. Generic media training is used to deliver technical skills and participants are often encouraged to apply the skills to a range of contexts and academic disciplines. The E-Learning Development Team has created and published suites of high quality, reusable training resources for media training, which have not only been used to train the learners that we engage with, but have also been reused by participants to train their students across a range of different contexts. This approach highlights tensions between face to face and self directed approaches to training, and recognises the benefits that a lead facilitator or teacher can bring to contextualise and support skills development.

Face to face training delivered by the ELDT is typically supported by resources made available on the institutional VLE which trainees can access before, during and after the session. Although we have duplicated these support VLE sites for colleagues who want to reuse the resources with their own students, we have made many of these resources available in the public domain so they can be completely re-contextualised or embedded into alternative platforms if required. Increasing the flexibility of access to the resources has allowed them to be reused in many more ways than if they were only accessible through the password protected VLE. For example, reuse in Schools by trainee school teachers who received initial training at the University.

The resources are made available through numerous platforms, as appropriate, including publicly shared files from the VLE, YouTube, Google Docs and the ELDT blog: http://elearningyork.wordpress.com/tag/reusable_resources/.

Resourcing

This approach aims to maximise the impact of the media training resources that we have developed. Sustainability is a key consideration in our practice, as the resource required for the on going dissemination of the training and skills development is borne, at least to some extent, by the trainees themselves (i.e. their availability to subsequently deliver the training in person). We wanted to develop a more flexible delivery model, enabling a wider range of participants to benefit from the training and develop skills in this area. Sustainability is encouraged by publishing resources on open public platforms under Creative Commons licences to encourage adoption and adaption.

To encourage reuse and further dissemination, we use professional media production tools and approaches to develop many of the materials to ensure high end results. However, we are also keen to model use of many of the entry level media tools that we provide training on. The training and resources were, therefore, developed by two members of the E-Learning Development Team using a mix of professional and free open source applications:

- **Video production**: Adobe Premier Pro/Camtasia 7/Movie Maker*
- **Screen capture**: Camtasia 7/8
- **Audio editing**: Adobe Audition/Audacity*
- **Image editing/manipulation/layout**: Adobe PhotoShop/Adobe Illustrator/Pixlr*/PowerPoint/Gimp*/SumoPaint*
  (*designates free applications)
While the exact time taken to design and create the activities and resources for a reusable two hour workshop varies, the total production time is typically three to four days.

It is perhaps worth observing here that the greatest proportion of the workshop development time (certainly in our experience) has been taken up with establishing a viable workflow and toolset for the participants to use. This part of the process usually requires a lot of research into what tools are available, what the available tools offer and how easy those tools are to use for non-specifically skilled staff. Once a workflow has been established, creating the training resources is a much more efficient process.

Impact and evaluation

The impact of this approach is most visibly demonstrated by evidence of reuse of resources and training, delivered by people who have attended workshops or accessed resources. Examples of this include:

- **Staff who have adapted our resources for redeployment with their students.** First year Archaeology students who worked in groups to create videos as part of the assessment for a module in Understanding Heritage Practice. Training on video production was provided by an academic, who had previously attended an ELDT training session, and who reused resources to support her presentation and student activities, including planning documents and production skills. The E-Learning Development Team was invited to deliver training in video editing using MovieMaker, deploying resources they had created for other staff facing contexts. Although time was extremely limited for face to face training, students responded well to the input they received, and were able to access support resources online as required. Finished videos were made available on YouTube and featured in an exhibition at the Yorkshire Museum. For more details please see: [http://goo.gl/3771Xy](http://goo.gl/3771Xy).

- **Generic training customised for a specific context.** The E-Learning Development Team has supported the department of Social Policy and Social Work in delivery of their Social Policy for Social Work project for students. The aim of this project is to provide students with hands on experience of using Social Media to support a campaign about a social issue. They receive training in video and audio production, as well as image manipulation and basic graphic design, to support a variety of projects including viral Facebook campaigns and video production for dissemination via YouTube, as well as leaflet, flyer or poster development.

- **Training the trainers.** The E-Learning Development Team provide training on podcasting and audio production for trainee teachers as part of the PGCE programme. This has been reused by the trainee teachers within their own practice as part of their delivery in primary Schools when on placement.

- **Supporting student induction.** The E-Learning Development Team has produced a range of student facing videos and guides to provide new students with a general introduction to the centrally supported VLE, in addition to specific guides on individual tools that they might encounter within their modules. These resources have been embedded by academics in a number of departmental webpages and VLE sites, including those made available to students before they arrive at the institution. For more details please see: [http://goo.gl/yr6iGo](http://goo.gl/yr6iGo).

The sessions delivered or facilitated by the E-Learning Development Team have been evaluated through a mix of post session evaluation forms and interviews with staff in a bid to assess the longer term impact of delivering such training.

Problems encountered and lessons learnt

As with delivering much technical training, particularly in the area of media production, there have been issues with hardware and software behaving in unexpected ways. Although exercises are carefully designed to anticipate or mitigate many of the problems that arise, some computers will have different set ups that can affect how various tasks will be performed.

While we are keen that our sessions are not beset by technical problems, we feel that it is a useful learning outcome for participants to be exposed to what can go wrong, and be encouraged and supported to find a solution to problems that arise. If resources and training are going to be widely reused, and skills embedded, it is important that troubleshooting activities are addressed, and that participants are able to work on different PCs, not just those in the training room with a specific configuration.

Although a potentially obvious observation, largely technical sessions (and certainly non-discipline specific sessions) are received much more readily, and with much greater engagement, when a member of the teaching staff is also present to contextualise why the technical knowledge is useful to the participants (in terms of how it might be used within the students chosen field, for example).
Another lesson quickly learnt when delivering sessions that have a critical mass of participants (circa ten or more participants) is to organise the session such that one person floats while one person is leading proceedings. This offsets individual problems from being overly disruptive to the general flow of the session (such as if a participant is having microphone input volume level difficulties in an audio session, for example).

**Future developments**

The E-Learning Development Team is committed to continuing to provide high quality resources and training, and encouraging their reuse. We will continue to develop and promote our bank of reusable resources, both through the continued development of generic resources to support media production skills development and in other areas of digital literacy, such as social media, where skills could be passed onto others by people who have attended our training.

We also hope to be able to develop more self directed, stand alone resources and training opportunities, in addition to our current offers, which have been designed primarily to support a blended approach. Our evaluation indicates there is a demand for this type of on demand support amongst the stakeholders we currently train face to face, either in groups or through 1:1 consultations. In addition to this, it is clear that well packaged, but adaptable, stand alone resources would make this type of training resource more portable and would increase the opportunities for it to be reused in different educational contexts.

**Transferability**

This approach is highly transferrable to other institutions with a demand for training in generic skills that could be deployed in different contexts. The E-Learning Development Team would be very keen for other institutions to take advantage of the resources that they have created and reuse or adapt them as required.

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