UCISA REPORT

2012 Survey of Technology Enhanced Learning: case studies

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Universities and Colleges
Information Systems Association

2012 Survey of Technology Enhanced Learning: case studies

CASE STUDIES

Contents

Introduction

This publication presents a series of case studies on institutional approaches to the management of TEL services and is intended to serve as a companion report to the 2012 UCISA Technology Enhanced Learning Survey Report[1], which captures TEL developments across the UK HE sector. The publication builds on the case study interviews conducted in the last UCISA TEL Survey in 2010[2].

The rationale for conducting the interviews is based on feedback received for the 2008 UCISA TEL Survey Report on the need for clearer lines of interpretation for certain areas of the data presented in the main TEL Survey Report. The case studies enable certain themes in the data to be probed and shed light on TEL trends through the eyes of representative institutions, offering context to the findings. The interviews also enable exploration of themes which cannot be captured effectively through responses to survey questions, such as organisational structure and cultural approaches to TEL developments.

About the sample

Upon completion of the 2012 TEL Survey, responding institutions were invited to volunteer as case study institutions to share their approaches to TEL developments and support provision. Out of an initial list of 24 volunteer institutions (from a population of 98 which completed the 2012 TEL Survey), interviews were arranged with ten institutions. The table below lists the participants, with descriptions by type, country and mission group.

The sample group is broadly representative of the UK HE population, covering all institutional types (Pre-92; Post-92; HE college), although it is acknowledged that no Welsh or Northern Irish institutions, nor members of the University Alliance and 1994 Group are represented. Two of the selected institutions (City University London and Edinburgh Napier University) were also the subject of case studies in 2010, and this was intentional in order to present a longitudinal narrative to TEL developments.

Institution	Type	Country	Mission group
Anglia Ruskin University	Post-92	England	Million+
City University London	Pre-92	England	Unclassified
Edinburgh Napier University	Post-92	Scotland	Million+
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	Post-92	Scotland	Unclassified
St Mary's University College	HE college	England	GuildHE
University College London (UCL)	Pre-92	England	Russell Group
University of Greenwich	Post-92	England	Million+
University of Sheffield	Pre-92	England	Russell Group
University of Strathclyde	Pre-92	Scotland	Unclassified
York St John University	Post-92	England	GuildHE

1   *Walker, R., Voce, J., & Ahmed, J. (2012).* 2012 Survey of Technology Enhanced Learning for higher education in the UK. A JISC/UCISA funded survey. *Available at:* **http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/en/bestpractice/surveys/tel.aspx**

2   *The case study interviews are presented in Appendix D of the 2010 TEL Survey Report: Browne, T., Hewitt, R., Jenkins, M., Voce, J., Walker, R. & Yip, H. (2010).* 2010 Survey of Technology Enhanced Learning For Higher Education in the UK. *A JISC/UCISA funded survey. Available at:* **http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/en/bestpractice/surveys/tel.aspx**

Case study questions and format

We are most grateful to members of the UK Heads of e-Learning Forum (HeLF)[3] for reviewing the question set for the 2012 TEL Survey and for suggesting areas for further questioning in the follow up case study interviews. In response to these recommendations, the case study interviews have explored the theme of TEL governance within institutions, as well as provision for quality management of TEL services to staff and students. A range of emerging trends are also tackled in the interviews, such as the development of services in support of Bring Your Own Devices (BYOD), the scaling up of distance learning provision and support across the sector for the development and sharing of open educational resources.

Each interview was based on a common template of questions, which is set out in the Appendix to this document.

The interviews were conducted between July and September 2012, and the questioning was therefore informed by the key findings of the 2012 TEL Survey Report, which were first presented to the community at the EUNIS Congress in June 2012[4].

Executive summary

The case studies looked at the following key areas of TEL support development and explored future challenges for institutions.

TEL strategy

The 2012 TEL Survey revealed that dedicated TEL strategies were becoming less common across the sector, with current practice directed towards embedding TEL concerns within overarching Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategies. The case study findings reinforce this view. Of the institutions that we interviewed, some had never developed a separate TEL strategy and those that did are now debating whether this should remain separate. Only University College London (UCL) and Sheffield have developed or are developing a separate strategy. UCL commented that the purpose of their separate TEL strategy is to complement the Learning and Teaching strategy whilst raising the profile of TEL across the institution. City University London, Edinburgh Napier and UCL also reported that they are committed to fostering departmental/school based strategies which address TEL concerns.

The TEL Survey Report highlighted that meeting student expectations was a key driver for TEL development within institutions, ranked the second most important concern after *enhancing the quality of learning and teaching*, and this finding is reinforced in the case study interviews. Student expectations and student experience are identified as the main drivers for TEL, and no doubt the recent increase in tuition fees within English institutions and the requirement to demonstrate *value for money* in service provision have helped to draw attention to the student experience. A couple of institutions also mentioned competitive advantage or ensuring provision matches competitors as drivers. Queen Margaret University mentioned the importance of developing student skills in technology for when they graduate. In terms of staff engagement, departmental and/or institutional culture is the main factor affecting uptake of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

TEL provision

In terms of centrally provided tools, all of the case study institutions run a VLE and Turnitin (with use of GradeMark). This is fairly comparable to the results of the 2012 TEL Survey where 100% of institutions reported the presence of a VLE and 92% provided a plagiarism detection system. The case study institutions have a much higher percentage of use of e-portfolios which are not as pervasive across the HE sector (only 76% in the 2012 TEL Survey). Another contrast to the results of the 2012 TEL Survey is the provision of Electronic Voting Systems (EVS) centrally. The survey reported only small numbers of institutions using EVS; however, the majority of the case study institutions provide these centrally. The University of Greenwich and the University of Sheffield have EVS as locally supported services. Lecture capture and video conferencing software is an emerging area and features in most institutions either as a pilot or as a fully supported system. Other centrally supported systems include Google Apps, Google Sites, Blogs and Opinio (a survey tool).

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3   The Heads of E-Learning Forum (HeLF) is a network of senior staff in institutions engaged in promoting, supporting and developing technology enhanced learning across the UK HE sector. For further details on HeLF, please see the **HeLF website**.

4   Walker, R. & Voce, J. (2012). 'A study of technology enhanced learning developments across the UK HE sector: 2001–2012.' EUNIS '12. A 360° perspective on IT/IS in Higher Education. *20th − 22nd June 2012. University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro*

Locally supported tools are not particularly common; however, where they exist they tend to be tools specifically required by that department or school, such as a remote teaching observation tool in the School of Education at St Mary's University College. Only the University of Sheffield reported the existence of locally managed VLE systems.

TEL governance and structures

The case study institutions tend to have a central team supporting TEL with the majority based within an IT or Information Services department, rather than an academic support department, although Edinburgh Napier operates without a central unit and embeds TEL support provision across three different areas of its support services. The number of staff FTE supporting TEL services ranges from two to 15 and covers a variety of roles such as Learning Technologists, Educational Developers, multimedia support and academics. Local support is either provided by faculty/ school facing central learning technologists or faculty/school based learning technologists. As an example, Anglia Ruskin University's local support includes Learning Technologists, Directors of Learning and Teaching and Teacher Advisors based within each Faculty. Both Edinburgh Napier and York St John refer to Teaching Fellows within their schools, who serve as champions for the adoption of TEL tools as part of their course delivery.

Quality assurance

All of the case study institutions reported some form of quality assurance (QA) provision for TEL services, in particular for the VLE and for online examinations. In a number of cases it is the responsibility of the schools or departments to develop and implement QA policies. The majority of institutions have either implemented or are considering the implementation of minimum requirements for TEL, specifically for use of the VLE provision. Edinburgh Napier have developed a quality framework for TEL which has been reused by York St John University. UCL reported the use of a metric developed by the University of Bedfordshire to review the level of interaction and availability of tools and resources within the VLE.

As might be expected, based on the findings from the 2012 TEL Survey Report, evaluating the student experience is well established in all of the case study institutions. The most commonly used mechanisms for evaluation are *end of module* or course surveys, annual student surveys and the **National Student Survey**.

Support for devices

The 2012 TEL Survey reported that mobile technologies top the list of challenges that institutions are now facing and are placing the most demand on TEL support teams. The case studies explain that the main challenge is in supporting a range of mobile devices and meeting expectations from students for their devices to work seamlessly with university networks. As a response to this, four of the case study institutions, including Anglia Ruskin University and the University of Strathclyde, refer to the importance of upgrading the wireless networks to facilitate the use of mobile devices. UCL are planning to extend wireless coverage to halls of residence following student feedback which has identified this as a key priority.

There is increasing demand from students to access TEL systems, especially the VLE, from mobile devices. In addition, several institutions have been investigating the use of mobile devices for teaching and learning, for example City University London has been investigating technology enabled rooms and York St John has provided 20 iPads to staff as part of a curriculum enhancement project.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Few of the case study institutions provide purely distance learning courses where students never come to the institution, which reflects the findings of the 2012 TEL Survey where fully online courses remain a niche activity. A number of the institutions are engaged in highly blended courses and the provision of courses overseas in countries such as Dubai, India, Germany and Singapore. Distance learning courses tend to be in subject areas such as Business (e.g. MBA programmes) and Medicine provided at a postgraduate level or for continuing professional development.

In terms of open educational resources, Edinburgh Napier provide an open access course, *Write-TEL* and have developed a Learning, Teaching and Assessment resource bank for case studies which is licensed under Creative Commons. For the remainder, the majority of activity is centred on iTunes U; institutions reported providing limited amounts of content mainly for marketing purposes. OER is an area that institutions want to focus on more in the future.

Future challenges

The evolution of technology and the change in student expectations are producing a number of challenges for the case study institutions. These include support for mobile devices, upgrading or implementing TEL tools (e.g. VLE upgrades, e-portfolios and multimedia provision), developing and maintaining relationships with local TEL support staff and external suppliers, and raising awareness and engaging academic staff and senior management. Edinburgh Napier University have also targeted the evaluation of their VLE migration process and the adoption of their framework for blended course design and delivery as a key priority in the short to medium term.

Acknowledgements

1.   Anglia Ruskin University

Interview with:

Uwe Richter, Principal Lecturer in Technology Enhanced Learning

Overview

Anglia Ruskin University is a member of the Million+ mission group. It has about 30,000 FTE students located at its main campuses, Cambridge and Chelmsford; University Centres in the surrounding region; a number of associate colleges at various international locations and through its distance learning programmes.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

Anglia Ruskin views Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) as fundamental to the student learning experience, having TEL embedded into its Corporate Plan, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy and Student Charters. The use of TEL across the institution is driven by the diverse profile of Anglia Ruskin students; including full time, part time, work based or practice based students and teaching delivered via regional and international partners.

TEL is seen as central to providing teaching staff with access to all the activities they are responsible for and instrumental in providing opportunities to share and quality assure learning, teaching and assessment practice. To facilitate this Anglia Ruskin has developed an in house bespoke VLE, built on Microsoft SharePoint 2010, giving the institution the opportunity to respond to the different needs of its various communities.

The primary strategic driver for TEL within the institution comes via the Corporate Plan (2012–2014) and the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (2011–2014). Both the Corporate Plan and Strategy are well aligned with specific milestones for different aspects of learning and teaching and are explicit as to when those milestones are to be achieved.

For TEL, a primary aim is to provide an enhanced student learning experience. The VLE is valued as an essential tool in achieving this aim and is key to sustainability. As well as enhancing its VLE, the strategy has a clear aim in ensuring that Anglia Ruskin has technology rich teaching rooms and is currently engaged in improving its media server and lecture capture services.

The institution is encouraging the move to greater use of TEL in modules via the VLE and, as such, is defining a threshold for VLE provision. A key driver for this strategic approach is the student expectation that teaching materials and learning resources are on the VLE. However, the institution is keen that staff focus on providing more interactive content and learning activities facilitating a student centred approach to learning and teaching.

While the strategy has clear targets regarding what needs to be achieved, one of the challenges is to determine appropriate measures to see the extent to which targets are being met and how successful they have been in achieving desired outcomes.

TEL governance and structures

Support structures

Centrally, Anglia Learning and Teaching (the central Learning and Teaching Unit) supports the development of learning, teaching and assessment through the implementation of the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy, curriculum design advice and specialised staff development. The link between central and faculty support for TEL is via regular operational meetings, with the faculty learning technologists and Faculty Quality, Enhancement and Standards Committees at strategic level disseminating university initiatives and policies.

Technical support for staff using learning technologies is provided by IT Services via email or telephone. There is also a separate IT helpdesk for students.

Devolved support

The institution has four Faculties and situated within those faculties are one or two learning technologists per Faculty as well as a Director of Learning and Teaching or Learning and Teaching Adviser, both reporting to the Deputy Dean with responsibility for learning and teaching. Each Faculty has an action plan which outlines how the Faculty intend to achieve the targets set out in the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. The learning technologists have responsibility for supporting TEL in the Faculties.

Pedagogical support for TEL is provided by the learning technologists, the Directors of Learning and Teaching and Anglia Learning and Teaching with the learning technologists being in a position to support different parts of the process. The situation is less clear when new technologies are introduced and piloted. One of the challenges with support is in linking all the underlying processes.

Staff Development

Staff development is an important means to support staff in achieving the strategic targets expressed in policy and strategy documents. As part of implementing the VLE and enhancing learning, teaching and assessment through technology, Anglia Learning and Teaching together with the learning technologists provide continuous institution wide VLE staff development. Additionally, learning technologists support and promote the use of learning technologies locally in their faculties.

Advanced VLE staff development workshops were developed and delivered by Anglia Learning and Teaching but it has been found that these are better attended when delivered at a local level by learning technologists for course teams in the Faculty.

The staff development provision is designed to respond to student needs and caters for different skill levels in using TEL by students and staff alike, and is informed by student and staff feedback.

For the development and delivery of distance learning courses Anglia Learning and Teaching provides a number of staff development programmes specifically aimed at course teams engaged in or planning to deliver distance learning. A two day Rapid Prototype Instructional Design (RaPID) course, based on Professor Gilly Salmon's Carpe Diem model, was developed to support the design of distance learning provision. Anglia Learning and Teaching have also adopted Professor Salmon's e-moderation course, based upon her five stage model, to enable staff to develop online facilitation skills; the delivery of this course is outsourced and run by All Things in Moderation.

All new members of academic staff who are new to teaching in HE are expected to complete an HEA accredited PG Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE). Staff also have the option of taking a Masters in Learning and Teaching in HE which includes modules related to the development of e-learning and is delivered in a combination of distance learning and face to face mode. However, staff often cite difficulties finding time to take further modules beyond the PGCHE or feel they already have a relevant qualification.

Quality assurance

Every module has a space on the VLE and there are minimum expectations in terms of the amount of content that staff need to provide, including module guides, reading lists, module definitions and teaching documents, and the level of communication via announcements. These minimum expectations increase annually. While the University and the Faculties have defined such expectations to ensure that all students have access to all information relevant to assure quality and standards, all staff are encouraged to use learning technologies in the most appropriate way to enhance the student learning experience.

For each module the VLE has different spaces. For example, there is a tutor space per module enabling collaboration amongst tutors. This has proved beneficial as it provides the module leader with full access to all deliveries of the module irrespective of where, when and by whom it is delivered. Previously, in some circumstances, such interaction between module leader and module tutors only happened at the end of the year during the exam board period. There is also the possibility of, and interest in, developing spaces which support learning communities across modules and cohorts. This opportunity for tutors teaching on the same module to liaise with each other has also been of benefit in terms of quality assurance, especially where the modules are being provided by a partner institution, allowing quality assurance issues to be addressed early on.

Anglia Ruskin have developed a distance learning lifecycle to support distance learning courses from the original conception stage, through the design, development and validation processes to the actual delivery. To assist with course development, the course team are provided with advice by Anglia Learning and Teaching and given the opportunity to undertake the RaPID staff development programme. When the course is ready for validation, it is approved by a panel consisting of both external and internal experts. The course team are expected to fully develop a module for the validation panel and to explain how certain elements of the course, such as e-assessment, will be handled.

Support for devices

The institution is also looking at mobile provision. The IT department have implemented virtual desktops across the institution running Windows 7 and Office 2010, including provision for iPads, tablets and smart phones through a VMware View Client app. This enables access to the VLE. Anglia Ruskin has also adopted iTunes U to support access to media through mobile devices.

However, there is currently no development of the VLE for mobile delivery beyond browser access. The current focus for the VLE is in terms of accessibility to ensure VLE access and usability is optimised, including for future mobile development.

Outsourcing

The IT student helpdesk is outsourced out of hours to ensure that there is 24 hour support for students' IT queries. The only outsourced software service is for student email which is provided by Microsoft via their Microsoft Live@edu service. All other software services such as the data centre and VLE are provided in house.

Some support material development is outsourced and, as mentioned earlier, the e-moderation course is run by All Things in Moderation. There had been some discussion regarding the outsourcing of VLE support but due to the bespoke nature of the VLE it has proved too difficult to identify external services that could provide the appropriate type and level of support required.

Distance learning

In terms of distance learning development, there has been a pilot to outsource content production via a publisher but there were a number of challenges with this approach, requiring the repurposing of content provided for online delivery. These early experiences have led to the development of templates for content providers to use with very clear definitions of what is expected in the production of online content.

Some distance learning is managed by a central distance learning unit which includes a dedicated facilitator who acts as the first port of call for students, handling course related queries and linking students with relevant support services and tutors. Online teaching is delivered by specialist online tutors while the quality assurance aspects of the student learning experience remain with the relevant Faculty.

Students at the heart of the experience

Anglia Ruskin took the decision a few years ago to introduce the Customer Service Excellence award across the whole institution. This has been perceived as beneficial in informing how different departments work with each other. It has been clearly related to developing a culture of high quality support for Anglia Ruskin students. As such Anglia Ruskin has been well prepared to address potential changes in student expectations. For example, the Student Charters for campus based, distance and research students are very clear about student expectations in terms of communications with and behaviours of staff in their interactions with students. This cultural change does not come without its own challenges but, so far, the process of achieving Customer Service Excellence has had more positive applications than anticipated.

University policies and strategies reflect student input and the aspiration to be student centred and informed in all University activities, as evidenced by the fact that students are well represented on all University committees and stakeholder groups and have been actively involved in the development of the VLE.

Future challenges

One of the key challenges acknowledged by the institution is how it will be ready to teach the highly digital literate students of the future as well as equipping the students of today with the digital literacy skills required in the employment market of tomorrow. For instance, Anglia Ruskin perceives the opportunities for informal learning that young students are experiencing via technology as a challenge as, currently, Anglia Ruskin can only provide opportunities for informal learning but has little influence on its take up. The concept of informal and collaborative learning may lead to a deeper examination of the traditional modes of teaching and a consideration of adopting an approach more akin to the *flipped classroom*, for example. Clearly, however, there are technical and cultural implications in such a transition.

From an IT administration perspective there is the need to run efficient and robust as well as cost effective processes. Where appropriate, administration systems will be integrated to improve timeliness, data quality and efficiency. This includes, for example, examining key components of the student lifecycle and providing relevant access to the VLE and related services at different stages in the lifecycle.

2. City University London

Interview with:

Annemarie Cancienne, Senior Educational Developer

Mike Hughes, Strategic Learning Environment Project Manager

Overview

City University London is a teaching and research focused university. The appointment of the latest Vice Chancellor (2009–10) comes with an aspiration to increase Research Excellence at the University. The University has a total of 17,499 students (12,733 FTE students) (from 2010–2011 HESA Student Return). 4,250 (about 24%) of the students studying at the University pay overseas fees. Income is highly reliant on student fees at City University London.

The University is divided into the following Schools:

- Cass Business School
- School of Arts and Social Sciences
- School of Health Sciences
- School Engineering and Mathematical Sciences
- School of Informatics
- The City Law School

City University London operates in multiple locations. There are five main locations to accommodate the different Schools. Cass Business School is also involved in running programme overseas (i.e. Dubai and China). There are some interdisciplinary subject centres that cross Schools and Central Services, and one central service based accredited programme (MA in Academic Practice).

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

The University does not have a separate TEL (or e-learning strategy). The e-learning strategy is embedded in the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy. Schools are encouraged to have their own strategic statements in relation to e-learning. School e-learning statements and/or strategies vary; some Schools are more intent on incorporating TEL as part of their strategy than others.

There is great autonomy and diversity among the Schools in creating their own statements and setting up their own objectives with regards to TEL provision. Input to the development of the Schools' e-learning statements from the central e-learning team at City is limited to when guidance is sought. Associate Deans of Education within the different Schools are owners of the strategic statements.

TEL provision in the University was always autonomous and diverse. However, over the last couple of years there is a drive for coherence across the Schools. City University London has seen lots of changes over the last six years. During that period, the university has had three different Vice Chancellors, which has had a significant impact on developments across the University, including TEL provision.

TEL provision grew organically within the University. In 2000, the School of Informatics started using WebCT, which about three years later evolved from local use to strategic wide use. Drivers for TEL provision include Schools' needs, competitive advantages in comparison with other institutions and student expectations and demands.

TEL uptake depends on School culture, level of staff support and engagement, and expectations. The Cass Business School and the School of Health Sciences operate minimum or suggested standards in VLE provision.

TEL provision

The centrally supported services at City include:

- Moodle – the institutional VLE
- Edublogs – blogging service
- PebblePad – e-portfolio service
- Turnitin – the plagiarism detection software
- Adobe Connect and Adobe Presenter – video conferencing/communication tools
- Turning Point – electronic voting system
- Video and audio streaming (FMS)

In addition to the above services, there are various pilots and other systems used at a smaller scale. For example, the University is piloting and evaluating Echo360 (lecture recording system).

The University is currently using Moodle 1.9 and will upgrade in Moodle 2.4/5 in September 2013. Within Moodle the plugins used include: OU's wiki, wiris – a maths calculation engine, and a light integration with library electronic resources via Talis Aspire.

The School of Heath Sciences is the strongest user of e-portfolios; however, there are plans to phase out use of PebblePad in favour of blogs, due to running costs but, more importantly, due to significant changes in the interface of the upcoming PebblePad version. It is anticipated that a small number of users in the School of Heath Sciences will continue to use PebblePad.

There is a variety in usage of Turnitin across the Schools. For example, the School of Arts and Social Sciences are using Turnitin for all their online assessments, while other schools use it less strictly.

Both central and devolved TEL tools provision is supported within the institution. TEL pilots sometimes begin centrally and find local users who will test the new technology, but can also start within departments and communicate back to the centre the pilot results. In either case, based on evaluation i.e. service maintenance, licensing, degree of usage, running costs etc. decisions are taken with regards to adoption for wider use.

TEL governance and structures

The Learning Development Centre (LDC) is a central unit committed to developing and supporting academics in the use of educational technologies and in supporting their academic practices more generally. Their remit includes areas of academic practice and educational development. LDC staff support the use of TEL within the University, but are also responsible for the delivery of the MA in Academic Practices. A total of 12.5 FTE in the LDC include roles such as educational developers, multimedia developers and academic posts. A separate administrative team of four people covers administrative needs of the team. Many of the team work on a part time basis.

Multimedia projects are supported by the multimedia developers within LDC. It is acknowledged that multimedia support for those involved in multimedia projects extends beyond the initial training provided. Multimedia developers work closely with staff, however, it is felt that as multimedia becomes increasingly pervasive the level of extra support required may be reduced.

In addition to the LDC team, an average of two Educational Technologists are based within each School. Communication and collaboration between LDC and School Educational Technology teams, is achieved through formal structures dealing separately with *strategic* and *operational* issues, as well as infrequent, more informal, coffee catch ups.

From a strategic point of view, there is the Advisory group, where LDC staff (Director and co-Director) have regular meetings with the School Associate Deans of Education, who are the owners of TEL provision within their Schools.

From an operational point of view, there is the Wider Educational Technology Community, where LDC staff and School Educational Technology teams have regular meetings.

The structure within LDC is pretty stable. There were no changes over the last two years other than maternity leave. The last restructure of LDC took place about four years ago, which saw the team expand by merging the E-learning Services and the Educational Development Centre teams. LDC also moved under the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) for management. The previous E-learning Services team was under Library Services management.

The LDC is also working with other teams and departments on the implementation of TEL provision. For example, the Strategic Learning Environment (SLE) Project Manager in Information Services (IS) is working closely with LDC and School staff. The role is highly driven by the strategy, and interfaces between IS and the Wider Educational Technology Community.

LDC liaises with the Academic Services unit through committee structures, which are responsible for quality control and compliance issues.

TEL organisation and support in City is two fold:

1. LDC works closely with the Wider Educational Technology Community and together are responsible for the strategic and hands on support.

2. IS are responsible for development support, project management, upgrades, licensing etc. With regards to Moodle, LDC and the Educational Technology community are liaising with the Strategic Learning Environment Project Manager, who is responsible for any further collaboration with other IS teams.

The Strategy and Governance committee for City's Strategic Learning Environment (SLE), chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education) provides strategic steer and oversees the University's VLE and all other TEL provision. Moodle, which replaced WebCT Vista in September 2011, is the main area of SLE. However, SLE oversees and focuses on a range of other TEL projects such as the EduBlogs, lecture capture, PebblePad, the move to Moodle 2.4/5 in September 2013 and so on.

As mentioned earlier, SLE is governed at a strategic level by the Strategy and Governance committee, chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (for Education), and including representation from LDC, the School Associate Deans of Education, Academic Services, and IS (including the Strategic Learning Environment Project Manager). This is a cross collaboration committee with input from all Schools and other stakeholders. The Strategy and Governance committee was deliberately created to oversee the move from WebCT Vista to Moodle. Since then its remit expanded to include other TEL provision and most recently physical learning spaces. Due to the expanded remit, a review of the membership is planned, to also include other units whose input is necessary (i.e. estates and facilities).

Quality assurance

Even though there are no dedicated quality assurance policies with regards to e-learning, LDC provide guidelines for online examinations.

School educational technology teams and their Deans assure academic quality of courses on Moodle and specify the tools required to meet their strategic and pedagogic objectives, while LDC facilitate and support the learning development aspects of the project. IS provide technical expertise and project management, and Academic Services help advise on policy.

In addition, there are minimum requirements for VLE provision with different levels of adoption from the various Schools (i.e. CASS Business School and the School of Health Sciences have developed specific standards). It is LDC's objective to increase awareness of suggested minimum standards for VLE provision across the Schools. Most recently, LDC is also attempting to increase their involvement and input in policies (including QA) within the University.

Currently, student experience is evaluated through the end of year module survey, the annual Student Voice survey and NSS results. It is LDC's intention to develop and include a set of questions dedicated to e-learning, in this year's end of year module surveys and perhaps the Student Voice survey.

Support for devices

A large amount of the IS investment budget is dedicated to upgrading the University's infrastructure. Currently, there is a dedicated project to upgrade the University's wifi provision. The wifi upgrade will be completed in 2013 and it is expected to enhance the current wifi provision by eradicating wifi – free patches and allow for even more devices to connect to the network. Eduroam is also being introduced.

There is also a commitment from the University (web team, marketing team and IS) in the use of responsive web design for delivering web based services, including web based TEL applications. Currently, the University's website is *responsive* (i.e. can be accessed from any mobile device).

In relation to the VLE, since the end of 2009 when the University introduced Moodle, IS have seen an increase in access to Moodle via mobile devices from 2% to 14%. To date, there is a great awareness of the students' demands in using their mobile devices and IS are committed to delivering mobile Moodle in the best way possible to accommodate this need. IS continue to monitor access to Moodle from mobile devices and they work towards the provision of mobile access to Moodle, ready for September 2013 when the University will upgrade from Moodle 1.9 to Moodle 2.4/5.

Beyond Moodle development work and the wifi upgrade project, other pilots and developments with regards to mobile devices include: the investigation and design of technology enabled rooms, where students can have access to laptops for group work or other teaching and learning activities and have access to services where they wish to bring their own device (BYOD). Currently, there are two of these pilot spaces with 2012/2013 evaluations determining the case for greater proliferation. In addition, the School of Social Sciences is investigating the use of iPads in teaching (i.e. the purchase of a portable cabinet with 30–50 iPads).

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Cass Business School is involved in teaching provision overseas. For example, CASS Executive MBA is a two year course, based in Dubai. The institutional VLE is used to support online teaching and learning activities. Courses within the Schools are taught face to face and there is no obvious agenda for the development of distance courses. Even though City is highly reliant on student fees, there is no stated strategic objective for developing distance learning in the near future.

With regards to open educational recourses, City has a presence on iTunes U. The initiative for City on iTunes U came from LDC when various educational materials and teaching resources were made available, but there is no policy with regards to maintaining iTunes U or further development due to other institutional priorities. iTunes U at City is also used for marketing purposes.

Future challenges

Through the University's Strategic Plan, funding to improve TEL provision was secured. It is felt that the important short to long term challenges relate to implementing and delivering the various projects, such as creating more flexible teaching rooms, upgrade to Moodle 2. Where project funding is joint with other service teams (e.g. LDC in conjunction with IS, estates) development and implementation can be more challenging.

LDC are working collaboratively with all other stakeholders and other service teams to address any issues and accommodate challenges for both large scale and smaller projects.

3.   Edinburgh Napier University

Interview with:

Fiona Campbell, Head of Academic Professional Development

Keith Smyth, Programme Leader, MSc Blended and Online Education and Senior Teaching Fellow

Stephen Bruce, Academic Development Adviser (MLE Development)

Overview

Edinburgh Napier University is a post-92 institution with roughly 13,000 full time students, and 600 FTE academic staff, located on three separate campuses in Edinburgh.

The University has three Faculties (Engineering, Computing and Creative Industries; Health, Life and Social Sciences; and the Business School) comprising two schools in the Faculty of Health, Life and Social Sciences, and three in each of the other Faculties – eight in total. There are also several Professional Services departments including Academic Professional Development, Student Affairs and Information Services, in addition to strategy leading Office of the Vice Principal (Academic).

The University predominantly focuses on campus based teaching, with around 80% of enrolled students attending classes on campus. A blended approach to the use of technology in supporting learning, teaching and assessment is central to the students' learning experience. However, in recent years, an increasing number of online programmes have been established at Masters level and there has been growth in the development of short CPD courses, offering greater choice and flexible learning opportunities to working professionals, which has extended the University's distance learning provision and consequently the take up of TEL services. The University has also been considering the establishment of a satellite campus in Hong Kong, as a step towards further developing its overseas provision for international students, and this would have implications for TEL service provision as well.

Edinburgh Napier does not have a dedicated TEL strategy; instead TEL issues are embedded within a range of institutional strategies such as the Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy and the Academic Strategy. These strategies are reviewed every five years. Edinburgh Napier has recently reviewed and published a new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for the period from 2010 to 2015 which has helped to guide recent TEL developments. The ethos of this is embedded within the recent introduction of a new institutional Benchmark for the Use of Technology in Modules.

TEL provision has been supported through a range of staff development initiatives as well as internal and externally funded projects (in the latter case through the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government) and this has encouraged staff to engage with and explore different uses of learning technologies. Of the major projects to emerge as a result, the Health Online Project developed a suite of blended CPD modules while the TESEP (Transforming and Enhancing the Student Experience through Pedagogy) project which ran until 2008 involved the redesign of modules and courses across a range of disciplines within Edinburgh Napier and the project's FE partner institutions. Both of these major projects left a legacy of resources that continue to be drawn upon. Other major projects within the last two years have aimed to support transition from FE to HE for new direct entrants through podcasting, mobile technologies and the use of virtual classrooms to enable joint student online activities pre-entry.

Internal funding, in the form of Teaching Fellowship development grants, has been used to support Teaching Fellows and their colleagues in initiatives such as the effective embedding of podcasting and classroom voting, and producing short guides on emerging areas of practice including MOOCs.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

TEL strategy

TEL issues have always been reflected within key institutional strategies such as the Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) strategy, rather than through a standalone e-learning strategy document. There has been a strong level of senior management support for TEL development across the institution. The previous Senior Vice Principal for Academic Development chaired the steering group for the aforementioned **TESEP** project, and this proved crucial in getting staff involved, with Heads of School and directors of Professional Services buying in to the objectives for the project which was part of the Scottish Funding Council's E-learning and Transformational Change programme.

The University's committee structure also facilitates academic buy in, with faculty representatives actively participating in the Academic Strategy and Enhancement Committee and the Academic Information System Steering Group, and on strategic project boards including the current WebCT Replacement Project which is overseeing the current move from WebCT to Moodle.

The revised LTA strategy was created in 2010 and launched through a staff conference in January 2011. It has a strong focus on the use of learning technology in learning, teaching and assessment activities, addressing TEL on three levels:

Level 1: outlining key principles for TEL usage within LTA approaches;

Level 2: articulating 10 key framing statements – for which schools are required to respond with their own statements on learning, teaching and assessment practices which take account of TEL approaches;

Level 3: creation of an online LTA Resource Bank of searchable exemplars, resources and case studies which outline effective approaches to LTA including TEL.

Staff from the Office of the Vice Principal (Academic) and the Academic Professional Development team are actively engaged in promoting the **LTA Resource Bank**, inviting contributions from staff and encouraging its use. Case studies within the Resource Bank are also being cross referenced with staff development sessions to create an integrated provision to support effective LTA practice.

The University Library's strategy also includes an e-learning strategy, which clarifies their pedagogic approach to the provision and delivery of electronic products and services, and identifies what is good practice in this area, and how to bring this to bear on current and future work.

Drivers for TEL usage

Each faculty and service area within the University has reviewed its learning and teaching and assessment strategy in the light of the revised institutional LTA strategy, and schools have reviewed their statements on course delivery, taking direct account of TEL approaches. The institutional strategy's requirement for schools and services to respond to the Level 2 framing statements, as described above, has provided a framework for this renewal exercise to take place, and is intended to be an ongoing and organic process rather than one off response to the publication of the strategy, with TEL approaches continuing to be refined and embedded in programme delivery.

The LTA strategy is in this way intended to be *iterative, inspirational and interactive*, ensuring that strategies towards TEL implementation are kept fresh and up to date.

Staff are strongly encouraged to reflect on their practice in using TEL tools in their teaching and to contribute cases to the University's LTA resource bank, which are organised around the University's new Benchmark for the *Use of Technology in Modules*. The new benchmark is based around the *3E Framework (2011)*[5] – which has been developed by the University:

'*to assist staff to meaningfully incorporate technology into the learning and teaching approach of their modules, and to meet the new benchmark approved by the University LTA Committee which is:*

To make active use of technology to meaningfully enhance the learning, teaching and assessment experience across all modules.'

(Smyth et al., 2011: p.1)

'*The framework is based on an Enhance-Extend-Empower continuum, which has been developed with illustrative... examples that might be incorporated as a minimum (Enhance), through to uses of technology that give students more responsibility for key aspects of their learning (Extend), and to underpin more sophisticated, authentic activities that reflect the professional environments for which they are preparing (Empower).*'

(Smyth et al., 2011: p.1)

The latest round of Learning and Teaching Awards presented in June 2012 were themed around the 3E Framework and the effective use of technology in learning and teaching; and staff were required to submit a case study to the LTA Resource Bank in order to be considered for an award. The most recent staff conference in June 2012, *Enhancing, extending and empowering student learning within online environments*, acknowledged this progress, serving as a forum for the presentation of three awards to case study authors and colleagues for exemplifying best practice at the Enhance, Extend and Empower levels.

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5   Smyth, K., Bruce, S., Fotheringham, J., & Mainka, C. (2011). *Benchmark for the use of technology in modules. 3 E Framework*. Available at: **http:// staff.napier.ac.uk/services/academicdevelopment/TechBenchmark/Documents/3E_Framework_Nov_2011.pdf**

Engagement by Faculties and Schools

Level 2 statements vary from faculty to faculty, based on the nature of the disciplines, size of the courses and the different pedagogic practices being employed. The essence of the LTA strategy is that it is not prescriptive and takes account of the different contexts in which the faculties work. Whilst the faculties and associated schools are expected to engage with the 3E Framework in how they use technology in their modules, they are not expected to conform to a minimum standard of a VLE presence for all modules. It is up to each school to determine what its minimum presence should be. However, it is expected that all taught modules will have some form of VLE presence and, as stated in the 3E Framework guidance, that within each module there will be at least two examples of Enhance level use of technology to actively support student learning.

The launch of the revised LTA strategy has been delivered in tandem with the migration of the University's VLE platform from Blackboard WebCT to Moodle (a product of the MLE review conducted in 2010), and this has given additional impetus for staff to engage with learning technology and revise their approach to blended course delivery. The move to Moodle has been managed by schools with a high level of take up, many of which have been mapped in terms of their design to the 3E Framework or have had their implementation within Moodle directly informed by the 3E Framework. There has, therefore, been a conscious effort to connect the rollout of Moodle with the adoption and use of the 3E Framework, both through online staff development provision (e.g. a Meet Moodle online course), workshops (e.g. Making Moodle modules that shine), and one to one support from Faculty learning technologists and Academic Developers within Academic Professional Development.

Staff engagement with the 3E Framework is also discernible through the number of Teaching Fellow applications which have been received over the past year in which applicants have explicitly mentioned the 3E Framework in their proposals, setting out how they would promote and support it at a local level if appointed to Teaching Fellow.

The June staff conference was also extremely well attended by 140 staff, with the event providing an opportunity for staff to look into and to try out Moodle and to discuss the 3E Framework and how it could be applied to their teaching and course delivery. Staff practitioners facilitated parallel Learning from Experience sessions providing an opportunity for innovative and interesting practice to be shared enabling its adoption and adaption by colleagues in other faculties, schools, programme and module teams. The **conference itself was captured in Storify**, which provides a useful document of the day itself and the range of ways in which staff at Edinburgh Napier are engaging with the 3E Framework, the introduction of Moodle and technology enhanced learning more generally.

TEL provision

Edinburgh Napier provides a centrally supported service for TEL tools – there is no devolved service within schools as such. However, academic staff may choose to use external web tools, and the University has provided guidance on how to engage with these types of tools, making staff aware of the benefits and challenges of Web 2.0. This guidance covers key points on data protection, IPR and archiving issues, and there are a number of worked examples for tools such as Ning and WordPress. A working group for electronic submission of coursework has also provided advice on how to backup and archive student submissions for coursework delivered through Turnitin or via wikis and blogs. A longer term project will be looking at how digital artefacts are handled across the University.

Central provision for TEL is reflected through support for the following tools:

- Moodle as the University's online learning environment.
- Elluminate Live! as a virtual classroom/meeting room.
- TurnitinUK as a text matching software to deter plagiarism and promote academic integrity.
- TurningPoint as a classroom voting system.
- ActivPanel as an interactive presentation tool available in the standard AV Desk Control Panel in all classrooms.
- Audacity to support the delivery of audio feedback to students.

Edinburgh Napier is also using SharePoint to host the LTA Resource Bank and 3E Framework resources and case studies. SharePoint links together a range of services such as the staff intranet and portal, and staff are automatically logged in when they log on to the University network.

Currently, there is no centrally supported portfolio space, but this gap in provision (formerly addressed through WebCT's e-portfolio tool) is being investigated with a project group seeking to find a suitable replacement solution. Information Services, which manages the University's centrally supported toolset, is keen to take stock of usage patterns for the current toolset as whole, with a view to assessing future requirements. The use of external Web 2.0 tools, social networking platforms and mobile apps for teaching and learning will also form part of this review.

Some academic staff do encourage students to use their own tools to complete study activities; for example, a Teaching Fellow in one of the schools has encouraged students to use their mobile phones and specific applications.

It is also accepted that staff will promote external Web 2.0 tools and give students the autonomy to use them. This practice is covered by the guidance which the University has produced on procedures for the use of externally hosted tools.

Support

Central support structures

There is no dedicated home for TEL services within the University's organisational structure, as responsibility for TEL is embedded across a range of service units forming just one element of a support service's provision. However, as part of a wider institutional restructuring of central services, three teams now take a lead on TEL developments:

- The Academic Practice team within the Office of the Vice Principal (Academic).
- The Academic Professional Development team within Human Resources and Development.
- Information Services comprising both the IT and the Library.

Academic Practice is responsible for taking the lead on strategic projects related to the LTA strategy, such as steps towards the further development of the 3E Framework. The team is also responsible for delivering **two accredited staff programmes** that relate to, and are partially or fully delivered through, online education, namely the MSc Blended and Online Education, and the PG Certificate Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. The PG Certificate Teaching and Learning in Higher Education is undertaken by all new lecturers at the University, as part of their probationary period. It covers key aspects of technology enhanced education in specific modules, and through being delivered in a blended learning mode with a good level of online activity allows participants the opportunity to experience the VLE as a student. In addition, the third module of the PG Cert is project based and many of those on the programme have opted to undertake projects that focus in part or in full on the use of TEL in teaching

The **MSc Blended and Online Education** (BOE) is a fully online distance learning programme for Edinburgh Napier staff and external participants from FE, HE and other areas of educational practice. It is aimed at experienced educators who are completely new to technology enhanced learning and teaching, or who want to take what they are already doing even further. The programme emphasises individual and collaborative activity, as part of an immersive developmental experience that allows participants to develop strong pedagogical knowledge alongside the development of key online tutoring skills. The MSc BOE has three core modules. The first focuses on theoretical underpinnings and drivers for change relating to approaches to blended and online education. The second module is dedicated to issues in supporting the blended and online student experience, including inclusivity and equivalence of experience. The third module is based on curriculum design and development models and approaches for blended and online courses. These three core modules have been accredited by the Staff and Educational Association (SEDA), meaning all three exit awards (PG Cert, PG Dip and the full MSc BOE) merit a SEDA award for *Embedding Learning Technologies* for all successful completers.

Academic Practice also delivers Write-TEL (Writing for Publication in Technology Enhanced Learning) — a fully online short course for educators interested in exploring TEL in their own professional practice. The programme was developed as an extension to the MSc BOE and was conceived as a way of strengthening pedagogic research activity and research teaching linkages internally, as well as disseminating good practice in TEL within the institution. The programme is now open to interested colleagues beyond Edinburgh Napier and the MSc BOE programme[6].

Academic Practice has recently been strengthened with a new academic member of staff joining the team with a responsibility for developing teaching practices through the use of TEL. Academic Professional Development has a specific staff development responsibility for TEL, providing support and guidance to faculties, schools, programme teams and individual staff on learning technologies, including Moodle and Turning Point. There are three Academic Developers, who each liaise with a specific faculty on LTA matters including TEL (e.g. use of Elluminate, podcasting, wikis, Moodle etc.). The team also organises the annual university wide **Academic Professional Development** programme of conferences, workshops, seminars and online opportunities which includes a technology enhanced learning strand focusing on supporting online learning developments and on the effective use of specific learning technologies such as TurningPoint, and Web 2.0. These sessions (and other bespoke development to met an identified learning need) are also available on a tailored basis to schools or groups of staff such as programme teams.

The Information Services Team combines IT Services and the University Library and is responsible for managing the technical infrastructure and provision of resources for TEL services. The team focuses on the academic working relationship with desktop technologies, centrally supported TEL tools, and custom applications. It has been responsible for managing the migration of the University's centrally supported VLE from a Blackboard Vista platform to Moodle, as well as supporting the institutional portal and video streaming services. The University has invested in three VLE

developers to support the migration to Moodle and to further develop the system. There is ongoing liaison between the Academic Practice, Academic Professional Development and Information Services in the management of learning technologies.

Devolved support

At a local level temporary learning technologist posts have been created to support the migration to Moodle, so that each faculty has a dedicated member of staff to support this transition process.

Long standing support posts for TEL do though exist in some parts of the university. Online Learning Advocates work within the Faculty of Health to support TEL development and there is also a dedicated learning technologist who supports staff. In addition to this local support, some schools also have dedicated programme teams to support online delivery (e.g. Biosciences).

A special interest group has also been set up to help **Teaching Fellows** to disseminate TEL best practice across schools, focusing on outcomes from TEL projects.

Quality assurance

The University has formed a view that a dedicated guidance policy on the use and application of TEL tools in teaching and learning is no longer required. In its place, it is promoting the 3E Framework, which provides a benchmark for the use of technology to enhance the learning, teaching and assessment experience across all modules. Guidance on aspects of quality is subsumed within this framework, as well as within other staff resources such as the University's assessment handbook. Staff are expected to follow this guidance and there is a close scrutiny on new module and programme proposals as part of the module and programme validation process to see how TEL is being embedded, and affording opportunities for flexible learning provision.

Aspects of quality in the use of TEL for course delivery are tracked in a number of ways. The standard end of module questionnaire has been a key instrument for collecting feedback on the student experience. All modules must use the questionnaire (consisting of 11 multiple choice and four free text items, with a dedicated question on the use of technology), although schools are free to add their own questions to the form; the School of Nursing has been particularly active in this respect in adding questions on its use of learning technologies.

The University also solicits student feedback when major changes are introduced to TEL services, such as the recent migration to the Moodle VLE platform. Previous student surveys were also conducted for the initial rollout of WebCT (2003) and upgrade to WebCT Vista.

In addition to these measures, Teaching Fellows also conduct evaluation projects within their own disciplinary areas, reviewing the impact of particular TEL initiatives. The MSc Blended and Online Education and Write-TEL programmes are also helping to promote a culture of evaluation on technology developments through their coursework activities and discussion of evaluation techniques and approaches, addressing *evaluation through support for scholarship.*

Support for devices

Edinburgh Napier is a three campus institution and wireless provision is more or less pervasive across all campus sites. A Mobile Applications Strategy Steering Group (under the chairmanship of Information Services), provides a steer for the University in the area of mobile applications development and related activities. In response to student feedback, Information Services have developed an in house mobile web which makes use of a combination of authenticated and non-authenticated services. These services are also available as web services accessible through the student portal, meaning content for the app is driven from the same source.

The University does not have a dedicated mobile strategy and roadmap, but a mobile application working group has been established to give a steer on how to develop apps, and this reflects the University's current approach to mobile developments with services dynamically developed as they are required.

The new Vice Principal (Academic) has begun leading a series of conversations with staff and students on digital engagement and inclusion. The focus of this work is to consider how joined up and connected information services need to be for the future, and where further opportunities might lie in terms of Edinburgh Napier being a *digitally minded* institution. A *Digital Futures* event is planned before Christmas 2012 to discuss the digital agenda for the University moving forward, and this will lead into further visioning and consultation work to be undertaken by a small cross university team over the course of the current academic year.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Distance learning as a delivery approach is becoming more important to the University. In 2010 the University offered three fully online programmes at Masters level, which were either already available to students at the time or about to be launched. This provision has now increased to ten live or *in development* online programmes at Masters level; being offered as credit bearing programmes to part time students and reflecting the University's commitment to providing continuing professional development for working professionals. New programmes have been targeted at the creative industries, for journalists and for entrepreneurs. There has also been recent growth in the number of CPD short courses which are being offered to professionals.

The University is also keen to expand its overseas teaching provision, with TEL services supporting this initiative. The School of Nursing currently delivers an undergraduate programme overseas with faculty flying out to initiate the delivery of modules which are then supported through a combination of local support and online teaching undertaken by the module leaders in Edinburgh.

The University has made a commitment to open education by ensuring that all case studies submitted to the LTA Resource Bank are licensed under Creative Commons and are, therefore, available for reuse. The cases are tagged with a number of descriptors and are linked to the JORUM repository. The 3E Framework is also licensed under Creative Commons and has been adopted by other institutions and adapted for their purposes; for example, York St John University has developed its own quality framework for TEL tools based on the 3E Framework. Representatives from three different HE institutions attended the June 2012 conference to discuss how they were using the framework to support academic staff in their adoption of TEL tools, and several other institutions across the UK are also at various stages of adopting and adapting the framework.

The University has also taken steps towards offering open access courses, with the Write-TEL programme representing the first course of this genre with external participants engaging through webinars. The **Edinburgh Napier Educational Exchange** has also been set up as an academic social networking platform, supporting collaboration between Edinburgh Napier staff and with external contributors. The choice of Elgg as the platform was intentional in this respect, facilitating the opening up of this open space to support collaboration with external contributors. Health professionals represent one category of external users who have engaged with Edinburgh Napier staff on the Exchange site to share insights on professional development.

Future challenges

A key priority for the short term is to support the rollout of the new Moodle VLE platform. There are a number of challenges bound up with this endeavour, principally:

- Technical development of the platform – getting greater control over the platform so that it meets the University's needs and educational objectives;
- Staff engagement with the platform – engaging staff so that they play an active role in the development of the platform, shaping the vision for the VLE and contributing ideas through the submission of enhancement requests for new tools and features;
- Staff engagement with the 3E Framework – supporting staff in their use of learning technology and increasing local expertise in the use of technologies as part of taught provision.

The University is committed to evaluating the adoption of the Moodle platform by staff and the use of the 3E Framework to inform course design and delivery, encouraging all staff to contribute ideas to its further development. The evaluation will review the benchmarks for the 3E Framework and their suitability for course delivery. A formal evaluation effort will take place over the next academic year, but there will also be a variety of informal channels for feedback to be collected – notably through workshops and online short courses, and feedback from the Teaching Fellows. A related goal for the University is to place accredited staff who have served as teaching fellows in each school across the institution, playing a role in gathering local stories of TEL implementation.

Ideas around the development of the framework moving forward include a focus on the requirements for specific roles, ranging from lecturers to programme leaders. There will also be an ongoing push for more examples to be submitted to the LTA Resource Bank, focusing on enhanced TEL activity, *increasing the conscious connections between TEL practice and models of blended course delivery*.

Recognition of staff engagement with TEL will also be a feature of the institutional scheme ENRoute! which is currently in development and will align with the sector owned UK Professional Standards Framework accredited by the Higher Education Academy. The Framework specifically addresses the use and value of appropriate learning technologies as core knowledge for higher education staff engaged in teaching and supporting learning. Both the accredited and bespoke routes to recognition as an HEA Fellow at a range of levels will include opportunities for participants to develop, reflect on and enhance their TEL practice. It is anticipated that ENRoute! will be accredited by the end of 2012 enabling piloting, implementing and the awarding of initial HEA Fellowhips during 2013.

TEL services will also play a role in supporting the University's innovation and inclusion agendas, joining up services across the institution.

4. Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh

Interview with:

Susi Peacock, Senior Lecturer in e-learning

Overview

Queen Margaret University (QMU) is a post-92 university based in Edinburgh. There are 4,000 FTEs, at undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level, plus up to 2,000 part time continuing professional development (CPD) students. A number of the students are part time mature students and direct entrants, who join in the third or fourth year of a programme, and so the demographic is not the typical 18–21 year olds.

QMU is based on one campus but have a number of international collaborative partners, in countries such as India, Singapore and Greece, who deliver QMU programmes. In most cases, the partners deliver the teaching and QMU provide the quality assurance and staff development and in some cases key lectures.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

QMU has never had a specific TEL strategy. This reflects the institution's decision that TEL is about learning so the strategy is included in learning teaching and assessment strategy. There is a feeling that the field of TEL is now coming of age as institutions move away from specific TEL strategy.

The University moved to a new campus about six years ago and wanted to make it a modern innovative university so this was one of the key drivers for TEL. At the time of the move there was a particularly supportive Senior Management Team who were very interested in technology and its potential, as well as a very dynamic IT department who were prepared to move learning technologies forward.

Student enhancement, especially in relation to the National Student Survey, is also very important and the move to the new campus enabled QMU to review and improve existing processes, such as the handling of student submissions, through the use of technology. A number of QMU courses are vocational, such as Health, Business and Drama, and so an important driver was to ensure that students were comfortable with technology when they graduate. There was also a realisation that QMU's non-typical students have a lot of other commitments and responsibilities so technology enables QMU to reach out to these students.

The new campus was not as easy to access as the previous campus, adding to the need to use technology to help reach out to students. There are 700 student dorms, but the majority of students commute to QMU, typically from the Borders, Fife and the North of Scotland. In Scotland commuting is not always as easy as in other places and so it was important to make sure that students are as prepared for the face to face sessions as possible. There have also been access issues such as the campus being closed for three weeks due to snow, which have increased the reliance on technology for ensuring teaching and learning is not disrupted.

An example of how departmental culture can affect uptake of TEL was the Drama department which originally had an off campus drama theatre. There was a reluctance to engage with TEL as much as other departments due to issues relating to subject, culture and location – it's much more difficult to engage people when they are off campus. Since then they have had moved to the same campus, had a change of management and change of focus, and they are now coming onto the new VLE and attending workshops.

TEL provision

The VLE (Blackboard) is the main centrally supported tool and 2012 is the first year where they have automatically created an area on the VLE for every module. Previously, staff would request modules mainly because they did not want students to find a blank area, but with the move to the new version of Blackboard there is now an expectation that there will be a module area on Blackboard for every module. There is not a specific set of minimum requirements but the Deans have said this is what they expect. There is a positive feeling about the new VLE as it is believed to be an improvement over the WebCT system.

Other technologies supported centrally include:

- PebblePad – integrated with the VLE, this is used extensively in Health Services, but is now being picked up more in Business and Drama use it too.
- Google sites – integrated with LDAP, this is used as a wiki tool, both for individual and group work. This is a very popular and has received a lot of positive feedback.
- Turnitin/Grademark – direct integration with the VLE.
- Clickers – electronic voting handsets are provided centrally.
- Adobe Connect – used for online seminars and workshops.

There is also central support for audio feedback with a website on how to provide feedback and useful videos. A variety of technologies are used for this, some staff use their mobile phones and upload to Blackboard, others used Articulate. They also help staff to create PowerPoints with audio.

There are no known departmental run tools.

TEL governance and structures

There is one team supporting e-learning based in the Centre for Academic Practice which comprises a head and three other members of staff (two full time and one part time) providing learning technology support. Two of the staff provide operational support, predominantly looking after the VLE, clickers, assisting with narration on PowerPoint and running workshops. The other is less operational and does a lot of work with the e-portfolio and undertakes research.

In terms of governance, in addition to departmental teaching committees there is a specially convened VLE Steering Group to oversee the move to Blackboard. The strategic steer for e learning comes from the section head and the Director of the Centre for Academic Practice.

The e-learning support structure has not changed over the past two years. The only change has been the reporting line for the Director of the Centre for Academic Practice, which was changed from reporting to the Dean to reporting to the Deputy Principal.

Quality assurance

There are quality assurance policies but each module on the VLE is based on a template. Tutors are encouraged to change the template to adapt for programmes or subject areas. The main concern is ensuring that there is something for the students within the VLE course, such as links to Turnitin, guidance on plagiarism, links to Library resources, assignments.

Review of the use of Blackboard is part of every programme review and various surveys. These include annual surveys and surveys at the end of each module. Module feedback goes to teaching committees and is fed back to the section. The main feedback from students has been a request for mobile access to the VLE. In addition there will be a lot of evaluation following the move to Blackboard.

Support for devices

QMU are seeing more and more mobile devices on campus. They are investigating the Blackboard Mobile Learn institutional licence and also the option whereby students can opt to buy the Mobile Learn app themselves. There are likely to be issues with ensuring things work on so many different devices. The key is to be flexible with support and help to a certain extent.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

There is not a lot of pure distance learning, (i.e. where students never come to a campus), but there are a lot of highly blended courses where students might come in once a year or three times a semester, or where students are on placements. Support for these students is very important and the VLE is seen as a key tool for doing this. There is a lot of experience at QMU in dealing with students who are not on campus.

Distance learning is expected to become more important in CPD and Masters programmes and highly blended learning will become much more prevalent. This is already happening and the technology is increasingly expected to reach out to students and this need makes it easier to get institutional funding for tools to support this, such as Adobe Connect.

QMU work with collaborative partners in countries such as India, Singapore and Saudi to provide programmes. The students and staff are matriculated with QMU and make use of the QMU Blackboard system. These countries typically have a traditional approach to learning and teaching; by contrast QMU have a more constructivist/collaborative approach which is very difficult to translate outside of the British context. The VLE is seen as one way to get academics and students away from a *spoon feeding* approach. Staff from QMU provide templates and staff development to the partners.

There is no specific provision of OER but there are some recorded lectures available on iTunes U. Whilst they do develop educational resources these are not made available publicly as they tend to be in the area of Health and Business where they are interviewing patients and clients. In addition, income generation and commercialisation is a key part of QMU's remit so there would be questions raised by the institution about why resources would be made available for free.

Future challenges

The main challenge is still a lack of understanding about the role of a learning technologist and acknowledgement of its complexity. It is such a varied role; one moment you're presenting to students, then liaising with IT about authentication, the next moment you're writing a research paper and later working with Masters students doing a dissertation. There is little recognition of the role in such a fast-changing environment and the continued promotion of the importance of learning technologist in academic sector is a priority. The continued location of Learning Technologists in an academic unit (rather than in IT) is important as academics are more likely to engage with Learning Technologists if they are not seen as technical. Secondly, is to continue to promote the location of Learning Technologists in an academic unit and to resist a move to an IT department. It is important to academics that Learning Technologists are not to be seen as technical.

Money is always going to be a challenge, as is getting senior management to understand that learning technologies are not a cheap option and require investment. They also need to understand student expectations of technology (e.g. why mobile access to a VLE is important). Keeping up with so many changes with the technology (e.g. new versions of existing tools being released), is also an issue. The systems are now very complex in terms of functionality and number/range of systems, so it's important to keep up to date in order to assist academics. If an academic wants to maintain a reflective journal, then would Blackboard be the best tool, or perhaps the e-portfolio, or Google sites? It takes time to learn all the systems and really understand how they can be used and which tool best meets the academic's requirements. There are challenges with integrating technologies such as the VLE and e-portfolio, especially when they are externally hosted.

The work of the team has been supported through the use of external services which have been free of charge. The future of those services is currently under review and it is of some concern that these may no longer be free or may, indeed, cease altogether. The evolution of different funding regimes across the UK will lead to continued uncertainty until the impact of these changes is fully understood. <- Not quite sure if the final sentence was what she meant or whether her comments were purely related to the possibility of differential funding of the JISC and so differential charging between Scotland and the rest of the UK.

5.   St Mary's University College, Twickenham

Interview with:

Martin Scarrott, Director of Information Services

Overview

St Mary's University College is a member of GuildHE and part of the Cathedrals mission group. It is a teaching led university college based on one campus in Twickenham, England. The institution was founded as a Catholic teaching training college and so the core of the provision is initial teacher education. More recently, the University College has diversified and offers a broad range of subjects from Sports and Health Sciences to Management and Social Studies and the Humanities.

In terms of the student population there are around 4,000 FTEs, mainly undergraduate, but a growing number of postgraduates, including PhD students. The majority of undergraduate students tend to be 18–22 year olds recruited primarily from South East England.

Research is a major priority in the University College's new corporate plan and this is a key area of growth. A number of Research Professors have recently been appointed with the aim to develop and promote a culture of research within the University College. Research degrees are currently awarded through the University of Surrey so another strategic aim is to obtain research degree awarding powers.

The number of international students has also expanded considerably in recent years.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

The University College's TEL strategy is embedded into the Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) strategy; there has never been a separate TEL strategy. The TLA strategy is based around the student experience and is underpinned by the Learning Resources and Technology strategy, the Assessment Policy and the Research-Enriched Teaching and Learning Policy.

The new Assessment policy states that students should be able to submit all standard coursework online through Turnitin, and expect an element of online feedback and receive marks online in order to improve the timeliness of feedback.

Student experience is the main driver for TEL, in particular, to address things identified as a concern in the National Student Survey, such as the timeliness of feedback and access to staff. St Mary's want to give students the best experience and the ability to use the latest technology, where possible.

Departmental culture has affected uptake in some cases, for example one School refused to use Blackboard because it was not felt to be appropriate for them, however, during the VLE review they became more engaged and are now using Moodle. The choice of Moodle was seen as a joint decision and the academics were very much involved in it.

TEL provision

The centrally supported environment consists of Moodle, Mahara, Turnitin with GradeMark and Library e-resources and is branded *simmsCAPital* where *simms* is the students' informal name for St Mary's and the CAP stands for Career, Academic and Personal. Both Moodle and Mahara are hosted externally by ULCC.

There are student and staff portals based on SharePoint 2010, branded as simmspace and StaffNet, which provide access to simmsCAPital and to SkyDrive on Windows Live.

There are no central facilities for storing multimedia files, but this is being investigated as more and more people want to provide video files to students. In addition, there is no central lecture recording system as there is general opposition to being recorded.

Academic schools are encouraged to use the central systems. Some staff have used their own websites and third-party hosted tools like eBoard, but there is no provision for departmental servers. The School of Education run their own system for remote teaching observations.

TEL governance and structures

The Department of Information Services consists of the following teams:

- Customer Services – providing an integrated information desk for students.
- Content Management – responsible for acquisition of library materials, procurement of hardware and software and administration of the library system, the staff and student portals and the Open Research Archive.
- Learning Technology Support – providing frontline ICT support for students and staff and supporting classroom technologies and multimedia software/equipment.
- Teaching and Learning Support – responsible for liaison with academic schools, support and development of simmsCAPital, library collection development and digital literacy support.

TEL is primarily supported by one e-learning Adviser (permanent post) and one e-learning Assistant (fixed term post until 2014), plus five Academic Liaison Librarians who provide training on Moodle, Turnitin and Grademark. Other staff provide additional administrative support for Moodle. Interns were used during the Moodle migration and one of these was then converted into the e-learning Assistant post.

The IT department are responsible for carrying out systems integration (e.g. with student records system) and authentication for the externally hosted TEL tools.

In terms of governance, there is an e-learning sub-committee, chaired by the Director of Information Services, with a representative from each academic School and others with an interest or expertise in elearning. This sub-committee reports to the Teaching and Learning Committee, who in turn report to the Academic Board. There is a budget for e-learning support. They have JISC funding for a Feed Forward project.

Quality assurance

At the moment the University College is working with academics to develop standards and guidelines regarding student expectations of technology (e.g. students should be able to access their programme handbook online and have access to discussion areas within the VLE). The culture within the University College means that departments tend to oppose standardisation from the Centre.

Reviewing student use of TEL is built into the monitoring of programmes and modules, where the module feedback includes basic questions about simmsCAPital. A summary of the module feedback is given to the appropriate teams in Information Services.

Various student surveys have been conducted in the past, for example, the Marketing department carried out a big student survey which contained questions on TEL. Focus groups with students on use of technology are also being considered, in particular, as part of a consultation with students on an extension to the Learning Resources Centre.

The Director of Information Services sits on the Student Services Committee, which meets four times a year, and reports to the Student Experience Committee. Students bring non-academic issues to this committee, such as issues with simmsCAPital.

In terms of reviewing staff use, they are just about to do survey of academic staff with questions about elearning support, in particular, opinions about the service provided by the Director of IS's team.

Support for devices

IT systems have implemented an improved wireless network which has been a big step forward for the use of mobile devices. They have also redesigned part of the Learning Resources Centre to enable students to be able to plug in laptops. Existing online services are not particularly mobile friendly, however, the institution has been investigating products which will enable mobile access to key online resources.

Front line staff are trained in basic support for mobile devices to assist with connecting devices to the network and try to deal with as many devices as they can. If they cannot solve the issue then it gets referred Learning Technology support team and, if need be, to the Networks team. There is interest in the *Bring your own cloud* debate and how cloud based services used by students would integrate with College systems.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

In terms of the official HEFCE definition of distance learning there is very little purely distance learning at St Mary's however there is a lot of *off campus provision*, where a programme is taught at a centre somewhere else in the country. For example, the MA in Catholic School Leadership has various centres around the country and the St Mary's

staff go in person to teach at those centres. In addition, there are similar programmes in Germany and Kuala Lumpur with this sort of *off campus provision*. Nowadays, more of the teaching and learning is done online so there are fewer visits in person and the students never attend St Mary's. There is also one programme, an MA in Strength and Conditioning, where students come in for a few days intensively at the beginning and then use the VLE for the rest of the programme. The Director of this programme is very keen on online learning and this course contains a lot of video content.

Whilst distance learning is not mentioned in corporate strategy, St Mary's is undergoing a curriculum review at the moment and various people within the University College see distance learning as key way forward and want to grow its use. The Learning Resources strategy promotes a vision that more and more people will want to do things online.

In terms of OER, the Learning Resources strategy promotes this as an area to raise awareness of and develop. Establishing and encouraging OER will be a challenge for the institution.

Future challenges

Short term, challenges include wanting to provide multimedia content and to cater to use of mobile devices.

Longer term, the challenge is uncertainty in terms of not knowing what may happen with technology and student expectations in the next few years. In five years' time, will students have a completely different approach, only use tablets and expect everything to be available on those? Will they have their own cloud based services that they want to bring with them? The challenge is trying to keep up to date with changes, trying to anticipate new things and trying to keep the student at the centre at all times.

Managing relationships with external providers and other staff within the institution is also an ongoing challenge which requires the development of a particular culture and skill sets.

6.   University College London

Interview with:

Fiona Strawbridge, Head of E-Learning Environments

Clive Young, E-Learning Advisory Team Leader

Steve Rowett, E-Learning Developments Team Leader

Overview

University College London (UCL) – London's global university – is a leading research and teaching university in the heart of London. Its provision extends across all academic disciplines with more than 70 departments in ten faculties; from Biomedical Science to centres for Fine Arts (UCL Slade School) and architecture (UCL Bartlett). UCL is based in Bloomsbury in central London but has departments in other parts of London (Archway, Hampstead); it also has campuses in Australia and Qatar.

UCL was founded in 1826 to open up education to students from any race, class or religion. UCL was a pioneer in accepting female students on equal terms with men. The University has over 8,000 undergraduates and 18,000 postgraduates, representing multiple nationalities, with overseas students making up nearly a third of the student body.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

UCL's E-Learning Environments (ELE) team recently developed the **Strategy for e-learning at UCL 2012–2015**, which is separate from, but complements, UCL's Learning and Teaching strategy. It was driven and influenced by the provost's **Council White paper**, and aims to be *an inspirational and visionary document for a world leading institution*, with input from various service teams, academics and students. It has also been informed by a review of current and emerging themes in e-learning, and by provision and developments in other top global institutions.

The first UCL e-learning strategy in 2006 took the form of a *strategic statement* and was an appendix to UCL's Learning and Teaching strategy. At that time it had been envisaged that in future the e-learning strategy would be embedded within the learning and teaching strategy, but in 2010 it was decided that a separate strategy should remain; the ELE team feel that this is helpful in raising the profile of TEL. Thus, the new strategy is a standalone document, drafted by the ELE team but owned by a new Learning and Teaching Information Services Governance group (LTISG). This group is chaired by the Vice-Provost (Education) and has representatives from service departments (i.e. Library, Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching [CALT], Registry, Estates etc.) and academics. The group is responsible for allocating funding for learning and teaching related IT projects, which makes the e-learning strategy more embedded within UCL's structures, a reference point for various initiatives and provides better visibility within the institution. TEL issues are addressed in detail in the elearning strategy and implementation plan.

Some of the drivers for TEL use at UCL relate to fees, student expectations, NSS results, IT provision in comparison to other Russell Group institutions, the results of the most recent students *IT facilities and services survey* which probed students' perceptions and experiences of IT and e-learning and revealed demand for flexible learning spaces and improved IT provision.

As departmental/institutional culture affect uptake hugely, ELE will be engaging with faculties and departments in the development of their own strategic plans for e-learning, in relation to the three year strategy for e-learning and to their own learning and teaching strategies. ELE are working with staff from CALT on a negotiating/supporting approach with departments, in order to assist them in decisions related to e-learning provision. The aim of this approach is two-fold:

    i)   to identify how the strategy for e-learning is interpreted in departmental contexts;

    ii) to provide opportunities for department to set their own e-learning targets based on their own needs and goals.

ELE and CALT staff are coordinators and facilitators in this process, working closely with departments, establishing communication channels and relationships for placing the support required in place. The intention is to identify two champions (ideally one academic and one member of teaching support staff) in each department who will interface between ELE and the department/faculty. It is ELE's mission to promote quality within departments and as part of this there is an initiative in place to engage administrative staff in CMALT accreditation.

The Information Services Division (ISD) was recently engaged in a major review/restructure process, which has seen the ELE team doubling in size and expanding its remit. Formerly known as the Learning Technologies Support Service (LTSS), the newly formed ELE team has new opportunities to provide support with *faculty facing staff* that can take the elearning agenda forward in formal and structured ways. The new structure and the remit is discussed later in more detail.

TEL provision

Moodle has been UCL's official VLE since 2007 when the University conducted a VLE evaluation and moved away from WebCT. Moodle is supported centrally by the ELE team and others in ISD. UCL has more than 4,000 active courses online (only a tiny number of which are completely distance learning courses). UCL recently upgraded to Moodle 2 (currently v2.2).

During the upgrade the team introduced a new look and feel. Apart from Moodle, other centrally supported services include:

    i)   Turnitin – plagiarism detection software;

    ii)   TurningPoint – Electronic Voting System;

    iii) Echo360 – the lecture recording system (branded Lecturecast);

    iv) Opinio – for survey provision;

    v)   Mahara – the e-portfolio platform (branded MyPortfolio).

All centrally supported services fall under ITIL service management procedures. In addition to the above centrally supported services, ELE supports other tools such as Blackboard Collaborate and textwall (for anonymous texts) as part of their remit to investigate, explore and pilot new technologies and tools. The team is involved in the support of *UCL Go!* (based on CampusM from oMbiel), the mobile interface for various applications and integration of Moodle with UCL Go! is a current project.
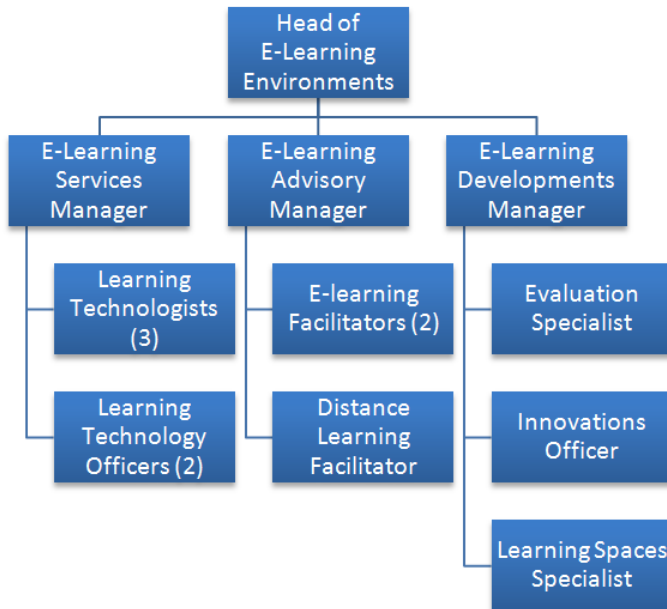
The use of the above TEL tools is mainly focused on blended delivery as an enhancement to the face to face campus experience. There are very few distance online courses supported by ELE. The team provides both pedagogic and technical advice to staff and supports the use of TEL through front line support (email and phone) to staff and students, training and development to staff through scheduled and bespoke departmental courses, and one to one and small group advice and consultancy.

TEL governance and structures

Following the recent restructure, the newly established E-Learning Environments team has grown in size from eight to 15, and now has more internal structure with three sub-teams. Seven new posts have been created to meet the needs of the expanding remit which includes faculty facing support staff, support for innovations, and a new role in physical learning spaces, in addition to the original *core services*. The new structure has three teams:

    i)   E-learning services team – frontline support and training for core services;

    ii)   E-learning advisory team – faculty facing and distance learning support;

    iii) E-learning developments team – includes conducting and evaluating technical and pedagogical innovations and learning spaces.

The Head of E-Learning Environments oversees the activities of all three groups.

A diagram of the new structure is shown above.

The restructure process has been a positive experience for ELE staff as they have seen investment in the team and have had significant opportunities to influence the final design of the new group structure. The new structure reflects the determination of senior management within ISD to invest in services related to learning, teaching and research in alignment with the University's strategic aims for excellence and innovation.

The E-Learning Environments team is a *customer facing* team within ISD, however, there are other teams that work closely with ELE staff to deliver e-learning services. A separate team, the Learning and Teaching Applications team – is responsible for second line technical support and development work on Moodle and other e-learning services. ELE also works closely with Web Services, Database Services, the Teaching and Learning Spaces team and CALT.

Collaboration with the above teams is well established and ELE staff have clear and formal ITIL structures in place, and a *customer provider* relationship. During regular minuted meetings, projects for development are identified and taken forward. It has been emphasised that personal contacts and relationships are also important in taking forward the e-learning agenda across the University.

It is recognised that outside the centrally support services and structures at UCL, there are some *pockets of local practice*. For example, a couple of departments manage and maintain their own bespoke VLEs because they offer functionality not available in Moodle; however, this is very much the exception and overall UCL's e-learning landscape is pretty consistent with use of institutional services (mainly Moodle, Turnitin and Echo360) in most departments.

Quality assurance

The following policies and procedures are in place to support TEL provision in UCL.

- Minimum requirements for Moodle courses at UCL (requirement for all taught modules to have a Moodle presence to a minimum specification)
- Guidelines for e-learning communication tools
- Using Moodle for online exams
- Moodle course backups
- Moodle course archives
- Moodle course enrolments and
- Moodle resetting process

So far, the minimum requirements policy has seen a mixed success – whilst UCL can claim a Moodle site for each course, many are just a minimal presence. Part of the e-learning strategy is to work with faculties and departments to move away from such a *compliance culture* to more enhanced use of TEL. ELE anticipates that working with departments in developing their own elearning statements and plans, may help them to better interpret how they want to use Moodle and other TEL in support of teaching and learning. Also, the Advisory team will focus on improving pedagogical approaches to the use of technology and learning.

Even though the Institutional Learning and Teaching strategy has an objective of establishing an elearning quality framework, that has not been developed yet. There are, however, specific and formalised structures for quality assurance locally; for example, the Medical School have specific policies in place.

The team trialled an evaluation of all Moodle courses last year using a locally developed metric based on an approach used successfully at the University of Bedfordshire. The metric uses indicators to measure the availability and actual use by students of different elements in a Moodle course. For example, student opportunities for interaction, access to resources, knowledge creation etc. are counted and weighted to provide a crude indication of the amount of engagement and active learning provided by each course. Results from the evaluation will be used for *baseline* evaluation, rather than in depth qualitative evaluation. It is anticipated that this will be developed further and introduced to departments as a tool to measure Moodle provision and identify areas of good practice as well as highlight areas for improvement.

With regards to the student experience, the team receives student feedback indirectly through the institutional *annual monitoring reports* from each faculty which draw on course evaluation questionnaires from modules (which includes a couple of questions on e-learning), and from departmental staff:student consultative committees. Additionally, ISD ran a student survey in 2010–11 which covered all IT services including e-learning services and learning spaces provision. This highlighted some areas for improvement (particularly related to physical learning and IT facilities) which have informed the e-learning strategy.

Support for devices

Although, the majority of UCL students own a variety of mobile devices (i.e. smartphones, laptops, iPads etc.), it is felt that laptops in particular are not used as much on campus as one might expect. UCL does not have a *technology demanded* culture and observations suggest that during classes and lectures the technology usage is relatively low.

In relation to Moodle, the ELE team is investing in the development of a mobile app for Moodle where traffic will be monitored and evaluated (i.e. frequency of usage). There is a great awareness within the team that this is an area for exploration and investment. Meeting student expectations is very important for the team and they have a proactive approach to technologies they support. For example, investigating the mobile interface for Moodle, Echo360, etc.

There is a new wifi project to extend coverage to halls of residence (this was identified by the last ISD student survey as a major priority). The ELE team commented that quotes from and video clips of students talking about their expectations and dissatisfaction played a significant role in securing management support and funding and in moving things forward faster.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Distance learning has been established at UCL for more than 10 years but remains a minority activity. There are various courses running with mixed success. Currently, there about 20 distance course but there is a general recognition at UCL and growing top down priority for developing more distance learning courses, particularly in niche, postgraduate areas.

For the last couple of years ELE has been involved in the support of distance learning at UCL, bringing together UCL practitioners interested in distance learning in an informal *distance learning network*. The group dealt with issues related to distance education (i.e. policies for distance learning, support available, technologies to be used etc). ELE is also currently engaged in the *Public E-learning Portal* project looking at technical support of distance learning with a particular focus on external facing CPD. Demand across UCL departments varies; however, there is a lot of interest from the School of Life and Medical Sciences in particular. As demand increases ELE is now better placed to support distance learning initiatives through the new dedicated *distance learning facilitator* role. Distance education at UCL generates additional income, which is important considering the current economical situation and the tuition fees increase.

With regards to open educational resources, UCL was one of the first users of iTunes U – UCL's iTunes U platform was launched in 2008 to include interviews, lectures, seminars, video materials etc. UCL's iTunes U presence includes lunch hour lectures, and other public lectures broadcasted; it is also used significantly for marketing purposes.

On a smaller scale ELE has been involved in **two OER projects** for CALT and the Dutch departments. In addition to OERs, ELE has been approached about the possibility of piloting a small scale MOOC[7]-style project by a couple of departments.

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7   MOOC – **Massive Open Online Course** – *an online course open to all with large numbers of participants.*

Future challenges

The short term challenge for ELE is the completion and establishment of the new team. The new team structure is providing lots of new opportunities for future developments (i.e. innovation, learning spaces etc.) and more focused work on areas where the team was already involved in (i.e. distance learning). The team is currently in a recruitment process (recruiting for seven new posts); it will take time before the team is complete and sufficiently well established to be able to perform fully. Additionally, many of the posts are new, which adds to the short term challenges, as in most cases it takes some time before the new roles are specified and clearly defined.

Another challenge for ELE, is the new strategy for e-learning, which has an expanded and challenging remit, and the involvement of a significant number of stakeholders across UCL. ELE's mission to work closely with departments and faculties creates logistical challenges considering the number of faculty facing ELE staff in relation to the number of the departments at UCL (more that 60).

The expansion of the ELE team is a very positive development in addressing the above challenges. Furthermore, the governance group, that overlooks the Strategy for e-learning is expected to play a critical and positive role in the implementation of the strategy. Work with other departments is also critical; developing good working relationships with other departments with overlapping interests will be essential to successful delivery against the strategy and implementation plan.

7.   University of Greenwich

Interview with:

Clifton Kandler, Web Services Manager

Overview

Greenwich is a large Post-92 university with 28,700 students in the UK and 11,500 in overseas franchise campuses. There are 1,650 staff, 680 of whom are academics. 30% of the student body are studying part time; 21% are postgraduates. Although Greenwich has been a teaching oriented institution the recent arrival of a new Vice Chancellor has led to an increased strategic focus on research and a number of new professors have been appointed to drive this forward.

The University has eight schools – Architecture, Design and Construction; Business School; Computing and Mathematical Sciences; Education; Engineering; Greenwich Maritime Institute; Health and Social Care; Humanities and Social Sciences; Pharmacy; Natural Resources Institute; and Science.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

There was a distinct **E-learning Strategy** which was last updated in 2006 and was supported by an E-learning Implementation Group. A new teaching and learning strategy is currently being developed and there is an ongoing debate as to whether TEL should be embedded within this or remain a separate strategy. One view is that if it is not in a separate strategy that it may be overlooked.

One driver has been the recognition that technology has an important role to play in teaching and learning in a modern university – it cannot be ignored. The VLE has important roles in teaching, learning, in communication and supporting connections between staff and students, and also in course management; a point of debate is whether providing access to timetables and tutorial groups (i.e. course support rather than learning materials) constitutes e-learning. There is an awareness that increased fees will lead to greater expectations from students for quality and consistency in the use of learning technology. Greenwich already knows from internal and external research that consistent use is wanted by students.

TEL provision

The Web Services team support the institutional portal Luminus which provides the only route into the VLE and library. With support from ULCC, Greenwich have developed an interface between Moodle and the timetable system (Syllabus Plus from Scientia) which allows students to chose tutorial groups from a block within Moodle. There is also a course evaluation questionnaire Moodle plugin from Synergy which provides for a standard core questionnaire with flexibility for additional questions to be included. It is an anonymous system and is separate from the core Moodle questionnaire. The collected data are reported back centrally.

Other centrally supported tools include Turnitin which is used very widely for more than 60% of all submissions. Increasingly, as well using Turnitin for textual comparison for plagiarism detection purposes, Schools are exploring online feedback and the other tools available. This is an area where the Web Services team are encouraging further policy development.

PebblePad is used in some departments. Echo360 was also trialled at one point but has been discontinued because of concerns about the cost. Lecture capture is being revisited in a project led by EDU.

There are some locally supported technologies such as electronic voting within some schools. There is also a centrally administered development fund which can be bid to by schools to fund TEL projects.

TEL governance and structures

Central support for TEL is provided by the Web Services team within the Information and Library Services department. The team look after the institutional portal and the library system as well as the elearning services such as the VLE, Turnitin and PebblePad. They provide operational and service desk support for these systems as well as training, including some training using Adobe Connect. The staff roles within Web Services are web service officers and web services assistants (see Figure 1 for TEL support structure), there are no dedicated learning technologists. However, the team are becoming increasingly interested and confident in pedagogy.

In parallel, there is a recently established Educational Development Unit which is categorised as an *academic unit*; the EDU reports to the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Development). They run the PG Certificate in Learning and Teaching and are responsible for much of the TEL related outreach, academic support, and dissemination of good practice.

The Web Services team have asked the Schools what training and support they want, and delivered against those requests. Increasingly, the Web Services team and the EDU are working together to provide courses and academic support – for instance in an *advanced quizzes* course the EDU covered the pedagogical aspects while the WS covered the more technical and how to aspects. Additionally, there are a number of school based learning technologists who are part of neither EDU nor WS – these posts report directly to the deans.
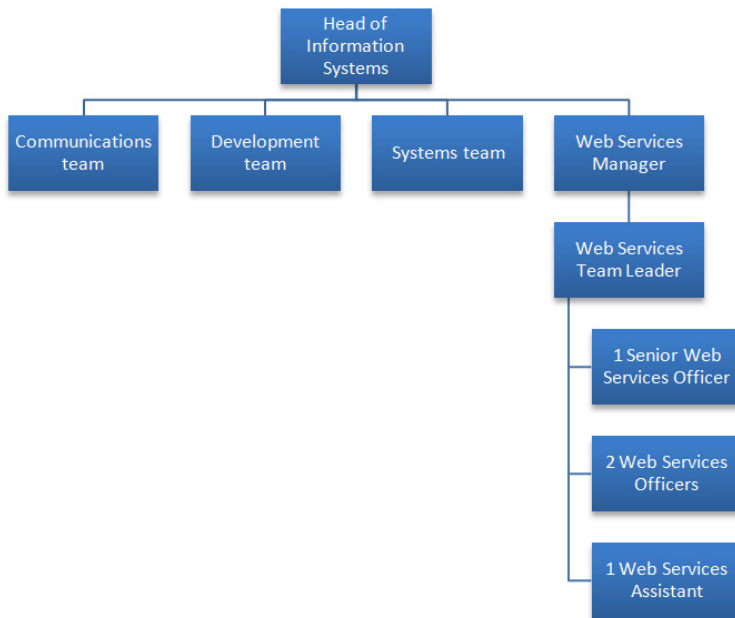

Figure showing University of Greenwich TEL support structure

Quality assurance

There is a central Learning Quality Committee (LQC) and each School has a Director of Learning and Quality who sits on that committee. Additionally, there is a VLE Group for users which evolved from a VLE review in 2010; it is chaired by the Web Services Manger.

A challenge, in common with other institutions, is engaging staff and demonstrating how technology can best be used to enhance learning and teaching. Attitudes range from the enthusiasts and early adopters to those who are resistant. Staff want clear cut examples and relevant case studies. Each School was asked by the LQC to develop their own implementation plan for the migration to Moodle, led by the Directors of Learning and Quality. In this way the Schools set their own timescales and the job of the Web Services team was to support them.

Different Schools took different approaches, with some adopting their own *minimum standards* for TEL to supplement the formal targets for the use of the VLE set by the Learning Quality Committee. This approach was implemented as part of the migration to Moodle – before that, practice varied between Schools. Some Schools take a top down approach to VLE usage and others are more enthusiast led.

E-learning is considered indirectly as part of the course evaluation process but there is no explicit question about TEL. Feedback, following the introduction of Moodle, is that because it is easier to use than its predecessor (WebCT), this is facilitating increased usage; this is supported by the figures collected centrally on the use of Moodle.

Currently, there is no policy for e-assessment but a group is being convened to look at this. Greenwich is interested in developments at the University of Exeter in a paperless submission and feedback system.

Support for devices

This area is felt to be a major challenge. Students are arriving with a wide variety of equipment and expect the University's systems to work seamlessly on it. There is also the choice between delivering services to smartphones via apps or using mobile themes. At present the Web Services team are developing a strategy for mobile to include the approach to be adopted for BYOD but in such a rapidly developing area the way forward is not always clear. Schools are a source of pressure in this area, expecting support which is difficult to provide. One point of debate is whether the priority should be providing access to systems and services and what will be the role of mobile learning.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Greenwich runs an online MBA and an online diploma in marketing. The Sciences School also provides online course to professional bodies, and there is online continuing professional development in biomedicine. Most distance courses are at postgraduate level but there is also an undergraduate course in the business school.

Currently, there is no intention to provide open online resources and courses; the EDU development team are, however, involved in a MOOC related project with the OU.

Future challenges

Another challenge is how best to measure and monitor what is going on in the VLE and other tools. What does active use/engagement look like on both the part of staff and students? We have found that the mere act of providing some indication of activity (however crude) and the fact that Schools know that this will reported to and discussed with senior management has helped them highlight the importance of TEL.

As previously mentioned, the major challenges are engaging staff and raising awareness (not just amongst academics but also amongst senior management within the schools) helping them to recognise the importance of technology and the role it can have in enhancing learning. For teaching staff, a challenge is to raise awareness of the range and potential of the learning technologies available.

Good news stories would help to address this with clear evidence of the effect of TEL on performance, and retention.

8. University of Sheffield

Interview with:

Patrice Panella, Head of Learning and Teaching Support

Sarah Horrigan, Learning Technologies Manager

Overview

Sheffield is a large Russell Group university with 25,000 students and 5,500 staff. It won the Times Higher Education University of the Year award in 2011 and is ranked highly for the quality of the student experience. Its mission is a university *rooted in civic engagement*. The University has 40 departments in five faculties – Arts and Humanities; Engineering; Medicine, Dentistry and Health; Science; Social Sciences. There is also a sixth faculty in Thessaloniki in Greece.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

Until recently, TEL had been covered within the **institutional Learning and Teaching Strategy** but the institution is now developing a separate elearning strategy. The **Corporate Information and Computing Services (CiCS) department also has its own Learning and Teaching Strategy** but this was written before the Learning Technologies team moved into CiCS and so does not focus on TEL.

The move to have a separate TEL strategy has been led by the PVC for Learning and Teaching who was keen to highlight it as a separate issue; the Learning and Teaching Strategy is very high level whereas the TEL strategy will be more practical and will have a clear operational plan. It is intended that the TEL strategy will be a useful vehicle for raising issues for discussion, and for providing recognition for academics who are engaging with TEL.

There are economic imperatives to realise the benefits of investment in the VLE and other institutional systems but much uptake of TEL at Sheffield was accelerated by the CETL – the Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in Arts and Social Sciences (CILAS). CILAS had a team of technical and support staff who transformed the use of TEL in some areas and although it has now disbanded, has left a legacy of good practice in these disciplines.

The student experience is another important driver and has prompted a move towards a policy for VLE use. However, the Learning Technologies team recognise academic staff will not be told what to do; it is essential to work with them within local departmental cultures.

TEL provision

The Learning Technologies Team (LTT) support Blackboard, Echo360, TurningPoint (voting system), Turnitin, and GoogleApps. Blackboard is used to support quizzes for summative assessment although some departments have their own instances of QuestionMark Perception. Echo360 is used for *personal capture* as well as for recording of live classes, and there is an aspiration to extend audio recording to all lecture theatres; its use is greater in departments with local learning technologists. It is seen as having potential for more effective teaching and student support.

A collaborative environment, Uspace, which has had deep local use rather than broad appeal, is being phased out. PebblePad is emerging in use after having been piloted for doctoral students. An early decision was made not to go with iTunes U, and there is no institutional media channel; however, there is considerable grassroots use of YouTube. It is possible that iTunes U will be introduced but its use is likely to remain as a marketing, rather than educational, platform.

There is a culture of departmental autonomy with some local IT staff and local learning technologists running local services and supporting local tools. Some departments have their own VLE – for instance Moodle in the School of Dentistry, and Minerva in the Medical School. Some manage their own voting handsets. Some departments have employed learning technologists to enhance the use of the VLE (examples were Law and Health). The impact of these additional support staff, who tend to be proactive, is evident in the level of engagement in departments.

Administrative and support staff have been identified as an important group and some dedicated support has been provided to this group.

TEL governance and structures

Until recently, TEL support was based in Learning and Teaching Services (LeTS) within Academic Services; LeTS included a learning development team, QA services, and media development as well as TEL support. In 2011, a restructuring led to the move of LeTS to Student Services (the largest central support department) and a reduction in scope to quality assurance and quality enhancement. Subsequently, the LTT moved to CiCS. There was also a scaling back of the Media Development unit; there the focus has moved from a bureau based authoring service (which included a TV studio) to a more *DIY* service which enables staff to create content themselves. The Creative Media Suite in the Information Commons now provides a centre for this activity, and the new Engineering Information Commons will provide an expansion of this.

Within CiCS, end user facing services supporting educational users of learning technologies are led by the LTT whereas the technical side (application development and integration, database and system administration) is provided by Technology Services. The relationship between LTT and Technology Services has improved since the more due to the two being closer physically as well as organisationally.

The organisational structure for Learning and Teaching Support within CICS is shown in the figure below (note that detail is only shown for the LTT). Whilst the service is centrally based, the five learning technologists have their own specialist areas (e.g. e-assessment, accessibility, Open Educational Resources, curriculum development, and collaboration and reflection).
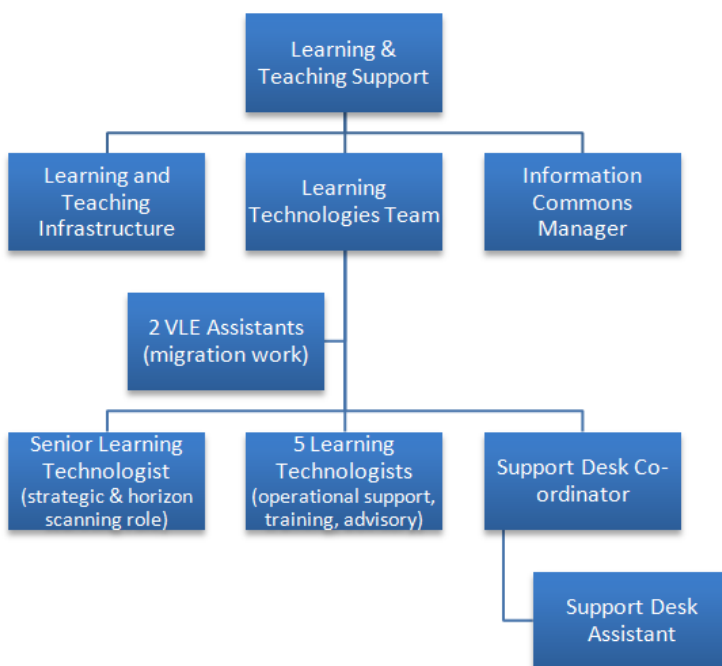

Figure showing University of Sheffield TEL support structure

The LTT also needs to work well with the LeTS educational development staff. This is challenging as the structure of the LeTS team is faculty facing whereas the LTT is centrally based with roles based on specialist areas, so the LeTS need to be able to work with different LTT colleagues, depending on the project or activity, and the LTT need to work with different LeTS colleagues, depending on which faculty they are supporting.

Quality assurance

There is a move towards an institutional policy for the use of the VLE which is proving controversial. This is intended to improve the student experience and is not seen as a means to encourage staff.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

There is a strategic push and growing interest in distance learning for taught postgraduate programmes, especially niche programmes in specialist areas which have steady demand. The economic climate has contributed to this but is not the only driver as Sheffield continues to be a selecting rather than recruiting institution for its campus based programmes. The Medical School is interested in running open global health education for the *greater good*.

Sheffield does not provide any free or open educational resources as an institution although some individuals do this.

There is a growing interest in OERs but a lack of willingness to share resources within the confines of the institution was felt to be an initial hurdle. There is a potential digital repository project in partnership with the Library.

There are now some partnerships with overseas institutions.

Future challenges

The main short and medium term challenges were felt to be the institutional academic culture with a strong focus on research rather than teaching which has consequences for TEL engagement and development.

Another challenge is the large number of departmental (and locally managed) learning technologists whose positions are rather uncertain with short contracts and an unclear career path; these staff often get diverted away from TEL into providing local IT and AV support. They often operate within departmental silos, lacking awareness of what is happening in other departments or centrally. It is hoped that a new Learning Technologists' Forum will help this group to share ideas and lessons learned, and to provide mutual support. The central Learning Technologies Team are now providing dedicated training and support to these expert users, and helping them to achieve CMALT certification. They have set up a TEL blog to which all of the learning technologists across the institution are invited to contribute. Additionally, the institution is moving towards a more centralised approach to IT service provision with IT as a shared service which might help protect these learning technologists from diversion from their main job purpose.

9. University of Strathclyde

Interview with:

Cathy Milligan, Head of Learning Technology Enhancement

Caroline Breslin, Learning Technology Adviser

Overview

The University was established in 1796 as *the place of useful learning* and this remains its mission today: to combine academic excellence with social and economic relevance. As *the place of useful learning* the University is committed to the advancement of society through the pursuit of excellence in research, education and knowledge exchange, and through creative engagement with partner organisations at local, national and international levels.

The University is Scotland's third largest university, and is situated in city of Glasgow. The institution has nearly 16,000 students and over 3,000 staff, from over 100 countries. It offers a wide range of traditional undergraduate and postgraduate courses plus a range of commercial CPD offerings, many incorporating TEL.

Scottish HEIs operate within different governance and funding structures to English HEIs, within the responsibilities of the devolved Scottish Parliament and the Scottish Funding Council. The introduction of the UK Government's White Paper and its impact is, therefore, different than in English HEIs. Nevertheless, some of the key messages in the document, such as the commitment to UK wide provision of public data, such as Key Information Sets (KIS), have already been directly applied within Scotland. Whilst not existing within the same funding and fee paying structures as English HEIs, Scottish HEIs compete at international levels, so the strategic directions within other parts of the UK are still pertinent. Initiatives such as KIS will potentially have a longer term impact in terms of how teaching and assessment is conveyed across institutions and, therefore, on the role of technology in learning and teaching.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

The University has been involved with technology enhanced learning and teaching since the mid-90s and has undertaken a number of internal and external TEL related projects since that time.

The University has technology enhanced learning and teaching embedded in its central strategies, including its Education Strategy and Information Strategy. TEL is driven, primarily, through its Education Strategy where there is explicit reference made to TEL. The institution has never had a separate e-learning strategy but the Education Strategy is actively cascaded down to departments, through the Faculty structures.

The institution's Information Strategy informs technology related projects and the University's Digital Campus initiative brings together other areas of the University such as Estates to work with Information Systems as part of an integrated approach, especially at a senior level.

TEL is seen as a core part of learning and teaching and this is reflected by responsibility for TEL being held by the Student Experience and Enhancement Services Directorate, working in partnership with Associate Deputy Principals (Education).

One of the drivers for moving forward with the promotion of the use of TEL is the holistic provision of support for students in both the on campus and off campus experience. This is to incorporate support for a diverse student population, across the undergraduate and postgraduate areas, in addition to the support for industry through a diverse range of CPD offerings, underpinned by technology enhanced learning.

The Education Strategy is routinely monitored against key performance indicators and all areas of the institution are expected to report on how well the strategic aims are being met. Hence, the strategy is very much embedded in the everyday practice within the institution.

TEL governance and structures

Two years ago, as part of a wholesale restructure, the support for TEL was redesigned. While a centralised VLE was available from 2004, other systems were in use at a local level. The institution implemented a *Unified VLE* in 2010 with Moodle as the core of the technical platform, but also integrating locally created TEL initiatives. To this end, a *Learning Technology Enhancement* (LTE) team with a broader TEL remit has been provided through a centralised/faculty hybrid structure since the implementation of the unified VLE.

Through its central team, located within the Student Experience and Enhancement Services Directorate, the institution keeps abreast of TEL in the sector and educational developments, as well as looking to exploit the benefits of that research by providing support for current practices in using TEL at the University. Departments also undertake their own research and can bid for projects, through internal Education Excellence funding, as well as submit supported bids to external organisations such as the Higher Education Academy or JISC. Oversight for the strategic direction for TEL has been delivered through a Learning Technology Enhancement Board, convened by one of two Associate Deputy Principals for Education.

This blended model of both central support and devolved support has worked well, with individuals working with faculties becoming trusted faces and collaboration on projects being seen as a *two way street*.

In 2012, opportunities to create further synergies between the Education strategy and enhancement and innovative approaches using technologies were realised through the bringing together of the Education Strategy, Quality Enhancement and Assurance Team and the Learning Technology Enhancement team.

Support structures

Support for TEL has been delivered through the LTE team. The team members take leadership roles within their areas and also act as named contacts that Faculty can contact. They provide a range of pedagogical support on the use of TEL. Support activities include development and running of practical workshops, for example, on the recent Moodle upgrade and particular key aspects of the system. Front line technical and access support for TEL is provided through an IT helpdesk, with more complex and/or pedagogic queries directed to the LTE team.

The team are also responsible for conducting a yearly evaluation survey on the VLE and supporting numerous projects currently running at the University.

As part of the implementation of the Unified VLE it was agreed that the four learning technology advisers should support strong connections with the Faculties i.e. there would be one adviser per faculty. Appointments were made internally with the individuals having previously been based in Departments coming together to jointly work on faculty and central learning technology activities and projects. The funding for these posts comes jointly from faculty and central funds where the posts have been filled from the faculties.

The advisers were recruited from within the faculties to build relationships across the Departments and the existing central VLE project team. Where it was not possible to recruit individuals from the faculties, members of the central team have fulfilled this role, often working in departments where they have had previous experience or established existing relationships.

In addition to the Faculty facing support structure, the technical support for the development of VLE and related technologies is provided by Senior Applications Analyst/Developers, who are formally part of the Information Services Directorate but are physically co-located alongside the Learning Technology Advisers. This ensures synergies between technical development and Faculty need, as well as offering opportunities for greater collaboration across other related IT initiatives within the institution.

The institution uses the NorMAN Out of Hours Helpline for IT provision. All other support is in house.

Staff Development

There are different levels of support for staff available from different areas of the institution. The IT Training Team, based in the Information Services Directorate, provides training on how to use the tools and functionality provided within the VLE. Sessions are developed in collaboration with the LTE team and are adapted as new features are implemented within Moodle.

The LTE team has developed **Teaching and Learning Online (TALON)**, a two part accredited course which is part of the Postgraduate Certificate in Advanced Academic Studies but can also act as a standalone course. This course looks at pedagogical use of online tools and how to engage with students in the online environment. The course is delivered entirely online, so lecturers experience first hand what it is like to be a student interacting with peers and tutors in the online environment.

In addition, the team provides a series of scheduled and *ad hoc* events such as open *Show and Tell* events to disseminate good practice in TEL, informed by the University Education Strategy objectives to spread innovation and share good practice across the institution. Feedback from the yearly VLE evaluation survey has led to the development of *Sharing Technology Enhanced Practice* (STEP) events run on monthly basis. These events are typically one hour in length, held at lunchtime and are based on a particular TEL theme. They incorporate a presentation on a particular learning technology and how to use it. They also provide case studies from academics which give the technology and theme being explored more credibility with attendees and provide an opportunity for discussion and sharing of information. Topics covered to date include: assessment and feedback using online assignments, the gradebook and quizzes, and the use of peer review.

The team is also developing *Exemplar* classes open to view by both staff and students, using real examples from classes being delivered in the VLE, to help staff explore the use of particular tools that may be appropriate.

Quality assurance

Quality assurance is fully embedded through the Education Strategy and Policy. The development of courses that have a blended design go through the usual formal course validation process. Online or blended developments are designed and implemented locally with support from the central team on a request basis.

The Learning Technology Enhancement team is now in the process of joining together with the institution's Education Strategy and Quality Assurance team, putting TEL very much at the centre of the Education Strategy. This joined approach will offer opportunities to inform and develop new policy on TEL where required.

Senior teams within the Faculties have responsibility for policy and strategic implementation of the Education Strategy and Quality Assurance and provide leadership for these initiatives through this structure.

Currently, the institution does not have any policies regarding a minimal level of online provision, or minimum standards as far as provision of learning and teaching within the VLE is concerned. Minimum standards with regards to technology available in learning and teaching spaces is embedded for centrally supported teaching rooms.

Support for devices

The collaborative strategic *Digital Campus* initiative, informs the many different aspects of digital provision within the international, technological institution. This includes enhanced provision for wireless and mobile support through **mPegasus, a student web portal for mobile devices**. Moodle v2.0 support for mobiles has also now been released. In addition, the institution is looking at VLE mobile provision across all devices and are, therefore, taking a much more embedded approach to this development.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

The University currently has a working group looking at the potential of mass open online courses (MOOCS) for Strathclyde.

Future challenges

The main challenge for the institution moving forward with TEL is trying to ensure a more consistent and sustainable use of technology in learning and finding appropriate methods to share practice, across all aspects of the student experience. Staff need to be confident of the value that investment of time in new and innovative approaches presents, balanced against other priorities and responsibilities within the academic role (e.g. research, knowledge exchange etc.).

The need for organisational restructures and the changes that often accompany such restructures bring their own challenges. The change in the TEL sector over the last ten years from an experimental and exploratory sector to one where the use of technology in learning is much more mainstream has necessitated changes in how developments are supported and taken forward. The University of Strathclyde has recognised this and the need to direct resource accordingly, considering the wider impacts across the sector when looking at the role of technology within its learning and teaching provision.

10. York St John University

Interview with:

Mark Dransfield, Technology Enhanced Learning Adviser

Overview

York St John University is a post-92 institution and a member of the GuildHE university mission group. Formerly, a college of the University of Leeds and product of a previous merger between two teacher training colleges (College of Ripon and York St John), the institution became a full fledged university on 1 October 2006. The University has roughly 6,000 full time students and 235 FTE academic staff. The University has three faculties (Arts; Education and Theology; Health and Life Sciences) and a Business School.

TEL strategy and drivers for TEL

In response to HEFCE's extraordinary e-Learning strategy and capital investment funding, a dedicated e-learning strategy document was developed by the University and approved in 2005 to guide the University through the implementation of its institutional VLE platform for the period from 2005 to 2010. WebCT had been introduced prior to 2005, but the publication of the strategy helped to guide the rollout of the system across the University, focusing on elearning support provision and the effective integration of the VLE with other institutional systems and processes. However, it was felt that a dedicated strategy had run its course for the period after 2010 and that a TEL focus would best be reflected in the University's Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy (2012 – 2015), addressing the embedding of technology in course delivery and the contribution of technology to the delivery of more effective pedagogic approaches.

As part of the corporate planning process, TEL issues are covered in detail in the University's Learning and Teaching Development five year plan. An annual operating plan flows from this process, which currently addresses issues such as:

- Effective staff development – provision of accredited awards through SEDA, focusing on certified practice in use of the VLE;

- Quality management – embedding of good practice through the implementation of a TEL quality framework, informed by Edinburgh Napier's 3E Framework in terms of processes and procedures for e-learning development.

Additionally, the University has also engaged in a review of its VLE provision, looking at functional requirements and licensing costs. The review was conducted in 2010 and informed decision making which led to a switch in VLE platform from WebCT (Campus Edition 6) to Moodle (version 1.9).

TEL provision

Establishment of TEL services

The decision to introduce a centrally managed VLE was taken by senior managers in 2003 in response to government initiatives to promote e-learning. The University began by piloting a few key modules online to identify how useful a VLE could be in supporting teaching and learning activities; this process was valuable in revealing suitable approaches for the implementation of the VLE across the University. Student feedback in these pilot studies highlighted the high value of online access to content and discussion activities outside class.

The success of the pilots led in 2004 to the implementation of a WebCT platform across the institution. The University has subsequently switched to a Moodle platform (currently Moodle version 2.2) for which 98% of all credit bearing modules now have a dedicated space on the VLE. Staff use the VLE most commonly to make course materials available to students and to manage e-submission activities.

TEL provision

Whilst the VLE serves as a hub for online learning, the University supports a range of systems including:

- BigBlueButton – a virtual classroom system;
- Turnitin – for text matching and support for academic writing;
- GradeMark – for e-submission, online marking of assignments and delivery of feedback to students;
- Mahara – for e-portfolio provision.

The TEL team also supports lecture recording facilities (provided through a combination of hardware using a Crestron solution linked to a Helix media server) and offers e-assessment guidance, with a particular focus on the use of iPads and tablets, for assessment and marking activities. There is no devolved management of tools, and departments use the centrally managed toolset, with the VLE and Mahara e-portfolio system most commonly used to support course delivery. The exception to this rule is the video assessment and feedback system, an in house development by the Department of Sports Science, although the central team provided guidance on the requirements for this solution.

Central support is focused on the promotion of these tools to staff and also on quality standards in their usage. Following on from the most recent institutional review (conducted by the QAA in 2011), there has been a strong emphasis placed on guidance in the use of technology to support teaching delivery, as well as the opportunities to extend teaching practice by adopting new approaches.

The use of TEL tools is focused on blended delivery as an enhancement to the face to face campus experience; online delivery is generally not viewed as an alternative to face to face learning, although there are a few programmes run by the Business School where online learning does serve as the primary mode of delivery. Previously, there have been initiatives to link the use of TEL tools to specific pedagogic approaches such as inquiry based learning, but TEL tools are now promoted to staff in a general way and not associated with a specific delivery approach. There is also support for students to manage their own learning; for example, there is a facility for students to set up their own group spaces within the Mahara platform.

TEL uptake by departments and faculties

The Business School is one of the leading adopters of learning technology within the institution. The Business School delivers MBA courses in leadership and management and also includes an English language and linguistics department which makes extensive use of learning technology in course delivery.

The Faculty of Health and Life Sciences is also a leading adopter of technology. This is most evident within the domain of sports science, with teaching programmes championing the use of video assessment, video resources and online tests as part of an integrated blended experience for their students.

Within the Faculty of Education and Theology, the primary PGCE and undergraduate degree in secondary education and PGCE all make extensive use of the institutional VLE as part of face to face teaching and support to students when they are on work placements. The VLE assists trainee teachers on the primary education programme in reinforcing their knowledge of foundation subjects such as English, Science and IT.

TEL uptake is less developed for practical disciplines such as Dance and Music. However, there are a range of examples of good practice within the Faculty of Arts, notably through the use of discussion forums to support English Literature teaching and the use of Second Life to offer students a 3D performative approach to, and understanding of Renaissance drama[8]. Film and TV have also adopted e-portfolios in support of assessment activities.

TEL governance and structures

Central support structures

The TEL team is part of a wider Learning and Teaching Development (LTD) team, which provides expert pedagogic support for all staff in the development of learning, teaching and assessment at the University. The work of the LTD is guided by the Learning, Teaching and Assessment strategy. There are six FTE within the Learning and Teaching Team, of which three are dedicated to TEL support. There have been no budgetary cut backs on staffing over the past year and the TEL team has actually gained an additional 0.5 FTE staffing resource.

The TEL team is responsible for delivering support and development services for academic staff in the effective use of learning technologies, and aims to *effect a closer relationship between curriculum development and the use of technologies*. This involves the provision of user management services and training, pedagogic advice and the development of resources for academic members of staff.

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8   *Further details of the Second Life* Threatron 3 *pilot are available here:* **http://cms.cch.kcl.ac.uk/theatron/index.php?id=94**

The TEL team work closely with Enterprise Information Systems (EIS), which is responsible for the technical management and development of the Moodle and Mahara platforms. EIS is a separate service unit, located alongside the Helpdesk and Networking teams within the University's IT team, which in turn forms part of Information Learning Services, which manages the University's IT and Library services.

Devolved support

There is no devolved support structure as such, although the Learning and Teaching Development team does oversee the management of an e-pedagogy Teaching Fellows network. Currently, there are six e-pedagogy Teaching Fellows, with each Faculty having at least one representative. Fellows receive a small award (£500) towards their personal and professional development. They contribute to Faculty plans related to the use of technology and take responsibility for local initiatives. For instance, the Teaching Fellow for Sports Science is managing the video assessment system as a part of a wider curriculum enhancement project. The Teaching Fellow within the Business School is leading on the implementation of electronic assignment marking and feedback. In addition to local Faculty responsibilities, Teaching Fellows are expected to contribute their thinking to the development of institutional policies on TEL services: most recently, the focus has been on the University's TEL quality framework, with contributions focusing on its implementation and promotion to colleagues within faculties.

Quality assurance

The TEL team is currently managing the implementation of a **quality framework for TEL** tools, which has been informed in its development by Edinburgh Napier University's **3E Framework**. York St John's framework combines guidance that considers the pedagogical approach to the design of technology and learning, with a standards based approach that sets out a minimum standard or expectation of how a particular technology/tool should be used. Examples are embedded within the framework to show how learning technologies can be used to complement and extend teaching practices.

There is an expectation that staff will demonstrate how they have considered this framework when designing blended and distance learning for students. The framework will also serve as a reference guide for the faculties to help interpret how staff are using learning technologies to support their teaching. Indeed, the framework is being used by one Faculty as a tool to audit existing TEL activities and identify areas for further development in the use of TEL tools.

The TEL team is responsible for evaluating the VLE service. This is addressed through an end of academic year survey which students are requested to complete. The survey results are reported directly to the Enhancement and Student Experience Committee.

In the last evaluation conducted, recommendations were made for a more consistent approach to the way that VLE module sites were presented to students across the University, with particular reference to joint honours students and their requirement for a consistent learning experience. This has led to the proposal of a minimum template for VLE module sites, which would include essential course information such as a summary of assessment dates, links to reading lists and to the University's tutorial booker system, enabling students to book meeting slots with their tutors.

Support for devices

The University's IT network has been designed to enable student to bring their own wireless and mobile devices to connect to the network. This has had implications for the TEL team's support provision, leading to the development of multi-device and cross platform guidance for staff and students, addressing Windows and Apple iOS mobile devices.

In relation to the VLE, an app is currently available for Apple devices, but the TEL team are looking to upgrade the Moodle platform in December/January to version 2.3, which will offer the opportunity for *device independent* mobile access, based on Moodle's recent switch to HTML5 for their mobile offering.

Staff are encouraged to bring their own devices, with iPads commonly used to connect to the VLE. The TEL team has consequently developed a level of expertise in the use of iPads for educational applications. There has also been a dedicated curriculum enhancement project in this area led by the Learning and Teaching Development Team, which has made 20 iPads available for staff to experiment with to learn how they can best leverage them for learning and teaching activities. The short term aim is to develop an internal community of practice in iPad usage, and to open this up to the HE sector to form a wider *UK iPads in education* community of practice at a later date, along the lines of the US network.

Another support area under development is related to the use of tablets in support of learning and teaching activities.

Distance learning and Open Educational Resources (OER)

Developing distance learning provision is not a strategic objective for the University – indeed only a few programmes are currently taught at a distance with the majority taught on campus face to face. Masters level programmes in the Business School account for the main examples of distance learning delivery – specifically the MA in English Language and Linguistics and an MA in Leading Innovation and Change – although they both include a block of residential weeks.

This picture may change in future years, possibly as a consequence of the University's decision to recruit internationally for students, with dedicated recruitment offices set up in China and Malaysia. This may lead to new opportunities for collaborative partnerships and new programmes which could be delivered at a distance.

There is no institutional policy related to the development of OER, although the Head of Learning and Teaching Development is currently acting as a critical friend for a Teesside University project in this area and the University has previously been involved in the ALPs project which created resources for inclusion within the JORUM repository. The University has also set up its own digital repository for OER.

Future challenges

The TEL team is focused on three immediate challenges for the upcoming academic year (2012–2013), namely:

- Upgrading the institutional VLE to Moodle version 2.3 in December/January and managing the communication of this change, as well as staff development and training activities;

- Developing a more strategic approach to the use of the institutional e-portfolio system – embedding it as a part of academic practice across the University, as well as managing technical upgrades of the service;

- Engaging and developing academic staff in e-submission, marking and feedback activities, so that it becomes everyday practice rather than something new.

- The TEL team has also identified the following medium term challenges:

- Implementation of the TEL quality framework and the evaluation of its impact on academic practice in the use of learning technologies, as well as on staff development practices;

- The ongoing support for the development of TEL practices, responding to the opportunities set out in the TEL framework, with particular reference to the use of mobile and tablet devices.

- Introducing a video platform including lecture capture and a media server.

Appendix: Case study questions

For each of the ten interviews conducted, a common question template was employed, following the themes and question areas as outlined below.

TEL theme	Interview questions
Background about institution	Status of institution (research based; teaching based..?); size of institution (# of students; # of departments etc.); campus based (one site or multiple sites; overseas campus?)
1. Understanding of TEL strategy	• Do you have a TEL strategy? (How is TEL addressed in your institutional strategies – as a standalone planning document or embedded across a range of strategies?) • Can you explain the reasons/history for your current position re. a TEL strategy? [need to know if have one or not] • What has been the evolution of (any) TEL strategy? (e.g. is it now part of your L&T strategy?) • What have been the drivers for TEL use in this institution? • To what extent does departmental or institutional culture affect uptake?
2. Overview of TEL provision	What TEL tools are centrally supported? Does your institution support a mix of central and devolved tools provision and if so, why?
3. Governance and structures	• How are TEL services organised and supported within your institution? How does TEL support relate organisationally to IT support and to Educational Development? • Please explain the roles of the different TEL units within your institution; what systems do they support?; how are they supported?; what are the roles of the different staff • What governance structures are in place for TEL? (Who provides strategic steer/oversight for TEL services?) • How did the current organisational structure for TEL services emerge? (Was it deliberately planned or has it emerged organically over recent years. Have there been any significant changes in organisational structure over the last two years – since the last TEL Survey in Feb 2010?)
4. Quality assurance	• Does your institution have any TEL specific quality assurance policies in place? Do you have *minimum requirements* for the adoption and use of TEL tools in learning and teaching activities? • Is the student experience of TEL assessed explicitly through dedicated studies or is it embedded within general course review (e.g. as an additional question to a survey)?
5. Support for devices	• What impact is the move to BYOD and mobile computing having on your institution and on the responsibilities for the teams supporting TEL? • Has your institution developed any approaches to providing, managing or supporting devices?
6. Distance and open learning	• How important is distance learning to your institution? Has its importance changed recently (in light of the changing economic climate)? • Does your institution provide any free or open educational resources? Is this likely to change?
7. And finally…	• What do you see as your main short and medium term challenges in supporting TEL services for your institution? • How are you planning to address them?