

Blended learning strategy for the flexible delivery of Foundation Degrees using Employee Block Release

Automotive

This project aims to use blended learning to facilitate the delivery of Foundation Degree modules as part of a 'block release' mode.

Objectives:

- Identify learning outcomes/content which can be delivered using e-learning
- Identify appropriate e-learning delivery method e.g. e-tivity, discussion forum, quiz, online assignment, Word document, slideshow, etc.
- Map e-learning opportunities across the syllabus and review to check that they are appropriate, feasible and that there is a variety of methods being used.
- Provide training to staff delivering the modules
- Design and create the e-learning content/e-tivities
- Review and evaluate the delivery methods and content
- Recommend suitable support mechanisms for level 4 students undertaking e-learning

Rationale:

There are different stages of e-learning development and different skills and techniques associated with each. The table, "Levels of E-learning development" illustrates this, although it is not an exhaustive coverage.

Implementing an e-learning strategy requires:

- Identifying what e-learning skills staff already possess and what they need to develop
- Identifying what learning outcomes can be delivered using e-learning techniques
- Providing training to equip staff to deliver their identified e-learning content/e-tivities
- Working with staff to design and structure e-learning content and e-tivities

Issues

- The review and agreement of materials and identification of potential blended learning delivery options will require the cooperation and **time** of staff delivering the programmes.
- A consistent approach is needed for design and delivery of materials so that learners are not confused when they move from one module to another even though the modules may have been designed and delivered by different schools
- Training will be needed in designing and structuring online materials so that they promote an inter-active and problem-solving approach. Successful online delivery needs to be tightly structured with learners aware of the schedule for learning and able to meet the requirements for regular log-in. Classroom activities which foster a problem-solving approach and promote independent learning need to be converted to e-tivities which can achieve the same outcomes in an online environment.
- Training will be needed to develop skills in delivering online learning:
 - e.g. if discussion forums are used as part of the delivery there are techniques of
 - posing questions to stimulate responses from the group of learners
 - monitoring learner response and encouraging reluctant responders
 - keeping the discussion focused and relevant
 - summing up discussion to bring out the relevant learning points
 - Maintaining an effective discussion forum is time-consuming and should not be seen as taking less time than a face to face delivery. When learners initially use a discussion forum it is necessary to put in a lot of time encouraging contributions, often by sending separate emails or making telephone calls to reluctant contributors. Time has to be allocated on a regular basis often with daily (albeit brief) log-ins to check the progress of the discussion forum and contribute/contact learners as appropriate. This will require a flexibility of approach from lecturers and managers.
- Learners may need support in accessing online learning e.g.
 - Access to an internet linked computer
 - Training in accessing online materials
 - IT skills or confidence in using those skills
- Effective systems and processes are required for enrolling and communicating with the learner and the employer throughout the learning experience. We need to ensure:
 - Consistently high standard of materials and delivery
 - Consistency and reliability: cancelling or rescheduling a course damages credibility
- Clear and effective communication with learners is essential so that they benefit from



an innovative and effective learning experience and are not demotivated by problems in contacting lecturers, accessing learning or progressing smoothly through their chosen qualification route.

Implementation Action Plan:

Action	By Whom	By When	Resources Needed	Review Date
Identify learning outcomes to be delivered using e-learning	Staff teaching modules. working with Hazel English		2 x ½ day workshop time: How e-learning can be used for delivery, basic techniques for creating e-learning content	
Identify appropriate e-learning delivery method	Staff teaching modules working with Hazel English		E-learning identification template Staff time for completion	
Map proposed e-learning delivery across the curriculum	Staff delivering modules Hazel English Dave Dyer		Completed e-learning plans	
Create e-learning content/e-tivities	Hazel English working with staff delivering modules			
Recommend support mechanisms to ensure students can use e-learning e.g. check their IT skills, provide guidelines for online response (staff and students) etc	Hazel English			
Review and evaluate the e-learning packages (prior to delivery)	Dave Dyer Hazel English			

Stages in Delivering Blended Learning

S U P P O R T	Model
	Basic course information on VLE:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Handbook
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • scheme of work
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staff information e.g. work contact details.
	Support materials available
	All learners inducted into VLE and shown how to access online support
	Links to useful web sites
	Level 2: Key session materials (e.g. PowerPoint presentations and Word documents) available online, as an aid to learners to review after a lesson or for absentees to 'catch up'. Uploaded either prior to the start of the course or at regular (weekly ?) intervals.
	Level 3: Discussion Groups used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student to student support (buddy system) • Tutor to student group support based on an agreed regular log-in period
D E L I V E R Y	Level 4: Using VLE to enable learners to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • achieve specific learning outcomes • provide evidence of the achievement of the learning outcome
	Level 5: Significant section of the course delivered online. All course materials available in an appropriate online format Problem-centred learning, using the Discussion Groups
	Level 6: Free-standing module, entirely learner-driven. Contains delivery materials and assessment (probably not accredited assessment) C/f Microsoft 'Help' tutorials

Skills/Knowledge Required When Utilising Models of Online Learning	
Model	Skill/Knowledge
Model 1	<p>Know who to contact for support</p> <p>Contact VLE administrator to set up course, using course code</p> <p>Produce materials which do not disadvantage learners (e.g. by fonts/colours used)</p> <p>Break up materials into 'bite-sized' chunks</p> <p>Add hyperlinks</p> <p>Set up course folders</p> <p>Upload materials</p> <p>Induct learners into using the VLE</p> <p>Upload a staff profile (?)</p> <p>Evaluate the online learning experience</p>
Model 2	<p>Create quizzes</p> <p>Use PhotoStory</p> <p>Upload podcasts, videos, animations, NLN materials</p> <p>Produce a WebQuest</p> <p>Create a drag and drop exercise</p> <p>Agree a standard format for presentation of materials (font, style, layout etc.)</p> <p>Evaluate the online learning experience</p>
Model 3	<p>Set up a discussion forum</p> <p>Induct students to using the discussion forum</p> <p>Set up structured discussions</p> <p>Moderate discussion: keep discussion focused, motivate and engage participants, summarise</p> <p>Evaluate the online learning experience</p>
Model 4	<p>Structure the course so that each topic has an initial overview and introduction, a logical progression through the materials and activities and ends with a summary of the key points</p> <p>Provide descriptors for each item of course material, specifying how it links to the learning outcomes and how the learner should respond to it (e.g. read/post a response/ identify key points..)</p> <p>Set up PowerPoint presentations as free-standing (not requiring further information) and controlled by learners (set to full-screen/outline; transitions/ bullet points controlled by mouse-click)</p> <p>Agree tutor response times</p> <p>Outline schedule for learner contribution</p> <p>Provide feedback to encourage and direct learners</p> <p>Check whether the accrediting body will accept online assessments/online verification</p> <p>Identify learners' responsibilities (ground rules; netiquette; frequency of log-in and posting)</p> <p>Identify tutor responsibilities (response rate, availability,)</p> <p>Set the delivery/assessment period e.g. Mon- Fri, Mon – Sun)</p>

	<p>State availability of materials e.g. when materials will only be accessible for a set period</p> <p>Evaluate the online learning experience</p>
Model 5	<p>Use monitoring tools (Gradebook, Dashboard and User Statistics) to track learners</p> <p>Use tools to promote learner inter-activity: Blogs, wikis, VOIP, electric blackboard, chat)</p> <p>Use learner-centred, problem-solving activities to promote independent learning</p> <p>Give timely and constructive feedback</p>
Model 6	<p>Produce a wide variety of materials to cater for different learning styles</p> <p>Provide an easily navigable structure through the materials</p> <p>Indicate where external support is available (e.g. IT support)</p> <p>Structure materials so they do not require any further explanation</p> <p>May provide different 'pathways' through the material to allow learners to fast-track or to revisit sections – personalised learning experience</p> <p>May need to track learner activity/achievement</p>

Template for identifying e-learning topic: Example

Course Title: Marketing					
Programme Team leader:					
Week no.	Topic	Learning Outcome	What do learners do?	How can e-learning enable/support this?	Support needed
5	Principles of marketing	Describe the concept and principles of marketing	Access online materials to find out about the principles of marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online materials • Web links (including videos, podcasts etc.) • Web Quest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-purposing handouts to inter-active or bite-sized e-resources • Researching and adding web links • Researching and creating a WebQuest
			Self-test on principles of marketing	Multiple choice or 'drag & drop' quiz	Creating quiz
			Discuss definitions of marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threaded discussion in the discussion forum: each learner gives an opinion on 1 definition • Vote for 'best' definition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up forum • Moderating e-discussions • Rating forum posts • Using voting equipment
6	Principles of marketing	Compare the effectiveness of the concepts and principles applied to the marketing of products by the two chosen organisations	Choose organisations, investigate their marketing strategies and determine what concepts and principles they use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups research and share information on a wiki • Learners contribute to their own group discussion forum to share information and ideas on their allocated/selected organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up and contributing to a wiki • Setting up and moderating a discussion forum

Identifying e-learning in your programme

Name:

Date:

Programme:

Course Title:					
Programme Team leader:					
Week no.	Topic	Learning Outcome	What do learners do?	How can e-learning enable/support this?	Support needed