Curriculum 2012 – Briefing Note 1

Technology Enhanced Learning

DCQE
Department for Curriculum and Quality Enhancement

What?

The social context in which learning takes place has changed in that learners are increasingly dependent on technology to help them fit learning into their complex, demanding lives. Ownership of personal technologies – from computers to mobile devices – is now pervasive and the use of the Internet, including Web 2.0 technologies, is commonplace. Rather than replacing the teacher, technology has in many ways increased the focus on pedagogic skills, with the art of the practitioner as instigator, designer and animateur remaining key to the process of learning.

Why?

Technology adds value to learning by enabling:

- Connectivity to information and to others
- 24/7 access to learning resources
- Greater choice over time, place and pace of study
- Alternative modes of study: distance, blended, work-based, partially or wholly campus-based
- Knowledge-sharing and co-authoring across multiple locations
- Opportunities for reflection and planning in personal learning spaces
- Rapid feedback on formative assessments
- More active learning by means of interactive technologies and multimedia resources
- Participation in communities of knowledge, inquiry and learning
- Learning by discovery in virtual worlds
- Development of skills for living and working in a digital age

How?

The technology-enabled lifestyles of 21st century learners require that learning be accessed via their own personal choice of tools, ranging from mobile phones, MP3 players and handheld games consoles to free online chat and telephony, social networking and media-sharing websites.

Designers of learning in a digital age should therefore recognise that personal, informal technologies are likely to play a role in learners' strategies for learning; learners with specific learning needs and disabilities may even depend on being able to access familiar software and hardware without which their ability to learn is reduced.

Despite the increased breadth of technology enhanced learning, the key principles behind effective learning and teaching still apply: whatever the technology or mode of delivery, learning should be the key objective, and pedagogy rather than technology should drive the decision making, whether the process takes place at the level of the individual practitioner devising activities or sessions or involves the work of a team or teams in remodelling a curriculum.

In summary, effective practice in a technology-rich context comprises a skilful combination of long-established and more innovative strategies in order to engage and empower learners and make learning more accessible, participative and rich.

Some tools available for technology enhanced learning at the University of Portsmouth include:

- Victory – an online virtual learning environment containing: learning modules, quizzes and surveys, who's online live chat, chatrooms, whiteboard, discussion, blog, journals, gradebook, online assignment submission, email, media library, calendar and weblinks
- ePortfolio – for personal development planning and continuing professional development, a resource where students can keep their treasured pieces of work
- Questionmark Perception – an online assessment tool for summative and formative assessment
- Turnitin – an online plagiarism detection tool
- Wimba – for audio and voice tools, podcasting and live classrooms
- Google Applications – for student and staff collaborative work

Selected references and websites

HEFCE (2009). *Effective practice in a digital age*. HEFCE: JISC.

Littlejohn, A., & Pegler, C. (2007*). Preparing for blended elearning*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Maier, P., & Warren, A. (2000). *Integr@ting technology in learning and teaching: a practical guide for educators*. London: Kogan Page.

Salmon, G. (2000). *eModerating: the key to teaching and learning online*. London: Kogan Page.

www.port.ac.uk/elearning

Further advice

Further advice and guidance is available from **elearn@port.ac.uk**