E learning mini symposium

VLEs in art and design

Why have a VLE or online learning?

- ..the new technologies are improving access to learning, not just for minority groups but for all students; computers provide improved flexibility of study, allowing students to learn at different paces and according to different learning styles; the learning process itself can be **enhanced through imaginative use of ICT**

Pringle, Mike. (2005). Report on e learning, AHDS

Course issues

- Overcrowded noticeboards
- Handout overkill
- Communication breakdown
- Students feel they don't get enough technical support
- Attendance issues
- Pressure of time
- Where to find information for their course

What do students want?

- Single search boxes like Amazon and Google giving instant satisfaction.
- More contact time with their tutors
- Opportunities for social networking (MSN, Youtube, blogs, wikis.)
- Virtual access to information at times they want.
- Opportunities to learn from each other.
- To be able to learn at their own pace

What do they get?

- Pigeon holes
- Student Portals
- Blogs
- Email
- VLEs
- Wikis
- Texting
- Lots of workshops

Some examples at the University College for the Creative Arts

- http://www.blackboard.ucreative.ac.uk/webapps/login/

Why is takeup of VLEs in art and design so small?

- Lack of time to develop programmes
- Misconception that e learning is a replacement for studio teaching
- No technical support
- Perception that a VLE has limited role to play in an art and design curriculum.

"Well, it's just a big filing cabinet isn't it?.

Constructivist viewpoint (Malins and Pirie (2006))

- knowledge and understanding are not acquired passively but in an **active manner through personal experience and experiential activities**,
- learning is based on problem solving and **active engagement** with ideas.
- three 'generations' of VLE's, from passive transmission through to active collaboration and reflective development.

Malins, Julian & Pirie, Ian (2006). Developing a Virtual Learning Environment for Art & Design: A Constructivist Approach, Gray's School of Art, The Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen
http://www.elia-artschools.org/_downloads/publications/EJHAE/Malins.doc

Courseware and pedagogy

Research by **Goodyear (2001)** and **Mayes(2005)**

Suggestion that courseware can be divided into 3 types – *Primary, Secondary and Tertiary*

- Primary = documents that convey information (i.e handouts, lecture notes)
- Secondary=Online tests or quizzes to question and apply new concepts
- Tertiary=captured online discourse (i.e discussion board) providing opportunity to engage in collaborative working

…..students input could then be used to drive further discussion and learning…..

So what are the benefits of using a VLE?

- It develops independent research skills
- Increases flexibility of provision
- Enhances capacity of integrating study with work and leisure.
- On screen learning can be made visually exciting (i.eYoutube, flickr, podcasting, wikis, etc)
- Ease of access to course materials and lecture notes
- Opportunity to share knowledge with peers…..

BA Fine Art Pilot

What aspects of Blackboard did you find most helpful?

- *Checking timetables, and getting lecture notes*
- *Notes from the lectures, reference details and copies of attachment sheets in lectures*
- *Everything was easily accessible*
- *The notes from the lectures. And bits of information from the lectures and briefs for other projects that is put on there.*
- *Reading lecture notes and handouts again*
- *Essay notes and announcements*
- *Access for info lecture notes from Wayne martin – bubbles & skulls – too long to photocopy*
- *Lecture handouts*
- *The lecture handouts and essay questions*
- *Timetables of term dates, essay on critical histories subject and Dutch painting*
- *The posting of lecture handouts in the critical histories unit*
- *Extended lecture notes*
- *Being able to retrieve a lost handout*
- *Lecture supplements e.g. Wayne martin essay enlightenment*
- *Lecture notes being available on-line*
- *Its pretty straightforward to use and all the information is easy to find*
- *Notes*
- *Having the briefs and project information/ lecture handouts etc.*
- *Essay notes*
- *Catch up on notes you have missed out on*
- *Helps you catching up if you have missed out*
- *Briefs etc*
- *Lecture notes*

Accessibility

2 main issues – accessibility of the **learning platform** and **accessibility of the content**

- The VLE itself should be included in the institutions inclusive teaching and widening participation strategies, as well as teaching and learning strategy and ILT strategy.

- See Ferl/TechDis/JISC RSCs publication 'Inclusive learning and Teaching'

Future directions

- He Scanning Licence
- Embedding learning objects (using a Mac, How to use Photoshop, etc)
- JISC Mail discussion group
- E learning Strategy
- Learning technologists x 2
- Develop and share pilot projects
- Ringfence photocopying budget and convert to print credits for students.
- Regular newsletter
- Lunchtime roadshows demonstrating 'building blocks'