



Preparing Students for Future Learning

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Abstract

UTS:Insearc is the premium pathway provider to the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). With education increasingly moving towards technology enhanced delivery, we identified the need to appraise our teaching approaches to better prepare students for future learning. This proposal represents the Blended Learning Framework adopted for the process of designing and implementing blended learning within the academic subjects. We initiated a suite of strategies with the intention to create classroom environment where learning occurs through seamless integration of technology enhanced strategies and face-to-face activities, characterised by the best features of interaction within a subject, that will promote academic enhancement and innovation in learning and teaching. The 'hands on' strategies allowed teaching staff to experience first-hand how students could be engaged with content through the meaningful use of technologies. This has led to 76% of our subjects either well progressed or fully compliant with a blended learning approach within a year.

Keywords: technology enhanced, blended learning, engagement, innovation

Introduction

As part of the blended learning project, UTS:Insearc has defined blended learning as: "A learning environment where students learn through seamless integration of technology enhanced strategies and face-to-face activities, characterised by the best features of interaction within a subject". In creating such learning environment, UTS:Insearc aims to seamlessly integrate a variety of technologies into the delivery of the curriculum, encouraging students to access learning opportunities and resources where the technologies are not segmented and structured or perceived as being 'added on' or an 'extra' workload. As far as possible the technologies used within this pedagogically planned framework should feel 'invisible' to students, and teachers, simply forming part of the way, along with face-to-face teaching, they interact with content and each other to provide a complementary learning experience that enhances and adds value to their studies and the students' depth of understanding (Torrissi-Steele 2011).

The Blended Learning Frameworks

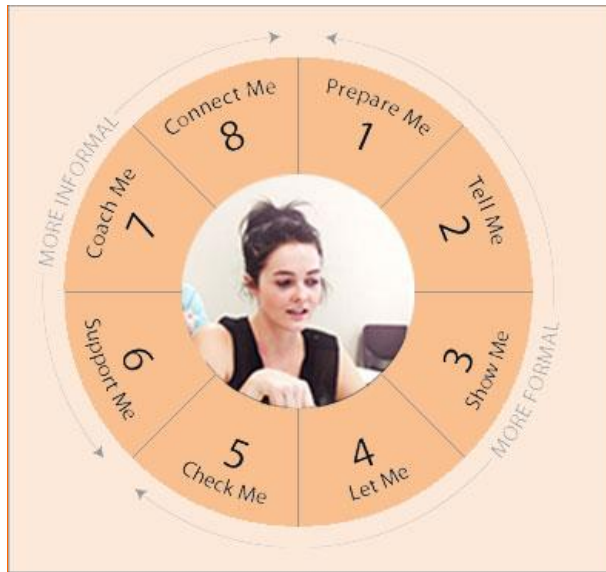
The technology enhanced strategies adopted by UTS:Insearc have been informed by Blended Learning Frameworks that provide overarching models that assist teachers to design their subjects, and support student-centred learning. These models are the 3E Framework and the Eight Phases of Blended Learning Framework (Figure 1). The Eight Phases of Blended Learning Framework has been adapted for the process of designing and implementing blended learning within subjects at UTS:Insearc. The different 'phases' of the framework emphasise the personal nature of each students' journey through the learning process as this process becomes more student-centred (Woodall and Hovis 2010).

The 3 E Framework

The 3E Framework is based on an existing and tested Enhance-Extend-Empower continuum using technology for teaching and assessment, and supporting student learning. This framework considers how to include learning activities as a minimum (Enhance), through to further uses of technology that facilitate more student responsibility and control (Extend), and to reinforce more advanced, collaborative learning activities used in academic and professional environments (Empower). These three stages can be conceptualised in Table 1 below.

By approaching the introduction of the concept in a gradual, supportive manner where we continuously stressed that pedagogy leads technology, we were able to encourage teaching staff to

adopt a non-traditional approach to their practice and to begin building a dynamic and innovative teaching culture. This has led to 76% of our subjects either well progressed or fully compliant with a blended learning approach within a year.



The Eight Phases of Blended Learning Framework can be characterised into the following stages:

Preparation:

Phase 1 Prepare Me: (Readiness Phase)




Instruction:

Phase 2 Tell Me: (Presentation Phase)

Phase 3 Show Me: (Demonstration Phase)

Figure 1: The Eight Phases of Blended Learning Framework

Table 1: 3E (Enhance-Extend-Empower) Framework

ENHANCE	EXTEND	EMPOWER
		
<p>Adopting technology in simple and effective ways to actively support students and increase their activity and self-responsibility.</p>	<p>Further use of technology to facilitate key aspects of students' individual and collaborative learning and assessment by increasing their choice and control.</p>	<p>Developed use of technology that requires higher order individual and collaborative that reflects how learning is created and used in academic and professional contexts.</p>

An example of how this might be applied to assist students to engage with and better understand key concepts:

ENHANCE	EXTEND	EMPOWER
Encouraging early engagement in key concepts		
<p>Students take turns in defining one or two key terms or concepts each week using a class glossary or wiki.</p>	<p>Students work in pairs to create an online guide for a particular topic (for example, an online 'scavenger hunt' for fellow students to explore).</p>	<p>Students use online resources (collaborative spaces, links to online readings, links to video clips etc.) that students can use in problem based learning tasks.</p>

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