

Reflective Account of Supporting and Engaging Online Learners

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Introduction

As an Academic Liaison Librarian, supporting Health and Social Work students, my position requires face-to-face teaching, facilitating students to obtain the skills

required to locate high quality evidence from Bibliographic Databases on which they base their practice (A2, K2, K3 HEA, 2011). The majority of these students are University-located but an increasing variety of opportunities for Distance Learning, has increased the number of students who rarely or never access the campus, physical library or receive Librarian-led information skills training (V1, HEA, 2011). Reasons for this may include continuing to work whilst studying, family or caring commitments, being physically or mentally unable to study unless at a distance and living far away from the physical campus (Ilgaz & Gülbahar, 2015).

Oxford Brookes' two strategies (2010 and 2014) aim to "provide an exceptional, student-centered experience which is based on both internationally significant research and pedagogic best practice"¹⁴ which enables any student to reach their potential without any limitations (V4, HEA, 2011). However, the isolation, difficulty of access to Librarian support or other University Support Services means Distance Learning students are increasingly disadvantaged from campus-based peers. Other pitfalls of studying online include unrealistic expectations, a serious underestimation in the time and organisational skills required to participate and a confusion about where to go for help (Fetzner, 2013 and Anderson et al., 2008). The expectation that the online environment will replicate the physical classroom and offer immediacy from Tutors (Anderson, et al., 2008) also hinder online learners.

Additionally, retention rates for online students are lower than for campus students and Fetzner (2013) found that nearly one third of students surveyed at Monroe Community College in Rochester, New York, who were unsuccessful in their online course were unlikely to sign up for another course. "Hence, what participants expect especially from the distance education program is having an effective learning experience through interacting with the instructors and other participants" (Ilgaz & Gülbahar, 2015).

I am now going to use two of my forum posts in TOOC15 which have enabled me to reflect on how groupwork can be facilitated and how it operates in the online environment; and what I would include in a good practice inventory for online courses, which will be based on my online interactions in TOOC15 and from pedagogical research.

Patchwork 1 – original in Appendix 1

I had different feelings and experiences throughout the groupwork task. Initially I was daunted with uncertainty about what was required. Having our first group seminar early on Monday morning, meant that details of the assignment weren't available. Therefore our initial discussions weren't very productive. Secondly, I was the first to start on our presentation, as I knew that I was unavailable for some of the Easter break. My frustration at the Easter break timing was because it created slow group progress and I felt isolated. Thirdly the second webinar made the biggest impact - despite technical problems (only two thirds with working microphones). The group were all engaging and moved on considerably. I felt happier about the groupwork. By the final webinar our presentation was nearly complete, but this gave us time to discuss presentation and allocate final tasks. Today (Sunday) I am relieved. Our presentation is complete.

With these experiences in mind: I think it is crucial for the Tutors to be prepared for the early starters at the beginning of the week. The task needs to be clear and understandable (it was in this case). The Tutors need to be able to facilitate the group at the start (which happened), and be willing to discuss the topic, and expectations for the groupwork. As more experienced adult learners we were able to discuss barriers to completing the task (e.g. the Easter break), however, for less experienced online learners the Tutor needs to facilitate this discussion at the commencement of groupwork. Tutors posting to the group discussion area can help facilitate slow moving groups. Tutors' being available for questions (especially during webinars) is also useful.

It is helpful if everyone is familiar with the software that is being used. Tutors could provide additional help, but this could be weblinks to other people's guides. Despite having used Google presenter before I have now learnt about the chat options, and comments, as well as making the finished presentation look professional.

I am a people person, so having some synchronous webinars to speak to the other members of my group was really important to me. It also enabled us to move on more quickly, than via text-based communication.

I thought I'd start a new topic on challenges: my biggest two were:

- Technology – only two of three of us could get our microphones to work. I felt this gave the talkers an unfair advantage over the non-talker as the speed of conversation is faster than typing!
- The unfortunately timed Easter break, which left me feeling quite isolated as I was the only working online on the presentation.

Any thoughts on these?

Reflection

The groupwork activity gave me the chance to work with others who have different backgrounds and experiences, thus mirroring to face-to-face groupwork. In reply to my forum post a Tutor (Appendix 1) mentioned Tuckman's (1965) Forming, Storming and Norming, and I think we had two webinars of this phase, before we got to the

final phase of Performing. Whilst body language and eye contact can help in the physical classroom, in the virtual environment, I wonder if Tuckman's (1965) process has to be done each time participants meet synchronously, as multiple people 'battle' to find their place in the group hierarchy?

I invited the responses of the rest of the cohort to help me explore some challenges to online groupwork. One respondent (Appendix 1) mentioned that we worked really hard as group to enable our online social presence (Rourke, et al., 1999), but that it was difficult with not everyone having a microphone. In my online teaching, to support students without microphones, I make more use of the 'click button' communication tools available, such as 'tick' or 'cross', to guarantee an equitable experience for all (V2, A2, HEA, 2011). The 'mute' participant encouraged us to continue to speak, but typing will not keep up with chat, and those with microphones could progress faster than those without. This could easily become a serious issue as the 'mute student' perceives the 'talkers' to be more dominant, and the 'talkers' think that the 'mute' are not undertaking their fair share of the task. Tutors need to recognise this barrier and facilitate if necessary.

Isolation is often referred to as the main barrier to distance learning (Muilenburg and Berge, 2005). During the Easter Break I felt quite isolated in the groupwork, as the rest of my group weren't online. Different styles of online usage behaviour (Salmon, 2002) definitely came into play at this point. Although the Tutor had posted to the forum to encourage the group, I didn't find the forum until the work was underway. Had I been leading this group, I would have encouraged them in the first webinar to agree initial tasks and completion dates prior to the next synchronous session. Breaks within a course, offer an opportunity to catch up, but student expectations need to be managed, to reduce isolation, and therefore Tutors need to be explicit about the groupwork expectations during this period.

My online groupwork experiences, the pedagogic research presented to us throughout the course, and my own reading, have shaped my own inventory of online course design good practice (A1, HEA, 2011).

Patchwork 2 – original in Appendix 2

Course design

To create a well-designed course, I would pick the activities and structure from several good design guides e.g. Salmon's E-Tivities (2002). However, I would want to ensure that the overall course design enables students to learn, digest, apply and progress, and that all elements of the 'Community of Enquiry Model' (Rourke, et al., 2001) are included. Therefore the course should have a logical structure making use of suitable technologies which don't hinder learning. I would consider reusing activities from other courses if they would work in the new course. I would include both synchronous and asynchronous options giving enough time for every student to engage, at a surface and a deep level (Hrastinski, 2008). Discussion boards would be divided up per topic and per week to avoid inter-twined threads. To support the students I would add a FAQ section for course queries or technical help. A final testing with peers would enable constructive feedback and fresh ideas.

Assessment

I would want to have both a formative and summative assessment, so that feedback from the formative can be applied in the summative. I would use constructive alignment (Biggs, 1996) so that the summative assessment tests the students on whether they've met the course learning outcomes. The assessment should also be fair, reliable and consistent, allowing all students to participate and be assessed on an equal basis (V2, HEA, 2011).

Course support

The course should be supported by a team, which should include a couple of Tutors, technical support, administrative support, and there should be access to additional support if required e.g. Librarian, Pastoral Support etc.

Online role of the Tutor

Tutors should be on rota to ensure rapid responses to the students. Discussion boards should be checked twice daily allowing a timely response to students in different timezones. Tutors should be prepared for heavy involvement at the course commencement, to facilitate a 'social presence' (Rourke, et al., 1999) and an online 'warmth' (Anderson, et al., 2008). Tutors should encourage participation by engaging with the students (MacDonald, 2008), but as time progresses, withdraw to allow peer support within the course. I would ensure that students who weren't participating were contacted individually.

Finally 'Being Prepared' as far as possible, keeping calm, and having a sense of humour will get me through whatever an online course can throw at me!

Reflection

I was aiming for a comprehensive good practice inventory to aide me in creating an online course. I therefore undertook further reading both from a generalist and from a Librarian's viewpoint to cover every aspect (A5, HEA, 2011). It is clear that course design for Information Literacy skills varied widely (Foster, Schurtz and Pepper, 2014; K3, HEA, 2011), and therefore I think the best method is having a clear structure, based on existing designs, which is purposefully adapted, rather than creating from scratch. Currently I provide standalone online bibliographic database searching sessions and a good design model is essential. JISC (no date) or Salmon (2002) or AUTC (2003) would be ideal best practice guidelines for these individual sessions (CILIP, 2013). I would use RLOs (Reusable Learning Objects), but as commented by another Librarian (Appendix 2) checking that they are current (CILIP, 2013). Therefore any major changes to University or Library webpages should allow sufficient time for staff to amend their RLOs.

Anderson et al (2001) 'define *teaching presence*' as the design, facilitation, and direction of cognitive and social processes for the purpose of realizing personally meaningful and educationally worthwhile learning outcomes. Through adequate teaching presence, formal learning that facilitates personally relevant and educationally defined outcomes is achieved.' which 'begins before the course commences'.

Librarians have to be good communicators and 'use a range of skills including oral, written, presentation, interpersonal, listening and assertiveness' to 'find, communicate and use information effectively' (CILIP, 2013; Present. SCONUL, 2011). Therefore a well-designed online course should have a mix of direct communication synchronously, and indirect asynchronous interaction. I would start the course with a synchronous webinar, to enable the students to hear and see me. Webinars would also be used when a new topic was introduced, to allow a presenter to be questioned throughout, replicating a face-to-face environment. Hrastinski (2008) states that synchronous eLearning increases the personal participation and motivation by students, whereas asynchronous eLearning increases cognitive

participation, allowing for more reflection and deep learning. I would therefore try to engage the deep level learning through reflection on forums, or blogs.

The Tutor role is extremely crucial to the success of the course. I therefore reiterate my opinion that at least two Tutors should support each online course, thus potentially giving an increased student-to-Tutor ratio online. Replying to forum posts can be time consuming, as the Tutor wants to give constructive feedback and push the student to explore their ideas further, and the different perspectives of more than one Tutor can refresh and motivate the students. A good Tutor will place the educational experience at the centre of the course, as per the 'Community of Enquiry Model' (Garrison, et al., 1999), and I believe that it is the Tutor engaging and encouraging the students which leads to the Educational Experience. "A critical factor for lively participation is the regular and active engagement of the moderator" (MacDonald, 2008). Lewis and Allen (2005) list the nine qualities of an online facilitator as motivated; approachable; visible; explicit; proactive; discreet; collaborative; technically capable and credible. Balancing Tutor presence in an online course is crucial to aid initially and facilitate over time, peer-to-peer communication and learning. From feedback from my post (Appendix 2) if this level of academic support is required for an online course, then Universities need to consider their staffing models to enable this (V4 UKPSF, 2011).

Conclusion

Having undertaken TOOC15 as a student I now have a clearer idea about mechanisms for collaborative working and potential challenges and barriers to online learning, especially time factors. My expectations of online studying are more realistic, and consequently I would certainly allocate myself more time. The Tutor's time commitment to an online course is staggering, and academic workloads should be revisited by my University to balance the extra commitment, with sufficient working hours.

Increasing my knowledge of eLearning research has made me more aware of the importance of course design and Tutor presence. This has led me to consider how my experiences of TOOC15 will change my practice. I have created a personal

Action Plan (Appendix 3), to maximise the effectiveness of TOOC15, and I am inspired to continue my reading about online course best practice and assessment and discuss with colleagues. I would now like to map the undergraduate embedded information literacy skills programme against Salmon's Five Stage Model¹⁹ (A5, V3, UKPSF, 2011). Finally, I have been inspired to apply my recently gained knowledge and consider if I could construct an online 10 credit masters module for the delivery of Information Literacy skills for Health or Social Care postgraduate, part-time or Distance Learning students (A1, A2, A3, K2, V3 UKPSF, 2011).

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Groupwork Reflection – original online entry

Originally posted Sunday 19th April 2015 9.03pm

Reflecting on the experience of the group work I think I had different feelings and experiences as the task went on.

Initially I was daunted - I wasn't sure what was required - the detail of the assignment wasn't available to us as one of the first webinars on the Monday morning of week 2. Therefore I don't think our discussion was as good as it could have been. Secondly, knowing that I wouldn't be around for some of the Easter break I was the first to make a start on our presentation. I was frustrated by the Easter break - as progress was slow and it seemed as if no-one else was around. Thirdly after our second webinar - despite technical problems (only 2 out of 3 with working microphones) I felt ok about the presentation. The rest of the group were there and engaging. That second webinar made the biggest impact and moved the group on considerably. By the final webinar - we had pretty much pulled our presentation together but this gave us time to discuss how we wanted to present it and final completion tasks for us all. Today (Sunday) I am relieved. Our presentation is complete.

With these experiences in mind for the tutors:.. I think it is crucial for the tutors to be prepared for the early starters at the beginning of the week. I think the task needs to be clear and understandable (it was in this case). The tutors need to be able to facilitate the group at the start (which happened), and be able to discuss the topic, and expectations for the group work. As perhaps more experienced adult learners we were able to talk about barriers to completing the task (such as the Easter break), however, the tutor needs to facilitate this discussion at the beginning of group work where the learners are not so experienced. Tutors posting to the group discussion area can help facilitate slow moving groups. Tutors being available for questions (especially during webinars) is also useful.

In terms of resources to support the group work. It is helpful if everyone is familiar with the software that is being used. Tutors could provide help resources for the software (this could simply be weblinks to other people's guides) to aide those who need it. During this exercise, despite having used Google presenter before I have learnt about the chat options, and comments, as well as making the finished presentation look professional.

I am very much a people person, so having a couple of webinars where I could talk with the other members of my group was really important to me. It also enabled us to move on more quickly, than via text-based communication

Reply from Marion Waite Monday 20th April 2015 8.44am

Hi

Thank you very much for your candid reflections. I wonder how much you have experienced it down to normal group process? Forming, storming and re-forming? Your group were very motivated and hence have finished the task, well done! The tutors have been encouraging all of the groups but some for, whatever reason haven't progressed with the task. Our baseline for the technology is Googledocs/slides as we feel that it is free and usable and offering too much choice will be bewildering for some. You do have a point though and it seems as though your group have discovered a new app that we haven't come across, so perhaps we could look at the

technologies used by the different groups and create links to your work for next year's participants.

Thank you again for your reflections and hard work.

Marion

Reply from Abi Ball Tuesday 28th April 2015 12.31

It is really interesting to read your reflections, you have reflected very thoroughly. Are you able to compare your experiences of online meetings with those of face to face meetings? Do you think the group would have behaved differently if they had met face to face? The Easter break did upset the flow of the group work but it also gave some people a chance to catch up with the reading so I think there are mixed views on that one. I agree completely with your comments on the need for high tutor engagement particularly early on in the group online meeting process and not just for students who are new to technology – even those who have previous experience of the technology can become blasé and forget the basics which can be very frustrating for all group members.

Abi

I also posted a second thread to the Forum

Challenges to Online Groupwork –posted Sunday 19th April 2015 9.07pm

I thought I'd start a new topic on challenges as my previous post was getting quite long. This way others can reply to this one separately.

The two biggest challenges I found with the group work was technology (two of us could get our microphones to work, the third person unfortunately couldn't). This gave the talkers perhaps an unfair advantage over the non talker as the speed of conversation is faster than typing!

The second was the unfortunately timed Easter break. Feeling quite isolated as it appeared I was the only around and working on the presentation.

Any thoughts on these?

Reply from Peer 1 Sunday 19th April 2015 10.04pm

Hi

We clearly had some quite similar thoughts - I've addressed both these issues in the post I've just put up. I found it really interesting, in the light of our group's sometimes quite challenging experiences, to reflect on last week's reading about "social presence" - given our range of technical difficulties, I think we spent quite a lot of time and effort working to keep everyone's social presence in the group, and it seems to me this indicates just how important it is.

I think the long break gave us a good example of one of the pitfalls of asynchronous learning - precisely because everybody doesn't necessarily have to be active at the same time, and you can't necessarily see how much/what other group members are doing, there can be those feelings of isolation, panic, possible resentment that no-one else seems to be doing any work,

etc. I can see how with groups of online students who didn't yet know each other well, or hadn't much experience of groupwork, tutors might need to set up some quite strong "scaffolding" in terms of suggested expectations, frequency of posting, deadlines, etc, and also check in regularly themselves, in order to help manage those feelings and keep the groups on track...

Reply from Peer 2 Monday 20th April 2015 7.15pm

I also found the technology challenging. I was the one in my group who couldn't get my mic to work and soon afterwards lost audio too. We all worked hard to compensate via the text pad but it lagged badly and overall a very poor and frustrating experience.

I agree with you, the Easter break appears to have created something of a hiatus, our group down to two for the collaborative exercise.

Reply from Elizabeth Lovegrove Tuesday 21st April 2015 9.43am

Thank you, all for this discussion.

How to deal with the risk (and actuality) of technology failure is a big, ongoing challenge for all of us, I think. It's my impression that the tech is getting slowly more reliable, and that such failures as we have are getting slowly less fatal -- for example, it used to be quite common that people simply couldn't get into a webinar room, so never got to find out whether their microphones worked. That's less common now, but as you've said, we do get people who have absent or non-functioning mics.

I think as we all become more practised users of synchronous tech, we also get better at compensating for failures, by for example multi-tasking between audio and text, but perhaps we need more formal mechanisms for dealing with it -- an agreed social contract kind of approach? Any ideas for what might go in such a thing?

(Incidentally, I'm posting in this thread despite it no longer being week 3 because this topic has been on my mind quite a lot, and is relevant throughout the course, I think, not just in the weeks we're doing small group work.)

Reply from Peer 3 Tuesday 21st April 2015 2.26pm

Hi

We too had technical difficulties, but because we were trained, it was possible to overcome them. On my last webinar session, my headphones broke, but we were able to switch to text quite easily and carried on, albeit a bit more clunkily! I believe that technical training is vital for online learning and teaching - before the course starts ie recommendation for week 0 - again! I intend to make that recommendation for the design of my MSc course for the next semester.

I agree with you here, there needs to be a "Teacher Presence" and supported protocols need to be established for the collaboration to be effective.

Collaborators working on a "best endeavours basis" is not a recipe for success.

Malcolm

Reply from Abi Ball Tuesday 28th April 2015 3.34pm

If we were collaborating in a face to face activity would the noise of the room (an equivalent example to the lack of microphone issue you raised above) impact on the experience of the students? Would the students simply move to a quieter study space or just carry on shouting at each other because they had been told to complete the activity in the room by a teacher? Why does the failure of a piece of technology in online collaboration cause such consternation? I'm not saying that it shouldn't (and I've complained bitterly about online activities on many occasions); I'm just playing devil's advocate here and asking why are we getting so hung up on the failure of a piece of technology? It's not like we don't have alternatives - we could have used the phone or email?

Abi

Reply from me Saturday 2nd May 2015 10.56am

Hi Abi

Just quickly to respond - I think that I was getting hung up on the failure of technology because in this instance it created a barrier. You can usually talk faster than you can type, and it felt like the 'talkers had an advantage over the typer'. The time lag of the text appearing didn't help matters either. It also felt like the typer didn't have the opportunity to have as much input either, which could have left them feeling excluded.

Reply from Abi Ball Monday 4th May 2015 9.36am

As H commented in a previous post, doesn't typing give the student more time to consider their response? I know it slows the process down and this can be a barrier if you are time poor, but I've facilitated online action learning sets with no audio and the depth of discussion was amazing (if a little slower than speaking).

As you commented in another of your posts, you were getting stressed by my responses when I was catching up last week (sorry!) until you realised that you didn't have to deal with them immediately. I know it is slightly different in a synchronous room but asynchronous or semi-synchronous technologies should take away the time pressure (or barrier to use your phrase) shouldn't they?

Abi

Reply from me Tuesday 5th May 2015 9.41pm

Hi Abi

Yes typing does give you time to consider your response, but when synchronously discussing groupwork and throwing ideas about - its far better that everyone is on a level playing field. In the end we made use of Google Chat as we could all access that and type at our own speed.

I do agree that asynchronously typing does give you time to reflect - as I've had the time to do here.

K.

Appendix 2

TOOC Week 6 Inventory of Good Practice – original online entry

Originally Posted Wednesday 6th May 9.44am with the following reflection from me:

Hi all

Here is my inventory of good practice. I'm slightly over the 30 lines, but hope that I've included all that I wanted to / meant to.

I think mine is a fairly general inventory. Yes, I was making it for my own use, but I was assuming I was a tutor, not the Librarian I currently am. I would therefore hope that it could be used by others in other disciplines.

I have focussed heavily on the course design and course support aspects of an online course, as I believe these two things to be crucial to a successful course.

K

Course design

I would endeavour to create a well designed course, probably picking and choosing the bits I wanted from several good design guides (eg Salmon's activities). I would want to create a course with a logical structure making use of technologies that suit the purpose, not ones which hinder learning. I would consider reusing things from other courses if they would work in the new course. I would want to include both synchronous and asynchronous options and I would want to allow enough time for all students to engage with resources, as I understand some online students need more time due to language barriers, learning difficulties, physical or mental health limitations or juggling work and family commitments alongside studying. I would ensure that discussion boards are divided up per topic and per week so that threads don't become inter-twined, and to help the students I would add a FAQ section for course queries or technical help. However, I would want to ensure that the course design enables students to learn, digest, apply and progress. A final testing with peers would enable constructive feedback and fresh ideas as well as checking that I had designed a suitable course.

Assessment

I would want to have both a formative and summative assessment, so that feedback from the formative can be applied in the summative. I would try to ensure that constructive alignment (Biggs 1999) is used so that the summative assessment will test the students on whether they've met the learning outcomes from the activity they have undertaken. I would want to ensure that the assessment was fair, reliable and consistent, allowing all students to participate and be assessed on an equal basis.

Course support

The course should be supported by a team or people which should include a couple of tutors, technical support, administrative support, and there should be access to additional support if required e.g Librarian, Pastoral Support etc.

Online role of the tutor

Tutors should ideally be on rota to ensure that responses to the students are as quick as possible. It would be ideal if discussion board could be checked twice daily to allow students in different timezones an equal opportunity to receive a timely response. Tutors should be prepared for heavy involvement at the beginning of the course, so that all participants get going and become happy with the technology as soon as possible. Tutors should aim to encourage participation by engaging with the students (MacDonald 2008), but also allow, as time progresses, peer support from the others on the course. I would ensure that students who weren't participating were contacted individually to ensure that they were ok.

Finally 'Being Prepared' as far as possible, keeping calm, and having a sense of humour will get me through whatever an online course can throw at me!

Responses to online entry

Reply from Marion Waite Wednesday 6th May 3.35pm

Hi K

Thank you. Liz has posted a question to M about the potential hazards of tutor responses, this is do you think there may be a risk of stifling interaction and peer learning, if the tutor is always the respondent?

I am also going to suggest as I am with everyone else on the thread that you take a look at least two other participant inventories and compare them with yours? where are the similarities and differences?

Marion

Reply from me Thursday 7th May 4.46pm

Hi Marion

Thanks for your reply. Yes I agree there could be a risk that the tutors are stifling the conversation, but personally, as a student, I always find it reassuring to know that I'm thinking along the right lines. Within this particular cohort - I do think that people are willing to comment and critique, but that I think was probably facilitated well by you, Abi and Liz in the first couple of weeks.

In this MOOC it has been really good to hear the views of peers in other disciplines and other sectors, and find out what has worked for them, and what they have experienced. This may be harder to do in an online course of younger students who may not have such diverse ideas.

Of course I will critique my colleagues entries - I simply ran out of time after posting mine!

Thanks

K

Reply from Peer 1 Thursday 7th May 9.39pm

I was relieved to see that while I didn't manage to meet the suggested target of posting by Tuesday, no-one else did either ;-) - well done for going first!

You and I have taken very different approaches, in that I focused very much on the kind of online teaching and learning practice I do currently get the opportunity for in my context, or could do with a bit of a stretch. I suspect your inventory therefore has more cross-disciplinary application than mine. Which parts of it do you feel would have most application in a more typical Subject Librarian context, ie when one is typically designing a stand-alone online activity or session rather than a whole course?

I think you're right that when it comes to a whole course, good design and adequate support are crucial, and minimise a lot of the potential problems. I particularly like your idea of re-using materials (RLOs), as I think being able to do this can mitigate some of the very heavy time

investment required before the start of any online learning - it is more feasible (and easier to justify to one's line manager!) if it is possible either to re-use previous resources, or plan to re-use what you create for this course. The constant changes in our online environments do challenge this of course - how often have we had to re-do a presentation or tutorial because the resource we're doing it on doesn't look the same as it did last year?...

Reply from Peer 4 Saturday 9th May 1.13am

Hi K,

I thought that your inventory was comprehensive and thoughtful. I also agree that the design and course support are vital.

I liked the way that you would bring aspects of previous designs that had worked well into the new design and the way you would anticipate the demands on time and resource with respect to the response to diversity, but can one assess how much extra resource or time can be allowed for diversity, or is it a 'business plan' issue which has commercial limitation perhaps?

I thought that it was interesting that you recommended at least two Tutors and perhaps technical and admin support plus other support as necessary. Do you feel that more support is needed for online students (Excluding the technical side).

How would you ensure that all of the students on a forum or webinar were engaging? This is something that we are wrestling with at the moment because we have up to 20% who are not engaging on our new online courses. I felt better about it when I read about why students dropped out from an American Online University and what the levels of non engagement were. (Fetzner 2013).

Student retention is close to our hearts!

Kind regards

M

Appendix 3

Action Plan for my continuing professional development in Online Teaching

Action	Mapping to Values and CPD	What do I need to do	By When?
Revisit undergraduate embedded information literacy programme to see if it maps to Salmon's 5 stage model.	SESE2 (Oxford Brookes University, 2014); A5, K5 – UKPSF (HEA, 2011)	Write down learning outcomes for all embedded teaching and compare	End of July 2015
Offer more online basic and advanced database searching sessions.	SESE2 (Oxford Brookes University, 2014); A2, V2 – UKPSF (HEA, 2011); 12: IT and Communication, 8: Literacies and Learning (CILIP, 2013)	Book sessions throughout year. Get additional support.	Start of 2015 academic year
Consider offering online sessions outside of 9-5pm e.g. evening	SESE2 (Oxford Brookes University, 2014); A2, V2 – UKPSF (HEA, 2011); 12: IT and Communication, 8: Literacies and Learning (CILIP, 2013)	Speak to Line Manager	End of June 2015
Read more about course structure and design.	Identify (SCONUL, 2011); A5, K3, V3 – UKPSF (HEA, 2011)	Resources from TOOC15, plus specific literature from Library and Information database	End of August 2015
Further reading on designing appropriate assessment criteria for online modules	Identify (SCONUL, 2011); A5, V3 – UKPSF (HEA, 2011)	Resources from TOOC15, plus specific literature from Library and Information databases	End of Dec 2015
Continue to keep up-to-date with advances in Online Teaching and disseminate to colleagues as appropriate.	Present and Gather (SCONUL, 2011); A5, V4 – UKPSF (HEA, 2011); 8: Literacies and Learning (CILIP, 2013)		Ongoing

Action	Mapping to Values and CPD	What do I need to do	By When?
Find out the needs of online learners with mental health problems or physical disabilities.	SESE2 (Oxford Brookes University, 2014); Scope (SCONUL, 2011); A2, K3, V1, V2 – UKPSF (HEA, 2011)	Undertake a literature search on medical and education databases to see what research has been carried out in this area	End of August 2015
Consider designing a 10 credit Masters Module to teach Information Literacy skills and bibliographic database searching skills to Masters students.	SESE2 (Oxford Brookes University, 2014); Plan (SCONUL, 2011); A1, A2, V1, V2, K2, K4 – UKPSF (HEA, 2011); 12: IT and Communication, 8: Literacies and Learning (CILIP, 2013)	Speak to Line Manager and peers with more experience in designing courses.	Aim to commence course September 2016 or January 2017.