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Engaging Students with Learning Outside the Classroom

Abstract:

Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) are an essential part of the learning infrastructure in university but are still commonly used as mere ‘file stores’ where lecture slides used in face-to-face lectures, and supplemental materials that support assessment preparation, are made accessible to students. VLEs are not necessarily a place where meaningful learning, teaching and assessment occur. Guidelines that indicate university ambitions for the use of VLE technologies, such as the 3E framework (Smyth, 2011), emphasise that VLEs should be places where students can interact, collaborate and develop “communities of practice” (Garrison and Anderson, 2003) that actively engage students in learning. Across the Higher Education sector staff are being asked to do more within the time constraints of existing contracts; therefore, approaches to teaching must be explored that make more efficient use of face-to-face lecture time, allowing staff to engage with other role-related activities.

Flipped classroom (Bergmann and Sams, 2012) is a teaching approach that engages students in learning content prior to class that prepares them for their face-to-face, tutor-led sessions. The asynchronous nature of the flipped classroom means that students may review content as often as required to prepare for face-to-face classes or to consolidate their learning. The flipped classroom model encourages active learning and experimentation in face-to-face sessions rather than passive absorption of information. In practice based subjects there is often an emphasis on learning procedures e.g. how to use software, or how to connect a piece of equipment correctly. If a student misses or doesn’t fully understand any stage of a process this either halts the progression of the traditional lecture until they have caught up, or it means that students may not fully understand or know how to implement the technique or knowledge.

This presentation examines a flipped classroom learning design developed during study on the MSc in Blended and Online Learning at Edinburgh Napier University. It will explore the development, delivery and evaluation of this approach to teaching the music production software package Logic X, implemented for Year 1 students on the BA Popular Music at Edinburgh Napier. It also examines the benefits and challenges of teaching and learning in this manner for both students and lecturers, based on student and staff experiences, and how their feedback has been used to further develop the module.

References

Bergmann, J. and Sams, A. (2012) Flip your classroom : reach every student in every class every day. Eugene, Or. : International Society for Technology in Education

Smyth, K. (2011) The 3E Framework [Online] <http://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/vice-principal-academic/academic/TEL/TechBenchmark/Pages/overview.aspx> [Last accessed 2nd December 2016]

Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T. (2003) *E-Learning in the 21st Century: A Framework for Research and Practice*. London: Routledge