

## Online learning design for DE: Inspiring new approaches

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## This workshop

What we will not discuss:

theories / new instructional design models for Web 2.0 learning

e.g Michael Allen's 'Forget what you know about instructional design and do something interesting'

e.g 'emerging design' models to support constructivist learning

What we will DO: design inspiring learning activities and make sure they work online

## What we are going to DO

Brief intro

Presentation: what we're not doing very well when designing learning + what can we do about it?

Team activity: design an online learning activity

Discussion

Tea break

Presentation: more tips on how to make collaborative learning work + assessing team work

Team activity: design another online learning activity (even better than the first one)

Discussion

Presentation: conclusion

## A little bit of background

Open Polytechnic

How online learning – potentially – adds value to DE:

- Enhanced learner support
- Didactic dialogue
- Offers more 'active learning' possibilities and opportunities for interaction

## what we're not doing very well when designing learning

Why a lot of e-learning is not working:

- Content-heavy with little or no learner engagement
- Interactivity is simply "hyperlinked instruction"
- Lack of authentic meaningful learning experiences
- Poorly designed small group experiences

What can we do about it?

## Five design principles

1. Create authentic learning contexts
2. Think 'activities' before content
3. Collaborative activities need to be designed for team work
4. Inspire your learners; make vocational learning stimulating and fun!
5. Use scaffolding and appropriate language to support and guide your learners



## 1 - Create authentic learning contexts



- Learning experiences should be tied to real-life experiences
- Contexts that refer to the intended purpose of learning
- Inspiring (fun) contexts



## 1 - Create authentic learning contexts



How do we contextualise learning?  
Different models e.g. "day in the life of..."

Examples:

- [Early childhood course](#)
- [Business communications course](#)
- Customer relations course

→ Storytelling + incidents that create learning events  
→ Real life situations

**The Paper Plane**  
Time: 1 Day to 10 Days

Students experimentally discover at first all paper planes fly the same. Some have holes between the tail and the ends of the wings and some can't fly. Some have holes with a magnet. The first, the second, and the third are supposed to use the paper plane jump towards the magnet. Everyone is into magnets. Pick up the girls' magnet in their experiment to see which things stick to the magnet and what it will do with. What is happening? The attraction and repulsion.

What would you say if one of the children asked you why the paper plane did not fly? What would you say if one of the children asked you why the paper plane did not fly? What would you say if one of the children asked you why the paper plane did not fly?

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Why do the paper planes not fly? Why do the paper planes not fly? Why do the paper planes not fly?

What have you learned through this activity and what are the learning outcomes?

Further thoughts and comments:

**What have you learned through this activity and what are the learning outcomes?**

Time: 1 Day to 10 Days

**A Day in the Life of Naomi...**

8:00 Arrival at the office

8:15 Workplace Communication

8:30 Lunch

8:45 A letter or an email?

9:00 Arrival at the office

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## 2 - Think 'activities' before content



- What should the learner be able to **do**?
- Relevant authentic activities: open-ended, ill-structured, fun-drama-controversy
- In a meaningful context
- Content 'delivered' just in time when the learner really needs help

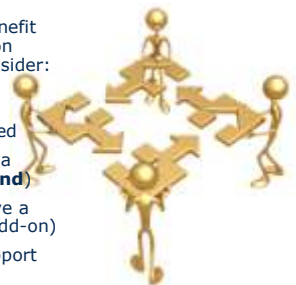


## 3 - Collaborative activities need to be designed for team work



If your students would benefit from working together on some activities then consider:

- Teamwork? If **added value**, and if well designed and facilitated
- A discussion forum is a tool (a means to an **end**)
- Discussion should have a purpose (it's not an add-on)
- Discussion should support **work**



## Which one will work?



**Learning outcome: Define intrapersonal communication and explain how intrapersonal communication is affected by perception, self-concept, culture and gender.**

Use the discussion forum to...

"Share your thoughts about intrapersonal communication and explain how it is affected by perception, self-concept, culture and gender."

"Discuss what role intrapersonal communication plays in your own life and how it is affected by perception, self-concept, culture and gender."

"In teams of six, develop a quality Wikipedia page for intrapersonal communication. Make sure you also address how intrapersonal communication is affected by perception, self-concept, culture and gender."

## 4 - Inspire your learners - make vocational learning stimulating and fun!



➤ Emotions!

*"You remember best what you feel the most"*

Schank, R. (2002). *Designing world-class e-learning: How IBM, GE, Harvard Business School, and Columbia University are succeeding at e-learning*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

→ It's a learning experience, not just a course

➤ Get learners 'hooked'... and it is not going to happen with boring learning objectives upfront!

➤ Inspiration, not bells and whistles

## 5 - Use scaffolding and appropriate language to support and guide your learners



- Supporting the 'learning journey': when, what, why and how?
- What will be difficult (but still worthwhile doing), what will be easy, what will be fun?
- The way we 'talk' to our learners
- Writing style!

## Small Group Activity



Turn the following learning outcome into an authentic, contextualised team task.

**" Examine how inappropriate language can form a barrier to good workplace communication and compare possible strategies for overcoming this barrier."**

You have 15 minutes to come up with an outline of your learning activity.

Appoint a presenter to explain your activity in 2-3 minutes.

## Making collaborative learning work



- Well-structured meaningful tasks
- Clear deliverable
- A deadline
- Directions/expectations
- Plan roles and responsibilities
- Explain why
- Relate group work directly to learning objectives
- Grade the activity
- Motivating feedback

## Making collaborative learning work



A closer look at the deliverable of team work:

What? Something from real-life professional environment, short and manageable, the result of discussions

This works: a job description, a balanced scorecard, a PPT presentation, a memo, an e-mail, 10 recommendations, a matrix/log frame (provide a template),...

Trouble: report, essay, summary of discussions...

### Team work: synchronous or asynchronous?



...or chat or discussion forum?

It should be work, so how can work be supported by these tools?

How about other tools (e.g. wiki)?

### Assessing collaborative learning



...is very difficult → creates frustrations for the learners + considerable workload for facilitator

Self-assessment and peer assessment instead? Issues!

BUT - if it's not graded the learners will be less motivated to contribute...

### Assessing collaborative learning



Only assess individual assignments

BUT

Make sure there is at least one question in which the learners need to USE their contributions in the team forums

How does this work?

For example: "Compare and contrast (new problem with team problem) ...Use at least one quote from your own contributions in the online teamwork..."

### Assessing collaborative learning



Individual assessment of team contributions – why does it matter?

- students can only do well on their individual assignments when they have contributed in the team tasks as well
- we can get rid of the rather patronising participation requirement along the lines of "post once and reply twice"
- gives students the necessary motivation to engage in collaborative work
- reduces the workload of facilitators/lecturers/tutors (because looking for evidence in discussion forums is a lot of work; marking individual assignments is much faster – and fairer)

### Small Group Activity



Design an online group activity which supports the following learning outcome:

#### **" Argue the role of business and industry in protecting the environment"**

- Think about how this can be made engaging, and how this will work online
- You have 15 minutes to come up with an outline design for the group work
- Someone in the group acts as a presenter and take 3 minutes to present your activity to the rest of the group.

### Conclusion



When you design online learning, start with the design of activities first.

Activities: the focus is on 'work' – not discussion for the sake of it

Activities should be the backbone of your online course.

Content-driven e-learning often fails to inspire.

Add-on activities = recipe for silence in discussion forums → the agony of all online facilitators

Online content = 'just-in-time' information that helps learners solve a problem.

Use emotion, 'talk' to the students when you design

Thank you!