

## **AKE Workshop Series**

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# **e-Learning Initiatives and Trends A Search for New Meaning**

**Workshop 1 - E-Learning,  
Nairobi, Kenya  
December, 2007**

# What is eLearning?

- " eLearning is a general term use to refer to **computer-enhanced** learning.
- " It is used **interchangeably** in so many contexts that it is critical to be clear what one means when one speaks of 'elearning'.
- " In many respects, it is commonly associated with the field of **advanced learning technology (ACT)** which deals with both the **technologies** and **associated methodologies** in learning using networked and/or multimedia technologies.

Wikipedia 2007 [Online]. Available from:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elearning#Pedagogical\\_elements](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elearning#Pedagogical_elements) [Accessed 2 December 2007]

# How is eLearning applied?

- " eLearning is naturally suited to **distance learning** and **flexible learning**, but can also be used in conjunction with **face-to-face** teaching, in which case the term **blended learning** is commonly used.
- " In Higher Education especially, there is an increasing tendency to create a **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)** (which is sometimes combined with a **Management Information System (MIS)**) to create a **Managed Learning Environment** in which all aspects of a course are handled through a consistent user interface standard throughout the institution.

# What are the technologies in eLearning?

**Many technologies can be, and are, used in eLearning including:**

Screen casts	ePortfolios	Electronic performance support system	PDA's	MP3 Players	Web-based teaching materials	Hypermedia in general
Multimedia CD roms	Discussion boards	E-mail	Collaborative software	blogs	wiki	Text chat
Computer aided assessment	Educational animation	Games	Learning management software	Electronic voting systems	Virtual classrooms	podcasts

**Most eLearning use a combination of techniques - moodle - discussion board threading, wiki and real time textual chat**

# What are the Associated Methodologies in eLearning?

- " **Instructional design** - traditional pedagogy of instruction which is curriculum focused, and is developed by a centralized educating group or a single teacher -
- " The designer sets the **performance objectives** and creates a systematic approach to the learning content. The instructor's role is to teach the students a **well-circumscribed body of information** within a well-defined learning environment (Gold, 2001).

# What are the Associated Methodologies in eLearning?

- " **Social constructivist** - pedagogy particularly well enhanced by the use of discussion forums, blogs, wiki and on-line collaborative communities -
- " The designer's goal is to **create** an information-object rich, and socially meaningful (i.e. communication and collaboration filled) **learning environment**. The facilitator aides the learner through the creation of authentic tasks and helps the student integrate other understandings of multiple perspectives through **reflection** (Gold, 2001).

# Learning as a Search for Meaning

<b>Assimilation</b>	Associate new knowledge events with background knowledge and prior conceptions
<b>Accommodation</b>	Change existing structures to new information
<b>Equilibrium</b>	Balance internal understanding with external “reality” (e.g. other’s understanding)
<b>Disequilibrium</b>	Experience of new information without achieving a state of equilibrium

# eLearning a Technological Shift?

**This technological shift-from knowledge being fixed to a certain time and place, to knowledge being accessible at anytime and at anyplace-**

**creates the potential for a change in the way learning is transacted from those who provide information (i.e. teachers or facilitators) to those who receive it (i.e. students).**

# eLearning a Technological Shift?

The mere fact of a **technological change** does not guarantee **educational transformation** or reform.

While this new movement has the **potential** to alter the traditional student-teacher relationship and improve learning outcomes, changes in educational delivery do not in themselves cause any significant impact upon learning outcomes of the students.

# eLearning a technological shift?

Even though technology may change the way students learn, it will have **no impact** without teacher support, and one of the most important reasons for the lack of faculty support is lack of faculty preparation.

It is the author's contention, that for teachers to teach effectively online they need to have had an **online learning experience**.

Gold, S. 2001. A Constructivist Approach to Online Learning. *IN: Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks* [Online]. Available from: Sloan Consortium  
<http://www.aln.org/publications/jaln/index.asp> [Accessed 3 December 2007]

# Dublin Institute of Technology: Information Services - Strategic Plan, May 2001 - 2015

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## Theme 1: Enhancing a learner centred environment

### Strategic Objective

The objective under this theme is to enhance the standing and effectiveness of the DIT as a multi-level, technological institution, offering programmes to a broadly-based clientele in a learner-centred environment and which includes a focus on responsiveness to society's lifelong learning needs. *An underlying theme is the promotion of the capacity to learn and to reason, and of learning skills, as being of greater importance than the changing nature of learning content.*

## **DIT: Three-year roll-out 2002 - 2005**

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Technological change  
Pedagogical change  
Cultural change

Academic staff in six faculties

Library staff

Central Computer Services (including the MIS)

Student support services (counselling, careers, disability etc.)

Learning & Teaching centre: prioritising pedagogy over technology

## **Dublin Institute of Technology: Information Services - Strategic Review, May 2005**

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**“In very broad terms the Learning Technology Team is excellent but **teaching itself is not generally innovative**”**

# eLearning in Applied Arts

## Lecturer survey results

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“In my opinion, carrying out our duties as lecturers is so time consuming that we hardly have any time to dedicate to eLearning”

“I have not been able to devote the time required to create content for use. I am a part-time lecturer on a course.”

“Sheer pressure of work makes it really difficult to find the time to get familiar with the system and start using it. I find that between teaching, admin. and research a solid 10 hours a day Mon.-Fri. plus working regularly at weekends just about keeps me on top of what I need to do during the teaching year. I can think of loads of ways in which it could be really useful, but I have found it impossible to find the time to put them into practice.”

“There is no DIT incentive for staff to use eLearning!”

# eLearning in Applied Arts Lecturer survey results

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“eLearning does not offer anything that class attendance and email cannot fulfil. In fact, posting notes online simply gives students good reason to take an extra shift at work or to sleep in.”

“If you want Art and Design staff to use the WebCT, you need to tailor training in such a way that it takes into consideration their teaching style/needs.”

“WebCT is an appalling piece of software. It's not that I cannot use it, it is that I refuse to.”

# eLearning in Applied Arts

## Lecturer survey results

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“If you want Art and Design staff to use the WebCT, you need to tailor training in such a way that it takes into consideration their teaching style/needs.”

*Making the Grade: Online Education in the United States, 2006*

“...the majority of faculty still aren't warming to the concept of eLearning”.

O' Rourke, K. 2001. *Fathoming eLearning Global and Local Implementations*. Dublin. DCU  
Available from: <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2006/11/10/online>

# Instituting Change

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- Instituting change in schooling is, first and foremost a question of **reconceptualising educational issues.**
- The **process** requires changing **hearts and minds**

Sefa Dei, G. J. 2005. The challenge of inclusive schooling in Africa: a Ghanaian case study. *Comparative Education* [Online]. 41 (3), pp 267-289. Available from: Academic Search Premier <http://web.ebscohost.com.remote.library.dcu.ie/ehost/detail?vid=3&hid=15&sid=b56c94fb-9e3b-43dc-ae61-f940ada4cada%40sessionmgr106> [Accessed 2 November 2007]

# Changing Hearts and Minds

**Learning and change cannot be imposed on people. Their involvement and participation is needed in diagnosing what is going on, in figuring out what to do and in actually bringing about learning and change. In the end cultural understanding and cultural learning starts with self-insight.**

Mc Niff, J. and Whitehead, J. 2000. *Action Research in Organizations*. London: Routledge

# 3 Levels of Change

- **Attitudinal** - enticing 'resisters' and 'mainstreamers' out of the 'autonomous isolation' of their classrooms
- **Policy** - developing strategies that **integrate top-down and bottom-up forces** in an on-going dynamic manner of '**permeable connectivity**'
- **Classroom level** - encourage a collaborative learning experience potential of new technologies in the learning environment doesn't stop at "*information delivery or doing old things in new way*"

# Educational Change as a Search for Meaning

**Solutions must come through the development of shared meaning. The interface between individual and collective meaning and action in every-day situations is where change stands or falls.**

Fullan, M. 2007. *The New Meaning of Educational Change. Fourth Edition.* New York: Columbia University

# Peer-to-peer Exchange

## Buzz Group Discussions

### Discussion objective:

To provide a forum for **sharing experiences** and identifying **common issues** on using ICTs in education, particularly in e-learning programming and/or e-learning centres

### Discussion focus: e-stories

What has been happening in **e-learning** in your country?

What has been done to promote **e-learning programmes** and/or **e-learning centres**?

What have been the **challenges/ barriers** in creating elearning environments?

What kind of **solutions** have been implemented?

What **changes** in the teaching and learning brought about by the elearning environment?