

LTC14D155

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Issue

Future plans for the use of the Blackboard Virtual Learning Environment in teaching and learning.

Recommendation

The paper recommends that LTC endorses the steps that need to be taken in the way in which courses are created and used in the VLE.

The paper asks LTC to consider the options for next steps.

Resource Implications

Enhanced use of the VLE will have resource implications for the Learning Technology team who will be needed to support academics in developing their practice in this area.

Risk Implications

Failing to utilize the VLE on every module risks low student satisfaction.

Equality and Diversity

The VLE meets the requirements W3C guidelines for accessibility <http://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility>

More use of screencast and video might necessitate transcripts being made and delivered alongside this sort of content.

Further Information

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Discussion document for TPPG
Learning Technology Team (20th Feb 15)

Suggested first steps to facilitate the introduction of strategic integration of online areas into module delivery.

Context and background

It is suggested that student expectations for online and blended delivery models are growing and that in order to meet them, our online module delivery areas need to be understood and to relate to traditional equivalents in a consistent and predictable way. This is not currently the case

To encourage adoption of the VLE and to enable academics to experiment with online delivery according to their individual priorities, online areas have been created on an ad hoc basis. As a result after several years of use, we now have over 8,660 live online delivery areas appearing on various users' front pages. These are not segregated by year of delivery or any other marker and the result may be that some students see the VLE as neglected or containing out of date information. To reduce the length of site-lists it has become uneven practice to disable or delete past instances of online delivery area. However this is also less than ideal as it reduces revision opportunities for students and forces academics to copy potentially legacy content into new instances for fear of losing access.

We now require some strategic direction around the creation, use, population and retention of online learning sites. It is suggested that these changes will deliver a consistent robust baseline and will create a structure from which further innovation, positive development and strategic direction can be applied.

Benefits to stakeholders

Students: privacy for private information, continued access to delivered content, separation of past and current content.

Delivery academics: continued access to past delivered material, ability for grades to flow from Blackboard to eVision / SITS for summative assessment.

Module organisers: ability to run multiple modules concurrently online and create economies of scale.

Suggested immediate steps.

1. Online delivery areas to be created in relation to entities on existing administrative systems and populated with students via direct systematic feed. This will create a fixed relationship between the online delivery areas and other UEA systems. This is especially important if online areas are to be used for summative assessment but it will also enable the integration of compliant external or third party tools (for example ePortfolio, reading lists etc.).

2. Delivery staff will fill the online delivery area with content, which may or may not be a copy of that delivered in a previous instance. Module organisers will be responsible for enrolling colleagues that require access to the module and this decision will be made in consideration of data protection and privacy policies and in the expectation that all module delivery areas will contain students' private information.
3. Colleagues requiring access to multiple online delivery areas (eg faculty librarians, school managers) will have granulated access privileges to allow appropriate access to content without the DP issues around accessing student private information
4. Online delivery areas may be 'snapped together' to allow economics of scale in delivery, if this is appropriate, and to enable parallel cohorts of students to interact together but the relationship between student and enrolment-origination should not be lost.
5. All online delivery areas should be archived with a complete record of materials delivered, assessments, feedback, interactions and enrolments at the end of each delivery period. Single online delivery areas used repeatedly with subsequent cohorts of students are to be phased out. This will not only allow students to revisit delivered content but will also allow them to access their own and their peers' interactions. Online interactions may include formative and summative assessments, online group work and discussion threads. A set of archived modules will also allow us to ascertain provision in the case of appeal. Re-creating online delivery areas freshly for each cohort (or actively copying content over) encourages an audit of material and it also ensures privacy for cohorts of students in terms of their interactions. Retained access is not currently strategically directed and students experience a variety of practices.
6. It is suggested that students and staff retain access to the archived copy of their online delivery areas throughout their relationship with UEA. Previous years' archived copies will be to be separated from current delivery areas using collapsible year headings. These structures can later be used to apply alternative data retention policies if required. This will also facilitate content copy and remove the current incentive to copy all content into the current year to avoid losing it.

Subsequent step 2: rationalisation of InfoSites

Our VLE is not only used for module delivery. Clubs, societies and other organisations also use it to share content and create interaction opportunities for groups. These sites will be categorised separately to online delivery areas and will not fall into the above policies.

When online delivery areas have been rationalised it may be necessary to also consider these InfoSites strategically. In particular it may be necessary to reduce the number of these informal sites as currently more than 1,000 students have above 20 Blackboard modules in their lists and many of them are not actively curated this could give users the impression of a unmanaged or neglected system.

Discussion document for TPPG

Alicia McConnell – Head of Learning Technology

Helena Gillespie – Academic Director of Learning and Teaching enhancement

Next steps with Blackboard – an informed direction

The use of the Blackboard VLE is now widespread at UEA and a year on year analysis of usage shows that student use is gradually increasing. Creative examples of practice are now seen in many schools with significant student use of the VLE. However we are also aware of the significant demand for increased use of blended learning from students, as the recent NUS publication 'Radical Interventions in Teaching and Learning*' exemplifies:

Inclusive Technology

It's rather cliché to say that technology is transforming the way we interact with and communicate knowledge and ideas. But it is not the technology in itself that is transforming education and society; it is, rather, the creative ways in which people are using technology to educate and drive change. Building on the assumptions of transformative learning that innovation and creativity can be learned and practiced, technology is a powerful medium through which such "habits of mind" can be developed. In particular, we can see many exciting ways in which technology can communicate information in interesting new forms. It can also be an important source of interaction between students for peer-to-peer learning in which the lecturer can also be an active facilitator, as well as a medium to share instant thoughts and feedback in a constructive and democratic manner.

Despite these tempting possibilities, uptake of learning technology in general and the Blackboard VLE in particular is patchy at UEA. This paper proposes actions to make student access to learning technology via the VLE more even across all courses.

Once the base-line has been achieved (see paper 1) it will be easier to move forwards with online delivery and blended learning models. It is possible to design school or faculty templates that act to direct colleague towards the provision of certain resources or minimum expectations. These can be used to prepopulate newly created online delivery areas. A clarified relationship between online and physical delivery will allow the integration of assessment, reading list and other third party digital tools.

This paper asks TPPG to endorse the actions set out below with a view to taking policy for the minimum use of the Blackboard VLE to LTC.

Step 1 – Each taught module will have a Blackboard module

Step 2 – Each Blackboard module will contain a minimum level of content and learning opportunities. The options for this is set out below.

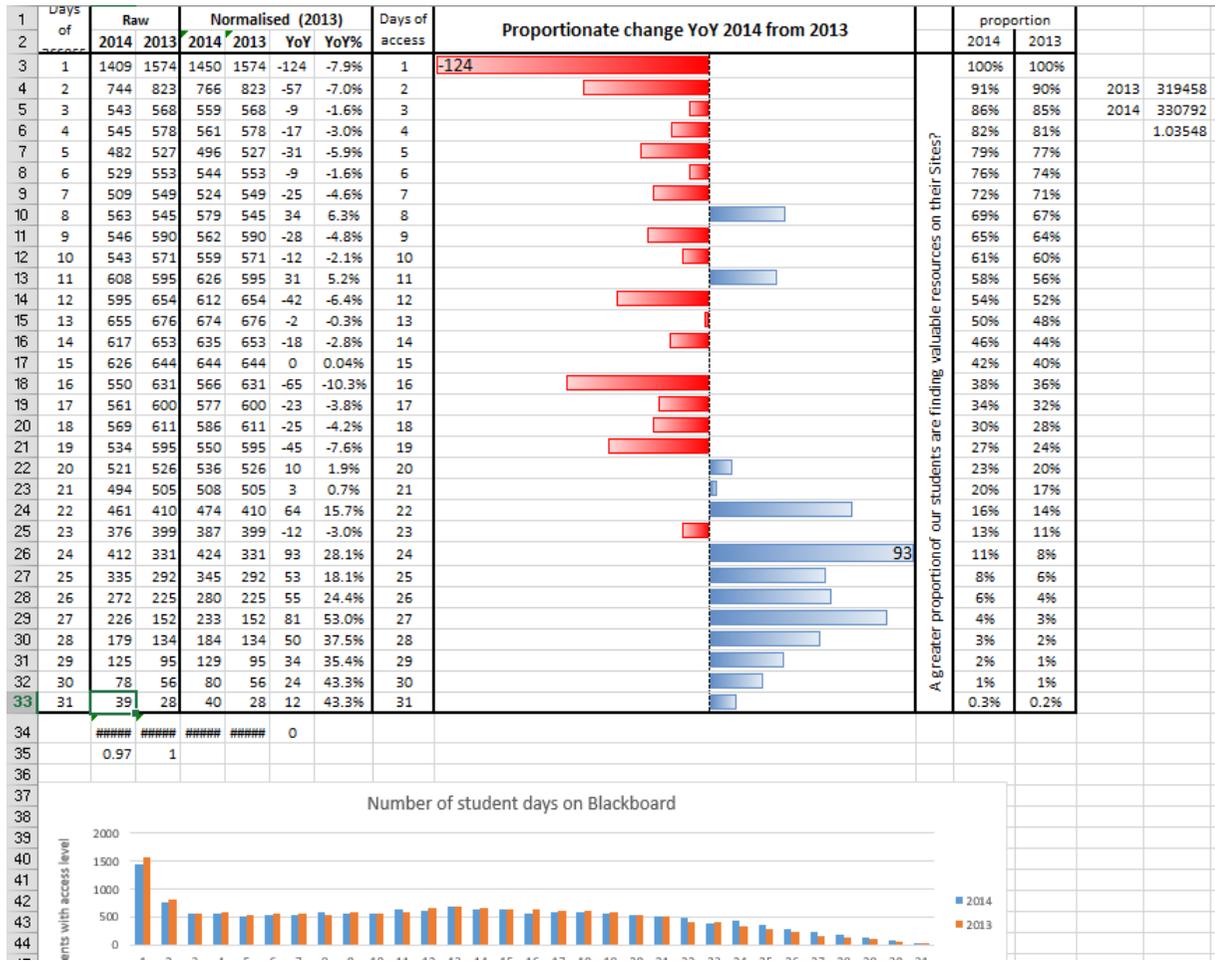
Step 3 – The impact of the above will be monitored by school and faculty teaching committees as part of the establish module and course monitoring process. To facilitate this a range of information (see Appendix 1) will be made available to schools. It may be easier to design subsequent steps and strategy on a thorough understanding of current position.

		<h3>Minimum online: School determined delivery point</h3>			
Point Zero		Online presence	Online to support learning	Online to drive learning	Online first
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Online delivery areas created and populated in relation to SITS entities ● Online delivery areas rolled over and archived at the end of each delivery period ● Archived online delivery areas available for permanent read-only access and separated from current delivery areas ● Access to student private information delegated by module organiser ● Electronic submission of summative coursework as institutionally directed ● InfoSites distinguished from online delivery areas 	Content	Reading list, regular announcements	Lecture notes and handouts available to support all face to face contacts.	Virtual lectures, classes and seminars to actively engage students in their learning and construct understandings of new material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Modules without face to face contact time or with greatly reduced face to face time ● MOOCs, UHO, Crime Fiction
	Assessment	Digital submission points and traditional or electronic feedback (eVision or Blackboard)	Formative work assessed online (Summative work assessed online)	Digital feedback. Opportunities provided for students to actively interact with feedback	
	External systems	Links to relevant professional websites and networks		Tallis Aspire Reading lists	
	Mobile and devices	Online delivery sites checked on device (Android, iOS mobile browser and mobile app)	Online delivery sites optimised for accessibility by device (Android, iOS mobile browser and mobile app)	Opportunities created during face to face delivery to integrate devices	
	Peer to peer		Online discussion spaces used to enhance and personalise face to face delivery	Opportunities for online group work that build virtual team work skills, define eLeadership and integrate with F2F	

Appendix 1

A: Trends in overall usage : YoY 2013 and 2014

These figures show student access to online delivery areas and InfoSites* overall. Year on year the trend is marginally positive. A greater proportion of students overall are accessing their sites regularly but the gentle slope suggests that colleagues may need support, encouragement and guidance to create online resources and interactions that are valued by their students.



B. School summary.

This is an example of a school summary report. It shows one school's active online modules and indicates the way that they are being used by staff and students. It is possible to see a correlation between frequently updated fresh content, student interaction and active use. We anticipate that schools will use this report to identify hot and cold spots and direct learning technology support towards modules that might most benefit from help with online content creation.

Blackboard content to 16th October and activity from 1st September to 16th October 2014 MODULES WITH ACCESS ONLY												
Module details				Student visitors			Appearance	Communications		Student action		
cmpl	course_id	Year	Name	Number	Sessions	Sessions per student	personalisi	esh co	lounced	Pos	Grad	Blot
105055	PHAB3EMY-14	14	2014/5: APPLIED IMMUN	7	83	12		10				
105028	PHA-3ELY-14	14	2014/5: THERAPEUTIC A	97	1134	12		35	2			
105034	PHA-5001Y-14	14	2014/5: DRUG DESIGN A	122	1423	12		48	3			
105053	PHAB3EEY-14	14	2014/5: EVIDENCE BASE	5	54	11		15	4			
105027	PHA-3EEY-14	14	2014/5: EVIDENCE BASE	96	1002	10		4	3			
105037	PHA-5004Y-14	14	2014/5: NEUROPHYSIOL	120	1151	10		21	1			
105054	PHAB3ELY-14	14	2014/5: THERAPEUTIC A	5	47	9		36	2			
105033	PHA-4004Y-14	14	2014/5: CELLS, PHYSIOL	106	939	9		16	2			
105041	PHA-MEAY-14	14	2014/5: PHARMACEUTIC	93	670	7		17	9		37	
108072	PHA-PPP-14E	E	2014-5 - Pharmacy Plac	401	2233	6		28	2			
105043	PHA-MFFY-14	14	2014/5: SPECIAL TOPICS	99	543	5		30	2			
105051	PHA-MPEY-14	14	2014/5: PHARMACEUTIC	92	425	5		38	5			
105056	PHAB3EPY-14	14	2014/5: FINAL YEAR RES	5	21	4		3	1			
105066	PHAN3VDX-14	14	2014/5: ADVANCED DRU	3	12	4	1	8	2			
105068	PHAN3VEY-14	14	2014/5: SPECIAL TOPICS	1	4	4		9	1			
66916	PHA-GEN-10E	E	2014-15 - General Infor	484	1725	4		22	1		401	
105070	PHAN3VGY-14	14	2014/5: PHARMACEUTIC	1	3	3		16				
101511	PHA-MA2X-13E	E	2013-4 - APPLIED THERA	1	2	2			1			
105045	PHA-MHBY-14	14	2014/5: CLINICAL THERA	65	119	2						
101456	PHA-PPP-13E	E	2013-4 - Pharmacy Plac	115	179	2	1					
90158	PHA-DGPPL1H11-11E	E	Diploma in General Pha	2	3	2						
95101	PHA-PPP-12E	E	2012-3 - Pharmacy Plac	19	26	1						
96726	PHA-MA1X-12E	E	2012-3 - FOUNDATION I	4	4	1						
89530	PHA-PPP-11E	E	2011/12: Pharmacy Plac	4	4	1						
67055	PHA-DGPPCD-10E	E	Diploma in General Pha	3	3	1	1					
67053	PHA-DGPPL1H10-10E	E	Diploma in General Pha	2	2	1						
67058	PHA-DGPPL2H08-10E	E	Diploma in General Pha	2	2	1	1					
67056	PHA-DGPPT-10E	E	Diploma in General Pha	2	2	1	1					
67152	PHA-FTP-10E	E	2010-1 - Fitness to Pract	2	2	1						
66121	PHA-DGPPL1C-10E	E	Diploma in General Pha	1	1	1						
90584	PHA-DGPPL1C-11E	E	Diploma in General Pha	1	1	1						
90159	PHA-DGPPL2H10-11E	E	Diploma in General Pha	1	1	1						

C. Online delivery area content breakdown.

This is an example of an in depth summary report of an individual online delivery area. This particular report is being used to evaluate a recent innovation : a set of virtual lectures to replace parallel lectures. We can use it to see which resources, in a busy online module, are drawing most student interest. Used in conjunction with qualitative techniques this is helpful to guide ongoing course design and drive iterative innovation.

MED-UNIT02-07: MB BS Module 02 - Locomotion				
02/01/2015				
<input type="radio"/> Use content creation dates <input checked="" type="radio"/> Use content modification dates				
Blackboard Item Name	Date		Type	Clicks
:Module 2 Resources & Links		Menu	Folder	322
:Video Resources on the use of SIMMAN	Oct-14	>1	Document	-
:Joint Zone - A Study in Rheumatology	Oct-14	>1	Externallink	320
:Tarnya Marshall: Drugs for the Treatment of Bone Disease	Oct-14	>1	Document	-
:Iatrogenic Addiction		>1	Folder	9
:Module Handbook		Menu	Folder	787
:Module 2 Student Handbook	Jan-15	>1	Document	-
:PBL Cases		Menu	Folder	6
:Seminars / Module Lectures		Menu	Folder	6276
:Week 1: Bone Pain		>1	Folder	2787
:Tarnya Marshall: Osteoporosis and Osteomalacia	Feb-15	>2	Document	-
:Nutritional Aspects of Bone Health (virtual lecture)		>2	Folder	375
:Nutritional Aspects of Bone Health	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:Haematological causes of bone pain (virtual lecture)		>2	Folder	312
:Haematological causes of bone pain.	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:Drugs for the treatment of osteoporosis (virtual lecture)		>2	Folder	311
:Drugs for the treatment of osteoporosis	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:Bugs and Bones (virtual Lecture)		>2	Lesson	55
:1. Microbiology	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:2. Organisms	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:3. Clinical presentation	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:4. Treatment	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:Ailsa Welch: Nutritional Aspects of Bone Health	Feb-15	>2	Document	-
:Archived Seminars		>2	Folder	272
:Martin Auger: Haematological Causes of Bone Pain	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:Richard Goodwin - Imaging of Bone	Jan-15	>3	Document	-
:Caroline Barker: Bugs and Bones (Infective Agents in Bone)	Feb-15	>3	Document	-

D. Student module usage breakdown.

This is an example of a report to flag variation in student use of online resources within a single online delivery area. Studies suggest that there is a correlation between student engagement with online resources and their engagement with course materials overall. If this is the case, this report (and online equivalents) can be used as an early warning system to identify students in need of extra support. Further this report can be used to identify active and less active students and recruit them as partners to develop the online offering. Finally the report can be used to obtain an overall pattern of the way that a cohort of students are engaging and interacting with online materials..

	<input type="radio"/> Show <input checked="" type="radio"/> Hide		Last Visit	Number of Visits	Visits per week	Clicks
	Name					
Student activity	269006		14/02/15	60	7.4	325
	270624		14/02/15	45	5.6	199
	270676		15/02/15	44	5.4	205
	269044		14/02/15	42	5.2	184
	269040		14/02/15	40	4.9	226
	269096		13/02/15	39	4.8	176
	269005		14/02/15	38	4.7	193
	269105		14/02/15	38	4.7	119
	269113		13/02/15	37	4.6	144
	269083		15/02/15	37	4.6	145
	248472		14/02/15	36	4.4	312
	260447		14/02/15	36	4.4	195
	269104		13/02/15	36	4.4	118
	269035		13/02/15	36	4.4	159
	270675		14/02/15	35	4.3	176
	260443		15/02/15	35	4.3	232
	269563		14/02/15	34	4.2	129
	266567		12/02/15	34	4.2	169
	271506		14/02/15	33	4.1	207
	269108		14/02/15	32	3.9	219
269072		14/02/15	32	3.9	107	
269004		13/02/15	32	3.9	105	

