Module 5 - Online learning

Authors: Charlotte Brack and Astrid Davine
Year: 2017

Charlotte Brack
Welcome to the module about 'Designing, implementing and supporting online learning'. I am Charlotte Brack from RMIT University in Melbourne.

Astrid Davine
And I am Astrid Davine from The University of Western Australia.

We have worked together online to design and develop this module which we hope will help you to start exploring the considerations for technology enhanced learning or digital learning. We have considered that you may have different roles so the module has been divided into three main sections: design, implementation and facilitation. Your role may cover all three or may centre on one or two of these aspects. Even if you don't have a role in design it will help in all roles to understand the design of what you are implementing or facilitating.

To support your learning during this module, and the course, we have suggested you use a Personal Learning Network for feedback and discussion. This may occur in the context of the module itself such as with a discussion forum, or it may be informal such as with colleagues in your program, school or department. Connecting in to a social media network in your institution, or maybe even the broader community, may be useful.

Charlotte Brack
Whatever your role or experience with learning technologies, as a new staff member you will need to connect to your institutional frameworks and values. These are probably expressed in strategic documents, policies or procedures which will typically describe the scope and boundaries of the technologies that you're expected to use.

We consider these institutional issues in section 2, but keep in mind that while there is a need to address them, these documents generally refer to the present, or even past technology environments and you may want to also have an eye to the future. If you are an experienced user of technology other sections of the module can be a refresher to remind you of your design aims and outcomes.

We've decided not to focus on specific technologies and their use, and we haven't used many learning technologies in the module itself, nor have we discussed technologies such as mobile technologies and social media which are emerging in the field of learning design. This is because the starting point should always be the design. There are hundreds of different learning technologies you could be using but unless you've thought why you want to use them, or the specific context, they may not add to the student experience. Once you've thought about what you want your students' to achieve, use your Personal Learning Network to start exploring the technologies that meet your needs.

Astrid Davine

Online learning is not just about transferring what is done in the classroom to the online or digital space, or substituting one mode for another. We need to be thinking about our students' future and enabling them to transform and lead in a technology rich environment. We hope you find this module useful - it is just a starting point so all the best so all the best for your journey.