

**Handelshøjskolen
i København**

**Virtual spaces:
preparing for real learning**

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John Pettit
Institute of Educational Technology

New skills, old skills: learners

- keyboarding and other ICT skills
- groupwork in an online conference
- searching on the Web and evaluating results
- reading & commenting
- writing a 'public' critique
- range of learning styles

New skills, old skills (1): staff

- keyboarding and other ICT skills
- **facilitating/teaching** groupwork in an online conference
- **facilitating/teaching** searching on the Web and evaluating results
- **facilitating/teaching** reading & commenting
- **facilitating/teaching** writing a 'public' critique
- **facilitating/teaching** in a range of learning styles

New skills, old skills (2): staff

- time! using template text; sharing online activities with other teachers; FAQs; managing expectations about email; student self-help
- thinking through how to integrate ftf and virtual (eg the five ways to introduce a topic)
- presentational skills in VLEs; asset management
- resisting unrealistic pressures: teachers
- avoiding unrealistic expectations: managers

The reflective practitioner

‘Now I know that any innovation will return at least a dozen variations in form when implemented, and I actively look to see which forms support learning and which don’t’

(Oliver, 2001, p.87)

A new form of support?

‘Yet, every time I began to feel overwhelmed, there in my email ‘Inbox’ would be another friendly, empathetic, personal note to our tutor group from our tutor... knowing there was always a virtual shoulder to lean on was critical... the enjoyment, the whole learning experience would have been shallower without that support.’

Any time, any place

‘[Through your laptop], you can’t go off anywhere for a week and forget about the class...

I don’t know if I could sustain that in the long term.’

(Glen Postle, University of Southern Queensland, quoted in Times Higher Education Supplement, 24 November 2000)

Integrating the virtual and the ftf

Introducing a new topic to learners (1)

**ftf introduction with slides and questions:
recommend five readings and ask students to find
and study one that interests them**

- pros: for some learners, ftf teaching is the most comfortable form; teacher can quickly gauge students' (apparent) understanding.
- cons: learners and teacher have to meet at a particular time; some students may not attend, and some attendees may not find the recommended readings

Integrating the virtual and the ftf

Introducing a new topic to learners (2)

ftf introduction with slides and questions: this time, provide a handout backing up your introduction, and handouts of the five readings

- pros: handouts ensure learners receive readings and can review your introduction; attendees can read the handouts any time and anywhere - if they don't lose them :-)
- cons: amount of photocopying

Integrating the virtual and the real

Introducing a new topic to learners (3)

create your introduction, with slides, in a virtual learning environment - plus hyperlinks to the 5 readings; ask students to find and study one that interests them

- pros: time- and place-flexibility
- cons: reading on screen is often harder [changing?]; learners have to find an on-campus computer that is available, or a computer at home with phoneline that is not being used

Integrating the virtual and the ftf

Introducing a new topic to learners (4)

create your introduction, with slides, in a virtual learning environment - this time without hyperlinks. Ask students to work in groups to search/critique.

- pros: group may motivate; additional learning outcomes: searching and evaluation; groupworking skills.
- cons: as before, learners have to find an on-campus computer that is available, or a computer at home with phoneline that is not being used

Integrating the virtual and the ftf

Introducing a new topic to learners (5)

set up a face-to-face discussion where students

discuss and debate their chosen readings

- pros: for some learners, ftf teaching is the most comfortable form; teacher can quickly gauge students' (apparent) understanding.
- cons: learners and teacher have to meet at a particular time; some students may not attend

Encouraging innovation

‘Take care that the first experiences of working with the technology ‘fit’ with the instructor’s experience and beliefs about the learning process [and] build the instructor’s self-confidence by starting with a successful experience.

(Collis and Moonen, 2001, p.56)