A mobile device supported blended learning approach for postgraduate students where absenteeism has been an issue

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Conference – Employer Engagement in a Digital Age
04 07 12.
If any one had...

- Pedagogy, blended learning, COP
- Historical genesis
  - Course responsibility
  - Joining UOGBS/HROB
  - PGCE or CeLTT
    - Certificated Learning through Transformative Technologies
    - Malcolm Ryan, Simon Walker
Background - 1

- Taking over responsibility for a course
  - MA Personnel and Development (INDU1008)
  - Postgraduate – Research Methods – prepare for dissertation
- The MA is a CIPD accredited course; part of students CPD
- Age range 30-45
- More females than males
- Full time jobs – busy lives
Background - 2

- Course requirements
  - Monday evenings (6-9)
  - Autumn term
- Lecture and tutorial
- 2 assignments
  - Literature Review
  - Methodology
The title of the talk

- 2010-2011
  - Students attendance was variable
  - Some regular; some very irregular
  - Why? Indolence or ... busy lives
  - Trigger – one complained that she was not sufficiently prepared by me
    - Absent 6 out of 11 (4 work; 2 holiday)
    - Never asked for notes/slides etc
Design - 1

- For 2011-2012 Shift from WebCT to Moodle
  - Throughout Business School
  - Obligated to create Moodle course pages
  - Available 24/7
  - Populate with
    - Course Guide and
    - facility to upload assignments for marking
  - What one wanted to add including
    - PowerPoint slides in pdf format
    - Reading lists
Design - 2

- Chose to add to the Moodle course page
  - Podcasts of all lectures
  - Chat Rooms (synchronous and asynchronous)
  - Wikis
  - Messaging (with IC-J or others registered on course)
  - Useful information and URL links
  - News and updating bulletins/ RSS feeds
Design - 3

- Blended learning
  - Moodle resources
  - Weekly lectures as before - F2F

- Mobile device
  - iPad2’s for each student
    - Could use for anything
  - To provide a common technology platform
Observations - 1

- Needed introductory guidance
  - Moodle access and navigation
  - iPads navigation – delighted but daunted
  - Course Leader needed to be able to guide
- Attendance was good – most students came most weeks; notified if going to be absent
- One student was absent regularly; illness issue and online access was a lifeline
- Podcast use very high – if absent and as an aide-memoire
Observations – 2

- Surprises
  - Complete rejection of Chat Rooms and Wikis – wanted F2F tutorials
  - Some very slow to adapt to Moodle course page
  - Some very slow to adapt to iPads use
Community of Practice

- Almost all new to dissertations and anxiety became obvious by mid-term
- Replaced three lectures with COP – like F2F sessions – they could get the lecture another time
- Each student brought “rough ideas” for their project and presented to the group (all present, incl. IC-J)
- Critically constructive comments and suggestions welcomed
- A second session reviewed ideas progress
- Positive comments regarding mutual learning, mutual support and sharing of ideas in a “safe place”
Measures

- Opinion/satisfaction survey was very positive
  - about the resources
  - the learning opportunities
  - Reported engagement
- Assignments submitted on time
- Good quality work submitted – as confirmed by the Moderator and the External Examiner.
## Results

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<td>Enrolled students</td>
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<td>Course Mean</td>
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<td>Course SD</td>
<td>6.80</td>
<td>9.39</td>
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<td>8.86</td>
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Conclusions

- Significant shift from traditional “push of content” to learning needs review and flexible provision of guidance, challenge and support
- Blended learning approach at outset and modified along the way as needed
- Challenges the assumption that one can prescribe an ideal blended learning approach
- Collegiality aspect of COP very motivating
- Salutary experience for someone who just wants to teach; greater intellectual complexity for the tutor/guide and ongoing engagement is vital.