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Traversing the Boundaries and Borders Experienced by Learning Communities within Online Problem Based Learning

Overview of CPD Module



- CPD module
- Geographical location of students
- Experience
- Traditional professional boundaries
- Subsequent design of module delivery strategy
 - Fusion of technology and pedagogy
 - Online PBL
 - Cross-disciplinary & cross- professional learning communities

Online PBL

- Synchronous and asynchronous integration of PBL
- Weekly trigger
- Synchronous – live discussion based on the trigger
 - Adoption of Roles:
 - Chairperson (group leader)
 - Scribe
 - Facilitator (disciplinary leader)



Aims

- To explore the issues arising from Online PBL
 - Issues surrounding learning communities
 - benefits
 - leadership and engagement issues arising for the learning community
 - implications for inclusion and exclusion of students resulting from real and perceived boundaries



Aims (cont)



- the student support offered and how this was influenced by the technological and pedagogical approaches utilised
- transition from disciplinary to cross-disciplinary/professional leadership and simultaneous curriculum team development
- the acquisition of transferable technological and curriculum development skills

The establishment of a learning community....



....a group of people with a common professional interest who share knowledge and experience, and learn together as a means to solve particular work-based problems.

(Santy 2007:113)

Inclusion and exclusion from online PBL



Fostering a sense of community can reduce feelings of isolation, improve the learner's attitude toward the course and the content, and ultimately boost student retention

(Ludwig-Hardman and Dunlap, 2003:10)

The components of a learning community



- *Participants must:*
 - *Be engaged in a joint enterprise, some compelling purpose or project that draws them together*
 - *Have common access to a shared repertoire of resources, including stories, concepts, and tools*
 - *Maintain relationships through mutual engagement in trust-building activities*

(Wenger 1998:73)

Learning Communities

Boundaries and borders



- Distributed control
- A move away from the boundaries inherent with traditional methods of teaching
- Establishing the nature of engagement
- VLE engagement may be
 - Synchronous with PBL
 - Asynchronous

Benefits of a bounded learning community



- An appreciation of multiple perspectives and refinement through argumentation
- Creation of a network for information exchange
- A sense of identity and the reduction of isolation
- Benefits for employing organisations....
- Benefits for potential patients....
- The sharing of professional experience and expertise
 - More knowledgeable practitioners who have greater educational commonality with fellow professionals
 - Traversing the boundaries?

Leadership and engagement issues



- Technological confidence and competence
 - Wimba classroom
 - Recorded discussions
 - Browsers (lurkers)
 - Visual clues
 - Confidence and competence of PBL chair, scribe and facilitator as well as the rest of the peer group
- Inter-institutional access to the online PBL platform

Leadership and engagement issues



- Maintaining motivation
 - Securing dedicated study time
 - Size of group (virtual learning sets)
 - Preconceived ideas
- Prevalent in online learning environments generally
- Structured synchronous timetabling of PBL (Quinsee & Hurst, 2005)
 - Variations in knowledge and experience of students with PBL (boundaries)

Student Support

- Browsers
- Resistant learner
- Benefits of a context for engagement through tailored learning activities (Biggs, 2003)
- Smaller groups (Lobry de Bruyn, 2009)
- Systemic v cognitive support (Ludwig-Hardman and Dunlap, 2003)



Supporting student in a problem solving community



Triggers

- Allow consideration of a case presentation
 - Assessment of the child / young person
 - Identify current knowledge/understanding
 - Pattern recognition/Patterns of knowing
 - Critical thinking/clinical reasoning
 - Collecting information and data
 - Analysing data
 - Interpreting data
 - Problem identification/solving
 - Informing decisions about care/treatments
- (Carper, 1978)

Curriculum team development

- Acquisition of transferable technological and curriculum development skills
- Academic staff exchanges (intradepartmental)
- Influence and inspiration
- Online facilitators posts
- Machinimas





Potential ?

POTENTIAL

Summary



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