

# Staff/Student Partnership to Encourage Active & Blended Learning [A-054]

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## BACKGROUND AND AIMS

The Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) curriculum consists of three over-arching themes (Biological and Medical Sciences; Clinical Dental Sciences; Patient Management & Healthcare Promotion) delivered over five years. It is non-modular in design and the Learning Management System (Moodle) reflected this. Each year Moodle section consisted of an administration page and a page of each of the 3 themes. This was designed to coincide with the roll-out of the then new curriculum without involvement from our students. This Moodle format has been perceived as cluttered, difficult to use and has made the use of online & blended learning activities very difficult.

Dentistry is a very dynamic clinical profession that is strongly influenced by developments in technology although students have tended to be passive recipients of this technology (McKerlie et al 2018). In academic year 2018/19 a staff/student partnership was established instigate a Moodle re-design with the aim of rationalising the layout of Moodle within each theme to make navigation easier and encourage use of the suite of active learning tools available within Moodle. The staff/student partnership will work with faculty to pilot active and blended learning approaches within the Clinical Dental Sciences theme for academic year 2019/20. Within this theme some faculty have experience with innovative active and blended learning approaches including Flipped Classroom (Crothers et al 2017).

The holistic framework to support effective institutional transitions (Adekola et al 2017) was used to guide this re-design. When working through the 4 main areas of the framework we found that the Change Agents, Institutional Considerations, and Organisational Preparedness themes are largely covered at sectoral or institution level, leaving our primary focus as Stakeholder Roles. Our biggest challenge to the implementation of new technology was not the technology itself – we used well proven technologies – but how people interact with it. As such the core of our project was the people impacted at all levels.

With the new sections now complete, the team will be supporting the pilot through the 2019/20 academic year.

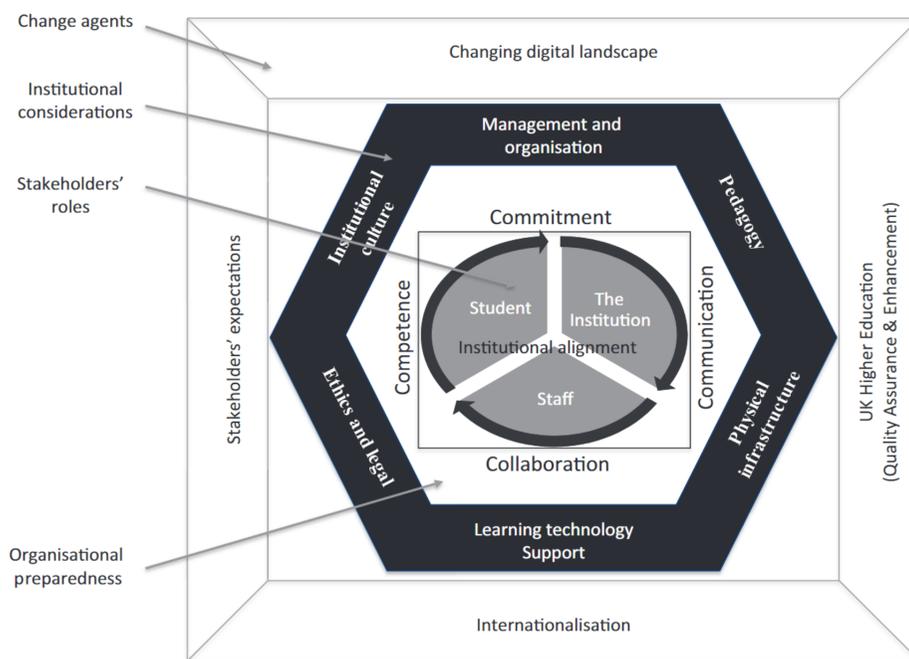


Figure: Holistic framework to support effective institutional transitions into enhanced blended learning - Adekola et al (2017)

## BASELINE ISSUES

Following ethics approval (MVLS Ethics Committee Ref: 200180187) both faculty and students were asked to complete an online questionnaire to establish a baseline of user experience with the current Moodle design.

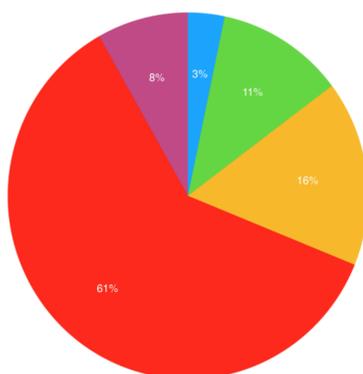
Students Contacted = 285, Responses = 60, Response rate = 21%

### Student Issues

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Complaints fell into the following themes:

- Poor Organisation & Layout
- Late document upload
- Limited Search functionality
- Lack of extra resources beyond lecture slides
- Poor staff/student communication
- Inconsistent formatting & naming conventions



I can always find the resources I need for a lesson.

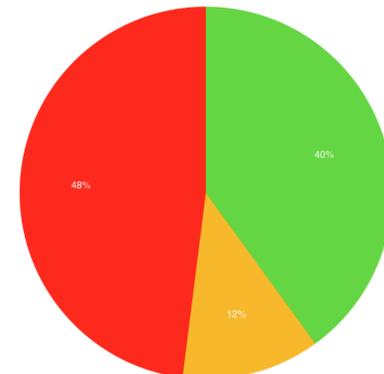
Staff Contacted = 49, Responses = 25, Response Rate = 51%

### Staff Issues

Strongly Agree Agree Neither Agree nor Disagree Disagree Strongly Disagree

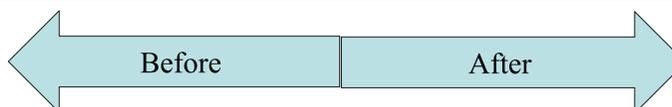
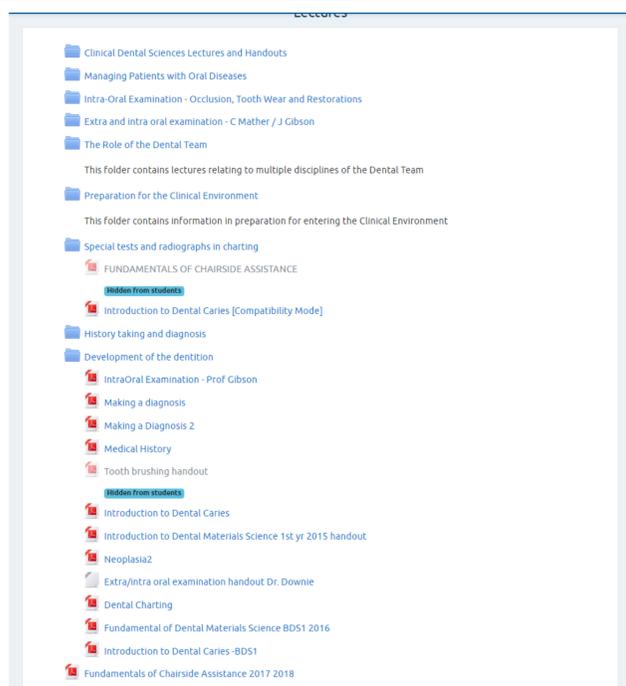
Complaints fell into the following themes:

- Poor Organisation & Layout
- Insufficient support & training
- Poor student engagement
- Lack of access
- Workload / not enough time



I always know where on Moodle I should put resources my students need for a lesson.

## PROJECT DESIGN/PLAN



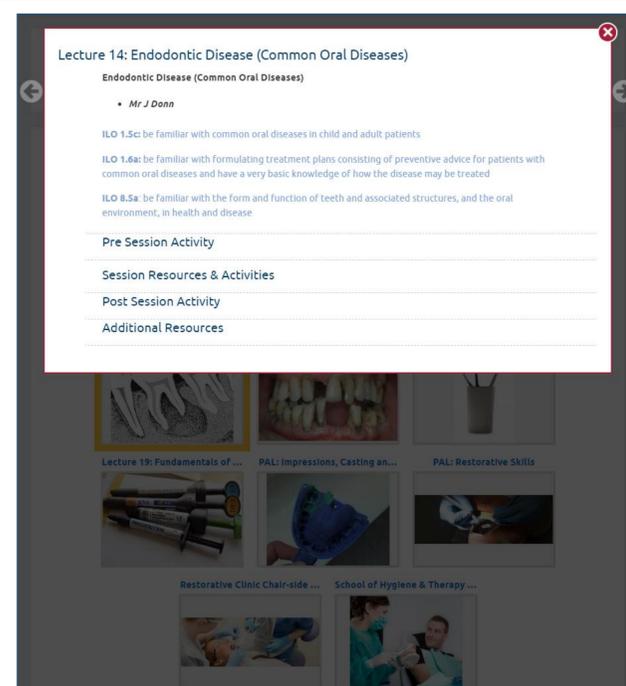
Following extensive discussions with all key stakeholders we agreed to take a two-phase approach to the redevelopment. This was to ensure essential changes were universal, but to also allow more pedagogically proactive staff to engage with active and blended approaches

### Phase One – Redesign

- Break the theme into consistent sub-themes across the programme
- Give each sub-topic a new Moodle Course page
- Develop blank template with standard headings for consistency
- Activate "Completion tracking"

### Phase Two – Active/Blended Learning

- Meet with student partners & teaching staff
- Identify best active/blended approaches for the context
- Use ABC Learning Design (Young & Perovic 2016) to visualise student progress
- Use new templates & headings to prompt academics
- Staff/student partnership to actively support teaching staff develop new approaches and materials



**Next steps:-** At the end of the 2019/20 session the new sections will be evaluated by means of a second set of staff & student questionnaires, and appropriate focus groups. If the results are encouraging we intend to roll the new Moodle templates across the remaining teaching themes in academic year 2020/21.

We plan to disseminate the full results of our study in late 2020.

## References

- Adekola, J., Dale, V.H. and Gardiner, K., 2017. Development of an institutional framework to guide transitions into enhanced blended learning in higher education. *Research in Learning Technology*, 25.
- Crothers, A.J., Bagg, J. and McKerlie, R., 2017. The Flipped Classroom for pre-clinical dental skills teaching - a reflective commentary. *British Dental Journal*, 222(9), pp. 709- 713.
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- Young, C. and Perovic, N., 2016. Rapid and creative course design: as easy as ABC?. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 228, pp.390-395.