

The Role of Staff Development to Enhance the Integration of E-learning within the HE Curriculum

Catherine Gerrard, Thomas M Connolly, and Mark Stansfield
University of Paisley, High St, Paisley, PA1 2BE

email: catherine.gerrard@paisley.ac.uk, thomas.connolly@paisley.ac.uk,
mark.stansfield@paisley.ac.uk

Abstract

In recent years, there has been a huge uptake in the adoption of virtual learning environments (VLEs) within UK universities and technologies that were once only employed for distance learning courses are now being used for everyday on-campus teaching. However, the introduction of VLEs into traditional face-to-face teaching has been patchy and ad hoc rather than strategic and in many instances, in the rush to justify their purchase cost, the emphasis for staff development has been placed on training in the use of the technology rather than how the technology can be used to enhance the learning and teaching process. This paper is part of ongoing research which seeks to identify the role of staff development as a means to extend e-learning beyond existing pockets of innovation and to effect a transformational change that will impact on the student learning experience.

The paper will discuss the issues surrounding the 'embedding' of e-learning where the interest is not in promoting the use of e-learning for its own sake but to improve the student experience by supporting practitioners to incorporate e-learning effectively into their teaching. The paper will draw on previous research to illustrate some of the ways in which staff development for e-learning is currently being addressed within UK universities and highlight the key issues raised. The overall aim of the research on which this paper is based, is to develop a framework for HE staff who are re-purposing their teaching for online delivery.

Keywords: e-learning, staff development, virtual learning environments, re-purposing.