Making Learning Visible:

Using Video and Wiki Technology to Increase Student Engagement with Learners in Large International Cohorts – Two Case Studies from UK Higher Education.

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Background

- Rapid growth in student numbers on both modules (class sizes of up to 465)
- Low base in terms of technology use in the classroom - funding through JISC for trials and technical support.
- "Students as Agents of Change"
- Both cases conceived as action research projects (Kemmis, 1988)



Theoretical rationale

- Social constructivism communication underpinning knowledge construction and higher level learning (Bruner, 1996, Vygotsky, 1978, Wertsch, 1985)
- Encouraging collaborative learning through group work to improve learning outcomes (Johnson et al. 1991)
- Self-regulated learning (Ridley et al. 1992;
 Zimmerman, 1989) and self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, 2002)
- Feedback, Feed forward and peer review (Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Rodway-Dyer and Dunne, 2009)

Research Aims

Video Camcorder

- Review technological, organisational and pedagogic issues in use of Flip camcorders by students
- Whether and in what ways student-led use of camcorders can support learning and skills
- Develop and refine practices incrementally using student feedback
- Develop resources and recommendations for future use of camcorders

Wiki

- Ascertain the extent to which using a wiki can help to monitor student engagement in group work effectively
- Enable decision-making about whether a wiki is able to provide a suitable vehicle for assessment that supports learning and achievement for all students



Research Design/Methods

Video Camcorder

- Three stage project covering three cohorts on a 1st year BA Business and Management module – Theory and Practice of Management
- Pilot study in first year (2009).
 Used student reflective accounts
 and tutor perceptions to refine
 phases 2 and 3
- Survey written and administered by Video Champions
- Focus groups
- Post-completion questionnaire

Wiki

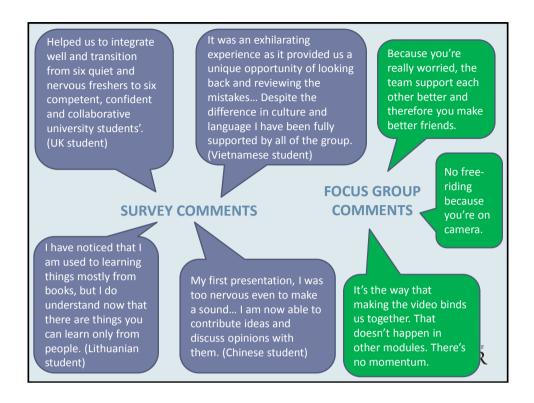
- Three stage project covering three cohorts on an MSc module – Strategy
- Longitudinal study September 2009-July 2012
- · Base-line survey
- Analysis of wiki use quantitative e.g. times and volumes; qualitative e.g. analysis of discourse and some netnographic observation (Kozinets, 1998)
- · Reflective statements
- Post-completion questionnaire
- Tutor perceptions



Findings – Camcorders

- Reflective accounts told rich stories of personal and academic growth
- Survey 72% thought use of video beneficial (n=161); 57% useful for reviewing group projects; 50% improved presentation skills; 40% helped with understanding by reviewing recordings
- Enabled students to understand how and what they were learning





Findings - Wiki

- Between 6% and 10% of students had used wikis previously
- Over 97% of cohort engaged with the wiki in a substantive way each year
- 14% of the cohort in 2010/1 considered it to be the best aspect of the module
- Asynchronous nature of discussions on the wiki enabled less confident students to participate more fully
- · Free-riders easily identified and dealt with
- Plagiarism and academic dishonesty virtually absent
- Many of the findings from other case studies using wikis were confirmed in practice in this context: including – including the wiki as part of the summative course assessment leads to better participation (Cole, 2009); priming students leads to earlier engagement (Wheeler et al. 2008).



Although our group preferred face-to-face communication to commenting on the wiki, dialogues were often continued online. (German student, 2011)

I think wiki cannot replace the group meeting. However, it can be an additional tool for the group members. (International student, 2010) This tool facilitated the whole process as each member had access to the latest updates ...work recently uploaded by rest members. The later, gave the opportunity for every member to contribute to others' work and therefore improve the final data. Thus, despite the fact that --as a team- we used to allocate specific tasks in members, the final work was done by all of us (Greek Student 2012)

As a group with a high proportion of members who came from non-English speaking countries, wiki can overcome some communication barriers. Even when you can not (sic) express yourself very well in the meeting, you also got an extra opportunity to say your opinion through wiki. (International student, 2010)

Despite the fact that it took us some time to learn how to use this new tool, the Wiki has helped us collaborating and assembling every group member work. It has also enabled us to control and view changes made by others as well as correct mistakes easily. In essence, the Wiki has been a good tool for group work". (UK student, 2010)

STUDENT

COMMENTS

Using a wiki
allowed my group
to maintain
strong
communication
throughout the
process and allow
all members to
contribute to the
final project (UK
student 2012)

Conclusions

- No student could hide away and not contribute without it being noticed
- Group learning dos not rely on a few enthusiasts
- Support can be given early when group working breaks down
- Requires a high level of input from tutors if managed well
- Work submitted on time and to a high standard students worked beyond the brief
- Student focus on style and standards
- Asynchronous aspect allows students to learn at their own pace
- Re-personalises learning and provides reassurance
- Emphasises the key nature of digital literacy
- Led to increased feedback and self-regulation/self-efficacy

