

Pen Lister

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RECENT POSTS

Pen Lister

Last call for helping with my research. Anyone who has experienced anything good (and/or surprising) / useful / disruptive by a lecturer using technology as part of the learning, let me know. If its personal (ie involves a bad experience with a member of staff) then email or inbox me. I can use the info with names changed or removed. If you have any ideas for uses of tech, or how you use it with each other as part of group work, tell me. Im collating this in the project - you can see it online at <http://webteach.penworks.net/research>. There is now a lot of data and writing done.

The Research Project

webteach.penworks.net

Read Offline

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · 53 minutes ago

Pen Lister

Quick query - has anyone here done any courses online (not part of LonMet)? If so, let me know what it was like...

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 15 July at 14:38

Seen by 3

Write a comment...

Pen Lister

Ive come across something quite interesting in research papers Im reading. A comment about when more learning materials are made available to students, they do less work themselves. Is this true? For example, if you have lots of lecture slides and handouts given to you, do you therefore not bother to read core texts?

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 25 June at 06:11 via Mobile

Seen by 4

Andrea Turso

I had written a long comment which in nutshell would have read 'it's all a vicious circle'. In fact more and more students forget what being taught means, which will eventually lead professors to feel obliged to adequate their standards to meet their lazy students.

Lazier students will only ask for lazier professors, and lazier professors neednt deliver quality to lazy students. Which is why nowadays students think they are studying because they're reading through the learning materials, i.e. 20 slides of incomprehensible bullet points or other scrawls.

I've seldom used learning materials but to get a vague idea of what a professors wanted to be told or read during examinations.

Core texts I've only read depending on the reasoning a teacher could give on the book they had chosen. Generally I do all my research from the sources I deem most appropriate.

25 June at 07:40 · Edited · Like

Write a comment...

What should people post in this group?

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15 mutual friends

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Sabine Müller

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David Andrew

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Simon Williams

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Nagja Amrit likes this.

Like

http://www.tcnj.edu/~jimms/previous/Readings/Week1/Cog_Effects_Prog.pdf

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 19 June at 00:16 near London

Seen by 5

Pen Lister ok, interesting (rather old) paper, but makes a good point early on:

(on "two widespread beliefs about the mental activities engaged by programming a computer and their expected cognitive and educational benefits")

"The first belief is linked to an atomistic, behaviorist tradition that views learning narrowly. This is the traditional and deeply-en grained idea that learning is simply an accumulation of relatively autonomous "facts". On this view, what one learns when learning to program is the vocabulary of commands (primitives) and syntactic rules for constructing acceptable arrangements of commands. This belief underlies most programming instruction. Its other facet is that what one learns when learning programming is just a programming language. The contrasting belief, in part a reaction to the first belief, is that through programming, children are learning much more than programming, far more than programming "facts"—it is that children will acquire powerfully general higher cognitive skills such as planning abilities, problem-solving heuristics, and reflectiveness on the revisionary character of the problem solving process itself"

So, what's your point?

19 June at 08:35 · Edited · Like

Write a comment...

Pen Lister

Quick questions about your thoughts on Weblearn, and how it is used. Give feedback on any aspect or all aspects - whatever takes your fancy:

1. Do you think course material is good quality, well organised and easy to find?
2. Do all lecturers provide material in Weblearn?
3. Do all lecturers provide material in Weblearn in a timely manner, i.e. in time for class, or revision, for example?
4. Do you think material in Weblearn adds to the value and quality of your learning?
5. Do you think Weblearn is easy or hard to use?
6. Do you think Weblearn is up to date or old fashioned?
7. Have you ever used a discussion forum in Weblearn?

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 13 June at 08:09

Seen by 5

Gabriele Butkute 1. Yeah, it's easy to find. It's well organised. I mean a long as you can find the material quickly - that's all that matters. Nobody is looking at it as a piece of art 😊

2. Yes.

3. No!!! Sometimes it is really frustrating when they do not upload sample papers early or lab notes as then you turn up at the lab with no idea what you will do. That impairs my learning.

4. They put the very minimum there - lecture notes and tutorial questions. But of course that forms the basics and then you can research the subject deeper.

5. Easy. It's really straightforward.

6. Well, I'd say it's getting better as the one we had last year was really old fashioned.

7. Yes. During a couple of groupworks. I do like it a lot and it's convenient that you get an email when there is a new message in case you don't use weblearn daily. Our tutors take the participation in the board as one of the marking criteria.

13 June at 09:05 via mobile · Edited · Like

Andrea Turso 1. No it's terrible in terms of "one can't possibly teach seriously with those slides". This is generally true to most of the modules I had been taught in LMU, even the good ones.

2. Some of them don't, for example we had a professor who preferred Blogger and Scribd to Weblearn. This was fine until Scribd blocked the downloading of documents to users who don't contribute back to the community.

4. No, because slides oversimplify the course of a lecture, tricking lecturers into thinking they can fill 55 minutes with 10 minutes worth of presentation, or maybe extend the presentation to include a gazillion slides with unimpressive statements or disorganised diagrams. I'd suggest we all go back to blackboards because frankly I don't like how material and slides is being passed year after year from one teacher to the other without being updated and improved.

5. and 6. Weblearn from a certain point of view it's a nice piece of software, but it seems the company behind it's more concerned with the technicalities than making their software easy to use. In fact they've hardly improved the user interface and user experience in the new version, which brings us to the point of how easy, or hard, it is to find material on weblearn. Weblearn probably suggests a document structure on its manual which different people have possibly interpreted in different ways making the navigation of some module a bit slow. Another problem with weblearn it's the amount of features and "zones" we're not using and are there just to confuse the hell out of the user. In general the weblearn experience it's quite poor as it doesn't have more value than a network storage would have, indeed having all the files stored on a network storage accessible with a File System (like the X: network drives) would be easier to access.

7. Rarely because it's hard to follow what's going on and actively participate to conversations. I believe most BBLearn users don't like staying logged into the application more than it's required to accomplish their initial goal, be it download a CW paper, slides or workshop exercises.

13 June at 10:09 · Like

Write a comment...

Pen Lister

New points to consider, and laggards (you know who you are!) do please share your VALUABLE input, this is important to me, and potentially to others too 😊 Also, Ill buy you a drink or three.

1. Could our digital library service be much better, if so how?
2. Do you expect more in the way of provision of technology to help with your studies - if so, what would you like to have?
3. Do you wish you could log in once, for everything?

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 7 June at 11:41

Seen by 6

Andrea Turso 1 and 2) Could you please add more to this? I don't really know what digital services our libraries provide besides the booking system?

3) A Single Sign On for Weblearn and Evison would be much appreciated. SSO would also be useful for the library services website and the other external such as IEEE explore or OnTheHub.

7 June at 11:48 · Like

Pen Lister OK more info as I would see it - youve just listed some online resources for your subject area - maybe we could have that for every subject area, that students could even add recommendations to - the library does offer a comprehensive academic journal library online, and also the inter library loan system, for real books from other libraries. No other digital material is offered afak.

For technology used to support study, it might be useful to have student developed wiki resources, or even shared (group) blogs for projects, or informal feedback online between tutor and student, or student group. These are just examples.

7 June at 11:54 · Like

Georgina Hewitson 1) I haven't used it yet so I haven't formed an opinion 2) No, there are computers that work most of the time and I have my own stuff. But I live with my parents so my opinion may vary to others who don't have lots of technology available to them at home. 3) YES! Does my head in.

7 June at 11:55 · Like

Pen Lister Georgina, also see my examples for other things you might be able to have re 1 and 2.

7 June at 11:56 · Like

Georgina Hewitson We tried blogging for a piece of coursework and it didn't work well as the other students just weren't interested in participating. I like the last idea though involving the informal feedback. Sounds like it would be helpful to a lot of students. One where an entire tutor group could communicate including the tutor would mean that information could flow quickly and could be corrected or added to easily by the tutor.

7 June at 11:59 · Like

Andrea Turso It would be nice to have access electronics labs open to all students where we could work with Open Hardware such as the Arduino controller, the Raspberry Pi embedded pc, Rep-Rap the self replicating 3D printer. Show people a 3d printer they'll find a thousand ways to get into electronics or programming.

But personally I believe it's more important and urgent to have access to non proprietary operating systems on all university computers, for instance any GNU/Linux distribution will do but Ubuntu and Fedora benefit the best business and enterprise support from Canonical and Red Hat.

Another thing it would be nice to have it's easier ways to borrow books "on the fly". For example it's very nice that the tenth floor of Tower Building (T10) teachers leave their books on a closet for students or other professors to take freely. For starters we could have some bookshelves at different places around the campus for people to leave books, and borrow them for as long as they wish.

12 June at 21:20 · Edited · Unlike · x3 1

Pen Lister interesting input Andrea. I like the "books on the fly" - but of course some staff might think it was an open invitation to everything. There's a 3d printer at the university - I think its part of Metropolitan Works. The CASS students have access, I don't see why others wouldn't (but this is subject specific, not all students would wish for this). The other input on OS etc is very relevant to your (our) subject area, but again not of interest to most other students (allegedly).

13 June at 08:02 · Like · x3 1

Write a comment...

Pen Lister

Ok groovsters (yes that does mean Adnan, Kristiyana, Milja, Sharon, Georgina, Gabriele, Stefano, and Andrea. I need to know what you're thinking, and you can speak totally freely here, as I won't attach any comments to names in my research reporting. So BE OUTSPOKEN if you wish.

I know some people have concerns about WHAT they are taught - but at this point Im interested in HOW they are being taught. My main interest is tech skills/knowledge and ideas, whether staff have imagination enough to use tech, how they use it etc. So Ill feed in a bunch of stuff to get chat going a bit, but if things occur to you, then just start talking about it.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 4 June at 09:13

Seen by 8

Gabriele Butkute My opinion is the same as Georgina's... Quite frequently we have to shout out advice on how to open a link or something. Some of the younger tutors are more fluent and comfortable with using tech, but the older ones find it hard. And I would guess they are quite defensive about it and wouldn't be open about it. Sometimes it is a bit frustrating to see them struggle but at the end of the day students in my course are tolerant and we don't really mind as long as they explain things clearly.

4 June at 09:20 · Like

Sharon Davies I've had lectures that have ended up being pretty much defunct as the lecturer hasn't been able to access their PowerPoint presentation. As a result of the day savvy technology isn't the be all and end all - I've had lectures that have been based on a Word document that have still been useful and engaging.

I've also had lectures that have used Prezi...well, once or twice. It was fun to look at but I can't say I learnt anything more than I would have done if Prezi wasn't used. It's more of an engagement tool I guess.

What I'm trying to say is that basically a lot of it comes down to the lecturer and their presentation style as opposed to the technology used, though I'm all for innovative techniques.

It'd like to see teaching move towards interactive technology, such as electronic whiteboards and the like. Granted the use of technology requires a great deal of investment, not just in equipment but in training and support, but at the end of the day it's a necessity in order to compete with other providers.

There's always the stereotypical generation gap when it comes to the use of technology and I know not everyone is keen on advancements, but at the end of the day people need to realise that we're not using chalkboards and abacuses anymore.

Having said all of this, it's not just teaching staff that lack technological skills...many students can't even fathom out how to photocopy a sheet of paper, print double sided or format documents correctly (and often need spoon feeding in order to do so). Perhaps I'm a little biased with a background in administration, but a little pro activity wouldn't go amiss (after all everyone says "google it" these days!).

Err, end of essay!

4 June at 11:27 via mobile · Like

Pen Lister Do pls carry on with these thoughts - this is useful. Maybe perhaps think about other ways tech might be used rather than maybe just presentations - what about feedback delivery, or input from students to actually develop a module syllabus, as you went along, or even using mobile video to contribute to a coursework?

4 June at 11:32 · Like

Pen Lister I also take the point about students not being savvy either - its something I have listed as a topic, and want to follow this up later

4 June at 11:32 · Like

Sharon Davies There should be more opportunity for students to be technologically creative with their assignments across all faculties - I'm not sure why there is such a focus on essays which devalues the way of communication and ICT skills (both of which are valuable in the workplace).

There are facilities in Weblearn that are not utilised (course areas, for example) which could benefit feedback and interaction with students as a whole. As it stands we are not really encouraged to communicate by any means.

4 June at 11:38 via mobile · Like · x3 1

Write a comment...

Pen Lister

What about this (and going on what Gabriele has just said) - another topic I want to ask is "Do you expect more in the way of how technology is used in your teaching and learning?"

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 4 June at 09:33

Seen by 8

Gabriele Butkute I suppose it would make lectures more attractive, but somehow as longer as the lecture is properly explained - it's fine. I have one excellent lecturer who doesn't use much tech but his lectures are still entertaining and capture students' attention.

4 June at 09:42 · Like

Pen Lister I spose if you never had it, you dont know what youre missing?

4 June at 09:55 · Like

Gabriele Butkute Exactly! You just get used to the way things are.

4 June at 09:56 · Like

Pen Lister So imagine what it might be like if you had the service of say, a much more modern app to integrate with your module - what would that be like?

4 June at 09:56 · Like

Pen Lister or what about supporting materials?

4 June at 09:57 · Like

Georgina Hewitson I think everything would work a bit smoother and revision would be easier to start rather than having to wait for a module to be updated. But what a good thing or will it promote laziness and a lack of further reading?

4 June at 10:34 · Like

Sharon Davies I've kind of touched on this in another comment, but generally yes - I expect teaching methods to be modified/improved as technology allows, though I'm not the be all and end all. Some sort of consistency would be nice for starters!

4 June at 11:32 via mobile · Like · x3 1

Write a comment...

Pen Lister added Milja Zarubica to the group.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 29 May at 10:52

Milja Zarubica likes this.

Pen Lister I hope you will help me with my MA research Milja , its just informal discussion in this group, on a few topics about technology in learning and teaching (and student support). I think you'd find it would be very valuable.

4 June at 09:12 · Like

Write a comment...

Pen Lister added Gabriele Butkute to the group.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 2 June at 08:37

Seen by 7

Pen Lister I hope you will help me with my MA research Gabriele, its just informal discussion in this group, on a few topics about technology in learning and teaching (and student support). I think your input would be very valuable.

Most people here are SocialMet teamsters, of which you are welcome to be part too. 😊

4 June at 09:11 · Like

Write a comment...

Pen Lister

FIRST TOPIC: "Do you think staff know more or less than you do, about technology?"

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 2 June at 08:36

Seen by 8

Georgina Hewitson More often than not they seem to know less as they struggle when they can't set lecture slides up. But maybe I would be. Some definitely know as much as I do if not more. But, yeah, we as students have found our selves shouting out suggestions on how to sort out a PowerPoint slide or open a hyperlink.

2 June at 08:25 via mobile · Like · x3 1

Sharon Davies It really depends on the member of staff and what they teach (for example I can guarantee anyone that works in Computing knows more about computers than I do), but generally I'd say that they know less.

2 June at 10:56 via mobile · Like · x2 1

Andrea Turso Technology as in smartphones, tablets, computers in general (i.e. using electronic devices that have a processor) or as in Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other fields of computing?

So my question is what are we trying to gauge: how easily these people can cope with technology (as for example a projector, or a new smartphone) or how good they are at their lecturing job in a computing-related degree course? Am assuming we're discussing re teaching staff.

Teachers should be mentoring rather than dubbing. For me it all boils down to: If they don't love their job then they're doomed to deliver uninteresting or low-quality lectures; and if they fail to externalise their love for their subject they fail to inspire, hence they fail in general at their job.

I believe this factor mostly influence the perceived competence of a lecturer: it doesn't matter if they are competent with technology or whatever as long as they are able to keep their field alive inspiring their students to either follow the same path and become mentors themselves, or possibly pick any other path possible in that field of the industry.

2 June at 11:07 · Like

Pen Lister No this can be any subject area, its not about quality of lecturer re their subject. Its about how much you think lecturers are tech savvy, no matter what their subject area. Like, do they know how to use smartphones or tablets, or ill the podium kit (like Georgina refers to). We'll get to quality of lectures later, (but only in relation to how well technology may or may not be used.)

2 June at 11:13 · Like

Pen Lister Nothing said at all, all comments are useful as I will be categorising and collating later.

2 June at 11:14 · Like

Write a comment...

Pen Lister

Update - welcome etc. Thanks for being my 'student' group for my research. Anyone who wants to know what it's about, go here (there will be regular updates too) <http://webteach.penworks.net/research>. I won't need much of your precious time. Ill just post up a question here now and again for you to comment on. Please also share links etc if you think it's relevant.

Thanks bigtime for helping out! 😊

webteach.penworks.net

Imp: the thinking chair MA Research These webpages are to provide a view on my MA Learning & Teaching in Higher Education dissertation research: "An exploration of key factors influencing (promoting or hindering) current & future use of technologies in L&T, with

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · 29 May at 10:55

Andrea Turso likes this.

Seen by 7

Write a comment...

Pen Lister created the group.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · 23 May at 15:41

Adnan Pavel likes this.

Seen by 7

Write a comment...

Andrea Turso and 9 other people are in this group

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