

E-learning: an opportunity or a threat for regionally based inter-working between universities and industry

John Slater

UK Open University

Thesis



- **E**ducating the current workforce in an ongoing way is important to the region, the employer, and the learner.
- **T**he possibilities afforded by eLearning are a threat to regional (and national and EU) structures under some circumstances (and the solution is not protectionism).
- **T**he possibilities for breaking provision down so that for instance support can be local and development global are beginning to be explored where the regulatory framework and culture (inc. language) permit (i.e. largely outside Europe) .
- **U**nderstanding how to support and encourage in this environment is a potential significant opportunity for differentiation.

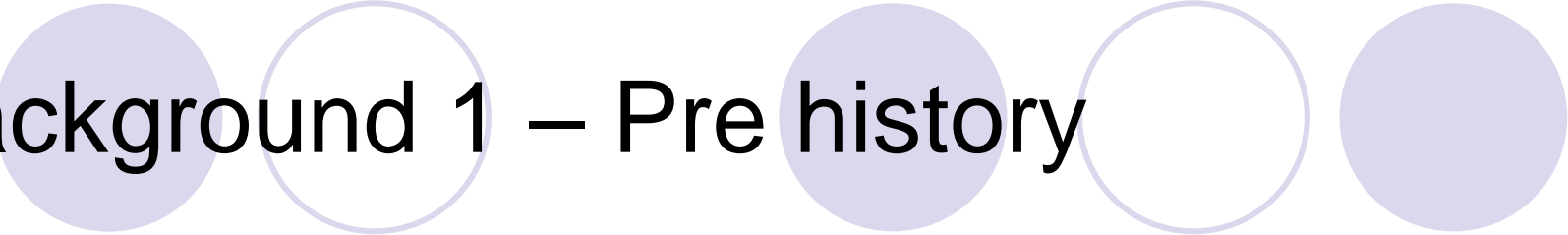
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Overview

- **Background**
- **Learners are changing**
- **Adapting to changing circumstances**
- **Here comes the technology**

- **Blended Learning**
- **Local and global**
- **Accreditation and awards**
- **How to proceed?**



Background 1 – Pre history

- **Industry** – mainly unclear as to ed needs
- **Not a priority for universities:** increasingly so for community colleges
- **Brand** all important ($O \geq C > I > \dots$)
- **Coarse granularity** (Masters and PhDs)



Background 2 - History

- **E**ducation vs training
- **N**eeds frequent encouraging interventions
- **T**raining in specialisms eg MScs
- **I**ndustry “days” and short courses etc. but largely universities want to deal with students not employers
- **R**&**D** focus nearly always paramount
- **E**mployers have lots of informal links with universities



Learners 1: Changing cohorts.

- **S**creenagers/ **H**omo Zappiens/ **M**illennials
- **H**ave shorter attention spans but
- **A**tttempt and then think
- **M**ultitasking expected

- **B**etter group skills
- **I**nformal/ **F**ormal increasingly blurred
- **O**vertly seeking qualifications/ tickets

Learners 2



- This lot learn better when the following factors are present
- **Leadership**
- **Integration**
- **Value to the learner perceived by learner**
- **Ethos (The 3 Es) – retention/recruitment +ve**
- **Sensible support model**



Adapting to changing circumstances?

- **Work Based Learning**
- **Increasing use of technology**
- **Typology getting sorted within Europe**
- **Less monolithic, more modularisation**
- **Encourage learner group participation**
- **Some industry involvement in determining the syllabus and in delivery**
- **Some work into what is actually required**



Here comes the technology 1

- **O**pen learning
- **E**learning
- **D**istance learning
- **I**ncreasing globalizati**z**ation
- **P**layers allowed from outside the game
- **U**SA driven but enthusiastic take up elsewhere (corporates)
- **S**uits a lot of learners ... but not all



Here comes the Technology 2

- **W**hen it largely went wrong we realised
- **R**esearch base was lacking
- **E**nthusiasm preferred over pedagogy
- **C**licking no substitute for group work
- **K**icked against by university workers
supported by educational policy,
regional and national etc.
- **S**upport models inadequate

Blended learning 1

- **E**learning, **F**ace to face, **M**ultimedia, **T**hreaded discussions, **C**hatrooms, **B**logs, etc.
- **D**isaggregation (see below)
- **L**earners like it – especially if they control the mix - as do organisations
- **I**nterdigitate offerings from a number of suppliers
- **T**ailor to learner characteristics above
- **E**ncourages and supports nomadic learning



Blended learning 2: Disaggregation

- **I**nitial development
- **D**elivery and QA
- **E**nhancement and situation
- **A**ssessment and awards
- **S**upport



BL Disaggregation examples from the UK

- **CISCO/MS** qualifications taught widely
- **HW/** Scottish Knowledge etc
- **Arab** Open University (30K students)
- **Off** shore campuses – eg Nottingham
- **Sheffield** collaboration



Local and Global: The theory

- **C**an take the best bits from specialised providers – remote in many cases
- **A**dd local support from those that know the learners and the context
- **N**etwork support plus some face to face
- **D**iscrete packages of learning
- **O**verview and pulling together locally



Accreditation and awards

- **I**ncreasingly possible with local consolidator university/college
- **P**rofessional body can also act if required
- **S**o can the multinational – directly or through learners
- **O**ptions of accumulate/transfer credit, move learner, add WBL, add APL.



Recommendations: multinationals

- **I**dentify what they want globally: add local
- **F**ind local suppliers that can also work globally with others
- **O**ffer their own involvement (support etc)
- **N**etwork between providers
- **L**earners involved in driving the system
- **Y**ell at strategists in the way



Recommendations: universities

- **L**isten to multinationals sympathetically
- **A**ccept globalisation –collaborate (EU skill)
- **M**ake disaggregation work
- **B**ase more offerings on regional priorities
- **S**how flexibility



Recommendations: strategists

- **Encourage** standards of typology etc (Bologna et al)
- **Preach** credit transfer/disaggregation
- **Encourage** removal of restrictive practices by modifying regulatory frameworks
- **Encourage** seamless boundaries between levels of education and understanding
- **Support** interworking between ed and multinationals in a variety of ways