CASE STUDY
Production and Presentation: Notes

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Open to people, places, methods and ideas – strong social mission
UKs largest distance education provider and recognised global world leader of DE and online education

Slide 3

We tend not to recruit many elite students – quite the reverse. The Open university has a strong social mission which means that it is open to all. This means that:
There is no entry requirement. From our current student body

- No formal qualifications 3%
- A Levels - amount not specified 12%
- 1 A Level or lower 39%
- 2 A Levels or equivalent 24%
- HE qualification 20%
- Postgraduate qualification 3%

Often our students have previously been failed by education system
They frequently lack confidence and appropriate study skills
Around 10% of our students declare a disability
73% of our students work full or part-time during studies so many of our students are studying while juggling work/family commitments

With the odds stacked against them, at the OU we had to understand how best to support our students to achieve their study goals? – THIS IS THE OU'S OPPORTUNITY.
At the OU we have made judgments about how to support our students based upon what we think and believe to be best for our students – underpinned by data and understanding what drives student success.

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Technology plays an increasingly prominent role in the world of learning, work and leisure and ensuring learners are capable critical and digital citizens is imperative.
In order to meet the changing needs of our students and society, and to operate effectively in a complex, rapidly changing world, the OU is constantly rethinking the processes of designing, developing and delivering enhanced learning experiences to ensure that the teaching approaches, including technologies can respond nimbly.
One of the changes in learning and teaching over recent years has been the variety of technologies which have been adopted to support teaching and learning.
Informal Environment (refers to learning that is not accredited or leading to a qualification – yet!)
'Over 200m views of our BBC programmes in the UK each year'
'Over 8m visitors to our online channels' like OpenLearn, YouTube and FutureLearn each year

‘13% of those visiting OpenLearn visit our student enquiries site’

Formal Environment

175000 forum views /day
160 new Modules being produced each year
500 Modules in constant updating or iterative development annually
Over 1 million VLE transactions /day

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The OU produces and deliver modules across a variety of mediums. We have a policy tat states ‘The learning experience will be designed with learning outcomes in mind and the pedagogical approach will take advantage of the most appropriate medium whether that be print or fully online’. In addition, we promise that all content is mobile first and available online and via mobile devices offline as well.
Have always adapted to and made use of cutting-edge technology to improve student experiences (for example, home microscope kit, lectures delivered overnight on BBC2, OU Anywhere).

Learning Design is the process of designing great teaching.

Technology Enhanced Learning is the process of designing a great learning experience in a digital environment.

Benefits to OU

- Leads to pedagogic driven improvement processes (i.e. technologies evolve based on pedagogic imperative).
- Increases student engagement through better designed activities and modules.
- Shorter production cycles
- Supports emerging tuition and assessment policies
- Focuses academic engagement around curriculum development, not administration.
    - Provide a wider range of content and resources in the most effective way;
    - Increases the flexibility of provision
    - Better understanding of ‘what works’ (evidence based approach) - increased use of the VLE also means that we are better able to track student interaction with the VLE and use that data to predict student success (Analytics).

Benefits for our students

- Increased understanding: animations, simulations and videos can all be used to demonstrate something that is hard to understand from explanations in words or on paper.
- Student-centered: students can participate in online course activities when and where works best for them.
- Reinforcing learning: online resources allow students to revisit or go over challenging material at their own pace and as often as they require.
- Immediate feedback: computer quizzes are enjoyed by many students and can often provide immediate feedback.
- Encourage learner independence and support personal development;
- Enhance the learner experience and make it more personally focussed;
- Provide opportunities for students to develop their skills in communicating, collaborating and teamwork;
    - Enables support of learners in building knowledge collaboratively and engaging in social learning;

Technology should not be seen as the principle driver for an excellent learning experience but as an enabler

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LTS sees its roles as changing the learning experience through technology-enhanced learning and this being translated to a rich learning experience which will change students lives . The Student is at the heart of what we do in LTS .
We are particularly responsible for

Development of modules with Module Teams

Production of module both online, print and all alternative formats (eg mobile first delivery)

Delivery of Learning Materials (via OuAnywhere, the Warehouse (distribution)

Managing the Learning Systems Roadmap and the accountability for the virtual learning environment.

Versioning of content for multiple platforms (FutureLearn, MOOCS; iTUnesU, YouTube etc.)

LTS is part of the Learning and Teaching Portfolio. Made up of LT Centre /Library /OMU Open Media Unit/Knowledge Media Institute KMi and Institute of Educational Technology (IET).
LTS works very closely with Academic colleagues in the Faculties. Relationships have developed over the years and this is very important to us.
It is important that LTS influences and leads Technology Enhanced Learning integrated within Learning Design for the OU. It is very much LTS's role to ensure a rich learning experience for the student now and for the future.

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Commissioning leads on planning, commissioning LTS resource, monitoring and reporting on progress while proactively managing risk and evaluating and reviewing all production.

Development and Production (D&P) focuses on developing, producing, delivering and supporting module content

TEL focuses on integration with learning design, innovation in TEL and learning environments

Slide 8

LTS sees its roles as changing the learning experience through technology-enhanced learning and this being translated to a rich learning experience which will change students lives . The Student is at the heart of what we do in LTS .
It is important that LTS influences and leads TEL for the OU. It is very much LTS's role to ensure a rich learning experience for the student now and for the future.
The role of LTS has changed dramatically over the past 3-5 years from solely being a publishing house to being a leader in innovation and the design of learning experiences. As a centralised resource faculties commission module (course/unit) development based on a model of life expectancy from anywhere between 5-10 years of module life (course/unit) as a return on production and presentation costs (the later which are significantly more than the actual production- this is the OU Tutor model which I speak about in the video presentation). This is the business case which is developed as part of what call the

StageGate process. This enables the OU to scale development and presentation and ensure activities and all development can be accurately costed and afforded- and that makes sure 'vanity' modules are not produced!
The LTS teams are actively engaged with producing learning designs, producing media, graphics, video etc. drawing on analytics, student data alongside Module Teams which are lead by Faculty Academics.
A huge point of difference is that the PVC Learning and Innovation owns the VLE so the standards and the user experience is pre-determined in relation to the design of the VLE. So, academic staff are not concerned with what colour the headings are, what the type size is or even where the assessment blocks go etc. They are responsible for what the learning experience is within the learning design and the expert discipline content. We don't expect our academics to build the module rather they provide input to that. After all the life expectancy is such that the quality is of a very standard to last the distance. We build it once, test it constantly in the development process and once it is in presentation it is updated incrementally and that is also built into the business case- so we know how much it is going to cost to keep it running well and can include this in academic workload models.

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LTS (in full) is fairly unique in HE in the UK and is distinct internationally with regard to size and input.
LTS is the design, production and delivery centre of the OU. This slide shows how staff in LTS interact with academic authors.
Producing learning materials is a collaborative experience between LTS and academic colleagues. The module team is made up of Faculty academics, LTS staff and learning designers from IET. Their roles are defined by the process but it starts with learning design workshops. Module teams can work together for up to 1 year.
These are Collaborative teams:

- Academics with LTS: people, media, technology, process, plus other areas of the University as appropriate
- Collaborative venture
    - Module team: subject expertise, course structure, learning outcomes
    - LTS: qualified, experienced, creative staff across all learning media

Managing the partnership
LTS has a comprehensive project management approach to ensuring modules are completed on time and to budget.

- Account management
- Project management
- Single pool of resources for agile response
- Learning and Teaching systems development
- TEL

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Producing materials at scale – we follow staged process that starts with analysis of data about the students, the learning experience itself etc. the rest I feel is obvious.

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At the OU the VLE is made up of many components. It can be understood as a collection of components or learning systems
Moodle is a key component – the main but not the only learning system
We have systems for:
library collections, submitting assignments, eAssessment, integrations with Google tools – such as email and docs, synchronous voice collaboration for tutorials, webpage annotations, and referencing
As well as teaching tools the VLE incorporates tools and features to help students in their own learning by;
Supporting a more mobile device oriented landscape;
Extending the range of ways students can contribute and share ideas and content;
Giving the student more control in specifying how they want the VLE to look and function for them
Altogether we can provide a rich toolkit for developing a very wide range of teaching and learning

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For an idea about scale we have around:
200K active users of VLE with about 450 active module websites
Over a million transactions per day at busiest times
Busiest day this year was 6th October 2014 when we peaked at 2.5M transactions and 57K unique users.
Most heavily used interactive tool is the forum

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We have an XML based publishing workflow that integrates text, rich media and interactive activities and outputs them to a range of different formats
Web pages, word, pdf, epub2/3, kindle mobi files, daisy talking book and pdf output for printing. Each output has a particular purpose and convenience for our students

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Content in the VLE can be automatically published as epub so it can be opened in a tablet device

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All students have access to OULIVE which supports small group and tutorial activity

It is used extensively in language teaching. In this case french. The students are being asked to play just a minute - speak for one minute in French without repetition, deviation or hesitation. (This is a well known panel game on UK radio)

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We have developed an extensive quiz and assessment system to enable iCMA (online assessment).

They can be simple or very sophisticated depending on the requirement.
From very simple formative multiple choice True or False type but the learning is located in the feedback
Our quiz engine can interpret text entry. So the student can write a short answer and then get feedback
We have others that invite the student to create a diagram which can be marked and feedback given
We are have now developed a question type which allows the solving of quite complex algebraic functions..
In this example you are asked to find the cubic polynomial p(x) which makes F(x) continuously differentiable.
Type in your solution –x3 +x2-2
Then check

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The mobile view now supports rich media content and some question types so students can study, collaborate and take tests on the move. Now all the print and disc materials are also available via an app so we are truly OUAnywhere

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None

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Students are supported by 6,500 Associate Lecturers who are our equivalent to a 'casualised' workforce. They are employed on contracts which last the life of the module to ensure continuity.
So, if a module was built to last 5 years they receive a 5 year contract for the life of the module.
They are responsible for a tutor group which can be between 15-20 students depending on accreditation requirements. So, its I a very favorable ratio of 20:1.
They are not employed on academic contracts but rather an agreement we have with the Union.
Their workload also consists of marking assignments, online and offline, running tutorials f2f and online plus other activities related to eth administration of the module.
They do not regularly participate in developing materials.
They do not undertake research.
They do articulate strongly with Student Support Teams. (more about those later)

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None

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None

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None

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Students are also allocated to a qualification/subject specialist Team with a shared purpose in supporting them in their particular curriculum area, tailoring support more effectively to meet their needs.

These Student Support Teams provide integrated, continuous support throughout a student's journey to help them succeed in their study goals.

Student Support Teams are a partnership of Faculty, Academic and Student Services Staff, including Associate Lecturers. it is expected that the closer interaction of ALs with other Student Support Team staff will lead to the greater integration of support to students.

What each student gets through their Student Support Team:

- One contact point based on the subject being studied
- Joined-up learning and learner support
- Proactive support in addition to reactive support
- Whole qualification support
- A well-integrated curriculum
- A consistent study experience
- Timely, targeted and personalised communications
- Membership of a learning community
- Informed advice about choices and changes
- Support for a long journey rather than for day-trips!

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As noted previously
ALs support students on individual modules
6,500 ALs support about 200,000 students
AL:student ratio of about 1:20 on each module
Personal face of the University
Line managed by faculty staff in regional/national centres – more detail when you visit Oxford but we have John with us today for overview
Have a specific AL role, contract and terms and conditions of service – later this afternoon

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None

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None

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None

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None

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None

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1. Welcome students to the module
Introduce students to: AL's particular way of tutoring, module, qualification, University (as required)
2. Reactive study-related advice
Proactive support at defined points in the module
3. Academic content support
Develop study skills
4. Monitor student progress - Identify students needing additional support
5 Grading of continuous assessment
6. Provide feedback to the University
Engages in staff development activities

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Continuous assessment is made up of tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) and possibly computer-marked assignments (CMAs).
Some CMAs are conducted online (eCMAs) or are interactive (iCMAs). CMAs and iCMAs are made up of a series of questions and you choose the answers from a given selection.
TMAs are usually essay or short-answer questions, although some modules also require extended essays, dissertations or projects or
recorded oral assignments as part of their continuous assessment.
The examinable component of a module may be an examination, it may be a piece of work such as a dissertation, a project or portfolio, or it may include both an examination and other work. It may be written or oral.

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None

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None

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None