eLEARNING STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING – WEDNESDAY 29th April 2009

This is to confirm that the next meeting of the eLearning Standing Committee will be held from 9.30am to 11.00am, Wednesday, 29th April 2009 in the Senate Room.

Parts 1 and 2 of the agenda are to be dealt with en bloc by motion of the Chair. Part 3 is for discussion. A member may request the transfer of an item from Part 1 and/or Part 2 to Part 3.

Dr Kabilan Krishnasamy
Executive Officer
Education Policy Services
AGENDA

WELCOME
The Chair will welcome members and in particular, Professor Brett Kirk (Associate Chair, Academic Board) who will be attending his first meeting of the eLearning Standing Committee.

APOLOGIES
The Chair will record any apologies. Members are reminded that apologies should be forwarded to the Executive Officer prior to the meeting.

PART 1 – ITEMS FOR COMMUNICATION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

1. UNIVERSITY POLICY ON SELECTED TEACHING MODES – Ref F9547, F26423

Between 2005 and 2007 the University undertook a project with a view to providing a single location where authoritative versions of all University level policies could be accessed, and a template and reliable version control for all such policies. Divisions with responsibility for University Policies have been asked to convert their policies into an agreed new format using a template provided for the purpose so that they can be published to the web on the University Policies site.

Members are reminded that by its R22/08 at a meeting held on 2 April 2008, the Academic Council approved by a report from the eLearning Standing Committee as modified by the Teaching and Learning Committee, and including a policy statement, which addressed on-line courses, distance education and blended learning. A copy of the relevant extracts from the Teaching and Learning Committee and Academic Council are attached. A copy of the full report entitled “Blended learning at UWA: a discussion paper and draft policy” is available at http://committees.uwa.edu.au/acaboard/council/agendas/2008/2_april_2008.

Members are advised that the principles contained in the report have been expressed as a policy (Policy No: UP09/1) in the approved University Policy format. The policy (Attachment A), which was noted by the Academic Council at its meeting held on 1st April 2009, has been published to the University Policies site at http://www.universitypolicies.uwa.edu.au/page/117132.

For Noting.

2. WebCT AND BLACKBOARD – PROGRESS UPDATE FROM CATL – Ref F5397

The attached report (Attachment B) provides a progress update on the current status and performance of the WebCT system at UWA.

For Noting.

PART 2 – ITEMS FOR DECISION TO BE DEALT WITH EN BLOC

No items
PART 3 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

3. FACULTY- SPECIFIC ONLINE LEARNING MODULES – Ref F6591

Members are asked to consider a request (Attachment C) from the Learning Language and Research Skills (LLRS) team that Moodle be included as an additional online writing module for first-year students within the University’s centrally-supported Learning Management System (LMS).

Currently, the University supports WebCT, which has been developed by Blackboard, as the centrally provided LMS. WebCT is a set of easy-to-use design tools for constructing an online course (page layout, colour etc) by the course coordinator. Academic staff members also have access to a set of administrative tools to assist them in managing and continuously improving a course.

It is anticipated, however, that WebCT will be phased out between 2010 and 2011 when a new Blackboard system is expected to be introduced. In view of these future changes the Chair suggests that the request put forth by LLRS be placed on hold and be considered once the University’s LMS is fully reviewed with a view to re-assessing the University's online learning needs and the ability of Blackboard to meet those needs in the future. It is proposed that the review be undertaken in mid 2010.

While there have been a number of different kinds of softwares that have been used by various faculties (such as Moodle, Mallard, MySource, etc.), it is also suggested that a set of guidelines, as a basis for establishing minimum standards, be developed for the use of softwares that are not centrally-supported by the University.

For discussion.

4. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR DECISIONS REGARDING NEW TECHNOLOGIES ADOPTION AT UWA – Ref: F28401

At its meeting held on 12th June 2008, the Technical Coordination Group (TCG) agreed to explore the process for evaluating the adoption of new educational technologies. In view of the fact that some senior professional staff members and academics have been approached by new companies promoting technologies and other IT related products, the TCG agreed to establish a set of protocols for evaluating new educational technologies.

The attached paper (Attachment D) entitled, ‘Proposed framework for decisions regarding new technology adoption at UWA’ was discussed at the TCG meeting held on 5th February 2009 and the views expressed at this meeting are also attached (Attachment E) for members’ consideration.

For discussion.

5. INFORMAL REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

The Chair may advise members on any recent issue that is of particular relevance to eLearning and its course of action.
University Policy on: Selecting Teaching Modes

Purpose of the policy and summary of issues it addresses:

This policy outlines the general principles that govern the selection of appropriate teaching modes. The policy describes the context in which such principles are formulated. It identifies not only the factors to be considered when assessing the appropriateness of a delivery mode for a unit but also the nature of support to be provided for staff and students in using the emerging teaching and learning technologies.

This policy applies equally to all the University’s teaching regardless of the location or the dominant mode of teaching.

Definitions:

In this policy,

“Blended learning” is learning which combines online and face-to-face instruction.

“Distance education” is teaching and learning in which learning normally occurs in a different place from teaching.

“Online learning” is teaching and learning or training which occurs online.

“Student learning” is broad experience acquired from both within and beyond the formal setting of classrooms, laboratories and lecture theatres

“Teaching mode” is the delivery technique or means through which students are taught.

“the University” is The University of Western Australia

Policy statement:

1  The University’s Commitment to a High Quality Student Learning Experience

1.1  The University is committed to providing a high quality learning experience for all of its students.
2 Different Teaching Modes

2.1 The University recognises that there are different teaching modes which include but are not limited to the following:
- online learning
- blended learning
- distance learning education
- face to face learning mode

2.2 All teaching modes are subject to equal application of the University policy.

3 Principles Governing the Choice of Teaching Modes

3.1 The University recognises that
- there is a plurality of student needs and circumstances
- student expectations will change in line with their diverse and transforming backgrounds

3.2 The University recognises that
- technical systems and networks must be reliable and robust
- technology extends the range of tools available for teaching
- technology enables new, more effective ways of teaching and learning
- the plurality of tools enables teaching which more closely matches the plurality of student needs and expectations

3.3 The University encourages staff to make informed decisions when selecting from the full range of available teaching modes those which provide a learning experience that is student-centred, appropriate and effective.

3.3.1 A student-centered learning experience:
- Takes into account diverse student characteristics shaped by their learning attitude and outlook and study orientation.
- Caters to various student needs, such as acquisition of specialist knowledge, pursuit of career advancement, and enhancement of intellectual and social developments, in pursuing a University education.
• Responds to student expectations that are moulded by a high degree of exposure to, and use of, communications technology.
• Recognises the diversity in student cultural and educational backgrounds

3.3.2 Teaching modes must be selected appropriately according to

• Student learning styles in which different students learn in different ways and with different preferences between visual, hearing, reading and writing and kinaesthetic.
• Student locations whereby, while the majority of the UWA student body studies at the Crawley campus, significant numbers are at other sites within Perth, some are at remote locations in the State, and others are located in other States or overseas.
• Student circumstances shaped by changing priorities and responsibilities.

Procedures
Consideration of appropriateness of teaching mode for a unit must be part of the course or unit approval process.

Consideration must include but not be limited to:
• the learning objectives of the unit
• the appropriate mix of information transfer and active engagement in the unit
• the extent and nature of contact between staff and students
• the extent and nature of contact between students

3.3.3 An effective teaching mode considers how technologies are used in conjunction with other delivery methods to broaden the range of teaching tools in order to facilitate teaching in different learning situations.
Procedures

Selection of the most effective teaching tool depends on an assessment of characteristics and distinctive needs of the student group.

The main categories of teaching tools must include but are not limited to:

- Live in-person (such as teacher-led classroom teaching, hand-on labs, coaching/mentoring, on-the-job training, fieldwork)
- Synchronous virtual collaboration (such as live online learning, online chat/IM sessions, conference calls, video-conferencing)
- Asynchronous virtual collaboration (such as online discussion boards, listservs, blogs, wikis)
- Self-paced asynchronous (such as online tutorials, simulations, online self assessments, archived webinars, podcasts, CD-ROMs, lectopia)

4 Review of Unit Effectiveness

4.1 The effectiveness of a unit and its teaching mode must be reviewed three years after its introduction.

5 Access to Materials and Technology

5.1 Where online delivery modes are used the students concerned must have access to the necessary technology.

5.2 In modes which require the use of printed materials students must have appropriate access.

Procedures

The communication of digital material is subject to the Commonwealth of Australia Copyright Act 1968 (and amendments).

Advice on compliance is available from http://www.legalservices.uwa.edu.au/page/20766

Also refer to Ancillary Student Fees and Charges Guidelines which are available from http://www.teachingandlearning.uwa.edu.au/page/76621

6 Provision of Support

6.1 Through its staff training and development programmes the University supports its staff in the acquisition and development of relevant skills, including the use of emerging teaching and learning technologies, where appropriate.
Procedure
To ensure that teachers have the required knowledge on the use of technology-assisted modes of teaching, the University must provide the necessary advice, training and support.

The provision of support can extend beyond the use of technologies to the teaching skills which must be specific to a particular mode (e.g. online facilitation) and to the skills required in successfully constructing a blended course.

More detailed advice and guidance on online learning skills at UWA can be sought from the Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning and the website at: http://www.catl.uwa.edu.au/elearning/online

6.2 Through its provision of technical and physical infrastructure and of resources the University endeavours to facilitate the adoption of the full range of approved teaching modes.

Procedure
To ensure security particularly for assessments appropriate identity and access management infrastructure must be in place.

6.3 Through its student support services, faculties and schools the University supports students to acquire and develop the relevant skills to engage fully with the learning modes which are employed.

Procedure
Students must be informed of the modes by which a course will be delivered as well as the content of all courses before they enrol in a unit.

Students must have a readily available source of advice and support academically and, where online technology is involved, technically.

Students must be given consistent and transparent guidance on how they are expected to engage with learning processes and activities.
Related forms: (Link)

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Related Policies or legislation:


Report on WebCT at UWA April 2009

Current Status
The system is functional with a working production environment and a suitable offsite backup in the arts faculty machine room in the Social Sciences building. As the latest build phase was completed towards the end of 2008 the system is now in a maintenance phase. The new hardware architecture is modular which should in theory allow for future increase in either processing power or storage capacity with minimal disruption to service.

A software update to V6.2.3 was also completed at the end of 2008.

Within the production environment, there are two current areas of vulnerability. First, there is currently only one source of power supplied to the machine rack in the physics data centre. Second, the major potential failure point is the administrative node for the application layer machines which is currently utilising a single source of power. If we lose power to this machine, its ability to coordinate the work of the three other application machines will be compromised within 3 hours (or sooner).

It is anticipated that both of these issues will be resolved during a scheduled down time over the mid-semester break (April 14th to 17th) when it will cause minimum disruption. A new, dual power administrative machine will be installed and, at the same time, the production environment will be connected to a secondary power supply to improve reliability in the event of power failure in the physics data centre.

Performance
The system has functioned well since the last major hardware upgrade in July 2008. Our peak usage time in November (the last week of Semester 2 followed by study vacation and exams) saw an increase of approximately 50% in the load experienced compared to the same time in 2007 without any discernible decrease in performance or disruption to service.

We have begun analysing usage statistics for 2009. Figures suggest that in 2008 the LMS system supported;

- Over 17,000 students
- An average of 2 million transactions a day
- Approx 1,700 sites split fairly evenly between the two semesters
- 1,360 units of study (approximately 350 units have both first and second semester sites)

The breakdown of 2009 units (mainly Semester 1) by faculty as at April 2nd, 2009.

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<td>Natural and Agricultural Sciences</td>
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Tasks and Activities – Semester 1 2009

Administration
The administrative functions required to create LMS accounts and units and populate units with staff and enrolled students have been greatly improved by the creation of some online forms that have enabled staff to submit requests. Several emails were also sent to staff reminding them of the deadlines for requesting units for 2009 (February 2 for Semester 1 units).

The reminder emails were sent earlier than in previous years to enable as much administration to be undertaken as possible before the beginning of semester 1. All units requested by the published deadline were created on time and all units were populated with the correct groups of students by the end of the first week of semester.

Training & Staff Support:
In the lead up to Semester 1, the “Quickstart Guide to Developing Your 2009 LMS (WebCT) Unit” was offered 3 times, with approximately 10 to 12 participants in each session. As its name suggests, this workshop is designed to enable staff to get started with the basics of using UWA’s LMS, quickly.

Also, several faculty/school based customised versions of the “Quickstart” workshop were offered (e.g. Graduate School of Education and Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), as well as numerous one-to-one or one-to-a-few consultations being conducted by the eLearning Development and Support team for staff who were unable to attend central, faculty and/or school offered workshops.

Workshops about utilising the LMS for group work, and to selectively release materials as well as creating and managing assignments and/or assessments are planned for later this year.

LMS Infrastructure Management:
The day to day management of the technical infrastructure which supports the LMS has been transitioned from CATL (which engaged the services of Oracle, Blackboard and System Administration consultants) to UWA’s central IT Services. Whilst the Service Level Agreement is being finalised, representatives from ITS and CATL are meeting on a fortnightly basis to plan for continuing maintenance and improvement of the current infrastructure.

Yvonne Button
CATL
Dear Denise

The Learning Language and Research Skills (LLRS) team is currently developing faculty-specific online writing modules for first year students. The project is financed by a Learning and Teaching Performance Fund grant (see attached funding application).

Originally, the modules were to be delivered using WebCT. However, it has become clear, from our own research and discussions with the UWA Web Office, that the Learning Management System, Moodle, would offer greater accessibility, flexibility and ease of use for our purposes.

Academic staff in a number of faculties have indicated that having the modules available to students, whatever unit they are enrolled in, including upper level units, would be advantageous. Moodle would enable easy access for students over their entire course, whatever units they were enrolled in. WebCT would not allow that flexibility.

Moodle will not only enhance student accessibility but also LLRS staff accessibility. Updating the modules will be an integral aspect of the modules’ development, implementation and evaluation phases. LLRS staff (not always the same staff) will require at times frequent access to the modules. This could be better achieved using Moodle as the different staff members will not need to obtain permission from the unit coordinators.

For the above reasons, we would like to request that CATL add Moodle to the Learning Management Systems it fully supports.

LLRS is investigating options for funding the hosting of Moodle for a trial period during which we will evaluate its usefulness for our purposes. However, given what we know of it, we anticipate that it will provide us with the features needed to make the online modules effective, easy to use and very accessible learning tools.

Members of the LLRS team would be happy to discuss this matter further with you.

Regards

Cheryl
Developing online, Faculty-specific writing modules delivered via WebCT for UWA first-year students

Submission to the Central Learning and Teaching Performance Fund by the Learning, Language and Research Skills Team, Student Services - June 2007

Introduction and justification for the project

The University of Western Australia Guidelines on Literacy state that:

"It is imperative...that the University ensure that its graduates possess the skills of tertiary literacy and can communicate well in their chosen disciplines.... Students...are encouraged to develop the ability and desire...to write and speak clearly, concisely and logically."

As a result of recent interviews with staff and students from across the University, the Review of English Language Skills Joint Working Party has concluded that:

- The aspiration to create excellent English language skills is something the University should hold onto, and no changes should be recommended to the graduate outcome of the ability to communicate orally and in writing in English.

Other conclusions that can be reached based on these interviews are that:

- There are widespread concerns amongst faculty staff about the academic English writing skills of students entering undergraduate courses, and the low level of skills constitutes a serious problem in many discipline areas
- If the University were to put more services into the proactive English language training of students, this provision of English skills development could be a major selling point for the University, and a distinguishing feature of its offerings
- Students who seek the centralised support services available appreciate these enormously and they result in a marked improvement in skills
- Teaching writing skills in first year is advantageous as students whose writing difficulties have been picked up early and who access support have fared much better than those whose problems have been detected closer to completion
- Teaching writing skills in a disciplinary context (through, for example, partnerships between Student Services and the faculties) is most effective in addressing faculty needs and a combination of strong centralised support and discipline specific assistance is desirable
- IRIS type modules on writing skills and on-line modules like BRAIN (see Extant Models below) would be of benefit to students across the faculties and of value in addressing the evident mismatch between our expectations and what many students have experienced prior to entering UWA

In recent meetings of and discussions with the CATLysts network, it has been proposed and unanimously endorsed that:

- LLRS work in close collaboration with the faculties to address the writing skills of students
- Pending the successful outcome of this funding proposal, CATLysts act as partners in liaising with faculty personnel and advising LLRS in the development of online modules (modelled on BRAIN) that guide students through what is required to successfully complete writing tasks in their faculties

Project description

This proposal seeks funding to develop on-line, Faculty-specific modules that aim to enhance student writing. The materials will be designed in WebCT for first year students in their first semester and be developed by staff from the Learning, Language and Research Skills team (Student Services) in collaboration with teaching staff and students.

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1 This idea was discussed at the CATLyts meeting of 13 June, 2007. Expressions of interest in this project have already been received from a number of unit coordinators across the faculties who have indicated that they would like to work with us on developing this idea and that it would be helpful to their areas. They have indicated that they ‘would certainly be interested in finding some...path for the students to get some help in this area’, and that they ‘are keen to be involved.’

C:\Documents and Settings\kkirishna\Desktop\Final_funding_bid (3).doc
One module will be developed for each of 8 Faculties (based on BRAIN, a series of 4 online modules recently developed by the FMDHS with input from the MedDent Library and the LLRS team) and will provide Faculty specific advice on academic writing for first year students. The online modules will be made available as a recommended resource for students via their first year classes.

Outcomes
On completion of the project the outcomes will be:

- Discipline-specific resources on academic writing available on-line to every UWA undergraduate student
- Improved students' understanding of the required writing skills in their Faculties
- Better support for writing skills training provided to UWA teaching staff

It is also anticipated that the project will lead to:

- Improved student satisfaction (as a result of greater clarity about discipline-specific writing expectations) and retention (as a consequence of greater success in meeting these expectations)

Extant models
The LLRS team have considerable experience in developing both generic and faculty-specific resources for students. This project aims to build on the success of:

- **BRAIN (Beginning Researcher and Information Network)**, a set of online modules focusing on faculty-specific academic skills (assignment writing, using the literature, note-taking and exam strategies). Through this project, the LLRS team collaborated with FMDHS and MedDent Library staff to design a template, wrote the content, incorporated material, adapted examples and developed interactive activities.
  
  BRAIN is seen as a highly valued tool within FMDHS, with the development team receiving congratulations from many quarters, including the following: ‘You have done a fantastic job in producing a clear, innovative site which has extremely useful material for students presented in a way I am sure they (and others) will use....I have no doubt this can be used in many different areas' (A/Prof Fiona Lake - Medical Education and Respiratory Medicine).

- **LLRS 'Survival Guides'**, downloadable resources that offer quick tips on the essential skills of communicating, succeeding at assignments, managing projects and research, critical thinking and reading and generic study skills

- **‘Jump Start’ resources**, a series of themed web pages offering tips, links, audio files, book reviews, templates and resources created by LLRS on a variety of topics important in the transition of students to learning at UWA

- **LLRS podcasts**, recordings of workshop offerings on generic skills and themes

Using the academic writing component of BRAIN as a model and incorporating faculty-specific material, the aim of this project will be to extend on-line faculty modules to all other faculties thus creating a more equitable and comprehensive service to UWA students and staff.

Furtherance of the University’s Operational Priorities Plan and Strategic Direction
This project will further the 2007 agenda for education, the University’s priorities and Student Services’ strategic objectives.

This project will further the 2007 agenda for education by focusing on improving student centred learning and satisfaction and addressing first year attrition. Collaboration between LLRS and the faculties will further develop the links between teaching and learning.

These modules support the University's priorities of improving the quality of the student learning experience by extending good teaching approaches and improving learning outcomes. They also will lead to improved provision of services for student transition, both domestic and international. The online academic writing models will provide explicit guidance in Faculty-specific writing expectations, and thus be useful for domestic students facing the transition from high school or the workforce to the University, and important to international students adjusting to a new culture and new learning environment. They will also be a useful resource for offshore and regional students who find it harder to access more centralised support.
This project will also further the Student Services’ strategic objectives of enhancing students’ prospects of academic success and improving the flexibility and accessibility of student learning. LLRS operational priorities for 2006-2008 will be furthered by developing, promoting, providing and evaluating flexible learning support and resources for UWA students and collaborating with UWA stakeholders to enhance student learning.

**Project schedule**

Based on the experience of developing BRAIN, it is envisaged that we will produce 4 modules in Semester 2, 2007 for use in Semester 1 2008 and the remaining 4 modules will be developed in Semester 1 08 for use in Semester 2, 2008.

**Phase 1** Project set-up
- Establish Faculty consultative committees
- Discuss any modifications to the proposed template
- Identify students needs in relation to writing skills

**Phase 2** Material development for first set of 4 modules
- Consult with unit coordinators, students and the Library
- Populate the template with discipline-specific examples, content, activities etc
- Develop 4 on-line modules in Semester 2, 2007

**Phase 3** Testing and modification of first 4 modules
- Deliver drafts of on-line modules to relevant Faculties and obtain feedback
- ‘Test’ the draft on-line modules with students (distribute and then run focus groups)
- Modify the modules following feedback and distribute for use in Semester 1, 2008

**Phase 4** Material development for second set of 4 modules
- Consult with unit coordinators, students and the Library
- Populate the template with discipline-specific examples, content, activities etc
- Develop remaining 4 on-line modules in Semester 1, 2008

**Phase 5** Testing and modification of second 4 modules
- Deliver drafts of on-line modules to relevant Faculties and obtain feedback
- ‘Test’ draft on-line modules with students (distribute and then run focus groups)
- Modify the modules following feedback and distribute for use in Semester 2, 2008

**Phase 6** Evaluation and reporting
- Evaluate the project
- Prepare and disseminate project report in Semester 2, 2008

**Collaborators**

A consultative committee will be established for each Faculty comprising:
- Dean/sub-Dean of Teaching & Learning
- CATLyst
- Year/Unit coordinators
- Lecturers of core units
- Students (represented by Guild societies and/or year reps)
- Subject and reference librarians
- LLRS representatives

**Draft resource content**

Although the precise content of the modules will be dictated by collaboration with the consultative committee, a template can be proposed based on materials previously developed for BRAIN in collaboration with the FMDHS, the MedDent Library and the LLRS team.

1: Introduction
   - Learning outcomes of this module
   - Expectations of student writing in this faculty
Types of written work in this faculty

2: Unpacking the question
   - Purpose of writing
   - Task words and brainstorming
   - Deciphering a marking guide

3: Structuring an Assignment
   - Using a framework
   - Introductions and conclusions
   - Sections and subheadings

4: Using the literature
   - Summarising and paraphrasing
   - Using quotes effectively
   - Citing sources in your work

5: Clear communication
   - Academic paragraphs
   - Strong sentences
   - Linking ideas together

6: The writing process
   - Getting started
   - Writing and drafting
   - Editing your own work

7: Summary

Each module will contain examples, activities, self-assessment quizzes and audio of UWA staff and students providing advice and case-studies. Links will also be provided to graduate attributes, sources of additional advice within the University, and related resources, such as LLRS ‘Survival Guides’, ‘Jump Start’ and podcasts.

Success indicators
Success of the project will be demonstrated via:
- Faculty staff engagement during the material development phase
- Improvement in student writing performance
- Positive feedback from staff and students
- Improvement in student satisfaction and retention
- Student access as indicated by web statistics

Budget
A budget of $50,000 is requested to allow for items listed below. Costs for project management will be borne by Student Services. This is estimated at $15K.

Because the template exists from extant models developed at UWA, a timeframe of 1 month has been allowed for developing each module. Additional time has been added to the project to allow for Faculty collaboration, module testing and project evaluation.

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<td>Material development</td>
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$50,225
Propose framework for decisions regarding new technology adoption at UWA

Preamble

This matter was raised at the TCG with particular reference to Audience Response Systems ("clickers") during discussions of this issue a number of points were made.

It was acknowledged that with certain technologies having them supported at an institutional level would increase their availability, sustainability, reliability and give the university an opportunity to take advantage of economies of scale implicit in the mass use of these technologies.

It was agreed it would be helpful to have a recognised process to propose, assess and select both a technology and a suitable provider in those cases where a technology was available through more than one vendor.

It was accepted that the TCG would have a role to play most notably in the assessment phase with particular reference to the viability and sustainability of the technologies and the total cost of installation and maintenance of the technology. If there were multiple suppliers of a product it was felt the TCG could also have a role in determining which of the vendors best met the technological demands of the university and offered a product which would best align with existing systems and take advantage of existing skill sets.

However it was also acknowledged that a parallel process assessing educational benefit and user friendliness would need to be conducted and it was thought that the final recommendation concerning whether the university committed at an institutional level to a particular technology needed to be made by a group with an educational brief not a technology brief. And the final decision made by a group who were also able to commit resources to support the implementation of any technology as there would be resource considerations associated with any such decision.

It was also commented at the TCG that the hardest step to manage would not be the assessment step but the proposal step – how is a technology to be proposed for consideration and how is that proposal accepted for assessment. Should proposals come from individual academics, should they come from individual faculties, should they have to come from more than one faculty and how should these proposals be forwarded and who to. The TCG were unsure on these points but felt that whatever the process the group that made the decision to escalate a proposal on to assessment stage should be made on an educational basis possibly by a group such as the eLearning standing committee.

Proposed plan for assessing potential enterprise level eLearning systems

Introduction

This proposal is based on and informed by the issues raised during discussions at the TCG but has not been formally endorsed by the TCG.
This is a proposed methodology for selecting and implementing enterprise level eLearning systems. These systems by definition must be widespread, reliable, stable, well supported and most importantly scalable. This is not the process by which individual enthusiasts receive support to implement new technology in an individual unit of study, they should seek support through other grant processes such as the LTPF or ISL.

The decision making process should be based on how easy a system is to use, how effective it is as an educational tool, how widespread its use would be, how easy it is to install and maintain, and how much it will cost rather than how innovative or novel it is.

The proposal is for a decision making process that lasts approximately 20 months from identifying the technology through to full institutional implementation and consists of four steps Nomination, Assessment, Trialling, Implementation. A timeline is suggested to take account of the ebbs and flows of work at the university to try to make the process as unobtrusive as possible but this timeline could be moved if a better fit to workload patterns can be achieved.

**The Process**

**Nomination**

In April each year each Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee should collect nominations for technologies staff in their faculty feel should be available as enterprise level eLearning systems. This nomination process can be handled as each faculty sees fit either just allowing all academics to email the committee secretary by a given date or creating more formal processes if they wish. The faculty eLearning committee should then discuss these nominated technologies and endorse those they feel have general application in their faculty (a limit could be put on the number of nominations they can forward but I would suggest they can forward as many as they like and the weeding out will happen at the next step). This endorsed list is then passed on to the eLearning Standing Committee by the end of April to enable them to be considered at a meeting in May.

At the May eLearning Standing Committee meeting those technologies which have been nominated by fewer than 3 faculties should be rejected (this threshold could be raised or lowered but I think anything which has been independently nominated by a third of the faculties probably warrants consideration). Those with more than three nominations are then considered in terms of their applicability across faculties which did not nominate them (some may be science/engineering specific others may be arts/humanities specific), in terms of current university investment in the technologies and in terms of their fit with broader institutional learning goals. Those deemed suitable then move to the assessment phase.

**Assessment**

In June the TCG in conjunction with ITS would plan a small installation of any nominated technology, work out where and how to host it, how to licence it and how many people can have access. In July/August the TCG and ITS collaborate on
implementing a small test installation of the technology. At this stage if there are multiple vendors for a particular technology it would be wise to set up test environments for each viable vendor (some can often be rejected without testing) so a comparison can be done of the different products parallel to assessing the overall suitability of the technology. During this process this group should assess the technical aspects of the system how easy is it to install, what hardware is required to host it, how well does it integrate with existing university systems and what would be the total cost of owning and maintaining it.

Once the test system is implemented (desirably late August) a group of staff appointed by the eLearning Standing Committee with a focus on educational useability should test the system for ease of use for both staff and students and educational effectiveness (this group should probably be drawn from CATL and the CATLyists it should definitely include members of the CATL elearning team as well as academics from a cross section of faculties). Parallel with this educational testing the TCG/ITS group should also monitor stability of the system and develop some sense of the maintenance requirements.

These groups should report back to the eLearning Standing Committee by the end of September for discussion at an October meeting. It would probably be easiest for the “educational” testers to submit brief individual reports and the TCG/ITS group to submit a single report. If these reports are favourable the eLearning Standing Committee would forward a recommendation with appropriate costings to a suitable funding group for a trial leading to full implementation.

**Trialling**

By the beginning of the next year the installation should be able to deal with a small number of actual units and students this may require expansion of the test implementation, it may not depending on the technology. Staff should then be asked to volunteer to trial the technology with their students. This trial should include advocates of the system so they do not have to wait a further year to use the system with their students, but should also include some novices so a clear indication of ease of use can be gained. If the reports from this trial are favourable then the trial should be expanded in second semester to include all interested staff while a viable enterprise level installation is built.

**Implementation**

Once a fully supported enterprise level installation is built (note this includes training programs, helpdesk and staff support) the system can be rolled out to all staff of the university and staff encouraged to use it, with examples of good educational use and discipline specific use.

**Notes**

All such systems should have their status reviewed periodically (probably every three years).
Any cross vendor comparisons should always include existing institutional systems as many supposedly new technologies actually just replicate functionalities in existing systems.

### Decision Steps

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<th>Criteria</th>
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<td>Faculty T &amp; L</td>
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<td>Applicability throughout the faculty</td>
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<td>eLearning Committee</td>
<td>Use across faculties</td>
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<td>Alignment with broader institutional goals</td>
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<td>Assessment</td>
<td>TCG/ITS</td>
<td>Ease of installation</td>
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<td>Ease of maintenance</td>
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<td>Favoured vendor</td>
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<td>Educational testing group</td>
<td>Ease of use</td>
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<td>Educational effectiveness</td>
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<td>Applicability across faculties</td>
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<td>eLearning Committee</td>
<td>Favourable report from both technical and educational testing groups</td>
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<td>Trialling</td>
<td>Trial group</td>
<td>Effectiveness with students</td>
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<td>Ease of use in actual teaching situation</td>
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<td>Lack of problems in actual teaching situation</td>
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<td>Reliability over a whole semester</td>
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3. PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR DECISIONS REGARDING NEW TECHNOLOGIES ADOPTION AT UWA

At the June 2008 TCG meeting the question of the evaluation of new educational technologies had been raised. Stephen Sheely had written a paper on this for discussion. Both technical and pedagogical evaluations were required. The following points were raised in discussion of what was desirable:

- The process outlined in the paper would take too long and had no decision point.
- The Teaching and Learning Committee elearning sub committee could be more active in identifying technologies with a teaching use.
- There could be a procurement exercise in which TCG could become involved.
- How to deliver maximum leverage in negotiating licences from a University-wide approach.
- Data, authentication and access should be considered for all software packages.
- A register of all licenced and operable software could be kept.
- ITS could have an architectural, information or advisory role.

Action: Comments to be passed on to the Teaching and Learning Committee