CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

THE MONA TEACHER

Learning Spaces in the 21st Century University

A 21st Century Learning Space

In the last 30 years or so, the world has witnessed a paradigm shift in teaching and learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995). The movement has been from teacher-centred approaches to learner-centred approaches. There has also been a great interest in how people learn and the cognitive sciences have been given more attention over these years as researchers seek greater understanding of learning (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett & Norman, 2010). Arising from the work done over the last thirty or forty years, there is now greater consensus concerning the need for active teaching and learning environments. These environments, it is felt are the ones best able to advance learning.

Accordingly, there has been much focus on engagement in the classroom. In this regard, there have been faculty members who have been experimenting with various innovative and student-centred approaches to teaching and learning in higher education. These approaches have generally been active and interactive, pushing the envelope on engagement. The development of computer technologies in a time when there is a shift from transmission approaches to teaching and learning towards more constructivist approaches has really influenced thinking about how learning environments ought to be constructed.

Designing Learning Spaces

There are those educators who now believe that the classroom in higher education should incorporate insights from the learning sciences/ cognitive science and information technology into the design of Learning Spaces (Brown, n.d.). Further, there is also information about how millennials and neo-millennials learn and this is also important in teaching and learning. The thinking here is that the learning environment (Learning Spaces) must be so designed that they will maximize the potential to impact learning in the best ways possible by recognising the convergence of the cognitive sciences, IT, and the Net Generation students. Learning Spaces, whether actual classroom, virtual or otherwise should not be left to chance or basic design approaches but ought to be specially designed with the convergence informing design decisions.

A Smart Classroom

21st Century Technology Tools

Some of these professionals, no doubt will encourage the use of the latest 21st century technology tools. In the process, they might be advocating for learning environments that make use of tools to ensure greater cooperation and collaboration amongst learners. Of course, the use of videoconferencing is now well known in higher education and there are possibilities for interaction using this tool with international experts. The learning experience can be enriched by these activities. Hence, the use of 21st century technologies can certainly be about creating opportunities for greater exploration and engagement. In the process, there is an effort also to enrich the learning experience as the environment is configured to bring together space, technology and pedagogy in the quest to achieve learner success.

As the 21st century marches on and as 21st century tools are employed more and more in our classrooms at all levels of the education system, universities are in some cases transitioning from traditional learning environments or traditional classrooms to smart classrooms. In fact, some universities have the resources to do almost complete makeovers to transition from traditional learning spaces. Smart classrooms, with mobile furniture seem to be shaping up to take over as the classrooms of tomorrow/smart learning spaces.

There are those colleges and universities who have redesigned their classrooms based on a 360 degree concept and to make them fully mobile. In such classrooms, there are no front, back or sides of the room. All the walls in the room are designed to be used for instruction. The teacher is able to move freely in the room, there is no readily discernible impediment to the teachers' movement, no restriction to be always at the front of the room. Therefore, the traditional position of the teacher, operating from the front of the room and proving information has been supplanted. The teacher in these types of learning environments is no "sage on stage" at all.

With mobile furniture, rooms can be easily reconfigured to respond to the mode of instruction. In some of these universities boasting these smart classrooms, students are allowed to check out 21st century technology tools, such as ipads, swivel cameras and mini robotic video devices (to name a few) with the ability to follow the teacher as he or she moves around the room.

Conclusion

There is clear evidence that Learning Spaces need to be properly thought out. The influence of contemporary educational philosophy must find its way into the design of Learning Spaces. In this regard, design decisions for the development of Learning Spaces for the 21st Century University must take into consideration the convergence of learning in the Net Generation Age, Cognitive Sciences and Information Technology.

References

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Teaching Tips

A Forum for discussion and tips for advancing teaching and learning at Mona

Teaching Tips is published monthly by the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Check our website at https://www.mona.uwi.edu/cetl/ for the latest edition.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AT THE CETL

Orientation to Teaching at the UWI Mona Campus

Pro Vice Chancellor and Campus Principal, Professor Archibald McDonald addressing new faculty on the topic: "Participation in the visions and dreams of the UWI" at "New Faculty Orientation 2017", August 24, 2017.

The CETL offered its annual New Faculty Orientation to Teaching at UWI Mona on August 24 & 25, 2017. This year over 30 faculty members registered for the programme. The programme provided opportunities for new faculty members to participate in sessions focussing on the following:

♦ An overview of teaching at UWI Mona Campus

♦ Student and faculty perspectives on teaching

♦ Conversations about university teaching resources

In the various sessions, issues relating to who we are as teachers were discussed. Further consideration was given to the following:

♦ Getting to know our students

♦ Clarifying our goals and expectations for our courses

♦ Working together with our students to advance their learning (with particular emphasis on the first day of class).

The new faculty members at "New Faculty Orientation 2017" listening attentively to a presentation on "Dealing with Emotional Issues of Students" presented by Dr Gordon Stair, Head of the Counseling Unit on August 24, 2017

Orientation to Teaching at the UWI Mona Campus

Opportunities were provided to help faculty to learn about how students learn and how to actively engage students in their learning. Several areas of teaching were discussed and some suggestions were offered about teaching techniques that might work best in particular, in our teaching contexts. Further, information was provided on professional opportunities available for faculty learning throughout the semester. There were also opportunities for faculty to indicate the various areas of teaching that they might need help with.

As usual, the Pro Vice Chancellor and Campus Principal, Professor Archibald McDonald was a featured guest speaker addressing the gathering on the topic: "Participation in the visions and dreams of the UWI." There was a student panel to discuss with the new lecturers their impression of the teaching that they were receiving on the campus so far and offer the student perspective on how a lecturer might be successful in the UWI classroom. A faculty panel provided insights on teaching in the UWI classroom from the perspective of faculty.

The student panel at "New Faculty Orientation 2017"

New Faculty members were presented with special welcome gifts by the CETL at the "New Faculty Orientation Exercise" on August 25, 2017. In this photo they proudly display their gift bags.

Course Design Workshop 2017

The Annual Course Design Workshop was held on August 23, 2017 from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm at the CETL Training Room. The hands-on teaching and learning session provided an opportunity for faculty from across the university to engage in a learning activity together on designing and developing a course. The overall purpose of this workshop was to facilitate the design or re-design of a face-to-face, blended or online course based on the institutional quality assurance guidelines and of course, the best practices in the academy relating to course design and development. Throughout this workshop activity, the various segments of course design were examined and discussed and faculty worked in groups to develop meaningful sections of a course that had some relevance to them.

Faculty involved in group activity at the Annual Course Design Workshop, August 23, 2017.

Faculty involved in group activity at the Annual Course Design Workshop, August 23, 2017.

SPOCs/ Hybrid/Blended Learning: Is there a place for the video lecture?

Is there a place for a video lecture in teaching and learning in the university in Jamaica today? There might be and in this article we will look at this issue. A look at MOOCs, COOCs and SPOCs reveal that they have all used video lecture with good success. But what are MOOCs, COOCs and SPOCs?

A look at MOOCs, COOCs and SPOCs

You might be familiar with the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). A MOOC is an open access online course and there are no specific restrictions in participation so, these courses are usually open to many persons, whether regular university students or other learners. It is usual for MOOCs to provide an interactive component to facilitate interaction among the participants. There are those corporations who have also used another forms of distance learning called Corporate Open Online Courses (COOCs). They are essentially MOOCs for large and small business enterprises. Some universities have used MOOCs as a supplement to classroom teaching and the model is called SPOC- Small Private Online Course or Small Private Open Course.

In looking at the MOOC, one noticeable prominent feature is that many of them use several video lectures and this is worth looking at in our own context where, getting students to do the reading assigned for a class is difficult. The MOOC, as an example of contemporary distance based approach to e-learning, facilitates many learners to engage in a collaborative learning enterprise. It also creates great opportunities for active and interactive teaching and learning. There is something unique about the MOOC in that it enables really massive participation of students drawn from the world community of learners. It can be persuasively argued that MOOCs have done well because of the cost reduction associated with them for learning and development.

SPOCs and Blended Learning

From taking a more focused look at the SPOC, it is clear that it is another type of online course offered to a limited number of students. It is usually designed to offer a small group of learners a tailor-made course. For the most part, formal enrolment in this course is usually required. In some instances, based on the perceived or known demand for the course, there might be a competitive application process. There are also instances when a fee is charged. Professor Armando Fox of Berkeley University, California is credited with having coined the word in 2013 to refer to a localized instance of a MOOC that was being used in the business world, specifically for business to business.

Further, SPOCs are used to support blended learning and flipped classroom learning. Accordingly, this approach might be more easily recognised by its less acronymically known term "hybrid" or "blended learning." As a teaching and learning arrangement, it combines various online resources and technology (for example, the video lecture) supported by personal engagement between faculty and students, students and students and students and content. The research on this teaching and learning strategy is indicating that better results are being realised with its usage evidenced also by improved student learning outcomes (E-Learning, 2016). SPOCs are really focused on creating a learning community in which engagement is given pride of place. Hence, some of the teaching learning activities that have been used include video lectures, assessment tasks with immediate feedback, interactive labs with immediate feedback and discussion forums similar to those that have been used in the MOOCs.

Engagement

In a learning environment in which SPOC is used, engagement in classroom activities is enhanced because a professor or lecturer using the SPOC will assign the reading component turned into video lectures as home work. This allows the professor/lecturer to spend the class time engaging in question and answer or using the time to ensure learning is advanced by clarifying areas of great challenge for students. The instructor might also work with students on projects and various other assignments to ensure that they are developing deep understandings of the subject matter content. The target audience for the SPOC was initially the worker when it was used in businesses. However, it can now be for individuals, workers or regular students.

SPOCs/ Hybrid/Blended Learning: Is there a place for the video lecture?

Interaction is important in educational activities, especially those that seek to foster active and interactive learning. The MOOC, the COOC and the SPOC are arrangements that can be used to foster engagement. The use of the video lecture is particularly important especially when the expertise of the lecturer is unquestioned and the content can be packaged in short segments to produce vodcasts. By including additional interactive components such as innovative feedback opportunities to the video lecture, quiz, group or team work, online chat etc., space can be created to enhance the engagement.

Conclusion

When the SPOC is used in institutions of higher education, students might have a role in determining some of the teaching and learning activities that will be included hence, they might opt for video lectures and assessment tasks with immediate feedback.

However, progressive educators will always create space in courses for students' voices to be heard. Institutions can develop their own SPOCs or use ones made by others.

References

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MAJOR ACTIVITIES AT THE CETL

Certificate in University Teaching and Learning 2017

The 8th Cohort of the Certificate in University Teaching and Learning (CUTL) Programme commenced on August 14, 2017. Classes were held daily during that week of August 14-18, 2017 with two additional classes in October and November 2017. This year, the CETL was able to welcome Dr Dian McCallum of the School of Education to serve as the facilitator for CUTL5001: Teaching and Learning: Theory to Practice. There are 18 persons who have enrolled in the programme for this cohort.

Graduation of the 7th Cohort of the Certificate in University Teaching and Learning

At the Annual UWI Graduation Exercise on the Mona Campus, held on November 3 & 4, 2017, there were 25 graduands for from the CUTL programme offered by the CETL. Congratulations to the following faculty members who successfully completed the programme:

Candidates from the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Mona Campus

1. Racquel Natalie Artwell
2. Germaine Orandy Daley
3. Sonia Denise Gatchair
4. Garcia Sydonie Green-McLennon
5. Kareen Delrose Guscott
6. Tannice Avadawne Hall
7. Christine Everet Olivia Hammond Gabbadon
8. Sydney Heusen McLennon
9. Joseph Emanuel Millwood
10. Natasha Kay Mortley
11. Catherine Patricia Murphy
12. Sharon Andrea Wheatle-Redwood
13. Kwasi Dane Effiong Tinglin
14. Alecia Marcia Walters-Archie
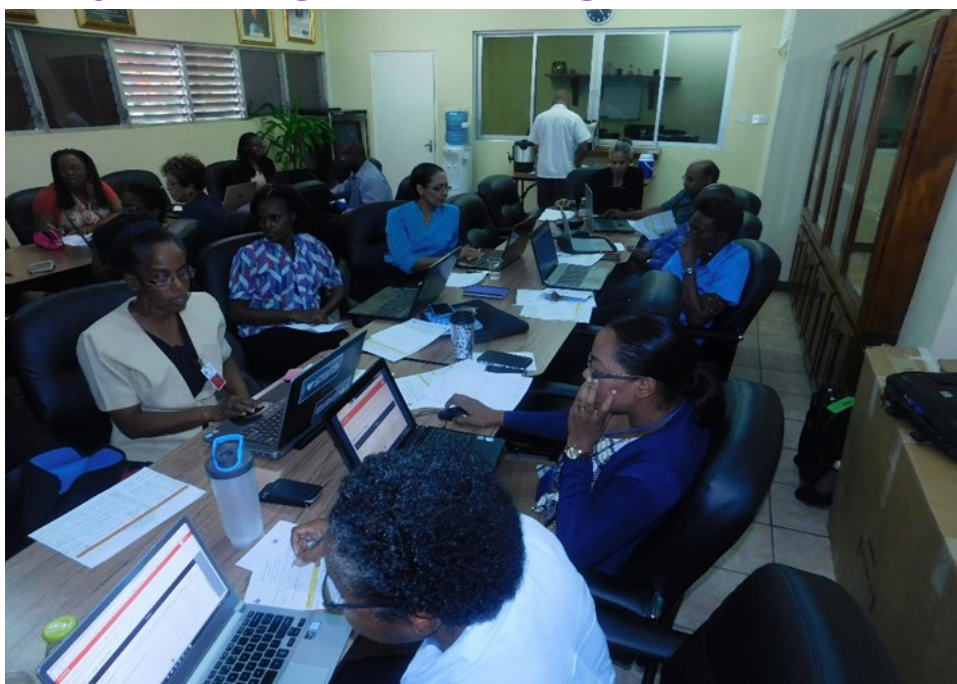
The 8th Cohort of the CUTL programme in a CUTL5001 classroom session in August 2017

Candidates from the School of Clinical Medicine and Research, Nassau, The Bahamas

1. Christine Elizabeth Chin
2. Catherine Inell Celese Conliffe
3. Eugenia Angelica Combie
4. Carnille Patrice Farquharson
5. Gertrude Clarissa Holder
6. Gwendolyn Eileen McDeigan
7. Cordelia Anette Nairn
8. Sabriquet Shenique Pinder-Butler
9. Vrunda Prashant Sakharkar
10. Corrine Odette Sin Quee
11. Christa Latoya Wells

Introducing Blackboard Collaborate »

In September 2017, the CETL held two workshops (September 14 & 28) to roll out Blackboard Collaborate to the entire faculty of the UWI Mona Campus. These workshops were facilitated by Mr Kirk Wilson of the Instructional Support Services (ISS), a division of the Mona Information Technology Services (MITS). Earlier, online workshops were held and it was anticipated that these would have continued. Unfortunately, the CETL was unable to host any other online workshop during this semester but these will be held in the second semester of 2017 — 2018 academic year.

Blackboard Collaborate is a web conferencing tool acquired by the University in early 2017. It is available on all campuses. In many instances, it is used with the learning management system so, at the Mona campus, lecturers are able to use it alongside ourVLE.

Mr Kirk Wilson making a presentation on Blackboard Collaborate at the Workshop as the CETL rolled out this new web conferencing tool to the UWI faculty in September 2017

The Blackboard Collaborate workshop