4E Framework for E-Learning

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**Introduction**

The 4E framework is an approach to eLearning activity that seeks to focus on the benefits of using technology in learning & teaching.

As Beetham et al have identified; “Transformation is more about the human and organizational aspects of teaching and learning than it is about the use of technology.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

The purpose of the framework is to humanise the use of technology.

The framework is based on the four Es (see below for more detail), each communicating what technology is doing for the learner and/or learning experience. In discussions with staff and students we can use these terms to ask questions about technology and how we use it.

The 4 Es are: Enable, Enhance, Enrich & Empower and these can be attributed to questioning the use of eLearning in the following ways:

**● What can technology “enable” us to do?**

**● How can technology “enhance” what we already do?**

**● How can technology “enrich” our learning experiences?**

**● How can technology “empower” learners & teachers?**

This is not about using technology for technology’s sake, but is about identifying the need/benefit of using a technology and ensuring its effective use, with the associated support systems to help staff and students build confidence in their use.

**Enable - To supply with the means, knowledge, or opportunity.**

Technology is being implemented to “enable” a process, activity, function or service to take place. Using technology as an enabler for learning & teaching encourages staff and students to think about the role that technology plays in “enabling” learning & teaching activity.

Examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Technology  | Activity  | Enables |
| Moodle | Providing course related materials | Enables access to materials in a flexible manner on and off site.  |
| Workflow | Encouraging students to develop their own online portfolios | Enables students to make their work visible. |
| MyBlogs | Requiring students to blog as part of their course | Enables students to share their thinking widely. |
| BB Collaborate | Running synchronous online sessions | Enables remote students to take part in communal learning. |

**Enhance - To make greater, as in value, or effectiveness.**

Technology is being implemented to “enhance” a process, activity, function or service that is already happening in some form. Using technology as an enhancer for learning moves staff and students beyond enabling, to think about how technology can be utilised to provide an enhancement to the learning experience.

Examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Technology  | Activity  | Enhances  |
| Moodle | Using news forums to keep students up to date with course related activity. | Enhances course-wide communication. |
| Workflow | Encouraging students to review each other’s portfolios. | Enhances students’ sense of the work being done across the course. |
| MyBlogs | Encouraging students to read each other’s posts. | Enhances understanding from multiple perspectives.  |
| BB Collaborate | Encouraging students to use the text-chat while the presenter talks. | Enhances discourse around the subject being presented. |

**Enrich - To make fuller, more meaningful, or more rewarding.**

Technology is being implemented to “enrich” the learning experience. Using technology as an “enricher” requires staff and students to think about how technology & digital assets can make learning more rewarding & meaningful.

Examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Technology  | Activity  | Enriches |
| Moodle | Using Moodle as a ‘hub’ to link out to other services and online spaces. | Enriches courses with a strong online presence or ‘home’.  |
| Workflow | Reflecting on portfolio work within Workflow. | Enriches students’ understanding of their work and supports them in communicating their thinking. |
| MyBlogs | Commenting on other students’ posts within a cohort. | Enriches discourse and reflection around students thinking. |
| BB Collaborate | Hosting multi-presenter panels within Collaborate. | Enriches engagement with multiple viewpoints. |

**Empower – To make (someone) stronger and more confident.**

Technology is being implemented to “empower” the learners. Using technology as an “empowerer” encourages students to take ownership of their use of technology in learning & teaching activities.

Examples:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Technology  | Activity  | Empowers |
| Moodle | Students to link out to or upload examples of their work. | Empowers students as legitimate participants with ‘something to say’.  |
| Workflow | Students sharing portfolio sites with institutions beyond UAL. | Empowers students in their transition towards professional practice. |
| MyBlogs | Students sharing posts openly online with relevant audiences.  | Empowers students in developing their own ‘voice’ within their discipline and to build networks. |
| BB Collaborate | Students lead a synchronous session. | Empowers students to work collaboratively and to ‘own’ the direction of an element of the course. |

1. Beetham, Helen. *Rethinking Pedagogy for a Digital Age Designing for 21st Century Learning*.

New York: Routledge, 2013. N. pag. Print. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)