

## Workshop

# Designing engaging online learning experiences

**Anouk Janssens Bevernage, Sue Dark**  
Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

**Length** Half day

**Objectives** Engaging the online learner remains a major challenge for e-learning designers and facilitators. How do we inspire the learner and energize the learning environment without any visual clues and when learning is not taking place concurrently?

This workshop introduces some of the basic concepts of engaging and collaborative learning design for online environments. Workshop participants will be given an opportunity to experience hands-on what it takes to make this happen.

At the end of the workshop, the participants will be able to:

- discuss and construct principles for engaging learning design for online delivery;
- explain what makes an effective online learning design to foster collaborative learning;
- design an inspiring online group activity;
- recommend facilitation approaches to promote a 'learner-centred' learning experience in a virtual learning environment.

**Intended audience** E-learning practitioners with intermediate level experience in working with virtual learning environments.

**Facilitators** **Anouk Janssens-Bevernage** is the E-Tutor Advisor at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. She is involved in supporting learning design for online courses and in guiding Faculty to effectively facilitate in an online learning environment. Anouk is an economist/MBA and educationist. Her main interests include research on and application of good practice to online learning design and facilitation.

**Sue Dark** is the E-learning Director at The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. Since obtaining her MSc in IT & Learning in the UK, Sue has worked in computer-based learning, training and e-learning for over 15 years in a variety of roles; instructional designer, staff developer and in management. Sue manages the Professional Development team and the Instructional Design team at The Open Polytechnic. She has been involved in a number of Government-funded e-learning capability projects within New Zealand, including the Open Source Virtual Learning Environment project, e-learning Guidelines project, eXe project and the Networked Education Pilot project. She engages with a range of national groups and forums and is particularly interested in instructional design.

**Details of activities** **Welcome and introduction**

### **Plenary discussion/interaction on 'engaging learning'**

- Visual presentation of a number of real learning situations (podcasts; lecturers' notes downloadable from VLE; online drag and drop graphical diagram; animated story and questions; chat; sharing thoughts on discussion forum).
- The voting process is made enjoyable and initiates lively discussions
- The discussions are supported by a visual presentation with further questions to prompt higher order thinking about 'engaging learning'
- The key characteristics of 'engaging learning' are noted on flipcharts to be summarised and used as a reference for the group activity (see below)

- Presenters underpin questions with reference to their experiences with e-learning design and delivery

#### **Introduce group activity**

- The participants are given a learning outcome from an environmental management course (the learning outcome inspires a broad range of professionals).
- Six groups of five are formed (or less groups if less than 30 participants).
- Groups are asked to design one 'engaging collaborative learning activity' that supports the learning outcome and that should be developed in a virtual learning environment. Their instructional design proposal should include thoughts about facilitation requirements and virtual class management issues.

#### **Group work**

- Presenters support individual groups by asking additional questions on their respective activities.
- Groups appoint their representative for group feedback.

#### **Group feedback to plenary**

- Each group takes a few minutes to describe their engaging activity for a virtual learning environment and explain why they think it is engaging.
- Other groups are invited to ask questions and to provide feedback.

#### **Summary and closure**

### **References Previous presentations of the workshop:**

Designing engaging online learning experiences  
Moodle Moot (Wellington 3-4 July 2006)  
<http://www.moodlemoot.org.nz/moodle/>

#### **Upcoming:**

Designing meaningful collaborative online group work  
eFest (Wellington 27-29 September 2006)  
<http://www.efest.org.nz/programme.html>

This workshop is derived from day-to-day practice at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, where the process is used to support course redevelopment for online delivery.

Please cite as: Bevernage, A.J. & Dark, S. (2006). Designing engaging online learning experiences. In L. Markauskaite, P. Goodyear, & P. Reimann (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Conference of the Australasian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education: Who's Learning? Whose Technology?* (p.1009-10). Sydney: Sydney University Press. <https://doi.org/10.65106/apubs.2006.3030>

The author(s) assign to ascilite and educational non-profit institutions a non-exclusive licence to use this document for personal use and in courses of instruction provided that the article is used in full and this copyright statement is reproduced. The author(s) also grant a non-exclusive licence to ascilite to publish this document on the ascilite web site (including any mirror or archival sites that may be developed) and in electronic and printed form within the ascilite *Conference Proceedings*. Any other usage is prohibited without the express permission of the author(s). For the appropriate way of citing this article, please see the frontmatter of the *Conference Proceedings*.