



Faculty of Construction and Land Use Strategic Professional Development Plan for Blended Learning

Purpose

This document describes activities to be undertaken as part of the 3C Project to increase the use of blended learning approaches in the Faculty of Construction and Land Use. It focuses on the aims and objectives for the Faculty and sets out a plan of action to achieve identified goals.

Key Staff

The following staff were involved in the development of this Strategic Professional Development Plan for Blended Learning for the Faculty of Construction and Land Use:

Prof. Jin-guang Teng, Dean	Faculty of Construction and Land Use
Prof. Geoffrey Shen, Associate Dean	Department of Building and Real Estate
Dr. Baki Iz, eLearning Advocate	Department of Land Surveying and Geo- Informatics
Dr. Barbara Leung, eLearning Advocate	Department of Building and Real Estate
Mr Peter Duffy, 3C Project Leader	3C Project, Educational Development Centre
Dr Christine Armatas, Senior Project Fellow	3C Project, Educational Development Centre

Background

The 3C project is a 2 year institutional initiative at PolyU funded by VP(AD) in support of PolyU's strategic plan. The broad aim of the 3C Project is to enhance the eLearning / Blended Learning culture at PolyU. The approach used to address this is through the use of the 3 concurrent foci (3C) of collaboration, community and context. For more information please refer to www.3c.edc.polyu.edu.hk.

The activities described in this plan have been developed after consultation with the two eLearning Advocates for the Faculty of Construction and Land Use – Dr Barbara Leung and Dr Baki Iz.

Key Drivers

The Faculty is faced with a number of key challenges over the next few years, including the introduction of the 3+3+4 education model, outcomes-based education, Freshmen seminars and Capstone projects. The increased use of blended learning will assist in managing these key challenges by providing staff with skills and experience to help them to teach more effectively and efficiently, using new approaches that incorporate eLearning technologies. It is envisaged that staff will be able to use technology to enhance the teaching and learning experience both in and outside of class, and to help students become independent learners.



Aim of the strategy

The aim of the strategy is to provide a framework for the provision of support and training for staff in the adoption of blended learning approaches in subjects taught in the Faculty. This strategy is aligned with the Hong Kong PolyTechnic University Strategic Plan 2008/09-2011/12.

Professional Development Goals

The action plan to be developed as part of the Strategic Professional Development Plan for Blended Learning is designed to:

1. increase staff awareness of the range of eLearning tools available and their application in educational contexts;
2. inform staff about what blended learning is and to help them to explore possibilities for its application in their teaching;
3. help staff to acquire the skills needed to adopt appropriate blended learning approaches in their teaching;
4. provide staff with resources to assist them adopting blended learning in their teaching;
5. promote best-practice in the use of blended learning to enhance teaching and learning at PolyU.

Interviews with LSGI staff

As part of the process for developing a Strategic Professional Development Plan (SPDP) for Blended Learning for the Faculty of Construction and Land Use (FCLU), Professor Jin-guang Teng, Dean of the Faculty, requested that the 3C Project team conduct a review of the eLearning experience and activities in the Faculty, specifically within the Department of LSGI. The purpose of this review is to gain an understanding of what has been done previously and how useful this has been, which would then be used to determine what activities could be undertaken as part of the SPDP.

NOTE: At present the suggested activities below have been sent to the Dean for review and feedback along with a summary of interview data and an analysis.

Approaches staff in LSGI would like to adopt that would enhance the use of blended learning

Staff had a number of suggestions about what could be done to enhance the use of blended learning in the Department and Faculty. These include:

- Having a Faculty liaison person to provide assistance with developing blended learning approaches that incorporate eLearning and face-to-face teaching – the model used by the Library and ITS is considered to be a good one to follow;
- Using virtual worlds such as Second Life to provide an area for students to practice skills that they learn in class. There are issues associated with replicating Hong Kong virtually that need to be managed, however, some purpose-designed virtual space could be developed for this purpose;
- A mentoring scheme, where senior students assist first year students in their studies. Technology could play a role in facilitating these interactions;
- Better integration of content being taught across subjects, which can be facilitated by online resources and alignment between laboratory classes and lectures;
- Sharing of resources already developed and approaches that have been used successfully



Activities for the Strategic Professional Development Plan for Blended Learning

Three broad areas where the 3C Project could provide assistance emerged from the interviews with staff. These are:

Workshops tailored to the Department / Faculty on topics such as:

- How to use new tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, effectively;
- Highlighting the best use for different systems and platforms such as Moodle, WebCT and Second Life;
- New approaches for staff to try, including what activities to give students to do outside of class;
- The benefits of a blended learning approach for different subject areas which staff may not be aware of – for example, how eLearning can assist students to learn mathematics and programming;

A forum for informing staff about:

- best practice for blended learning;
- how to avoid traps and pitfalls from the start when adopting a blended learning approach;
- how to evaluate teaching interventions;
- tools that they can access to make blended learning easier;

Practical assistance and support on specific projects. Some examples suggested by staff were:

- Provide assistance with creating high definition, high quality videos and DVDs of things such as fundamental skills, construction sites, surveying practice etc, which also embed other tools such as Excel for calculations etc.;
- Help to develop specialised tools such as a program to geometrically model the relationship between a camera and the environment to provide a 3D image;
- Assistance creating animations;
- Assist with subject developments in the Department, such as Professor Mok's new subject that will adopt a problem-based learning approach;
- Assisting with an initiative in the Department where practical work outside of class is increased while decreasing lecture contact time and using a blended learning approach to support this.

Next Steps

The data collected from the staff in LSGI provide some clear suggestions as to how the 3C Project could assist that department to adopt more blended learning. The extent to which these suggestions are applicable to other departments in the Faculty needs to be assessed and a plan drawn up to deliver the workshops and practical assistance identified through this process.



A draft plan for consideration is to:

1. Conduct an eLearning / Blended Learning Roadshow to help raise staff awareness about blended learning and to promote interest in adopting this approach in their teaching;
2. Establish a timeframe and specific workshop topics in collaboration with eLearning Advocates for the Faculty (Dr Baki Iz and Dr Barbara Leung) to meet staff needs with respect to different tools and approaches they could adopt in a blended learning context;
3. Initiate support for specific projects in the Faculty such as Prof. Mok's PBL subject;
4. Seek interest from other Departments regarding workshop topics and other activities to promote blended learning in the Faculty.

Additional activities under the 3C umbrella that the Faculty can be involved with are listed in Table 1.

Evaluation

Each activity undertaken for this Strategic Professional Development Plan for Blended Learning will be evaluated using a protocol developed by the staff involved in organising the activity. The evaluation could be completed using methods such as:

- questionnaires
- uptake and usage statistics
- focus group feedback

The result of these evaluations will be reported as per the Communications Plan.

Communications Plan

Progress on the implementation of the Strategic Professional Development Plan for Blended Learning will be communicated in the following ways:

- through reports to the Faculty and School / Department Learning and Teaching Committees;
- via the monthly 3C eNewsletter and on the 3C project website;
- at events or activities conducted as part of the 3C Project or as part of the Strategic Professional Development Plan;
- through emails and other means as required.



3C - What's in IT for me?

Table 1. Additional activities to be held as part of the 3C Project which the Faculty can have involvement with

Activity	Organisers	Participants	Indicative Dates
eLearning Showcase	3C Project Team	Open to all PolyU staff	16 th October 2009
Teaching Innovation Award	3C Project Team	Open to all PolyU staff	12 th – 16 th October 2009 4 th June 2010
Faculty events with invited eLearning consultants	Mr Peter Duffy & Dr Christine Armatas, 3C Project Team Dr Baki Iz, Faculty eLearning Advocate Dr Barbara Leung, Faculty eLearning Advocate	Invited staff from Faculty of Construction and Land Use	12 th – 16 th October 2009 4 th June 2010
Teaching and Learning Symposium	Mr Peter Duffy & Dr Christine Armatas, 3C Project Team Dr Baki Iz, Faculty eLearning Advocate Dr Barbara Leung, Faculty eLearning Advocate	Open to all PolyU staff	4 th June 2010
Technology to address teaching challenges – Workshops	Mr Peter Duffy & Dr Christine Armatas, 3C Project Team Dr Baki Iz, Faculty eLearning Advocate Dr Barbara Leung, Faculty eLearning Advocate	Open to all PolyU staff	Semesters 1 & 2 2009/2010