Developing and Embedding an Institutional E-learning Strategy

Elizabeth Barnes
University of Teesside
United Kingdom

The use of technology and blended learning is embedded in education, but the extent to which it is consistently used and managed is less clear. Practices have primarily emerged through enthusiasts and a combination of informal and formal dissemination. Driven by student feedback and expectations the University recognised a need for a more systematic and managed approach to the use of e-learning in learning and teaching strategies.

A strategy has been developed around five strands: learner support, staff support, quality assurance and enhancement, e-innovation and strategic management. Implementation is driven and measured througha set of challenging and ambitious key milestones, devised to underpin a culture shift and University wide buy-in. The establishment of a minimum standard for the use of the virtual learning environment (VLE) for all modules requires all academic staff to engage with this agenda.

Its success is dependent on alignment with other University strategies and development plans, change and development of practice across central departments and academic Schools and inertia from senior management with buy-in from staff. Implementation is managed through a working group comprising representation from across the University and is managed in academic Schools through e-learning co-ordinators.

The challenges in achieving Institutional wide change cannot be under-estimated. To name but a few, communication, retaining momentum, staff expertise, transferability of technological solutions a quality assurance framework that is fit for purpose and ultimately managing and meeting student expectations.