



BENEFITS OF ENABLING LECTURERS AND STUDENTS TO AUTHOR, SHARE AND DISCUSS MEDIA-RICH DOCUMENTS FOR ONLINE STUDY

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Abstract

This poster evaluates the benefits of using OB3 – a web-based technology enhancing the online study experience. Its development was undertaken using human-centred design methods, and informed by research on 1) educational design for academic success, 2) good visual design that facilitates learning and is cognitively effective, and 3) networked learning. The resulting technology has features enabling lecturers, students, and administrative staff to author, create, share, and discuss media-rich study documents. All these activities are undertaken without the direct support of technologists.

One postgraduate medical programme at a university has used this technology for six years, and one three-year undergraduate midwifery programme at an institute of technology has used it for four years. An evaluation of their online study activities with OB3 showed a number of benefits including:

- Co-constructivist and personalised learning is supported as part of blended learning models.
- The media-rich documents, most times with embedded discussions, take the form of curriculum content or student assignments, and are created as part of asynchronous collaborative activities such as wiki-style co-written documents, templated-group activities, e-portfolios, and group projects.
- Lecturers and students consider that the technology affords study that is engaging, flexible, and helps in overcoming isolation.

The benefits of using OB3 for online study were qualified using the Creative Classroom Framework, the NMC Horizon Report Education and the Australia and New Zealand Technology Outlooks Reports. Innovative pedagogical practices emerged when this technology enabled lecturers and students to author and co-create study content by themselves. Significant challenges in the adoption of higher education technology could also be addressed such as rethinking the role of educators and improving digital literacy.

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