



EFFECTS @ Oxford Brookes University

As the EFFECTS project draws to a close, Brookes reported ongoing institutional change in terms of embedding C&IT into learning, teaching and assessment. Brookes took a different approach to other institutions in the project, using the funding to appoint a Learning Technology Support Officer (LTSO) who was responsible for pedagogical issues as well as IT support. This concentration on institutional rather than individual change showed substantial progress.

In July 2000, the LTSO and the OCSLD convened an internal one-day C&IT conference on 'Online Learning Here and Now: Realistic and Practical Enhancements to Teaching and Learning using C&IT'. The conference attracted over 100 Brookes staff, and there was much lively discussion. The agenda revealed a wide range of C&IT use in learning, teaching and assessment at Brookes. Some of the papers presented at this conference and subsequently published in Teaching Forum (48, Summer 2000) are provided as case studies on the EFFECTS web site (see also <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/virtual/NewTF/index.html>).

Effects of EFFECTS: Media Workshop and WebCT

Richard Francis, the LTSO, became the Head of Media Workshop in January 2001. The newly established Media Workshop, a component of the Brookes Virtual project, is in many ways an outcome of Brookes participation in the EFFECTS program. Of course, there were also many other reasons for its establishment (EFFECTS doesn't feature in the documentation accompanying the project). Brookes Virtual is a new and developing resource that aims to create an integrated learning environment through extensive use of C&IT, enhancing the learning experience gained by students studying on a Brookes course.

Among Media Workshop's responsibilities are enabling staff to convert and develop suitable C&IT-based learning materials for online delivery; staff development, short courses and central support; and organising and running awareness-raising and dissemination programmes. Since January 2001, the Media Workshop has been providing 15-hour courses in using WebCT for teaching and learning. Well over 100 academics and support staff have done this course (up to July 2001). Many are either using or preparing to use this environment in their teaching.

The OCSLD, Certificate of Higher Education and WebCT

The Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development (OCSLD) employed another LTSO at the start of January to continue fostering use of C&IT for teaching and learning at Brookes. This position also has responsibility for CAA. In term 2 of this academic year, the OCSLD offered parts of its Certificate in Higher Education (CTHE) online using WebCT. It was the first course to 'go live' in this medium, and

encountered technical snares aplenty. Students were encouraged to find ways to use their participation in the discussion board towards their assessment portfolio, and some used this medium as they carried out extensive group projects investigating C&IT use at Brookes.

The OCSLD plans to built on this experience, further developing the use of WebCT next year, in recognition of its responsibility to play a leading role in using C&IT in teaching in effective, pedagogically sound ways. The CTHE has 30 or so participants each year as it is compulsory for new staff who lack teaching qualifications. Ways of using of C&IT for teaching and learning will, through these new teachers, diffuse into teaching programs throughout Brookes.

Partner institution

At our partner institution (University of Oxford) four participants started the programme, but to a person have all withdrawn. It would appear that the motivation to attend the EFFECTS programme was one of problem-solving and that there was no further interest in completing a case study to gain an academic qualification.

EFFECTS course

The DIP HE (EFFECTS) was institutionally validated in 2001. To date, however, the prospect of an academic credit has proved to be of little incentive with staff preferring to focus on projects that will help them solve immediate learning and teaching issues.

The future: ongoing learning needs arising through C&IT use

Media Workshop and the OCSLD jointly run an ongoing dissemination program at Brookes, presenting innovations in C&IT use at Brookes, including CAA, in seminars throughout term. We anticipate that substantial numbers of students will be accessing parts of their courses through WebCT in the coming year. Technological innovations, including for teaching and learning, continue apace. Together, these will stimulate demand for more training, trialling and dissemination of C&IT skills as academics and support staff search for solutions to unanticipated pedagogical and technical problems.

A second internal conference on teaching and learning using C&IT at Brookes is planned for July 2002. Looking back over the period of Brookes involvement in the EFFECTS project, we can observe with some satisfaction that a substantial advance in embedding learning technologies has taken place, and we expect it to continue into the future.