

## **A review of e-learning at King's College**

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## Executive Summary

A series of cluster discussions and individual interviews has taken place within the College to map the nature and extent of the use of e-learning, to identify good pedagogical practice across the College and to explore key issues, challenges and possible directions.

Outcomes of the review indicate:

- i. A blended learning approach, in which “traditional” ways of teaching are enhanced by the use of e-learning technologies, is widely seen as an appropriate way forward.
- ii. There is a shared view that e-learning should be pedagogically led and should not be treated separately from other teaching and learning support.
- iii. Some schools and departments are perceived to have made particularly good progress in comparison with others. These include the Modern Language Centre in Humanities, the School of Law, War Studies and Dentistry.
- iv. The College VLE (Blackboard) is a point of reference; however it is generally used as a repository for information. In addition, not everyone is aligned with the VLE framework. For example, there is a perception in Medicine that the modular approach in the centrally supported VLE is not appropriate for the discipline. However, there was agreement that there should be a uniform base-level of e-learning provision across the Schools.
- v. Models for e-learning may have limited impact on curricula where disciplinary professional bodies are involved, such as in nursing, dentistry, law and other areas where standards and competencies frameworks are prioritised.
- vi. A number of barriers to the wider adoption of e-learning were identified: lack of community and coherence across the College in this area; difficulties in releasing staff time to engage in e-learning development activity; a perceived lack of recognition and reward for the teaching and development of e-learning that reflected the research-led nature of the institution; gaps in support services; and limited training to help address the technological and pedagogical needs of staff and students.
- vii. Potentially revenue-generating programmes lack seedcorn funding to get them up and running.
- viii. A framework/model needs to be put in place that will take into account the need for varied support roles such as instructional designers and content developers.
- ix. There is a concern that the capability to support innovation is not in place and therefore e-learning developments are taking place too slowly or not taking place at all.
- x. There is recognition of the work that EIGER has carried out but there is a consensus that it is not integrated into the College structure.

Alongside and in support of existing local provision, there is a widely felt need for a central co-ordinating focus with strong liaisons in each school to help bring together College e-learning expertise and drive strategic developments at a College level. This would help to: share existing effective practice; facilitate and support initiatives and the development of staff expertise; instigate research ideas; address finance barriers and provide a locus for the generation of external funding streams.

## Glossary

Blog	(from 'Web log') A personal online journal that is easy to update with user narratives and links.
Haptics	The science of applying touch (tactile) sensation and control to interaction with computer applications.
HE	Higher Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
MCQ	Multiple Choice Questions
RSS feeds	Really Simple Syndication: a family of Web feed formats used to publish frequently updated works; they can help students to maintain contact with the university and manage their time.
Social software	Software, running on an individual's computer or on a website, with which users can create personal profiles, form groups, connect with others and communicate
Virtual/Augmented Reality	A form of human-computer-interaction, where virtual objects are added to real scenes in real time
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
Web portal	A website or service that offers access to a broad array of digital resources and services, such as e-mail, fora, search engines, etc.
Wiki	A website that visitors can edit using their browser. Groups can use a wiki to share resources and author documents collaboratively.

### Introduction

This review has been undertaken at the request of the College Education Committee, in parallel with the King's Graduate Project discussions that have taken place from May to November 2008. It is expected that it will contribute to the College's revision of its learning and teaching strategy. The report's focus on e-learning does not signal that e-learning is a separate issue from learning in general: such a distinction would be hard to maintain. However, it acknowledges that at the moment, and for the foreseeable future, e-learning presents a range of issues that may warrant particular attention.

This is not an exhaustive account of e-learning at King's. Neither does it provide a full review of the literature or of developments elsewhere, Instead it offers a view of how e-learning is currently happening and how it might be, provided by participants who are involved in e-learning in a variety of ways, across the College. It is hoped that its strengths lie in its depiction of the variation within the College and its assessment of the practical issues that arise when colleagues engage in e-learning developments.

A series of cluster discussions took place at the College to inform the development of the College's approach to e-learning, in ways appropriate to the overarching institutional mission and the College's learning and teaching strategy. It was believed that College wide participation and a consultative approach would enable wider participation and the inclusion of a range of informed perspectives.

The discussions helped to map the nature and extent of the use of e-learning. They explored expertise by identifying adopters and champions of e-learning and good pedagogical practice across the College. They also explored challenges, which would potentially affect future development.

A team-based approach of discussions involving staff from across the College was followed. Six small group discussions took place. The process was documented and a collaborative communication tool (a wiki) was used to encourage additional contributions from cluster participants during the process. The individual groups (clusters) were:

1. Programme directors
2. Learning technologists
3. Researchers
4. Teaching practitioners
5. Students
6. Senior leaders

The report contains the views of a large number of academic and support staff from across the College. The report did not seek views exclusively from e-learning enthusiasts but took a broader and sometimes properly sceptical perspective. e-Learning is not seen as a panacea, nor as a cheap alternative to "conventional" teaching. Instead a blended approach is recommended, in which the possibilities that e-learning offers become part of the wide range of approaches and techniques that are available for teaching and learning. Nevertheless there is a recognition that e-learning may at times offer more than the chance to do the same things better.

The provision of tools for e-learning may tend to mean that decisions are taken for the institution as a whole. Whilst this is understandable, it is also acknowledged that teaching and learning are intensely personal activities, for both teachers and learners. The review

has sought to identify the range of needs across the College, so that provision can offer appropriate choices for particular contexts.

### 1. Conceptions of e-learning

Cluster participants were asked to define e-learning, taking their context and role into account. Some took a generic and non-contextual view, in which the main function of e-learning was to replicate, as well as possible, face to face teaching. Laurillard's (2002) definition of e-learning as 'any learning that involves technology' sums up this broad view. Participants saw a number of benefits:

- ❖ Opportunities to supplement traditional methods e.g. simulate an experiment.
- ❖ Flexibility of access to electronic resources for students while they are off-campus.
- ❖ More sustained interaction with students through distance learning environments.

For some, e-learning meant not simply "doing the same things better" but "doing new things". This included the possibility of addressing new audiences, often through distance learning. It also might involve significant changes in pedagogy, improving students' learning experience by:

- ❖ Being more student-centred and motivational than traditional educational approaches.
- ❖ Enhancing interactivity and creating opportunities for collaborative and peer to peer learning.

This was a significant outcome of the discussions: an attempt to redefine e-learning by differentiating between technology-mediated and technology-enhanced learning, the latter providing a focus on how the practitioner can change approaches to learning through technology.

The College VLE (Blackboard) was a point of reference in these definitions as the environment within which courses and modules were developed; clearly it is a significant part of the landscape. The nature of current usage is outlined below. However there were attempts to provide a broader definition taking into account that there were initiatives in the College to support course delivery outside the adopted VLE framework.

Some participants chose to position e-learning in the King's context, offering disciplinary/institutional definitions of e-learning. Their views are explored below.

### 2. e-Learning across the College

The overall perception of e-learning across the College was that the College is not advanced in terms of its e-learning provision when compared with the British higher education (HE) sector and that there were a number of research-led universities ahead of King's.

A view shared across clusters was that the development of e-learning in the College varied considerably across schools/departments, with some schools perceived as 'being behind' in relation to others. The extent to which e-learning was utilised depended on whether a school/department/person felt that it was worthwhile. Activity was perceived to be locally driven by specialists, champions and enthusiasts, and an individual academic's propensity to use ICT in teaching. A common view was that most programmes use some 'e-learning' resources, but this might be little more than uploading non-interactive resources on the web.

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The current e-learning strategy framework was thought to be insufficiently directive. However it allowed schools flexibility to manage their own e-learning needs. Participants pointed out that these needs are different in different subject areas and for different students. Some departments have developed content-rich courses, whereas others had put emphasis on communication between students, tutors and external collaborators. College-level development would need to take full account of legitimate local variation.

Examples of good practice were perceived to be located in War Studies, the Dental Institute's postgraduate programmes, Law, Nursing and Midwifery and the Modern Language Centre. Those discipline-shaped perceptions of e-learning included the adoption of tools (podcasts, blogs, wikis and so on) and these approaches were predominantly blended.

This variation in engagement and approaches was explored by the participants. Examples were given and explanations for these approaches in schools/ departments included:

- At times the context drove the development, e.g. Distance Learning in War studies.
- Some disciplines/subjects, such as languages, are perceived to be more suitable for e-learning. Modern Languages started with a blended learning approach and then moved towards 100% distance learning in some areas.
- The clinical curriculum drove the change towards e-learning in biomedical sciences.
- There tends to be a greater acceptance of e-learning initiatives in the biomedical sciences. This is partly because of the types of teaching materials, and partly because Medicine, in particular, has historically been ICT-orientated.
- The Medicine, Dental Institute and Biomedical & Health Sciences Virtual Campus is heavily used and regarded as central to the Medical Curriculum, and is accessed by both staff and students. It is primarily, but not entirely, an administrative system.
- The main reason that professional courses like Medicine tend not to use Blackboard-like platforms is that the modular approach in the King's VLE does not fit well with the single cohort, single course structure of the MBBS programme and a reprogramming of the interface would be the only solution to make it work in a way that responded adequately to the needs of teaching practice in Medicine.
- DEPS has been a long time user of e-learning in the broadest definition, and continues to do so in pockets of excellence.

It was recommended that the interface between discipline-based practice and the College's strategic support for e-learning could be strengthened by:

- ❖ The learning and teaching coordinators ensuring that there are effective links in the strategy to discipline based practice.
- ❖ Supplementing generic strategy principles by concrete indicative discipline-based examples, not constraining but aspirational in nature.
- ❖ Articulating generic graduate attributes and testing these in disciplinary environments to develop a meaningful matrix of attributes. This could lead to the development of core materials relevant to all disciplines.
- ❖ Engaging school teaching committees in a discussion around the generic framework and asking them to supplement the interpretation/implementation of that strategy with a discipline led approach.
- ❖ Having an appendix of examples in the strategy, a disciplinary patterning within a spectrum of activities approaches and practices, so it would not interrupt the flow of the generic document.

e-Learning has largely been associated with Blackboard. The quality and range of available materials has been improved and includes a variety of links to resources. VLE training has

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been recently made more widely available. This has been a first step in getting people to feel more comfortable with the platform and e-learning. Moodle as an alternative VLE is being taken up by some schools in the College.

Discussions highlighted some trends of use:

- ❖ Use of the platform as a repository for information and not broadly for other worthwhile activities.
- ❖ The temporal aspect of platform use, i.e. activity peaked when Blackboard was selected (as the College platform) and then it 'went quiet again'.
- ❖ The current choice of platform is limiting and serves a limited number of pedagogical approaches.

Cluster members believed that developments should be informed by existing research and should be accompanied by new research and evaluation. EIGER was felt to be very useful as a group of people meeting once or twice a term and there was recognition of its activities at senior management level. It was agreed that EIGER was working effectively as a dissemination group, sharing experiences and putting people in touch with each other. The advantage of EIGER was its informal approach where anybody who was interested could get involved with it, as a more formal structure might not work for some members of staff. However, it was widely felt that (1) EIGER is not integrated into the College structure and the decision-making processes of the College (2) a number of EIGER-like groups were needed (3) and there was need to consider format and structure of a bigger group to disseminate their activities

### 3. Priorities

Participants emphasised some significant factors as priorities for the development of e-learning in the College:

#### 3.1. *e-learning provision*

- Access to e-learning is part of what a modern university should offer and what students expect. Broadly, we need to do more and do it better.
- There should be a base-level of e-learning provision across the Schools, including access to support and the availability of tools. This should be complemented by additional local provision tailored to needs.

#### 3.2. *e-learning and students*

- The Connected Campus Project has the potential to benefit students immensely by allowing seamless connected access across the College.
- e-learning can address the issue of student non-participation and facilitate interaction, though face-to-face teaching remains central in what we do at King's.
- e-learning can contribute towards more self-regulated and self-supporting student behaviours.
- Computer-supported collaborative learning places an emphasis on groups of people learning together in virtual spaces. Therefore the development of the web portal environment and collaborative environment represents a significant component within the current VLE framework.
- Students should be offered opportunities to generate, as well as to use, web materials.

### **3.3. e-learning and staff**

- Demonstrating the benefits of e-learning to staff can stimulate enthusiasm though it is not a given that all staff will come on board.
- We could take more advantage of King's best lecturers to create digital media: video, audio or create online content.
- Engagement in e-learning should be recognised, celebrated and rewarded appropriately

### **3.4. The curriculum and e-learning**

Participants discussed how e-learning related to the curriculum. There was strong agreement that the curriculum should be enhanced by e-learning rather than driven by it. To keep pedagogic concerns at the forefront, some suggested that one should consider the curriculum and intended learning outcomes first of all and then look holistically at how e-learning can be used beneficially.

Affinity with the King's Graduate Project was also highlighted. When considering curriculum delivery as a whole, e-learning had a great deal to offer, that would enable the College to achieve flexible, personalised learning, as well as to facilitate proposed curriculum characteristics such as global connectedness, interdisciplinarity and creativity.

Others looked at the *content* aspect of curriculum, to complement the *process* views above. Some suggested that a good starting point would be to look at what areas of the curriculum might be amenable to e-learning and identify standard core materials which can be converted into an e-learning format.

There was wide agreement that we are not yet making optimum use of the web, which offers the opportunity to make a range of learning materials available across the College to meet widely felt needs among students, with generic materials open to modification to accommodate different disciplines.

It was agreed that reuse of learning resources was a commendable approach to developing e-learning. This could include:

- Identifying materials that already exist.
- Using open source materials and ready made adaptable re-useable e-learning resources for example in international repositories
- Benefitting from international collaborations to develop e-learning content.

There were further concerns that e-learning may determine the curriculum. For example, a participant suggested that some disciplines still need to follow traditional approaches to learning and teaching, with, for example, access to real libraries and materials. It was also pointed out that e-learning may have little impact on the curriculum where disciplinary professional bodies are involved, e.g. nursing, dentistry and law, where professional standards and competency frameworks may be prioritised.

### **3.5. Assessment**

It was widely felt across the clusters that technology can be used to serve the purposes of assessment. Handling assessment in an electronic environment is complex. It was suggested that Blackboard at the moment cannot support that degree of complexity. To address the perceived inadequacies of the VLE's e-assessment tools, approaches have frequently been developed outside the College VLE.

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Assessing students' needs and prior knowledge is a challenge for assessment in HE. It was suggested that computerised adaptive testing should be used to diagnose student ability and areas of weakness and strength. Effective rapid, personalised feedback can be formative, real-time, engaging, and uncover where learning support is needed.

Discussions highlighted that formal MCQs and electronic questionnaires can be used in a variety of forms and can be extremely useful when used flexibly for some courses and group sizes. Attitudes to MCQs varied. For instance it was thought that MCQ tests can be used to assess basic knowledge, though it is harder to provide automatic feedback for 'in-depth' questions. It was recognised that, in large cohorts, computer-assisted assessment via Blackboard can be used and it was pointed out that evaluation results from students were positive.

Technology provides the opportunity to engage students in e-assessment using peer evaluation and formative assessment, through computer-mediated communication. Giving detailed feedback on a peer's work and having the feedback assessed addresses student development needs and leads to better understanding of assessment criteria.

Discussions on this topic also explored how some of the more traditional problems such as plagiarism have become more acute in e-learning environments. Electronic submission can help with plagiarism detection via the integration of electronic systems such as Turnitin that compare students' work against electronic sources including other students' work. The reliability of the system processes and mechanisms for submitting assessments should be enhanced to alleviate anxiety and concerns for students. It was also indicated that peer assessment can help to overcome the plagiarism problem.

### **4. Challenges and barriers**

Overall, discussions highlighted a perception that e-learning has yet to be seen as a principal means of enabling the attainment of strategic objectives and has yet to achieve sufficient prioritising or resourcing. The issues brought up by the national student survey (both nationally and locally) surrounding feedback and assessment have led to an increasing realisation that there is scope for improvement and presents an opportunity. Enhancing the quality of delivery is essential and e-learning can play a part in this.

A number of barriers were identified:

#### **4.1. Staff involvement**

- Lack of e-learning awareness when new staff are inducted.
- Lack of staff willingness to engage because career progression is seen to be based mainly on research output.
- Lack of team effort
- Lack of time and an expectancy that the work is carried out in tutors' spare time.
- Not buying out teaching for academic staff in order to work with content developers.
- Professional development provision that is sometimes not sufficiently specific to the needs of the staff.

#### **4.2. Frameworks and pedagogy**

- Lack of explicit guidance on issues such as pedagogy, quality assurance and the evaluation of e-learning as part of the overall content of a programme.
- Lack of good examples of good e-learning practice in different schools.

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- In some Schools there is felt to be an unrealistic expectation about what e-learning can achieve.
- Insufficient recognition that the format of online content is substantially different to face to face and that Distance Learning requires continuing attention once it has been set up.
- Too many technologies to choose from (which are not always supported).

### **4.3. Resources**

- Spending too much time developing content from scratch, which might be available freely and of an appropriate quality from somewhere else.
- Lack of significant investment.

### **4.4. System capability**

- Pre-enrolment on the system is required so that study skills and other provision can be made available in advance of enrolment
- e-learning modules need to be accessible to external students.
- Lack of access to courses at different levels by students where appropriate.

### **4.5. Communication**

- Fragmented student communities across the College.
- Tensions between central and local mechanisms – ensuring that the 'centre' is in touch with local expertise and that the communication goes beyond enthusiasts or technology experts.
- Cultural issues: differences of discourse in communication between academics and technical staff.

## **5. Future developments**

### **5.1. A Web 2.0 future**

Focus group members suggested a number of ways in which technologies could be used more widely and to good effect in higher education. Underlying a number of these recommendations is a trend towards the wider use of computer mediated communication (e.g. Web 2.0 technologies and environments) and recognition that they represent a different view of how we might teach. Participants suggested:

- It is not necessary to have a monolithic central system that supports e-learning. Instead, different technologies can be incorporated in flexible and innovative ways. Where VLEs are used, other technologies such as computer based simulations, video conferencing, virtual and augmented reality, haptics, social software and social networking technologies, such as blogs and wikis, RSS feeds etc. should be explored. There should also be more focus on mobile technologies and what might be termed pervasive (in everything) and ambient (part of the constant background) technologies.
- Blended learning approaches should be encouraged if appropriate, where a significant part of the curriculum is supported by online tools.
- Opportunities should be taken to develop open and distance learning using e-learning where appropriate.
- Institutions should move towards an appreciation of the value of informal learning opportunities.

### 5.2. *Changing roles*

Participants suggested that learning and teaching roles that once were strictly defined had now become less clear. For example, around educational technologies, the distinction between academics and other roles across the institution has become blurred.

It was believed that traditional staff roles would probably not change radically, but would embrace technology more. There may be implications for rethinking the relationship of teaching-centred and research-centred staff behaviours, and a shift towards taking on a facilitator role away from content delivery.

Any re-assessment of roles should revisit how staff make use of teaching time as a whole, including lecture time, tutorials and other student-centred activities when evaluating the possibilities for and usefulness of e-learning approaches.

Inducting staff into changing their pedagogical approach by introducing them to e-learning tools featured in the discussions. These step by step approaches could help lecturers change their teaching style by, for example, breaking up lectures into more interactive sessions that would include advice for students on how to make use of available e-learning opportunities. Introducing Blackboard to new lecturers via the programmes jointly delivered by KLI and ISS was also noted as a beneficial approach.

e-Learning competences could be added to staff job descriptions indicating that there is an expectation of engagement with e-learning. Lecturer induction courses should involve an introduction to accessing the College e-learning system.

### 5.3. **Staff recognition**

Participants' perceptions were that staff efforts are not recognized, that there is a distinct lack of financial and academic rewards and that staff need to be given more time for e-learning development.

It was pointed out that the nature of the College as a research-led environment shaped staff perceptions about any benefits for their career. In addition, not all academics saw benefits for their teaching because they were not convinced e-learning would actually benefit their students. The clusters also highlighted that at King's more traditional models of delivery still exist that had served the College well and that many staff would not be convinced that there was any need for change. However, it was felt by senior and a number of other staff that there is a need to engage more staff in e-learning. It was suggested that reluctant members of staff would gradually change, mainly through student pressure via student feedback and from peer facilitation. 'Show and tell' seemed to be an effective method that could overcome staff reluctance by:

- ❖ Demonstrating examples of effective e-learning practice, rather than introducing tools as a radical shift in culture.
- ❖ Aiming towards a tipping point, where people see the advantages of e-learning and do not want to be left out.
- ❖ Building confidence; once the real benefits of e-learning are clearly exposed then an exponential uptake was likely.

Cluster participants expressed the view that staff who take up e-learning tend to be digitally literate whereas there seems to be a gap between 'digital immigrants' and 'digital natives'. The College had historically concentrated on face to face workshops for staff. However web-based opportunities were being developed to be accessed by staff at any time, at basic,

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intermediate, advanced level, so that staff development could be made available more flexibly. It was agreed that the seminar support model (ISS technical and KLI pedagogical) to help staff get started was a sensible model. However, there were inconsistencies in staff development offered to members of staff who wanted to create online courses/modules. A perception was that there was a tension between the development opportunities coming from central professional bodies and in-school training. The view was that in some Schools there is plenty of support, whereas others struggle. For some this suggested a need for a central pool of support to even out these inconsistencies.

Other recommendations also included:

- ❖ A training framework that takes into account varied support roles such as instructional designers and content developers.
- ❖ Rewards that recognise excellence across a range of areas, improving recognition in the College, as well as embedding it within appraisal and promotion procedures.

### **5.4. Supporting students**

It was agreed that many students in some respects are well equipped to reap the benefits of e-learning but that there is still a skills issue to be addressed. Undergraduates are more likely to be computer competent whereas postgraduates form a diverse group - mature students for example were identified in some cases as not being as 'computer literate'. However, it was also agreed that assumptions should not be made about technical competence, as research indicates not all young people are engaging with digital spaces and many lack the necessary information handling skills. Working in teams does not 'come naturally' to students and some effort is required to encourage computer supported collaborative work. In addition, some of the more traditional problems such as plagiarism have become more acute in e-learning environments.

It was suggested that a two-step approach could be: to identify students lacking the necessary competencies and then to provide help and support to up-skill these students and ensure they are in a position to benefit from e-learning.

It was widely felt that there needs to be a generic induction at the beginning of each course to address learner needs. It may be advisable to explore whether there is enough commonality across courses/disciplines to design a generic induction programme.

### **5.5. Supporting strategic change**

The cluster participants believed that senior management support would be needed to develop a more strategic College approach, to support the processes of strategic change and to ensure dissemination to staff and students. It would:

- ❖ Keep both resourcing and pedagogic issues on the agenda, with a focus on long-term investment strategies e.g. through the connected campus project and associated activities.
- ❖ Give explicit support to the objectives of the e-learning agenda.

Cluster participants agreed that an integrated strategy composed of both e-learning and learning and teaching strategies is needed. This should form one of the drivers for a culture change where e-learning becomes an integrated part of teaching at King's. The consensus was that the e-learning agenda needs to be managed centrally to be effective, without undermining local initiatives, and that more explicit engagement of the College middle and

senior management is needed to provide resources and support. These should be based on a clearly defined College strategy that is distributed and made manifest at the local level.

### 5.6. Administrative implications

Cluster participants explored the administrative issues that would need to be dealt with to enable e-learning development to take place. Requirements included:

- ❖ Access to information and services that would support the learning process, by developing a single point of contact for students, including single authentication, seamless connected access across the campus and a robust service.
- ❖ Increasing flexibility and transparency in system administration to allow staff to access one another's materials.
- ❖ Reconciling effectiveness, efficiency and security with open access to computing facilities for students.
- ❖ Tracking student web presence to monitor retention and progression.

### 5.7. Models of e-learning support

Participants listed a number of important tasks that could be done better and that current structures and processes did not always support effectively:

- ❖ improve networking and working relationships among those with e-learning expertise
- ❖ share existing effective practice
- ❖ facilitate and support initiatives
- ❖ support the development of staff expertise
- ❖ develop and deploy instructional design skills and learning technology skills
- ❖ explore and support e-learning aspects of online and distance learning and other markets, such as CPD
- ❖ address finance barriers
- ❖ instigate research ideas
- ❖ provide a point for the development of external funding
- ❖ provide and develop expertise in evaluation

The merits of central support versus support based in schools and departments were considered by the clusters. It was agreed that establishing a development model and an explicit approach that recognised the roles of central, school and departmental provision, articulating them in ways that were sensitive to context, was fundamental for the success of e-learning.

Group members considered what kind of model might work for a College-level e-learning support group, drawing on exemplars from other universities. A body dealing with e-learning would need to be connected appropriately with the College Education Committee, KLI and ISS, as well as with Schools.

At a minimal level (model 1), a group would provide a basic level of support, offering dissemination of good practice across the College, bringing together expertise and innovative initiatives and responding to requests for evaluation of e-learning materials. Much of this is already part of the role of KLI.

At a more strategic level (model 2), the implementation of the e-learning aspects of the College learning and teaching strategy would be supported by a central hub of expertise for pedagogical and technical matters taking the initiative in many or all the above areas as a

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development team, also taking into account the periphery and local implementation mechanisms.

In both models:

- ❖ The group would work closely with ISS and collaborate with current successful dissemination and support significant structures such as EIGER.
- ❖ The group would work with KLI to offer academic development opportunities in response to demand.
- ❖ Funding would be needed and investment models for developing resources and training. External funding would be identified and acquired. A good investment would be to recruit dedicated researchers who are tasked with applying for external funding.

### **5.8. Costs**

Participants were asked to consider the costs involved in the design, development, delivery, and maintenance of e-learning. Important considerations in these discussions included: programme cost, cost of initial development, generating and paying expertise and tutor's time. It was agreed that costs can vary widely depending on the delivery method (blended or distance learning) and metrics should be used to measure impact, e.g. a costs/benefits analysis.

Priorities were to regard e-learning as an investment, address prior conceptions that e-learning is a resource free enterprise and find, allocate and dedicate resources to support initiatives. Possible models discussed were (a) top slicing central resources to put into a central fund, or (b) allocating central funding to Schools and Departments to support initiatives. Cluster participants believed that income should also be generated by attracting external funding.

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations

The broad conclusion is that, although there are examples of excellent practice, and encouraging signs that infrastructure is being significantly enhanced, the College is not yet appropriately organised and resourced to support the development of e-learning practice across all curricula.

The e-learning review has identified two aspects of College organisation that are needed:

- a forum in which e-learning policy can be developed
- a focal point for expertise in e-learning across the College

The following outlines a light structure to enable this to happen.

### **e-learning Forum**

An advisory forum, chaired by the Vice-Principal (Education) or nominee will meet termly to develop and review policy in relation to e-learning. The College e-learning Co-ordinator will be a member of the Forum and will have a central role in facilitating the development of policy. Other members of the Forum will be chosen to ensure that there is expertise in depth in relation to e-learning and a wide understanding of the kinds of teaching taking place across the College. The Forum will report regularly to College Education Committee.

### **College e-learning Co-ordinator**

The Co-ordinator will be nominated to work closely with colleagues across the institution, especially but not solely those in KLI and ISS, to:

- ❖ facilitate and support initiatives
- ❖ improve networking and working relationships among those with e-learning expertise
- ❖ share existing effective practice
- ❖ support the development of staff expertise and offer academic development opportunities
- ❖ develop and deploy instructional design skills and learning technology skills
- ❖ provide and develop expertise in evaluation
- ❖ address finance barriers and provide a point for the development of external funding
- ❖ instigate research ideas
- ❖ explore and support online and distance learning and other markets, such as CPD

### **Associated developments**

Each School will be invited to nominate an e-learning champion, to work with existing learning and teaching co-ordinators (LTCs) and the College e-learning Co-ordinator to promote an e-learning agenda in their School. In some cases the LTC may also be the e-learning champion.

The Co-ordinator will work with EIGER to facilitate the development of a community of practice across the College and in the UK and internationally.

Where appropriate, ISS and KLI will channel available resourcing into the funding of e-learning initiatives, through planning mechanisms such as the College Teaching Fund. The e-learning Co-ordinator will be closely involved in this process.

## **KING'S COLLEGE E-LEARNING REVIEW**

External funding will be identified and acquired via collaborative bids.

### **Review**

It should be noted that this is a very “light-touch” approach, relying heavily on networking and goodwill and without any increase in overall funding. Whilst it will help to ensure that the College makes the best use of its available resources, it needs to be acknowledged that the overall level of resourcing is insufficient to secure the advances that many in the College would like to see. In particular, a larger team of ISS learning technologists is needed to support development across the College. Organisation and level of funding should be reviewed in twelve months to see whether they are able to deliver the progress that is needed.

## Appendix: Cluster participants

### Programme Directors

Laurence Alemanni  
Louise Barriball  
Dominique Borel  
Barbara Daniel  
Nicholas Harrison  
Anne-Lucie Norton  
Pat Reynolds

### Researchers

Chris Abbott  
Jacqueline Bloomfield  
David Hay  
Ian Stevenson  
Ann Wilkinson

### Teachers

Barry Blakeley  
Richard Cammack  
Rachael Morris-Jones  
Mary Webb

### Learning Technologists

Philip Blake  
David Byrne  
Ian Calder  
Julian Fletcher  
Jonathan Hunt  
Matthew Taylor

### Senior Leaders

Dominique Borel  
Ian Creagh  
Mary Davies  
Sonia Massai  
Jan Palmowski  
Karen Stanton  
Jeremy Ward  
Phil Whitfield

### Students

Two fora: one with 10  
undergraduate, and one with 3  
postgraduate students

