

Technology enhanced learning: a whole-college approach to continuing professional development

Case Study of Innovative
Practices for Teaching
and Assessment in NI FE

Technology enhanced learning: a whole-college approach to CPD



INSPIRING. TRANSFORMING. ENRICHING.

Background

Workplace learning has attracted increasing attention in our networked society, as staff look for opportunities to enhance their skills through continuing professional development (CPD) mapped to their needs and those of their learners. It is against this backdrop SERC has created access to innovative, formal and informal CPD opportunities to improve learning and teaching. Embedding technology enhanced learning necessitated a dynamic, tailored approach to CPD, addressing the digital literacy and pedagogical skills of staff.

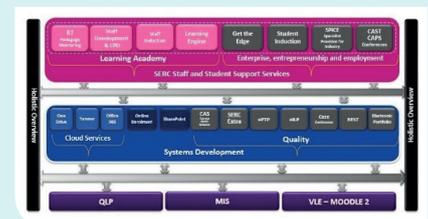
Raising and maintaining professional standards goes hand-in-hand with developing tutors' professional practice. It has been shown that where CPD is at the heart of planning for improvement, and integrated into the quality improvement and self-evaluation cycle, standards rise and retention and achievement increase as tutors develop their pedagogic skills. A holistic approach was adopted in SERC to engage learners through the professional development of tutors, leveraging the advantages of technology to develop a contextualised, innovative curriculum through a range of delivery models.

Development

In SERC, 'learning agility' is valued as a core competence. Consequently, SERC has developed a range of formal and informal learning opportunities for all staff as part of the **Learning Academy**. These include **staff induction** that has been flipped (training is provided online prior to meeting face-to-face), **online learning modules** through the **Learning Engine** portal, **ILT Pedagogy Mentoring programme**, **Moodle Monday** (online webinars every Monday, focused on developing blended learning skills of teaching staff), **Webinar Wednesdays**, 'live' recorded webinars each Wednesday, where staff share good practice, and **social learning via Yammer**, which provides just-in-time training. These examples have been highlighted as best practice by QAA and ETI and have drawn international attention, resulting in SERC providing CPD training to colleges in Ireland and Singapore on these methodologies. SERC has been invited to speak about these strategies at a number of international conferences.

"Well-considered and systematic whole-college approach to the planning and provision of CPD for all staff, which is articulated clearly in strategic and operational planning processes and in the associated targets"

ETI, 2015



Holistic overview of TEL approach in SERC

"The review found the college ILT Pedagogy Mentoring programme as an area of good practice which develops ILT and Pedagogy skills of Higher Education lecturers and increases the variation of assessment strategies"

QAA, 2013

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ILT Pedagogy Mentoring programme

A whole-college approach to peer mentoring and bespoke staff support has been implemented through the ILT Pedagogy Mentoring programme, tailored to the needs of lecturers and students.

ILT Pedagogy mentors seconded from a range of curriculum areas identify and respond to the ILT and pedagogic development needs of selected programme teams and lecturers. They work closely with colleagues to map the appropriate technology and teaching and learning strategies to curriculum and student needs.

Mentors teach in their colleague's classroom environment, using demonstration lessons, team teaching and peer observation to inspire change. Lecturers seek feedback from students and use this to inform future planning. SERC has completed over 600 mentoring cycles with more than 400 staff. The impact of the work has led to joint research with a Japanese college and invitations to present to and train staff in Ireland, Singapore, Japan and Thailand. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) and the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) have identified the mentoring programme as best practice.

Inducting new staff

A flipped classroom approach is used for staff induction, enabling staff to undertake training before an induction workshop. As part of the new induction process, lecturers are observed and a range of supportive measures are put in place, including mentored support, workshops and one-to-one sessions with the mentor.

“It gave me more confidence. I’m part time. It made me think about how I could use ILT in classes to cater for most learning styles and make the sessions more interesting. The mentoring afforded me the opportunity to look closely at the pedagogy of my lessons and revealed how through ILT learning could be enhanced and enriched.”

SERC, part-time tutor

“Thank you for your kind support and understanding. My mentor has been fabulous – perhaps this is one of the main gains of this process – experiencing what excellent needs focused and supportive true mentoring is all about.”

HE tutor, 2013



New staff induction uses a flipped approach

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Learning Engine

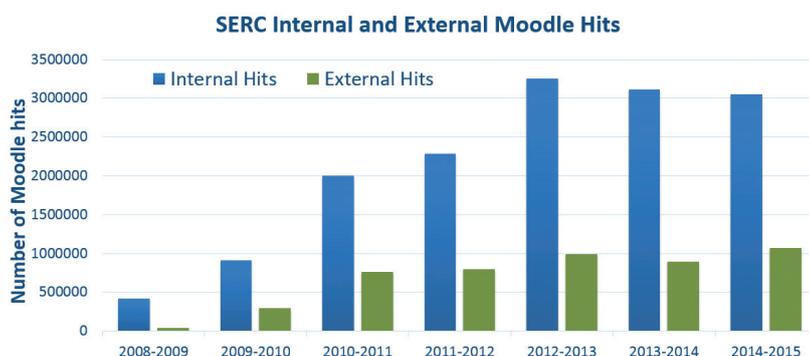
The college developed an online learning management system called the Learning Engine. This allows staff to set up, deliver, track, benchmark and report on training. Using interactive multimedia content, staff participants work through courses, completing quizzes to show that they understand the training topics.

1042 members of staff have completed the online modules and standard operating procedures (SOPs) or policies that they were allocated. 38 modules have been developed. 15,843 learning activities have been completed (June 2015). As a result, SERC has saved an estimated £400,000 in travel and trainer costs.

Moodle Mondays and Webinar Wednesdays

With the need to be solution focused and excellence driven, and in a climate of budgetary constraints, the college identified that staff needed flexible training opportunities alongside the mentoring programme. Such opportunities also enable lecturers to undertake and review training at a time and location of their choice. Developing the virtual learning environment (VLE) Moodle is a key part of SERC's vision for adopting a blended learning approach. To encourage lecturers and students to use the VLE to support and enhance blended learning, SERC implemented Moodle Mondays. These are webinars focused on good practice in blended learning. Moodle Mondays and Webinar Wednesdays are recorded and thus enable staff to watch wherever and whenever they choose.

SERC continues to build the technological pedagogies of its staff through a wide range of CPD initiatives. The use of Moodle has increased significantly, with over 4.1 million hits in 2014–15. 26% of these were from outside of the college.



Increased Moodle Use



Learning Engine App



SERC's Moodle Mondays focus on blended learning



SERC's Webinar Wednesdays focus on sharing good practice

“Yes – not only did I learn new skills, it helped me engage in reflective practice and identify my strengths and weaknesses.”

SERC tutor, 2014

