**Quality in online and blended learning – research-based practitioner learning**

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**What’s been done to mitigate online/blending learning further disadvantaging those who are already disadvantage?**

1. What does research/practice tell us about what we need to think about as CLD practitioners when planning remote and blended learning?
2. How does this research/guidance help us evaluate effectiveness?
3. What are the key points from this research CLD practitioners need to think about for future delivery of CLD?

Alona and John in their presentations cited OFSTED and Columbia University research showing that learners with a history of less educational success do not do so well with online learning.

Our adult literacy and numeracy learners tend to have little history of educational success so this is an issue for us as CLD practitioners planning remote and blended learning. Do we risk disadvantaging our learners further when we deliver online and blended learning?

Technological challenges and access to data are an issue; the social aspects of learning face to face are also important. But something that stood out for me was how learning design can support learner engagement and retention.

Open University research, again cited by Alona, ([Http://oro.open.ac.uk/45383/](http://oro.open.ac.uk/45383/) *The impact of learning design on student behaviour, satisfaction and performance: a cross-institutional comparison across 151 modules)* looked at how the learning activities we choose for our learners can lead to more engagement and success.

What they were measuring was student activity on a VLE and learning success in relation to the learning design of modules. These are students where the technology of accessing learning is not a barrier, so that is controlled out of the study. The more active and interactive the learning design required the students to be, the more the students engaged on the VLE and had better retention and improved results.

The researchers looked at modules where the main learning activities were reading, listening, watching. Then they looked at modules using learning designs that required learners to interact with each other and their tutors, find out and report on information for themselves, create things, and apply their learning (in either real world or simulated settings). These led to greater learner engagement and retention.

Some words that stand out for me as describing learning activities that get good results in online learning are discover, gather, communicate, discuss, share, report, collaborate, present, create, make, contribute, experience, trial. I think these describe what we do as CLD workers, particularly in that we encourage our learners to talk about what they’re doing. I would add reflect as an important part of our work.

When it comes to evaluating what we do as CLD workers, I feel that our learning design – our approach to learning - supports positive outcomes. We’re not teachers or lecturers delivering information or sending our learners away to learn something from a text book. We’re developing skills. The learning we deliver in CLD is potentially therefore as effective as online or blended learning as it is face to face

For myself I need to learn more about learning design and applying ideas to my practice - what am I actually doing when I’m doing x with my learner? That could help me develop my practice in line with research that demonstrates effective ways to work with learners.

References: [Http://oro.open.ac.uk/45383/](http://oro.open.ac.uk/45383/) Rientes and Toetenel, *The impact of learning design on student behaviour, satisfaction and performance: a cross-institutional comparison across 151 modules) Open Research Online, accessed 10/4/2021*

Appendix:

Table . Learning design activities

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|  | Type of activity | Example |
| Assimilative | Attending to information | Read, Watch, Listen, Think about, Access. |
| Finding and handling information | Searching for and processing information | List, Analyse, Collate, Plot, Find, Discover, Access, Use, Gather.  |
| Communication | Discussing module related content with at least one other person (student or tutor) | Communicate, Debate, Discuss, Argue, Share, Report, Collaborate, Present, Describe. |
| Productive | Actively constructing an artefact | Create, Build, Make, Design, Construct, Contribute, Complete,.  |
| Experiential | Applying learning in a real-world setting  | Practice, Apply, Mimic, Experience, Explore, Investigate,. |
| Interactive/adaptive | Applying learning in a simulated setting  | Explore, Experiment, Trial, Improve, Model, Simulate.  |
| Assessment | All forms of assessment (summarive, formative and self assessment)  | Write, Present, Report, Demonstrate, Critique. |