The ADDER Project

Assessment & Disciplines: Developing E-tivities Research
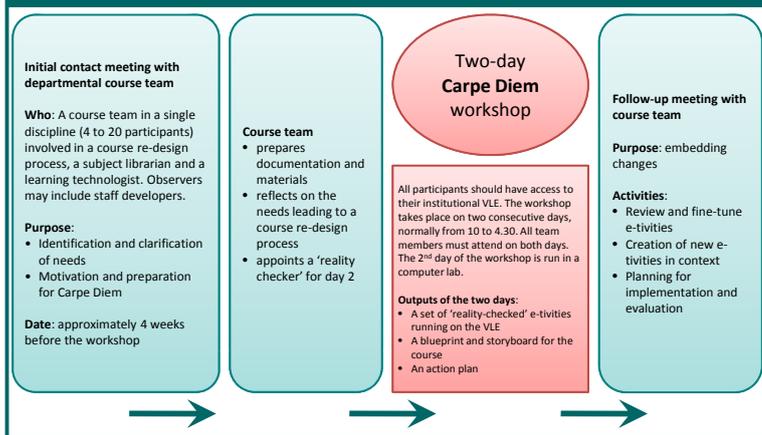
ADDER highlighted, compared and contrasted assessment practices in three disciplines (Inter-Professional Education, Media Studies and Psychology) at four Higher Education institutions (Derby, De Montfort, Northampton and London South Bank universities) over 12 months. It investigated the similarities and differences in assessment practices that make use of e-tivities, developed through CARPE DIEM, and the impact of these practices on the learner experience.

The CARPE DIEM Process

Initial contact meeting with departmental course team

Who: A course team in a single discipline (4 to 20 participants) involved in a course re-design process, a subject librarian and a learning technologist. Observers may include staff developers.

Purpose:
• Identification and clarification of needs
• Motivation and preparation for Carpe Diem

Date: approximately 4 weeks before the workshop

Course team
• prepares documentation and materials
• reflects on the needs leading to a course re-design process
• appoints a 'reality checker' for day 2

Two-day Carpe Diem workshop

All participants should have access to their institutional VLE. The workshop takes place on two consecutive days, normally from 10 to 4.30. All team members must attend on both days. The 2nd day of the workshop is run in a computer lab.

Outputs of the two days:
• A set of 'reality-checked' e-tivities running on the VLE
• A blueprint and storyboard for the course
• An action plan

Follow-up meeting with course team

Purpose: embedding changes

Activities:
• Review and fine-tune e-tivities
• Creation of new e-tivities in context
• Planning for implementation and evaluation

Links between e-tivities & assessment	Rationale
1) Output of e-tivities is assessed.	All student work should count. May replace essay to avoid over-assessment.
2) Two sets of e-tivities: optional and compulsory.	E-tivities are appropriate for knowledge construction and to assess some of the content.
3) E-tivities are optional, but their output explicitly builds towards assessment.	E-tivities are aligned with requirements of a subsequent assessment
4) E-tivities are compulsory and their output builds towards assessment. The tutor 'ticks a box' when each e-tivity is satisfactorily completed by each student.	E-tivities are aligned with requirements of a subsequent assessment
5) All e-tivities are optional and not explicitly linked to assessment.	Keen students are given the opportunity to learn more without assessment pressure.

	Media Studies		Inter-Professional Education		Psychology	
	Course 1	**Course 2**	**Course 1**	**Course 2**	**Course 1**	**Course 2**
Course type	Blended	Blended	Blended	Online	Blended	Blended
Course level	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Undergraduate	Undergraduate
Choice of technology	Web 2.0 tools: (lulu.com, blogs and Delicious).	Web 2.0 tool (Wiki) used as Web 1.0 tool (discussion board).	Web 1.0 tool: discussion board. Web 2.0 tools: Wikis and blogs.		Web 2.0 tools: GoogleDocs & GoogleTalk.	Web 2.0 tools: Wiki.
E-tivity type	Multiple-loop e-tivities. Students posted their comments and were required to respond to other students' comments.	Single loop e-tivities. Students were only required to post their contributions.	Multiple-loop e-tivities. Students posted their comments and were required to respond to other students' contributions.		Multiple-loop e-tivities. Students had to post their comments and were required to respond to other students' contributions.	
E-tivities for assessment (type)	Summative and formative assessment.	Formative assessment only.	Formative assessment only. Tutor used e-moderating skills to provide formative feedback in the discussion boards.		Formative assessment only.	
E-tivities for assessment (grading)	All output from e-tivities is assessed. 50% of grades based on weekly online e-tivity participation.	E-tivities not graded but compulsory. They build up towards the summative assessment. Tutor 'ticks a box' when each e-tivity is satisfactorily completed.	E-tivities not graded but compulsory. They build up towards the summative assessment. Tutor 'ticks a box' when each e-tivity is satisfactorily completed.		E-tivities are optional and ungraded but build up towards summative assessment (final practical report).	
E-tivities for assessment (length)	'Formative ungraded' e-tivities over several weeks.	Short, one-week e-tivities.	'Formative ungraded' e-tivities over several weeks.		'Formative ungraded' e-tivities over several weeks	

Findings

• ADDER has extended and enhanced the frameworks generated as part of the University of Leicester's ADELIE Pathfinder project, particularly the links between e-tivities and assessment.
• CARPE DIEM workshops are an effective way of increasing awareness of innovative and effective approaches to e-learning re-design and assessment for learning.
• Through CARPE DIEM, participants recognise the value of 'hybrid teams' (academics, learning technologists and librarians), work collaboratively and capitalise on each other's skills and expertise for an enhanced learner experience.
• ADDER has enabled participants to design, peer-review and test e-tivities in a safe environment, resulting in increased confidence to justify changes to their assessment practices.
• E-tivities and other technology-enhanced changes to course design and assessment are impacting positively on the learner experience.
• 'Shadowing' has been effective in developing skills to run CARPE DIEM workshops locally and build institutional capacity.
• ADDER's outcomes are valued by partners and other institutions who have learnt about the project through dissemination activities.
• Participants plan to develop their e-tivities and assessment practices post-ADDER, share their experiences and support colleagues to review their practices.
• The dissemination of outputs and outcomes to the wider HE Community will continue beyond the end of the project.