

Title: **Walking the walk: Using loop input for effective blended learning on an academic practice programme for new lecturers**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Design and embed loop input within their own online learning environments
- Address some of the challenges in delivering blended learning for academic staff development
- Take an informed and reflective approach when developing an online community of inquiry

Session Outline

The University of Reading's Academic Practice Programme is aligned to Descriptor 2 of the UKPSF and a probationary requirement for new lecturers. The programme is continually evolving in response to shifting institutional and sector demands and is an important vehicle through which to inspire colleagues to be innovative and caring about their teaching practice. A current priority is to support new teaching staff to design more flexible, inclusive programmes in response to increasingly large and diverse cohorts.

Drawing on their background as teacher developers in ELT (English language teaching) the programme team take a Loop Input pedagogical approach (Woodward, 2003) to professional development: this is a defining feature of the programme and informs everything we do. Through this approach, our students (who are also staff) not only learn about a teaching method but experience it too. This 'modelling' of methods embeds reflective practice and is a powerful way for teachers to learn.

The programme was designed from the outset to combine face-to-face and online delivery. The use of experiential learning extends to our use of the VLE, which is Blackboard. We draw upon Salmon's Five Stage Model (2005) to support effective online learning during formative assessment tasks, and the work of Garrison, Anderson and Archer (2000) informs our building of an effective community of inquiry where not just social presence but teacher presence is given priority. The use of forums, webinars and videos we have created is an integral part of the programme.

The workshop will share examples of our approach and ways it has impacted on our new lecturers. The workshop will also, through small group work, discussion and reflection,

provide participants with opportunities to exchange ideas from their own practice and to explore some of the challenges entailed when taking a blended approach.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Introduction & learning outcomes for the session (10 mins)

Input: Powerpoint and teacher talk to outline our T&L context, expand upon our staff development principles and philosophy informed by the literature and explore the design of the programme (20 mins)

Demonstration: of our experiential approach incorporating short tasks set around extracts from our VLE activities (30 mins)

Discussion tasks: comprising paired think-pair-share activities and small group discussion to: (i) explore implementation of online active learning principles and Loop Input; (ii) exchange ideas and own approaches; (iii) address challenges and identify solutions (20 mins)

Plenary discussion: to draw out lessons learned and takeaways from the workshop (10 mins)

The workshop will be co-delivered and facilitated jointly, with active monitoring and support to allow maximum participation.

References

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