

**Title:**                   **How best to evaluate the effectiveness of a VLE**

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

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

- Identify ways of evaluating technology enhanced learning
- Understand how to evaluate a VLE using qualitative data
- Identify ways in which effective academic practice in VLE's can be supported and developed

#### **Session Outline**

Key issues to be addressed are:

The aim of this workshop is to investigate three interrelated issues that focus of the pedagogy of VLE's. Firstly, I will address the issue of developing the correct methodology of assessing the usefulness and efficiency of VLE's. A useful starting point when evaluating any educational development is to ask what is the main purpose of the venture? (Baume 2003). Has the VLE achieved what it was intended to achieve? But we also need to ask how else can we 'improve' the venture and 'understand' what effect it is having on the learning experience. To answer these questions I intend to show why it is important to go beyond a quantitative approach (which focuses on performance data) and look at qualitative data such as lecturers perceptions and personal experiences of using VLE's (Almpanis 2009).

Secondly, I will briefly describe my own methods used to assess staff opinions of a new VLE established at Regent's College. Whilst most research has focused on the students experience the aim of this session is to unravel the issues staff face when using this type of technology. It will also highlight the issues that academics are using VLE's in different ways to achieve different results in their teaching (Phipps L et al 2008).

Thirdly, based on my own research of lecturers using the Blackboard VLE at my institution, Regents College I will endeavour to suggest ways to tackle some of the issues related to the evaluation VLE's and how to support practitioners' adoption of elearning (Sharpe 2005).

## Session Activities and Approximate Timings

00-5mins. Introduction.

5 - 15mins. Small group discussion on how VLE's are evaluated in your institution

15-25mins. Presentation on developing the methodology of evaluating the usefulness and efficiency of a VLE.

25-35mins. Brief description of research project set up at Regents College to assess the effectiveness of new VLE.

35-40mins. Activity based on what staff said in my evaluation. Presentation of results of project findings

40-45mins. Concluding remarks

## References

Almpanis, T(2009) *Virtual Learning Environments (VLE's) in Higher Education. Tutors' Perceptions of their Efficiency*. VDM Verlag Dr Muller Aktiengesellschaft & Co. KG. Saarrbrucken, Germany

Baume, D. (2003). *Monitoring and Evaluating Staff and Educational Development. A Guide to Staff and Educational Development*. D. Baume. And P. Kahn. London. RoutledgeFalmer.

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<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/digitisation/SixStepsHandbook.pdf>

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Phipps, L. Cormier, D and Stiles, M (2008) Reflecting on the virtual learning systems – extinction or evolution? *Educational Developments* Issue 9.2, 1- 4.

Sharpe, R (2005) Effective interventions to support practitioners' adoption of e-learning. *Educational Developments*. Issue 6.1. 8-10.

Stiles, M. J. (2007) 'Death of the VLE – a challenge to a new orthodoxy', *Serials*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 31-36 (available from: <http://serials.uksg.org/openurl.asp?genre=article&issn=0953>).