

**Title:** Teaching and learning in less-formal digital spaces: how far can the use of less-formal digital learning environments support student learning and evidence teaching excellence for the TEF?

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### Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Articulate ideas of the less formal digital space as a learning environment
- Consider how far using less formal digital spaces might support student learning and the creation of learning partnership communities
- Consider how far using less formal digital spaces might support the evidencing of teaching excellence for the TEF
- Evaluate which digital spaces might support best practice in their institutions

### Session Outline

As part of the widening participation agenda, digital pedagogies are moving beyond the 'VLE' and leveraging the potentialities of the social digital space to support learning.

Framed in ideas of heutagogy (Blasche, 2012), digital social capital (Poussing, 2010), digital learning spaces (Lea, 2015) connected learning (Siemens, 2014) and learning partnership communities (Eaton, 2016), the session aims to identify why using social digital spaces as learning spaces can support non-traditional learners in college-based higher education settings to engage with course content and improve employability skills.

The session will move ideas of the digital 'beyond the app', inviting dialogue as to how we frame ideas of 'less-formal' digital learning spaces. Ideas of the non-traditional learner will be explored through case studies from two different HE contexts that have experience in working with 'less-traditional' learners.

The session will share ideas as to how using less formal digital spaces can promote teaching excellence in different HE contexts, and how the use of such spaces enables capture of student learning gain and engagement.

The session will continue with an overview as to the affordances of using social digital media platforms when building online learning partnership communities that enable contact with employers and the local community.

Finally, delegates will evaluate how far using less formal digital spaces might best support teaching excellence and the capture of evidence for the TEF within their institutions

### Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

- Introduction 'debating the digital' - short presentation with integral question and answers which looks at less formal learning spaces and frames in ideas of heutagogy - 10 mins
- Delegates work in groups considering how case studies from various centres might support student learning and the creation of learning partnership communities (print) - presenters facilitate - 30 mins
- Facilitate sharing of ideas - group question and answer (flipchart) – 10 mins
- Delegates work in groups considering how case studies from various centres might support capturing evidence for TEF (print) - presenters facilitate - 30 mins
- Facilitate sharing of ideas using TEF assessment framework - group question and answer (flipchart) - 15 mins
- Plenary/ Q & A - 5 mins

### References

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Blaschke, L.M., 2012. Heutagogy and lifelong learning: A review of heutagogical practice and self-determined learning. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 13(1), pp.56-71. Available at <http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/1076/2087>

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Mandarano, L., Meenar, M. and Steins, C., 2010. Building social capital in the digital age of civic engagement. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 25(2), pp.123-135. Available at [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lynn\\_Mandarano/publication/256548552\\_Building\\_Social\\_Capital\\_in\\_the\\_Digital\\_Age\\_of\\_Civic\\_Engagement/links/55fc10c908aeba1d9f3aaf1e.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lynn_Mandarano/publication/256548552_Building_Social_Capital_in_the_Digital_Age_of_Civic_Engagement/links/55fc10c908aeba1d9f3aaf1e.pdf)

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