AGENDA

• The Open University: Introduction to one of the world’s largest universities
• Key changes, challenges & opportunities the Open University have had to embrace in recent years
• How Moodle and Virtual Classrooms underpin teaching & learning
• Why choose Adobe Connect?
• Challenges of implementing Adobe Connect and lessons learned
• What success now looks like
• What does the future of teaching and learning look like at the OU?
Our mission is... to be open to people, places, methods and ideas

We believe that... education should be 'open' to any one, any time, any place

Over 174,000 registered students and almost 7,000 lecturers

43% of part-time undergraduate students in the UK

35,000 academic awards annually

The UK’s largest university

350 study locations

146 postgraduate and 473 undergraduate courses
Established in 1969 and since then, 2.02 million students worldwide taught.

Number of current students: 173,927

7/10 students say they achieved more job satisfaction after studying with us.

30% of OU students work full or part time.

76% of OU students are under the age of 25.

National Student Survey: Highlights the OU’s Consistent Quality.
We’re 1 of 3 universities to have consistently achieved over 90% for student satisfaction.

1300 Employers choose the OU to support their ongoing Learning and Development needs.

72% of OU research submitted was assessed as world-leading or internationally excellent (REF 2014).

4707 staff and 5604 Associate Lecturers.

619 modules (473 Undergraduate modules and 146 postgraduate modules).

7356 overseas students in 141 countries.

88% of FTSE 100 companies have sponsored staff on OU courses.
Consultancy
Unmatched experience of the pedagogy and the design and delivery of online/distance education

Research
Applied research and thought-leadership in key subject areas including Technology Enhanced Learning and Big Data

Tools
Innovative digital tools including OU Analyse and The Open Science Laboratory

Content
High quality curriculum underpinned by pedagogy that secures learning outcomes with impact

Platform
Development and integration of a world-class VLE platform, based on Moodle architecture, to create a consistent, simple, intuitive, engaging and purposeful online and offline learning experience

Delivery
A distinctive, high quality and unrivalled tutor-led teaching/support model
Key changes, challenges & opportunities

The Open University model

- Open access
- High quality learning materials
- One-to-one support
- Interactivity and feedback
- Formative and summative assessment
- Residential/day schools
- Social networking
Key changes, challenges & opportunities

Typical OU module

- Runs for **6 or 9 months** (30 or 60 credits)
- 300 or 600 hours of study (**8-16 hours per week**)
- Students study **part-time** from home (or work, bus, train, prison, submarine…)
- Students in **groups of around 15-20** with an assigned tutor

- Teaching material structured around the module website using:
  - A weekly **study planner**
  - Face-to-face or online **tutorials**
  - Sometimes augmented with **books** and other learning resources
OU Learning Systems in numbers

- **180k** active users (students/staff) of the VLE every year
- Around **450** live module websites, and **5000+** historical sites
- Over **1 million transactions per day**, forum views per day averages **170,000**, unique users per day averages **35,000**
- **700,000 quiz** attempts per year, **6 million quiz questions** answered per year
- Busiest day so far in the last 12 months was Monday 9th October 2017 with **49,509 unique students**
How Moodle and Virtual Classrooms underpin teaching & learning

**OU VLE ecosystem**

**Navigation & Content**
- Study Dashboard
- Study Planner
- Digital content/offline formats
- OU Anywhere (mobile)

**Comms & Collaboration**
- Tutorials – Adobe Connect
- Forum, Blog, News alerts
- Wiki, OpenStudio, Questionnaire
- Office 365

**Guidance & Support**
- Computing Guides
- Accessibility Support
- Event booking
- Student management
- Data & Analytics

**Assessment**
- Quiz, Workshop
- Gradebook
- Assignment handling
How Moodle and Virtual Classrooms underpin teaching & learning

VLE module website: Homepage
Why choose Adobe Connect?

OJEU Competitive Dialogue Tender: Collab8

**Pros**
- Extensive and extensible range of features and functionality
- Comprehensive recording functions – both native and MP4
- Mature cross-platform mobile provision for learners and educators

**Cons**
- Accessibility: mitigated by HTML5 access point in near future
- Information Security for Collab8 (and not just Adobe) need to be clear
- User guidance needs to cover all platforms & devices

- Suitable ability to provide persistent content and resources, as an alternative to preloading material, with options to set templates and use multiple custom blocks
- Excellent provision of breakout rooms, with many monitoring and engagement options
- Proven education and public sector experience in addressing and supporting OU needs in distance learning, with well prepared and clear responses to use cases provided
Why choose Adobe Connect?

Key features

- **Highest overall scores** in tendering, provides the top five tutor/student requirements:
  - Reliability (during ‘peak internet’ times across UK/EU)
  - Audio (good quality VoIP essential)
  - Whiteboard (and ability to annotate content)
  - Text chat (for backchannel and focussed debate)
  - Breakout rooms (activities and peer working)
- Great for **interactive, lively and engaging tutorials**, and for collegiate and collaborative events
- **Cross-platform mobile provision**
- Comprehensive **recording and editing functions**
- **Integrates well with our Moodle VLE** and with the way we manage online tuition
Challenges of implementing Adobe Connect and lessons learned

Transitioning production systems

Concluding transition

• Closing OU Live (Blackboard Collaborate) service, archiving valuable data
• Encouraging sharing of good practice and improved tutorial patterns
• Mainstreaming the process for business-as-usual
• Establishing ongoing licence model
Challenges of implementing Adobe Connect and lessons learned

Training and Staff Development

- **Preparatory training** for key staff (late Autumn’16) ➔ 20 staff trained by suppliers **Collab8**
- **Super-user training** (Feb’17) ➔ 40 staff trained by **Collab8**
- **Early adopter training** (Mar/Apr’17) ➔ 200 staff trained by **Collab8** and super-users
- **Mainstream training** (May – Oct’17) ➔ 4000 ALs and 350+ central staff trained by **Collab8**, super-users and training website
- **Late adopters** (Nov’17 – Mar’18)

  *Briefings, demos, tailored sessions and drop-ins also on demand*
Challenges of implementing Adobe Connect and lessons learned

Change Management

- Platform suitability
- VLE integration
- Training plan
- Guidance
- Room configuration
- Staff readiness
- Student preparation
- Faculty preparedness
- Change management
- Finance
- OU Live stability

People:
Staff readiness, Student preparation, Faculty preparedness, Communications

Process:
Training plan, Guidance, Room configuration, Change management, Finance

Technology:
Platform suitability, VLE integration, OU Live stability

Lessons learned (so far)

- Know your stakeholders, build trust
- Continuous comms, direct support networks, active channels
- Recognise cultural issues, challenge entrenched behaviour
- Assume lower digital literacy and technical capabilities
- Proactive champions in Faculties
- Capacity for change – staff time, part-time hours
- Risk review contingency planning for critical third-party services
What success now looks like

Improved student workflow

Students encouraged to book onto Learning Events

Reminded nearer time on study planner

Hyperlinks direct students to correct online room, depending on type and scale of event – persisting for duration of module
What success now looks like

Enhanced online rooms integration

Moodle themes used to create responsive view (and tailored messages for mobile)

Effective operational oversight & strong supplier relationships

• Daily OU Helpdesk liaison, weekly ops dashboard, fortnightly Advantage Support calls, monthly healthchecks
• Rapid response to high usage periods, license extensions – to inform and plan for next year uptake
• OU Live shutdown – pragmatic, rapidly moving from dual-running to single solution
What does the future of teaching and learning look like at the OU?

Future opportunities in online tuition

- Improved discoverability & management of recordings, unifying consistent policies
- HTML5 accessible interface
- Semi-automated, selective MP4 conversion
- Mobile apps and recording replays
- Seminar license for larger events
- Student peer support rooms
- Templates and subject-specific layouts
- Discipline-specific widgets/pods
- Granular attendance reporting
- Learning Analytics
What does the future of teaching and learning look like at the OU?

Future Learning Systems

Objectives

• Create a rich digital learning experience using innovative learning technologies

• Allow a supported learning journey with collaborative communities of students and academics

• Enable and use of state-of-the-art teaching and assessment methods

Improved infrastructure

• Tools to support agile content creation

• Greater access to data and learning analytics for students, for pedagogic evaluation and improvement of modules, and for platform enhancement

Focus on student needs

• Affordances of on-screen vs. print

• Online/offline synchronisation: improved mobile app

• More personalised experience: dynamic study planner
Summary and Questions

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