

Key ideas

1. Spaces and places of learning are what students sign up for and identify with. Digital services to students should be an enrichment of those spaces, not just a gateway onto the wider digital world. How students feel about their spaces depends on having access to their services, facilities and networks – and devices. How do we help students to identify those services with the University – at least some of the time?
2. Students have different expectations as well as different experiences and skills that they bring to HE, e.g. relating to their subject area and the institution (and its reputation), perhaps from workplace experiences. Student expectations arise both from prior experience and from ideas about university study.
3. Rise of SCHOMS as an organisation mirrors the enhanced role that media services play in learning and teaching. Roles and responsibilities are changing, design of learning spaces coming to the fore, as well as use of digital media by staff and students. Learning space involves partnership – not just about learning and teaching, not just about the physical/digital infrastructure – everyone is involved.
4. UCISA has always focused on technology, but is moving more into staff/student support, via bring your own/build your own approaches. There is more focus on learning and teaching, student experience, understanding what staff and students need from the digital environment to achieve academic success. Many of the networks and systems are in any case becoming hybrid (local/cloud-based) so the role needs to change. But it is important not to outsource so much that the end user does not identify in any way with the service or the institution. [Digital environment as institutional branding and student identification]. Systems need to be implemented in full knowledge of the academic practices involved and how they are changing.
5. How to resource rolling out of innovations? One-on-one support won't work at scale – we need more of a cascade model. Breaking down divides between academic and professional staff – and developing of hybrid roles – is key. Communities of practice, peer support, the open plan office 'creep' of expertise.
6. Vice chancellors and PVCs tend to be influenced by others working at their level. They see what others are doing and don't always think through the consequences, benefits, support and development requirements for their own institution. We need to be ready to justify the use of technology (when appropriate) in terms of benefits to the student experience, learning outcomes, and support for institutional priorities.
7. Challenge of developing flexibility and repertoire rather than just teaching one approach/application. Challenge of connecting students to the open environment while providing a safe 'walled garden' to develop.
8. Transactional relationships ('hygiene'?) - may be seen as generic, consistent, entitlement-driven, contractual
Transformational relationships – may be seen as specialised, various, enhancement-driven, personal

Activity 1: Suggestions and successes

What is already being done (well) and/or suggestions for doing it better

1. Online pre-enrolment academic transition/socialisation activity for arriving students which asks them to use the university platforms before they come to the physical campus. This gets them to use learning technologies for learning first, and for transactional, administrative activities after that. Key is aligning activities to the real curriculum and making them simple and fun.
2. (Generally) induction that is relevant to the digital age/digital student e.g. assumes existing skills as an asset, supports reflection and self-diagnosis, provides support on-demand

rather than providing one induction process to suit all needs. Review of induction and pre-induction – more focus on academic activities – students have to engage early with key systems and services.

3. Robust, ubiquitous access to Eduroam [on campus, in halls, in the vicinity?]
4. Out of hours support for IT, invest in frontline support including student help-desks. On-demand online training e.g. Lynda, Rosetta.
5. Culture of using open content
6. Lecture capture, minimum standards of content in VLE
7. Culture in IT services moving from providing infrastructure/services to supporting people in a mixed environment [but could move faster]. IT in service of learning and teaching – better understanding of those needs specifically.
8. Inclusion of teachers and learners in design of IT environment and learning spaces. Students and practitioners working together towards shared solutions.
9. Use of twitter/facebook to engage with students
10. Dashboard to support seamless access to learning services
11. Have a centre (inward/outward looking?) that can research digital environment for learning, apply to support institutional agendas, attract funding/reputation externally – investing in research, development and evaluation
12. Work collaboratively with technology companies to pilot new features
13. Use closed systems with students in the early days then let those skills be used in the open environment (or) empower students to build their own permeable personal learning environment based partly on institutional (data and info) systems, partly on third party systems.
14. Support online communities of practice within institutions – and across institutions – enabling specialist interests and practices to emerge
15. Become more agile in response to new technologies – not scoping, development, implementation but ongoing adoption. [Do institutions need to have a constantly reviewed list of software/services that are (a) provided (b) supported and (c) suggested or recommended.]

Activity 2: challenges and needs for support

Challenges

1. Engaging vice chancellors and other senior managers – including Deans - in this agenda. (a) need to develop people as well as buildings and infrastructure (b) commitment to student engagement and understanding of digital issues from a student perspective.
2. When top-down commitment is there, it is hard to get buy-in from faculties and departments. Staff workload makes it difficult to do anything different/new. There are multiple agendas, particularly operating on the curriculum (employability, sustainability, inclusivity). And it is hard for staff to update practice and knowledge as fast as it is changing.
3. Tensions between support for robust infrastructure and support for diverse practices. Related challenge of both keeping closed environments 'safe' and simultaneously allowing access to open environments. Providing consistency of service and parity of experience while encouraging innovation and variety in learning/teaching. Organisational systems/admin need to be robust and consistent for innovation to be built on.
4. Digital expertise and policy can be very fragmented in institutions. For example, student engagement and TEL strategies need to be linked.

5. Technology has been de-prioritised under other pressures and constraints; technical innovation may be avoided due to fear of failure.
6. Drive for 'consistency' in VLE use – which often comes from students (and student reps were vociferous about this) – does it risk losing diversity, innovation, emergence of specific subject based practices? One participant asks: *'What is better = some courses look better than others (re VLE) OR they are all consistently rubbish?'*
7. Need to manage student expectations e.g. around access to staff, access to learning materials, learning practices, quality (relative to best of the web).
8. What it means to 'study' is changing – new modes of writing, note-taking, mapping the terrain, curating material... we need to support students with those new modes where they can genuinely enable academic outcomes – but how when we hardly understand it ourselves?
9. Risk that we are just responding to student dissatisfaction, not planning for successful students in the future.
10. Partner institutions and distributed campuses create new, more diverse demands. Who hosts/supports? What are the obligations and agreements?
11. Effective digital strategy demands ongoing engagement with stakeholder groups and collaboration across different internal areas (estates, IT, TEL, library etc)

Requirements for institutional development and support

1. Need for more pedagogical guidance for staff/institutions, authorised by funding bodies/QAA.
2. A national approach to bridging the gap between KS4 and HE - a transition project designed from both perspectives. Locally, better links between K4 and university – engage with colleges and schools, engage with students pre-induction.
3. Staff careers need to be structured so that doing something different every year with your teaching is normal and supported. Could there be national drivers for this e.g. via the UK PSF, QAA, HEA, NUS?
4. Behavioural change, institutional culture, motivation & reward are constant issues. Could there be national exemplars of building a supportive culture in institutions?
5. National survey data e.g. NSS, student barometer – need to have more sensitive and detailed questions about the digital environment. Need for more specific digital data set that can be shared and analysed nationally. But also support for local information gathering and student engagement.
6. Need for a longitudinal IT survey of students and alumni across their time at university and beyond.
7. Link up existing projects – all working towards same broad goals but often under different headings. Better collaboration amongst sector stake holder groups such as on this project.
8. Model frameworks for institutional engagement – strategies, roles (e.g. changing roles of learning technologists). Tools for auditing 'maturity' of institutions in terms of digital capability and support for digital students – alternatively (alongside?) auditing DL of staff/students. Also guidance on how to operationalise – share and embed innovation, share expertise and knowledge, maintain investment, assess impact.
9. National study/sharing of practice around learning platforms, assessment technologies, user-centred design, open resources... [range of topics mentioned here – basically a desire for more shared and joined-up approach to research and horizon-scanning]
10. Subject-based examples and stories. Reasoned and researched examples of best practice in a format academics can easily access and apply.

11. National level MOOC on supporting teaching with technology/digital literacies
12. Perhaps the main thing we need to focus on is making HE cheaper [better perceived value?]
13. Better understanding of how to define and measure impact, what improvements we should be looking for and how we should capture it.
14. Help with analytics - how to combine different sources to provide meaningful and useful information
15. Help understanding what a Business Intelligence strategy is, what it looks like, what benefits/ advantages it can bring to improving the digital education experience/ environment/ skills.
16. Models and protocols for design of learning spaces that are fully digitally ready – engaging all stakeholders
17. Models for organising, resourcing and prioritising the demands on IT Services - too many initiatives happening simultaneously - too big.

Activity 3: Engaging students

1. Students should be resourced, recognised and rewarded for engagement. Ensure there are rewards in terms of digital identity and reputation as well as any other more direct recompense. Student bursaries can work as well (better?) than hourly payment – more student ownership of project outcomes, sometimes easier to organise with payroll. Student engagement could be linked to open badges or other kinds of credit (e.g. graduate award)
2. Student digital conference, hackathons, digital festival, digital week, lunchtime showcases, digital identity events.
3. Work with student societies, student committees and NUS officers, provide digital training for reps, work alongside existing PALS schemes, embed digital outcomes into existing student (graduate) award.
4. Engage students via the library, the Student Employability Hub (or similar) – physical spaces and places where students like to gather.
5. NUS Student Engagement Toolkit – agreed that student union partnerships are key.
6. Collect information from students via focus groups, forums, online surveys. Consider involving students themselves in design and analysis of the research. Have students carry out interviews and collect vox pops.
7. Used results of consultation to create posters showing ideas/responses and asking for more feedback.
8. Arriving students undertake user survey regarding ICT systems. Self-diagnostic tools with opportunities to reflect and identify needs for support are more motivating and developmental.
9. Use online tools and services for student engagement and gathering ideas – e.g. padlet, crowdsourcing, even online games? Allows ideas to be shared and responses to be public rather than student complaints being one-on-one to the university and receiving a private response.
10. Essential to feed back to students on their ideas and responses – closes the loop and keeps the conversation going. Need to make student participation/engagement normal and intrinsic, not be looking for special incentives (will skew representation). Need multiple means of engaging students, not just one. These might include special projects but should increasingly be normalised.
11. IT services have successfully used early adopter groups, student testers and pilots, student participation in key roll-out projects.