

Updating education studies for a digital age

This exemplar is relevant to Digital Student challenge:

Deliver a relevant digital curriculum

At Blackburn the BA Education Studies degree now includes a thematic strand that recognises the significance of technology-enhanced learning and its impact on the future of the educational profession. A module on *'21st century identity'* introduces some of the key themes; *'Educational practice in a digital age'* is taken in year two, and a special project in year three encourages students to use some of the digital tools they have encountered to explore ideas about technology in education. Student engagement and assessment is based throughout on real-world use of technology, for example through writing blogs, creating 'interactive essays' and peer assessment with a range of sharing tools. Working spaces include institutional VLEs, social media and student-generated spaces.

The public work produced by these students is a testament to their digital journeys, often from starting points that were far from the 'digital native' ideal:

- *'ICT unfortunately fills me with dread... I did learn to type using a manual typewriter and my first mobile phone was one only used to make calls and text, oh and it had the 'snake game'.'*
- *I just don't have a wide range of skills with technology.*
- *So my first go at blogging was a complete bust...*

Now these students are not only more confident with digital technology themselves but they are passing on this confidence to a new generation:

- *'initially when I had heard the word 'coding' I was wondering how I could possibly be involved in the teaching of such a subject and develop such a wide range of new skills, but slowly I am coming to understand that there is far more involved and it is far less scary than I initially predicted.'*
- *'Completed my TELP today with the QR Readers with 36 year 5/6 pupils went really well. Even decided to set up a Padlet as an assessment. The pupils are sending responses as we speak- feel like a complete Digital Native today, although I am now exhausted!!'*
- *'It becomes less frustrating when we are experiencing a problem and find out on Google that it is something that a number of people have not only experienced but also have solution to.'* [Through connections made on Twitter, this student was able to get access to free training and the loan of a £10,000 interactive table from Promethean for her project at a local primary school].

How does this meet the challenge?

- Students encounter a range of responses to digital technology in education and reflect on a range of ideas and views, developing a critical approach to the field.
- Emergent practices and ideas are openly shared, allowing students to see their profession as constantly in development.
- Students have opportunities to try a range of technologies and to experience both open and closed digital environments.

Find out more

- [Digital pioneers blog](#)
- [Paper on the philosophy and practice behind the course update](#)

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