TOWARDS A STANDARDISED APPROACH TO GENERIC MODULE DELIVERY AND SUPPORT IN THE SCHOOL OF COMPUTING AND ENGINEERING AND AN EXAMINATION OF THE MYRIAD IMPLICATIONS INVOLVED

Judith Hopkins

Abstract - This study chronicles the drama played out in universities across the world. Lecturers from varying disciplines and backgrounds attempt to teach subjects using diverse methodologies or no methodology at all. Academia is presently divided into two distinct camps. Those who are in favour of pedagogical training regardless of discipline and believe it enhances and enriches the teaching and learning process and those who simply are not in favour of it. The alarming result has been that in each university, there is no standardization of modules taught or learnt or indeed no formal system of how a module should be delivered to aid module authors and leaders with no requisite pedagogical training. This has increasingly led to falling grades, low retention rates and much disappointment on the part of the raison d'etre of the university, its valued clients – the students. This study seeks to outline the problem, recommend a solution and propose more extensive utilisation of existing technology that could help to alleviate the problem in some way.

In order to determine how to best deliver a module, we will first define what a module is. For our purposes a module is a related logical sequence of instructions that are executed by a facilitator for the benefit of learners with the aim that the learners should totally master instructions, be able to replicate them and apply them in novel situations.

Research has shown however that people learn differently and teaching has to be deliberately structured in order to get the desired learning outcomes. All students are individuals and they usually assimilate new information in different ways. One student may feel more comfortable reading information, another might be more practical in orientation and prefer to do hands on activities, yet another may feel perfectly at ease doing both. The challenge here is how does one treat a class of students as individuals? The answer is that the teacher should determine students’ expectations and experiences and tailor subsequent classes to take these into consideration and manage the teaching and learning process in such a way as to not to disadvantage any student.

The latter teachers prepare thoroughly, assess their students and seek to make the teaching and learning experience as beneficial and enjoyable as possible. Whatever style the teacher uses, there must be ways of ensuring that the student learning experience is maximized. One way of achieving this is by providing lecturers with module authoring information to provide the know how needed and by assigning module assessors who will check that the modules conform to a pre-determined criteria for excellent module quality.

Further research is being carried out in the area of module delivery. Important recommendations will be made at the end of the project.