

# LTP Portfolio

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## INTRODUCTION

### **Who am I? What is my background?**

Let me start by telling you who I am, what's my background? and why I wanted to complete the LTP course. I am Amanda Kennard and I can honestly say that my experience of education at secondary school was a real let down. I was not assisted or encouraged in any subject and was forced to study for subjects I had little or no interest in, although an exception to this had been Physics and Mathematics. As for career advice, well that was pretty poor, I wanted to be an Architect and was told I was not clever enough, great advice for an 11 year old, instead suggestions were made for a career that I was not interested in so I left school with very little. From this experience I believed I was not 'academic', but I was creative as I was good at making objects and seeing how they worked. I decided a career in engineering was for me so I served an apprenticeship for 5 years and studied for both an ONC and HNC on day release. It was during this time that I was encouraged to succeed by all who knew me, work colleagues, the lecturers and, of course, my family and succeed I did with distinction. Many of the lecturers at the time also asked me to consider a teaching career as I had shown an aptitude when my peers were struggling to understand a lecturer and I had explained it more clearly, but at the time working was more important to me.

After 13 years at work, being trained on software applications and teaching others, I decided it was time to get a 'proper' qualification and so I completed the BSc Multimedia Technology and Applications degree in 2003, obtaining a first class (Hons), so perhaps I am 'academic' after all! As a mature student I was seen by many of my peers as knowledgeable and was often mistaken for a teacher and asked to assist them in their studies. It became clear that I had a talent for teaching and was approached to follow this up with some teaching in the final year of my degree, which continued for the next 2 years.

Over the years I have volunteered on a number of projects for 11-14 year olds including the IEEE's Neighbourhood Engineers and a mentoring scheme in a pupil referral unit. I have also delivered lectures to large groups, 120 students in a lecture theatre, small groups, 5-10 students in a tutorial workshops and I have been a teacher for Luton University where I provided whole day workshops for a week for 12-15 students from industry. I now work within the TLTC department providing small group workshops for 8-

12 students in a number of technologies including multimedia software, Web 2.0 and the Virtual Learning Environment, WebCT and now WebLearn (Blackboard Vista).

### **What's my motivation for doing the LTP course?**

It seems that everything has been leading up to teaching and it is now time to take this experience to the next level. I am very interested in teaching and how students learn, I also want to learn how to improve my teaching techniques so that my students will be engaged and enjoy their study as well as find other ways in which to help students understand, assimilate and build on their existing skills in the subject areas I teach. With passing this course I am hoping to gain a deeper understanding of learning and teaching, reflect on my practice and, of course, gain a recognised qualification.

## CHAPTER 1: LEARNING AND TEACHING

Before looking at how I teach and encourage learning with my students, I need to look more closely at the theories behind learning and teaching and reflect upon their use in Higher Education. I will then analyse my lesson plans, as shown in Appendix 6, and justify my choice of learning and teaching methods. But first I need to start at the beginning and ask the question, **what is a learner?** The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) describes a learner as *“One who learns or receives instruction”*, so what type of learner am I? Using the quiz available in the RLO *“Assess Your Learning Style”* shown in figure 1, there are a set of questions for each criteria which I answered honestly to obtain my profile, shown as a kite. The RLO uses Honey and Mumford’s (1982) learning styles and has four classifications, Activist, Reflectors, Theorists and Pragmatists.

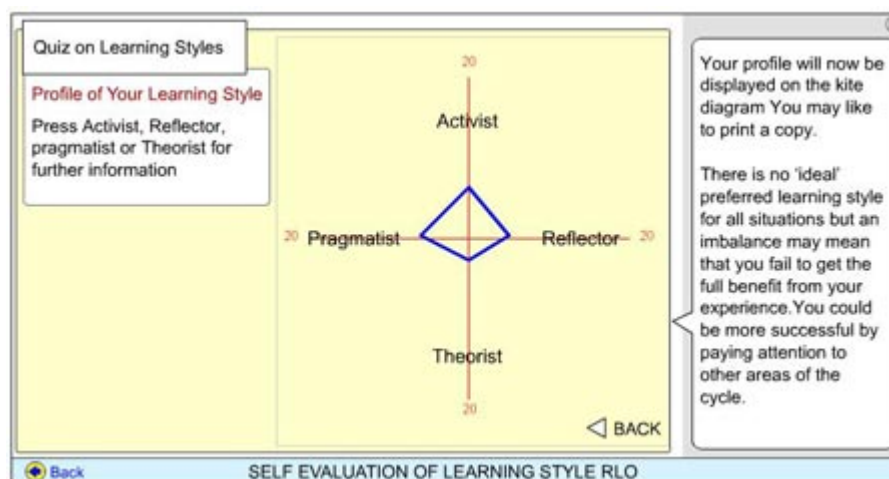


Figure 1: Griffiths, Pokorny and Smith (2007)

As you can see, my profile illustrates the Activist as the highest point of the kite, with an even distribution between a Pragmatist and Reflector and a smaller section for Theorist.

This makes perfect sense to me, when I want to learn how to use a piece of software or how something works, I play with it or dismantle it, try something out to see if it works while I build up an understanding and expand my experience, looking at the manual as a last resort.

*“Activist - SOMETHING HAPPENED...it is likely that you prefer to start learning something by getting involved and trying things out challenging yourself with ‘what shall I do next?’ ‘What happens when I do this?’ ‘What if I tried that?’”*

*(Griffiths, Pokorny and Smith, 2007)*

The Pragmatist in me is looking for the *“practical reason for learning”* (Griffiths, Pokorny and Smith 2007), what’s the point and will I be able to use what I have learnt in the future, the profile also suggests I am a reflector who has *“pondered experiences and looked at them from different angles, comparing them with the experiences of other people.”* (Griffiths, Pokorny and Smith 2007). I rely on my memory rather than a process of reflection and I know I do not reflect as often or as much as I should. As for the theorist in me, I do ask myself *“How does it all make sense?’ How does this fit with that?’ What is happening here?”* (Griffiths, Pokorny and Smith 2007), but not in great detail, my abilities and being able to think on my feet help me to make sense of the situation as it presents itself, which makes each workshop a fluid and organic process of learning for my students.

When studying is required, I prefer to ‘dip’ into books and reference materials rather than read the whole book from cover to cover. While others find the information really interesting, I get bored, lose concentration quickly and get easily distracted. Zull (2002) has suggested that it’s the way our brains are wired that governs how we learn and that

*“We provide an unjust education if we do not give every student the maximum opportunity for learning. Depending upon their natural abilities, imbalance in education deprives some students of learning more than others. Those who are naturally more creative, or have better memories, or are more reflective, or are more active have different opportunities if we do not provide balance. This is unjust.”*

*(Zull 2002, p.42)*

So what does this mean for the students I teach? Who are they and how do they learn? How do I achieve the desired outcome? It would be great if we could know each person and their learning style before they arrive at a workshop as *“Each learner brings his own special set of neuronal networks to class. There’s nothing we can do about that. They really can’t check them at the door!”* (Zull 2002, p104). But this is not possible, so before I start thinking about the delivery of future workshops I need to prepare myself by looking into possible learning styles and to plan my workshops accordingly.

My brain is set up for practical, hands on learning, using ‘building bricks’ and ‘scaffolding’ to increase and expand my knowledge, making me a constructivist. Constructivism is learning by *“fitting new understanding and knowledge into, with, extending and*

*supplanting, old understanding and knowledge*" (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p11) but as a teacher it is important to consider *"how to bring about change or transformation to the pre-existing knowledge of their learners (Mezirow, 1991)"* (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p11), reflecting upon the experiences we gain in our lives we can build mental models and/or rules which can be modified each time. Hands-on problem solving is the key with the *"curricula customised to the students' prior knowledge"* and *"educators focus on making connections between facts and fostering new understanding in students"* while *"calling for the elimination of grades and standardised testing"* (Funderstanding, 2001). The students instead take their experiences and assessment becomes part of the process, putting them in control and at the centre of their own learning.

*"As teachers, we are on the outside, but we have great influence by the way we manipulate, mold, and enrich the information our students needs. For balance, we must give equal thought to how students take ownership of that information. How is it transformed from 'ours' to 'theirs'?"*

*(Zull 2002, p.44)*

Many ideas have stemmed from this including experiential learning which literally means learning from your experiences or 'learning by doing' developed by Kolb (1984) and is shown in figure 2.

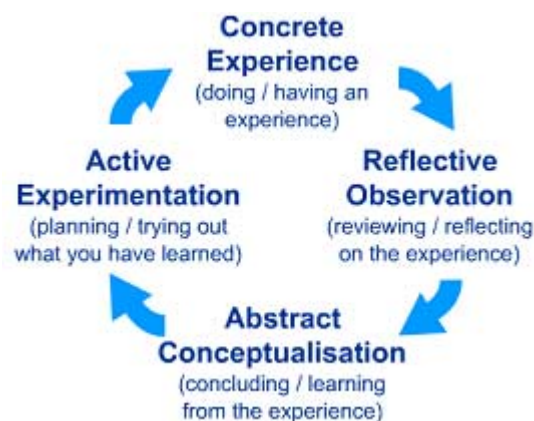


Figure 2: Kolb (1984)

This learning style underpins many teaching activities including *"work-based learning and placement learning, teaching laboratory and practical work, action learning, role play and many types of small group teaching"* (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p14) which is where my workshops fall as they allow the students to form, modify and reform their learning through their experience and it's a constant cycle, not fixed, with

each workshop building upon the last. How this effects my teaching is covered further in Chapter 3: Evaluation of Teaching.

Taking this a step further Zull (2002) talks about how we go about testing our abstract ideas and turning them into something more concrete, mental into physical and in turn the *“Action forces our mental constructs out of our brains and into the reality of the physical world.”*

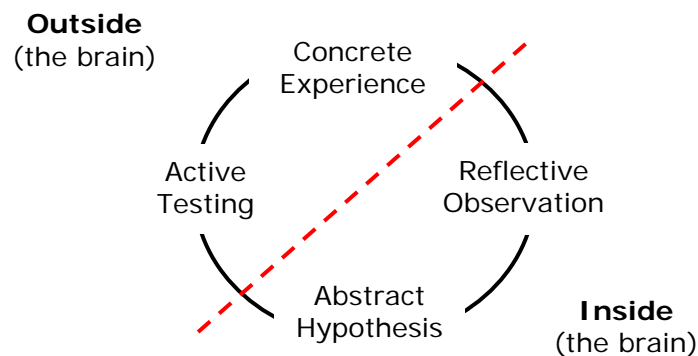


Figure 3: Zull (2002)

*“If we act on an idea by changing our behaviour or undertaking something new in our life, we see the idea expressed in the physical form of body action and sensory interactions with people and objects in the world. In our effort to express our ideas, we create concrete experience. And that experience gives us information about the validity of our ideas; it is active testing in the most direct and concrete form possible.”*

*(Zull 2002, p.203-220)*

Another aspect to consider is whether the students have a deep or surface approach to learning as discussed by Biggs (1987) and Ramsden (1988). If a student has a deep approach they are looking to understand the meaning and maximise their learning. They want to get as much as possible from the workshop so they *“attempt to relate concepts to existing experience, distinguishing between new ideas and existing knowledge, and critically evaluating and determining key themes and concepts”* (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p18). Meanwhile, a student who has a surface approach to learning will only do the bare minimum and so will memorise information in order to complete the task. They will *“make no distinction between new ideas and existing knowledge; and to*



*treat the task as externally imposed (as extrinsic)" (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p18).*

Obviously, rewards for students could be do this activity and you'll get more marks to your grade, but what would the trade off be? Memorising and recalling 'parrot fashion' to gain a reward is not the same as increasing learning and Zull (2002) also says *"when we try to help someone learn by offering an extrinsic reward, the chances are that learning will actually be reduced."*

*"One of the values of extrinsic rewards is that they can get a learner started on something" (Zull 2002, p.51-54).* In the case of the workshops, the reward is being able to use a piece of software on their own, with little or no assistance, and in the long term be able to support their own students learning, *"The main value of extrinsic rewards is that they may be the first step in moving toward intrinsic rewards" (Zull 2002, p.51-54).*

An example of the surface approach is known as Rote learning, where a student gives the impression they have understood everything using *"superficial levels of cognitive processing" (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p18),* learning facts verbatim without a *"meaningful framework" (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p18).* I have seen this happen in a few workshops, where with the aid of feedback forms and a process of asking if they are ok, students have left a workshops giving me the impression they have understood everything, meanwhile, a few weeks later they will be in touch asking a question that had been covered in the workshop.

So from the aforementioned styles, which learning and teaching style is most appropriate for my workshops and how will I produce the aims, learning objectives or outcomes for each workshop?

To design the learning outcomes and objectives for my workshops I have referred to SOLO taxonomy (Biggs and Collis, 1982), a hierarchical classification with five stages, each building on the last with each level gaining in difficulty. The taxonomy stands for **Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes** and is made up of the following stages.

- **Pre-structural:** Unconnected slices of information, unorganised and making no sense to the student. At this level, points can be misunderstood or completely missed.

- **Unistructural:** Obvious connections are made simply, but the students do not grasp their significance. Responses deal with terminology rather than the important attributes.
- **Multistructural:** Connections are made but the bigger picture is not known, so may not address the bigger issue.
- **Relational:** Students can now appreciate the connections and they can make sense of the topic and can conceptualise the components structure.
- **Extended Abstract:** The student can, not only make connections within the topic but outside of it as well. This presents a high level of understanding as they can now transfer the principles learnt; therefore they now have a high level of understanding.

For each new and existing workshop, careful planning is required to ensure that the students will be able to continue to use the software beyond the workshop either on their own or with assistance. Unlike semesters, where students have 12 teaching weeks to build on their experiences and knowledge, the workshops are one off's where as much information is provided as possible during that time. For this reason the workshops are planned as 'bite size' chunks of learning, with each workshop building upon the last to provide as much knowledge as possible.

Students attend the workshops to learn how to use software and obtain a *"Concrete Experience"*, figure 2 Kolb (1984), by working through the exercises provided. *"Reflective Observation"* is normally achieved at the end as each student not only reflects on what they have achieved so far but on the workshop itself which is provided in the form of a feedback form. Although this is for my benefit so I can adjust each workshop to accommodate those learning styles, it is also a chance for the student to reflect on their learning and what would be the next stage for them. The *"Abstract Conceptualisation"* is achieved outside of the workshop, when they are free to come back to the software and to see if they have remembered or learnt anything from the workshop, at the same time, using the software to try something out for themselves, the *"Active Experimentation"* phase.

Emerging technology also needs to be considered as it offers the opportunity for students to study when, where and how they choose as very few have the opportunity to learn without the encumbrance of working for a living. These technologies are also changing the way lecturers teach and *"If the goal of learning professionals is to transfer knowledge*

*to people, what better way to do that than by a problem-based, experiential approach to learning” Finn (2005).*

*“The use of new learning technologies can help us hold on to the positives of traditional learning while embracing and implementing new ideas. But, we need to incorporate new technologies for learning purposes when and where it makes sense to do - not just because some new tool has come into vogue”*

*(Finn 2005)*

So **what is a teacher?** Wikipedia (2008) describes a teacher as *“an acknowledged guide or helper in processes of learning”* and my role is not just to teach but more about facilitating learning, empowering the students to take control of their own learning and allowing them to use the information and skills provided in the way that suits them best.

*“If we come to class thinking only of our own goals, we may miss the moment. But if we come ready to discover what our students have been thinking, we may see the door open for us to have a major impact on learning.”*

*“...we might resist our instinct to take over and lead them by the hand. We should avoid the old pitfall of making it our learning rather than theirs.”*

*(Zull 2002, p.203-220)*

The workshops outcomes control how each is delivered, mainly the student’s ability to use the software effectively on their own, therefore before each existing or new workshop is delivered, careful planning is required as they only have a short space of time to learn the software. Taking time out after each to reflect, see chapter 6 for further reflection, allows me to evaluate each workshop objectively and change for the future if necessary.

Each workshop contains 8-10 students from a variety of departments and with a variety of IT skills, all of which would be classed as mature students and as such have very clear expectations of what they hope to achieve. We are all students at some point in our lives and as such we are in control of our learning outcomes *“you can pick what you want to learn and complain if you do not get what you want”* Cotton (1995, p18), great for them, but maybe not so for me, the teacher. But the workshops are more heuristic as part of it is based around a problem, how to do something, the exercises are provided so that the student and I can work through them together, which is most appropriate for mature

students as they often bring a variety of skills and knowledge with them, or none at all, that may be appropriate already.

During the workshops the students are active learners, posing questions that help them to understand the software. *"Everyone learns more when information is presented both visually and verbally"* Felder (2008) so providing the documentation and exercises in both pictures and words enables students who occupy these categories a chance to understand. I'm a visual person and understand more from images than from words so I make the documentation as clear as possible for both and I also show examples during the demonstration section for them to be able to associate what they see with what they want to achieve for themselves.

SOLO taxonomy works best for the basis of learning outcomes, but not all of the levels apply to the subjects covered in the workshops. Appendix 6 shows some lesson plan examples, but as you will see example 4 shows how it has evolved. In a nutshell, the learning outcomes or objectives are that the students leave a workshop with some basic skills in the use of the software and that we give them the tools to take their knowledge one step further, so the levels from the SOLO taxonomy which my workshops are structured around are as follows:

- **Pre-structural:** At the start of the workshop an overview and demonstration is provided.
- **Unistructural:** Description of the terms used in the software and providing analogies, which the students can relate to but may not understand completely.
- **Multistructural:** This level does not apply.
- **Relational:** Exercises provided for students to work through and the topic starts making sense.
- **Extended Abstract:** At the end of the workshop they are expected to understand the software and in the future adapt their own teaching to utilise the software.

It is important to provide different scenarios, which will appeal to each student's learning style, and not what I think their style is. Delivering workshops to learning outcomes and then reflecting upon each workshop allows for a better understanding of what worked and what didn't. Starting each workshop with a demonstration, allowing for note taking if required, working through exercises together and then letting the students do it for themselves gives them the opportunity to learn at their own pace and allows the student

to take time to understand the software. Each subsequent workshop is available for them to choose what they wish to learn next and are designed as small 'bite size chunks', enabling the students to construct the learning to suit themselves, building upon their existing knowledge.

## CHAPTER 2: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

As students attend higher education and bring with them existing knowledge and their own learning styles, it's useful to know how *"they apply or use the information (or skill) in real ('authentic') situations"* (Gibbs 1994, p162) and as such assessment form an important part of the process. Biggs (1996a: 26-27) referred to the *"authentic"* process as *"ecological or performance assessment"* where ecological assess the student in context and where they would have to give an account of the question, while *"performance assessment"* is used to assess the student as they demonstrate their knowledge.

Although there are no formative assessments required for the workshops, I do assess the students during the workshop using the *"performance"* process as this assesses the student *"in a realistic setting"* (Gibbs 1994, p162) where they able demonstrate their skill and grasp of the topic through the exercises. The feedback is instantaneous, as they know instinctively how well they are doing from how quickly they pick up the concept and work through the exercises or how many times they have to do the exercise or ask the same question.

*"As students become increasingly strategic in their study habits, there is much evidence (Brown, Bull and Pendlebury, 1997) to show that assessment is the driving force behind student learning (Kneale and Collins, 1996). Students are motivated by regular assessment (and feedback), which is shown to have a marked improvement on students' overall performance (Schmidt, Norman and Boshuizen, 1990)."*

*(Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p289)*

*"Student perceptions of what is rewarded and what is ignored by more formal examination procedures will have a substantial impact upon their learning behaviour and thus upon their outcomes"*

*(Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p42).*

Students learn in a number of different ways, assessment and formative feedback are key to enabling a student to progress further and must be provided in the most appropriate and beneficial way. It not only has to be effective but accurate and where a semester system exists, as in this University, feedback can be deemed useless when *"students only find out how well, or how badly, they are doing when they receive their assessed work with a mark and comment. By that time, it is too late to take any remedial action"* (Fry,

Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p173). Often, the size of the class, especially very large ones, dictates the speed in which formative feedback is provided and as such the semester, in reality, is a short time frame. But this is not a one-way process; Ramsden (1992) has stated that *“assessment should also serve a feedback function for teachers”* teachers can assess their methods of teaching for effectiveness and this can help them to make changes to their delivery if required.

*“Formative assessment is conducted to help plan how teaching or learning should take place, or alter teaching or learning while it is going on. Summative assessment only tells us what has been learnt at the end of a learning or teaching process.*

*(Gibbs 1994, p159)*

If the workshops were part of the teaching semester it would be possible to assess students and provide feedback, as *“assessment is a integral component of the teaching and learning system. Assessment may be used explicitly to guide students in their study”* (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 1999, p42), but for feedback to be effective it not only must be accurate but given back to the students at the right time, if it's too late it may no longer be of any benefit.

These workshops are not part of formal teaching but they are important all the same as these are about teaching software to enable my students, who are lecturers themselves, to teach their own students using appropriate technology and my student feedback is formative, within the process of my teaching and in every workshop.

## CHAPTER 3: EVALUATION OF TEACHING

Kolb doesn't consider feelings as part of his Learning Cycle, but these form part of the reflective process, how I feel about a workshop and the feedback from the student's assists me in deciding whether to make changes to the delivery or keep it the same. But he does suggest that *"we have an experience of some kind, we then reflect upon it or think back to it, formulate some idea or theory of what went on there, then test out our theories in some way which may lead to another experience"*. Using this principle to reflect upon my teaching and feedback from students I have come to the following conclusions.

At the start of each workshop a feedback form is included in the documentation, see Appendix 4 for examples, which the students are asked to complete before they leave. If they choose to take it with them and return it later I've found that the majority will not forward them back, why? If they mislay them then find them much later, do they find them to late and cannot remember the workshop? Perhaps they believe it's too late to return them? Do they loose them or think it's not important? Who knows what their reasons may be but they are encouraged to complete them before they leave and I explain why they are important to me and how their feedback will be used to improve workshops in the future.

From my perspective, assessing the students during the exercises can be very informative; it can highlight where the formal teaching is inadequate or where the handbooks are either too or not descriptive enough. It's a two-way process and as such students like to work through the exercises with me and then on their own.

Figure 4 shows some of the sources and methods I will be using for evaluating the workshops and students learning, questionnaires, monitoring and re-appraisal and observations as part of my existing processes.

From the questionnaires illustrated in appendix 4, which give an overview of the student's opinion of the workshop, but only provides an overall opinion with very little detail, comments have ranged in the past from problems with the rooms to not supplying food. Generally an analysis from this and from observations during the session can be very informative. The feedback forms have been redesigned recently where a scalar system is used instead of the original free text boxes.



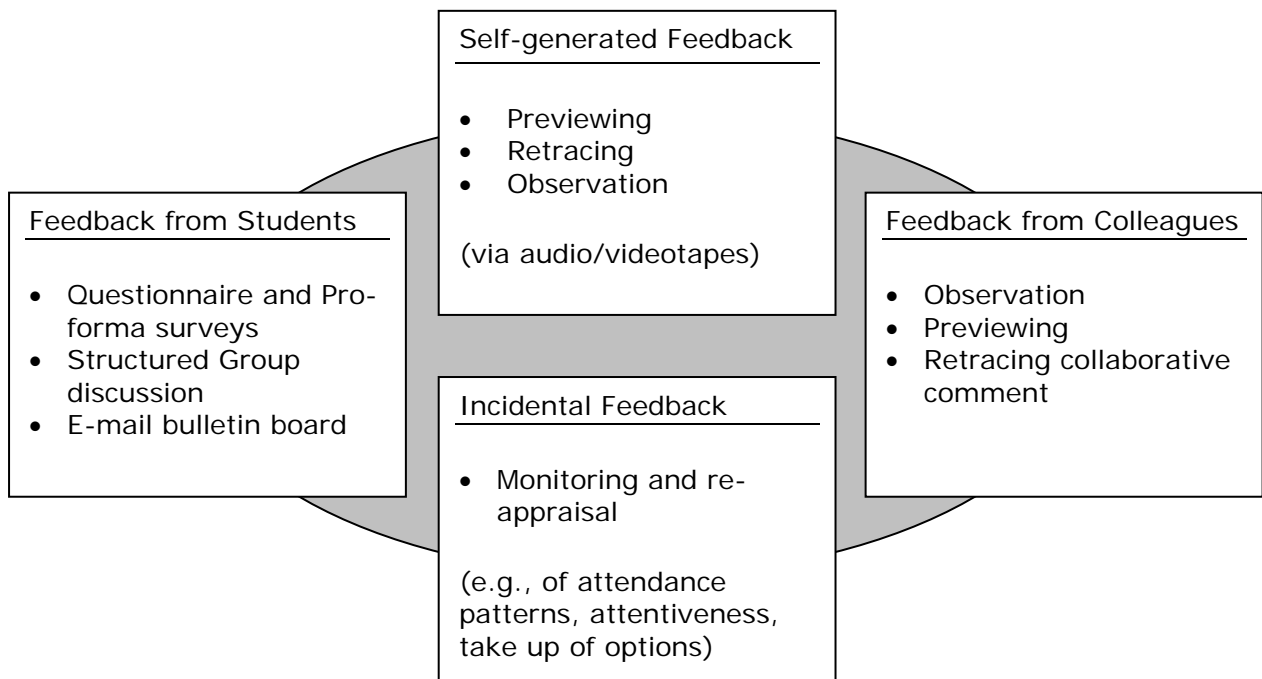


Figure 4: Sources and Methods of Feedback  
Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall (1999)

Some of the comments have been as follows:

### What needs improving?

- Use existing examples to demonstrate what can be achieved.
- More statistics about the use of the software
- Need a break
- More hands on and practice
- Using the software like a student does.
- Working on a real module, not a training module

### What's good?

- Teachers enthusiasm
- Teachers knowledge
- Teacher gave a good explanation

When this feedback was known I changed how I delivered the session by reducing the introduction and increasing the hands on time so that more of the exercises could be

covered during the session. As the software is for delivering module content, many students wanted to work on a real module, not the training one provided where they could do anything without worrying about the consequences. If they only had access to the training one they saw this as a waste of time so where possible I found out what they wanted to work on prior to the workshop and allocated them to their own module.

This works well for them, but as the teacher it makes a workshop quite complicated to facilitate, in a way, two types of learning has to be achieved. Modifying the workshop to accommodate this scenario means that students leave a workshop generally happy as their files are in place and ready to go, so they have accomplished their learning outcome.

From the feedback it also became clear that other workshops needed to be put on offer, in 'bite size chunks', covering less in the basic workshops so that areas that needed to be grasped well could be covered in greater depth while other aspects are now covered in follow on workshops. So far this has worked very well but with each feedback there are more challenges for both the students and I and for my future practice. Each workshop provides me with more insight into the students and how they learn and it's a very organic process. So, what I have to do is keep analysing the feedback and make improvements to the workshops wherever and whenever required.

I have been able to re-asses the delivery of each workshop, allowing students to 'tell' me what they want to achieve and adapting accordingly, therefore no two sessions are the same and so feedback varies considerably from workshop to workshop. Some prefer a more structured teaching style and some think it's too structured, not allowing them time to explore and find their own way. It is obvious to me now that, even with effective feedback the workshops and their delivery will not please everyone, so it's best to try and accommodate as many styles as possible, let the students decide what they want to know and be as fluid and flexible providing as many learning resources as possible.

## CHAPTER 4: PEER OBSERVATION OF TEACHING

See Appendix 2

## CHAPTER 5: FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT 1

[LTP Formative Assessment \(pdf\)](#)

## CHAPTER 6: REFLECTIVE COURSE EVALUATION

Every lecturer needs to be able to reflect upon their practice so that they can evaluate and make improvements to their teaching practice and I'm no different. To be able to do this effectively I have used Kolb's (1984) "*Learning Cycle*" as shown in figure 2, the observations of me and by me illustrated in appendix 2 and my reflective logs shown in appendix 5 to look more closely at my own teaching and the LTP course itself.

Kolb also suggests that we all have a preferred part of the learning cycle, which we use more than the rest, and this will grow stronger while the rest of the cycle is underused. In my case I would say that the strongest part of the cycle is "*Active Experimentation*", as I do this automatically for my own workshops, planning something new generated from feedback previously given and testing it out in the next workshop. What was the experience like, good, bad or indifferent? Does it need improving for the next time? Applying this to the LTP course, what did I learn from the experience? I discovered many things about myself, I was not aware that some aspects of my own teaching were actually part of a learning style. By allowing students to construct their own knowledge and, in some workshops where they were dedicated to departments, see mentor observation in appendix 2, letting the students work and assist each other I was actually facilitating Social Constructivism.

*"The teacher does not simply stand by, however, and watch children explore and discover. Instead, the teacher may often guide students as they approach problems, may encourage them to work in groups to think about issues and questions, and support them with encouragement and advice as they tackle problems, adventures, and challenges that are rooted in real life situations that are both interesting to the students and satisfying in terms of the result of their work."*

*(Chen, 2008)*

By being observed and observing other lecturers teaching style, see appendix 2, it provided me with reflection and ideas for the future. What was good, what was bad, what worked, what didn't, can I adapt and use this in the future? Are there any techniques that I could use which would improve my teaching and increase my students learning? The observations revealed that although I have a lesson plan, I do not stick closely to it and often go off on a tangent but I can think on my feet and am able to

answer most questions if not all. I was able to keep most students attention, but I do need to stick to topic. So what's the best way to address this or improve the situation? Stick to a lesson plan, perhaps get students to ask questions at the end, not during the workshop and learn how to manage groups more effectively. From observations of other teachers it was clear how they engaged with their students, Tim was very knowledgeable but he did not force this knowledge on to his students, he let them come up with their own ideas and prompted or pulled them back to topic if necessary. This was a great technique as the students gained confidence in speaking – very important in law – improved their knowledge of the subject through discussion and felt capable of anything that may be asked of them. Tim put them at the centre of their own learning.

Although Kolb doesn't consider feelings as part of his "*Learning Cycle*", feelings are important for me as they are what informs me of how the LTP workshops and my teaching in general have been received, it's a reflective process, how I felt, happy with what I learnt or disappointed that I didn't get as much out of the LTP course as I hoped. He does suggest that "*we have an experience of some kind, we then reflect upon it or think back to it, formulate some idea or theory of what went on there, then test out our theories in some way which may lead to another experience*". While Schon (Griffiths, Pokorny and Smith 2007) suggests that if it is to be beneficial to the teacher then "*reflection on action, talk it back to yourself, how did I feel, what did I learn, usually after the event*", is important as a way to reflect at the time and make improvements for the future.

Looking at Kolb's Learning Cycle in more detail, I have addressed each section in turn as I feel it relates to the LTP course.

### **Concrete Experience**

Looking at the workshops objectively each week I realised that each teacher has their own style, some more structured than others and from this experience I could contemplate what happened and reflect about what could be changed or improved, while considering what would be effective for my own practice in the future. For example, the workshop on the 19<sup>th</sup> February (Appendix 5: Log 4) illustrated clearly the different styles of teaching that Debbie and John had, Debbie was enthusiastic while John seemed disinterested. This may not be the case, but it was the 'feeling' I had at the time. I am very much an intuitive teacher with up to now, no formal training so the LTP workshops provided a great deal of information which was useful and which gave me ideas for the

future, such as techniques for small group teaching, engagement, possible forms of feedback and assessment.

### **Reflective Observation**

My impression of the LTP course is that the subjects do not change and the delivery method is based upon the feedback obtained from the workshops with adjustments made for the next delivery of the workshop. Having a combination of group activities made the workshops more interesting and using coloured stick it notes was an effective technique for student feedback, quick and easy to do for the student as only one comment was asked for and easy for the teacher to analyse.

On reflection of the workshop delivered by Debbie and John, it was Debbie who I wanted to emulate, if I had some of her skills I would be able to keep student's interested in my own workshops for longer. In depth knowledge helps but being able to transfer that knowledge in an interesting way, keeping students engaged and putting them in control of their own learning is key for effective learning.

### **Abstract Conceptualisation**

I learnt a great deal from other teachers who described their experiences and their methods for teaching. It was apparent that as they all teach something different, some techniques are better than others for student learning. The LTP course had groups working with whiteboards or discussions, but this is not suitable for all scenarios and not everyone teaches in the same way, with the same resources. How I teach is based around what I have to teach, group discussions are not appropriate as I am teaching software. However when teaching software to a department, who have a specific requirement, group discussions work well as the students have an incentive to achieve the same object and they will work together well. It is important to use the right technique for the subject using the most appropriate resources, for example, experiments need a practical while teaching software needs a pc but both require a teacher who knows the subject well so they can adapt when questions or problems arise.

### **Active Experimentation**

I plan to use the stick it notes in the future, as they are a great way of obtaining instant feedback from the students, not in all workshops but in the ones that run for 3 hours, halfway through before the break. If achievable, I will address these issues after the break or for future workshops if it requires more planning. Student dynamics can change

the experience not only for the students but for the teachers too and because of this I will go through the cycle constantly making improvements or changes for each subsequent workshop.

In short, I have learnt a great deal from the LTP course and it has given me insight into what techniques I could instigate to improve my teaching in the future, what I need to address, what I need to continue with, a phase in my teaching that I am looking forward to.

## APPENDICES

### 1. Action Plan

See [Appendix 1](#)

### 2. Observations

See [Appendix 2](#) for further details

### 3. Workshop Formative Development Pro-forma

See Appendix 3

### 4. Student Feedback

See Appendix 4

### 5. Taught Element

See Appendix 5 for workshop notes (note taking) and [Reflective Logs](#).

### 6. Lesson Plans

[See Appendix 6](#)



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