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# Workshop: Re-defining Learning Skills

## Integrating skills with content in technology-rich learning environments

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*Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau*  
*Transforming Education; Transforming Lives*



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# Welcome

The focus of this workshop:

- There are only two questions for this workshop:
  1. What are the learning skills you seek to develop in your students? How do you embed them into the delivery of your course in a technology-rich environment?
  2. Which of these skills do you prioritise in evaluating student performance (assessment) and which do you regard as less important for your subject area?
- We will address these two questions using two group exercises during which we can share our understanding and experience of developing learning skills in our students.

# Introduction: Learning Skills: Separately taught versus embedded?

- Many universities offer “Study Skills”, “Research Skills”, “Academic Skills” courses to their students. These are often separate courses – sometimes delivered from separate ‘skills development’ units not embedded in timetabled teaching.
- I believe this is a **bad** idea – ‘study skills’ training tends not to be subject specific – and is not (necessarily) re-enforced by subject teachers’ practices.
- Different subjects require different skill-sets. Different teachers have different expectations of the learning skills needed for their subject. Generic ‘study skills’ courses do not address these subject-specific skills needs.
- Content experts (teachers, lecturers), however, are **not** skills development experts (usually) – so how could learning skills development be embedded into subject-level teaching?

# Learning Skills: Subject-specific or Generic?

- What are the skills which teachers should develop in their students for subject-specific courses?
- A first group exercise: How would you place in order the skills which would be of most benefit to your (subject-specific) students?

Categories of generic learning skills – by rank importance.

- How best to teach these skills within subject-specific classes?

# Embedded Skills: What are they?

- Knowledge Management.
- Critical Thinking / Problem Solving (Creativity).
- Communication Skills.
- Teamwork and Flexibility.
- Digital Skills.
- Independent Learning.
- Ethics and Responsibility.

How may these be incorporated into subject-specific classes?

# “Spot the Teacher!”

- Here is a very easy game (based on a popular football-related game seen in newspapers and magazines – “Spot the Ball”, in which a photograph is shown from which the football has been removed).
- Let us start with a simple one: “Spot the Teacher” in this photograph:



# “Spot the E-Teacher!”

- Same game: the next photo is more difficult ☺



# The Digital Future of Work: What Skills will be needed?

*Extracts from McKinsey Global Institute (2017): “The Digital Future of Work: What Skills will be needed?” (Panel Discussion).*

“For young people today, what is clear is that they are going to need to continue to learn throughout their lifetime. The idea that you get an education when you are young and then you stop and you go and work for 40 or 50 years with that educational training and that’s it—that is over. All of us are going to have to continue to adapt, get new skills. . .” (Susan Lund)

“. . . what I tell students is that it would help if you had the skills that are required to deal with information because those are the core skills that are necessary these days to help you learn new things. This ability to learn things on your own to some extent will be driven by the core skills you have and how you can handle and process information” (Vasant Dhar)

“We found that, for example, in something like 60% of all occupations an average 30% of their work activities are automatable. What does that mean? We’re going to see more people working alongside machines, whether you call that artificial augmentation or augmented intelligence, but we’re going to see a lot more of that.” (James Manyika)



# Implications for e-Teaching:

- Which strategies work best when teaching in a technology-rich environment?
- Which methods of teaching are most effective for blended and online classes?
- How do I maintain quality in my teaching in a rapidly changing learning environment whilst balancing my workload of research and teaching commitments?
- How do I make choices among all the available media, whether text, audio, video, computer, or social media, in order to benefit my students and my subject?
- How do I decide how to prepare courses that may be face-to-face, blended or fully online?
- What are the possibilities for teaching and learning using material from MOOCs, OERS (open educational resources - public domain), open textbooks?
- What is the reliable research that can best guide me in designing my courses?

See: *T. Bates, 2017, Teaching in the Digital Age, Curwen Press*