Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy 2009 – 2015 (Revised September 2011)

M Newcombe 14/09/2011

INTRODUCTION

The Technology Enhanced Learning strategy (2009 -15) sets out the University of Exeter's goals and planned actions for enriching student learning experiences through the use of technologies.

'Technology Enhanced Learning' (TEL) has been adopted to replace 'e-learning' in this strategy (based on guidance in the HEFCE e-learning strategy, 2009). TEL is defined here as 'learning facilitated and supported through the use of information and communications technology'; this includes the use of technology in physical teaching spaces and online. This semantic shift places learning, not technology, at the centre of the student experience.

Higher education has been affected by rapid developments in the use of technology since the mid 1980s and this has become integral to the way we teach, learn, research and administer. However, technological interventions in learning and teaching have been slow to be adopted and are often seen as 'bolt-on' rather than core to the curriculum. This position is increasingly untenable. The HEFCE e-learning strategy argues that using technology in learning and teaching provides benefits in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and, where appropriate transformation of how students are educated.

Benefits of TEL
The JISC InfoNet report "Exploring the Tangible Benefits of e-Learning" found that the appropriate use of technology is leading to significant improvements in learning, teaching and assessment across the sector. This is turn is translating into improved satisfaction, retention and achievement (HEFCE, 2009). The JISC is now recommending that technology enhanced learning provision should be built around an entitlement to learning literacies, defined as 'a capacity to participate effectively in learning, research, work and life in a digitally-enabled economy and society'.

Two approaches to using technology are being adopted by staff in higher education
- complementing and strengthening existing learning environments, activities and assessment strategies that have been proven to be effective by the introduction of technology into a blended learning environment;
- creating new learning environments where communication, collaboration and resource sharing are largely managed online.

Staff continue to require specialist support to develop the expertise required to use technologies in either of these ways.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Background to TEL initiatives

In 2005 a draft e-learning strategy was written to give impetus to the use of technology to support learning and teaching at Exeter. In the intervening period e-learning become a more important element of the student experience at Exeter, dominantly through the use of a central VLE system (WebCT) delivering mainly learning content and resources.

Audits of the VLE in 2009 and 2010 showed that there were variations in the student experience across the institution. While some staff adopted online assessment, plagiarism detection and online communication tools, the majority of programmes are using technology for very limited purposes.

Investment in TEL

There has been sustained financial investment in TEL since this strategy was originally written. However, a survey (USCIA 2008 and 2010) of other HEI's provides evidence that many of Exeter's comparator institutions have historically invested more in development and support for TEL.

Following an external consultation exercise led by the DVC (Education) in 2008/9 the VLE was successfully migrated to the Exeter Learning Environment (ELE). In the transition period £200K internal SDF and £100K Infrastructure funding supported the VLE migration process; the infrastructure funding underpinned the capital costs needed for this development and other significant TEL investments.

Additional TEL funding was made available through the bi-lateral process to support a step change in TEL staffing in 2011 and outlined changes in the focus of TEL work. It is anticipated that long term sustained investment in TEL will continue be required to sustain the strategic goals and maintain a competitive edge in relation to Exeter's comparator institutions.

External TEL projects

Exeter has been successful over the past four years in being awarded a large number of externally funded projects to develop innovative uses for technology within learning and teaching. This external funding (£871,400 between 2007 and 2011) has directly supported new posts and has influencing the speed of adoption of TEL across the University. The outputs of these projects are seen as key drivers for this strategy. Appendix B lists completed and current centrally delivered TEL projects.

The current use of technology in teaching and learning

The investment in TEL initiatives has already had a significant impact on the student experience as show by the metrics below. This step change has been influenced by the significant investment in TEL.

	2007-08	**2008-09**	**2009-10**	**2010-11**
Modules available via VLE	969 (WebCT)	1168 (WebCT)	1596 (WebCT)	2587 (ELE)
Resources available on ELE	N/A	N/A	18000	60751
Assignments submitted to Turnitin	277	3501	15390	16194
Annually recorded lecture content - (Echo 360)	N/A	263 hours	590 hours	1400 hours

The identified variations in use of TEL across modules has been addressed through the adoption of the ELE code of practice, now part of the TQA manual, outlining minimum expectations (Appendix A).

Integration with the strategic framework

The Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy is one of several University strategies which contribute to the University's strategic framework. It contributes most directly to the Education Strategy and has links with the Research and Internationalisation Strategies. There are also important links to the Learning Spaces, IT and HR strategies which provide the technical and human resources which are essential for success.

SHAPING OF THE STRATEGY

Vision

The widespread adoption of technology enhanced learning will make a key contribution to the quality of student learning experiences and will enhance Exeter's mission to provide active, research-led education. In turn this will have a positive impact on the university's strategic mission and ability to meet its KPI's. This strategy will impact in a positive manner on NSS results relating to learning and teaching, progression / achievement and graduate employability.

Exeter has an ambition to be a technology leader in TEL, and has adopted a 'fast follower' approach to ensure that we take advantage of new innovations in the field through quick adoption. This aligns very closely with the Learning Spaces strategy and will ensure that we equip physical teaching spaces with appropriate technology to support face to face as well as online delivery.

Guiding Principles

The following principles guide this strategy

1. Access to a rich virtual learning experience should be seen as a key element of the student experience at Exeter
2. Pedagogic requirements should underpin the uses made of technology
3. Colleges, disciplines and individual academics have subject specific requirements which require flexibility in technologies used
4. Central provision of appropriate and up to date e-infrastructure is core to achieving the strategic goals
5. Appropriate staffing levels within Professional Services and Schools will provide support to enable the better use of technology
6. High quality staff development will be provided to ensure the effective and efficient adoption of TEL

THE EXETER STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Exeter's students expect high quality learning experiences based on a combination of face to face contact and access to a range of technology enhanced facilities and resources. TEL makes a vital contribution to meeting this expectation. At a time when larger cohorts create challenges for maintaining high levels of personal interactions between students and their teachers, TEL can provide an alternative rich environment for support and communication.

Students arriving at Exeter will have had extensive experiences of technology supported learning, and will expect their HE experience to take this further. They will expect approaches and resources which are flexible, responsive, active, problem-based, 'just-in-time' and 'just-for-me'. Increasingly they are 'transliterate'[1] – they have the technical ability to read, write and interact across a variety of platforms, tools and media.

However, students do not necessarily have the critical skills or digital literacies to use these resources effectively or the ability (information literacy) to evaluate critically the quality of the sources they use (CIBER University College London, 2008). One of the key aims is to ensure that these employability skills are developed. It is proposed that through this strategy students will develop the skills and digital literacies required now and likely to be required in the next 3-10 years. Increasingly, the JISC is recommending that e-learning provision should be built around an entitlement to learning

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[1] http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?storycode=403135

literacies, defined as a capacity to participate effectively in learning, work and life in a digitally-enabled economy and society.

Personalisation, mobility, choice and sociability are key features of technology use in learners' lives that they will expect to transfer to their study at Exeter. Students leaving HE will need higher order skills in digital collaboration, communication, creativity, problem solving, information handling and managing their own personal development.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The following 7 goals support the implementation of the Education Strategy and Institutional Plan and build on previous and current initiatives at Exeter. These goals have been mapped to those in the HEFCE TEL strategy (see Appendix C for the HEFCE goals)

1. Firmly embed technology as integral to teaching, learning, assessment and curriculum design, and our ambition to promote active research led learning (HEFCE goals 1, 3, 5)

2. Support high level institutional strategies to promote TEL across the institution (HEFCE goals 1, 2)

3. Create a culture of sharing and reusing quality content, and the infrastructure to enable this (HEFCE goals 1, 4, 7)

4. Ensure the institution provide appropriate resource capacity for sustaining TEL to meet our current and future needs (HEFCE goals 4, 7)

5. Promote innovation and creativity in the use of technology enhanced learning to enhance the curriculum (HEFCE goals 1, 4)

6. Engage in projects to research the application, use and pedagogy of educational and e-learning technologies (HEFCE goal 6)

7. To give worldwide access to high quality, research-informed and up to date learning and teaching resources (HEFCE goal 3)

AREA OF FOCUS

The implementation action plan outlines how this strategy will be implemented across the institution. There are 9 specific areas of focus for this action plan over the next few years:

A. Development and delivery of high quality learning materials
B. Streamlined and improved assessment online
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative technologies
D. Continue to develop digitally literate graduates
E. Enhancement of technologically enhanced learning spaces
F. Quality assured blended programmes and creative and competent staff
G. Integration of College and Professional Services Planning for TEL
H. Strategic Leadership
I. Realise the benefits from existing TEL technologies

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MEASURING SUCCESS

The HEFCE TEL strategy (2009) suggests that the benefits of TEL can be measured on three levels depending on the type of intervention:
- Efficiency (existing processes carried out in a more cost-effective, time-effective, sustainable or scalable manner)
- Enhancement (improving existing processes and the outcomes)
- Transformation (radical, positive change in existing processes or introducing new processes)

This approach has been adopted to ensure that implantation of this strategy will have a measurable impact on the student experience. In addition the implementation will be measured against the core institution KPI's. Evaluation activities will be carried out annually.

A review of ELE (Appendix D) was undertaken in the summer of 2011 to measure staff and student experience and satisfaction.

DISSEMINATION & EMBEDDING

Dissemination

The Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy will be disseminated across all Colleges of the University.

Embedding

This strategy will inform the development of College plans where it is anticipated that actions will reveal clear intent to enhance learning and meet student expectations through the use of technology across their programmes. Strategies will include the enhancement of formative and summative assessment through the use of TEL and provision of a range of alternative assessment methods.

The Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (LTHE), Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) and YouTeach programmes provide professional support to enhance academic practice and its impact on the student experience. Both programmes will promote a range of technology enhanced facilities and resources and develop the competence and confidence of lecturers in their use.

Informal opportunities will be created for all staff to develop their expertise in using a range of learning technologies to enhance their practice and meet the needs and expectations of their students.

The Hub and Spoke staffing initiative provides support within Colleges to develop the skills and confidence of colleagues as they explore innovative

and creative approaches to teaching using a range of technologies and systems to enhance their existing practice and experience of their students.

STRATEGIC REVIEW

A strategic review will take place every 2 years to review the improvements of technology on the student experience, measured against the core institutional KPIs.

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IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

Area of focus	Action	TEL strategic goal	Timeframe
A. Development and delivery of high quality learning materials	Explore and adopt pedagogic design processes which allow for the reuse and repurposing of high quality learning content	1	2013
A. Development and delivery of high quality learning materials	Review available curriculum materials and undertake programme of enhancements	1	Sept 2011 - ongoing
A. Development and delivery of high quality learning materials	Provide access to a range of online pre-sessional materials prior to arrival at Exeter	1, 2	2012
A. Development and delivery of high quality learning materials	Create a repository for online learning content linked to the VLE	1, 3	2015
A. Development and delivery of high quality learning materials	Enhance online materials using innovative approaches and technologies	1, 5, 7	2012
A. Development and delivery of high quality learning materials	Provide public access to OER materials using a range of repositories and open sites	3, 7	2011
A. Development and delivery of high quality learning materials	Implement quality processes to ensure that OER materials promote the institutions high quality research and teaching	3, 7	2012
B. Streamlined and improved assessment online	Enhance formative and summative assessment through the use of TEL and provide a range of alternative assessment methods	1	Ongoing

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B. Streamlined and improved assessment online	Run OCM project for early adopters during 2011/12. Use JISC project to evaluate and inform further rollout in 2012/13	1, 4, 6	2012
B. Streamlined and improved assessment online	Develop version 2 of OCM to add further functionality to support enterprise rollout in 2012	1, 4, 6	2012
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative technologies	Provide access to core TEL systems from a range of online devices through which students can flourish	1, 3	Ongoing
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative technologies	Bid for external funding to actively engage with innovation in using TEL for teaching and learning	6	Ongoing
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative technologies	Ensure current research, evidence and scholarship concerning TEL is disseminated across the institution and implemented within the curriculum	6	Ongoing
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative technologies	Embed outputs of externally funded projects into the curriculum	6	Ongoing
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative technologies	Explore location-based mobile technologies (e.g. augmented reality) and other new innovative technologies which can integrate and support the curriculum	6	
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative technologies	Lever University processes to harness new technology ideas and ensure that they have the opportunity to develop as enterprise systems	1, 4, 6	2012
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative	Pilot the use of Google apps as a tool to support collaborative working	3, 5, 6	2012

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technologies			
C. Identify and develop strategic and innovative technologies	Engage with organisations such as Gartner, Educause and ALT to monitor the potential of new technologies (horizon scanning)	5	Ongoing
D. Continue to develop digitally literate graduates	Support the JISC funded Digital literacies project and ensure that this work is embedded into the curriculum	1, 2, 6	
E. Enhancement of technologically enhanced learning spaces	Roll out lecture capture system across the institution and make recordings available in a choice of formats to students	1, 3	2013
E. Enhancement of technologically enhanced learning spaces	Support the provision of technology for learning spaces in the Forum, in particular to realise the potential of the surface computers	1, 3, 4	
E. Enhancement of technologically enhanced learning spaces	Ensure learning spaces are equipped with appropriate technology and inform the adoption of the Learning Spaces Strategy	3	Ongoing
F. Quality assured blended programmes and creative and competent staff	Provide formal staff development opportunities through LTHE, PCAP, YouTeach, Certificate in TEL and TEL masters module for academic staff in the use of TEL	1, 2	2010 - Ongoing
F. Quality assured blended programmes and creative and competent staff	Run informal staff development and awareness sessions in the use of TEL	1, 2	Ongoing
F. Quality assured blended programmes and creative and competent staff	Provide training and support for academic and support staff in the use of ELE including OCM	5	2010 - ongoing

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F. Quality assured blended programmes and creative and competent staff	Promote Open Educational Resources (OER) across the institution following on from the successes of the HEFCE / JISC funded Open Exeter projects.	7	2012
G. Integration of College and Professional Services Planning for TEL	Support additional staff resources by implementing a hub and spoke model with the Colleges	4	2009 - 2012
G. Integration of College and Professional Services Planning for TEL	Develop a network of College e-learning champions to support innovation within the curriculum	5	2012
H. Strategic Leadership	Offer range of incentives e.g. awards and recognitions built into PDR process for Programme teams or individuals	1	Sept 2010 - ongoing
H. Strategic Leadership	Maintain an internationally competitive edge in TEL through regularly reviews of the use of TEL worldwide and by attending relevant international conferences	2	Ongoing
H. Strategic Leadership	Provide staff resources to sustain TEL related activities	4	2010
H. Strategic Leadership	Clearly plan future investment in TEL by identifying available Infrastructure funding	4	Ongoing
I. Realise the benefits from existing TEL technologies	Support Exeter IT in the development of ELE (version 2 upgrade)	4	Ongoing
I. Realise the benefits from existing TEL technologies	Support Exeter IT in the development of Echo 360	4	Ongoing
I. Realise the benefits from existing TEL technologies	Embed the use of OCM across the University	1, 6	2012 ongoing

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APPENDIX A - ELE CODE OF PRACTICE[2]

EXETER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT - CODE OF PRACTICE

Implementation: for all with immediate effect 2010-11

1. All modules, at UG and PGT levels, are expected to have an ELE site. The ELE will be more visible and easily accessed than WebCT, and it is likely that students will turn to it as their primary source of information about any module. Moreover, all ELE sites will be visible to all students and staff. An ELE site therefore becomes critical in the duration of a module, and also important as a vehicle for publicising modules. It is recognized, however, that different modules will require different levels of commitment to virtual learning. In this context, this document seeks to establish a basic standard of practice across colleges, by listing *minimum requirements* as well as some *recommended enhancements*. It is hoped that an increasing number of modules – especially core and group-taught modules – will embrace a number of the enhancements. It should also be noted that the potential of the ELE beyond the extent of these lists is considerable, and that support will be available from Education Enhancement to develop sites in innovative ways.

2. *Minimum requirements*
   a. Module description
   b. Details of weekly reading and teaching schedule
   c. Lecture notes and slides
   d. Assessment information
   e. Link to appropriate online library e- resources (e.g. reading lists, journal articles)
   f. Links to online versions of important reading (e-books, key documents, articles, etc.)

3. *Recommended enhancements*
   a. Calendar
   b. Links to other sources of information
   c. Discussion forum
   d. Recorded lectures (Echo360 content where available in lecture rooms)
   e. Interactive group work
   f. Formative and summative assessment
   g. Online submission of coursework (via Turnitin)

4. While the College aims to have support staff in each department trained to assist with basic ELE tasks, sole responsibility for any site lies with the module convenor.

5. In order to encourage good practice in this area, it is recommended that each department should devote time in at least one departmental meeting annually to showcasing the most effective and innovative sites managed by colleagues.

6. All staff and students have access to all content on ELE. There are some exceptions to this for high value courses (e.g. MBA & MPA) and courses which have medically sensitive content. For all other courses a request to close access must be made to the Associate Dean Education in writing, outlining the reasons that access should be removed. A decision based on this information will then be made.

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Andrew McRae, Associate Dean of Education, College of Humanities
Matthew Newcombe, Head of e-Learning, Education Enhancement
November 2010

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[2] http://admin.exeter.ac.uk/academic/tls/tqa/Part%208/8U%20ELE.pdf

APPENDIX B – TEL PROJECT LIST

August 2011

EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT PROJECTS

Audio Feedback for Learning   **HEA, 2008, £30,000**

Working with Geography, Biosciences and PCMD, means of using digital audio and screen-visual feedback technology were explored. This approach addressed in part the students' concern regarding lack of meaningful contact time and also the fact that many students do not readily draw upon the textual feedback they receive. The project produced video training clips used for students' study skills development within schools.

E.J.Dunne@exeter.ac.uk

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/educationenhancementprojects/audiofeedback/

Augmented Reality: Unlocking the Hidden Curriculum

JISC, 2010-2011, £50,000

The augmented reality technology adds a layer of virtual information over the physical world. The project uses this technology find out about biodiversity across the University of Exeter campus. Students, staff and visitors equipped with suitable smartphone application are now able to trigger information on flora and fauna at any time of day or season, presented as rich visual and audio media. The project was short-listed amongst the nominations for the Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards within the *ICT Initiative of the Year* category.

M.J.Newcombe@exeter.ac.uk

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/educationenhancementprojects/augmentedreality/

Becoming a STEM Enthusiast

The National HE-STEM Programme, WP strand, 2010-2011, £15,000

The project is developing open educational resources about the student and staff experience of studying in the STEM subjects, with an aim of encouraging students in schools and tertiary colleges to consider applying for STEM subjects at university-level. Materials will be made available from August 2011 through the Open University's Labspace as well as the HE STEM Programme's online collaboration tool.

J.L.Rowe@exeter.ac.uk

http://www.hestem-sw.org.uk/widening-participation/wp-projects/?p=24&pp=summary

Big Dilemmas   **The Annual Fund, 2010-2012, £4,800 per year**

This is an interdisciplinary project affiliated with the Climate Change & Sustainable Futures research theme. Students, lead academics and stakeholders are collaboratively tackling complex sustainability issues. In the first year, the project focused on the 'Future of Renewable Energy in the UK' and the lessons that can be learned from the Severn Estuary tidal energy scheme. The theme for the second year is 'The Use of Land'.

H.Sjerps-Jones@exeter.ac.uk

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/research/excellence/keythemes/climate/researchprojects/bigdilemmas/

Campus as Living Laboratory   **2010 – 2011**

Exeter Carbon Observatory (ExCO): **the Annual Fund, £10,000 over two years**

Birds and Bees: Vinspired / Bristol National History Consortium, £1,000 for Bioblitz, plus funding for a biodiversity GDP post at Devon Wildlife Trust

The project facilitates formal and informal learning for sustainability. The campus serves as a community based living laboratory for identifying, evaluating and assessing indicators of progress toward greater sustainability. Campus staff, academics, students and stakeholders are collaborating on various projects, such as the Birds & Bees Campaign and Exeter Carbon Observatory. While learning on and about the campus, students and academics collaborate with colleagues from other disciplines and learn about each others' work.

H.Sjerps-Jones@exeter.ac.uk

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/sustainability/curriculumandresearch/curriculumenhancementandinnovation/

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/sustainability/campus/biodiversity/birdsandbeescampaign/

The Exeter CASCADE Project: Cascading Research – like Digital Literacy Skills at Exeter

JISC digital literacies project, 2011, £100,000

The Exeter Cascade Project aims to ensure the widespread development of student and staff digital capabilities by creating innovative and authentic research-like activities which will be embedded in disciplines and supported by post graduate researchers. We already have some experience of engaging Postgraduate Research Students to cascade skills to Undergraduates and, following a careful audit of current practices, we shall refine this approach and apply it specifically to digital literacy skills. A number of research-rich online and face to face activities will be developed and piloted in our five Colleges. Postgraduates will have opportunities to develop their own skills and they will also have access to a newly accredited training programme which will focus on how to cascade these skills to others. The University will use the outcomes of this project to develop institution wide models for student skill development which go beyond digital literacy but which has this at its heart.

E.J.Dunne@exeter.ac.uk

Enhancing learning & teaching through the use of technology: the positioning of educational technologists in enhancing the student experience

The HEA Evidence Net synthesis project, 2009, £2,500

The project conducted a literature review to identify the most effective and efficient positioning of educational technologists within institutions in order to maximize their positive impact upon the student experience. The research found that the relationship between educational technologists and the student experience is addressed by referring to such staff as being 'brokers' e.g. between academic staff and students.

T.J.Browne@exeter.ac.uk

http://repository.alt.ac.uk/831/1/Tom_Browne_Helen_Beetham_HEA_finalweb.pdf

In at the Deep End

HEFCE, Higher Education and Technicians Education and Development (HEaTED), part of the Institute of Science Technology (IST), 2009, £5,000

The 'In the Deep End' booklet is a resource for colleagues new to teaching in higher education to help them cope with the first few critical elements of their work. Printed copies are available from the Education Enhancement Unit and the booklet can also be accessed online via the University website.

D.Fung@exeter.ac.uk

https://as.exeter.ac.uk/media/level1/academicserviceswebsite/studentandstaffdevelopment/documents/Deep_End_Brochure_2011.pdf

Integrative Technologies   **JISC, 2008-2010, £200,000**

The project worked with academic and professional services staff in the University of Exeter Business School to develop integrative, technology-enhanced learning experiences in order to support large cohorts of students, with about one third being international. Variety in curriculum delivery was developed or adapted to support flexible learning and preferences. Several technologies which were not used at the outset of the project – 'clickers', Flip cameras, the Optical Mark Reader scanner, Turnitin and Echo 360 are now used frequently in the Exeter Business School and increasing numbers of staff are adopting these new ways of working. Learners at Exeter led on designing experiences and experienced a 'step change' in the way the curriculum is delivered.

E.J.Dunne@exeter.ac.uk

http://exeter.ac.uk/integrate/

Leading curriculum change for sustainability – strategic approaches to quality enhancement

HEFCE 2010-2011, £200,000 (shared between three universities), £15,000 (pilot) + £2,500 internal funding

The project is focused on processes that can ensure that curriculum development with a sustainability focus is of the highest academic quality throughout the HE sector. A consortium of five UK universities is involved the project, with Exeter piloting curriculum development in the Business School. Other colleges could use the model and apply it in their own environment. The lessons identified and learnt will help to promote systemic change for colleges and the institution.

H.Sjerps-Jones@exeter.ac.uk

http://insight.glos.ac.uk/sustainability/Education/hefcelgmquality/Pages/default.aspx

Maths and Statistics Support   **DARO, 2009-2012, £15,000**

The project aim is to provide discipline-based mathematical and statistical support to students whose degree subjects require them to be competent in these skills. Postgraduate students are paid to support undergraduates in five disciplines across three campuses. The delivery methods include one-to-one appointments, drop-in helpdesks and organised small group sessions. The project has now established itself as a vital part of what students expect and need in term of support for their studies.
R.Canter@exeter.ac.uk

National Action Research Network (NARN) on Researching and Evaluating Personal Development Planning and e-Portfolio   **HEA NTFS, 2007-2010, £4,500**

The project researched the impact of student Personal Development Planning (PDP), a framework for enhancing and capturing student learning by sector wide agreement, on the student learning experience. This consortium project engaged practitioners from 16 HEIs. Exeter found that the provision of a one size fits all, technology-based solution is often regarded as counter-intuitive to open, developmental conversations between tutors and students. As a result of this finding, some schools developed their own specially tailored materials and systems with an aim of securing greater engagement from students and staff.

J.L.Rowe@exeter.ac.uk

http://www.recordingachievement.org/research/narn-tree/the-personal-tutor-role-in-pdp.html

Online Coursework Management

HEFCE Modernisation Fund, 2010-2011, £50,000

This project is to create a complete and end to end electronic assessment process from setting assignment through submission, marking to feedback. During the summer of 2011, the system will be developed and tested by selected staff in the Colleges of Humanities and Life and Environmental Sciences. Consultations with staff across the university will be held in the same period. The project has won the Green Impact award in recognition of supporting the University Sustainability Strategy.

S.A.Milward@exeter.ac.uk

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/educationenhancementprojects/ocm/

Open Exeter   **JISC, 2009-2010, £250,000**

The aim was to make a wide range of learning resources created by academics freely available, easily discovered and routinely re-used by both educators and learners. The project looked at practices and challenges associated with the provision of open educational resources and modified them to create Exeter's own templates and institutional policies and procedures for repositories, metadata, searching tools, IPR, dissemination, educational practice and training and outreach documentation. The project learnt that it is essential to gain understanding of IPR and copyright before setting out to create new resources.

T.J.Browne@exeter.ac.uk

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/educationenhancementprojects/openexeter/

Open STEM   **HEFCE, 2010-2011, £20,000**

The project addressed the challenge of releasing subject-specific open materials for HEA-accredited staff development courses. A range of STEM-specific open resources for educators and professional development teams, focusing specifically on Mathematics and Biosciences, were produced and made available on-line from the LabSpace. These resources are used in the LTHE programme, by postgraduates who teach, in PCAP delivery and similar.

B.Cooper@exeter.ac.uk

http://labspace.open.ac.uk/

Programme Assessment Strategies (PASS)

HEA NTFS, 2009-2012, £200K (25K a year to Exeter)

This project addresses the challenge of designing an effective, efficient, inclusive and sustainable assessment strategy which delivers the key course/programme outcomes. The project is producing guidance and case studies on programme assessment across a range of subject disciplines. It builds on the extensive experience within six partner institutions by identifying essential principles of programme-based assessment and using these to implement and test the effectiveness of programme assessment strategies.

Sue.Burkill@exeter.ac.uk

http://www.pass.brad.ac.uk/

Pathfinding Videoconferencing   **HEA, JISC, 2007-2008, £98,000**

This research and practice-based project explored the experience of staff and students learning and teaching through videoconferenced seminars. The aim was to use the research to inform and to share good practice. As a result, colleges are more carefully considering appropriateness of teaching by videoconferencing and in many cases have revised their practices.

J.L.Rowe@exeter.ac.uk

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/educationenhancementprojects/videoconferencing/

Protocol   **EPSRC, 2008 – 2009, £58,900**

The project produced a transferrable, research-informed protocol for the transition of face to face-delivered programmes to web-deliverable formats through transition of one Masters programme – the MSc in Urban Water Systems within Engineering. The Protocol for Converting Face to Face Programmes to Distance and Blended Learning can be used by Schools that are considering the conversion of a conventional face-to-face programme to a distance or blended learning version. The Protocol has specifically been designed for the context of Master's Level provision, although much of the information may readily apply to the undergraduate context.

E.J.Dunne@exeter.ac.uk

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/educationenhancementprojects/ctaproject/

Reciprocal Shadowing as a means of promoting institutional change

The Leadership Foundation, January – September 2011, £9,300

Through engaging in a reciprocal shadowing activity, senior managers and staff in two southwest universities will have the opportunity to gain an insight into each other's daily working lives. At the same time, they will test the resources developed for this purpose. In the post-activity phase they will share experiences and reflections, raise issues for change and address solutions as a collaborative partnership between students and staff, building on the successful Students as Change Agents initiative. Learning from the shadowing experience will enable better organisation and the generation of improved resources, so that the programme can be rolled out on a wider scale in the future.

E.J.Dunne@exeter.ac.uk

Signposting On-Course Support (SOCS)

Outreach and Strategic Development Fund; HEFCE WP, 2010-2011, £10,000

The project researched the experiences of students coming to Exeter from non-selective state schools to understand the issues surrounding transition and success for these students. A survey of current and past students was completed and some students were interviewed about their experience, and a set of video-based resources on progression and transition for prospective students and for use in staff development activities was produced. The online resource includes links to existing materials and a series of interviews with students.

J.L.Rowe@exeter.ac.uk

Students as Agents for Change in Learning and Teaching

DVC Discretionary Fund, 2008-2012, £12,000

This is an innovative and exciting student-led action-research project. Students look into ways of improving the learning and teaching experience within their School. They choose their own topic of research that addresses an area of learning and/or teaching that is of concern within their School. Recommendations resulting from students' action research get embedded into the School's learning and teaching practice. In this way the project enables students to engage formally with the processes of real and positive change.

E.J.Dunne@exeter.ac.uk

http://as.exeter.ac.uk/support/educationenhancementprojects/change/

VLE Migration project 2009–2011

Infrastructure Fund £100,000

Strategic Development Fund, £200,000

This was a one year project funded by the University to migrate the institutional VLE from WebCT to one based on Moodle. The migration was supported by 9 Graduate Business Partnership students who were employed for one year and were allocated to work with a specific school. The project undertook a procurement process for a fully outsourced Moodle VLE, technical integration work, migration of all courses and content from WebCT to the new system and staff awareness and training. ELE (Exeter Learning Environment) was launched in September 2010.

M.J.Newcombe@exeter.ac.uk

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/spc/changeteam/delivery/ele/

APPENDIX C – HEFCE TEL STRATEGIC GOALS

Activity area (from original strategy)	Strategic priorities
1. Pedagogy, curriculum design and development	• Enhancing excellence and innovation in teaching and learning • Enhancing flexibility and choice for learners • Enhancing student achievement • Improving employability and skills • Attracting and retaining learners • Supporting research-based or enquiry-based learning • Engaging employers (or other stakeholders) in curriculum design and delivery • Improving efficiency of curriculum design and delivery processes
2. Learning resources and environments (was 'Learning resources and networked learning')	• Enhancing flexibility and choice for learners • Enhancing student achievement • Improving employability and skills • Widening participation and improving access • Effective management of learning resources • Designing and maintaining effective environments for learning
3. Lifelong learning processes and practices (was 'Student support, progression and collaboration')	• Improving employability and skills • Enhancing flexibility and choice for learners • Widening participation and improving access to learning opportunities • Supporting diverse learners' needs • Retaining learners and meeting learners' expectations • Co-operating with other institutions, colleges and campuses

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Activity area (from original strategy)	Strategic priorities
4. Strategic management, human resources and capacity development	• Enhancing excellence in teaching • Enhancing excellence in research • Workforce development • Business/community links • Improving efficiency and effectiveness of institutional processes
5. Quality	• Institutional quality processes can support objectives and enhance benefits in all the other areas
6. Research and evaluation	• Enhancing excellence in learning and teaching • Enhancing excellence in research • Enhancing understanding of learning and teaching processes • Enhancing institutional processes (especially quality assurance and review)
7. Infrastructure and technical standards	• Enhancing flexibility for learners • Supporting diverse learners' needs • Enhancing efficiency of institutional processes • Enhancing the technical infrastructure • Enhancing the information environment • Ensuring effective ICT investments and effective use of existing ICT resources • Sustainability ('green' computing)

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APPENDIX D – STAFF AND STUDENT ELE SURVEY

eLearning	August 23, 2011

ELE Survey: Comparison of Staff and Student Results and Feedback

This document supplements the reports summarising the results and feedback from two surveys carried out to determine staff and student satisfaction with the University of Exeter online learning environment ELE (Exeter Learning Environment).

The surveys were designed to gauge impact and help guide support, training, and enhancement. Running the surveys towards the end of the first academic year gave staff and students time to become familiar with, and to have used ELE (ELE was introduced and replaced WebCT in August 2010).

The first section of this document illustrates participation; giving numbers of staff and students completing the survey; then staff and student satisfaction recorded across colleges and disciplines are compared.

Participation

|	Student Survey	Staff Survey
Launch date	24th May 2011	29th March 2011
Close date	18th June 2011	23 May 2011
Number of respondents	527	228
Expected number of respondents	5000	1511
Response rate	10.5%	15.1%

Number of respondents by college
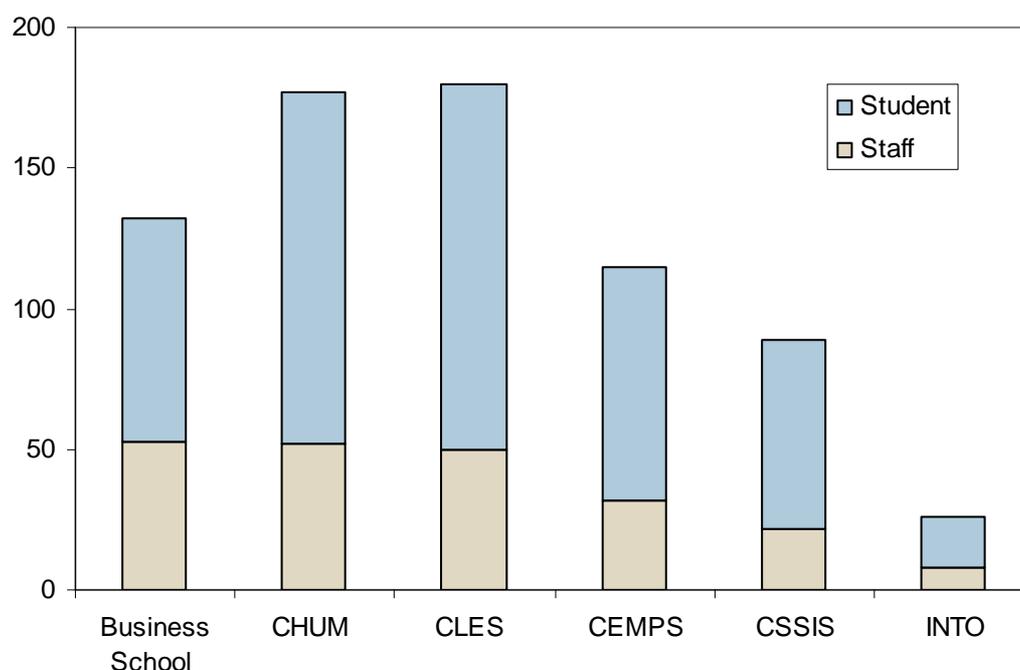
The participation figures will be useful to Education Enhancement staff supporting colleges with ELE and who may decide to look in more detail at responses. Although responses from colleges (above) provide a

reasonable sample size, some disciplines returned fewer surveys. So scores and responses, though useful, may not be representative.

Number of respondents by discipline
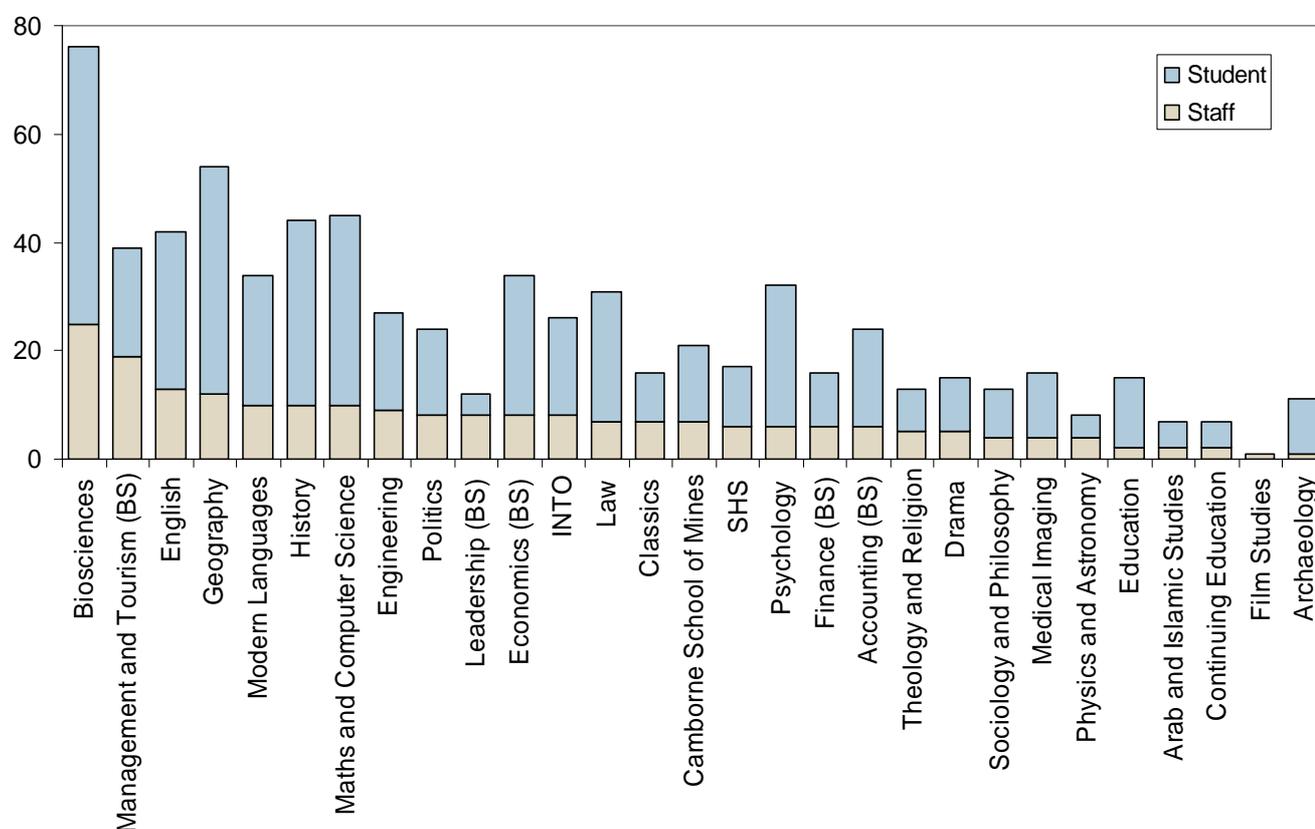
High rates of staff response in Biosciences and Business School can partly be ascribed to the presence of Graduate Teaching Assistants. GTAs were purposefully included in the survey as staff: they have editing access and are involved with teaching.

These figures may reflect staff and student engagement levels but would not provide an accurate measure of engagement with ELE (to calculate a % response by discipline). It should also be kept in mind that the population is self-selecting. In certain disciplines low response rates could be in indication of contentment with ELE; and those staff or students had no particular issues which to raise as feedback via the survey.

Satisfaction

Positive (1 to 5), negative (-1 to -5) and neutral (0) scores were combined to simplify comparison between staff and student satisfaction.

Where satisfaction scores were positive students and staff are very similar. Students returned more neutral responses than staff regarding ELE/WebCT preference and training and support. Staff returned more negative feedback in these areas: their greater requirement for training and administration of ELE courses, having more potential for difficulty.

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Students reported that they find ELE easy to use and that one of their main concerns was the way in which some ELE courses were organised and presented.

Overall Satisfaction with ELE

ELE v. WebCT

ELE Support and Training
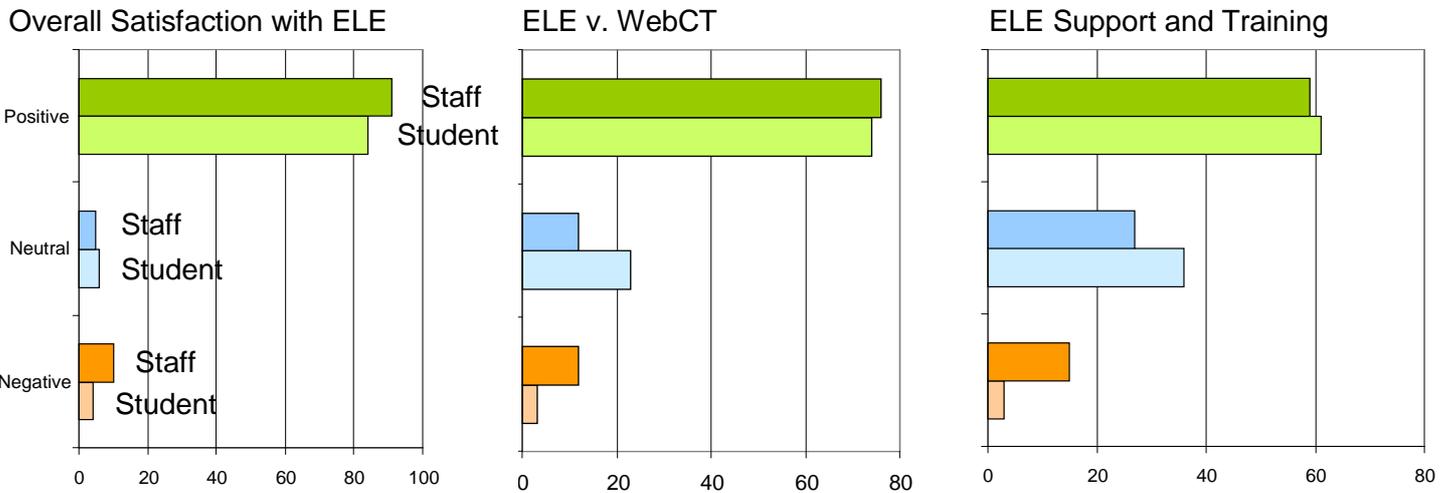
Student and Staff Satisfaction by College
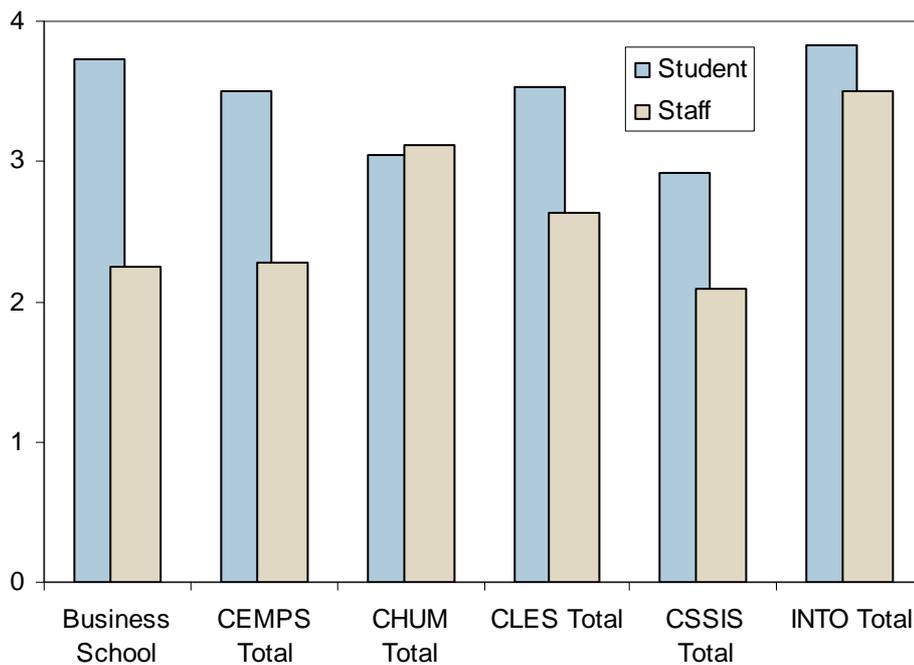
Average scores by college (above) show generally greater satisfaction amongst students than staff. Organising the scores by discipline shows that, in some areas satisfaction levels are similar (and high) for both students and staff but there is also a great deal of variation. Student satisfaction is far higher than that of staff in some disciplines (e.g. Finance, IAIS); however in other disciplines the reverse is true and staff satisfaction is greater than that reported by students (e.g. physics and astronomy, classics, drama, psychology).

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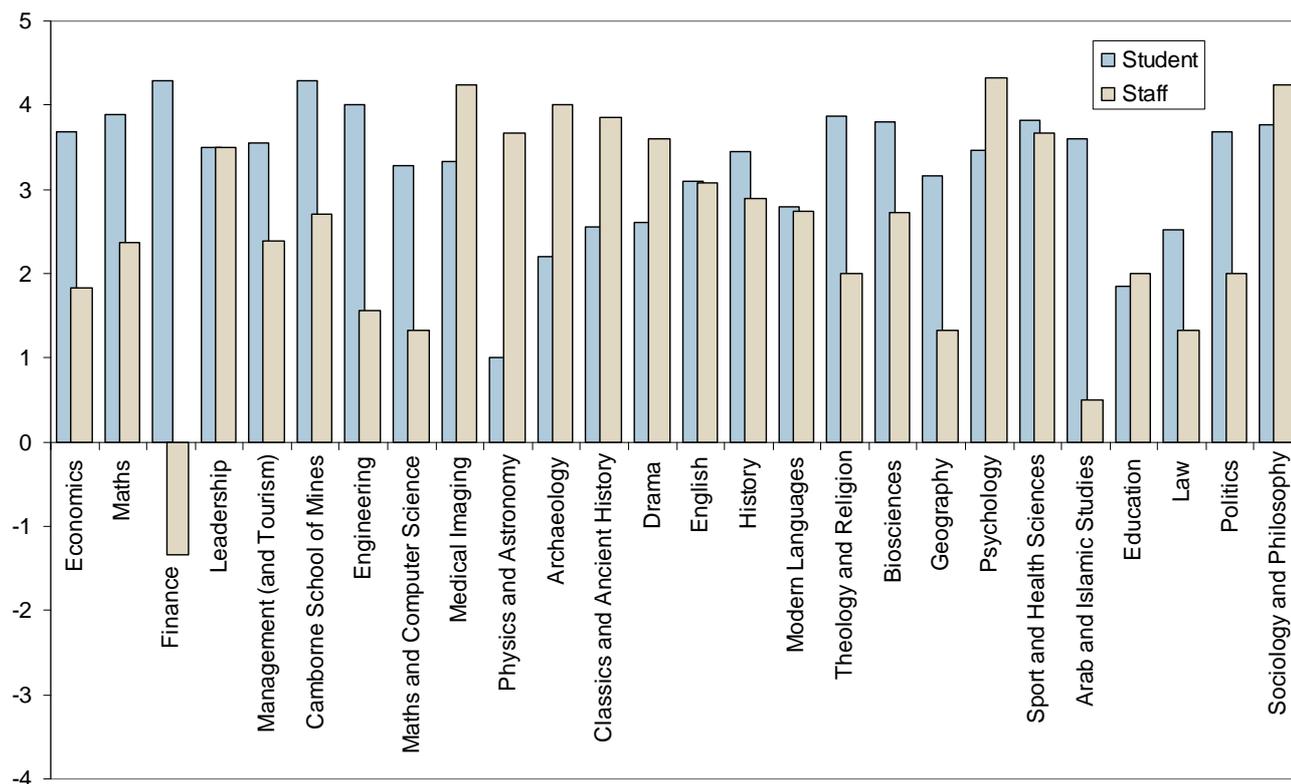
Summary and Concluding Remarks

The survey provided information on staff and student attitudes to ELE and how ELE is used at period when the use of the VLE has increased dramatically in terms of supported modules, as well as the increases in the volume and range of materials that are delivered.

The survey returned a very strong endorsement of the move from WebCT to ELE. Students like ELE and find it easy to use. Staff, although they miss certain features of WebCT and pointed out a range of improvements that would make using ELE more efficient, prefer ELE to WebCT and most find it straightforward to use.

The survey has provided valuable feedback for future enhancement (for example the provision of more advanced training). The survey reports, data, and comments will be distributed to EE staff supporting colleges to identify specific areas for action and carry out any further review or analysis of the data that would be useful.

Staff were invited to give their details if they wanted further information and support. Requests for support were collated after the first wave of responses had arrived and actioned before the survey had closed. These requests, as well as the comments, received as feedback, will further help develop FAQs and inform future training and support.

ELE Staff Survey Results

ELE (Exeter Learning Environment), the University of Exeter's online learning facility, was introduced in 2010 to replace WebCT with a more user-friendly, flexible system. Since ELE was launched in September use of the system has grown rapidly. Initial feedback was good, however a formal survey was required to properly gauge satisfaction during the first six months of use and help guide support requirements and future enhancements to ELE.

The survey was designed to be quick and easy to complete, and to provide an opportunity for written feedback. The survey was anonymous, however staff were invited to give their details if they wished the eLearning team to contact them to provide information or support.

Launch date: 29 Mar 2011 **Close date:** 23 May 2011
Number of respondents: 228
Expected number of respondents: 1511
Response rate: 15.1%

Overall Satisfaction
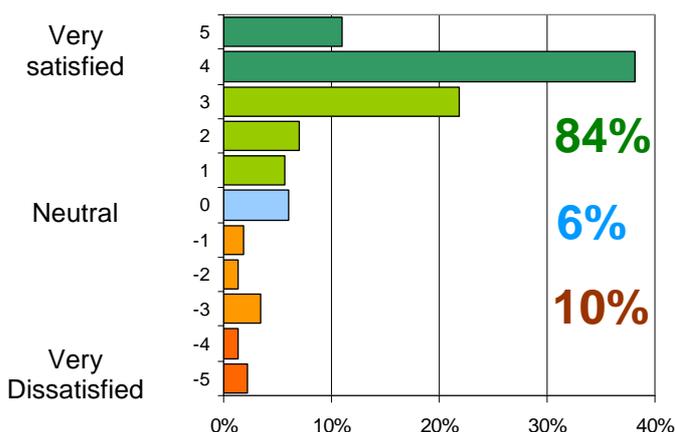
How satisfied are you with ELE?
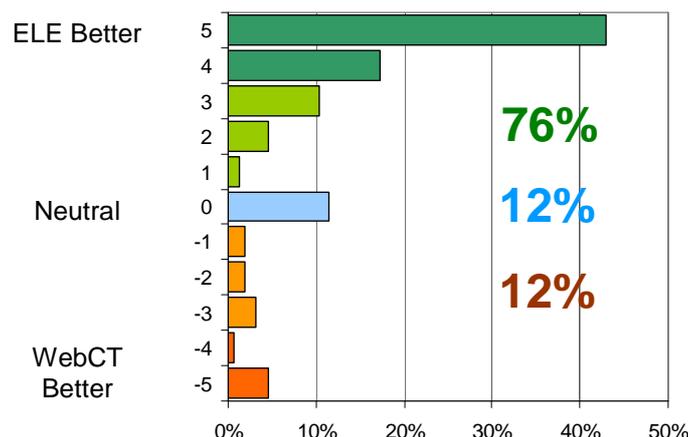
If you used WebCT how would you rate the experience with ELE? Do you feel it is an improvement?

Users showed a very high level of satisfaction with ELE and overwhelmingly favoured ELE over WebCT. A user in CEMPS commented:

> "WebCT was painfully slow to use. The interface was death-by-a-thousand clicks, it was picky about which browser could be used… I didn't like the way WebCT permitted no-one who was not a registered student to see material from other modules and disciplines."

And a user from the Business School:

> The basic software is much better and gives more flexibility than other, even commercial systems. the switch to the new system was the right strategic move.

Scores were averaged to determine satisfaction by college and discipline. Users within most disciplines and colleges reported high levels of satisfaction. Disciplines within CHUM and INTO reported consistently high levels, with other colleges showing more variability between disciplines in their level of satisfaction. Business School discipline, Finance (4 users) reported dissatisfaction with ELE.

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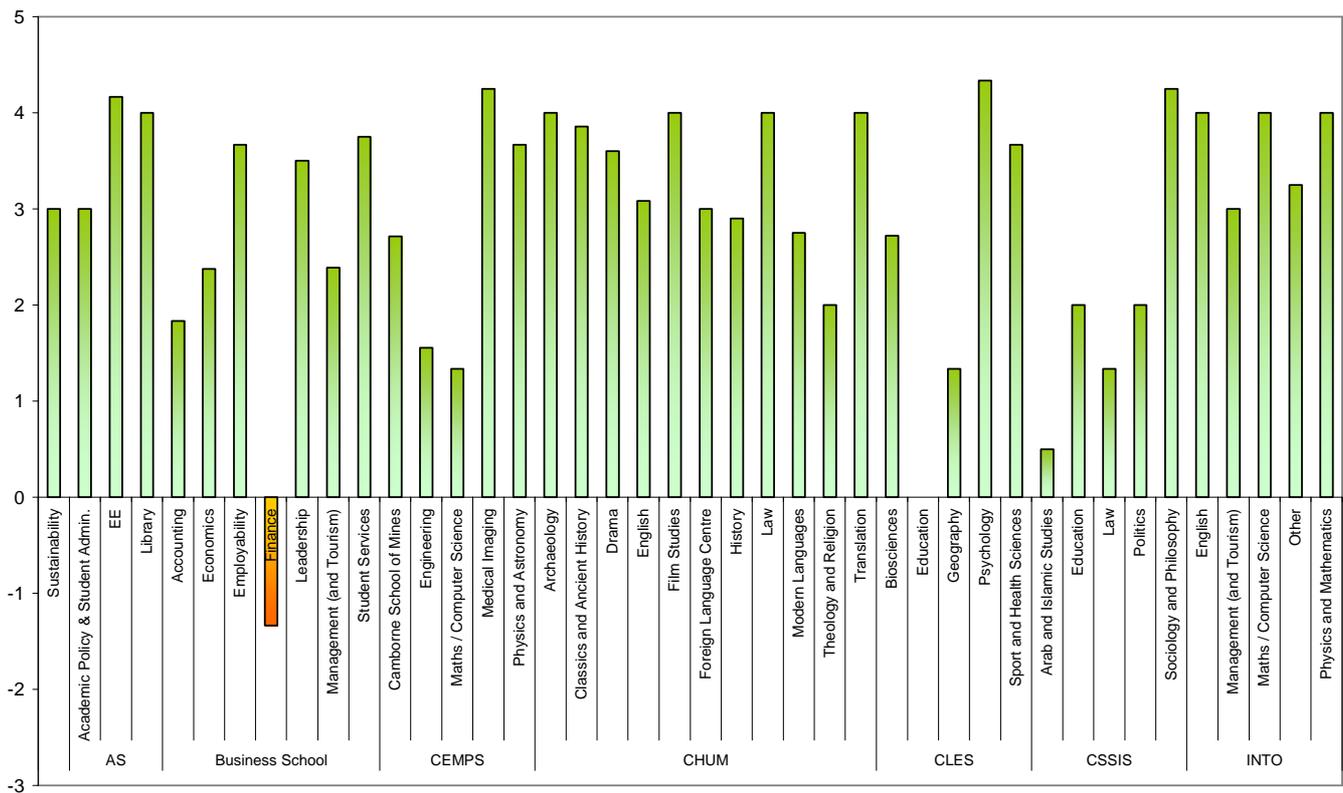
Is there anything that you particularly like about ELE?

It was very easy to pick out the main themes from the users comments. Ease of use, simple layout, and flexibility of the system were repeatedly cited. The comments were used to make a word-cloud - a graphical display based on word counts - to give an instant impression of the comments received.

27
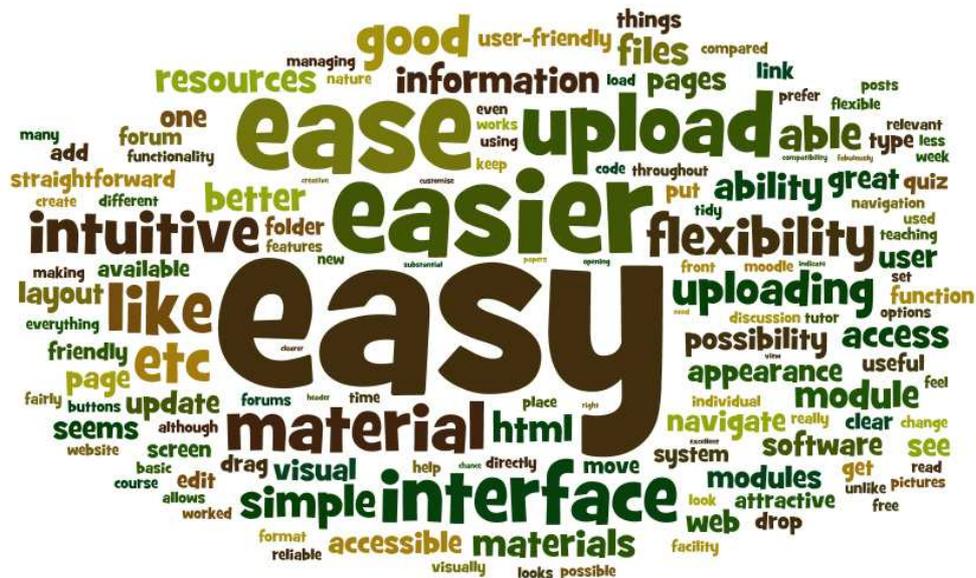
What would you change?

The following selection of comments from the likes and 'would change' parts of the survey, demonstrates the diversity of user experience of ELE. Despite the majority of staff citing ease of use, a few staff find ELE difficult or complicated, or some aspect of ELE awkward. Comments revealed the variety of expectation regarding the look and feel (design and layout), as well as attitudes to open access to courses.

Is there anything that you particularly like about ELE?	Is there anything that you would change about ELE?
Ease of use and navigation. ELE is so easy to load material onto. It works fabulously. Easy interface, intuitive to use.	*… difficult to navigate around and to upload work*
Good structure, User-friendly interface. It doesn't look too cluttered.	*Its linear nature - but a small price to pay in light of ease of use and functionality*
The basic web design looks good.. Attractive layout compared with WebCT.	*The graphical interface could become more attractive.*
Ability to update it ourselves. Ease of use - pretty much idiot-proof. Flexibility of options for use. More opportunities for creative interaction between students.	*There are so many editing options that it can be quite complicated to work.*
You can view modules which you are not enrolled on	*…had to spend too much time making sure my materials could not be viewed by everyone.*

Positive comments regarding the ease of use outweighed criticism, however there were some common issues relating to functionality. The most common complaint was that the upload mechanism is laborious. Numerous users said that it took too many steps to upload files. Some were only able to upload files singly (some perhaps unaware that files could be zipped for upload).

Users also missed the facility in WebCT to make material available at a pre-set date and time, found the messaging system of ELE inflexible.

Support and Training

When questioned about their overall satisfaction with training and support, a clear majority (85%) were positive or neutral.

How satisfied are you with training and support ELE?

A word-cloud of the support comments gives a quick impression of the variety of support that users feel they benefitted from: training sessions, eLearning, team, phone calls and email. Many users were able to get help from colleagues.

Comments on support generally very positive and frequently cited the eLearning team members who had helped them. Below are some examples of good feedback and the types of response:

- *Quick emails to the ELE team - who were always quick to respond, and knowledgeable.*
- *I have asked our learning technologist for help in countless occasions. His help has saved me many hours and has been excellent. To be honest I would not have half of the resources I have in my pages were it not for him.*
- *A colleague showed me how to use it briefly, then I picked up the rest via trial and error. It is very straight forward to use for a well-versed PC user.*
- *I didn't go to a training session, but used the short online sessions which were really helpful. The occasional email did the trick*
- *A colleague who attended the meeting helped me the first time. However, the help files and videos were also really helpful. Used online handbook*

Users reporting a negative experienced commonly focussed on initial training.
Some users said there is no user guide or documentation (support and documentation is available via the ELE homepage and a dedicated ELE Training and Support course) or were unaware of the documentation suggesting "*online instruction, frequently asked questions, if they are not already there…*". In some cases users were not sure who to go to for help.

Some staff found the pace of training sessions too fast, others too slow (which would suggest that for majority of users the training was delivered at about the right pace and level). There was agreement that the workshop format was useful when this was used. Users also commented that the training staff were very professional and helpful. When the migration team was disbanded at shortly after the migration period was over, their support was missed.

Satisfaction with support by college and discipline

Although most disciplines returned positive scores for support, satisfaction levels varied considerably between disciplines and within colleges. A weak positive correlation exits between overall satisfaction with ELE and satisfaction with support and training.

Suggestions

In their suggestions for improvements to support, users frequently commented that wanted more information and training on more advanced features of ELE.

- Masterclasses on different focused aspects, such as setting up groups, setting up Turnitin, designing the page etc., ongoing- short workshops on specific activities for example uploading material, messaging, using ELE in conjunction with Turnitin
- Document more advanced features.
- Now ELE is running and I have some experience, it might be helpful to providing some training to help people use it better. The previous training offered was at a time when I was too busy.
- A follow up session for Cornwall is well overdue most people can do the basics now and need additional training in the more advanced features. Turnitin particularly would be good to be trained on. At present there seems to be no support available in Cornwall and I would not know where to get support for ELE.

Enhancement

The survey asked users to indicate the content and facilities they made available to students. A checkbox list was used to allow this part of the form to be completed quickly and give results that would be consistent and could be analysed easily.

Content and tool usage by college is given below and shows the proportion of different types of materials by user. It does not reflect the quantity or volume of material.

The usage by discipline (not shown) gives a complicated picture of use and will vary naturally: for example modern languages may use more audio, english and drama may use discussion for a more frequently. The detailed discipline results are expected to be useful to eLearning staff supporting colleges.
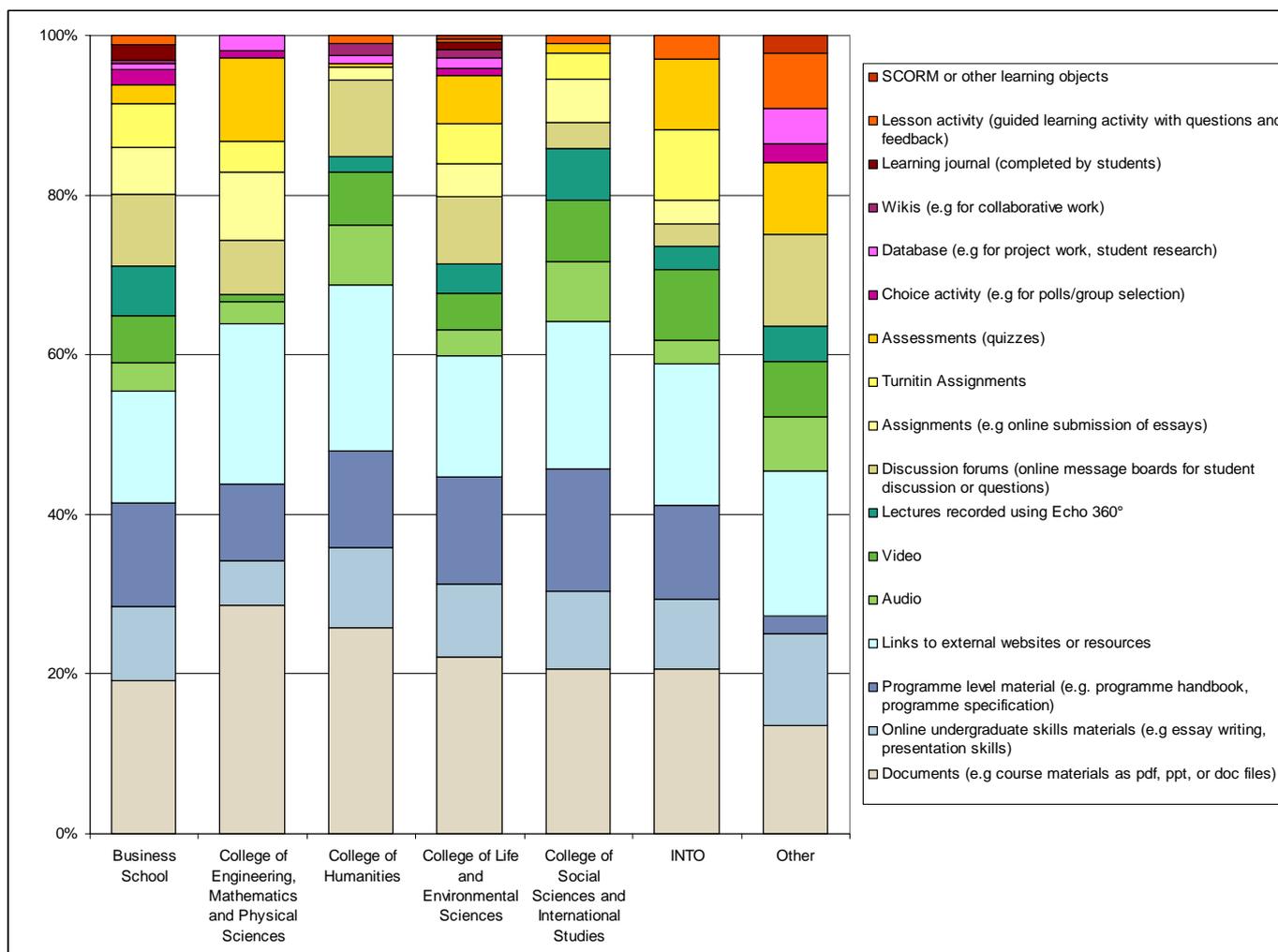
As well as promotion of the variety of features available with in ELE, further training as indicated by responses to suggestions to improve support would bring about enhancement. Many users said that they were interested, having learnt the basics of ELE, to do more and learn more about ELE's advanced features.

Users asked to suggest enhancement of teaching, for example:

- *At other universities I have worked at they have whole teams of educational technologists that can design animations and other online teaching materials - this made the final product look much more professional. - in the post Brown era this should be an area we invest much more in at Exeter.*

But many users focused here too on changes that would enhance usability for the tutor. Therefore these suggestions have been merged with the comments from the question specifically asking for suggestions changes that might improve ELE. This combined list is given below.

Many of the improvements might help enhance the student experience, directly or indirectly, but some suggestions (such as restricting access), it should be noted would have a negative impact upon the student experience.

A manageable digest of comments has been created by assigning comments to a category:

Usability and Features, Content, Assessment and Turnitin, Access, Communications and Interaction, Training and Support, Access, and Technical. Comments that share a theme have been grouped and repeated comments aggregates. A figure in bold at the end of each sub group of comments is the total number of comments that shared a similar view.

Usability and features

- *The file upload procedure is clumsy. The multiple stages of uploading material to the site. Up loading files takes many more steps than it did with WebCT, and links to files are easily broken. It would be better to simply drag and drop to various parts of the ELE layout. I have used a different version of ELE at another institution that allows you to import files from another ELE site directly onto the page (the function is Import). The window showing the files available for upload defaults to a reduced size when it opens up, so one has to enlarge it to get to the "choose" option ... not a major issue but it all adds up and makes the process time consuming (and confusing for new users who get stuck when they get to that stage and are unable to see the "choose" option.* **(x43)**

- *It should be possible to add several files in one go. WebCT had the WebDAV facility; we need that, or an equivalent. Ability to upload more than one file at the same time (without the need to create a zip file first). Make it easier to add material to multiple course modules.* **(x9)**

- *More difficult to navigate. It is difficult to organise, it is difficult to see which file to upload from a long list, you can't just delete one file from the upload list when you have finished with it. It is very time consuming.* **(8x)**

- *If I try to replace files I have updated on ELE with revised versions, I often have to rename them, even after deleting the original. Otherwise, I keep getting the old file when I upload the new.* **(x7)**

- *The layout: it is full of guff you don't need, minimizing space on the screen for what you do need. It's also institutionally heavy, sort of bureaucratic, and this means it's just not appealing as a CREATIVE tool. Move the tabs for the library, student resources etc as if you accidentally move your mouse over them, which I do a lot, the menus drop-down and get in the way. Pages too busy. You have to wade through so very many words, logos and notices to get to content or imagination. ELE's equivalents are choked with boxes and words and they don't permit editing (with tracked changes) of one another's work. The content bar on ELE makes it look like there are lots of options but they are really all just variations on the same: it is very limited.* **(x7)**

- *The editor is also difficult to use sometime because it uses html formatting and I more familiar with how to format in Word. I've had some difficulties with formatting.* **(x5)**

- *It would be good to be able to create a slightly deeper layered structure, i.e. a bit like a folder structure. Its linear nature - but a small price to pay in light of ease of use and functionality. I'd want to have the ability to make separate pages. The page gets really cluttered with resources that it just looks like a mess and not very professional. It would be nice to have a front page option, allowing for more of a "site map" of the page. I would like to be able to format lists in two columns to reduce the length of the page.* **(x5)**

- *Improved font/look of the site. We were told that ELE would 'look more modern' than WebCT but this is debatable. It would be nice to be able to adjust the theme colours for each module, but this is only a cosmetic gripe.* **(x3)**

- *For the user to determine how many 'topics' there. While I see that you can 'hide' some, I am not sure that you can make new ones? There might be a way for the user to do this, but the number of 'topics' doesn't seem to correspond to anything (it seems to be set at 20 - which is not enough for a 22 week course, and far too many for an 11 week course).* **(x3)**

- *Ability to save templates of your module structure, etc.*

- *Ability to create a backup of the whole module(including structure/layout and files)*

- *I think the Turnitin activity needs to be stronger in terms of reliability. This week email receipting has gone down and has caused havoc in terms of students saying they have submitted when they haven't. Dates have also changed/been reset and this is not good enough when you are dealing with serious deadlines.*

- *If you load a wiki for example you have to adjust it using code <br> for line break etc because the edit window shows all the code.*

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- *One important feature was available in WebCT and now missing in ELE is the 'Selective Release' criterion for release of assessment - it is important that this is included, otherwise it limits a very useful online facility. (x7)*

- *Tailoring to basic needs of the courses is more important educationally than standardising, though this may not tick the management boxes.*

- *The infrastructural improvements of ELE over WebCT are far outweighed by the onerous workload of managing it ourselves without any clerical or technical support - especially for clerical work like scanning, uploading and fixing links. This took the better part of a full forty week to set up, and a good two hours to half a day each week to maintain. I understand senior colleagues had asked for support from the library scanning team for this and had been refused. I support the use of e-learning, but I would prefer to focus on developing this as a profesional teacher rather than an IT office junior.*

Content

- *Remove the 100MB limit - I want to put videos up. I often need to post large datasets for students to download and we came across an issue which meant that there was a file size limit of 10 mb (I think). File sizes limits too low (I use VIDEO). (x4)*

- *I would like to record my lectures, which would make my teaching time more flexible*

- *This may be a comment more for the ECHO recording people, but I have several times had to ask for corrections to what recordings are posted - e.g. missing recordings, mislabelled recordings, interlopers from other courses.*

- *Make it possible to put links to Echo360 lectures in the lecture folders. It looks really messy and hard for the students to follow for them to have to sit below/outside the lecture folders.*

- *I think that a lot of listening comprehension exercises could be diverted from classes to ELE, provided that this is possible in regard to copyright regulations.*

- *I want to be able to use video more effectively but this relies on our having access to a university server (which we have so no problem). I also want to use more flash stuff than I do now but I am worried the upload limit might restrict me.*

- *In order to really reap the benefits of the system I think it really needs a full time member of staff to upload and create content for it. I'd love to have time to but with less than 100 hours to prepare for and carry out 22 lectures, mark 3 courseworks per student, write and mark exam papers etc there is no time what so ever to do anything other than the bear minimum.*

- *Use ELE for employability / career options / job adverts*

Assessment and Turnitin

- *Uploading online quizzes is not very intuitive. Calculated questions are extremely difficult to program! (x3)*

- *More types of quiz would enable more flexibility. Need ways to handle math. (x2)*

- *It would be very useful to be able to copy a quiz, in its entirety (I believe that this is not possible at present) rather than by category.*

- *It would be useful to have the facility, as with WebCT, where I could force submission on a quiz, after the deadline - currently I have to manually mark a quiz if the student has forgotten to submit by the deadline. There is a countdown clock but it only warns within ~ 20 seconds of the deadline.*

- *A means by which students submitting work electronically can have their work marked and returned to them, without others being able to see it. I would also like to see a direct link to the University's ePDP system and/or an alternative ePortfolio tool, from every module with an ELE site. If we are encouraging students to reflect on their learning, and make links to employability, we should surely provide them with the tools to do this, and in a way that makes them much more visible than they currently are.*

- *Add assessment and marking (if it is possible to streamline with the Bart system) in a way that is sufficiently flexible to adapt to our own marking system*

- *The ability to set up student groups for assessed group work that then would automatically upgrade the grade book*

- *Model answers and general feedback on coursework assignments.*

- *I would like better feedback chances.*

Communications and Interaction

- *Better messaging tools which includes an inbox and sent items. Have the equivalent of a "sent" section so you can see confirmation once you send a message. It seems that it is difficult for people to upload very big files to the discussion forum. To be able to add more than one attachment to a message in the discussion forum. Make a link to the SRS for easy emailing of students. Make it easier to email students with links direct from ELE. It should be possible to select to send messages to any combination of the groups teachers / students. (x14)*

- *Improving the tools for collaborative exercises (along the lines of write-board). There are many things that can be done on other VLE's that you can't do on ELE, such as "write-pad", and other tools that allow group exercises. Link to Confluence wiki or a better wiki on ELE. I would like to use virtual group meeting rooms to allow students to meet and discuss work; also a facility for them to share documents (similar to Huddle). (x6)*

- *It needs to be possible to upload, download and edit the document underlying a Choice. They are very laborious to prepare, and impossible to modify intelligently. more flexibility with the "choices" option; don't like the current system that only allows to create 3 choices at a time. Setting up study groups for 260 students is extremely time consuming at that rate. (x6)*

- *I would have student (participant) photo headshots for all students on ELE. this would make for more effective tutor/student relations/dialogue and would provide a better student experience overall. (x4)*

- *how student learning logs are managed. At moment it's very difficult to see at a glance what work has been commented on and what not. As students do not complete work in the same weeks, I have always to go back to earlier logs to check whether or not I've responded...and whether they have in turn responded. (x2)*

- *We won't get it to replace Facebook, though, so the system should work alongside such social networking sites. Group learning spaces, e.g. for group assignments (accessible only to group members and tutors/admin) might be useful so groups can meet virtually, exchange information, upload and modify documents, etc. At the moment much of this is happening via Facebook or Google docs; call me a control freak but I would much prefer to have this on ELE and be able to monitor progress. (x2)*

- *The "Choice" option is not as user friendly as it could be. I found it rather inflexible and not as useful for students' self-allocation to groups as I had hoped. It would be helpful to have the facility to allow students to make choices and rank them (e.g. 1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice).*

- *It needs to find a way to mange groups of students more easily. This was one of the strengths of WebCT. At the moment we use the fora as way to manage groups but this is clunky and staff do not find it easy to manage.*

- *Having the mugshot picture from my staff card displayed to students every time I answer a messageboard question.*

- *Probably it could become some sort of an interactive forum to be logged in and used during lectures.*

- *Think about how it interacts with smartphones - lots of students have these and it would be good to understand what changes are needed to take advantage of this.*

Training and Support

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- *More training modules or a manual which covers some of the more advanced features so that I can set up a more exciting and slick site for my module. Now I am familiar with the basics I would like to do some more complicated things with ELE but don't know how to. (x15)*

- *More/better training and support. More ongoing training is needed. (x6)*

- *It really needs a LARGE, VISIBLE, OBVIOUS 'help' icon leading to a quick "how-to" card for editors. I simply do not remember how to use it, and so don't. There are so many editing options that it can be quite complicated to work. Anything to make it easier for ageing technophobes like myself to be less terrified of each new stage. (x3)*
- *Better user guides. Online help for editing. To have a more useful help section that demonstrates typical classroom functions that lecturers use week in week out e.g. how to put students into groups, how to use forums etc. (x3)*

- *More training on Forums and Wikis. (x3)*

- *One person per department to be in charge of ELE training and application, this appears to be happening slowly on the Exeter campus which is great but asking for help over the phone from a person 100 miles away is not an ideal situation for those in Cornwall. please provide further opportunities in Cornwall to learn about the facilities listed above at Q 12. (x2)*

- *An advanced course on ELE would be useful. I need to increase my understanding of its scope of operations. Maybe I should find out what some of the things in Q12 are for. A presentation/training session to learn about the possibilities would be good. Much more training on how to use the other parts of ELE.*

- *Guidance on attaching audio and video files would be useful please.*

- *No one in my department knew how to use Turnitin. I think Turnitin is very valuable, but it is probably far less used than it should be.*

- *I can see the potential, I simply have not acquired the techniques to realize it. Obviously I am responsible for this. At the same time, I wish the site had convenient links to technical reminder pages for people who modify it only occasionally. I am just not an IT person and it's very hard to remember how to do things.*

- *Proper training for GTAs or moving back to the old sponsored GTA program.*

- *WebCT was much worse… but this is still a very sharp learning curve and requires more time than I can spare*

Access

- *Restrict access to those registered on a module. I don't want my lectures downloaded by anyone in the university - especially those in the years below who will take my course in future years. I do not like to upload my own lecture notes or PowerPoint slides due to copyright issues on my own work in progress. I do not wish 12,000 people across the university (from administrative staff, academic staff to every undergraduate/postgraduate) to have access my work. Had to spend too much time making sure my materials could not be viewed by everyone. (x8)*

- *More control over individual students on access and availability. (x3)*

- *Having the option to include stakeholders in forum discussions through guest logons.*

- *I would like to be able to grant access to certain external participants through a temporary guest logon.*

- *It would also be advantageous to allow students to access material for courses on which they are not registered. With more and more cut and shut modules formed as parts of others this would save repetitive uploads.*

- *WebCT reports on users were much more complete and useful. The way ELE generate reports and the details it provides is very unsatisfactory.*

Technical

- *Improve speed (x4)*

- *Compatible with all browsers (Google Chrome in particular) Make it work in IE. (x3)*

- *Reliability. We need to make sure that ELE works in classrooms. I had to pull two classes because the technology did not work. Responses to the helpdesk were sometimes prompt but sometimes lackadaisical. (You turn up to class, ready to use things you and your students have posted, and the system is down: incredibly frustrating; it means you can't rely on it as the sort of learning tool it is supposed to be, and this means you don't use it -- not fair to the students, and a waste of my time). Consistency: sometimes students can post links to activities, sometimes they can't -- often within the same hour. They all report wasting TONS of time trying, and they all report feeling frustrated, never knowing how long their ELE posting is going to take because sometimes it works first time, sometimes it takes many attempts. (x2)*

- *I am told that the way it wraps, e.g. mp3 files, in a media player is frustrating for some students who would like to be able to download onto their iPod at Uni and play offline.*

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eLearning   August 22, 2011

ELE Student Survey Results

ELE (Exeter Learning Environment), the University of Exeter's online learning facility, was introduced in 2010 to replace WebCT with a more user-friendly and flexible system. A formal survey of staff was made to gauge satisfaction during the first six months of use and help guide support requirements and future enhancements to ELE. A comparable survey of students was made, to obtain their feedback and suggestions and an overview of the results and feedback is presented here.

The student survey carried equivalent questions to the staff survey, or that would complement the staff survey. Like the staff survey, it was anonymous, designed to be easy to complete, and allowed written comments. Additional user data was obtained by the student survey information on year of study and country of origin to see if any trends would be identified or any differences in the feedback would be recorded.

Launch date: 24 May 2011 **Close date:** 18 Jun 2011
Number of respondents: 527
Expected number of respondents: 5000
Response rate: 10.5%

Overall Satisfaction
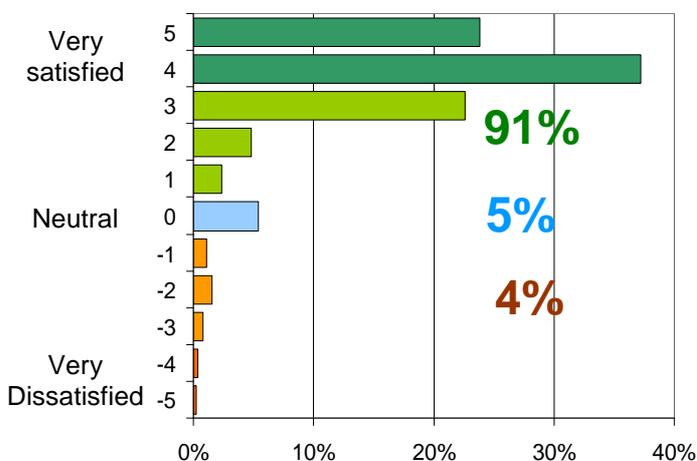
How satisfied are you with ELE?
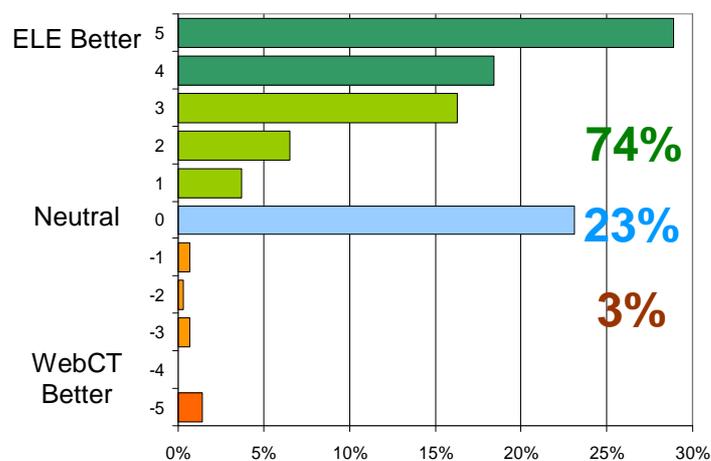
If you used WebCT how would you rate the experience with ELE? Do you feel it is an improvement?

Several tutors had commented on the staff survey that students like ELE and this is substantiated by the student survey which recorded an extremely high level of satisfaction with the system. Students who were able to compare their experience of ELE with WebCT overwhelmingly favoured ELE. A student commented "*ELE is much easier to use and more self-explanatory than WebCT and much quicker and more reliable*".

Satisfaction scores were averaged for college and discipline. Users across all colleges and within most disciplines reported high levels of satisfaction. Of 35 disciplines, 27 had an average score of 3 or greater. Eight others had a positive scores of between 1 and 3.

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Support and Training

When questioned about their overall satisfaction with training and support, a clear majority (94%) were positive or neutral. The strong neutral score could indicate either that support is simply adequate, or that many students have not sought help using ELE.
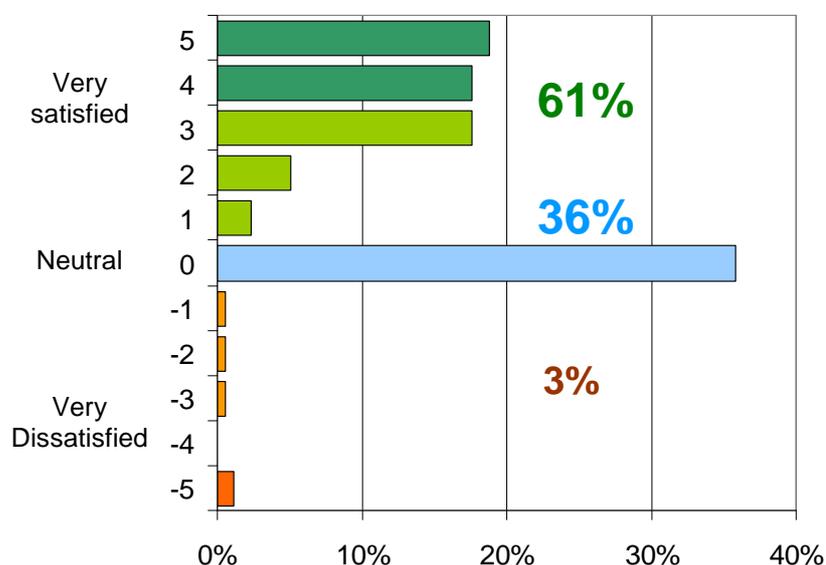
How satisfied are you with training and support for ELE?

Satisfaction by student type
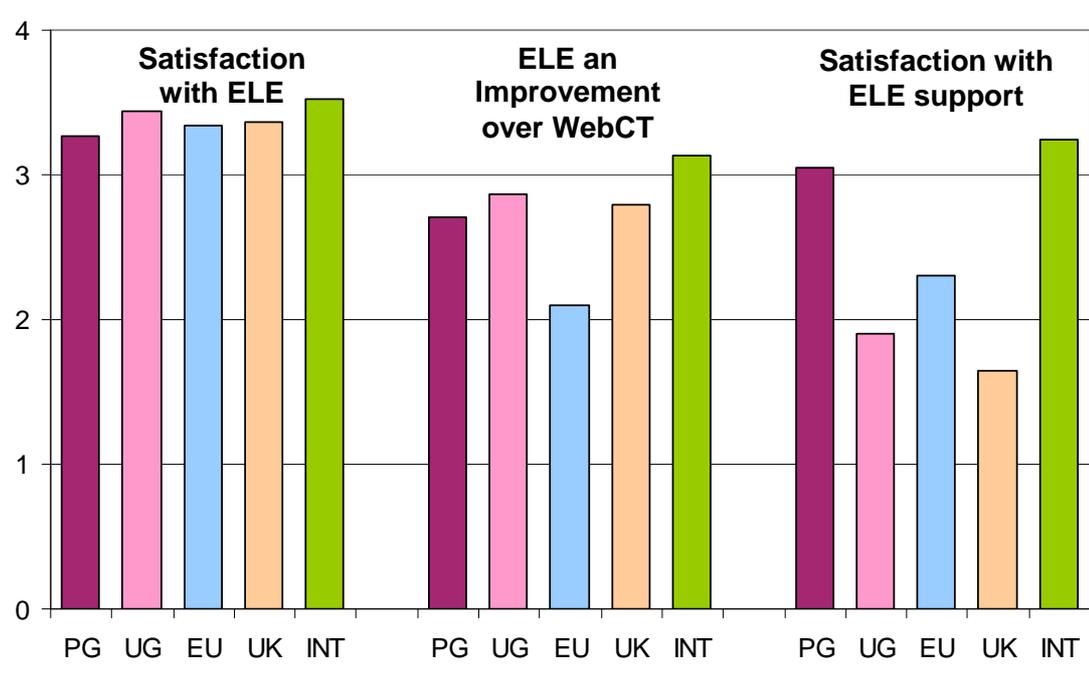
Satisfaction scores were averaged for five main user types based on level of study (postgraduate/undergraduate) and origin (UK/EU/International). All types showed very high levels of overall satisfaction with ELE, and there were good to very good rates of satisfaction compared to WebCT, as well as for ELE support. EU students reported a good but slightly lower average score comparing ELE to WebCT.

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International students reported the highest levels of satisfaction with support for ELE followed very closely by postgraduate students. Averaging the scores by type reveals that it was EU and UK students who tended to rate support neutrally.

Is there anything that you particularly like about ELE?

Students find ELE easy to use and navigate. They said that ELE pages were clear and well laid out. Many comments though positive were less ELE-specific: students said they liked having everything in one place and frequently commented on the range of range of materials: recorded lectures, readings, exam papers.

Student answers were used to generate a word-cloud showing the most common words used in their comments. Students mentioned access in several different contexts: access to materials in one place, access to all materials.

Usage

Students that said that they use ELE more than they did WebCT for two main reasons: (1) it is easier to use [and find material] and (2) staff use it more. Typical comments of ELE included:

Better features and easier to use.
Tutors using it more and putting more material up.
ELE is far easier to navigate and seems to be utilised more frequently by staff.
I think that lecturers have utilized ELE more, which has been positive for me.
Because the lecturers use it more.

The following table of module and file counts, collected in March 2011 records the increase in the number of modules that have corresponding ELE courses and the number of resources available on the VLE. Students have noticed and appreciated this increase.

Modules available to students via the VLE	Resources available to students via the VLE
2009-10 (WebCT) = 1596	2009-10 (WebCT) = 18000
Term 1 2010-11 (ELE) = 1752	Term 1 2010-11 (ELE) = 26876
Term 2 2010-11 to March (ELE) = 2426	Term 2 2010-11 to March (ELE) = 56923

What would you change?

Many of the "What would you change?" comments go beyond improving existing functionality, and there are many excellent suggestions for improvements to ELE. These are looked at in conjunction with responses from the feedback about enhancement.

There were a wide variety of comments but frequently mentioned issues revealed two main areas of concern:

(1) how tutors use ELE The variability in the levels of use, and the presentation of material. Comments on included:

> *Have all teachers use it. Some lecturers do not really make use of it.*
> *Not all instructors used ELE consistently.*
> *Encouragement for staff to adopt a standard practice when putting up lectures etc,..*
> *The lecturers should be taught how to use it better! Some have the hang of it but others either don't use it or use it in quite a messy way.*
> *There are too many folders, discussions… which can get really confusing because there is too much going on and it can be hard to find specific information…*

(2) reliability of the system. Many of the 'change' comments talked about crashes or downtime. Many of these cited MyExeter, and it is possible that on some of these occasions at least ELE may have been unaffected and would have worked via a direct link had students been aware of this. It should be noted that some students included reliability in their likes comments. Students also commented on the reliability of specific features; for example that the reliability of recorded lectures (Echo 360) need to be improved.

Student comments and suggestions

As well as specific suggestions, students remarked that "*ELE is fine,. its more about what the lecturer puts up that makes it good.*" and "*The effectiveness of ELE is mostly dependant on how tutors use it".*

To provide a more readable and compact version of the feedback for this report, comments were organised by type into categories to create a digest. Representative comments have been selected for quotation and the number of similar comments on that theme is given in brackets.

Tutor participation and practice

- *How the professors use the system. The lecturers should be taught how to use it better! The effectiveness of ELE is mostly dependant on how tutors use it. Some have the hang of it but others either don't use it or use it in quite a messy way. Tutors may need workshops on how to best use ELE to enhance learning. They obviously know how to use it, but just uploading documents isn't much different from sending documents over email. It may be that the concept is too new for them as well. The link to hand in assessments often aren't clear. There are too many folders. Sometimes the information is all put into one folder. (x20)*

- *Getting all staff to use it Some lecturers need to make more use of the ELE system. encourage non tech-savy lectures to use it to put up information. I think it would be a good idea for it to be compulsory for tutors to put up their lectures on to ELE. It would be good if postgrad teaching assistants were .. to upload material for their students. (x11)*

- *More interaction, for example, discussion forums and design the layout better and more intelligently e.g clearer links, relevant things grouped together Could include Wikis for group presentations or some of the features above. encourage tutors to use the wide variety of tools and facilities on the ELE Some do not even sort out discussion boards so students end up doing this themselves on Facebook. Other tutors are excellent and it makes all the difference. In a previous school ELE was used as a total repository for class, instructors would teach the class with ELE as the tool - they would post questions for students to answer, they would post homework and tests. (x7)*

- *Not all instructors used ELE consistently encouragement for staff to adopt a standard practice when putting up lectures etc. **(x6)***

Content

- *Put more videos of lectures online. All lectures should be recorded via Echo360 or some other system and made available on ELE. Previous years' resources (and those of discontinued modules) should be archived and still accessible for subsequent years, in addition to the current material. **(x13)***
- *Recordings of the lectures uploaded straight after lectures. Improve speed of updating it by lecturers. **(x3)***
- *Lecturers need to make sure lectures are up there before they teach it so people can print the slides to write notes around I have been diagnosed with dyslexia and its been recommended that all lecture notes should be posted on ELE prior to lectures so that people with learning needs can read them prior to the lesson. **(x3)***
- *More links to academic sources. Links to external websites. **(x2)***

- *Widen the range of subjects ELE offers to help students receive and remind themselves of vital advice useful throughout their studies. In this way, students will be encouraged to develop their key skills further.*
- *More resources such as answers to all past papers as helpful learning material.*

Assessment (Assignment Submission and Quizzes)

- *More use of online assessment/online submission of work in the future. …it would be *extremely* useful if online essay submissions could be provided for by the ELE, and made use of by tutors. As an MA student who lives at a considerable distance from the university, I am often asked to submit 'minor essays' (such as essay plans, or unmarked, formative essays) via the BART system. **(x5)***
- *Able to see your essay/test results throughout the year… I would make it easier for lecturers to put our grades on. **(x4)***

Contact and Communication Tools

- *Make it compulsory for lecturers to put deadlines and tests on the calendar. The calendars to be used more. **(x6)***
- *I think better promotion of the online forums would be really useful- maybe also the ability for individual groups to be set up by the staff within a module (e.g. presentation groups) so that they could have discussions between themselves and the lecturer for help on assessments, presentations, group coursework etc. **(x2)***
- *The discussions need to indicate whether you have read a posting or not. **(x2)***
- *Link the MyExeter timetable with the ELE timetable Would be helpful for FCH students if a timetable could be created electronically through modules selected on ELE, including flagging up clashes! **(x2)***
- *[integration] of the email system and ELE*
- *Assessed forums on ELE were open to other students- I did not like commenting on them because I didn't feel comfortable with my peers seeing what I had written.*
- *A section to advertise subject related extra-curricular events, for example guest speakers or workshops.*
- *Message board function is not used as much as it was on WebCT was last year because it is harder to navigate and not clear to find. We get email responses to all questions asked by students to tutors on the message boards which aren't relevant to us and are annoying.*
- *Wish it showed more events happening at the Cornwall campus as well as shows the Cornwall campus students timetables.*
- *Mores space on the forum for attached files etc; now only 500KB is possible.*
- *It would be nice if students could add their photo at their profile; now only tutors and staff can do that*

Technical

- *Make it more reliable! I think that ELE is very efficient but there have been some break downs during the exam period which is quite stressful. I found it frustrating at the amount of times I was unable to access ELE; although saying that it was a general problem with MyExeter website access. **(x22)***

- *Improve layout/appearance. I find the layout of the discussion threads confusing. Not always easy to navigate, find pages that you don't regularly visit. Quicker links to certain resources, such as between different module pages. Having to go back to the home page before you can log out! (x11)*
- *Improve loading times.(x4)*
- *Website works poorly on non-windows systems and many students do not have a choice about their operating system so can't change to suit ELE. It's not hugely compatible with Google Chrome/Firefox. Won't [work] properly in Internet Explorer, so need to use Google chrome. (x3)*
- *Also having ELE and MyExeter mobile sites would be really useful as loads of students now have Smartphone58 and want to check course info on the go. Better access from SmartPhone / iPad (x3)*
- *Reliability of recorded lecture needs to be improved.*

M Newcombe 14/09/2011