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Accessibility

The extent to which a course is designed to allow disabled students to take part in all the activities available to their non-disabled peers and achieve all the learning outcomes. This includes technical aspects such as conforming to accessibility standards, the provision of alternative formats, and processes for making reasonable adjustments to accommodate individual needs.

Adaptive teaching

The use of the computer to analyse a student's current performance and offer alternative content or a different sequence of activities to optimise the student's learning.

Availability

The percentage of time in which a computer system is available for use and not unavailable due to failure or scheduled maintenance.

Badges

Badges can be used to recognise skills or competencies, and are suited to non-formal learning. Digital badges have a software infrastructure that supports the awarding, collecting and display of badges, and verification of both the holder and issuer.

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Big data

A term to describe approaches to gathering and analysing large volumes of rapidly changing data from a wide variety of sources.

Blended learning

A mix of e-learning with traditional teaching and learning practices. Typically there is a combination of face-to-face interaction with online learning.

Cloud computing

The provision of computer services running on distributed servers provided by a third party, in contrast to computers provided by an institution. Cloud computing makes use of computing resources (hardware and software) delivered as a service over the Internet. It entrusts remote services with a user's data, software or computation.

Collusion

A form of **plagiarism** where there is inappropriate collaboration between students or the knowing exchange of answers.

Course

A well-defined module of study, typically of a term or semester in duration. In this manual, a course is understood to be synonymous with a **module** and not with a qualification.

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Curriculum

A broad term covering both academic and subject requirements and the processes for organising and managing the teaching and learning.

Distance learning

A mode of study that allows the learner to study most or all of a course without attendance at a campus-based institution.

E-learning

Learning facilitated through the use of information and communication technologies. There are several facets to e-learning including hardware (computers, mobile phones, digital cameras, etc.), digital resources (the Web, materials presented via Virtual Learning Environments, online libraries, etc.), software (tutorials, office packages, etc.), and online communication tools (email, chat, forums etc.).

Evaluation

A systematic appraisal of the effectiveness of a teaching or learning element or activity, carried out for the benefit of the teacher and institution. It should be contrasted with **assessment** activities which are carried out to gauge the progress of an individual student's learning.

Feedback

Advice and commentary given by a teacher on examinations, coursework, or classroom activity. This

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can be oral or written and helps learners to understand their progress.

Flaming

In online communication (e.g. discussion forums), exchanges of increasingly angry and offensive messages, often caused by a breach of netiquette.

Flexibility

Provision of study such that students can choose their own time, pace and place of learning. It also describes how programmes of study may allow students to choose courses or topics of particular interest to them.

Flipped learning

In flipped learning, students acquire most of their content knowledge by independent online study rather than in face-to-face lectures. Teacher-student contact time is instead used for discussion and problem-solving.

Formal learning

Formal learning is delivered by trained teachers in an institutional setting and is typically assessed for credit. This contrasts with non-formal and informal learning.

Formative assessment

Assessment aimed primarily at determining the strengths and weaknesses of a student's work, with the objective of improvement. Formative assessment demands feedback to the student in some form and

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may, but will not always, contribute to summative assessment.

Independent learning material

Material designed for learners to study with minimal or no support from a teacher. Also known as self-study materials.

Informal learning

Informal learning takes place outside of formal settings and often takes place in the context of some other experience than an intentional learning activity.

Interactivity

Methods of teaching and learning that include techniques in which learners communicate with each other and with the tutor. Interaction may be synchronous (e.g. telephone) or asynchronous (e.g. e-mail). It is also used to refer to the way in which learning materials themselves are designed to require the active participation of learners.

Key skills

Those essential skills which people need in order to be effective members of a modern society and a flexible, adaptable and competitive workforce. Examples of key skills are communication, collaboration and group working, literacy, numeracy, use of information technology and knowing how to learn.

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Learning analytics

The measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of student activity, particularly tracking their use of web pages, in order to visualise and analyse learning interactions. This can be for a number of purposes: the institution can gain insight into the effectiveness of courses, teachers can detect problematic areas of a course, teachers can monitor their students' learning, and individual learners can visualise their achievements and behaviour in relation to others.

Learning design

The process of planning, structuring and sequencing learning activities.

Learning management system

A system that focuses on the administration, tracking and recording of learning or training. In higher education contexts, these functions are often subsumed into a **VLE**.

Learning outcomes

Statements indicating what a learner should have achieved in respect of both knowledge and skills at the end of a given course or programme.

Learning platform

A system that focuses on the delivery of the content and tools needed for learning; often used as a synonym for **VLE**.

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Lifelong learning

A term that emphasises that need for continuous formal and non-formal learning throughout life to improve knowledge and skills in a changing world.

Mentor

A person who acts as an adviser to a learner. The activity is called mentoring. The term is especially used in work-place learning environments to cover professional advice. It is also used for advisors in online forums (see **Moderating**), typically those who are past students rather than full academic staff.

Mobile learning

E-learning through mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets. More specifically, mobile learning activities can be designed to make use of a student's immediate context and surroundings, for example offering information about an artist while visiting an art gallery.

Moderating

Facilitating discussions in forums and other online systems, including ensuring acceptable behaviour. Moderators have privileges that allow them to edit or delete messages that contravene a code of conduct. They may also have a role in guiding and shaping discussion, helping students to engage in useful and appropriate interactions.

Module

A separate and coherent block of learning, usually over a term or semester. Part of a modular programme of

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studies where the programme is divided into a range of similar sized segments.

MOOC (Massive Open Online Course)

MOOCs are online courses designed for large numbers of participants which have no entry qualifications and are offered for free. They are distinguished from OER by offering a full course experience, and content that is often not free to reuse.

Netiquette

The informal rules of good behaviour online that would not be covered by a formal code of conduct. Text-only media lack clues such as expression or tone of voice used in face-to-face conversation, so greater effort should be made to keep online conversations positive and constructive.

Non-formal learning

Non-formal learning typically occurs in a structured setting as a deliberate activity, but is not associated with formal assessment and credit.

Online

A term describing activity that requires a connection to the Internet.

Open Educational Resources

Materials offered freely for use by teachers and learners. 'Freely' in this context means without charge and with few or no restrictions on the way material can be adapted and reused.

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Pedagogy

The theory and process of teaching.

Peer assessment / review

Assessment or review of students' work carried out by other students.

Personalised learning

Tailoring the curriculum and pedagogy to meet the learning needs of an individual learner; typically this implies a negotiation between teacher and learner.

Plagiarism

Using the ideas or writings of another as if they were one's own, (i.e. without acknowledging the original author).

Programme

A sequenced set of courses or modules representing a student's total study requirement and usually leading to an award on successful completion.

Reliability

(of a computer system) The ability of a system to continue to perform correctly, both in routine and unusual circumstances.

(of assessment) The consistency and repeatability of assessment.

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Semantic web

A set of technologies and metadata standards intended to allow machines to 'understand' the meaning of information in web pages.

Social media / Social networking site

Web sites and apps (such as Facebook) devoted to supporting and representing links between individuals based on real-life connections or shared activities and interests. Social media may be used to support online communities.

Stakeholder

A broad term to include students, teachers, educational managers, employers, etc., any of whom will have a legitimate interest in aspects of the learning provision.

Study centre

Local facilities away from the main campus of an institution providing some facilities for study, such as meeting rooms for tutorials, collections of reference material, and computer access to the internet.

Summative assessment

Assessment (often taking place at the end of a course or programme) leading to the attribution of a grade or a mark to the student. The results of summative assessment determine whether a student progresses to the next stage of the programme or, on completion, gains an award.

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Tutor

A teacher who provides instruction, academic advice or counsel to one or more students. The tutor role focuses on the presentation of a course to students and may be distinguished from the role of the academics who design and create an e-learning course.

Transferable skills

Skills such as communication, problem-solving and teamwork that can be applied in different academic and work contexts.

Usability

The degree to which a computer system can be used effectively, efficiently and with satisfaction by its users.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

A set of computerised systems or tools which allow controlled access by students to online course materials and the facilities needed to support learning. Typically, a VLE is accessed via the web and will contain tools for course/programme registration; content management, including access to external resources; student-student and student-tutor discussion; tracking student activity; secure submission of assignments; assessment; access to course/programme information; access to student support systems; etc.

Virtual mobility

The use of information and communications technology as an alternative to physical mobility to allow students to study programmes from other

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institutions as part of an award of their home institution.

Vocational courses

Courses of study related to professional practice and labour market needs.