

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Demonstration

Blog by Sam Jordison

Before we start, here's a link to the [Dynamic Learning Maps](#) website

Simon Cotterill will be leading this lunchtime session.

Delegates in the room are already billing this as the session where you can "come and see the future". Sounds intriguing...

This project provides online curriculum maps. It will be running to the end of march and is piloting in medicine, but should be able to be used in lots of other contexts.

The concept:

A core component is the Curriculum Map. (Especially important for the complex curriculums in medicine.)

Personalised Learning is also important. It's not just one-way map. Students can add reflective notes and links to external resources and co.

It all ties in to the interactive web 2.0 approach.

Maps as a metaphor:

Where have I been? - it should be able to help with revision.

Where am I now? - promotes contextualisation and connections between modules

Where am I going? Helps understanding of complicated curricula, curriculum choices and co.

Stakeholders include:

Teachers

Learners

Curriculum Managers

Admins

External regulators

It helps people find where their speciality is covered in the curriculum...

Oh! We're now looking at what Simon has described as "a horrifying technical diagram". It basically shows all the resources that Learning Maps can draw on to get its resources, such as library databases and similar. There are lots of them - and lots of arrows. It also shows where Learning Maps can add to - such as learning resources and Life Long Learning records...

Clearly it has plenty of uses!

Simon also points out that the project has the potential to aid in monitoring and identifying gaps in teaching.

Well that all sounds useful. We're going onto the demonstration now.

We're told that the views that students get vary on a programme by programme basis.

The programme is bringing up a series of flow charts with links within them - leading to more charts! - and resources. Cleverly, as you click on a section within the chart it expands out and brings up more content...

(There are a few screenshots of the resource [on the project website](#) so you can see what I mean, although sadly, at the moment you need a Newcastle University login to really test it out.)

There's also the potential to display external resources inline.

We're now looking at the facility to add reflexive comments, which seems nice and straight forward.

We've just had question checking that everyone has private individual access and data, which Simon confirms.

The model is based on a connected note approach - almost like a neural network, says Simon. The more connections that are made the stronger the links get. Which gives us powerful information for filtering the most relevant data.

Now we're doing a search - on 'kidney' - a lot of records have come up and Simon is filtering it now based on where it's taught within the curriculum.

It's not just as simple match of the word, says Simon, because it's building on the connections. So it also brings in modules relating to - say - 'renal' and similar too.

Simon has now taken us back to the top level of the map, where there are links to careers and similar. Oh and we're looking at some painful looking medical images... of teeth and a wide open mouth... ouch!

So that proves there are lots of useful pictorial resources on the site too.

Simon is now telling us about the evaluation they've done on the resource. The main piloting will start in September, but there have been focus groups already. Psychology students were very interested in module choices. Speech therapy students were interested in the way the resource could iron out duplication of teaching. Users also stressed the importance of being able to choose between text based tree lists and visual mind maps.

Some medicine students were worried that it looks complicated but some thought it "was the best thing since sliced bread".

The majority of medical students surveyed so far suggested that it would help them understand the MBBS curriculum.

Most thought it was easy enough to use too and would benefit their learning. Plus it would be useful for reviewing and reflecting after a session and for wider revision.

So, all the current indications are good...

A delegate has asked how students access the system.

Through Blackboard, the VLE or independently, says Simon.

"It's looking really fabulous!" says a delegate. That's a nice note to end the session on. Let's hope the pilots go well...