

E-Learning and the Creative Arts

Some might see a dissonance between the creative, holistic and social ethos of fine art education and the use of e-learning technologies. The design of the Blackboard system seems to support a simplistic view of student learning based around text resources, discussion forums and multiple-choice tests - which raises the question "how can this be of any use in a creative practice-based discipline?"

The answer lies in your imagination and your ability to subvert the technology; you will often need to work 'against the grain' to achieve your educational aims. These aims, and the motivation behind them will depend on your particular situation - but here are some suggestions:

- to improve the support you provide to students who may study part-time or live some distance from Leicester. You can use Blackboard to post resources and information that they can access when and where they wish (provided they can access the Internet)
 - to create a set of 'frequently asked questions' that enables students to help themselves and avoid plaguing you with the same old queries again and again...
 - to provide a mechanism that they can use to share images of their 'work in progress', write about their meaning, influences and methods - and comment on each others work.
 - to enable simultaneous access to all kinds of resources, such as journal articles, historical reference sources, digital galleries and artist's websites.
 - exposing your students to the swirl of new ideas, methods and forms that other artists are using the Internet to share and communicate about.
 - to facilitate collaborative artworks in which digital images of real artworks are shared, processed and blended - and then compared and discussed.
 - to enable working artists (with Internet access from anywhere in the world) to engage with your students using a discussion forum.
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