Flexible Learning

2012

SMS Code	LT702001		
Level	7	*Credits*	10
Total Learning Hours	100	*Contact Hours*	40
Work Experience Hours	nil	*Self Directed Hours*	60

Introduction

In this course you are offered a mix of online and face-to-face learning methods. Attendance at the class sessions is optional; however, the class activities and assessment rely on interaction with your peers. This will occur via class blogs, web conferencing, a discussion forum and face to face workshops. There will be a mix of activities and self-directed work. Overall you can expect to spend on average 5-6 hours to week studying in this subject over one semester.

Note: The dates on the timetable are a guide, and although there is one activity per topic they do not have to be done in the scheduled week. You can combine activities, and do not have to work on one activity each week; it depends on how you organise your study.

Online material is located on WikiEducator, an open access wiki platform (Course wiki). A Course Blog will be used for weekly announcements, weekly summaries, and to link you to individuals' blogs.

Links: The links to materials on the Course wiki, the Course Blog and web conferencing will be sent on email.

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Aim

To enhance the understanding of flexible teaching and learning principles and processes, and their application to the design of flexible learning practices.

Learning Outcomes

At the successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss principles and processes of flexible teaching and learning to facilitate culture sensitive adult learning;
- Critique the design and application of existing flexible teaching and learning options in relation to the literature;
- Analyse and evaluate challenges that arise in the design of flexible learning environments;
- Explore and justify the strategies for the development of flexible learning environments;

- Create and evaluate a plan for the implementation of a flexible learning experience.

Assessment

There is *one* assessment in two parts.

1. Development of a Flexible Learning plan.

2. Presentation of the final Flexible Learning plan.

You must successfully complete *both* parts of the assessment to be awarded a *pass* in the course. Marks are not allocated for the assessment, only a pass or not passed. One re-submission is possible if a pass is not obtained the first time.

Please note: you must request an extension before the due date.

Assessment Instructions and Marking Criteria

The assessment and marking criteria are described below.

1. Development of a Flexible Learning plan.
Your ideas for the Flexible Learning plan are developed using an individual blog. You will be guided to do this through a series of activities to help you build your plan. Instructions for the activities are located in brief on the timetable, and in detail on the course wiki. Your blog will provide a record of your learning, and become the main vehicle for interacting with other members of the class. The first two activities are outlined here to start you off. Reminders about the activities will be posted on the Course blog as the course progresses.

Note: All the work you do for the activities must be posted on your blog.

Activity one: Set up a blog* and introduce yourself and your work.
- Tell the class something about you as a person, where you work and your goals for this course.
- Describe the reasons you are using, or need to introduce a *Flexible Learning*[1] approach in your workplace.
- Post to your blog.

  * Suggestion: for the blog– use blogger.com, or wordpress.com – detailed instructions are on the course wiki.

Activity two: Define FL in your context, and discuss reasons for using flexible approaches.

- Find yourself a buddy in the class, and discuss the following questions:
- What does the term Flexible Learning mean to you?
- Why is it necessary to use a more flexible approach in your work?
- What do you need to explore to help this happen?
- What goals do you have for using Flexible Learning in your work?
- Post responses to your blog.

2. Presentation of the Flexible Learning plan

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[1] You will be guided to develop a definition and philosophy for Flexible Learning in the course.

- Choose how you present the final plan.
  - It can be online – synchronous (using web conferencing), or asynchronous (slide show, blog etc.) - or face-to-face at the mini-conference at the end of the course.
  - For example, you may choose to use a digital slide show, video, audio, written piece, blog, wiki, verbal description in person, poster etc., to present your plan.
  - Providing your final plan in an open format will enable others to learn from your work. ☺
- Indicate how feedback from others has influenced your plan.

Marking criteria

Achievement of the following criteria will result in a successful pass for this assessment:

- Progression of ideas and understanding about concepts of Flexible Learning while developing the plan is evident.
- Definition and philosophy of Flexible Learning as part of adult learning theory is expressed.
- Ideas and concepts are discussed and underpinned by theoretical evidence, correctly cited.
- Provides meaningful feedback to other participants about their plans.
- The final plan is presented to the class and includes the following areas (from the template):
  - Introduction, aim, background – reasons more flexibility is needed, examples which have inspired the plan and the fit within the organisation.
  - Strategies to introduce flexibility are explained in detail with rationale.
  - Concepts of Flexible Learning are covered - Access and Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity, Sustainability, Open Education, Cultural Sensitivity.
  - Concluding remarks and what needs to be done to action the Flexible Learning Plan.
  - References in APA format - preferred.

Final date for submission of assessments:
2 July 2012

Flexible Learning Plan Template and Guidelines

Introduction

Provide an overview of what will be covered in the presentation. Define Flexible Learning in your context.

Aim

State what you intend to achieve with the plan, in one or two sentences. List the objectives for the plan.

Background

Describe the learning environment you work in. Outline the reasons flexibility is necessary, and the factors which have stimulated change.

Access and Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity

Provide a definition for each concept and the relevance in your professional context. Explain how you will ensure all your learners can access the learning environment you have created.

Open Education and Sustainability

Provide a definition for each concept and the relevance in your professional context. Outline the strategies you intend to use to ensure these concepts are addressed.

Overview of Strategies, organisational policies & strategies

Summarise the approach and strategies you will use to ensure flexibility in the learning environment, including the importance for your organisation, particularly in relation to organisational policies and strategies for learning and teaching.

Adult educational theory or approach

Outline the adult educational theory or approach (e.g.,self-directed learning, critical thinking, reflective practice, evidence-based, work-based etc.) on which you have based your plan.

Technologies for learning

Describe the learning activity you have designed using a 'trend' technology and how it contributes to the flexible learning environment.

Cultural Sensitivity & Indigenous Learners

Provide a definition for this concept and the relevance in your professional context. Outline aspects of the Maori Strategic Framework which underpin your approach.

Conclusion: *Round off the presentation with a concluding remark and a "where to from here" statement.*

References: *This is a list of readings and websites you have used to create your plan. Please use an APA referencing format.*