

## The brave new world of teaching and learning with iPads in HE

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### Purpose

Since its launch in 2010, the iPad has aroused the interest of educators who can see the potential of this mobile device to enhance teaching and learning. Some (Geist, 2011) have gone as far as describing it as a game changer in the context of Higher Education.

This paper presents a pilot project on the use of iPads with Business and Management undergraduate students at Bath Spa University in the UK. The trial took place during the academic year 2013-14 and involved the use of tablets in face-to-face seminar sessions in the first year module *Organisations and the Business Environment*.

The overall aim of the project was to explore how iPads could be used in seminar sessions to enhance the student learning experience.

The four main areas of focus for the trial were aligned with module outcomes:

1. Extend student knowledge and understanding of Business and Management
2. Improve presentation skills
3. Support collaboration and make group work more effective
4. Enhance the digital literacy of students

### **Design / methodology / approach**

Teaching and learning activities using the iPads were built into seminar sessions following the principles of Constructive Alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011), a student-centred approach where the tutor designs activities with the purpose of enabling students to meet the learning outcomes of the course.

The pilot lasted for 24 weeks and each seminar session was 3 hours long.

The trial was evaluated through:

- A student survey containing both quantitative and qualitative questions aimed at collecting students' perceived value of the iPads as a tool for learning. This was administered using Google Forms on the iPads in one of the final teaching sessions of the program.
- Feedback gathered on a weekly basis from direct observations by the tutors, and data extracted from a tutor questionnaire at the end of the trial.

### **Findings**

Students reported:

- the iPads improved their ability to make presentations
- the tablets made group work more effective
- their confidence in using iPads increased and they perceived an increase in their digital literacy

Tutors observed:

- the devices helped students stay on task (rather than get distracted from it)
- increased student engagement
- enhanced student centred learning

Additional findings:

- Greater understanding of the barriers (technical, administrative, etc. that can be encountered around the deployment of the devices)

### **Research limitations / implications**

The size and scope of the trial limit the generalisability of the findings. However, these can still be of use to educators wanting to undertake similar projects in the future.

A more diverse method of data collection will be implemented to enhance the study on its next phase. This will include focus groups and interviews to gather further qualitative data from students and tutors

### **Originality / Value**

There has been a limited amount written in the academic literature on how to make use of iPads in a practical way within the Higher Education classroom. The majority of what has been published is in an embryonic stage, and tends to be limited in scope, or not directly relevant to the Business and Management Higher Education classroom. This project responds to this gap and will be of use to those practitioners wishing to embark on similar projects.

### **References**

- Biggs, J. & Tang, C. (2011). Teaching for quality learning at university. (4th ed.). Maidenhead: McGraw Hill/Open University Press.
- Geist, E. (2011). The game changer: Using iPads in college teacher education classes. College Student Journal, 45(4), 758-768.