Enquiry-Based Learning for Constructed Textiles in the School of Materials

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Enquiry-Based Learning for Constructed Textiles

Aims were:

• to develop an EBL environment for constructed textile design through a blended learning approach;

• to convert weave design lectures into EBL;

• to use WebCT to clarify curriculum objectives and study techniques.
Weaving for Designers:

- traditionally taught through lectures, laboratory classes, written exams;

- on the whole design students found the unit hard - there was difficulty in visualising 3D structures and understanding the processes;

- subsequent examinations and practical weave design projects showed students did not fully understand many of the topics covered.
What we did:

1. identified problem areas in syllabus;
2. designed and trialled one EBL task;
3. evaluated the task through observations and reflective questionnaires;
4. developed further EBL units;
5. implemented these into the syllabus.
First trial of a weave EBL task

• Unit drafting was identified as an area students found difficulty understanding fully.

• A task was developed for teams to design, plan, draft and weave a table mat for IKEA.

• This was trialled in consolidation week with lunch provided as an incentive ☺️.
There was lots of thinking and scratching of heads!
Looms had to be set up appropriately after deciding what to do
The table mats were woven
Finished designs
Observations and feedback from students

• Team-working skills were strong but teams were too big
  – group size could be made smaller;

• One day task was too long - two hours of teaching support/planning + up to 6 hours of practical work was required
  – task could be broken down into chunks and the actual size of woven piece reduced;

• There was a lack of planning - 8 out of 14 students commented that they would plan more if they did the task again
  – planning must be stressed and timetabled.
EBL tasks embedded into Weaving for Designers for 2006-7

• Three EBL tasks were developed to cover:
  – unit drafting;
  – extra weft design effects;
  – double cloths.

• A schedule was developed to allow for support tutorials, planning and practical sessions.
  – For each task there was a related one hour tutorial first (without giving too much away!!) then the task was set. Students had one week to prepare (2 hours) and the next week they had four hours to undertake the task.
Evaluation

• Students were asked to complete a questionnaire for feedback.
  
  – While students found the tasks challenging they felt they got a lot out of the tasks and understood the topics.
  
  – This was reinforced by the reports they submitted and in subsequent practical projects by the fabrics they produced.
Where we are now

• EBL tasks have been embedded into the Weaving for Designers module.

• 1\textsuperscript{st} year weave design lectures have been changed into a workbook of practical exercises backed up by tutorials. This has been running now for the last two years.

• 1\textsuperscript{st} year textile laboratory classes have been transferred into EBL tasks. These ran for the first time in the 2007/2008 academic year.
  - Feedback to date has been favourable.
Where we are going

• Currently there is a WebCT unit containing:
  • Subject specific info;
  • EBL info;
  • A mailing facility;
  • Self test.

• This is now being transferred into Blackboard for next Academic Year.

• In addition we are going to transfer Printing for Designers into an EBL unit for 08/09 and hope to do the same for a unit Yarn Production for Designers in 09/10.
• Thanks for listening

Any questions? ☺