

**eLearning**  
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EU Conference  
Delivering on the Lisbon Agenda

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**Make IT delightful!**

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Founder and director of Core UK, a not-for-profit team devoted to innovation in learning and technology, across all phases and sectors in education. Reader in Distributed Learning in the Institute for Educational Cybernetics, University of Bolton. Current research, consultancy and development contracts are with the UK Improvement & Development Agency, UNESCO, the UK Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and BECTa. Core UK is associated with Core NZ, based in Christchurch New Zealand. Richard is also creating the Digital Teacher Foundation and establishing the National Archive of Educational Computing. Richard co-developed the structure and ethos of Ultralab - one of the most successful innovation centres in learning and technology throughout the world, managing the research and development of Ultralab to build successful large-scale action research projects. He supported the intellectual, creative, ethical and conceptual thinking at Ultralab and supervised PhD students in the field of educational computing. For ten years before joining Ultralab in 1990, Richard led software development in the Computers in the Curriculum Project after beginning his career as a school teacher.

This talk is based on thirty years of action-research in learning and technology, culminating in the last three years delivering a successful degree programme (Ultraversity) founded on negotiated Action-inquiry in the workplace, online community and innovation in assessment aimed at widening participation in UK higher education.





## Characterising tutors & trainers as digital immigrants is insulting and incorrect

1. We have 'plastic' brains
2. Young people have more time to play
3. If older people played as much as young people, they would find ICTs simple
4. Wisdom, problem-solving and 'soft' skills are more important

1 Our brains are capable of adaptation and change in far-reaching ways. After serious brain injury, people who have lost complete faculties have re-developed them using other areas of the cerebral cortex.

2 Young people have hours to explore, take risks and use trial and error to discover how technologies work. Persistence, patience and optimism are more important than any other characteristic.

3 Older people have full time work, overtime, family and community commitments which leave little time for play, time which is precious and often used for the most rewarding leisure activity - not trial and error with poorly designed technology.

4 For deep learning, the wisdom, problem-solving knowledge and soft-skills that older people have are more important. Teachers meta-knowledge of content, inquiry, critical thinking, reflection, learning processes, common misconceptions, communication, assessment, moral support and team work are their key skills and bring huge value to learners.

Two studies reported at ALT-2006 showed:

- that teenage game-players had no clear advantage at higher education level;
- that middle-aged female health practitioners, although showing a lack of experience with ICT, made up the gap within six months of engagement in training online.



## Learning should be serious fun - and so must teaching

1. Fun = playfulness, humour, self-regulation and creativity
2. Fun drives motivation
3. Fulfillment is both substance and affect
4. We are entitled to fulfilled and happy experiences!
5. For tutors & teachers, it is not just the performance of teaching, it is also preparation and summative assessment which should be fun

- 1 Fun sounds like a trivial and ephemeral phenomenon, but its key characteristics lend serious strength to learning. Playfulness allows mistakes, encourages risk-taking, rewards taking part and is inherently fulfilling, Humour encourages heightened senses and engagement, increasing concentration and focus. Self-regulation is the norm in fun activities - your involvement in decisions is critical to enjoyment, even if the decision is to sit back and listen or watch. Most games put heavy responsibility in the hands of players and part of the fun is coming to terms with losing and winning. Creativity - making your work, inventing your characters, defining your own problems and exploring out-of-the-box ideas are undoubtedly central in fun activities.
- 2 Fun makes motivation easy, and our hunger for further fun is not easily fulfilled thus sustaining motivation for long periods.
- 3 Fulfillment brought about by activities is achieved through the completion of substantial undertakings - finishing an essay, re-planting the garden, playing in a concert - but if there is no fun, then such fulfillment is not as complete it could be.
- 4 Is this a human right? Does it also lead to effective learning? I think so.
- 5 A lot of concentration is put on the act of teaching either face-to-face or online, but these are not the only areas of work for the tutor or trainer. Preparation of materials and design of learning environments can be creative and fulfilling, but assessment is often seen as a drudge. Assessors are invited to be objective robots, denying human relationship and seeking reliability. Collaborative working and holistic judgment have lots to offer here to improve the experience. Exhibition also offers a more delightful experience for learners and assessors, as the arts have known for some time...



**Appreciation - a delight that springs from the love of aesthetic form**

"The emotions of a fulfilled imaginal sensibility are of a range and subtlety that outstrip the power of language to symbolize them. Hence they are conveyed by the non-discursive symbolism of drawing, painting, sculpture, music and dance."

**Interest - a delight that springs from the love of knowledge**

"When the need to understand is realized, we experience interest, extending into curiosity and fascination, the passion for truth, excitement in intellectual discovery, pleasure in the clear communication of ideas."

**Zest - a delight that springs from the love of action**

"the emotions involved in the fulfilment of free choice and effective action" including "relish, gusto, exhilaration, achievement and work satisfaction"

Heron, J, **Feeling and Personhood: Psychology in another key**. London and Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992.





## Learning is individual, but also interpersonal, communal and societal

1. iMac, MySpace and YouTube - note the individual pronouns
2. Email, instant messenger, phone & SMS are mostly interpersonal
3. Web sites, Facebook, blogs seek the societal
4. Where is the *intentional* communal context, where purpose, trust & membership are well understood and nurtured through facilitation?

1 Individual learning discourse is the cult of me. Reflective thought underlies this kind of learning. Using my desktop, unconnected. Creating my webspace and publishing the movie I like and sometimes I made. Reflecting on one's own self-expression can be a powerful force for learning - sometimes imagining the audience response, anticipating critique and re-expressing in a cycle of improvement well known to authors.

2 Interpersonal learning discourse is intentionally seeking another's approval, opinion or response. Safer than societal, but riskier than individual, best learning occurs when the other is a friend or colleague where a relationship of trust (and forgiveness) is already established. The critical friend, mentor, advocate, parent and teacher can all act in this role.

3 Societal learning discourse is the intentional seeking of a public response. Mechanisms for response from strangers are sought to test hypotheses, creativity and opinion. More courage, resilience and confidence for this kind of risk taking, but the value can be great as a diverse audience offers a range of response.

4 Communal learning discourse arises when ideas are shared amongst a group who are bound by purpose, respect and trust. The purpose offers solid context for learning. Respect and trust allow critical dialogue which challenges and supports in the same message. The ethos is one of commitment to each other to enhance each other's learning in a semi-public context. Facilitation is a key concept and careful management of membership and rules to support trust essential. Knowledge can then be shared and mutual benefit obtained.

These communal discourses suffer from being private and thus make much less noise in the eLearning world than they should.





**eLearning** **lisboa.07** **Strong Community → Deep Learning**

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**community**

- a. Me & my school - discussing an individual or individual school
- b. We & us - discussing schools or participants collectively
- c. Disclosure, venting, humour & passion
- d. Agreement with, or reference to, other participants or contributions
- e. Discussion & dialogue, mentoring
- f. Ownership - lobbying or proposing action

**learning**

- h. Offering info, ideas, resources and inviting critique - as an initiation
- i. Asking challenging questions.
- j. Articulating, explaining & supporting positions on issues
- k. Reflecting on previous contributions
- l. Exploring & supporting issues by explanations & examples. Also critiquing, challenging, discussing & expanding others ideas. (Feedback)
- m. New insight, conceptual change, re-evaluation
- n. Impact - proposing action, summarising.

**strength** **depth**

Evidence from Talking Heads (UK headteachers online community of practice) and Virtual Heads (UK trainee headteachers)

Chapman, Ramondt & Smiley, 2004

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The power of the communal approach is hypothesised to achieve depth in learning, a phenomenon noted by Leonie Ramondt and Carole Chapman when analysing the nature of the Talking Heads community in 2005. Stronger community, as measured by increasingly ‘communal’ statements, was clearly linked to increasingly deep learning statements.



## The training of trainers & tutors should be delightful!

1. Inter-disciplinary & collaborative
2. Inquiry-based & focused on improvement in practice
3. Patchwork Media for assessment
4. Technology as an important topic
5. Community for shared purpose & support

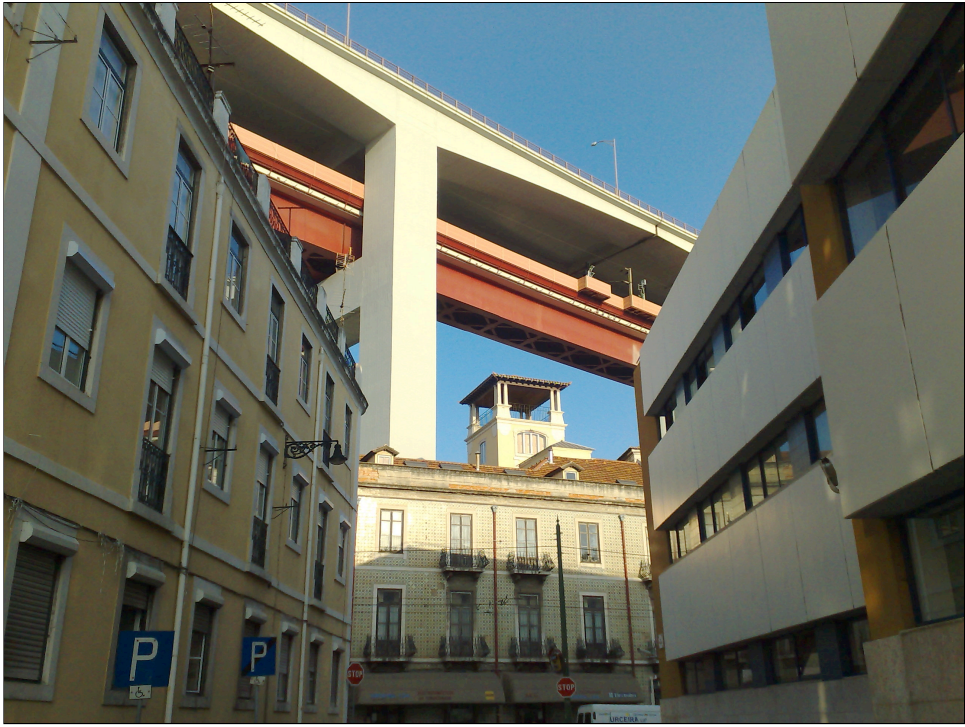
1 Synthesising a range of disciplinary ideas has been a hallmark of educational development and collaboration between trainers & tutors with different perspectives can make learning more delightful.

2 An action-research, self directed methodology applied to learning increases the pleasure in learning as direct correlations are made between knowledge and practice. Standards are maintained by obliging learners to negotiate their action for improvement with tutors against published generic criteria and with practice against work-colleague's professional expertise.

3 Inviting learners to regularly produce pieces of assessment in a genre and media which fulfils their creative potential, matched by a 'stitching process' in which they tell the story of their learning journey making a claim to meeting learning criteria.

4 Directly addressing technology concepts at an appropriate level is essential in a Web 2.0 world and makes proper sense of the term 'personalise'. ICT is the highest form of tool known to human civilisation, which has been symbiotic with tools in its evolution since the stone age.

5 Online community can fit people's lives, providing a convivial context for learning which is both pleasurable and challenging.



## In summary:

1. Characterising tutors & trainers as digital immigrants is insulting and incorrect
2. Learning should be serious fun - and so must teaching
3. Learning is individual, but also interpersonal, communal & societal
4. The training of trainers & tutors should be **delightful!**





