6MM006 Individual Project
Engaging VLE Design

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10132 - Produced by a student with dyslexia.   Please refer to the Dyslexia Assessment Policy when marking this work

Contents

Abstract

This project investigates how the aspects of engagement can be included in the design of online courses to provide online learning for a church. It focuses on how learning design takes the development of online courses beyond simply the display of content to consider the flow of activities and underlying pedagogies within the online learning environment.

The literature review covers areas of Learning Design, Learner Engagement and Online Learning and the church. The research suggests that online learning is appropriate and conducive to Christian learning and that it is not just possible to design for engaging online learning but it ideally should be considered during the design process. A Learning Design approach offers several advantages to designing online courses. It allows the designer to model the flow of activities throughout a course for planning purposes but is also an industry standard ISO that can be used to share good practice and transport designs between systems.

The points highlighted by the Literature Review are then combined with the requirements of the course set out by the church team and are analysed in terms of their contribution to the design. A Design Verification Document is produced to both inform and validate engaging aspects of the final design. This was achieved by drawing together similar requirements and summarising how we can identify that such requirements have been met.

The Design Verification Document successfully outlines how engagement could be included at the design stage. However, the final course design produced does not meet the requirements outlined in the Design Varification Document. Over concentration on Learning Design without spending adequate time on Instructional design to develop the content has led to a skeleton framework of a course which is lacking the content.

Introduction

Virtual Learning Environments (VLE) are used extensively in both education and corporate settings. They can be used alone to deliver specific training, or blended with offline teaching to provide additional learning through extension activities, homework, feedback, tests, discussion and much more. But with social networks and other sites vying to compete for our attention when we are online, how do we make sure that ours is visited and used as it is supposed to be? How do we get people to engage with our site? Is simply

displaying information and hoping for people to use it enough?   This report will investigate what makes a course engaging and how these elements can be considered at the design phase.

The church in this study currently has a website on which they display information on events, rotas and links to audio recordings of the service.   The church also operate two emailing lists, one dedicated to prayer requests, the other detailing events, news and pastoral issues.

The Rector is keen to reach out to the local community in new ways and also develop the spiritual understanding of the current congregation.   In an initial correspondence he referred to this website http://www.foundations21.net/ as an example of how he would like the church to be reaching out.   There are currently two services on a Sunday one in the morning and one in the evening.   Most of the morning service's congregation attend house groups regularly, these house-groups meet fortnightly to discuss the sermons and provide a platform for discussion and deeper learning in a social setting.   It is noted by the Wardens that the evening service has less house-group membership.   Although they are keen to raise this membership they are also exploring the possibility that an alternative to house-group may be beneficial to provide the deeper learning and social interaction.

The church year is split in to several sermon series each focusing on a different theme. This initial pilot will focus on one sermon series.   The overarching aims of the VLE are to provide a space for deep and spiritual learning, with a focus on social learning.

The design of the church VLE will be used as a platform to investigate whether it is possible to take in to account the application of engaging activities at this stage of development.

Academic Question

Can learner engagement be incorporated in to the analysis and design of an engaging online learning course to support the blended learning of a sermon series within a church?

Aims and Objectives

Aim 1:   Review the literature of what makes a learning course 'engaging' for learners.

Objectives

- Research how do others define 'learner engagement'.
- What other aspects are considered favourable to creating a successful Online Course?

Aim 2:   Analyse the user requirements of the church and reflect on how these are suited,

or can be adapted to include engaging principles as outlined in the literature review.

Objectives

- Create a list of questions or areas of discussion to be used within the requirements collection.
- Carryout interviews with major stakeholders.
- Carry out some secondary research on current Church VLE's.
- Create a Design Verification Document summarising both the user requirements and requirements of an engaging course.

Aim 3: Create a learning design that achieves the requirements set out in my analysis.

Objectives

- Model Learning design in Compendium LD
- Use Design Verification Document to test the Design

The Artefact

A Design Verification Document which will both define aspects required for engagement and be used to conclude whether aspects concerning engagement have been met by the design.

I wish to design an online course using learning design techniques, based on the user requirements and the literature concerning what an engaging course should consist of.   I have read around the subject of learning design and mapping pedagogies to learning designs, from my reading I surmise that effective online learning should encompass a range of pedagogies that go beyond the simple display of content, this should be present in the design process.

Research Method

The research will be carried out on three levels.   Firstly a literature review will be carried out to inform of the current thinking behind learning through VLE's and issues of engagement.   The literature review will be broken down in to sections, learning design, learner engagement in online courses and online learning and the church.   The latter of these three topics will summarise the second level of research; a brief search of the internet for what Christian learning sites or Church sites are currently available.

These two levels of research will form the foundation of the project and inform the third level, which is a range of interviews to gain the opinion of the church leadership team.

There are two broad paradigms, or approaches, that one can utilise when undertaking research, these are positivist and interpretivist. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008) show us the different philosophical assumptions made by each approach. The positive approach is based on a factual view of the world around us and it utilises quantitative research where conclusions are drawn from measurable data. The interpretivist approach is based on a view of the world that is not based on natural laws. It utilises a qualitative approach to research where meaning is drawn from experiences and opinions of the participants.

Bogden and Biiklen (cited Fraenkel and Wallen 2008) describe five features that characterise qualitative research thus giving an indication that the research is based on an interpretivist approach.   These features are: a natural setting being the direct source of data, data recording via words and pictures rather than numbers, concern for process as well as product, analyse data inductively and concern for how people make sense out of their lives.   My research is based on the thoughts and requirements of the VLE, I expect the results to be descriptive and based on the personal expectations of each participant. The data collected will be in the form of thoughts, feelings and experiences, the research method involved contains all five of the features of qualitative research, therefore I can conclude that my research is qualitative and I will be taking an interpretivist approach.

As the research will be interpretive in approach the collection instruments used will need to measure thoughts, feelings, situations and experiences of the participants, therefore it is important that the instruments used are capable of effectively recording this type of information.

Patton (2002) describes purpose as the 'controlling force in research'.   The purpose of this research is to gather the requirements for an online course.   The requirements in this instance focus on the details of the course itself independent of the platform on which it is to be delivered.   Details may include how much time a week is expected from the participant, what types of activities are desired and what is the required outcome of the course.   This purpose is conducive to Action-Oriented, Problem-Solving research.   This type of research tends to be carried out within a group or organisation to solve a problem or address an issue which is usually specific to that group.

Patton highlights the issue of conducting a literature review prior to completing research. He points out that although it may act to focus the research it may also bias the researcher. In this study the literature review, regarding engagement, has set in place certain principles of design that need to be included to develop an engaging course.   These need to be clearly defined prior to the commencement of the interviews and usually care would need to be taken not to influence or bias the interview results, however in this case the principles could be used to inform the interviews.   From the initial contact with the Rector it is clear that there is a wish for the church to offer an online course, however there is a limited vision to how this may look.   Therefore contrary to usual interview techniques avoiding introducing external ideas it may be necessary to use questions informed by the research as

a basis for topics for discussion. For example 'research has shown... How would you feel about…?'

The same is true for the responses of previous interviews. Usually an interviewer is concerned only with the opinion of those being interviewed, however in this instance, as there is to be only one user requirement, it will also beneficial to introduce the outcomes of previous interviews to gain more insight into the needs of the church.

I have decided to limit the initial analysis to the Leadership and Sermon teams. It is my view that this would be the first stage of an ongoing iterative design process. This initial stage is to lay the foundations of the VLE and the direction that the leadership team wish to take.

The Data Collection instrument will be in the form of a series of interviews with the Church Leadership Team, Wardens, and Preaching Team. As the aim of the research is to gain an understanding of the requirements of the VLE, there will be only one interview per person, but a further feedback meeting may be required as part of the design process. Depending on Logistics the interviews are to be completed in groups. Knight (2002) warns against the reliance of group results alone and Lambert and Loiselle (2008) highlight the use of the focus group to compliment individual interviews as focus groups give participants the opportunity to express their opinions in a social context and the opportunity to question each other's opinions whereas individual interviews give the participants an opportunity to express their personal opinions in more depth. However in this instance a single user requirement needs to be drawn in conclusion of all the interviews, it is the group consensus that we are concerned with rather than an individual's opinion, group interviews will allow the participants to discuss inconsistencies in requirements rather than these inconsistencies being resolved further along the analysis route.

The interviews will be semi-structured with a mixture of fixed and open response questions the fixed response questions to determine more factual requirements followed by open questions to stimulate debate regarding the function of the VLE. The issues to bear in mind when conducting the interviews are the time required to conduct such an interview and the reliance on the participant to be engaged in the interview process (Knight 2002).

The results of the interviews will be distilled to a collection of;

- General requirements of the VLE framework – anonymous logins, use of forums, etc
- General requirements of the course itself – time frame per week, types of activities, open forum, overall learning objectives, etc
- Specific requirements of the course – week to week titles, specific weekly learning outcomes, etc

These requirements will contribute to the creation of a Design Verification Document. This Design Verification document will then go on to both inform and verify the course design. These three documents; The literature review, Design Verification Document and

Design, fulfil the aims of the research and aspects of their completion will be used to inform a conclusion to the academic question.

Literature Review

This report is concerned with 3 main topics.   These are Learning design, Learner engagement in online courses and the church online.   The latter two topics informing the input and the former outlining the process of developing the input into a product.

Learning Design

Designing for learning is introduced by Beetham and Sharpe (2007).   They highlight the importance of design to translate the underlying pedagogy into a tangible plan for learning. It is not new for teachers to design for learning it has been considered for a long time. Originally there may not have been a documented design but the teacher would still have considered the learning process in their planning for face to face teaching.   More recently the planning processes has become more formalised through documentation such as lesson plans and course validation documents.   They point out that design for learning can be concerned with a range of pedagogical tools, however learning design is a more focused activity stemming from instructional design. It focuses on modelling the learning process itself, with an aim to describe and share learning activities.   Mor et al (2013) extend this notion and discuss educators' predominant role as 'designers for learning'.

There has been a shift in design from instructional design to learning design. Britain (2004) describes how Instructional design focused around the creation of learning objects and was predominantly a method of content delivery.   In contrast learning design focuses on what learning activities take place when and by whom.   Although seemingly fundamental this change in focus moves away from simply displaying content to catering to a range of pedagogies that teachers use and reflecting these within the online learning environment.

She goes on to summarise the 3 key ideas behind learning design as; the generation of learning activities not just the presentation of content, the generation of a work flow and the ability to record learning designs for reuse or sharing with others.   This general description is also reflected in Conole, Dyke et al (2004) who also highlight the historical separation between theory and pedagogy, they pose that learning design based on theories will bridge this gap and result in a greater range of pedagogical activities available. Their paper outlines the array of differing theoretical positions on learning and potential e-learning activities.   The model they propose maps activities to what they consider to be the 3 key spectra of learning. The authors highlight the effectiveness of this model at the

design stage but also for auditing existing practice.   It can be used to evaluate and critique the range of approaches to a topic.

As pedagogy is considered the art and science of teaching Stefanov et al (1998) consider learning design to be an art as it requires a wide range of skills, including awareness of learners, education, software design and aesthetical design.

Blandin (2003) looks at usability from a sociological perspective.   The successful implementation of an online course is not simply down to the design but is also rooted in the society that it is to be used within.   He discusses the teachers pedagogy in terms of learning cultures and explains how the preference of teachers to use their own developed online learning platform, in favour of a pre-existing one, is due to inconsistency between the teachers own learning culture and that of a course that has not been developed by themselves.   If the learning design is to be placed in the hand of the designer, that designer must consider not only the physical usability but also the usability from a social perspective.

Although their explanations vary in presentation both Hampel & Pleines and Pachler & Daly highlight a trio of considerations when implementing online courses these are pedagogical, technological and content.   These three themes are also loosely followed by Dale and Lane (2007) who use the headings Differences in Learning Styles, Student Motivation Towards Assessment and Design and Functionality of the VLE to evaluate student engagement.

Both the OULDI (unknown) and Institute of Learning Innovation (2013) provide structures to assist in the design stage, from outlining the learning objectives through to deciding on learning activities and the production of a learning design.   The Institute of Learning Innovation (2013) advises this is not done in isolation but through a collaborative design process involving a team of teachers, designers and other stakeholders.

Learner engagement in online courses

Fredricks et al (2011) discuss engagement in out of school activities.   They summarise engagement in the following three terms; Behavioural engagement related to attendance, participation, and positive conduct,   Emotional engagement reflecting the extent of positive and negative reactions to the Learning environment   and Cognitive engagement how invested students are in their learning.   How willing they are to carry out the activities needed for learning.   They recommend the following to encourage engagement within and outside of school settings.

- "by showing students that they care about them;
- by creating a positive social environment where peers have opportunities to work together and learn from each other;
- by having clear expectations, rules, and routines to maximize time on task

- by including a variety of interesting tasks that emphasize higher-order skills and real-world applications."

Fredricks et al (2011)

When researching the area of learner engagement in online learning there are few definitions of what it is to be engaged in online learning.   Zyngier (2008) notes that it is regularly reported in the media that 'school students today are more alienated, resistant and disengaged than ever before'   the author goes on to outline a range of instances where the lack of   student engagement is blamed for a range of social issues without actually defining what engagement is.   The paper looks at engagement in the overall school context.

He cites a range of authors' work in this area and surmises that most definitions centre around a varying mix of Behavioural, Emotional and Cognitive Engagement. However he contends that engagement is closely linked to social inclusion, having a sense of what is being learnt is worthwhile and having a say in your learning.   He recommends   C.O.R.E. pedagogy to overcome the issue of engagement.

- *"**C**onnecting-to and engaging with the students' cultural knowledge*
- ***O**wning-all students should be able to see themselves as represented in the work*
- ***R**esponding-to students' lived experiences and actively and consciously critiquing that experience*
- ***E**mpowering-students with a belief that what they do will make a difference to their lives and the opportunity to voice and discover their own authentic and authoritative life." ((Zyngier, 2007 cited in Zyngier 2008)*

Almala (2006) applies the learning theory of constructivism to eLearning.   The 5 main principles of eLearning complement the CORE pedagogy described above they are: a relevant learning environment, social negotiation, multiple perspectives and modes of learning, ownership of learning and self-awareness and knowledge construction.   He extends the notion online learning should be a process of developing an online pedagogy rather than simply displaying content, advice contained within the report includes areas such as ensuring the activities are set at the correct level, encouraging teamwork, teacher participation and clear guidelines.

These two theories support the notion that online learning has the potential to be a highly engaging activity.   Stefanov et al (1998) discuss the implementation of an online course according to constructivist learning theory.   They put forward a model of flexible distance learning based on learner centred pedagogy.   They consider the main characteristic of

learner centred pedagogy to be that the learner is not presented with prescribed knowledge instead knowledge is discovered and constructed by the learner. They consider learning design and learner engagement to be interlinked, with the former resulting in the latter.

Hampel and Pleines (2013) highlight the need for further research as to how the design of courses can effect student engagement. It is noted in their literature review that many authors have called for appropriate designs for online courses to enhance the student experience and the importance of the structure of the course, including what, how and when activities are introduced.

Dixson (2010) is an example of research in to 'what do students find engaging?' She reports that online instruction can be as effective as traditional instruction but to do so it needs to create a 'collaborative environment and a strong instructor presence'. Her results found that students reported there were no statistical difference between active learning assignments such as case studies, discussion forums etc. and passive activities such as reading, quizzes or PowerPoints. However she stressed the importance of learner/learner and learner/teacher interaction, therefore there is an additional benefit to both 'active activities' that encouraged collaborative learning and social interaction and a multi-channel approach to student/teacher communication. The conclusion of the report is that there are no activities which in themselves promote engagement, rather it is the development of real connections between students and teachers.

Shank (2007) gives a practical summary of design ideas to make the course engaging and giving advice on conforming to conventions. Similarly Conrad and Donaldson (2003) outline how to initially engage pupils then keep them engaged in the learning activities. Both of these publications are rooted in Instructional Design but provide activity ideas that could be incorporated in to a learning design.

The online learning and the church

A brief search through Google using the search terms, online church course, church VLE, church learning environment brings up two types of site. The first type is the online course that is individually focused, with fixed online courses that individuals follow. Social aspects of these courses are with other separate individuals also taking part in the course, it is a separate online community. The second type are connected to physical churches and have weekly input usually with their sermons in either audio or video format, sometimes they have forums which are used by the congregation. I continued my search to try to find a site which included activities that extended the learning contained in the sermon on a weekly basis. I was unable to find such an example.

At this point it is important to note that the majority of research pertaining to Christian education online refers to formal higher level Christian education rather than congregational education.

There are theological aspects to the Social Constructivist approach often applied to online learning. Deulen (2013) states that 'social constructivism is a natural fit with the biblical approach to learning'. The Bible makes many references to believers operating in community tending to each other's needs and encouraging each other. The concept of 'one-anothering' upholds this idea but extends it further than simple relationships to actively encourage learning in one another. However she points out that care needs to be taken with the construction of the online community. She cites Tannen (1986) who noted that up to 90% of communication is non-verbal, therefore if one removes this ninety percent, how social is the learning environment that remains. She advises a blended learning approach combing face to face and online interactions, or possibly introducing Moodle access to Second life virtual realities via an online avatar.

Further explaining our need to be social, Grenz (2001), cited in Deulen (2013) argues that God himself as the Trinity   (father, son and holy spirit) is a relational being, and as we are made in his image we to are meant to function as relational beings. She extends that this along with an androgogical model (pertaining to the education of adults with the teacher as a facilitator and students directing their learning) rather than a pedagogical model (pertaining to child education where the teacher is the main director of learning) upholds the notion that the Christian educator is not simply a conveyor of content but;

'As a facilitator in the student's journey to not be   "conformed to this [present age] but to be transformed by the renewal of [their] mind" (Holy Bible: new international version, 1990, Romans 12:2)'

Thorne (2013) presents areas of constructivism as the basis for online distance learning for Christian higher education. He outlines the three constructivist theories, radical, social and cognitive. He actively rejects the radical view as it rejects the view that there is an objective reality and truth. He defines Social Constructivism as 'a view with strong emphasis on culture and other norms and memes of a group as determining truth' and Cognitive constructivism as 'a view that there is an objective reality, but that reality can only be partially and subjectively understood'.

One of the core values and defining features of the modes of Constructivism is their stance on the notion of truth. As already stated Radical Constructivism excludes the notion that there is any truth outside the students perception of it. This is contradicted in itself by

Jesus 'I am the truth' (Holy Bible: new international version, 1990, John 14:6). The Christian perspective is that;

> "Truth is infinite, perfect, and absolute" however "attempts by sinful humans to know truth are finite, fallible and subjective" (Knowlton et al cited in Thorne 2013)

This quote mirrors the cognitive view. In a cognitive constructivist stance, truth is finite and definite but 'sinfull humans' allow truth to be distorted by society and human influences and is beyond full understanding.

He notes that biblical knowledge is not just the acceptance of knowledge but the internalisation of knowledge, this fits well with constructivist principles. Although the internalisation of knowledge is not guaranteed an online course creates a situation where it is harder to be present without being involved, which would result in a degree of internalisation. In a physical situation one could be present but not participate whereas online it is the participation that makes one present.

The notion that the student's world view is self-constructed may initially be a point of concern, however Thorne (2013) questions whether the student is competent to make such constructions. However the Bible calls for such a construction to take place, for Christians to grow in grace and knowledge. In addition he points out that the Christian has the advantage of the ministry of the word of God and the Holy Spirit.

Reading these two individual's perspectives it appears that although Deulen (2013) and Thorne (2013) agree in principle that constructivism is a valid basis for online learning they disagree semantically on whether social or cognitive constructivism should form the core principles of an online course. The truths of the Bible have been rewritten over time according to the social and cultural values of the time. Our understanding of truth is socially constructed as described by Thorne (2013). However mainstream Christian belief is that there is a definite truth, as described by the cognitive view, which we all strive to attain (Dulen 2013). In the absence of the tools or ability to uncover the definite truth we must default to a social approach.

Lee (2013) considers 'The Technologising of Faith' through an ethnographic study of the internet activity of a university Christian fellowship group. This study is not focused on participants of higher level Christian study but on general students who are partaking in additional Christian study through small groups and Bible study, this is in line with the structure of the congregation where Christian study goes alongside other aspects of work and study within their lives. The study looks at whether the use of technology is conducive to living a Christian life. Lee describes nine areas of focus when looking at Christian participants' involvement with the internet.

Firstly the always-on culture where people feel tethered by the internet which could be viewed in both positive and negative terms. The constant tending to various online communities 'negates [their] aspirations to be fully present with each other and to God'.

Secondly the internet as a vast tool for searching is described as a valuable tool for Bible study, however point three highlights the abundance of information on the internet. The implications of this is twofold. Students can become over reliant on searching rather than thinking and spiritual learning, also the reliability of some sources on the internet are questionable. Point nine highlights how worship music and videos on YouTube can be useful to complement Christians' quiet time and reflection.

Thirdly the internet gives the learner the ability to sculpt their responses. Words can be crafted before posting, this can lead to more considered thoughtful discussion. Alternatively it can lead to posting what gives over the best image. This is tied in with the fourth point of disclosure on the internet. Participants reported feeling the need to "be real" in their online world and would often reveal intimate details that would not be revealed in real life. This can lead to escapism as described in point five, where students use the internet to escape real life and can use status updates and frivolous posts to hide their emotions and issues that they are experiencing. One participant shared that escaping to media entertainment online is easier than spending time in prayer or self-reflection.

Point six tells us that teachers see online learning as inferior however learners do not see a distinction between online and offline learning with respect to spiritual practices and learning. However point seven explains how participants felt that witnessing was easier online as they were more able to reach out to distant acquaintances friends and family through social networking.

Point eight clarifies that rather than replacing face to face intimacy online relations strengthen them, and act as a surrogate when face to face interactions are not possible.

Lee (2013) concludes that it is possible for Christians to use internet technologies to enhance their Christian practices and learning. As the internet has become a central part of many of our lives it also has a place as part of our spiritual lives. However the need for balance is highlighted, along with the need to be as genuine online as we are in person.

Analysis

The analysis will distil the requirements outlined in the Literature review along with the outcome of the preaching group interviews to produce a Design Verification Document. The distillation process is outlined below and documented in Appendix 4. There are three

areas of consideration when designing an online course; pedagogical, technological and content. These aspects will inform the Design Verification Document.

Pedagogical Considerations

The design will take a Social Constructivist approach to learning. This reflects the pedagogical underpinnings of the house groups that currently take place within the church but also provides the basis for the CORE pedagogy advised by Zyngier to create an engaging environment and complement *Fredricks et al 's (2011) recommendations to increase student engagement.*

Connecting and Responding aspects of the CORE pedagogy already form an essential element of the house-groups that exist, there needs to be a safe environment for people to express their views. In further agreement with Lee, the preaching group consider that the removed nature of online discussion creates an air of openness which should lead to open discussion.

The Owning and Empowering aspects are not currently aspects of the house-group sessions the design will need to take into consideration how the conclusions and feedback can be taken into account from one week to the next. Participants will also need to have a view of why they are taking part, what is the reason and how will it benefit them. This church situation is different to that of a school where the aim is more explicit, I need to learn this to pass a test, however in this situation the aim is not so easily identified and will need to be communicated effectively.

Deulen (2013) recommends a blended learning approach to online learning, this is reflected in the overreaching aim of the preaching team to complement its Sunday sermon series.

Conole et al (2004) point out that the learning design itself needs to reflect not just the content but the flow of activities.

Zyngier (2008) calls for the course to respond and critique the students experiences. The theme for this sermon series is especially self-reflective and this type of critique can be encouraged through discussion with others, Almala (2006) point out that questions for discussion should be highly focused.

Zyngier (2008) also highlights the importance of empowering students to see how their participation will impact their lives whilst *Stefanov et al (1998)* wants students to construct their own knowledge and share it with other students. Again the nature of the sermon series lends itself to this type of inflection. Almala (2006) recommends personal assessment, but as there will be no formal assessment a personal blog will act as both a

record of the construction of knowledge over time, a device to share with others what has been learned and a tool for self-assessment so that progression can be tracked over time.

Almala (2006) and Stefanov et al (1998) highlight the need for the teacher to be present within the elearning environment and to facilitate learning.   The Preaching team will maintain a presense on the course through active participation on the forums and the blogs.

Fredricks et al (2011), Dixson (2010), Dale and Lane (2007) and Almala (2006) all advocate the use of online collaborative activities within a positive social environment.   This desire is reflected in the Preaching group interview (Appendix 4) where it was highlighted that personal growth could only be achieved through relationship with others.

Stefanov et al (1998), Zyngier (2008), Almala (2006) highlight the importance of learners formulating their own learning objectives and seeing themselves reflected in the course along with relevant and authentic activities.   This creates a point of uncertainty to the learning plan.   But aspects need to be built in to the design that allows for students to decide for themselves the outcome for their learning.   This could then be fed in to the next weeks plan.   The blog gives an opportunity for individuals to highlight their outcomes.

Technological Consideration

The implementation of the design will be through the Moodle VLE.   This restricts the design to the applications within this VLE.   Moodle is based on social constructivist theory and provides many of the tools that authors describe as engaging, such as wikis, forums and collaborative working opportunities.

Dale and Lane (2007) have found that students will be more forthcoming with their opinions and participation if forums are anonymous or at least have the option to be.   However this is not reflected in the views of the preaching team who feel that this negates the feel of the online course as an extension of the physical church there should be no distinction in this setting of a person's online and offline presence this idea is mirrored in Lee (2013).

Hampel and Plaines (2013) highlight the use of a single large forum instead of many individual forums having a positive effect on the number of posts made to the forum. Whereas Dale and Lane (2007) emphasise the need for feedback or a conclusion to the discussion in online forums. So discussion forums will be closed after a fixed time with a summary by the teacher.

Almala (2006), Dale and Lane (2007) and Fredricks et al (2011) all explain the necessity for clear expectations of and rules for forum and course use.   A clear introduction to the

course and how the course will function is essential along with help options throughout the course.

Lee (2012) promotes the use of online media to promote quiet time and reflection this view is mirrored in the interview with the preaching team.   Where external links are used Almala (2006) highlights the demotivating effect that broken links to web based resources can be.

Lee (2012) also encourages verification of sources to ensure the validity of the information, encouragement to research online should be supported by a feedback facility to share links which could then be discussed through various means.

Content

Dale and Lane (2007) highlight the importance of introducing the course and the activities available.

The course will be ten weeks long this is taken from the Preaching group notes (Appendix 3).

The course will contain Activities and a forum.   Individual blogs would be useful for each participant to track their learning; however this would not form part of the initial pilot. The Evening service will, where possible use film clips to illustrate key themes about being human.   It may be called ALTOGETHER HUMAN?   (Appendix 3)   Further information on the content of each week is shown in Table 2.

Dale and Lane (2007), Almala (2006) and Fredricks et al (2011) agree that a wide range of activities targeted to the individual's level of learning need to be presented.   Differing levels of activities can be offered and discussions can take place at a variety of levels.

Conrad and Donaldson (2003) stipulate four phases of engagement that can be used to build up an engaged community within an online course.   These phases describe the levels of engagement of learners as Newcomers, Co-operators, Collaborators and Initiator/Partners.   In correlation to this the tutors role develops from Social negotiator to structural engineer to facilitator and finally to community member or challenger.   They put forward many activity ideas which may be included in the design.

Artefact - Design Verification Document

Specification	How will I know if it has been accomplished?	Accomplished y/n
The course will follow the sermon series and will be directly informed by the sermons week to week.	The course will follow the structure of the sermon series	
The learning design approach takes in to consideration the flow of activities.	The Design itself should reflect the flow of the activities through the course.	
One of the over arching goal of the course is to encourage participants to apply their learning to themselves. There should be opportunity to analyse and reflect.	The forum questions should encourage personal growth and exploration.	
One of the overarching goal of the course is to encourage participants to apply their learning to themselves and apply what they have learnt in their lives. In this instance there is no formal assessment. Progression is personal to the participant.	Encourage personal reflection through the use of personal blogs. Encourage personal reflection and sharing of experiences through the use of personal blogs.	
An instructor as a presence within the e-learning environment Teachers are mostly facilitators	The sermon team and myself will moderate and offer direction to the forum and blogs	
There should be a number of collaborative activities.	There should be at least one activity that involves collaborative working.	
It will be important to review the course weekly to reflect the outcomes of the forum discussions in the future weeks' activities.	The course design should include opportunity to feedback on previous discussions. And be flexible to respond to learners requests. Points need to be built in to the design that allows for students to decide for themselves the outcome for their learning. This could then be fed in to the next weeks plan. The blog gives an opportunity for individuals to highlight their outcomes.	
Dale & Lane and the preaching group appear to disagree on whether the participants should remain anonymous. Lee and the preaching group consider that the removed nature of online discussion creates an air of openness which should lead to open discussion.	Participants will remain named in the discussion areas	
A single large forum instead of many individual forums.	A single forum used	

Feedback or a conclusion to the discussion	Discussions closed after an fixed amount of time with conclusions fed back in to future weeks	
Clear guidelines for forum use Clear guidelines to discussion Clear expectations, rules, and routines	Introduction to the forum and activities along with rules of use.	
Use of online media to promote quiet time and reflection	Media clips should be used throughout not simply for entertainment but as a point of reflection	
Reliable web based resources	Ensure all links are working.	
Verification of sources	Encouragement to research online should be supported by a feedback facility to share links which could then be discussed but the group and monitored for inaccuracies by the preaching team.	
The first week should give an outline to what the overall week structure will be	Clear instructions	
10 weeks beginning on 19th January 2014	There should be course content for each week	
Activities and a forum. Individual blogs would be useful for each participant to track their learning; however this would not form part of the initial pilot. The Evening service will where possible use film clips to illustrate key themes about being human. It may be called ALTOGETHER HUMAN?	Each week should contain activities and points to discuss on the forum. The title of the course should be 'Altogether Human'.	
a wide range of activities targeted to the individual's level of learning need to be presented. Differing levels of activities can be offered and discussions can take place at a variety of levels.	Provide a range of different activities each week.	
Opportunities to witness	Encouragement to share experiences both on the VLE and from VLE in to social networks.	
learners as • Newcomers • Co-operators • Collaborators Initiator/Partners. **tutors role** • **Social negotiator** • **Structural engineer** • **Facilitator** **Community member or challenger.**	There should be differentiation in the requirements of social interaction. With it steadily increasing collaboration and self-direction.	

Content Outline

The titles and input for the weeks		
Person to Person (we are designed for human relationship)		
Input for Topic	*Themes of individualism, loneliness, formation of persons through key relationships. Isolation. Interaction.* *John Stott – The Contemporary Christian pages 114-119.* *Genesis 1:18-25 Genesis 2:15-25, 1 Corinthians: 12:1* Designed for Human relationship over relationships through machines, seek human relationships through the machine. Can it sustain relationships or does it create false relationships. How real are the relationships we form online? Activities – celebrating or acknowledging relationships within their lives. Considering impact of loneliness on someone. Is there something that can be done to assist. What it may be like for people and what could be done	
Creature to Creator (we are designed for a relationship with God)		
Input for Topic	*To be complete as a human being we need to know God. In what sense are we distinct from other animals?* I Believe in Man*, George Carey Chapter 2.* *Psalm 139:1-6, John 1:10-13.* Regardless of religion human beings are designed for a relationship with god. God is interested in everybody even those who are not interested in him. We are the creature not the creator. Our position within the universe. We are incredible but not god. Activity - Hierarchies in society building up dynamic where is god where are we. Used to be taken for granted that god came first then angels, people, animals etc. Have we now got the point where we care for our pet more than we care for our neighbor? Do we have it intrinsically wrong? Reflection – In my life what do I put above god. Putting god first in choices that we make.	
Reason		
Input for Topic	*Its importance, virtues and limitations.* *What do Christians understand by the Mind, What is spiritual blindness? How does the Christian develop a Christian mind? In what sense does Faith transcend mind? How do we use and abuse our minds? What happens to our humanity when the mind disintegrates?* *Stott Issues facing Christians today pp36-41.* *Mark:12:30, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 13:11-13, Philippians 2:5.* Important to think as a Christian Do not let your mind be conformed but transformed romans 12??/ See preaching notes. Culture does not put reason highly. Entertainment is about getting out of mind, mindless entertainment. Push reason to the side. How do we abuse our mind? What happens to our humanity when the mind disintegrates.	

	Loving and valuing humanity in spite of loss of intellect – mind etc. *Activities – choice making, reasoning activities, moving towards why do we choose to give it up? Why do we switch our minds off?* *Reflection - Who has god made you to be, if you loose your reason what makes us better than animals or beasts? You have taken away what god has made you to be.*

Image ("Mirror, mirror on the wall).

Input for Topic	*Image ("Mirror, mirror on the wall). The way our sense of selfhood is manufactured from multiple influences). Fashion?* *Significance of appearance? Icons?* *Am I Beautiful?: Finding Freedom in the Answer by Chine Mbubaegbu* *A book written for women by a Christian woman.* *Psalm 8, Luke 5:12-15…..people stigmatised by disease. People who are dehumanised by others and by their wealth - Luke 19:1-7.* *Models vs real photos what is real our expectations of ourselves.* *Over body image significance of appearance, icons. What is our image of ourselves and how we are perceived as successful?* *Money, job, status or contentedness, friendship, happiness?* *Society says you do not count unless?* *Image and illness there are body issues within the church. – not aimed at a youth*	

Life – making living and ending life

Input for Topic	*Issues around the creation of people. Valuing life itself. Pro-life. Euthanasia, death, eternity. Remember that our humanity and life itself derives its dignity from our being God's Creature.* *David Cook Question Time - Section 6-7.* *Genesis 4: 8-15, Micah 6:6-8 John 11:25. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20* *Living purposefully. Life is given by God and can only be taken by God so how does this affect our perception of suicide, abortion and euthanasia?*	

Gender and God

Input for Topic	Gender and God - What it means to be male and female. Sexuality and identity. Help folk recognise themselves as sexual beings even if their sexuality cannot always find expression. People are living alone outside of relationships for a significant part of life. John Stott, Issues facing Christians Today Part 4. Also writings of Elaine Storkey, David Cook Question Time Chapter 4. Genesis 2: 24, Ephesians 5: 22-23. *We are different and need to accept and embrace our differences. Modern Culture says it is ok to be who you are whatever the consequences but has it created a culture where we do not have the boundaries that traditional roles of gender had?* *The Bible says that women should not be head of the church but this is on conflict with modern society.*	

Messages from the Media

Input for Topic	How are we portrayed and impacted as human persons by the images of various media and social media. The power of the media to shape perception……of ourselves, norms, desires and aspirations. What does the media contribute to virtue? David Cook, Section 10 of Question Time – The Media	

	See too various Image magazines. Philippians 4:8 *Media effects our perception of the world around us through advertising and narrowcasting.* *How does social media allow us to control our image through selfies status updates? But how much of it is a fair reflection of what is going on? Does our activity online reflect our off line selves.* *Activity – Look at your Facebook or Twitter profile, does it reflect you as a Christian?* *Reflection – Is there something we can do to be Christian online?*	
Violence and what it does to us.		
Input for Topic	How does violence present itself in your experience of life? Is it possible to defend exposure to violent images? David Cook, Section 9 of Question Time – Force and Violence. Joshua 10:6-11, Colossians 3: 12-14. *Violent imagery on screen how does it affect our reaction to when we encounter violence. Are we hardened to its effects.* *Gods image is in us and should be reflected in to the world. But what happens if we are violent?*	
Fulfilment. I only want to be happy?		
Input for Topic	Fulfilment what is it? I only want to be happy? David Cook Question Time, page 25 -28. Micah 6:8. John 10:10. *What is happiness? How do we get a relationship with God.*	

Course Design

The purpose if the design is to assess the effectiveness of the Design Verification Document to highlight areas of concern within the design.

The design has been completed using CompendiumLD.   This is a piece of software designed by the Open University as a tool to develop learning designs.   It enables the user to create an over view of the course as a flow from start to finish as with an activity design.   Files can be saved as html documents, images or a learning design file.   Potentially a learning design file can then be used to upload the course on to a Learning Design Player or VLE.   For the purposes of this report the design will be saved as html enabling it to be viewed in a browser.

The design process begun with laying out a basic structure that would for the basic structure week to week.   This was based on the outline that came out of the discussion with the leader of one of the youth groups and agreed with the sermon team.   The structural points required, as outlined in the Design Verification document, were then included in the general outline.   Lastly the content was considered designing and adding appropriate activities and input for the various tasks again taking in to account the requirements of both the sermon team and the Design Verification document.

To access the learning design browse to   <Altogether Human\Altogether Human.html>   and open in a browser.   It has been tested in the most up to date versions of Internet Explorer, Chrome and Firefox.

Verification of Course Design

Specification	How will I know if it has been accomplished?	Accomplished y/n
The course will follow the sermon series and will be directly informed by the sermons week to week.	The course will follow the structure of the sermon series	Yes
The learning design approach takes in to consideration the flow of activities.	The Design itself should reflect the flow of the activities through the course.	The software used allows the flow of activities to be recorded.
One of the overarching goals of the course is to encourage participants to apply their learning to themselves. There should be opportunity to analyse and reflect.	The forum questions should encourage personal growth and exploration.	No – due to issues understanding the content and time restraints no questions were included in the design.
One of the overarching goal of the course is to encourage participants to apply their learning to themselves and apply what they have learnt in their lives. In this instance there is no formal assessment. Progression is personal to the participant.	Encourage personal reflection through the use of personal blogs. Encourage personal reflection and sharing of experiences through the use of personal blogs.	Yes - Each week includes a point at which participants should be encouraged to update their blog.
An instructor as a presence within the e-learning environment Teachers are mostly facilitators	The sermon team and myself will moderate and offer direction to the forum.	Yes
There should be a number of collaborative activities.	There should be at least 1 activity that involves collaborative working.	Yes there is an activity which involves sharing web links to interesting articles.
It will be important to review the course weekly to reflect the outcomes of the forum discussions in the future weeks' activities.	The course design should include opportunity to feedback on previous discussions. And be flexible to respond to learners requests. Points need to be built in to the design that allows for students to decide for themselves the outcome for their learning. This could then be fed in to the next weeks plan. The blog gives an opportunity for individuals to highlight their outcomes.	
Dale & Lane and the preaching group appear to disagree on whether the participants should remain anonymous. Lee and the preaching group consider that the removed nature of online discussion creates an air of openness which should lead to open discussion.	Participants will remain named in the discussion areas	Y
A single large forum instead of many individual forums.	A single forum used	Y
Feedback or a conclusion to the discussion	Discussions closed after an fixed amount of time with conclusions fed	Y

	back in to future weeks	
Clear guidelines for forum use Clear guidelines to discussion Clear expectations, rules, and routines	Introduction to the forum and activities along with rules of use.	Y
Use of online media to promote quiet time and reflection	Media clips should be used throughout not simply for entertainment but as a point of reflection	Y
Reliable web based resources	Ensure all links are working.	Y
Verification of sources	Encouragement to research online should be supported by a feedback facility to share links which could then be discussed but the group and monitored for inaccuracies by the preaching team.	Y - During the research activity in week 5 participants are asked to feedback and share links.
The first week should give an outline to what the overall week structure will be	Clear instructions	Y
10 weeks beginning on 19th January 2014	There should be course content for each week	Y
Activities and a forum. Individual blogs would be useful for each participant to track their learning; however this would not form part of the initial pilot. The Evening service will where possible use film clips to illustrate key themes about being human. It may be called ALTOGETHER HUMAN?	Each week should contain activities and points to discuss on the forum. The title of the course should be 'Altogether Human'.	Y
A wide range of activities targeted to the individual's level of learning need to be presented. Differing levels of activities can be offered and discussions can take place at a variety of levels.	Provide a range of different activities each week.	N – Due to issues understanding the content and time restraints not all weeks include set or a range of set activities.
Opportunities to witness	Encouragement to share experiences both on the VLE and from VLE in to social networks.	Y
learners as • Newcomers • Co-operator • Collaborators • Initiator/Partners. s **tutors role** • **Social negotiator** • **Structural engineer** • **Facilitator Community member or challenger.**	There should be differentiation in the requirements of social interaction. With it steadily increasing collaboration and self-direction.	N - Due to issues understanding the content and time restraints I was unable to plan a progression f activities that gradually increased participation.

Conclusion

The objective of this report was to answer the question "Can learner engagement be incorporated in to the analysis and design of an engaging online learning course to support the blended learning of a sermon series within a church?"   The report has outlined the need for the course design to go beyond simply displaying content to preparing a flow and exchange of information for the duration of the course.   With careful consideration given to how participants will interact with each other and how these interactions will be instigated and monitored.

It has also highlighted how some students' perception of themselves online is an extension of their offline selves.   In these instances their Christian activity is extended online through a variety of existing social media and online resources.

The literature review laid a pedagogical foundation for online learning which was found to be compatible with the Christian ethos of ministry. However the search for similar church sites did not return any. Sites either contained courses that were fixed or week to week sermons; there were no examples of courses running alongside the sermon series.

The vision of the church to start a VLE to support the sermons is supported by the literature review and an engaging VLE should have the desired result of encouraging 'one anothering' amongst those who are unable to attend a physical house groups.

The first half of the report question "Can learner engagement be incorporated in to the analysis and design of an engaging online learning course to support the blended learning…" can be answered through the Design Verification Document.   The literature review and interviews fed into a Design Verification Document.   Many of the aspects leading to engagement highlighted in the literature review complemented each other.   The general trend throughout was; a need to plan for communication not just expecting the sharing of ideas to be spontaneous, multiple communication methods, a range of activities to cater to a range of abilities, opportunities for participants to control their learning and opportunities to feedback to the group.   All of these aspects can be factored in to the design of a course using a learning design method.

The second half of the question "… to support the blended learning of a sermon series within a church?" is not as readily answered.   CompendiumLD , the software selected to create the learning design enables the design of a flow of activity including nodes to depict a range of resources and media tools as outlined in the Design Verification.

However the Design Varification Process highlighted issues surrounding the lack of content included in the design.   The interviews with the preaching team did not provide the level of detail for the sermons that I had expected.   As there were no specific weekly outcomes and vast topic areas on a weekly basis it proved extremely difficult to plan activities in advance.   As the preachers were not able to provide any great detail of the sermons prior to the event and the course preferably online within 48 hours of the sermon this created a turnaround period of 48 hours in which to design and upload the course.   (Although the creation of the course is outside the scope of this report it speaks to the extreme time restraints involved). Contrary to learning design principles most of the time within this 48 hours was focused on content design, building the individual media elements and inventing tasks rather than considering the design elements pertinent to engagement. In addition to the time restraints there were aspects of limited experience, teaching ability and subject knowledge.

The literature review gave the impression that Learning Design should be applied in place of instructional deign however the lack of focus on content has led to a framework by which the content can be organised, but no content to fill it out.

Going forward the concept of the church extending into online learning and engagement is in line with Christian ideology however there needs to be more communication between the preacher and the designer with regards to the scope of the sermon and possible design activities.   With a clearer outline and activity ideas provided by the preacher about how they feel the sermon could be extended.   In return the designer needs to provide a clear layout of what is required of the preacher possibly be some sort of Pro-Forma.

Once issues of content are resolved then aspects of engagement can be factored in to the design in line with the requirements as set out in the Design Verification Document.

As a tool to evaluate a course design in terms of engagement the Design Verification Document has successfully highlighted the shortfalls of the current design and made valuable contributions to what is required for successful designs going forward.

Analyse and evaluate project

Product

The product or artefact as outlined in the Project Proposal form Pro 2 is the Design Verification Document.   The Learning Design itself being the subject by which to assess the effectiveness of the Design Verification Document.   With the whole process being used to answer the academic question.   In real terms the end product has been the Course Design itself which has been implemented within the church.

This separation of concerns has at times been blurred and has at times hindered the progress of the academic work and makes the success of the project complex.

In terms of the academic report the aims and objectives have been met and the academic question has been answered.   The artefact itself, the Design Verification Document, has been successful. However the course design has not been successful either in terms of being verified or in terms of being successful for implementation.

The success of the Design Verification Document can be evaluated in terms of successfully summarising aspects pertinent to engagement and providing a tool to evaluate the proposed design. The verification document has succeeded in both of these areas, particularly the latter.   It has provided a clear indication of the areas lacking in the design and the importance of instructional design as an important partner to be used alongside learning design, rather than alternative to it.

The Course Design can also be evaluated in several ways.   As a test subject of the Design Verification Document it has been a successful in allowing the verification procedure to highlight the flaws of the design.   Academically this is the purpose of the design. However in real terms the design was to go on to be used for a real life course, in this respect the Course Design fails to provide a the required plan to build an engaging online course.

There is potential for the Design Verification Document to continue to assist in the design and evaluation of online courses as part of an iterative design process.

Process and Planning

Focusing on a project - This research project began with an investigation into current literature regarding learning design and a desire to build a VLE for my local Church that I attend.   Initially I wished to investigate Learning Design Players as these where prominent as a trend amongst the literature that I was reading.   I had my title, aims and objectives laid out and had approached the church to conduct a project along these lines with a comparison of three learning design players each running the same course.   During this time I was receiving no input from a supervisor and had found myself overwhelmed by the breadth of information available about the topic.   The topic I had chosen to focus on had a

wealth of information introducing the theoretical advantages of Learning Design Players and gave the impression that they were available as tools to be used.   However this research turned out to be out of date and around a subject that appears to have fallen from grace as a practical application.   Running alongside these initial mistakes I had begun conversations with the church, it became apparent that due to the nature of how the sermons were created there was no one who could provide me with a course structure to run on the players.

As my research was outdated and there was no design to implement I needed to rethink the focus of my research.   The final direction for the project to take was to focus on the Learning Design itself and communication with the church was leaning towards wanting to get the congregation involved and encouraging additional thinking outside of the Sunday service.   These two factors combined to form the final question.

At this point in the project two mistakes had been made.   Firstly I got entrenched in the academic theory without checking the current practical implications of that theory.   This led to the assumption that a number of Learning Design Players existed in a form that would be easily installed and useable.   Unfortunately the learning curve to implement the players available was very steep and as they are not on popular use the support was limited. Secondly I was trying to develop the project from two directions.   What do I want to research? and What do the church want me to produce?   The academic question would have implications on the delivery of the VLE and would involve considerable additional effort from the church team with no additional benefit to the church. I needed to bring the focus of the research in line with the outcomes required by the church.

Making assumptions over content - As outlined in the Conclusion of the report although I was aware that content would need to be produced in order to carry out the design.   I underestimated the timeframe in which this design would take place.   It was my initial intention to pre design the general course content, with a view to make any amendments required after the sermon had taken place.   This would give me a month in which to design the relevant components prior to the start of the series.   However the scope of the topic areas and my lack of understanding of the subject matter made this pre-design stage virtually impossible.   The alternative, designing the content after the sermon had taken place would give me 48 hours to design and implement the course.

This mistake harks back to the choice of research projects.   At the beginning I made the mistake of trying to evaluate learning design players prior to having a learning design, at this point I realised that I have also tried to implement modern course design techniques 'Learning Design' without first considering the basic instructional design techniques to

develop the content of the course. I did not have the knowledge of the topic area to design the content that wold provide the basis of my learning design.

Exaggerating my skills - As a joint student of computing and education I had considered myself able to carry out the function of translating information into lessons, I have had experience of this in the past in my role as ICT technician in a school.   I was not prepared for the process involved in distilling a vast topic area, setting my own objectives for the session and interpreting this into meaningful content.

Approaching the planning Gantt chart - During the first part of the project as I had no defined outline or title, the planning was really difficult. Once I had my aims and objectives in place the planning process was quite straight forward.   A Gantt chart was drawn up which was reviewed bi-weekly in line with my supervisor appointments.   The report was split in to the relevant sections and an estimate of the amount of time each section would take was drawn up.   Additional details requiring planning were the letter templates for the potential interviewees, questionnaire templates, ethics and consent forms, and ensuring the design was carried out within the church's timescales were added.

I initially set quite a strict Gantt chart with the project finishing in February this was to allow time for the extension module.   Unfortunately due to a change in my supervisor I needed to extend this deadline to mid-March.   As I had factored in an early deadline for myself this disruption did not have a detrimental effect on my ability to complete the module within the set deadline.   Adjustments to the Gantt chart were made and the report was completed within the given deadline.

Managing stress - The first half of the project I found really stressful.   I believe this is partly down to the time constraints I had put on myself because I wished for this to be connected to an external organisation, but also due to the lack of guidance in the first half of semester one.   This lack of guidance enabled me to get carried away in the wrong direction and consequently doubt myself going forward with the project.   Once the objectives were set and the Gantt chart produced I found it far easier to plan my time and know that I was on the correct track.

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Appendix 1 - Website search Results

Results of search through Google using the search terms, online church course, church vle, church learning environment for online Christian environments.

Site	Fixed online resources	Weekly online resources	Connected to physical church	Online audio	Online video	Activities	Forum
christiancourses.com	Y	N	N	not sermons	not sermons	Y	Y
christianleadersinstitute.org	Y		N		not sermons	Y	Y
foundations21.net	Y	N	N	not sermons	not sermons	Y	Y
londoninternetchurch.org.uk	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Some within the forum	Y
radiantchurch.org	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
vbfondemand.tv	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N

Appendix 2 - Discussion of requirements and pilot participation with leader of 18 – 30 Church Social Group | Results

Topic Practical questions.

How many people are there in your sessions?
Sessions range between 5 to 22 people aged 18 to 30 but manly younger 20's
When and where do they meet?
Meetings are at **** weekly between the hours of 7.00 and 9.30
When could I come and introduce myself to the group?
3rd Dec 2013
Could I advertise in other ways throughout the group?
Yes leaflets / invitations could be distributed throughout the group and through Facebook and twitter.

Topic Timing for activities

Discussion - The group lead busy lives as reflected in the fluctuations of attendance.   Many already participate in a range of activities within the church.   CH suggested time should include time for prayer and reflection should be built in to the time spent online.   Time spent on discussions in the forum would be additional to this.   The dilemma between imposing on people's time and the

benefits of reflection and social interaction were discussed.   It was generally agreed that the forum would be encouraged but allowed to build naturally.

Conclusion - A guide time of 15mins per session

- 2/5 mins prayer or worship
- 5 mins interaction
- 6 – 7 mins prayer and reflection – with possibly a countdown timer, music, videos etc.
- 5 mins writing up refection or completing reflection activity.

Topic Content

Discussion - Time restricted activities.   Focus on a single learning point per week.   Looking to promote decipleship, the personal, practical application of what has been expressed in the sermon.   Seeking ways to apply Christian principles within the participants own life.   There should be just one main point expressed throughout the session in a short simple concise manner.   He feels that a media rich environment is essential to engage the participants, but the focus of the session needs to be on God, with the computer as a guide to the session.

CH recommended three books on the subject of discipleship to assist in my understanding of it.

- Croft S.J.L., (1999) Ministry in three dimensions : ordination and leadership in the local church . [online] London: Darton Longman & Todd.
- Kinnaman, David ,Hawkins, Aly, (2011) You lost me : why young Christians are leaving church-- and rethinking faith . [online] Grand Rapids, Mich.: BakerBooks.
- Putman, J., Harrington, B. and Coleman, R. (2013) DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples . [online] Zondervan.

Conclusion –

- Time restricted activities
- One main point to each session
- Media rich
- Focus on discipleship
- Course as guide to learning but focus on God

Topic Outcomes

Discussion – We discussed the outcomes of the online course.   CH expressed that the outcome is a change within the person, he would not expect a tangible outcome that could be measured, rather a personal growth and transformation within the participant.   As this is a different kind of outcome to that usually expected within education it is important to communicate the aim of the course effectively so that expectations of the participants are managed.   An introductory video was mentioned which outlines these aims and the general structure of the course.

Conclusion -

- Personal change rather than tangible outcomes
- Introduction video to communicate the desired outcomes

Appendix 3 - Preaching Team Sermon Outline

(Received by email Tuesday, 14 January 2014)

SERMON SERIES ON ALTOGETHER HUMAN?

This series will be demanding for the preacher and the congregation.   The themes cannot be explored from one scripture passage. The preacher will need to search the scriptures and take care over the interpretation given.   If in doubt ask for further help.   Preachers are encouraged to preach shorter sermons (20 minutes for this series and if appropriate use film clips to illustrate the complexity or distortions present in wider society on your topic.   It is OK to preach sermons which give an outline of the issues and pose questions but do not give pat answers.   Be Biblical…….even though that will mean showing the Bible does not pronounce fully on every issue. We want to help the congregation to develop a Christian mind.

Dates	Theme	Basic Reading	Scriptures
January 19	Person to Person (we are designed for human relationship). Themes of individualism, loneliness, formation of persons through key relationships. Isolation. Interaction.	John Stott – *The Contemporary Christian* pages 114-119.	Genesis 1:18-25 Genesis 2:15-25, 1 Corinthians: 12:1-?
January 26	Creature to Creator (we are designed for a relationship with God). To be complete as a human being we need to know God. In what sense are we distinct from other animals?	*I Believe in Man*, George Carey Chapter 2.	Psalm 139:1-6, John 1:10-13.
February 2	Image ("Mirror, mirror on the wall). The way our sense of selfhood is manufactured from multiple influences). Fashion? Significance of appearance? Icons?	*Am I Beautiful?: Finding Freedom in the Answer* by Chine Mbubaegbu A book written for women by a Christian woman.	Psalm 8, Luke 5:12-15…..people stigmatised by disease. People who are dehumanised by others and by their wealth - Luke 19:1-7.
February 9	Life – making, living and ending life. Issues around the creation of people. Valuing life itself. Pro-life. Euthanasia, death, eternity. Remember that our humanity and life itself derives its dignity from our being God's Creature.	David Cook *Question Time* Section 6-7.	Genesis 4: 8-15, Micah 6:6-8 John 11:25. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
February	Reason - Its importance,	Stott Issues facing	Mark:12:30, Romans 12:2,

16	virtues and limitations. What do Christians understand by the Mind, What is spiritual blindness? How does the Christian develop a Christian mind? In what sense does Faith transcend mind? How do we use and abuse our minds? What happens to our humanity when the mind disintegrates?	Christians today pp36-41.	1 Corinthians 13:11-13, Philippians 2:5.
February 23	Messages from the Media. How are we portrayed and impacted as human persons by the images of various media and social media. The power of the media to shape perception……of ourselves, norms, desires and aspirations. What does the media contribute to virtue?	David Cook, Section 10 of *Question Time* – The Media See too various Image magazines.	Philippians 4:8
March 2	Gender and God - What it means to be male and female. Sexuality and identity. Help folk recognise themselves as sexual beings even if their sexuality cannot always find expression. People are living alone outside of relationships for a significant part of life.	John Stott, *Issues facing Christians Today* Part 4. Also writings of Elaine Storkey, David Cook *Question Time* Chapter 4.	Genesis:2 24, Ephesians 5: 22-23.
March 9 *John Coyne*	Violence and what it does to us. How does violence present itself in your experience of life? Is it possible to defend exposure to violent images?	David Cook, Section 9 of *Question Time* – Force and Violence.	Joshua 10:6-11, Colossians 3: 12-14.
March 16	Fulfilment what is it? I only want to be happy?	David Cook *Question Time,* page 25 -28.	Micah 6:8. John 10:10.

Appendix 4 - Preaching Team Interview Results

Topic Outcomes

Why do we want a VLE?

To diversify how we reach out to the congregation and cater to different learning styles. Traditional stand at the front and talk is not the most effective way of reaching out. To move away from the traditional mode of sermons and house groups and embracing the social medias and technologies available.

What do you feel is the overarching outcome of the course?

To encourage the Growing Whole-life Disciples as depicted in the strap line for the church.

To encourage personal growth and reflection but encourage the social and group dynamic growth of the church. To relate the sermon content to oneself and translate it in to kingdom living. Christianity is a team sport, important to engage in small groups.

The series is about personal growth but you can't do your personal growing on your own.

There is a concern that the evening service is not sufficiently engaging youth culture in a format that is to be credibly informing them.

What is the theme of the series?

Altogether Human? Explore what it means to be human in relation to God. It will involve exploring ideas in the media, literature and culture.

What do you consider the outcomes for the weeks?

1. **Person to Person (we are designed for human relationship)**

   What is means to be altogether human? With emphasis on the question mark. What differentiates us from animals. How contemporary culture distorts what being human is about. Redressing balance which has been lost in contemporary culture. Designed for relationship, is formed from birth via relationship with mother. Relationship is fundamental to being human. So what does that mean in terms if individualism or to be lponely? Look at relationship with others rather than god.

   Designed for Human relationship over relationships through machines, seek human relationships through the machine. Can it sustain relationships or does it create false relationships. How real are the relationships we form online?

   Activities –

   - Celebrating or acknowledging relationships within their own lives.
   - Considering impact of loneliness on someone. Is there something that can be done to assist?
   - What it may be like for people and what could be done

2. **Creature to Creator (we are designed for a relationship with God)**

Regardless of religion human beings are designed for a relationship with god.   God is interested in everybody even those who are not interested in him.   We are the creature not the creator.   Our position within the universe.   We are incredible but not god.

Activity - Hierarchies in society building up dynamic where is god where are we.   Used to be taken for granted that god came first then angels, people, animals etc.   Have we now got the point where we care for our pet more than we care for our neighbour?   Do we have it intrinsically wrong?

Reflection – In my life what do I put above god.   Putting God first in choices that we make.

3. **Reason**
   Important to think as a Christian
   Do not let your mind be conformed but transformed romans 12.
   See preaching notes.
   Culture does not put reason highly.   Entertainment is about getting out of mind, mindless entertainment.   Push reason to the side.
   How do we abuse our mind?
   What happens to our humanity when the mind disintegrates.
   Loving and valuing humanity in spite of loss of intellect – mind etc.

   Activities – choice making, reasoning activities, moving towards why do we choose to give it up?   Why do we switch our minds off?

   Reflection - Who has god made you to be, if you lose your reason what makes us better than animals or beasts?   You have taken away what god has made you to be.

4. **Image ("Mirror, mirror on the wall). The way our sense of selfhood is manufactured from multiple influences)**

   Models vs real photos what is real our expectations of ourselves.

   Over body image significance of appearance, icons.   What is our image of ourselves and how we are perceived as successful?   Money, job, status or contentedness, friendship, happiness?

   Society says you do not count unless?

   Image and illness there are body issues within the church. – not aimed at a youth

5. **Life – making living and ending life**
   Living purposefully.   Life is given by God and can only be taken by God so how does this affect our perception of suicide, abortion and euthanasia?

6. **Gender and God - What it means to be male and female**
   We are different and need to accept and embrace our differences.   Modern Culture says it is ok to be who you are whatever the consequences but has it created a culture where we

do not have the boundaries that traditional roles of gender had?   The Bible says that women should not be head of the church but this is in direct conflict with modern society.

7. **Messages from the Media How are we portrayed and impacted as human persons by the images of various media and social media.**

    Media effects our perception of the world around us through advertising and narrowcasting.

    How does social media allow us to control our image through selfies status updates? But how much of it is a fair reflection of what is going on?   Does our activity online reflect our off line selves.

    Activity – Look at your Facebook or Twitter profile, does it reflect you as a Christian?

    Reflection – Is there something we can do to be Christian online?

8. **Violence and what it does to us**
    Violent imagery on screen how does it affect our reaction to when we encounter violence. Are we hardened to its effects.
    Gods image is in us and should be reflected in to the world.   But what happens if we are violent?

9. **Fulfilment. I only want to be happy?**
    What is happiness?   How do we achieve a relationship with God.

Topic Content

How do you envisage the course being delivered?

- After being advised of what was discussed with CH.   We want the sermon to be available online to be recapped if necessary.   It will be available in as much detail as possible according to the notes, PowerPoint and audio available.
- This will be followed by a time of prayer, possibly inspired by an image, video or single verse.
- Activities should be simple and explore the root ideas of the sermon increasing in complexity, building to encourage deeper thought around the subject and its application to Christian living.
- Time of reflection accompanied by PowerPoint of prompt either simplified sermon PowerPoint or alternative. With instructions that the focus of this time is with the lord and on reflection with the computer as an aid.   Encouragement to get up move around and be comfortable.
- The Forum should be a chance to ask questions reveal what has been revealed through the reflection.

Have you any experience of Christian online learning environments?

Are there any features that you would or would not like to see?

    Liked the model of discipleship on foundation 21.   When they set it up they accepted that people wanted to access information 'on the move'.   But also to act as a resource to small groups.

Some research has shown that anonymous interaction online can be beneficial for participants to be more open, however the Bible shows that we should all be 'one anothering' and that community is all about knowing one another.   These two ideas are in conflict.   Does the church want the participants of the site to be anonymous, known, or this to be a choice for the individual?

> It was expressed that names should be used in the forum and discussion groups.   On social networking sites people are extremely open about personal details as there is a feeling of distance, through the screen, from the other people.   This feeling of distance should encourage openness without the need for anonymity.   To encourage personal bonds within church there should be development of bonds online.

Topic Timing for activities

How long do you expect a participant to spend online?   Once a week, Through-out the week ?

> Once a week, then revisiting the forum as replies are posted.

Appendix 5 - Distillation of requirements

Distillation of the requirements outlined in the Literature review along with the outcome of the preaching group interviews

Objective	Rational	Specification	How will I know if it has been accomplished?	
Pedagogical				
Blended learning Approach	Deulen (2013) Preaching Team Sermon Outline (Appendix 3)	The course will follow the sermon series and will be directly informed by the sermons week to week.	The course will follow the structure of the sermon series	
Consideration to flow of activities not just content.	Conole et al (2004)	The learning design approach takes in to consideration the flow of activities.	The Design itself should reflect the flow of the activities through the course.	
Responding-to students' lived experiences and actively and consciously critiquing that experience	Zyngier (2008)	One of the overarching goals of the course is to encourage participants to apply their learning to themselves. There should be opportunity to analyse and reflect.	The forum questions should encourage personal growth and exploration.	
Focused questions for discussion	Almala (2006)			
Empowering-students with a belief that what they do will make a difference to their lives and the opportunity to voice and discover their own authentic and authoritative life.	Zyngier (2008)	One of the overarching goals of the course is to encourage participants to apply their learning to themselves and apply what they have learnt in their lives.	Encourage personal reflection through the use of personal blogs. Encourage personal reflection and sharing of experiences through the use of personal blogs.	
Students get opportunities to construct their knowledge while solving real problems and transfer their knowledge to other students	Stefanov et al (1998)			
Assessment is personal based on an individual's progression	Almala (2006)	In this instance there is no formal assessment. Progression is personal to the participant.		
An instructor as a presence within the e-learning environment	Almala (2006)		The sermon team and myself will moderate and offer direction to the forum and blogs	
Teachers are mostly facilitators	Stefanov et al (1998)			
Positive social environment where peers have opportunities to work together and learn from each other	Fredricks et al (2011)	There should be a number of collaborative activities.	There should be at least 1 activity that involves collaborative working.	

Active activities encouraging participation with others.	Dixson (2010)		
Collaborative activities	Dale and Lane (2007) Preaching Team Sermon Outline (Appendix 3)		
Problem solving tasks with a team work approach	Almala (2006)		
Learners participate in the formulation of learning objectives and take responsibility for their activities	*Stefanov et al (1998)*	It will be important to review the course weekly to reflect the outcomes of the forum discussions in the future weeks' activities.	The course design should include opportunity to feedback on previous discussions. And be flexible to respond to learners requests. Points need to be built in to the design that allows for students to decide for themselves the outcome for their learning. This could then be fed in to the next weeks plan. The blog gives an opportunity for individuals to highlight their outcomes.
Owning-all students should be able to see themselves as represented in the work	Zyngier (2008)		
The problems students solve are formulated either by themselves or by the teacher and come from everyday life and from the participants professional practice	*Stefanov et al (1998)*		
Relevant and authentic activities	Almala (2006)		
Technological			
Anonymous discussion	Dale and Lane (2007)	Dale & Lane and the preaching group appear to disagree on whether the participants should remain anonymous. Lee and the preaching group consider that the removed nature of online discussion creates an air of openness which should lead to open discussion.	Participants will remain named in the discussion areas
Named discussion	Lee (2013) Preaching Team Sermon Outline (Appendix 3)		
A single large forum instead of many individual forums.	Hampel and Plaines (2013)		A single forum used
Feedback or a conclusion to the discussion	Dale and Lane (2007)		Discussions closed after an fixed amount of time with conclusions fed back in to future weeks
Clear guidelines for forum use	Almala (2006)		Introduction to the forum and activities along with rules of use.
Clear guidelines to discussion	Dale and Lane (2007)		
Clear expectations, rules, and routines	*Fredricks et al (2011)*		
Use of online media to promote quiet time and reflection	Lee (2012) Preaching Team Sermon Outline (Appendix 3)		Media clips should be used throughout not simply for entertainment but as a point of reflection
Reliable web based resources	Almala (2006)		Ensure all links are working.

Verification of sources	*Lee (2012)*		Encouragement to research online should be supported by a feedback facility to share links which could then be discussed but the group and monitored for inaccuracies by the preaching team.	
Content				
Introduction to the range of activities available	Dale and Lane (2007)	The first week should give an outline to what the overall week structure will be	Clear instructions	
Weeks long	Preaching Team Sermon Outline (Appendix 3)	*10 weeks beginning on 19th January 2014*	There should be course content for each week	
Course will contain	This is taken from the Interview with the sermon team. (Appendix 4)	Activities and a forum. Individual blogs would be useful for each participant to track their learning; however this would not form part of the initial pilot. The Evening service will where possible use film clips to illustrate key themes about being human. It may be called ALTOGETHER HUMAN?	Each week should contain activities and points to discuss on the forum.	
The theme of the series	Preaching Team Sermon Outline (Appendix 3)		The title of the course should be 'Altogether Human'.	
Content at correct level	Dale and Lane (2007)	*a wide range of activities targeted to the individual's level of learning need to be presented. Differing levels of activities can be offered and discussions can take place at a variety of levels.*	Provide a range of different activities each week.	
Provide a range of activities within the zone of proximal development	Almala (2006)			
variety of interesting tasks that emphasize higher-order skills and real-world applications.	*Fredricks et al (2011)*			
Opportunities to witness	Lee (2012)		Encouragement to share experiences both on the VLE and from VLE in to social networks.	
learners as - Newcomers - Co-operators - Collaborators - Initiator/Partners. tutors role - Social negotiator - Structural engineer - Facilitator - Community member or challenger.	*Conrad and Donaldson (2003)*	The flow of the interaction should follow the phase structure outlined from learners as newcomers and tutor as social negotiator through to learners as initiator and partners in the learning process with tutors as community members and challengers.	There should be differentiation in the requirements of social interaction. With it steadily increasing collaboration and self-direction.	