

## Critical Incident

### Teaching Context:

- Clinical education for BSc Nursing Students and new staff nurses and healthcare support workers at Moorfields Eye hospital
- Most teaching sessions consist of both theoretical and practical teaching
- Student cohort is unisex, consisting of various ethnic backgrounds and an age range of 20-50
- I also provide support when needed outside of teaching for all students on our ophthalmic courses both undergraduate and postgraduate

### Area of Development:

- I decided to tackle the challenge of redesigning lessons in order to place a greater focus on two key aspects:
  - Pushing students to think and reflect more deeply on how conditions affect all facets of patients' lives – the physical, mental and social aspects. Understanding the impacts on family life, work/financial status and education among many other things.
  - Spending more time to refine practical skills by increasing time spent practicing as well providing more opportunities for assessment and feedback on those skills

I decided to explore the use of blended learning to deliver the basic teaching content for each session through online means. This would be done in advance to deliver a form of just-in-time teaching or 'JiTT' (Novak et al. 1999).

## Literature Review

During my literature review, I viewed a variety of material from academic books to various journals. I wanted to use the current literature in order to inform mainly two key things – 1) how to successfully implement blended learning 2) how to contextualise it for nursing.

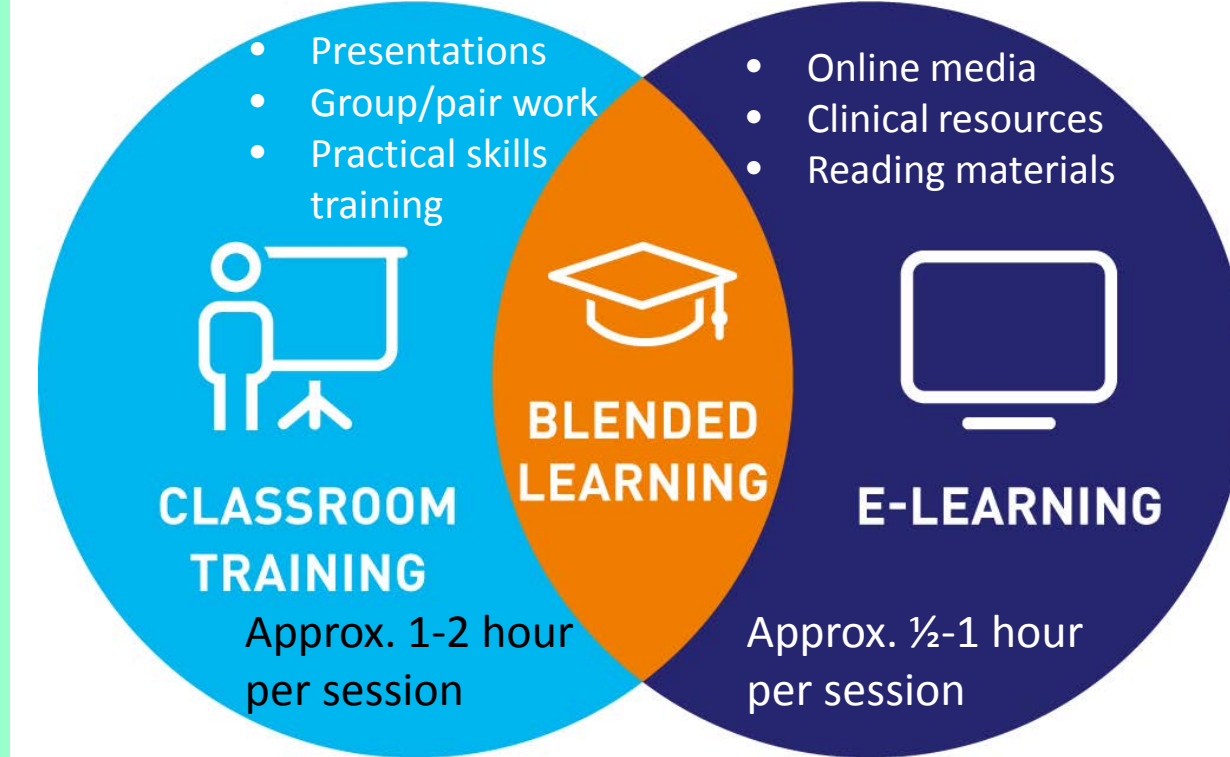
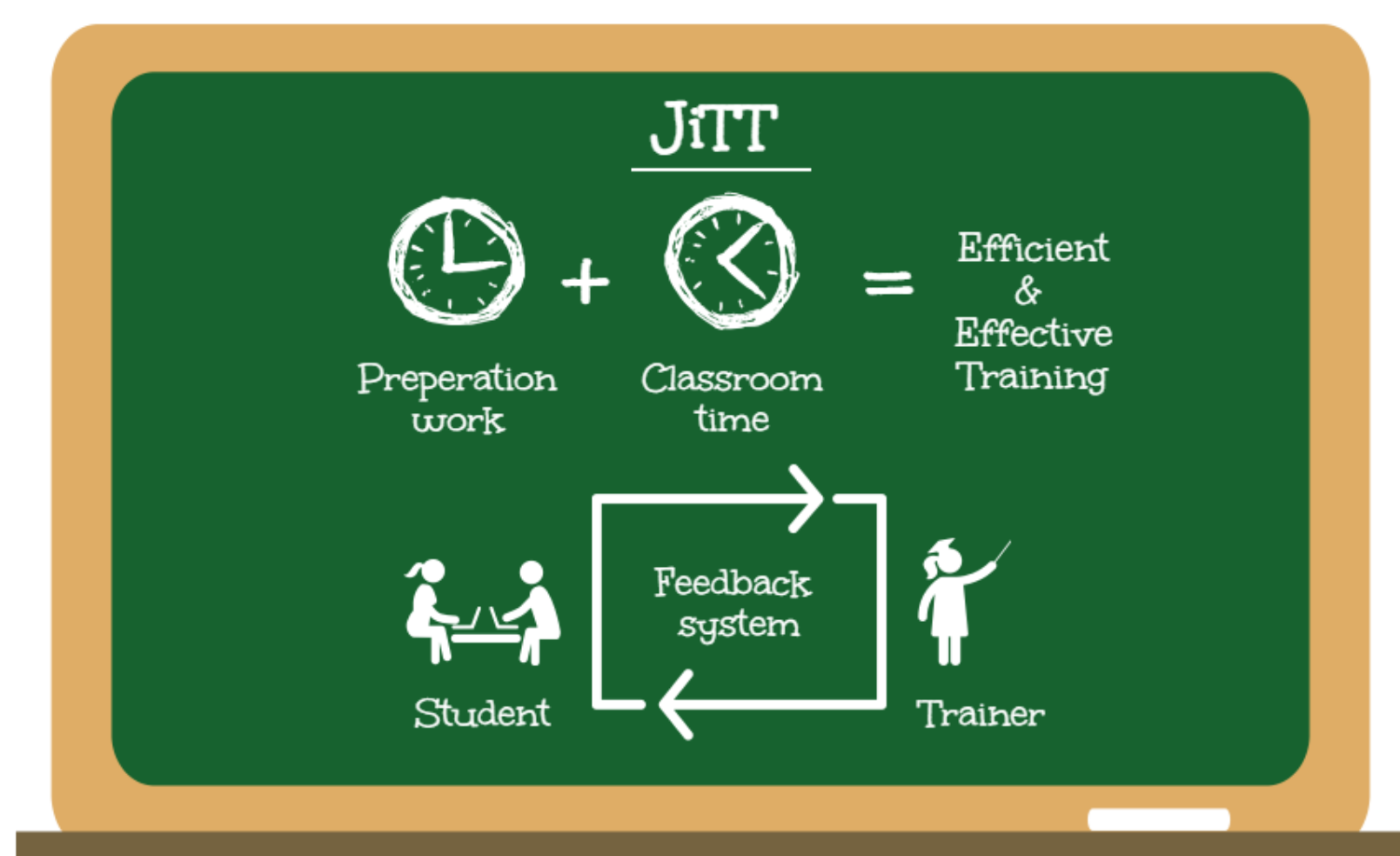
Glazer (2012) provides a clear framework to introduce blended learning into teaching. By familiarising students with small amounts of preparatory reading before lessons and slowly becoming accustomed to diving straight into discussions and exploration of the concepts/practice of the practical skills required, you can evaluate how receptive the students are to the approach and how effective it is in enabling student learning. You will then be able to follow through and add more layers to your blend in various ways.

### Types of Blending in Teaching

- Online (VLEs, media etc.) learning with standard classroom learning
- Self-paced learning with collaborative group learning
- Custom, specialised learning resources with general, off-the-shelf resources

(Singh 2003)

Implementation should also be supplemented with thorough guidance on how the new blended system will work. Informing students that they still have a responsibility to learn outside of class time and prepare in advance is imperative (Stacey & Gerbic, 2008; Vaughan, 2007). Communication is important in voicing your expectations but also understanding your students' and if many do not find the blended approach beneficial, try investigating why and if these issues can possibly be solved.



Teaching sessions were conducted at Moorfields Eye Hospital by my colleagues and I, who make up the clinical education team.

For the nursing education, blended learning can be very useful for practical modules and as suggested by Johnson et al. (2010) much of the teaching can be delivered online which may be blended with simulation sessions and small group seminars in which students can practice the skills as much as possible and consolidate their practice with senior academic tutors. The absolute efficacy of blended learning as an approach has been shown to be on par with and even exceed traditional teaching by various studies (McCutcheon et al. 2014; Pereira et al. 2007) however there are few meta-analyses conducted and overall limited evidence to draw from so continued research would be useful.

## Intervention

I slowly introduced blended learning by giving them printouts to read in out-of-class time prior to teaching in order to inform them of the basics. To familiarise them with e-learning, I sent an online video to the students outlining the practical procedures that the upcoming lesson will cover in detail. I sent regular follow up emails to remind and check whether the students had engaged in the preparatory work. At the beginning of the session, I carried a short recap quiz to jog everyone's memory and ensure all the students are on the same page. In the future, I plan to provide more e-learning tools via online platforms such as Moodle along with creating my own custom learning resources such as demonstrational videos for practical competencies.

## Data

Mainly presented through feedback:

- My mentor mentioned that my use of blended learning was done well and enhanced the students' overall learning experience. Learning conducted via e-resources was effectively assessed at the outset of the lesson and tied to the practical teaching clearly
- Student feedback was very positive with most of them responding well to all aspects of teaching. Students liked the use of blended learning which enabled them to prepare adequately in advance, getting the fundamental content out of the way
- I believe I had implemented the blended learning manageably for both myself and the students. One drawback was the timing of intervention as I had only given the students 3 days to engage in the online portion of the blended learning. For the future, I hope to improve the blended resources I provide as well as building up the online aspect of blended learning further.

### Student Feedback:

"I enjoyed the new learning experience and it was definitely more manageable than I initially thought"

"Most of the presentation wasn't just teaching and allowed for open discussion on the topic"

"The preparatory materials helped me to understand and engage with the lesson a lot better"

## Conclusion

The summarise, blended learning is a great way to provide a just-in-time style of teaching in order increase productivity of class time by either covering more content or giving students more time to work with concepts/practical skills. The implementation of this intervention was quite effective for my student cohort due to the practical emphasis of the nursing discipline but also because many had requested more time for practicing and improving the relevant skills. I will continue to gather feedback on my use of blended learning and observe future literature on the efficacy of blended learning in the nursing discipline.

## References

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