
ETHICS@<http://www.kewl.uwc.ac.za>: THE POTENTIAL OF E-LEARNING FOR THE SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the design and implementation of a module on Advanced Social Work Ethics using a blended learning approach and relying substantially on e-learning as a pedagogical tool. The design is contextualised by elaborating on the parameters in which the module was developed – viz. the minimum standards of the Bachelor of Social Work pertaining to ethics, as well as the e-learning and assessment policies at UWC. The module design and implementation was informed by constructivist pedagogical principles, and made use of the notion of ‘critical friends’ as a means of providing opportunities for students to interact as peers and provide input on each others’ learning, thus decentralising the traditional role of the university lecturer. Examples of assessment tasks devised for the module to illustrate the pedagogical principles are also provided. Students’ responses to their experiences of undertaking the module are drawn from their final journal entries and provide an indication of how the module was operationalised.

Key words: e-learning, blended learning, social work ethics, critical friends, social constructivism, responses to e-learning

INTRODUCTION

This blended learning module on social work ethics was developed in line with University of Western Cape (UWC) policies of e-learning and assessment. These policies encourage the shift from *teaching* to *active learner-centred pedagogy* as well as the provision of opportunities for participation and collaboration between learners. At the time the module was developed in 2005, students and the instructor were both novices in the pedagogy of ethics and in e-learning. The module has since been implemented in 2006 and 2007, but for the purposes of this article, the initial creation, implementation and piloting of the module in 2005 will be focused upon.

The article elaborates on the instructional design of the module: the systematic process of creating learning tasks for a set of outcomes chosen for the module prior to its application (E-learning strategy for UWC version 1.5). Constructivist pedagogical principles, which inform the design of the module and the use of students as ‘critical friends’ for collaborative learning, is discussed. The modification of the role of lecturer from didactic transmitter of knowledge to a more responsive facilitator is described. The article further examines students’ reflections on their e-learning experiences by utilising their writings from their journal entries written during their involvement with the module.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The module was constructed to give effect to the new minimum standards for the BSW degree, as well as the e-learning and assessment policies at UWC. The audience was fourth year social work students and the module content dealt with advanced social work ethics. The UWC e-learning policy provides the following process for instructional design, which is the process which was undertaken to create and design this e-learning module:

- defining the problem or knowledge gap that the instruction is meant to address;
- defining the audience that the instruction is meant to serve;
- developing objectives and assessment strategies;
- selecting and sequencing content;
- selecting and sequencing the learning activities;
- creating the course and populating it with sequenced content and activities;
- engaging learners in the course and guiding learning;
- evaluating the course and its design (E-learning strategy for the University of the Western Cape Version 1.5).

The module was designed to give students the opportunity to understand the following:

- how students' own values impact on their ethical decisions;
- what ethical dilemmas are, and ways of solving ethical dilemmas;
- how local and international social work ethical guidelines impact on practice of social work;
- how international human rights and the South African constitution impact on social work practice;
- the conceptual frameworks for social justice and the ethics of care;
- how perspectives of ethics of care and social justice can be critically applied to the field of social work practice.

The module objectives as outlined above as well as the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) outcomes and associated assessment criteria pertaining to ethics were used to design the assessment tasks (South African Qualifications Authority, 2003). These tasks were developed to provide opportunities for students to develop competencies with regard to the outcomes and associated criteria.

The construction and delivery of the module was also informed by UWC's e-learning policy which encourages lecturers to integrate Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into the curriculum. The term 'e-learning' was initially used in the corporate sector, but has since 2002 increasingly become utilised within the higher education sector and refers to the use of computers and the internet for learning (Littlejohn and Pegler, 2007). As Herselmann and Hay (2005) point out, e-learning is no longer only associated with distance learning but is also increasingly used with face-to-face learning.

In terms of the UWC e-learning strategy, technology is seen to facilitate the transformation of teaching and learning according to the constructivist paradigm leading to active and independent learning, where students take responsibility for their own learning. Social constructivism builds on Vygotsky's (1962; 1978) notions of learning. Central features differentiating a social constructivist and more traditionalist view of learning are the following:

- it is social rather than individual;
- it is an interactive, dialogical context-based practice, utilising a variety of learning activities rather than an acquisition of transmitted knowledge available for consumption in the form of lectures;

- it is a complex, creative and participatory process rather than being a static, linear and passive event;
- it involves meaning-making rather than imbibing ‘received’ knowledge (McConnell, 2006; Rohleder, Bozalek, Carolissen, Leibowitz and Swartz, in press).

Informed by these ideas of constructivism and collaborative learning encouraging critical thinking, as well as UWC’s policy on assessment, which stipulates that the curriculum must be assessment-driven, I set about constructing assessment tasks for the module. These tasks were a mixture of online tasks on the UWC e-learning platform, and face-to-face exercises in the classroom; what has become known as a ‘blended learning approach’ (Littlejohn and Pegler, 2007).

CONSTRUCTIVIST ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Herselmann and Hay (2005) are of the opinion that well-designed e-learning courses provide opportunities for learner-centered education and for students to regulate their own learning as well as opportunities to engage in collaborative group learning activities. E-learning using constructivist ideas emphasises setting authentic tasks for students that is, questions which are of genuine interest to the course designer and to which there is no right or wrong answer.

In this module, students were asked a series of questions in a discrete number of assessment tasks. In these tasks they were required to interact with each other, reflect on their own practice while simultaneously reading literature to inform them on current approaches to ethics and ethical dilemmas. The intention was to design questions that were relevant to the students, thoughtful, open-ended and that were authentic in that I genuinely did not know the answer to them. I was interested in how students would form their own understandings and engage with each other in their deliberations regarding the questions posed.

Constructivist paradigms see learning as a social activity and hence encourage collaborative learning incorporating critical thinking through engaging in knowledge-building with peers in a social context (McConnell, 2006). Furthermore, constructivism emphasises recognition of prior learning. I therefore planned assessment tasks which tapped into students’ situated knowledges in relation to their prior learning experiences, and asked them to reflect on these with a critical friend. This was done to facilitate students’

active involvement in a collaborative and negotiated sense-making of both their experiences and their interactions with critical literature (Dysthe, 2002).

CRITICAL FRIENDS

The notion of a 'critical friend' is derived from educational action research (Smith, 2004). A critical friend can be a colleague or fellow student who would be truthful in their response, willing to challenge attitudes and behaviours, point out inconsistencies, raise questions about the situatedness of power and oppression, and be attentive to their partners (Taylor, 2000; Thomas, 2004). Cross, Liles, Conduit and Price (2004) have noted that participating in conversations with peers as critical friends can lead to new dimensions of learning as it enables professionals (or students in this instance) to open themselves to questioning and alternative interpretations of their actions.

In this module, I devised a number of tasks in which students had to respond to each other as critical friends. This meant that they were to critique another's experience by reading each other's postings and then providing a response. The intention was similar to that of Costa and Kallick (1993), where critical friends would be enabled to ask critical and provocative questions of each others' work and utilise each others' feedback to provide different lenses with which to view reality.

The assessment tasks that I constructed were designed to ask thought-provoking questions which would lead to an expansion of vision as well as interaction between learners. The emphasis of these tasks was on dialogical interaction between the critical friends. I had hoped that this social interaction would maintain the students' interest in their tasks and thus enrich the production of knowledge with respect to ethical issues and dilemmas in social work. The difference between conventional approaches to ethics and the one I employed in this e-learning module was that students were given opportunities to find answers to questions independently whilst at the same time engaging with their classmates as both critical friends and collaboratively as group members. An example of an exercise using the critical friend was a task where learners were asked to examine (a) their own notions of what it means to be a morally good person, (b) they needed to identify the influences of their gendered, raced and classed values and backgrounds on their professional practice, and (c) they needed to explore the influences of religion or the 'unseen world' on themselves. Their responses to each other about these matters facilitated dialogue.

A BLENDED APPROACH TO LEARNING DESIGN

I offered multiple learning opportunities in a blended approach, as I was aware from previous experience of the complexity of catering for diverse learning needs of learners across identity and context (Bozalek, Rohleder, Carolissen, Leibowitz, Nicholls and Swartz, in press; Littlejohn and Pegler, 2007; Palloff and Pratt, 2007; Yusuf-Khalil, Bozalek, Staking, Tuval-Mashiach and Bantebya-Kyomuhendo, 2007). I constructed nine assessment exercises, each with a different emphasis, which was designed to ‘scaffold’ or build upon the students’ previous experiences in the learning process (Salmon, 2006).

The assessment tasks for this module were designed specifically to give learners opportunities for reflection on their personal and professional experiences. I used ideas such as the following list of criteria quoted from Boud and Knights (2004:27) to design activities which would optimally promote reflection:

- “Learners are actively engaged with a task which they accept is for learning; they are not simply following a set of instructions, but contribute their own thinking to the task.
- The task is constructed to allow significant elements of choice by the learners so that they can begin to own it and make it meaningful and worthwhile for them; it thus becomes a task which is undertaken not simply to satisfy the needs of the teacher.
- The event is not totally unpredictable and learners are prompted to notice what they did not expect.
- A learner’s experience is challenged or confronted in some way which allows them to reassess experience and the assumptions on which they are operating.
- Learners are obliged to intervene in some way in their own learning process; they have to make choices and follow the consequences of their choices.
- Learners are required to link what is new to them to their existing frameworks of understanding or confront the need to modify these frameworks.”

The assessment exercises which I designed used a blending of synchronous and asynchronous tasks to scaffold the learning process, where synchronous tasks involve interacting at the same moment in time, but not necessarily in the same place, such as the online chatroom in a learning management system, msn, skype or videoconferencing, and asynchronous tasks are

where the learning environment is accessed at times which suit the learner, such as a discussion forum, email correspondence or worksheet spaces in the learning management system to scaffold the learning process (Mason and Rennie, 2006; Salmon, 2006; Littlejohn and Pegler, 2007; Pallof and Pratt, 2007). Examples of synchronous and asynchronous tasks are provided below:

Table 1: Example of Asynchronous exercise

Assessment Exercise 5
Read the article by Mattison (2000) (click on link). Write 250 words on an incident which occurred in your practical work last year where you were in a dilemma about what you should do. Write a discussion in another 250 words about the incident in relation to Mattison's (2000) questions on pp209 –211 nos. 1-8.
Share the above piece of writing with your critical friend by posting it to him/her.
Read the piece of writing you have received from your critical friend and respond to your friend's piece of writing in no more than 500 words.
Read the SACSSP's new ethical code and the IASSW and IFSW document and write 500 words on what professional obligations you think are relevant to firstly to your incident and secondly to the incident of your critical friend. Post this to your critical friend.
Write a response to your critical friend's piece of writing on the task in (d) (the SACSSP's code of ethics in relation to the incident described) where you indicate whether or not you agree with the professional obligations which your friend has identified in your own and in his/her incident. Give reasons for why you agree or disagree.

Table 2: Example of Synchronous exercise

Assessment Exercise 8
Get together with members of your group and choose one of the following questions and engage in an online chatroom group discussion about your views on these issues, motivating why you think the way you do on the issues. You will need to do some reading yourself before you engage with the issues:

Do you believe that resources should be distributed according to need, merit, future potential, first come first served, lottery, or to the most disadvantaged? (Abramson 1996)
What is your view of a competent social worker? How would you know that a person had done a good job and made a good contribution as a social worker?
Should a social worker always be truthful to his/her client? Indicate where your viewpoint falls in terms of deontological and utilitarian theories, and give reasons for your views.
Do you believe that all people should be treated equally or that people should be treated differently depending on their circumstances?
Do you believe that people have the free will to determine their own lives or are their lives controlled by forces outside of themselves?
Do you believe that the individual's rights and needs should take preference over the good of the community as a whole? Why/ Why not?

Writers such as Salmon (2003, 2006), Lewis and Allan (2005); McConnell (2006); MacDonald (2006); Littlejohn and Pegler (2007) and Palloff and Pratt (2007) all provide informative guidelines and examples of theoretical and conceptual issues underpinning online and blended designs which support constructivist notions of learning. In the Advanced Social Work Ethics module under discussion here, the blended learning design consisted of nine assessment exercises which formed the basis of the curriculum and were spread across the space of a semester. Students were instructed on the use of technology and UWC's open source learning management system. The UWC social work students struggled initially to grasp the technology as they had had little exposure to it in their previous three years of study.

Students were able to take their own time to peruse the material for the module and were free to engage with further materials via the internet or electronic journals and books. Various readings were made available on-line so that they were readily accessible and hyperlinks to prescribed readings in electronic journals were also provided. The tasks I devised accommodated students' prior knowledge and experience, for example, in a few of the exercises students were required to focus on a dilemma from their practice in the previous year fieldwork placement. Johnstonn and Olekalnns (2002) found that deeper learning and critical thinking are more likely to occur where students reflect on their own learning and where the stimulus for

learning are issues from previous experiences and where assessment practices reward critically analysing material. They further emphasise the importance of providing opportunities to apply knowledge in a number of different contexts, which, as I have already indicated, is what I attempted to do through the nine assessment tasks.

THE ROLE OF THE LECTURER IN E-LEARNING

In e-learning the lecturer is a facilitator or an e-moderator, a term Salmon (2003; 2006) uses to describe the role of an on-line teacher. This approach allows a challenging of the hegemonic teacher-learner relationship and a shifting of epistemic authority (Sanchez-Casal and Macdonald, 2002), in that the role is one of support and scaffolding. The e-moderator builds and sustains virtual communities of practice, through engaging in a number of activities such as acknowledging students and their inputs, commenting on the quality and sufficiency of postings, modelling ways to present arguments, summarising students' postings, stimulating fresh ways of viewing phenomena, providing guidance when discussions are off-track, and providing commentary (Salmon, 2006). As can be imagined, this is a complex role which requires knowledge of students' prior and current learning experiences and needs, as well as their personal and professional identities (see Bozalek et al., in press, for a fuller discussion of this).

In the context of students engaging with each other as critical friends, as in this module, the e-moderator views the interactions between the students after they have communicated with each other, providing comments and guidance in relation to their interaction and assessing the quality of their work by allocating marks.

The following section will provide an indication of how the seventy four students in 2005 responded to the module, by reviewing some of their journal entries. Students whose work is used in this section completed written and signed consent forms that they were comfortable with their work being used in publications such as this one.

THE RESPONSE OF UWC STUDENTS TO THE E-LEARNING MODULE ON ETHICS

In this section, I provide some responses that students wrote in their summative journals on the module. These responses will give some indication of the major benefits and problems identified by UWC fourth year social work students in relation to the module and more specifically, to their

experiences of e-learning. There were a total of sixty three students enrolled for this module.

Initial difficulties with the module

Most students reported that they were initially quite wary of the whole experience of e-learning and then became despondent, as they had problems logging into the system. The students, coming mainly from historically disadvantaged backgrounds were technological under-prepared and needed a great deal of assistance to engage in e-learning. Furthermore, they tended to become frustrated due to a lack of access of computers for their needs, a common problem in Africa, particularly among poor, black African women who have the least access (Yusuf-Khalil et al., 2007). This is reflected in journal entries as follows:

"...some had some difficulties in logging in to the kewl system, some could not access the course material on the computer, etc. So it was really a struggle to most of us. But as the time went by we start to get used to the idea of doing the course on line."

"it was a little bit difficult as most of the time we have no access to the computers or we had difficulties finding computers."

Improved technological skills

Many students reported that they had gained significantly in terms of their proficiency with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills, as well as typing and being enabled to negotiate their way around the internet. Some students were so lacking in proficiency that they did not know how to send an e-mail prior to starting this module. Some students commented that they were engaging with content at the same time as gaining technological skills:

"...while we were trying to gain knowledge about the content of the course, we were also acquiring computer skills. So what I can say is that we were killing two birds with one stone. Personally I feel that there is a lot that I learnt in terms of the content of the course because I can be able to apply what I learnt from the course in the field."

"This course has sharpened my computer skills to a level I never knew how. Before this course I did not even use e-mail, I did not even know I had an e-mail address. However now I can copy, paste, attach and e-mail someone."

Improved reading and writing skills

Students also reported that both their reading and writing skills developed in this module, and consequentially their conceptual skills too. The interaction with their critical friends appears to have been an effective one in enhancing their reading skills, as one student comments:

“We are not aware of it but many times we do not read for understanding and conceptualising. We as students many times only read to gather information and then to submit assignments. Because of the group discussions and having to critically respond to your friend you would need to internalise what you have read. E learning affords you that opportunity.”

The usefulness of the assessment tasks for internalising ethics

Ethics is a potentially abstract subject and it is therefore important for students or learners to be able to engage with ethics by considering real life dilemmas in relation to various theoretical perspectives. The assessment tasks in the module provided students with opportunities to develop links between the abstract theoretical notions and real life practical experiences. Furthermore, students were able to examine and comment on how their peers were engaging with these links. Students remarked on this in detail:

“I feel that as a future social worker in the profession, I will be faced with a lot of adversities, difficulties, and challenges. It is the way I construct and handle these adversities that would make me a good social worker. This course has then helped and addressed some similar adversities and it is my understanding that social work will never be an easy task. I have enjoyed ethics more than the other courses this year. I learnt new and exciting things about social work and other important aspects of life.”

“While I had previously engaged in literature content, ie: Code of Ethics, Bills of Rights, Ethics of Care, etc, this course has heightened my level of consciousness to ethical practice and has made ethics a very real and less abstract concept. I’ve always relied on ‘gut instinct’ to guide my actions. This course has made me realise that our actions (in terms of what we consider to be best or right) is guided by our own truth, which may not necessarily be appropriate or relevant in our interactions with others and in social work practice as a whole. This has made me realise that without deliberation, I could very well be doing more harm than the intended good. In addition, as a custodian for human well being, this course has made me realise the huge obligation/ responsibility I have as a prospective social

worker to ensure that I act in a manner that encourages and supports capacity building in people.”

Johnstonn and Olekalnns (2002) distinguish between surface and deep learning in that with the latter the learners only engage in a task for short-term goals of passing a module, whereas with deep learning they become personally invested in their learning experience and obtain significant meaning from the learning. In examining the above excerpts from learner’s journal entries, it would seem that the students were able to engage in deep rather than surface learning. I would add that they are able to carry through these experiences to their practice as student social workers.

Learning from peers, independent learning and critical thinking

Many of the assessment tasks provided students with the opportunity to interact with their peers either as a critical friend or a member of an e-learning group. For many, this may be the first opportunity that students have to see the work of their peers and compare themselves against how their peers interact with the material as well as on how their peers respond to their offerings. One of the students was enthusiastic about an exercise which investigated each other’s views of morally good persons and the impact of their personal values on social work practice:

“The very first exercise that we did is the one that I think that was fabulous in the sense that it gave me a close look to the inner feelings of my critical friend, I could understand his thoughts about life general. That exercise has given me an opportunity to have an overview of my critical friend’s background and the direction he is taking with his life”.

Johnstonn and Olekalnns (2002) found that the process of reading other students’ work and commenting on it enabled students to enhance understanding as it forced them to think about the material and make explicit and externalise their views. In the excerpts below it is evident that students benefited a great deal through interaction with their peers as critical friends; they could identify with each other’s experiences and learned to respect and debate their views. As Johnstonn and Olekalnns (2002) point out, student peer interactions provide a way of ensuring prompt and detailed feedback on their postings. It would seem that students seem more amenable to receiving critical feedback from a fellow student than from their lecturer or e-moderator. Being critical friends can also give students more of a sense of responsibility and control in relation to their learning (Johnstonn and Olekalnns, 2002). In engaging with the responses of their critical friends to their analyses, they were able to take responsibility and learn critical

reflective skills, identify strengths and weaknesses, and offer constructive criticism on their friends' practices and analyses. They commented:

"It was a way of learning from a friend as well. Personally I've also learned that I'm not the only one experiencing difficulties and uncertainty. I have also learned that other people's experiences, answers, etc. are also important, valuable and it can help me as a person and professional. I've learned that would've never shared my thoughts, feelings, experiences with my friend face to face as I did through e-learning."

"I only had knowledge of doing group discussion only in the lecture halls. I never thought that it could be possible to engage myself in group discussion through a computer. So for me that was really [a] quite an experience that I will never forget."

"Core values of this course have brought me into light on being considerate towards others opinions. I have learnt on how to be open on constructive criticism and bearing in mind that we learn with and from people."

To think and act independently from the instructor with one's peers is one of the aims of e-learning. Students are able to develop good patterns of consistent working in that they are continually actively engaging with assessment tasks rather than merely being passive absorbers of the content provided by lecturers in traditional modules. This assists in the ability to learn in that students are engaging and re-engaging with the learning material and using it in different contexts. The curriculum becomes assessment-led rather than content-led and students gain confidence in their ability to learn independently. As one student commented:

"The good thing about e learning is that the students can do their work without [having] to wait for the lecturers to tell them."

A number of students reported that they were able to engage in critical thinking as a result of participating in the module, an outcome which was anticipated in the design of the module. For example:

"This course has helped me to think, analyse and understand dilemmas in a critical manner. I have understood how my own values impact on a ethical dilemma and more importantly on how it (sic) impacts on a ethical decision."

The quote that follows shows that critical reflection is not always a comfortable process and can lead to a questioning of professional competence:

“On a more personal level, this course has also taught me a bit about myself. Not one who enjoys self-reflecting or is confident about relating /engaging in “abstract” phenomena, this course has really challenged my boundaries and made me face the doubts I have about my own capacities and abilities.”

Not all students, however, felt that they benefited from the experience of being a critical friend. Students were given the freedom to choose anyone from the class as a critical friend, and many of them chose friends with whom they were familiar. The following student’s analysis of her experience raises the contradictory concepts of what friendship and criticality mean and how sometimes the two can be incompatible:

“The exercise I least enjoyed was the critical friend exercises. My critical friend and I express things in very different ways. This meant that before I could respond, I needed to spend time interpreting what was being said. While I suspect that this may possibly be part of the learning experience, with limited time and my tendency to ponder on meaning, I sometimes found this frustrating and time consuming. I am also concerned that I may not have responded appropriately to her thoughts. My situation was further complicated by the fact that my critical friend is also a personal friend and her friendship is one that I value. I therefore found it extremely difficult to be truly critical.”

Ability to express self through e-learning

Students were assigned to groups in the module and thus did not have the opportunity to choose collaborators in learning, as they did with their critical friends. Many students expressed an interesting view that they felt less inhibited in the e-learning environment and more able to contribute to their own learning and that of their peers. It was apparent from their comments that they felt less judged by peers in the e-learning environment than in face-to-face interaction in class:

“I found E-learning very challenging, It has helped me to become able to express my views on the topic of discussion, without having to be judged by the social work class that my English is poor, my dressing code is this and that ... all those things. On E-learning it was my word against other people’s views I enjoyed it I must say. It was a comfortable room for learning and developing my reasoning skills. To share my thoughts and my way of seeing things with a group without withdrawals and anxieties and being judged its what I enjoy the most in my life, E-learning has given me that opportunity.”

“The assessment exercises that I enjoyed or that I liked the most was the discussion forum within groups. These exercises I liked the most because they challenged each and every one of us to contribute to the topics discussed. For everyone to express their views and without anyone looking at your face. Because I have observed that in group discussions some people are afraid of speaking because they think that they will be laughed at or made fun of the way they speak especially English not being their mother tongue. So the discussion forums in this course gave them a chance to express themselves without any of those concerns.”

According to Johnstonn and Olekalns (2002) students often find it intimidating to contribute in large classroom situations, and even in small tutorial sessions they may be reluctant to offer their opinions for fear of being seen as a ‘weak’ student. The e-learning environment offers these students a refuge from the judgement of their peers and facilitates a more egalitarian and active mode of interaction with peers and with the learning material.

CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to demonstrate that through engagement with e-learning and other blended learning tasks students were accorded epistemic authority in the classroom (Sanchez-Casal and Macdonald, 2002). The design of learning activities in this course has illustrated how e-learning can serve to disrupt hegemonic pedagogical practices such as the notion that knowledge should be transmitted and acquired by learners who are passive recipients of didactic teaching (Hildebrand, 1999). Through practices such as engagement with critical friends and because students feel freer to express themselves through this medium, e-learning has the potential to destabilise inequities and pose alternatives to regimes of truth in society by giving learners the opportunities to actively participate in knowledge production, hence illuminating students’ local knowledges (Bozalek, 2004).

The advanced ethics module described in this article provides an example of the possibilities of blended e-learning in the social work curriculum in South Africa. This module could be used within a higher education institution or could be a means of interacting beyond institutional, professional and national boundaries. The experience of e-learning came at a late stage for the social work students of 2005, who expressed the wish that they could have had exposure to this medium earlier in their career. This articulates with current concerns in South African and global higher education which calls for flexibility in the reconceptualisation of learning as a lifelong activity. Incorporating a blended approach is one way of addressing this.

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