

## Narrative 6

Sweta Rajan-Rankin is a lecturer at the Social Work division in the School for Health Sciences and Social Care. She is the module leader in Social Policy for the BA and MA programmes in Social Work and is involved in offering foundational lectures on welfare delivery, social policy provisions and linkages with front-line practice.

When Sweta started working at the university she was quite a novice in the use of blended learning technologies. She became involved in the Learning Design initiative along with other colleagues from the School of Health Sciences and Social Care (SHSSC) by attending the Blended Learning Design workshop in November 2009. The reason for getting involved in this initiative, as she remarked, was because she was *'quite interested in the notion of blended design, as any other student-centred lecturer would be ....to learn new skills and to decide how you can deliver your module to students in a way that really engages them [the students].'*

The School design team who attended the workshop consisted of inter-disciplinary team members from Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Community Nursing, Bio-sciences and Social Work.

The common theme selected in the group was 'inter-professional practice' and concerns attached to 'ethical issues' in particular. During this one-day event, Sweta and her colleagues were given the opportunity to plan the design of a new short course and map out the key elements and 'flavour' of this new short course. The SHSSC team were also exposed to a series of learning design tools, the 'at a Glance' Course Map, Pedagogy Profile, the 'Design Decision Assistant', and the 'How to Ruin a Course' activity, all of which can be used at various points in the process to represent, inform and reflect on learning designs.

The team also shared ideas about which technologies could be integrated as part of this short course design. Sweta took the opportunity to make extensive use of learning tools available during the workshop by uploading to Cloudworks a proposed module design (using blended learning methodologies) on 'Inter-Professional Ethics'.

| At a glance module map  |  | Team: MSB  | Date: 09.11.2009 |
|---|--|--|------------------|
| <b>Module title and key details:</b><br><b>Title: INTERPROFESSIONAL ETHICS</b><br><b>Key Details:</b><br><b>20 credit module over 12 weeks</b><br><b>Masters Level 1</b>  | <b>Information &amp; experience</b><br>Physical components<br>Course handbook, core texts, books, professional code of conduct, journal articles<br>Online<br>Youtube, podcasts, blogging, (Player), audio-visual links, student generated discussion on podcasts  | <b>Characteristics of module (using keywords):</b><br>-Inter-professional practice<br>- Ethical reflexivity<br>- Morality, law, ethics<br>-Theory to practice linkages (research and citizenship)<br>-Global ethics frameworks   |                  |
| <b>Communication &amp; interaction</b><br>Physical components<br>Multi-disciplinary learning groups, key input from experts, cultural learning groups, group discussion<br>Online<br>e-discussion groups and blogging, student profile and sharing of interests, looking at different e-modules from other universities | <b>Guidance &amp; support</b><br>Physical components<br>Introductory workshop to use e-resources<br>Tutorial support (face-to-face) and on-line (e.g. blogging)<br>Group representatives in e-discussion groups<br>Online<br>Technical support, advisory team, APDU, u-link <a href="http://www.shssc.ac.uk">www.shssc.ac.uk</a> | <b>Thinking &amp; reflection</b><br>Physical components<br>-Presenting controversial audio-visual links and generating discussion around application of theory to practice<br>-Critical incidence<br>-Diarying<br>Online<br>Notebook, blog, e-portfolio (including critical incidence), linkage with workbooks |                  |
|   | <b>Evidence &amp; demonstration</b><br>Physical components<br>Poster presentation/Group Workshop (25%)<br>Critical Essay (70%)<br>Class/e-participation (5%)<br>Online<br>None   |  |                  |

Fig 1. At a glance course map – SHSSC Course Design Team

Following her involvement in the Blended Learning workshop, Sweta continued to develop further her ideas to redesign the current methods and approaches of her teaching delivery. Her primary intention was to redesign her module using a blended approach *'to facilitate a*

*student-centred*’ method of delivery which is essentially *‘an effective method rather than a popular method’*. Sweta thinks that using the learning design tools at the Learning Design workshop, especially the Course Map, has helped her in this process.

*“I could see through the steps involved in looking at what type of resources we need to deliver our teaching, what type of information we are trying to share. Or, since this is social work or a professional course – what type of skills are we trying to develop.”*

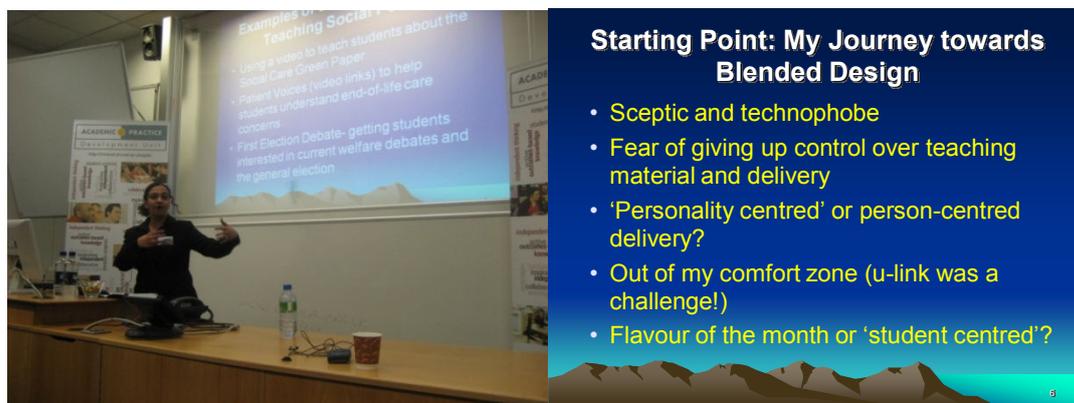
Sharing ideas on inter-professional ethics with other colleagues from different course teams within the School proved difficult during the workshop as the ethical frameworks and concerns varied across the disciplines. In Sweta’s opinion, the blended learning workshop would have been more productive if it had been spread over two days so that teams could learn how to use virtual learning environments and also have critical space to discuss its application with colleagues. The compressed nature of the one day workshop and the inevitable differences between different disciplines presented a unique challenge to team working. However, Sweta thinks that the disagreements made staff realise that they had to talk *‘about professional ethics more’*.

*“This is something that we need to do because we want to have inter-professional learning, to have different professions learn and teach together”.*

Sweta’s experience of using ‘Compendium LD’ and Cloudworks was somewhat difficult too, although she managed to develop a visual representation of the new short course design during the workshop. She remarked for instance that technology should assist clear pedagogical intent and not replace the aim of teaching itself.

On a more positive note, Sweta thinks that by taking on board the pedagogical concepts disseminated during the workshop, she has now managed to make changes to her teaching delivery methods which have derived *‘extremely positive feedback’* from her students. As a result, she has succeeded in moving away *‘from more didactic teaching to a more student-centred [approach] to teaching’*, thus giving the students the flexibility and independence to become more autonomous in their learning experience, and to be able to reflect and share ideas with their colleagues.

Finally, Sweta took the opportunity to share her newly-acquired experience on blended design approaches, tools and resources during the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Learning Teaching Symposium at the university to generate awareness and understanding of the pedagogical benefits that can be realised through these new learning design methodologies.



**Fig 2: ‘Changing the Metaphor’ Presentation during the university’s Annual Learning & Teaching Symposium 2010.**

Sweta’s presentation at the Symposium was very well received and presented interesting challenges about the future of using virtual learning environments in teaching professional

degrees such as social work. By giving examples of using videos of patient experiences of end-of-life care, she demonstrated how these tools could be valuable for student learning, but also cautioned the importance of managing strain and emotional distress such visual aids could produce if not also managed by supportive and empathetic facilitation.