ABC Curriculum Design - Workshop Process

ABC Workshop Format

Workshop schedule:

1. **Module info and graphs sheet**
   - **Tweet your module** – tweet size description of your module
   - **Module shape (Learning types activities graph)** distribution of learning types
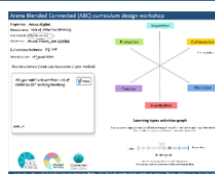   - **Blend** – (blended graph)
2. **Storyboard sheet**
   - **Storyboard** – learning types sequences and activities
   - **Assessment** – align activities and assessment
3. **Module info and graphs sheet**
   - **Review the graphs** – what has changed? Why?
4. **Actions** – what next for team?

Step 1 – Format & Resources Overview

The workshop begins with a PowerPoint presentation, which should be kept as short as possible, but explains the format of the workshop and the resources.

Fig 2.5 Typical slide from the initial presentation.

Step 2a – Tweet It

The first task for the teams developing either a module or a programme is to agree on a tweet size description (strapline, unique selling point, value proposition, etc.) of the module/programme and write it on the workshop graph sheet. Team leaders also report this back to the facilitators. The purpose of this step is for the teaching team to agree on the overall aim of the module being discussed.

Step 2b – Shape It

The participants then draw the rough "shape" of their programme (as they envisage it initially) as represented by learning types on a spider graph (e.g., how much practice, or collaboration) and the envisaged blend of face-to-face and online learning.
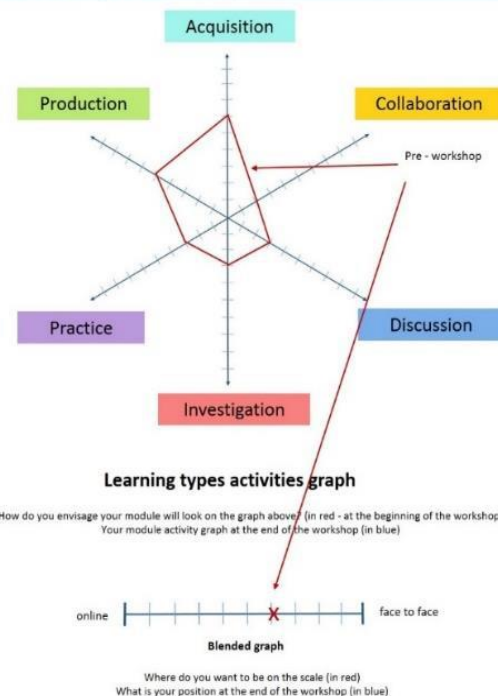
Fig 2.6 Tweeting and drawing the module 'shape'.

Step 3a – Sequence the Timeline *(cards facedown)*

Next, the team plans the distribution of each learning type by sequencing the postcard-sized cards along the timeline of the module, represented by a large A1 sized paper 'canvas'. Often, activity sequences are repeated and the module is usually represented by two or three patterns of activity.


Fig 2.7 Teams discuss the pattern of learning activities with the cards 'face down'.

Step 3a – Learning Activity Selection *(cards face-up)*

With this outline agreed by the group, participants turn over the cards. On the back of each card is a list of online and conventional activities associated with each learning type and the team can pick (by ticking) from this list or write in their own. The type and range of learner activities soon becomes clear and the cards often suggest new approaches. The aim of this process is not to advocate any 'ideal' mix, but to stimulate a structured conversation among the team.

Fig 2.8 Once the ABC cards are 'face up', teams select or write activities.
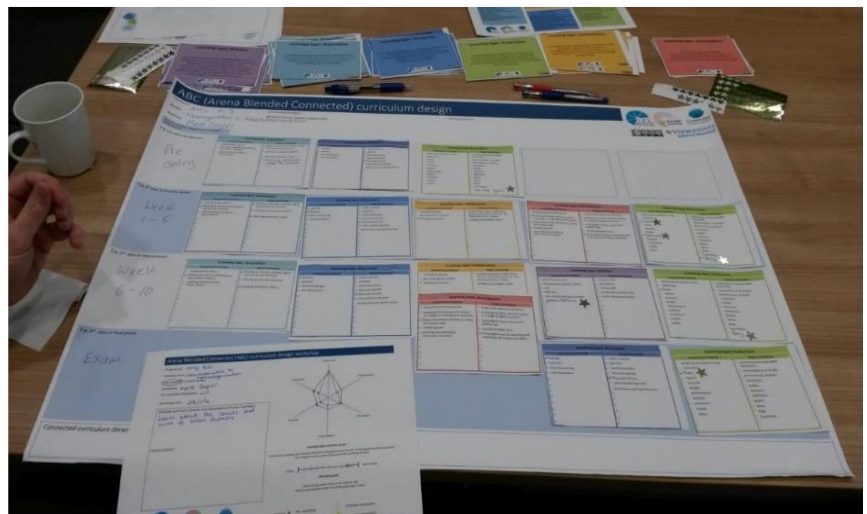
Step 4 - Formative & Summative Selection

Once learning activities are selected and agreed, participants then look for opportunities for formative and summative assessment. These are represented by affixing silver (formative) and gold

(summative) adhesive stars to the activities. By this point, module/programme development team have an overview and the details of the learning and assessment activities on the module/programme.

Step 5 – Re-Shape It

Now they can go back to the graphs from the beginning of the workshop and adjust the shape of the module/programme on the learning types and the blend graph and discuss any changes. The new shape is drawn in a different coloured pen to indicate any changes.

Step 6 – Connected Curriculum *(e.g. program outcomes, KPU Academic Plan, etc.)*

At this stage, with the design compete, the module teams can look at components of the course in more detail.

Apply institutionally-specific criteria:

In **UCL** we often ask teams to consider where the Connected Curriculum (UCL's educational strategy) is represented in the course and place numbered stickers on the design, each number representing a dimension of the strategy. This has proved an effective and natural way of addressing what can be a difficult exercise.

Fig 2.9 Stickers represent strategic 'dimensions'
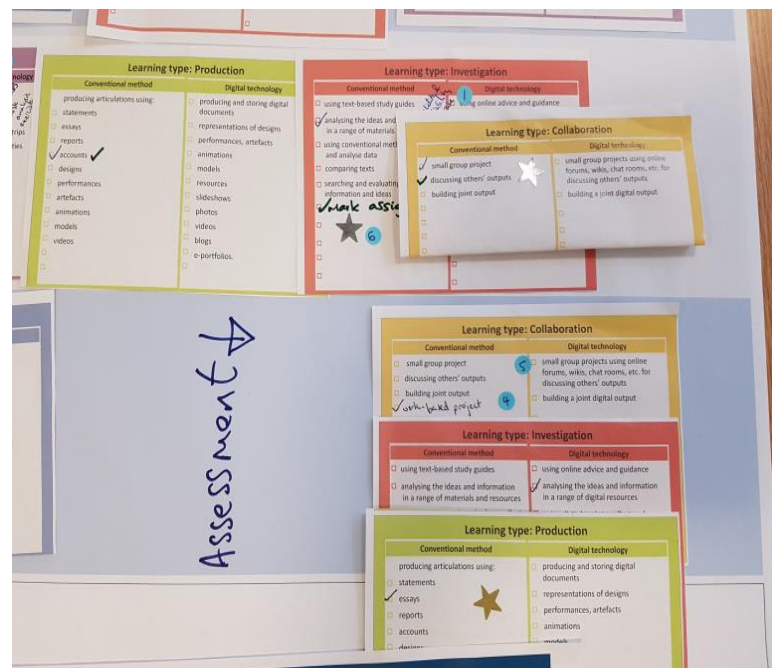
The stickers could be used to represent other institutional frameworks such as:

- employability,
- graduate outcomes,
- digital capabilities,
- data points for data analytic,
- areas where teams may need support
- and so on.

Another Localized Example: 'Vives', one of the Erasmus+ partners, designed their own assessment stickers to add another level of discussion to that activity and to go more into depth about the assessment activities planned in the design.

Step 6a – Capture & Display the Final Story

The final stage is to photograph the new storyboard. The storyboard can then be used to develop detailed student documentation, describe student 'journeys' or outline a module in the virtual learning environment such as Moodle. Teams can also refer to this during the development of their course, and we often see storyboards attached to office walls.

Step 6b – Action Plan

Teams are strongly encouraged to write an action plan to decide who will do what. The action plan can include further input from the Digital Education support team, additional resources to be gathered, identification of copyright issues etc. The evaluation of the HEFCE project in 2017-18 showed this to be a particularly important aspect of the workshop.

Step 6c – Share with Your Peers

At UCL we prefer to work with whole programmes and in this case an additional stage has been introduced, the 'promenade'. Module leads present to whole group, with the whole room assembling round the table. In this way the room gains an impression of the student experience across the programme, practice and ideas can be exchanged and programme-level outcomes, assessment, cohesion, 'through lines' (cross-module themes and activities) can be addressed. In this case the programme lead is advised to make an action plan.

Fig 2.10 Module leads describe the module to the whole programme group.

Current UCL Model: Nowadays at UCL, we try to run ABCs for whole programmes, with the core and main optional module teams invited to work together. The workshop is then extended by thirty minutes to a two-hour session. This enables the programme leader to provide guidance to the whole programme team on issues to address together. This may include a focus on the Connected Curriculum, diversity assessment, issues raised by students, changes in professional qualifications and so on. At the end of workshops for a single programme session, module leads explain their designs briefly to the rest of the cohort, providing opportunities to explore progression, -lines of activity, and implementation of specific strategies throughout the programme. This adds considerable value to the workshop and provides a unique overview of the student experience across the programme.