

Problem Solving: A Collaborative Learning Approach Using Computer Network

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- An aim in any award is to enhance the communication and transferable skills of the learner and promote problem solving activities involving the content of the modules that make up that award. The design information network (EDNET) has been set up to enable learners to exercise their skills using the new medium of computer networks. Microsoft products are used to create information in electronic form which can then be accessed through a World Wide Web browser.

Problem solving with a collaborative learning approach has been a feature of design education for a number of years. The traditional approach has been to "soak" the learner in a knowledge environment for concentrated periods of time. The move to use computer networks was made in 1995 resulting in 10 modules, each of 80 learning hours, and over 500 learners/year currently engaged at all levels and across various awards. The largest

module has 360 learners on a business award undertaking a design selection and industrialisation project.

This paper sets out to,

- outline the problem solving processes promoted in the learner through a collaborative approach
- outline the operational framework in which the learning process is managed
- describe how the computer network is set-up to enhance the learners experience
- provide an appraisal of the effectiveness of the networked learning environment from the learners and facilitators perspectives.

This paper should be read with the EDNET open.

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