Canterbury
Christ Church
University

Blended Learning Quick Start Series:
Core knowledge acquisition in blended learning

Introduction

Core knowledge acquisition is the least interactive element of learning; it is the part of the learning experience where students must read a text, or listen to someone talk, or watch a video.

Core knowledge acquisition is key to successful learning, but its success is often determined by the activities that underpin it. A well-structured learning experience will intersperse engaging activities throughout the core knowledge acquisition process, keeping the passive learning of students to minimum.

In synchronous teaching settings, try to break a session down into separate sections of delivery. This way, you can combine core knowledge acquisition with other activities such as polls and discussions.

In asynchronous teaching settings, try to address core knowledge acquisition through bite-sized learning objects such as short videos and readings.

Core knowledge acquisition can be easily embedded using a range of tools within our Learning Platform Suite.

Option 1: Asynchronously via ReCap

Pre-recording videos using ReCap is a great way to convey key issues and content effectively, leaving face-to-face teaching time free for interactive activities. Think about recording bite-sized videos of no more than 10 minutes in length and use each video to focus on a different theme or topic. As a starting point, it's often useful to think of a traditional one-hour lecture; think about where the natural pauses or progression points are, and then use these as a guide for breaking this down into a series of short recordings.

Option 2: Make readings interactive

It's very easy to link to online readings and resources from within Blackboard, but you should try to do so in a way that links the reading to a follow-on activity. For example, you may ask students to read a particular article and then have them discuss the article within a Blackboard Discussion. Be selective with your readings and try to stagger them over a series of weeks.

Option 3: Use mixed media

Core knowledge acquisition is key to successful learning, but it doesn't all have to come in the same format. Think about combining video and audio with visual and text-based media such as Microsoft PowerPoint. With core knowledge acquisition, less is more, and students are more likely to engage if content is delivered in smaller chunks and in a variety of formats.

Option 4: Breaking down synchronous activities

If you're delivering a class, punctuate your session with other activities. Polls or turn to your neighbour activities can help refocus students for the next topic and can reinforce learning from the previous point.