A Pedagogical Perspective on Lecture Capture

For the past decade, the primary use of recordings in higher education has been to make live lectures available to students for review (lecture capture). This has been justified as popular with students who have a record of the lecture which they can access if they missed the lecture, or can listen to again to revisit parts they did not understand or for revision purposes. Students with physical, or learning disabilities are thought to find recorded lectures particularly useful as a way to manage the pressure of note-taking in class, or managing their disabilities with regards to attending lectures (Williams 2006). Students from non-English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) could also find this technology beneficial to their studies (Soong et al. 2006; Leadbeater et al. 2013). Whilst these are legitimate uses of recorded lectures, there is a need to consider whether recordings of 'live' lectures are the only or indeed the best way of meeting these pedagogical purposes.

The starting point must be that pedagogy is enriched by having a range of ways of engaging with students (and students engaging with each other) and that digital technologies have a part to play. There is evidence that students prefer blended teaching methods which incorporate both recorded material and live lectures but do not view recorded lectures as a replacement for attending live lectures with most agreeing that they prefer attending the live lecture even when it is available through other means (see for example Karnad, 2013).

Students and lecturers are aware that watching a recorded lecture is not an equivalent learning experience to attending the live performance. However non-didactic the style of a lecture (and we should acknowledge that lectures often include significant interaction with the 'audience') lectures as live performances and shared experiences are qualitatively different to the solitary viewing of a recording. Even the core information communicated in a live, performative setting has a different character and effect to the same information communicated impersonally, via a recording. Live delivery casts the information as provisional, a professed view and an interpretation open to challenge. This provocative tenor is at the heart of the

professorial role of the lecturer. Lectures delivered to students as live performances can contribute to an appreciation of education as a process of questioning and to a critical attitude to what is presented. By contrast, viewing recordings in isolation is characterised by passivity and disempowerment. Unable to ask questions or comment, to exchange thoughts with others (whether as a directed activity within the lecture or informally afterwards) the student is positioned as a passive recipient of content rather than as an active participant.

Lectures themselves have been criticised as positioning students in this way and instead of increasing the passivity of the student as 'consumer' through offering them recordings of lectures, a more creative use of the technology is to use it to maximise the active engagement of learners (this is the philosophy behind the 'flipped classroom'). Rather than a recorded lecture, podcasts might be produced which prepare students for the lecture and enable them to be more participative in it. Flipped classroom pedagogy also acknowledges that the format of the live lecture is not appropriate for digital presentations which typically need to be shorter and make greater use of images and sound.

Recording lectures provides an inferior experience for those subsequently relying on the recording but also impacts negatively on those students attending the live lecture. Students are subjected to a level of surveillance over which they have little control and a concern is that this can inhibit students' contributions and participation and discourages the kind of 'risk taking' so necessary for active learning. Moreover, whilst there is token acknowledgement of students' right to privacy from those advocating lecture capture, it is clear that when established as a norm or default practice, there is significant pressure on students to 'go along with it' irrespective of reservations they may have. Although the evidence is equivocal, there is a suggestion and a strong suspicion across the profession that availability of recorded lectures may also impact negatively on attendance and the lecture experience.

The key qualities of effective teaching and learning are that it is interactive, relational, dynamic and responsive. A recorded lecture is none of these things. Implementing a lecture-capture system is not evidence of a serious commitment to exploiting the pedagogical potential of digital technologies (including to address the

concerns outlined in the first paragraph). On the contrary, it is token and cheap. A serious commitment would begin by giving lecturers the necessary time to engage, and be creative, with the technology and to have autonomy over its use in their programmes.

Three key requirements for a university-wide Web Based Learning and Teaching system have been identified: flexibility and mutuality in where and when recordings can be made, lecturers' control over those recordings, and effective means for staff and students to interact with the recordings and for these interactions to be an integral part of the course. Research indicates that teaching staff want to innovate in their use of digital technologies including recordings (Germany, 2012). Rather than having lecture capture imposed on us, we need to be supported to innovate through appropriate training and curriculum development time as well as appropriate software.

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