ABC LD Toolkit 2019 Part 3 (of 3)
Erasmus+ ABC to VLE Project

ABC Learning Design Localisation Guide
Version 2

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This series of guides together with accompanying videos and workshop resources form the ABC to VLE Toolkit (Version 1). Supported by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union. The original 2018 version was part-supported by the HEFCE Action for Curriculum Excellence project 2016-18

Terminology:

This document uses UCL specific language that may differ from terminology used at your own institution. Where a 'programme' is mentioned, this depicts an entire programme of study (e.g. Bachelor of Arts or Master of Science). The term 'module' refers to a unit of study within the overall programme (e.g. CHEM1001). UCL usually run an ABC workshop for a programme, consisting of 5+ teaching teams who will each (re)design a module within that programme.

The term 'course' is used either to denote a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) course, or it is used where the unit of study is not explicit, so it may describe the design process used for programmes, modules and CPD courses interchangeably.

An 'online course' refers to the online components of a course (module, programme or CPD course) that are developed within an institution's Virtual Learning Environment or Learning Management System.

You may wish to find and replace these terms with your own local terms, to aid understanding.

-Jessica Gramp, Inclusive Web Ltd

1. The ABC ethos of localisation

Extensive testing at UCL and other institutions has shown high levels of transferability, academic enthusiasm and satisfaction for the ABC method. The aim of this document is to suggest how this rapid-design format can be introduced to other universities and colleges. The guide is based on an earlier version released as part of the Hefce ACE project (see Toolkit Part 1). To be successfully implemented elsewhere, the ABC method may need modification and adaptation to the local context. On the other hand, the UCL team is conscious that the success of ABC is due to its distinct and dynamic 'formula'. Too much modification, especially the addition of new conceptual elements and participants tasks in the workshop may break the workflow of ABC. Moreover, by keeping the core structure of ABC, we can more easily share ideas and resources across the community. The localisation of ABC, therefore, is something of a balance and we suggest teams start with the 'classic' ABC LD format (Toolkit Part 2) and change or adapt elements gradually to meet local circumstances and needs, based on workshop feedback.

In our experience, there are several elements that can be changed from the outset. ABC can stand alone as an intervention, but it can be used as a more powerful institutional change 'tool' when it is aligned principally with institutional and departmental strategies and local support approaches and capacity. There may also be a need to consider institutional quality processes and academic development initiatives.
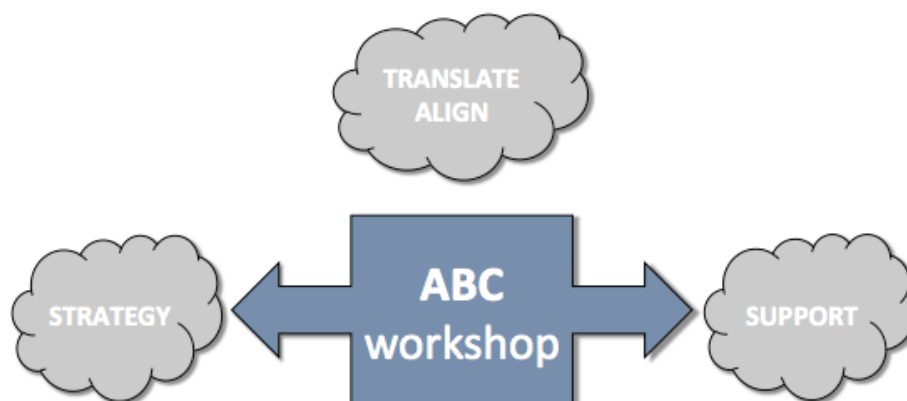
ABC aligns with strategic initiatives and local support

1.1. Strategic initiatives

The evaluation of ABC and associated strategic initiatives as part of the Hefce ACE project (see Toolkit Part 1), reinforced the notion that curriculum enhancement is more likely to be successful if learning design aligns clearly with institutional goals. As we have seen, academics are usually under pressure with multiple demands on their time, so initiatives that appear unrelated to improved student experience, strategic aims or quality processes may not be sustainable in the longer term. For this reason, the UCL team carefully avoided the idea that ABC was a 'project' and even from the outset promoted it as a 'business as usual' process. Even the name Arena Blended Connected deliberately echoed established and respected UCL initiatives around academic development, digital education and research-based teaching and learning. The ABC designs can be used to highlight where the strategic initiatives are reflected in the student experience. This is usually done at the end of a workshop, where sticky dots are fixed to activities that are aligned to strategic initiatives. In the example below, blue dots signify dimensions of the Connected Curriculum (UCL strategic initiative), but other universities have used this method to identify, for example, employability-related activities. The simplicity and transparency of this approach enables narratives to be easily generated for quality reporting.
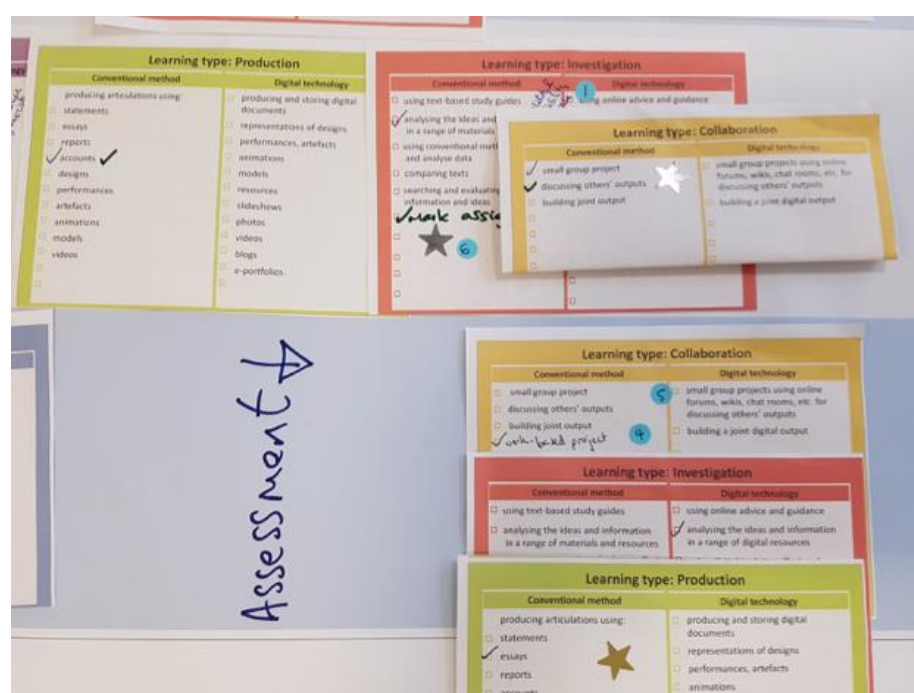
Strategic elements identified in designs

1.2. Technical localisation: The Tool Wheel and VLE alignment, Post-workshop support

The second main element of institutional alignment confirmed by the evaluation was that post-workshop support is critical if designs are to have a chance of being implemented. The hands-on, team-based format of the ABC workshops is certainly motivating and enjoyable in itself and there is evidence of engagement and staff learning as a result. However, we found

at UCL that where there was a lack of direct follow-up support, the participants may have not been able to fully realise the plans they made during workshops. As pioneers of ABC method, the UCL team was ironically a victim of its own success. There were so many requests for ABC workshops, the team was unable to follow up completely on the post-workshop progress. The advice from UCL has recently been for adopters to stage a more controlled roll-out, perhaps picking a few flagship programmes to support, helping them to implement designs and evaluating as they go along, to pick up evidence of impact. This is a slower implementation but, in some institutions, building a solid evidence base may be more important than rapid expansion. Interestingly, as we will see below, UK educational developers have generally taken this more measured approach and integrated ABC workshops into a framework of module development support. Our evaluation showed they had adapted the ABC resources to harmonise with institutional strategies and had achieved successful outcomes as a result.

1.3 Quality lifecycles

A third element, not highlighted in the evaluation, is the alignment with internal quality processes and validation lifecycles. Although some academic teams participate in ABC at a very early stage of programme or module conceptualisation, most have a defined outline in terms of learning outcomes and often a validation document. If the programme or module is still fairly vague, the ABC workshop can help to firm up ideas, but it is difficult to get to the stage of specific activities in a ninety-minute or even two-hour session. We recommend in this case, a separate pre-ABC session be undertaken to define and agree on the key features of the programme or module either being reviewed or planned. There are several approaches to this and two well worth exploring are (see references for links).

- **OULDI 'Pedagogical features card-sort'** exercise "Choose a maximum of 12 cards which define the key features of your module/ course (either existing or planned)".
- **Gilly Salmon's Blueprint**, part of her well-known *Carpe Diem* learning design process, "The outcome of these exercises will be a 'poster'".

Another, simpler approach for existing programmes is to review learning outcomes within the context of student feedback, National Student Survey (NSS) scores, domain changes and other strategic priorities. This can be achieved as part of a programme 'away day' and can immediately proceed a standard ABC workshop. One big advantage of this format is, if the ABC is run in the morning, the practical implementation of the designs and any issues arising, can be discussed after lunch. As part of its remit, the ABC to VLE project will develop this idea of a pre-ABC programme workshop further. This will be released in Version 2 of the Toolkit.

1.4 Academic development

As mentioned above, at UCL, ABC is promoted as a mainstream and practical academic process, rather than a staff development intervention. Again, we felt this was important to

enable long-term embedding of ABC in local practices. Nonetheless, as will be clear, ABC is an opportunity for individual and team development.

Often, innovative designs demand some access to examples or 'case studies' of the new practices identified (for example in media-based assessment or online communication techniques) and some technical up-skilling. At UCL, we emphasise the local ownership of the design process and the Programme lead makes the invitations. Thus, participants at ABCs are often not the usual attendees at academic development events and there is definitely the potential to build on the workshop enthusiasm to encourage personal development. Some approaches to this will be described later.

Another approach is to embed ABC into 'normal' academic development frameworks. ABC is, for example, integrated as a session in UCL's 'Arena Two' pathway for lecturers and teaching fellows on probation. The scheme enables participants to apply to become a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. Moreover, ABC has been aligned to criteria of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) so participation in ABC could be documented as evidence for a Fellowship application (see Appendix 1).

2. UCL Localisation

Although the 'classic' ABC format originated at UCL, we also localised it to suit particular types of courses. ABC LD is used for the design of 3 types of courses: programmes/modules, short/life learning courses and distance learning courses/MOOCs. Although the ABC LD design workshop is always the same, the pre and post workshop interventions differ. UCL has experimented with two approaches. The first is what we called the tool wheel, where we mapped the tools available to teachers to the six learning types. There are many such 'app wheels' available, but we felt this specific mapping would help focus academics on the type of tools they could use. We also wanted to illustrate what was supported by the institution and what wasn't, by means of concentric rings, with the supported tools (mostly in Moodle, UCL's Virtual Learning Environment) in the centre and the unsupported tools further out. We developed the wheel in a workshop format, bringing together learning technologists with technical colleagues and other developers. The question of what tools were actually supported, and to what level, was very interesting in itself. We would highly recommend this consensus-building approach in other institutions.

The outcome (below) is a useful visual map. In an active format, this should be 'zoom-able' and 'clickable,' leading to more information on the specific tool.
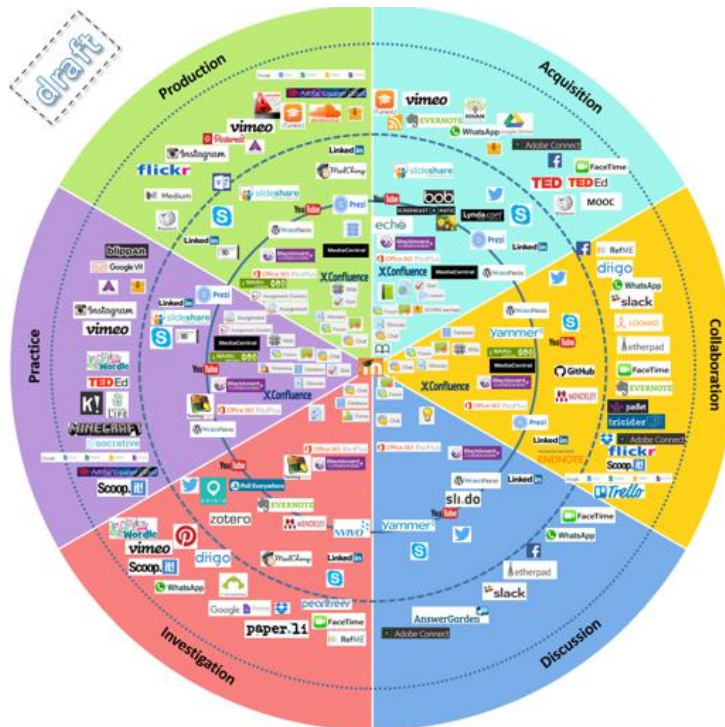
The original UCL 'tool wheel' of educational technologies used at UCL

A second approach is to amend the cards themselves. UCL did this for their own MOOC developments. The back of the cards represent the restricted activities possible within FutureLearn (MOOC platform used by UCL). The ABC workshop runs in the usual format, but the MOOC cards provide a closer link to the FutureLearn 'steps'.

Cards adapted for FutureLearn MOOC design

The outcome is much the same, but without the summative assessment stars. The narrower technical focus means the steps can be listed in a spreadsheet in the form of an action plan. Note the additional space for 'learning time', an important aspect in MOOCs, where participants' envisaged time on task is usually very limited.

ABC designs using the modified cards

The UCL team has also produced Moodle-specific cards. These were launched at Moodle Moot in Edinburgh in March 2018. The cards are downloadable from the ABC blog and like the FutureLearn variants, represent a technically more specific choice. The UCL version, links activities to numbered 'miniguides', information sheets on the various Moodle tools. Like the ABC materials, these versions are also all open source. It is a requirement of the Creative Commons license that these materials are made available under, that those using and adapting the materials maintain the same license on all derivative works.

UCL's Moodle-specific cards

The designs are similar to those produced using classic ABC LD cards, but participants are pointed to specific miniguides in their priority areas (as identified by the major changes in the module shape diagram). As well as helping to see what institutional tools are available for each learning type, this also means participants can refer to the institutional guides for help implementing their designs after the workshop.
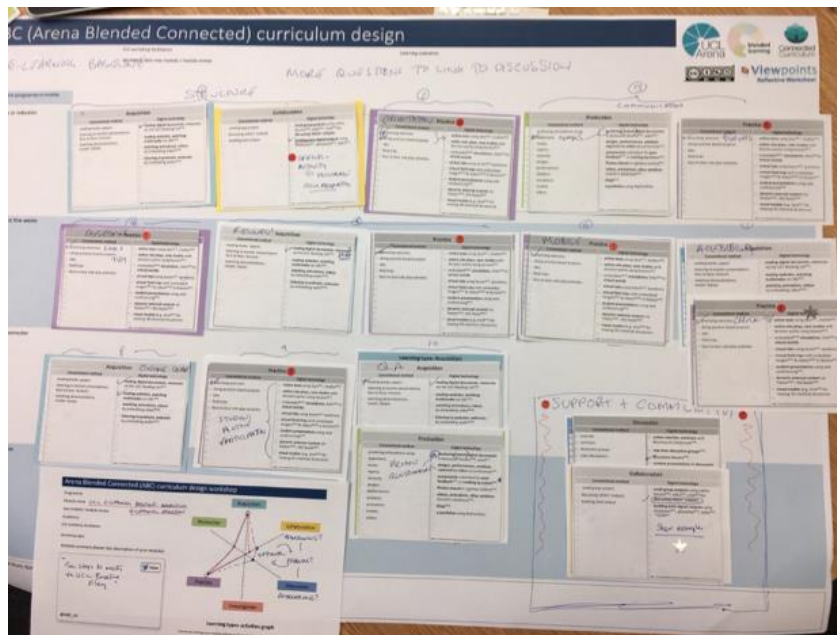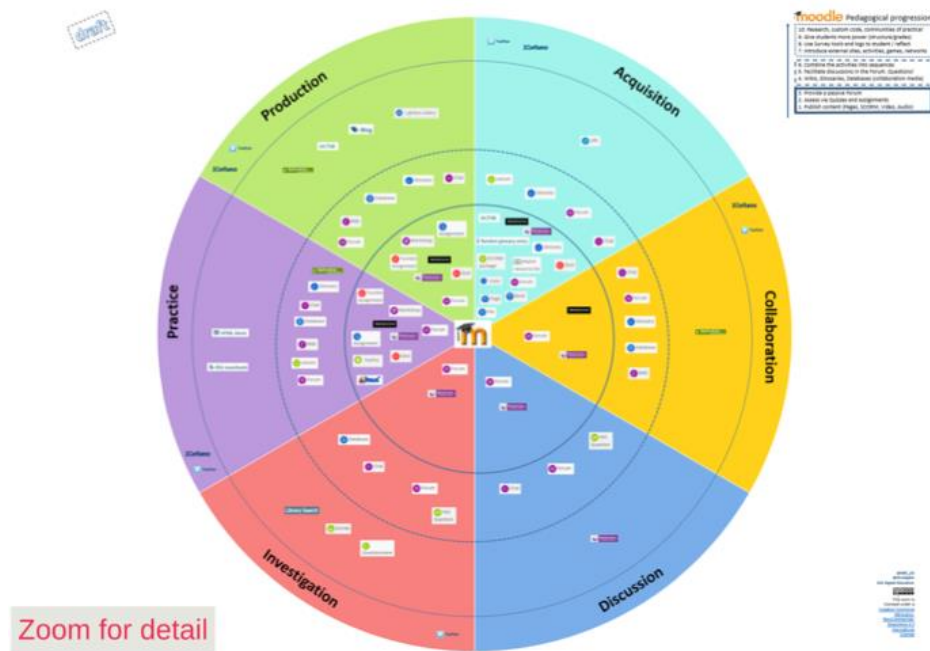
More Moodle-specific designs and UCL miniguides (below)

We plan eventually to upgrade the miniguides with pedagogical examples.

A simplified tool wheel (below) was also produced to help participants to brainstorm Moodle tools they may use in their plans.

Zoom for detail

The rings do not represent levels of support, but 'pedagogical progression' as identified by Moodle itself.

moodle Pedagogical progression

10. Research, custom code, communities of practice!
9. Give students more power (structure/grades)
8. Use Survey tools and logs to student / reflect
7. Introduce external sites, activities, games, networks

6. Combine the activities into sequences
5. Facilitate discussions in the Forum. Questions!
4. Wikis, Glossaries, Databases (collaboration media)

3. Provide a passive Forum
2. Assess via Quizzes and Assignments
1. Publish content (Pages, SCORM, Video, Audio)

Original slide from Martin Dougiamas c 2010

As with the original UCL 'tool wheel', developers are recommended to start in the centre (the bottom of the list above) and work outwards. In this neat formulation, ABC's Laurillard-based design principles and the pedagogical model inherent to Moodle are connected.

3. Two international case studies of ABC localisation
This section co-written with Bernard Hasenknopf and Vassiliki Michou (Sorbonne) and Manuela Milani (UniMi)

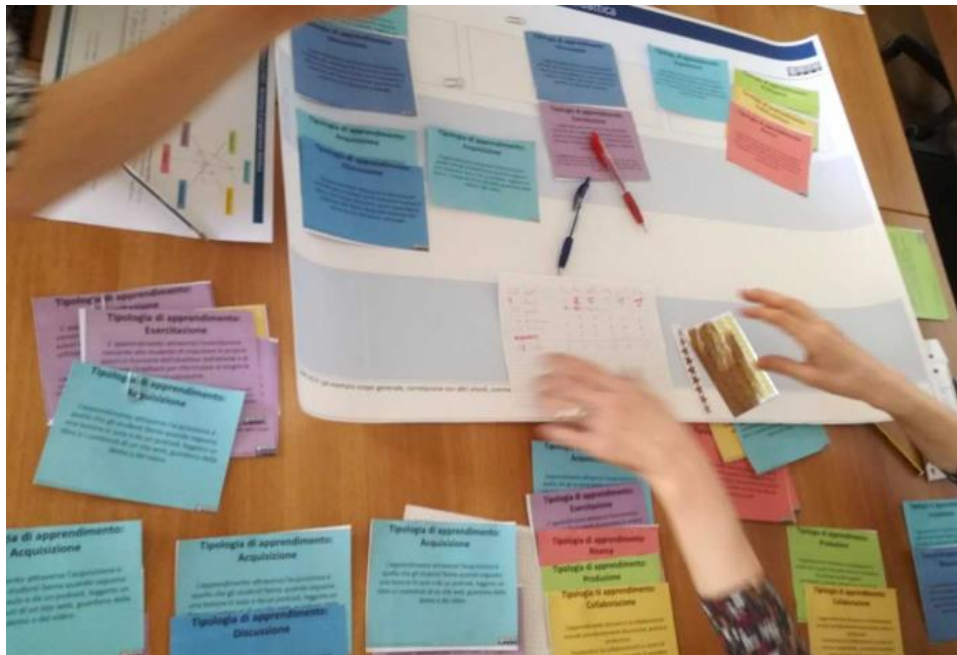
Using Italian language ABC LD resources

ABC LD has now been adopted by several UK and European universities and two of the early users was actually in 2017 were the Università degli Studi di Milano (UniMi) and Sorbonne Université in Paris. The Milan initiative has already been written up (Milani et al 2017) and as we shall see the experience of both these institutions illustrate many of the issues described above and neatly foreshadows some of the other European and UK adoptions we will address in the next section. Both UniMi and Sorbonne are members of the League of European Research universities (LERU) and like UCL aim for aspirational strategies to develop future-looking, digitally rich, flexible programmes. They face the same challenges of limited academic capacity to engage with programme redesign.

In 2106, UniMI launched the EXEL (Experiment of Enhanced Learning) initiative, which aims to foster capacity and community to promote effective teaching and meaningful learning. The project collaborates with individual academics, academic departments and schools, to support and help develop excellent teaching across the university at all stages of a faculty member's career. The EXEL team had the daunting task to engage in redesign with a wide range of academics within a short timescale. Multi-day, intensive processes, such as the well-known Carpe Diem and CAeIRO workshops (see below), while effective, seemed to demand too much time from hard-pressed academics and EXEL's small support team.

Sorbonne University faced a similar challenge. Sorbonne is a new multidisciplinary university arising from the union of Paris-Sorbonne and the University Pierre and Marie Curie (UPMC) on January 2018. The university attaches great importance to academic development as part of its overall policy and strategy. In late 2018, a new law was implemented mandating the academic development of new teachers at the university. This is expected to enhance the

pedagogical choice and innovation across the university and encourage re-structuring of courses. At UPMC, the academic development of its teachers was already at the heart of its concerns, each disciplinary department of UPMC could already offer teachers support on their teaching methods through peer feedback. However, it was recognised this process rarely focussed on course redesign and the diversity of the learning process. Sorbonne now works to promote projects that focus on innovative change initiatives that enable multifaceted courses in different formats, face-to-face and online.

The ABC LD approach seemed to align closely to the immediate needs of Milan and Sorbonne universities. UCL's workshop had been developed specifically for teachers in LERU-type universities and at that stage had already been used successfully for over two years at UCL. The UCL team had found the method to be highly transferable and its 'train the trainers' workshops are popular across Europe and further afield.

The key to adapting any "global" methodology such as this, is localisation. UniMi and Sorbonne, though in many ways similar institutions to UCL, are at different stages of the educational development process. The drivers for educational change at the three universities are analogous, but expressed and implemented in different ways. The main educational strategy at UCL focuses on Connected Curriculum (Fung 2017), promoting research-based teaching and learning. This institutional change driver has propelled ABC LD into more widespread adoption and the UCL developers have carefully aligned and integrated ABC LD with the Connected Curriculum initiative. ABC LD designs are often used at UCL to highlight where university strategies and initiatives are reflected in the student experience. ABC LD was clearly conceptualised at UCL as a learning design methodology and in its home institution and 'classical' format, it is largely promoted as a mainstream and practical academic process rather than a staff development intervention, although it is now also embedded in UCL's academic development programmes.

At Milan and Sorbonne, the strategic context is quite different. Therefore, ABC LD has been aligned more closely with academic development, than strategic initiatives. Milan is in the process of defining its own educational strategy and along with it, the academic development support that will be offered. Sorbonne is also building a strategy, while offering an extensive catalogue of workshops and training in several areas. The adaptation process, as shown in these two universities, is not a simple process of translation or even remodelling the ABC LD workshop itself, but of repositioning it to take account of national, institutional and cultural contexts.

For Sorbonne, the feedback from the first trial workshops in 2017, co-delivered with the UCL team, was very positive. Nevertheless, a few points, such as the short length of the workshop and the (apparent) absence of a theoretical background, were critiqued. As a response, the team doubled the length of the workshop to three hours and added several theoretical elements such as Bloom's taxonomy, constructivism and constructive alignment between learning objectives, activities and assessment. The method was renamed ABCD (activity-based curriculum design) and contextualised to its participants - and potential participants - quite carefully in order to manage expectations and respond to the expressed needs. The remodelled workshop is offered in an "open" format to individual teachers as a way of introducing the principles of learning design, as well as a method for team-based working on the design of a course. As at UCL, it can be customised for local contexts within the institution.

At UniMi, the initial trials of ABC LD, also co-delivered with the UCL team, were equally successful in stimulating wide ranging discussions of teaching methods, blended learning and assessment methods. With this experience, the EXEL team ran several subsequent workshops in UniMi with a range of academic groups (Milani *et al* 2017). As at Sorbonne, ABC LD was closely linked to academic development initiatives and, in this instance, was integrated with an online course, "Blended Learning" (Educate-it 2017) from Utrecht University, which is another LERU member and run twice in the summer of 2017 and 2018.

In Milan, ABC LD is always used with teachers belonging to the same programme, or to the same year. It's always a "group" experiences with specific goals identified during previous meeting with the programme coordinator. Also, the effectiveness is discussed not only with participants (thanks to an online survey), but also with the coordinator, to identify together future directions of academic development. This is possible, because in UniMi, ABC LD works well to create communities of teachers, develop a common educational language and engage in educational re-design.

Both Sorbonne and Milan found that ABC provides the right context in which course redesign can be discussed in a new way. However, a number of interesting themes have emerged through the adoption of ABC in these two universities.

1. ABC LD assumes at least some awareness of the blended learning methodologies and technologies listed as suggestions on the learning activities cards. Some UniMI participants expected these would be covered specifically in the workshop, one commenting, "actually, I thought it was a course about online learning". This is why in the localisation process, UniMi and Sorbonne extended the course in different ways.
2. Similarly, some teachers in UniMi and Sorbonne were looking for more general educational development advice, such as "new tips on how to schedule lessons in order to improve the student learning process and at the same time simplify my lesson preparation work". In a context where interest in educational innovation is quite recent, it may be risky to focus too much on the technological aspects, when broader educational development perspectives need to be addressed. Innovation and technology are not synonymous and this has to be clarified from the very beginning. However, at Sorbonne, teaching teams liked the joint presentation of the different types of activities and were happy to be able to choose between a classical face to face version of an activity and an equivalent one using digital tools.
3. 'Branding' is important. A workshop with a clear label (UCL in this case) could be read as "too different" to be relevant and so not useful in the local context. The Sorbonne team rebranded the approach ABCD, however kept the reference to the UCL brand that provides "prestige" and "assurance" of the approach itself.
4. All teams found when ABC LD is used for programme redesign, building a relation with the academic lead is fundamental to ensure that participants' expectations are managed, that the workshop recognises and addresses the stage of development of the programme and it focuses on the most pressing tasks for the group.

More fundamentally, localising a method such as ABC LD, must take into account the intrinsic elements such as the attitudes and societal culture of each country. The ABC LD method clearly places the student in the centre of the reflection and choice of activities that aim to better guide students in their learning. In Italy and in France, although the vision of the teacher's role is evolving towards the idea of the teacher as "mentor," who guides the student through the learning process and accompanies them on their cognitive journey, teaching practice itself still reveals the dominant perception of the teacher as "master," who stands in front of students to teach. Thus, two primary typologies of academic populations can be identified. Those who voluntarily accept to rework their courses and apply their pedagogical

choices; and those who find the proposals very interesting, but the prepared storyboard remains on paper. There are also those who will not really be sensitive to this process of storytelling their course, but at Sorbonne University, this population rarely attend the offered workshops.

Another essential subject, but also a source of constraints, is the parity of esteem of research and teaching. At UCL, as across the UK, the tradition of certifying university teachers, while still recent, is now well established and ABC LD has been aligned to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF), a nationally-recognised framework for benchmarking success within higher education teaching and learning support (HEA 2011). In France and Italy, the evolution of teachers' careers is based on their research work and not on their teaching activities. Therefore, the teachers deprioritise their academic development for teaching and consequently, the time attributed to this effort.

In order to address this, in collaboration with the University of Utrecht, UniMi and Sorbonne are actively working together in order to offer a common training course about blended learning in a blended format. This will allow teachers to experience blended learning for themselves, and to gain from the advantages digital learning can offer them, such as adaptability to their personal agenda. As the UniMI and Sorbonne experience highlights, support for learning design must recognise the particularities of programmes and individuals, as well as the importance of this being offered at the "right time" of programme lifecycles.

4. Examples of localisation from other Erasmus+ ABC to VLE project partners

Some of the other partners in the Erasmus+ Project already had experience of the ABC LD approach and presented at the initial project meeting on 11 October 2018.

VIVES, Belgium

 VIVES is the biggest university college in Flanders. The VIVES team had discovered ABC LD during EDEN2016 and in September 2016, the UCL team came to introduce the sessions for about 50 teachers. All materials were translated in Dutch and they have since developed their own layout, based on the local communication style. VIVES were an early adopter of the method and since November 2016 some 200 VIVES-teachers have participated in locally run ABC LD workshops. These have been organised on demand, or as part of professional development and training activities. Based on the ABC LD method, a new VIVES *start2blend* course has been developed which is more intensive and individualised. The 'App wheel' was also localised, based on the ABC LD learning activities, illustrating the educational tools available and the amount of support offered in order to enhance transparency and clarity. The team is now thinking about how to organise a follow-up for teachers and whether this can be provided in a blended format.

*VIVES adaptation and icons*

KU Leuven, Belgium

KU Leuven ran ABC LD for the first time in October 2017, as a disciplinary workshop for the Faculty of Sciences. The team started with the material from VIVES (above), but localised them to the KU Leuven context, especially the definitions of the learning activities and the teaching methods. After the workshop, the team discussed the materials used and made further changes based on Laurillard (2014). The KU Leuven cards are shown below.

ABC LD is used in a variety of ways. One of these is as part of teacher training for newly appointed teachers. These are multidisciplinary, individuals whose teaching experience vary. They participate in a blended module 'Basics of course design,' comprising online material and face to face meetings. One of these meetings is an ABC LD workshop. The team also offers workshops to disciplinary teaching teams at the programme level, and the form of one-to-one or small-team coaching, on demand. At the first ABC to VLE partner meeting, the following useful questions were raised and will be addressed at a later stage:

- Is ABC suitable for all kinds of learning design needs?
- What is the role of facilitators?
- The team aspect brings added value, but is this format still suitable for individual teachers (as not all teachers are part of teaching team)?
- Could we explore alternative partners in the design process, such as students, study advisors?
- Is there an ideal or wrong storyboard?
- What are the links with Diana Laurillard's Conversational Framework?
- What follow-up support is needed?
- What goals can be reached with ABC LD?
- Can ABC LD be used as a tool for strategy implementation?

University of Helsinki, Finland
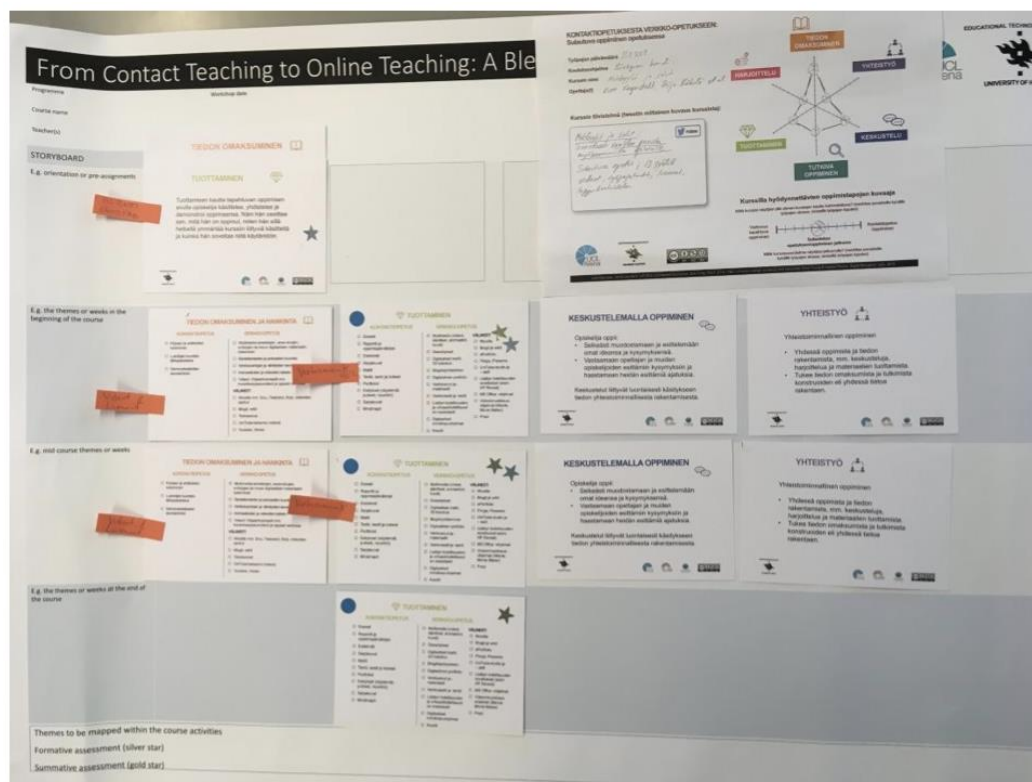
ABC LD workshop materials in Finnish

The Helsinki team have been experimenting with ABC LD since 2017. The materials were translated into Finnish and the cards modified to the local context by adding the university's educational technology tools, as well as some pedagogical methodologies and activity types. Symbols were added to the learning types cards, as shown below. The workshop presentation was adapted to include case-specific pedagogical topics to start the workshop, drawn from pedagogical research. As an example, if a workshop was planned to focus on peer review activities within the target courses, the beginning of the workshop would include a brief presentation of peer review in pedagogical literature and at the institution. Moreover, to map the peer review activities within the courses, instructors and course planners were provided stickers to attach to the course poster, to specifically mark these activities.

Below is a picture of the symbols added to the ABC LD cards.

Tools and activities were also added to the cards.

The ABC LD workshops were launched in 2017 at the University of Helsinki, with pilot materials to test the concept. In spring 2018, following a visit from the UCL team, ABC LD workshops were run with revised materials and lesson plan. Approximately 15 workshops have been run, ranging from two to 50 participants in one workshop and in disciplines ranging from the humanities to microbiology and medicine, as well as the University Pedagogy academic development study program. The case-specific pedagogical topics include:

- Recreating a lecture course with multiple teachers into a flipped learning classroom.

- Reviewing courses within a sequence, in a study program.
- Mapping specific topics, e.g. classroom community, work life skills, essay writing skills, peer review activities, learning objectives.
- Introducing a pedagogical topic: first, a mini-lecture on a topic within pedagogical research literature, then another mini-lecture from an online learning perspective, tying in with the cards.

The Helsinki team would like to provide more emphasis on learning objectives within the workshop and encourage student participation in workshops. They are also keen to map other topics such as e-portfolio work and skills-based learning activities. The team have been active in promoting the method at Finnish education conferences such as Pedaforum 2018, Lahti Digiforum 2018 and Dare to Learn ed tech event 2018. They see the need for a how-to package for the workshop in Finnish. As with other partners, they want to explore ideas for creating a digital version, either within a VLE, or as a separate piece of software.

Tallinn University, Estonia

The UCL team visited Tallinn in May 2017, to help the team run the first ABC LD workshops for academic staff at the Institute of Educational Sciences. The cards were translated into Estonian (see below). ABC LD is now used mainly in specific course planning and the aim is to use it for a more 'holistic' development approach in preparation and implementation of programmes and modules.

Tallinn also has a teacher training VLE, eDidaktikum, which is a competency based platform. The team would like to build links with both that and supporting the development of digital competencies in blended learning formats, an area the UCL digital education team is also working on.

Dublin City University, Ireland

The only other partner to have used ABC LD prior to the start of the project was DCU, who had experimented with it as part of an 'Introduction to Learning Design' session for new tutors. The participants in this session were asked to design a short course called 'Finding Relevant Literature' using the ABC LD approach. The feedback was (mostly) positive, particularly with regard to the level of engagement it afforded. ABC LD had also been tried as tool for redesigning/reconsidering an existing blended course: a Masters in Special Educational Needs (MSEN). The approach inspired discussions on H5P interactive video and the Book feature of Moodle, in particular. To develop ABC LD expertise further, the UCL team visited DCU in November 2018, to run a series of workshops and 'train the trainer' sessions with them. DCU already use the 3E Framework (Smyth 2011) to support the meaningful incorporation of technology into learning, teaching and assessment. 3E uses an *Enhance-Extend-Empower* continuum, "with illustrative simple-but-effective examples that might be incorporated as a minimum (Enhance), through to uses of technology that give students more responsibility for key aspects of their learning (Extend), and to underpin more sophisticated, authentic activities that reflect the professional environments for which they are preparing (Empower)". The alignment of ABC LD with other transformational models such as SAMR (Puentedura 2006) is also being considered.

University of Oxford, UK

The UCL team visited Oxford in May 2018, to facilitate a 'train the trainer' ABC LD workshop with academics, education developers and learning technologists. Oxford is currently changing its VLE from an open-source VLE, based on the Sakai platform to Canvas. The team is in the later stages of an 'early adopter' phase, working with staff from 27 different subject areas across the University.

To date, eight ABC LD workshops have been facilitated for academic teams at Oxford to help them reflect on their teaching, before moving modules to the new VLE. At present, the Oxford team's findings indicate that the optimal approach to ABC LD workshops is to work with departments and course teams. They also ask participants to bring along students who have already completed the course to contribute their perspective to the learning design; academics have valued this greatly.

In addition to customising the app wheel to incorporate Canvas tools and other technologies supported by the University, the Oxford team has identified a number of desirable changes to the ABC LD materials, to fit the local context. These include omitting the 'blended' scale from Activity 1, and treating collaboration as a meta-level 'mode' of learning, rather than as a type of learning activity. Over the course of the summer, the team will review and customise the other learning activity cards.
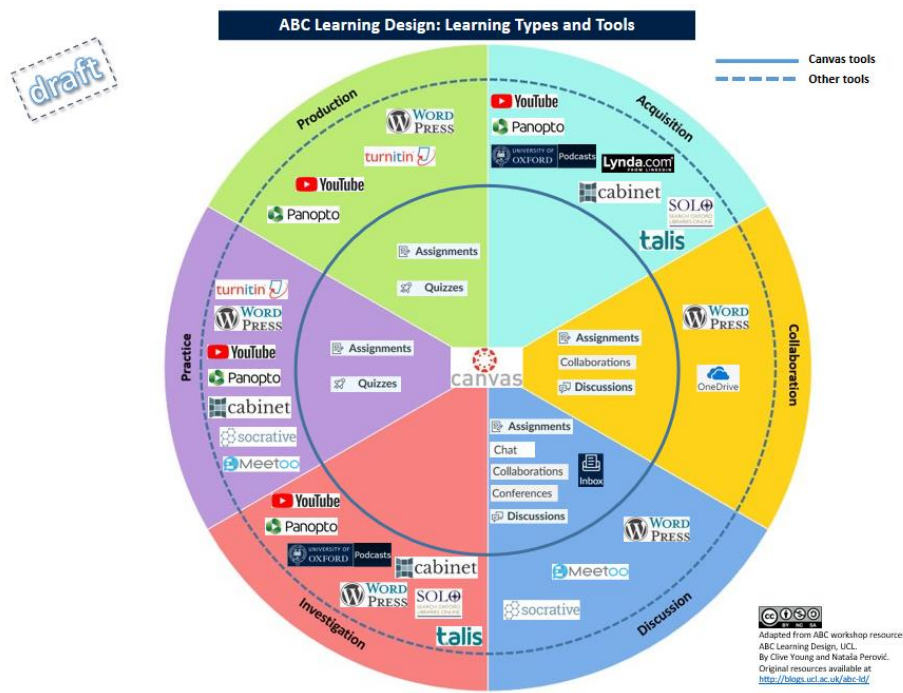
University of Oxford localised Canvas 'tool wheel'
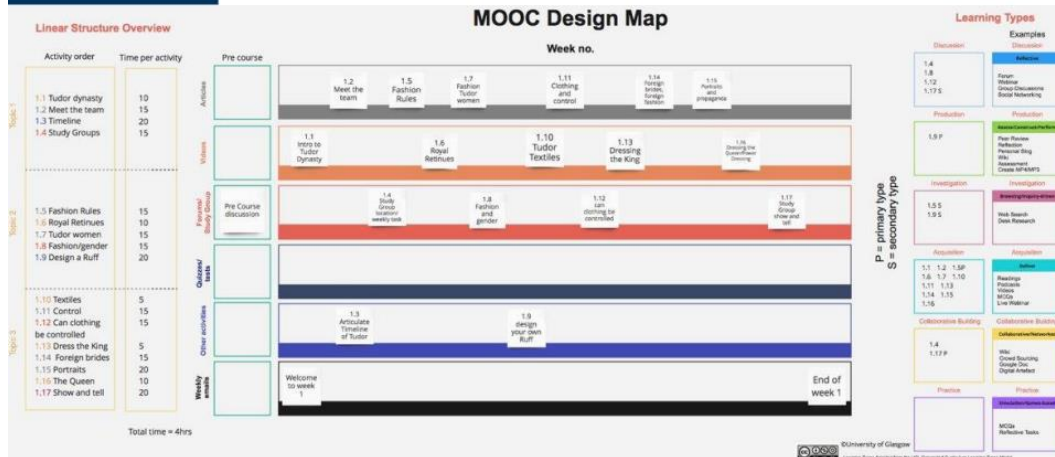
Absalon University, Denmark

The UCL team visited Absalon in 2017 to facilitate the first ABC LD workshops for academic staff and academic developers. The cards were translated into Danish (see below). The 'tweet and shape' sheet and storyboard were adapted to suit Absalon's context. ABC LD is now used as a learning design approach for programmes and modules.

Adapted Absalon presentation and workshop resources

5. Examples of localisation from the UK

The HEFCE Catalyst programme sponsored an ABC Learning Design Mini Conference that was held at the UCL Knowledge Lab on the 9th March 2018. Some of the institutions presented their progress. The project also funded a visit to the University of Lincoln.

University of Glasgow
Presenter: John Kerr, University of Glasgow

Glasgow have been using ABC LD since 2015, but the workshops were 'officially launched' in May 2016, when the UCL team made the first – and highly successful - external visit. Since then, it has been used to support the institutionally Blended and Online Learning Development (BOLD) projects. The response has been very positive, one teacher commenting:

> "I've seen positive changes in my in-person teaching as a result, both in delivery but, more importantly, in lecture and whole module design. I think about it all in a much more informed way: less like bits and pieces of information, more as almost a story arch where every bit of lecture, every reading, contributes to an identified whole. Hard to put in to words, but it's all really helped me!"

The terminology has also been adopted, with the six learning types used as a framework for 'How To Moodle', promoting good practice in active learning design across the university. Two localisations stand out:

As at UCL, the ABC LD approach has provided a new structure for MOOC design. The team have devised a MOOC Design Map that uses the ABC LD principles.

MOOC Design Map using ABC LD Learning types

The ABC LD cards were also slightly adapted with additional examples of digital activities for inspiration.
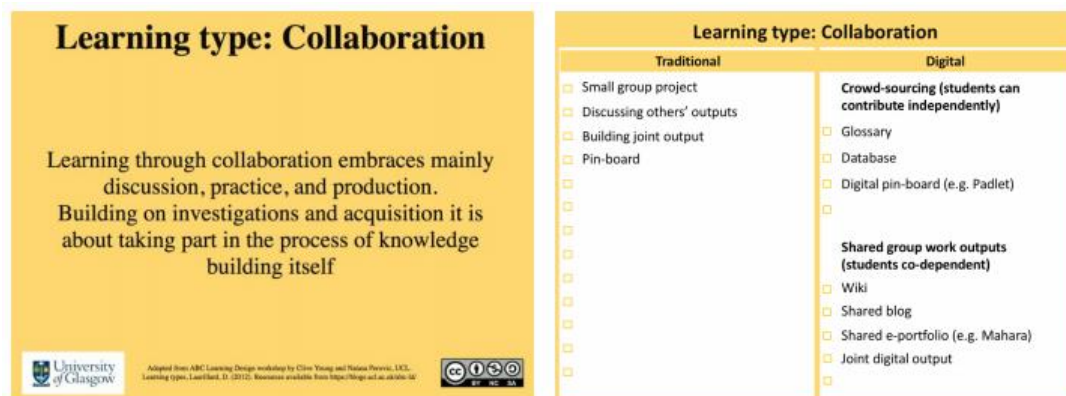
Adapted ABC LD card set

University of Reading
Presenter: Adam Bailey and Nina Brooke

The University of Reading has a strong educational strategy, the Curriculum Framework, launched in February 2017, and has committed to reviewing its undergraduate curriculum by 2019. At Reading, ABC LD is, therefore, very much focused at the programme (rather than the module) level, in order to help ensure the design and delivery of cohesive programmes.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The UCL team ran a 'train the trainers' workshop in May 2017 and then ran a highly successful full workshop for academics the following July as part of their 'TELFest'.

The drivers for choosing ABC LD were:
- A Learning Design approach was required.
- Mechanism to integrate TEL into the Programme Review.
- Mapped easily to the Curriculum Framework.
- Encourages meaningful engagement.
- Holistic approach.
- Scalable, flexible & time efficient.
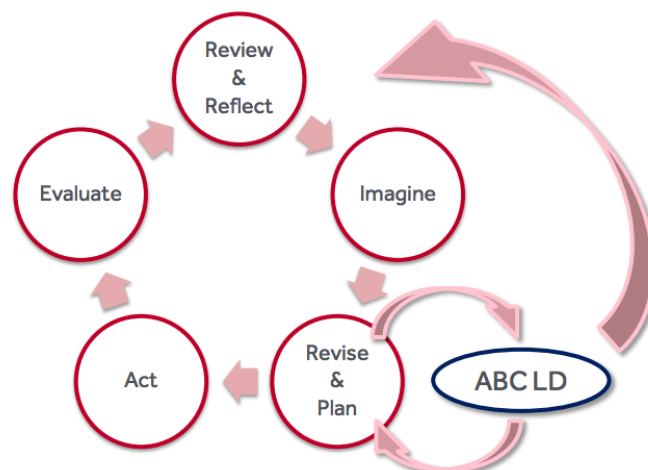- Helps to identify staff development needs.

In 2018, ABC LD was featured at the University T&L Conference, a localised card set was developed and the method was integrated in the Programme Review.

Discussion

Examples	Now
Face to face discussion in seminars, tutorials, and buzz groups in lectures.	
Online discussion in Blackboard discussion boards and Blackboard Collaborate webinars.	
Asynchronous discussion gives students time to consider responses before contributing.	**Future**
Discussion tasks may include: ■ **Enquiry:** students research & bring knowledge of the discipline beyond what was taught. ■ **Reflection:** students articulate what and how they have learned through their contributions. ■ **Intercultural competence:** students from diverse cultural backgrounds bring in different perspectives.	

Modified ABC Learning type 'Discussion' card

Curriculum Review cycle

As part of a wider institutional review process, the Reading TEL team found ABC LD:

- Works for different disciplines.
- Easy to use & engaging.
- Academics took ownership over the process.
- Created a common language & consensus building.
- Had an evidenced impact.

There were challenges, though, where academics had fixed modes of teaching. It was important to avoid the micro detail and integrate staff development. Future plans included: using ABC LD to develop staff & student partnership; run more programme level workshops; and ensure academic ownership . From an academic development perspective, the team wanted to ensure they could capitalise on opportunities and evidence impacts.

Canterbury Christ Church University
Presenters: Rosie Greenslade and Lynne Burroughs

ABC LD is embedded in a transformation initiative

UCL ran the first 'train the trainers' workshop at Canterbury Christ Church University in March 2017. This very positive experience was hugely influential on how they subsequently worked with academic teams in other universities. Since the visit, ABC LD has become part of the "Curriculum Design for Transformation" (above) initiative and is used with programme teams, module teams and to support one-to-one design sessions. As in UCL, ABC LD has been embedded in academic development programmes, in this case the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PCAP) and the University Certificate in Academic Practice (UCAP) for part-time or sessional academics and professional services staff. At the Mini Conference, the team showed a charming wordcloud representing the learning technologists' view of ABC LD (left).

University of Bristol
Presenters Suzanne Collins and Suzi Wells

This experience was slightly unusual, as the UCL team had no contact with the Bristol team before they started exploring ABC LD. In fact, UCL only found out Bristol were using the method after a chance comment by one of the team at an unrelated event. In general, the ABC LD seems to have been run in a similar way to the classical model (above), although again with a few interesting modifications (below). However, after seeing the classic format, Suzi commented "What I soon found was that our renegade use of the tool wasn't in fact that renegade" (reference below). It has been used in a number of contexts, including the Bristol Futures FutureLearn Courses, using the adapted cards and tools (below).

Rapid curriculum design

Course name: Human physical performance and
exercise physiology — Prof Plume,
Dr Chen Sung,
You
Learner timeline (learner's own perspective)
Learning outcomes

		Learning type: Acquisition	Learning type: Collaboration	Learning type: Discussion	
E.g. pre-entry or induction **Week 1**					
E.g. 1st year or first few weeks **Week 2**		Learning type: Inquiry / Learning type: Acquisition		Learning type: Practice	
E.g. 2nd year or mid semester **Week 3**		Learning type: Acquisition	Learning type: Discussion	Learning type: Production	
E.g. 3rd year or final phase **Week 4**		Learning type: Production	Learning type: Practice	Learning type: Discussion	Learning type: Collaboration

Action plan

Learning type: Acquisition

Learning through acquisition is what learners
are doing when they are listening to a lecture or
podcast, reading from books or websites,
and watching demos or videos.

What is this about?

After doing this, learners should...

Based on ABC curriculum design resources by UCL Digital Education / CC BY-NC-SA 4.0

Learning type: Acquisition

How could this be done online?	How could this be done offline?
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

How could this be assessed?	Other notes/ideas...
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	NOTE: Acquisition usually requires supporting activities such as reflection, practice or synthesis. ⚠
☐	

The Bristol team provided a blog review of the Mini conference (see references at end), commenting, "As well as the hands on session, hearing about what others have been using the method for, and what they had learned from it, was inspiring." Two main points were highlighted:

> *"How useful the method is as a review tool (as I had previously used it to design new courses). It helps people visualise and recognise all the great things they already do, before thinking about how they might want to develop their course for the future. The act of discussing it with others surfaces long held beliefs and assumptions which might no longer apply. When redesigning a course, unit or programme, I can see how helpful this might be.*

Secondly, this tool is really effective at a programme level. The evaluation of individual courses or units seems to take on a new dimension when done in a room with all the units and courses in the programme being evaluated at the same time. Without asking people to do this explicitly, connections between units can be spotted and developed, duplication can be discussed, and people involved across the whole programme can start to get a real sense of what the students' experience of the whole programme actually is. A 'ground-up' programme development seems to happen, which is more holistic and sustainable than a 'top-down' directive."

The blog post concluded:

"For our purposes, this certainly seems like a useful tool for two big projects that the University of Bristol is tackling: programme level assessment and embedding the Bristol Futures themes into the core curriculum. Being able to quickly map where things already happen, and then talk about it in an open and positive environment, could be a really engaging way to get these conversations started. Let's see where learning our ABCs can get us…"

University of Lincoln

At the very end of the ACE project in April 2018, UCL was able to make a belated visit to the University of Lincoln's Digital Education team to run a 'train the trainers' session, followed by a workshop for academics run by their own team, supported (minimally, as it turned out) by the UCL team. It was reported afterwards that the visit generated much enthusiasm and as a result, requests to run the workshops further in future school away days and across programme teams. Lincoln also represented a way in which the ABC LD community can work together. The Lincoln team had already incorporated ABC LD concepts in their academic support materials and had produced a set of 'recipe cards' that linked the six learning types to examples of good pedagogical practice technological 'how to's'. These will be made available under Creative Commons licensing and hopefully also added to the ABC LD community hub at abc-ld.org.

University of Lincoln ABC-based recipe cards

6. Notes on technical localisation: The Tool Wheel and VLE alignment, Post-workshop support

The Lincoln recipe cards in the previous section remind us of the challenges of linking the ABC LD designs to the technical environments that academics have to work in. At UCL, this is Moodle, but other systems, like Blackboard and Canvas can be mapped to the ABC LD learning types too. The methodology is technologically neutral. However, given the issues raised earlier about post-workshop support, it is useful to try to map the activities on the back of the cards with the tools available (or recommended) by the environment. This provides a closer link between the conceptual designs and the practical tools available, and therefore better opportunities to provide targeted support or specific online resources the academics can refer to after the workshop.

The ABC LD 'tool wheel' approach (without the level of support rings) was adopted by the University of Reading for Blackboard. As with the UCL version, some tools appear in several sections. Omitting the social media tools also makes the design clearer and more accessible.
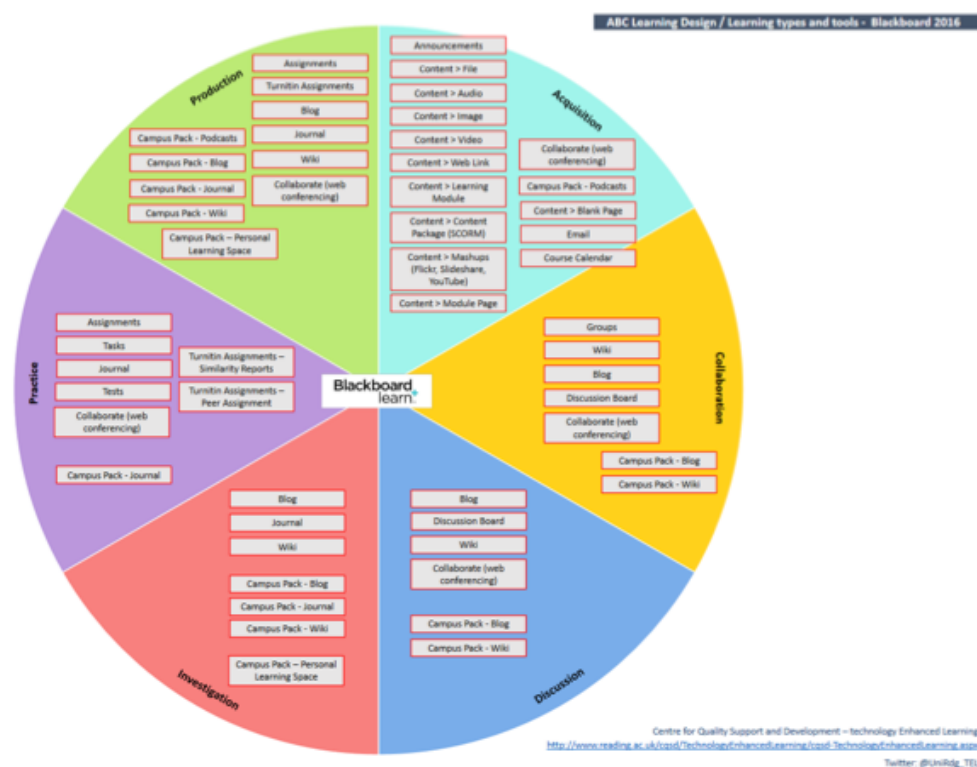
Adapting the cards

Members of the FutureLearn MOOC platform community may have come across another set of platform-specific cards launched in early 2017. These were also based on the ABC LD workshop.
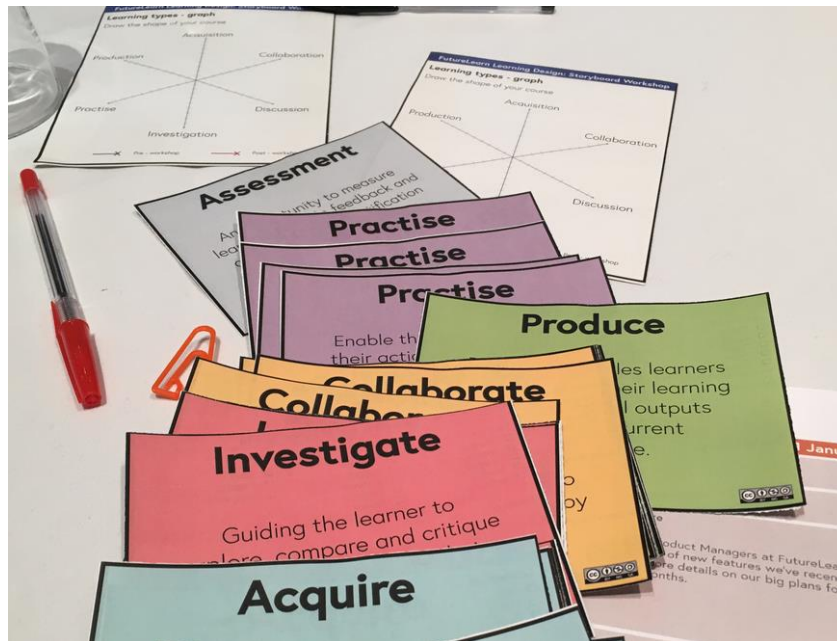
ABC-like FutureLearn cards

Clearly, a similar approach can be taken for other learning environments. In February 2018, at a workshop run at the University of Amsterdam, a set of the 'classical' cards were localised, by appending tools in their new Canvas learning environment.

University of Amsterdam cards with Canvas tools added at the bottom of each list (in blue)

These modified cards raise an interesting issue. Do we risk over-focusing on the technology in the designs? In the 'classic' card set, no tools are specified, so that the designs remain

technically 'open', but may be harder to support and implement. In the VLE-specific cards, the technical solution is more determined and possibly more supportable, but choice is restricted. There is no real answer to this conundrum, but the discussion is worth having with colleagues.

7. Conclusion

Even in the short time ABC LD has been promoted outside UCL, we have seen a number of very useful variants of ABC LD emerging, together with supplementary tools such as 'recipe cards', local 'tool wheels', 'design maps', tool-specific cards, and so on. All of these build on the ABC LD concepts, especially the rapid-design format for engagement, and the activity types to provide a simple taxonomy of design elements. All provide different perspectives and possibilities aligned to local needs. So far, the method has been used for learning design, strategic development and change methods, academic development, technical (e.g. VLE) and support mapping, quality assurance and analytics.

We suggest the localisation process should itself be considered part of the ABC LD methodology, a way to begin work with different groups such as academics, professional staff and academic developers and build a locally owned version. This localisation should be iterative, the workshops and supporting resources evaluated and refined, as local experience grows.

We encourage institutions to keep in touch with and help build the ABC LD community (google map of ABC LD community https://bit.ly/2SXUh23 below.

Even in this short document, we can see if we maintain a core approach innovations can spread quickly. 'Crowd sourced' ABC LD resources are already being exchanged among the community and the UCL team are exploring ways to foster this activity further. With this in mind, we ask you to keep referencing the ABC LD identity. This is part of the Creative Commons licensing, but also this helps us all identify colleagues across the sector using the method. Please see the 'Running the workshop' document for details. We note some institutions have kept the ABC LD acronym, but changed its UCL-specific reference to something like Active Blended Curriculum or Activity Based Curriculum. Be creative!

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Appendix 1

ABC has been aligned to criteria of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF)
Arena Blended Connected Learning Design

Mapping ABC LD to the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF): a rough guide

This document is a resource for staff developing curricula through
participation in the UKPSF. The resource maps ABC workshop activities to
the UKPSF. See the links for more detailed information.
If you're applying for an HEA Fellowship as a Fellow, Senior Fellow or
Principal Fellow, you can refer to your 'ABC LD workshop' to evidence your
engagement with the UKPSF Dimensions, aligned to the appropriate UKPSF
Descriptor.

Associate Fellowship is not included in 'ABC,' as early career staff seldom
work on module or curriculum design. **Principal Fellowship** is relevant to
overarching curriculum enhancement strategies.

ABC Workshops	UKPSF Descriptors and Dimensions
	Areas of Activity
ABC curriculum design: a quick way to (re)design programmes and modules through a hands-on workshop where academic teams discuss and create storyboards of students' activities.	**Dimension: Area of Activity 1 (A1)** Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** You participate in an ABC workshop because you teach a module/modules. You contribute to the design of the learning activities on that module. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** You participate in an ABC workshop because you lead a team of teachers engaged in module or programme design and coordinate their design activities **Descriptor 4 – Principal Fellow** You work on a strategic level. You see that ABC workshops enable participants to enhance the curriculum and achieve institutional goals so you arrange funding and formulate policies which promote participation.
ABC learning types and learning activities: participants consider learning types and select appropriate related student learning activities.	**Dimension: Area of Activity 2 (A2)** Teach and/or support learning **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** You find your approach to teaching is enriched through participation in the ABC Workshop as you consider of a variety of learning types and their associated learning activities. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** You lead module/programme teams to ensure their approach to teaching is enriched during the ABC Workshop through consideration of a variety of learning types and associated learning activities.
ABC assessment: participants identify opportunities for formative and summative assessment related to the learning activities they have selected.	**Dimension: Area of Activity 3 (A3)** Assess and give feedback to learners **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** You use the formative and summative assessment tasks you have identified to promote your students' learning. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** You coordinate the integration of formative and summative assessment tasks related to module/programme learning activities, guiding and mentoring the staff you lead to enable them to promote student learning through assessment.

ABC learning environments: Participants consider diverse learning environments, both face to face and digital, and select active learning options and formative feedback to support student learning.	**Dimension: Area of Activity 4 (A4)** Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** You evaluate and adapt the learning environment in light of the range of learning types and associated student learning activities. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** You mentor colleagues in your programme teams, helping them to evaluate and adapt the learning environment to learning types and student learning activities.
ABC professional development: Collaboration with colleagues designing modules together is a great opportunity for gaining insights into diverse approaches to learning and assessment.	**Dimension: Area of Activity 5 (A5)** Engage in continuing professional development in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices **All Descriptors** Participation in ABC Workshops offers a variety of opportunities for professional development in relation to all the Areas of Activity, Core Knowledge, and Professional Values of the UKPSF. Participants should pinpoint and note down individual areas of learning after the workshop, as these will vary.
	Core Knowledge
ABC - the exploration of subject knowledge: teams work together, pooling specific subject knowledge to select appropriate module and/or programme content.	**Dimension: Core Knowledge 1 (K1)** The subject material **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** You share your subject knowledge and select appropriate areas of your discipline for inclusion in the module you're working on. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** You guide and lead discussions on the subject knowledge to be included in the module/programme. You help workshop participants to formulate the course learning outcomes based on that content.
ABC - the selection of appropriate learning types and activities: Workshop participants consider and sift through a selection of options for	**Dimension: Core Knowledge 2 (K2)** Appropriate methods for teaching and learning in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme **Descriptor 2 – Fellow**

students engaging with the subject area.	You debate the teachability of possible module content, taking account of the level of the programme, and select suitable learning activities for students. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** You help your teaching team to select content and learning activities suitable for the level of the programme.
ABC – applying research into student learning to module/programme design: ABC is informed by the work of Diana Laurillard. The learning types emanate from her 'Conversational Framework' which highlights the importance and effectiveness of social interaction and activity for learning.	**Dimension: Core Knowledge 3 (K3)** How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s). **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** ABC workshop tasks, identifying learning types and devising related learning activities for students, alert you to evidence-based insights into how students learn. The workshop provides a space for using these insights into student learning to design your module/s. The focus is on your discipline. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** During the ABC workshop, you oversee the work of your teaching team as they use their insights into student learning to design the module/s you lead, focusing on your shared discipline/s.
ABC - academic teams outline the type and sequence of learning activities both online and offline to enable students to meet module learning outcomes. ABC can be used by programmes and modules changing to a more online or blended format.	**Dimension: Core Knowledge 4 (K4)** The use and value of appropriate learning technologies **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** ABC workshops enable you to work with others designing your module to identify appropriate online learning activities. If you're developing blended learning or moving a module online, the ABC materials include options you can select for online learning activities. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** You support your module teachers as they design online/digital learning activities to create optimal environments for active student engagement with high quality learning.
Evaluation is not included in ABC.	**Dimension: Core Knowledge 5 (K5)** Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching Module teams should consider evaluation methods outside the ABC Workshop, especially formative evaluation which enables small changes to be made during each iteration of the module.

ABC enhances the quality of modules and programmes: Module teams work together, designing the best modules they can to achieve enhanced outcomes for students.	**Dimension: Core Knowledge 6 (K6)** The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice with a particular focus on teaching **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** Participating in an ABC Workshop is evidence of your engagement with designing the best possible module for your learners. The aim is to achieve high quality student learning. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** Leading the work of your module design team in an ABC Workshop is evidence of your leadership and coordination of the design of the best possible module for your learners. Your aim in guiding the design of the relevant modules/programme is to enable the teachers in your team to achieve high quality student learning.
	Professional Values
ABC workshops promote a range of approaches to teaching and learning.	**Dimension: Professional Value 1 (V1)** Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities **All Descriptors** Participation in an ABC workshop gives you the opportunity to select different approaches to teaching and assessment, including techniques to enhance the learning of diverse students.
ABC workshops promote diverse approaches to teaching and learning.	**Dimension: Professional Value 2 (V2)** Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners **All Descriptors** ABC workshops do not promote participation in the sense of widening participation but the choice of learning activities offered to you has the potential to enhance equality of opportunity for learners.
ABC workshops are based on research into learning in higher education	**Dimension: Professional Value 3 (V3)** Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and continuing professional development **All Descriptors**

	As you participate in ABC, you draw on research into effective approaches to teaching and learning in higher education. You can purposefully broaden your use of research and scholarship beyond the workshops as you design modules further, drawing on the literature on relevant pedagogy.
ABC workshops provide opportunities to explore the potential for the integration of preparation for professional practice into modules.	**Dimension: Professional Value 4 (V4)** Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice **Descriptor 2 – Fellow** ABC enables you to create learning activities which are relevant to professional practice and improve the employability of students. **Descriptor 3 – Senior Fellow** You highlight opportunities for your team to create learning activities which are relevant to professional practice and encourage colleagues to consider how students can develop skills to improve their employability.

Rosalind Duhs
February 2018
ACE project