Supporting student learning in the virtual environment

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David Morris

Director of e-Learning

Ewart Woodridge CBE, Chief Executive of the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education, says, “The ‘Agile University’ is about the capacity to innovate, particularly in new business or operating models. It requires a creativity in how an institution is structured and people are equipped to lead and manage it. **It also requires a strategic and entrepreneurial approach to the use of technology.”**

The agile university

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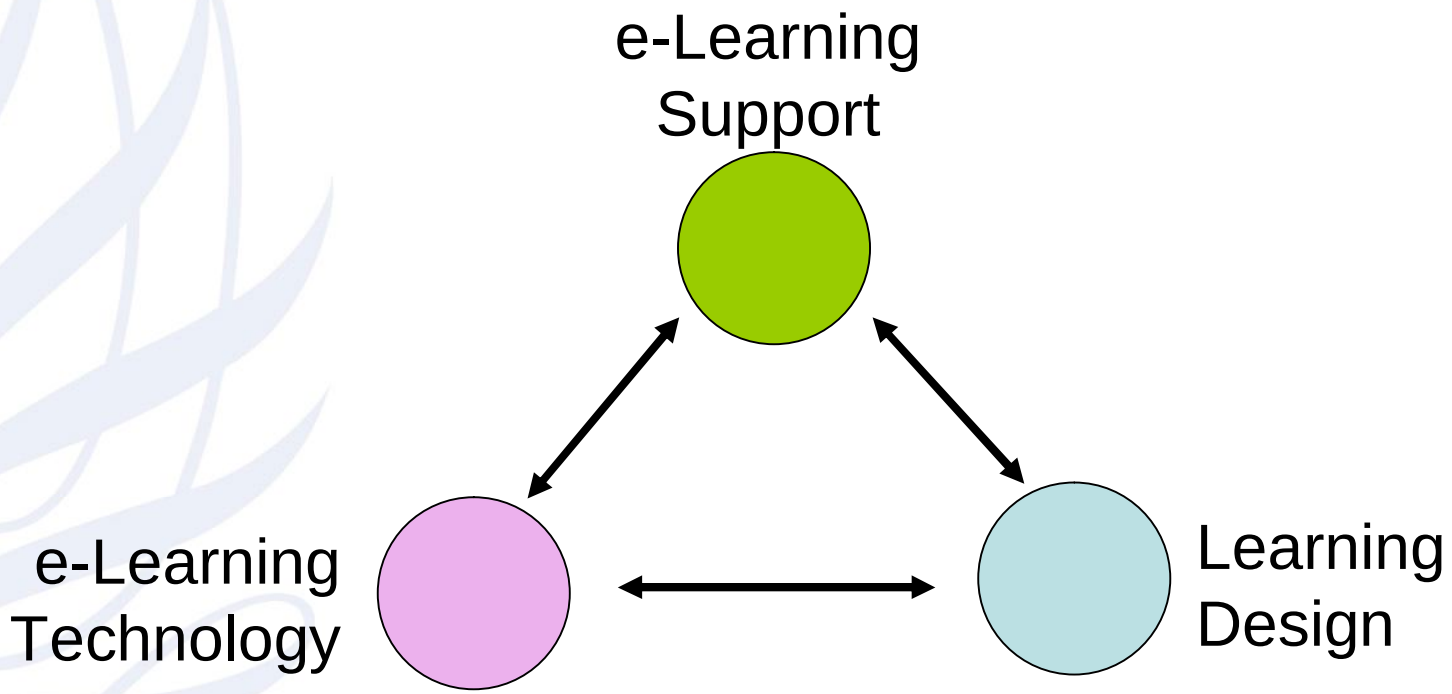

The make-up of e-learning

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- Virtual hospital wards – educating doctors
- Virtual buildings – for the construction industry
- Virtual towns – coping with emergencies
- The Pitch – scoring educational success with Premier League football
- Teenage cancer nurses – building an international community of practice
- Maureen from Cameroon – taking highly specialised programmes to new places

Using technology in innovative ways: examples

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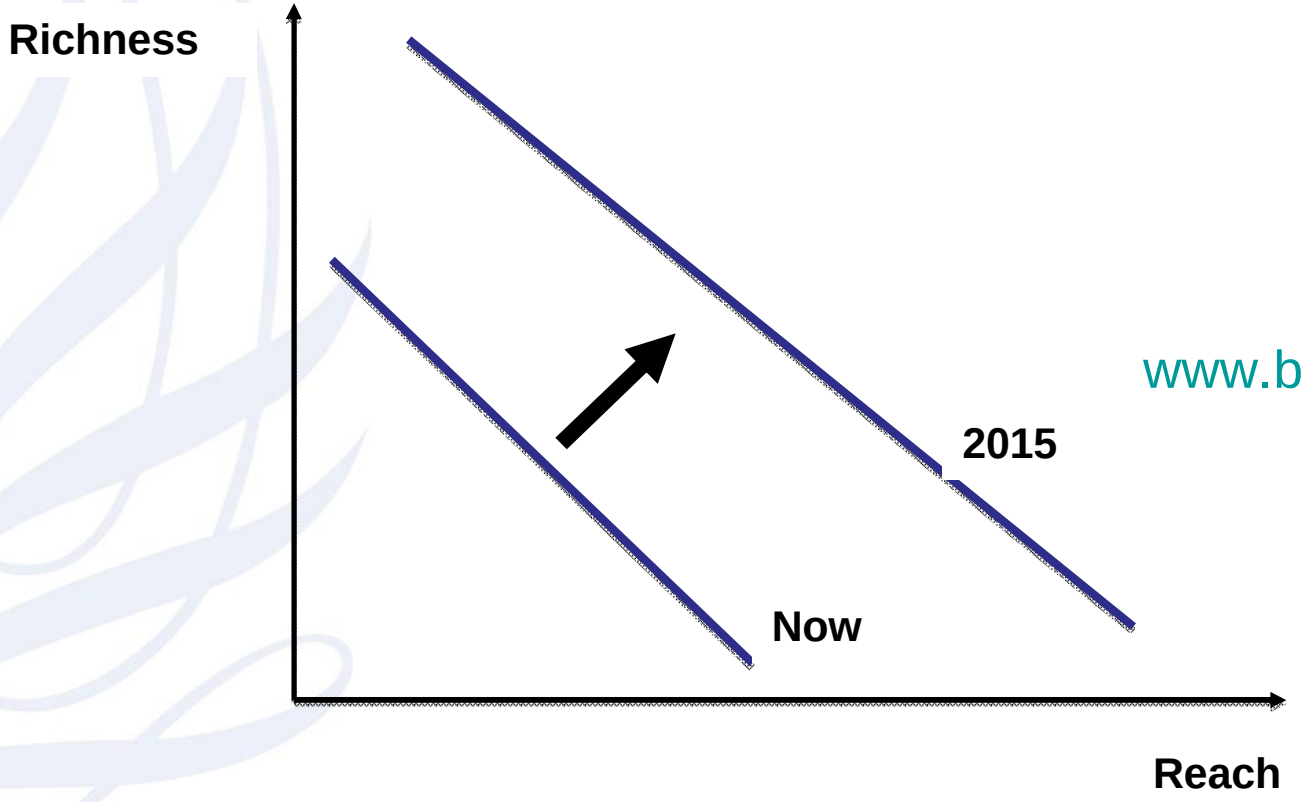

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Richness vs Reach?

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- Diverse learners (diversity of location, needs, learning styles, access to resources, culture, aspirations.....)
- Learning spaces – physical and virtual (dissolving the boundaries – the edgeless learning world; breaking down preconceptions)
- Content (we are all net importers of content; none of us are monopolists)
- Time periods (lifelong learning; spaces between other demands; across physical boundaries)
- Knowledge (specifically the collaborative construction and exploitation of knowledge)
- **But blended learning is the norm**

What are we connecting?

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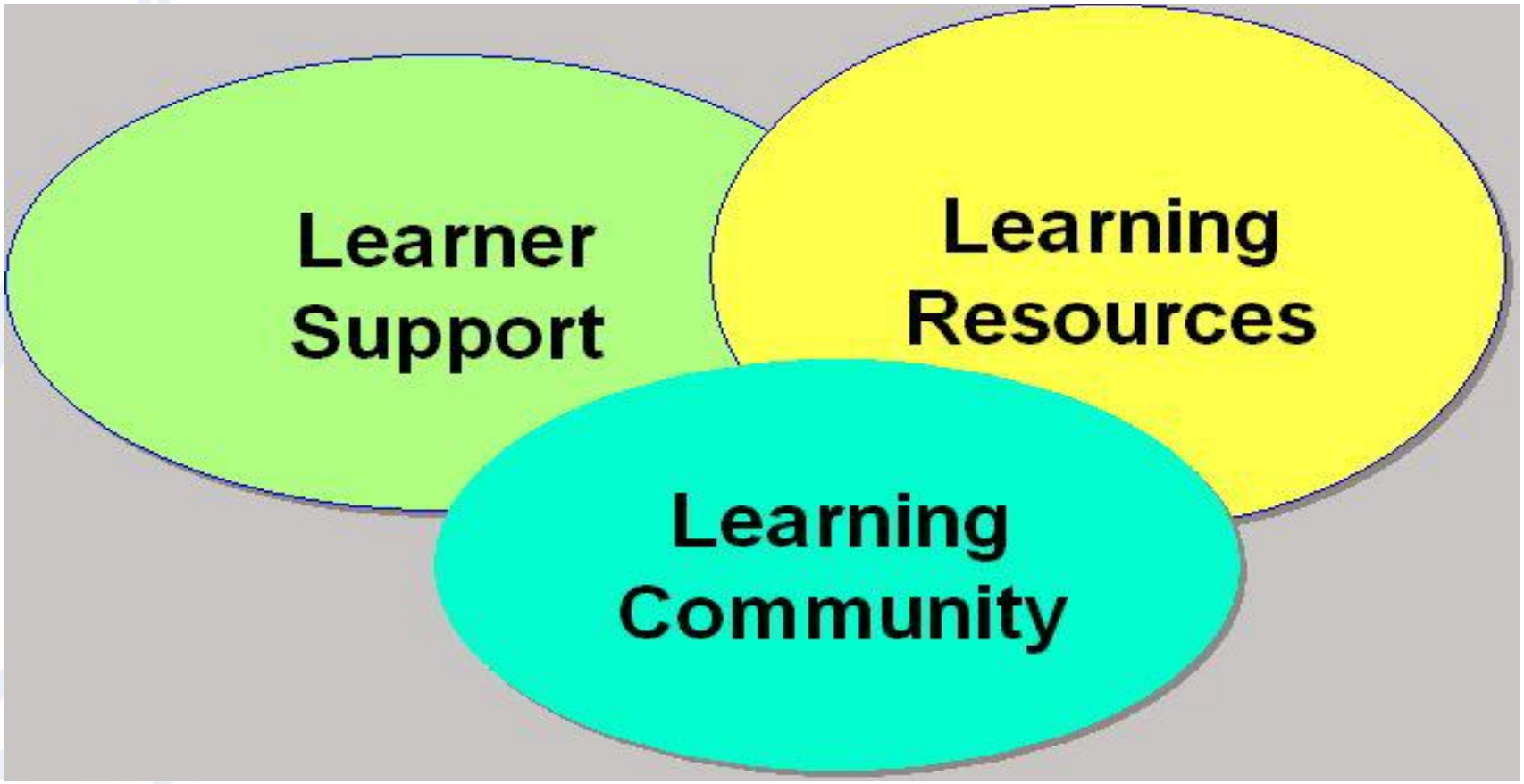

From one to three…

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Supporting student learning

- Note “student learning” not “students”
- Helping staff to support students is vital
- Students helping students can be very powerful
- Communities are dynamic
- The conventional world of help desks, logging queries etc. may not work
- Students are not natives in all digital environments
- Availability, reliability, quick and useful feedback, access to high quality resources.....

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- New business models
- New ways of working (for both students and staff)
- Economies of scope not economies of scale
- Open
- Accessible
- Collaboration not competition
- “Glocal”
- Sustainable

Think....

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