


 Cultivate


With Cultivate, instructional designers at the University of Johannesburg are working with lecturers to adopt technology more quickly, while building stronger relationships.

With 40 000 students across four campuses UJ is one of the largest residential Universities in Africa. UJ is working hard to bring technology's benefits to staff and students in a time of great change. They recently merged with two other institutions and upgraded to WebCT Vista, an enterprise Learning Management System.

We asked Dr. Marlena Kruger, Director of UJ's Centre for Technology Assisted Learning (CenTAL) and recent recipient of the SAARDHE Fellowship Award in Academic Development, to outline the major challenges they were facing.

"Optimisation of our investments and continuously building capacity and empowering our human resources is the biggest challenge. We need to ensure that all users master what we have invested in. As a result of the merger we now have a very large client base to serve, without any additional human resources," she said. "The difficult task is promoting the successful integration of technology and education. That's the fuzzy part; the approaches need to be integrated."

Reflecting on how to achieve this led CenTAL to reconsider how they went about relating to faculty. One of their strategies was to familiarise faculty with the available tools.

"We found with LMS training that if it's in too much detail it's frustrating for lecturers" explains instructional designer Erica Pretorius. "We found they get confused being shown the tools."

CenTAL also tried appealing to lecturers' interest in specific pedagogical areas. For example they asked those interested in assessment to attend assessment professional development workshops. But this did not prove as popular as they had hoped, said Erica.

"In the end it's all about relationships, building good relationships with faculty. Cultivate is assisting tremendously in this process."

Dr. Marlena Kruger – Dr. Marlena Kruger, Director of UJ's Centre for Technology Assisted Learning (CenTAL)

"The visual approach really works. Lecturers get the idea really quickly rather than us telling them in many many words."

Erica Pretorius – instructional designer

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UJ and Eiffel-Corp have a long standing relationship; Eiffel-Corp has been a key partner to the University supporting and promoting UJ's Learning Management Systems since 2000.

Eiffel-Corp knew that it could help with 'Cultivate', a methodology supported by a wealth of resources. It was developed by Eiffel-Corp to help instructional designers or educational technologists nurture the adoption and creative use of technologies with faculty and students, to demystify technology for management and executives.

CentTAL now uses Cultivate as a core resource and process to introduce the right blend of tools to lecturers. Cultivate has been deployed by CentTAL in a number of highly successful formats, from professional development workshops through to one on one and group engagements.

In the short time UJ has been using Cultivate they have seen impressive results.

Faculty are consistently creatively engaged with the possibilities offered by educational technology. "It has helped me to engage lecturers in a very visual and creative way; with Cultivate I make better use of my time" says Hermien Geldenhuys, Co-ordinator Lecturer Development and Course Design.

The time taken to understanding has decreased. This has been rewarding for Dr Francilène Greyling – instructional designer,

"You should see the expression on their faces when the penny drops when lecturers realise that they can solve problems by using the [Learning Management] system."

Arno Louw instructional designer at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) agrees:

"Lecturers assimilate the tools much faster. The conceptualisation of the system requires less work upfront. Cultivate resources help the lecturers make new discoveries. Something seems to click and it stimulates more creative use of the tool. How could you survive without Cultivate?"

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Dr. Francilène Greyling - instructional designer

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Through Cultivate CenTAL staff is now more easily able to present a consistent and professional appearance across faculty. Instructional designer Benita Nefdt explains “Lecturers are always impressed and feel that it’s very professional. We do not have the time or the skills to develop the professional materials such as those found in Cultivate.”

“We are using Cultivate in a number of creative ways. One important area we are addressing is going back to the champions and energising them. To make sure they are not stagnating and that they remain open to new ideas and ways of doing things. While we are still looking at growing the base of users we need to go and see what the champions are doing with the tools to uncover effective practice, to see what they are happy with and what they are focusing on. In the end it’s all about relationships, building good relationships with faculty. Cultivate is assisting tremendously in this process”

says Dr. Marlena Kruger

Andre vd Merwe, CEO of Cultivate responded.

“We were so excited to hear how Cultivate made a difference at CenTAL. The resources and approach resonated with the entire team. It’s great to hear that Cultivate is delivering on its promise to spur adoption including the added job satisfaction that your interventions with faculty are making a difference.”

If you want to explore how Cultivate can help your educational technologists reach higher quality outcomes with faculty quickly, please contact us today. info@cultivatelearning.com

www.CultivateLearning.com

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More information about Cultivate:

The Cultivate resources and methodology are based on over four years of research and development by Eiffel Corp. Eiffel Corp has been working with dozens of institutions in South Africa, and over 100 internationally since 1998.

Cultivate was born out of a deep desire to tackle the issues of promoting sound educational technology adoption. The journey began in 2004 when Eiffel Corp founders Andre and Gwen vd Merwe asked the question ‘how do we achieve technology adoption within education to meet acute teaching and learning outcomes?’ While the journey to answering the question is by no means complete the early results are very encouraging.

More modules have been released and a Certification program for Learning Technologists is in development. Version 2.0 was released on the 1st of November 2007. Cultivate now operates under a separate trading company from Eiffel Corp yet shares Eiffel Corp’s resource essence.



More information about University of Johannesburg:

The University of Johannesburg was established on 1 January 2005. It is the result of the incorporation of the Soweto and East Rand campuses of Vista University into the Rand Afrikaans University, which took place on 1 January 2004, and the merger of the Rand Afrikaans University (into which the two Vista campuses had been incorporated) and the Technikon Witwatersrand on 1 January 2005, to create the University of Johannesburg (UJ). The Technikon Witwatersrand had been in existence since 1925, the Rand Afrikaans University since 1967 and the Vista University since 1982. UJ has four campuses spread over Central Gauteng: the Auckland Park Kingsway Campus (the main campus), the Doornfontein Campus, the Auckland Park Bunting Road Campus and the Soweto Campus. With over 40 000 full-time students and 2 700 permanent employees, it is one of the largest residential universities in South Africa.

