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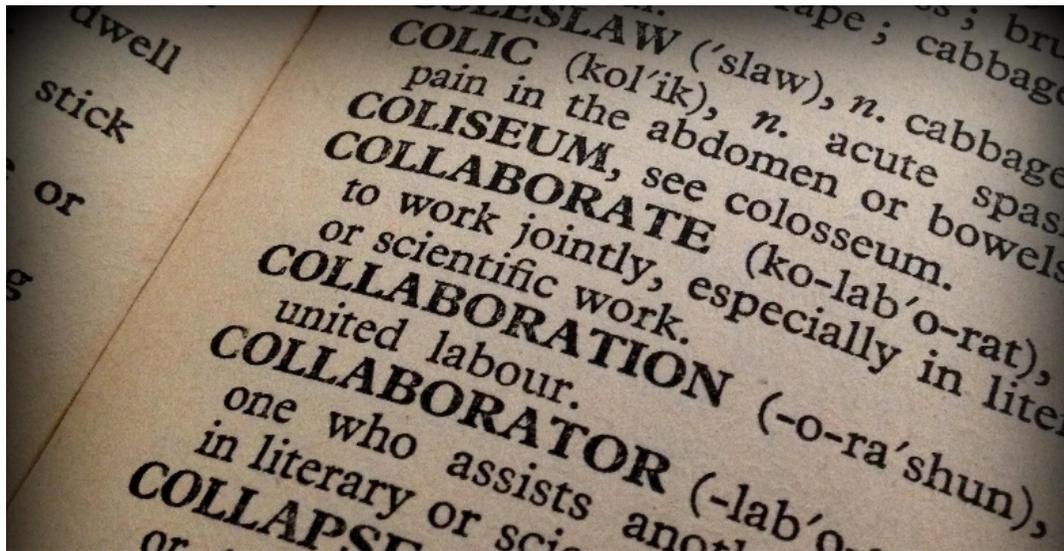


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# Stop, collaborate and listen: why edtech in HE is all about teamwork

When it comes to implementing new and emerging edtech, collaboration between learning technologists and academics is key, says CoSector – University of London's France Barth



Thursday 20th December 2018



**In a university setting, and when it comes to new technology, how is collaboration useful in the classroom?**

I'm from a teaching background, and as a teacher, I have seen first-hand that [collaboration is essential in the classroom](#). You learn by

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collaborating. Whether you learn via teacher-to-student or student-to-student. My job now as a learning technologist, is to ensure that same connection and ability to collaborate is made with a university academic.

### **Academics are somewhat renowned for their reluctance towards using new and emerging teaching technologies. How do we encourage collaboration when it comes to implementing edtech in the classroom?**

The reluctance is still very much there. Which of course, creates challenges when implementing new learning technologies. For many academics, if they have a bad experience with technology, they are really less likely to engage with it again. Many academics also still believe that technology is going to be a replacement for real-time teaching, but this is actually far from the truth. It is there to enhance the existing teacher/learner experience, not to replace it.

### **How are you collaborating with academics to implement new technologies in the classroom?**

Learning technologists at CoSector – University of London are implementing a step-by-step process. Often, academics come to me with a great idea of using tech in the classroom, but they are not sure how to implement it. So, I ask them firstly, what do you want to use the technology for, what is your overall aim, which students will be using this technology, and how do you think this will enhance their learning? After that, we can provide some real, targeted advice, and go on to demonstrate how the technology works. Once we've decided on a plan of action, we start the implementation, training and monitoring process. When we get a little down the line, we stop, and we evaluate the success of the

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technology with the academic. We can also get student feedback and we monitor performance.

So, as you can see, the whole process is collaborative. At no point is the academic on their own with the technology, and at no point are the learning technologists left to their own devices. It is a joint effort.

“ *You learn by collaborating. Whether you learn via teacher-to-student or student-to-student.* ”

Sometimes academics feel as if they must use new technology, and they don't have a choice but to integrate the latest edtech. This can breed a certain level of resistance and hesitation to change. But I think a process such as the one we have in place, highlights how important everyone's input is. It really is a case of, I need you, you need me, let's work together.

### **Have you used this step-by-step process recently?**

Yes. I was recently approached by an academic who was using an online chat to communicate with her distance learning students. The academic knew there was other software out there that was potentially more suitable, but she just didn't know what was available to her. So, using the process discussed, we were able to find the most appropriate video conferencing tool for her needs, and the needs of her distance learning students. It was a collaborative process from start to finish.

**The University of London has always been a very forward-thinking institution when it comes to edtech, how can other universities follow suit?**

**Finally, what would you say to an academic**



It is important to know that a learning technologist is not IT Support. They have many specialist skills and they can use their expertise to enhance teaching and learning in the classroom and outside of it. I am a teacher first, so I can bring those skills into play.

Technology is undoubtedly the way forward. Students have incredibly high expectations of their learning experience, and they have grown up with developing technology. Students expect universities to offer different ways of learning, accessing material, and collaborating. They also expect different types of delivery – blended learning, distance learning, part-time, etc. So, universities need to be constantly looking at emerging technology, but they also need to make sure their teaching staff are on board with these developments. This is where that collaboration is crucial.

### **apprehensive about using edtech?**

In all learning environments, collaboration is key. It is really important that learning technologists and academics establish a strong relationship, and it is vital to remember that it is certainly not a one-way dialogue when it comes to implementing technology in the classroom. It is about working together to create something that will boost the teaching and learning experience for teachers and students alike.

*France Barth is a learning technologist at [CoSector – University of London](#).*

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