3ydd Gynhadledd Dysgu ac Addysgu

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# Crynoldebau / abstracts

Abandoning the lecture theatre

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A new module on learning how to program was created as part of the department’s revamp of the first year. In previous years a similar module was taught partly in the lecture theatre with some practical work in a workstation room. All of the new module’s teaching, apart from a one-hour tutorial, is now undertaken in a workstation room (B23).

The rationale for this is presented: namely, the focus is on programming and so ready access to PCs and software development tools enables the students to undertake small programming exercises during a presentation. Moreover, ready access to PCs enabled students to use Qwizdom Virtual Remote. This made it easy for all students to both display the slides on their PC screens, making it easier to see the slides, and also to participate anonymously in quiz sessions.

Undertaking most of the teaching in a workstation room was not without problems. Students were easily distracted by access to websites such as Facebook or to work on a programming assignment when they should be listening to a presentation. The LAN School tool allowed the lecturer to restrict access to specific websites or programs during the teaching session, which helped address this issue. Other problems will also be presented.

The module is nearing its end for the current academic session. Although relatively successful, there is further scope to shorten presentations. Through trial and error it was felt that 15 minutes of talking without students interaction should be the maximum. Students seemed more engaged if presentations were broken up with frequent quizzes or breakout coding sessions. It remains to be seen whether student grades for the module are enhanced compared with previous years for similar introductory programming modules. The lecturer would like to use other features of the LAN School software in the future: e.g. presenting a student’s screen showing good practice to other students.