

C e n T A L

Centre for Technology Assisted Learning

*Sikhuthaza imfundo!
We energise learning!
Ons gee woema aan leer!
Re fa thuto mafolofolo!*

presents



Lost amidst lots of little lights... OR led towards the light?

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Recognition:

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Looking back at a lustrum of integrated technology-assisted learning (TAL)



- Since January 2003: CenTAL involved in the design and development of \pm 950 integrated learning material packages (\pm 70 – 120 packages per semester).
- More and more experienced in the use of Edulink and training users in the use thereof.
- CenTAL has six, soon all seven instructional designers (IDs) as certified Blackboard trainers.
- Slowly but surely moved away from a **production model** to a **staff development model**
 - with the view to empower users for the effective and optimised use of the learning management system (LMS – Edulink).
- Looking back on this road:
 - Realise – we* have already come a long way (* as an university-wide team).
 - With hindsight comes insight.
 - Learnt many lessons, some of which I'm sharing with you today from my experience as a project manager in this environment.
- Also: We have grown and done things right – reason for celebration.

- **Celebration: synonymous with festivity and lights.**
- **Carried away by the l in lustrum, lights and celebration.**



More about all the l's in a while...

Let's look what we have dealt with in this past lustrum:

Educational and technological tools



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Discussions

... much, much more!

Wikipedia

Social
bookmarking



Learning guides

Library Live

...
and
...



Video conferencing

Lectures and
tutorials

Email



Readers

Calendar

Voice overs

PDA's

Graphic
design

CHAT

Document
camera work

Quizzes

Grading

Tracking

Learning environment team members



- Lecturer, co-lecturers, HODs
- Tutors
- Course coordinator, project manager
- Management of different departments
- Instructional designers
- Instructional developers
- Secretaries
- Graphic designers
- Studio manager – video conferencing
- LMS administrators and supporters
- Quality care practitioners
- Translators, editors
- Evaluator
- Staff from General Administration
- Learning material store staff
- Library staff

Each educational tool is a little light!



Light *noun* 1. natural agent that stimulates sight and makes things better

(Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2002)

Now back to the / -question:

Lost amidst **lots of little lights**... OR... led towards **the light**?

Light *noun* 2. a source of illumination (helping to clarify) [Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2002]

Each educational tool a powerful source to be reckoned with, BUT ...
are we utilising them in such a way that they are **all working together** to form one light, source – one hub of resources effectively facilitating students' learning?

If the use of different tools is **not properly planned – in an integrated manner**, the light of each tool will soon fade, leaving the lecturer and student in the dark, devaluing the unique power of the individual tools.

L-question game:

Blinded by	–	enlightened by?
Lacking insight	–	lucrative learning?
Limited by, left behind	–	limitless learning?

Feedback from the May 2006 Edulink Symposium



- **Directly quoted:**

I think this is a exciting challenge but am concerned that some of us may be caught up in the whirlwind and forget focus – to provide quality education. There is a perception amongst the unconverted that this is an easy way out.”

Linking this concern to the global education imperative



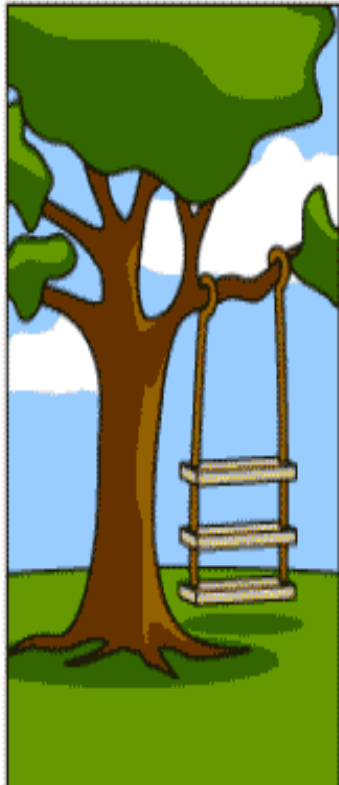
From the welcome note and the executive summary of the white paper ***Unlocking the Global Education Imperative – Core Challenges and Critical Responses*** compiled by Gordon Freeman, Vice President: Education Strategy, Blackboard Inc:

- “We are all in **common cause for improved education**, higher rates of student engagement, greater levels of institutional accountability... and social improvement.”
- “It is clear that the pressures of the information age are very real, and that they cause nations and institutions to rethink how to provide **high quality education to exploding numbers of students.**”

A look at the running of integrated technology-assisted learning environments from a project management point of view



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How the customer explained it



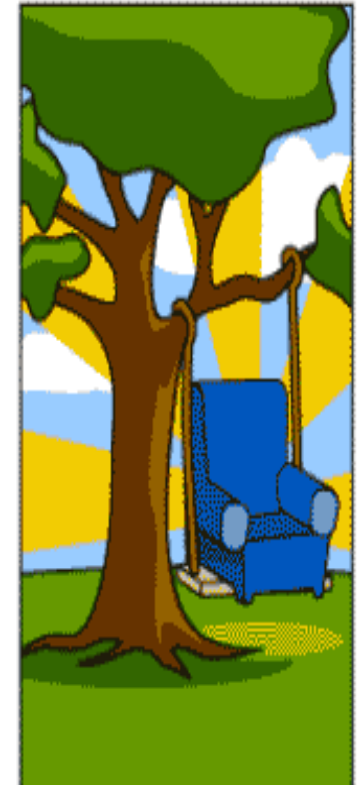
How the Project Leader understood it



How the Analyst designed it



How the Programmer wrote it

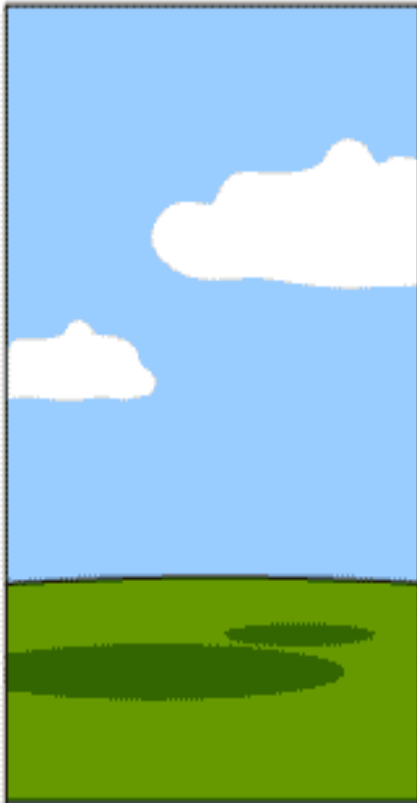


How the Business Consultant described it

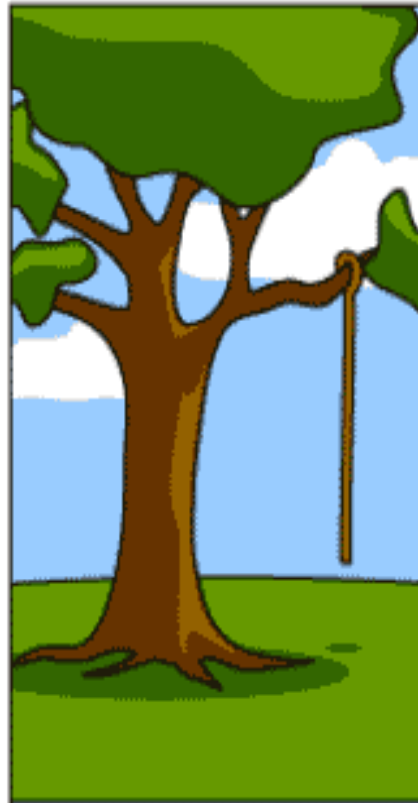
The process continues... everyone is busy, but oh...!



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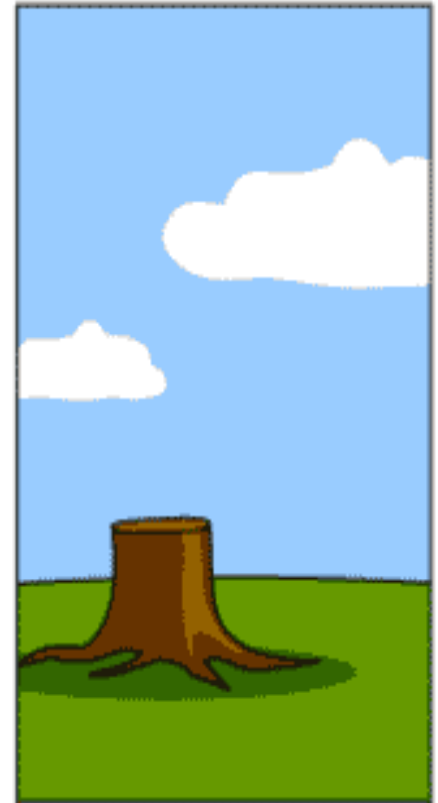
How the project was documented



What operations installed



How the customer was billed



How it was supported

And now for the surprise...

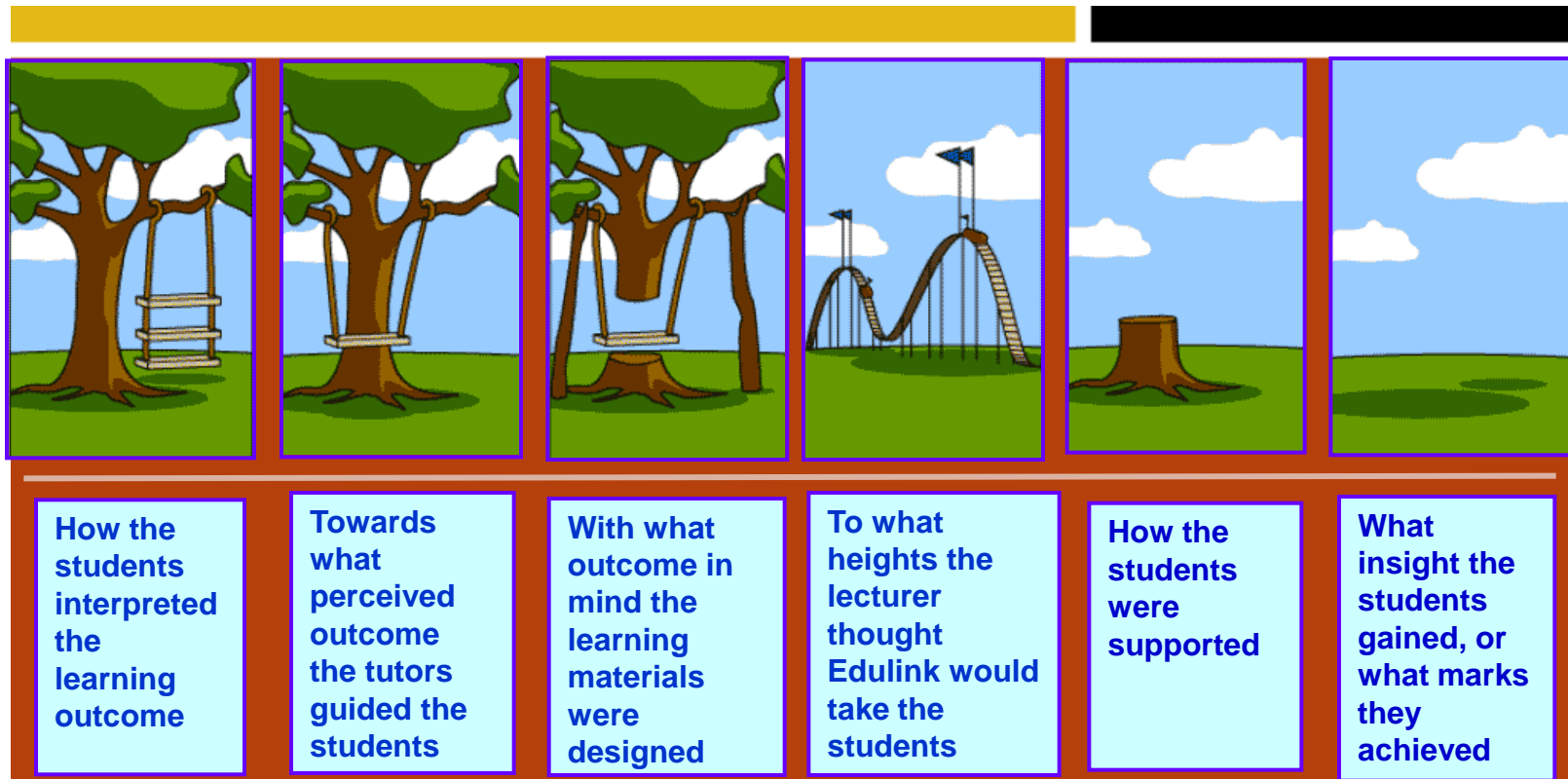


What the customer really
needed

Comparison with the planning of a learning environment

If this is
the learning outcome of the module...

Lack of an integrated approach could easily lead to the following:



Each educational role player is a project manager



- Each of us is the project manager of our own working environment, be it as a lecturer, a member of the design, development or support team or a manager.
- The same project management principle applies to all of us:

“An undefined project cannot be managed... an unmanaged project usually fails!”

(Imago Business Transformation Limited, 1996)

- This also applies to the planning of a learning and teaching environment.
- Next: Sharing CenTAL's expertise in this regard...

CenTAL's involvement in creating integrated TAL environments



What does an integrated TAL environment look like?

An integrated TAL environment typically consists of all or a combination of the following:

- A learning guide template and checklist to facilitate the development of the guide by the lecturer.
- An interactive CD-ROM with a variety of activities like
 - voice overs
 - document camera work
 - video clips
 - case studies
 - etc.

to provide a richer learning experience and allow students the opportunity to improve their skills and test their understanding of the work. (Read more in *CenTAL newsclips* in folder: *An in depth look at interactive CDs – great learning environment enhancement tools.*)

- An electronic learning environment / LMS, namely Edulink with a variety of tools to choose from:
 - Information and communication (calendar, email, discussions, chat)
 - Assessment (quizzes, self-assessments, surveys, assignment)
 - Management, tracking and grading of student's marks
- New technologies, such as Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)

CenTAL's involvement in creating integrated TAL environments by means of the ADDIE model



Analyse

Design

Develop

Implement

Evaluate



ADDIE involvement

- Analysing the course
- Structuring the learning package
- Preliminary media planning for the course
- Designing the learning environment
- Designing and developing the CD-ROM
- Implementation – by means of training and professional development of lecturers **(new slide)**
- Evaluating the fully integrated learning environment formatively **(CenTAL evaluator)**
- Evaluating the fully integrated learning environment summatively **(CenTAL evaluator)** and acquiring final approval



- **Coordination services**

Coordination of the registering for tender, printing and delivery of the learning material packages via liaison with General Administration – if lecturer has registered the module with CenTAL and agrees to adhere to the central timelines of UJ for these processes.

From the Project Model website:

"Question... How do projects get late? Answer... One day at a time!"



• Edulink services

- Design, development and evaluation of selected tools for the Edulink website in collaboration with the lecturer
- Translation and editing of Edulink material – if the website is part of an integrated learning environment
- Revision, adjustments or improvements of existing Edulink websites in accordance with instructional design principles in collaboration with the lecturer
- Support to handle student and lecturer queries via email (by means of eduhelp@uj.ac.za) and telephonic support with regard to Edulink
- Solving Edulink technical glitches – focus of CenTAL's Learning Technology Advisor
- Electronic surveys – electronic evaluation of selected components of the learning material for specific modules



- **Training and professional development services (Implementation)**

- Edulink training for students of the specified module at the commencement of the module:
 - One or two periods training in computer labs
 - An introduction to Edulink application
 - Focussed session on the relevant tools used in the Edulink module
- Edulink introductory workshops – overview of the system: prerequisite for activation of module website
- Brown Bag lunch sessions – focused one-hour workshops on the *why* and *how* of using specific tools – for the more experienced users
- Cherry-on-the-cake professional development opportunity for lecturers: ***The Hero's Journey***, an accredited six-months short learning programme (10 credits, NQF level 7)
- Lecturer / designer training – customised and just-in-time (JIT) according to needs
- Group of lecturers – customised and JIT according to needs
- Assistant / tutor training – according to needs **(Read more in *CenTAL* newsclips in folder: AD and CenTAL joining hands in tutor training.)**



• Additional services

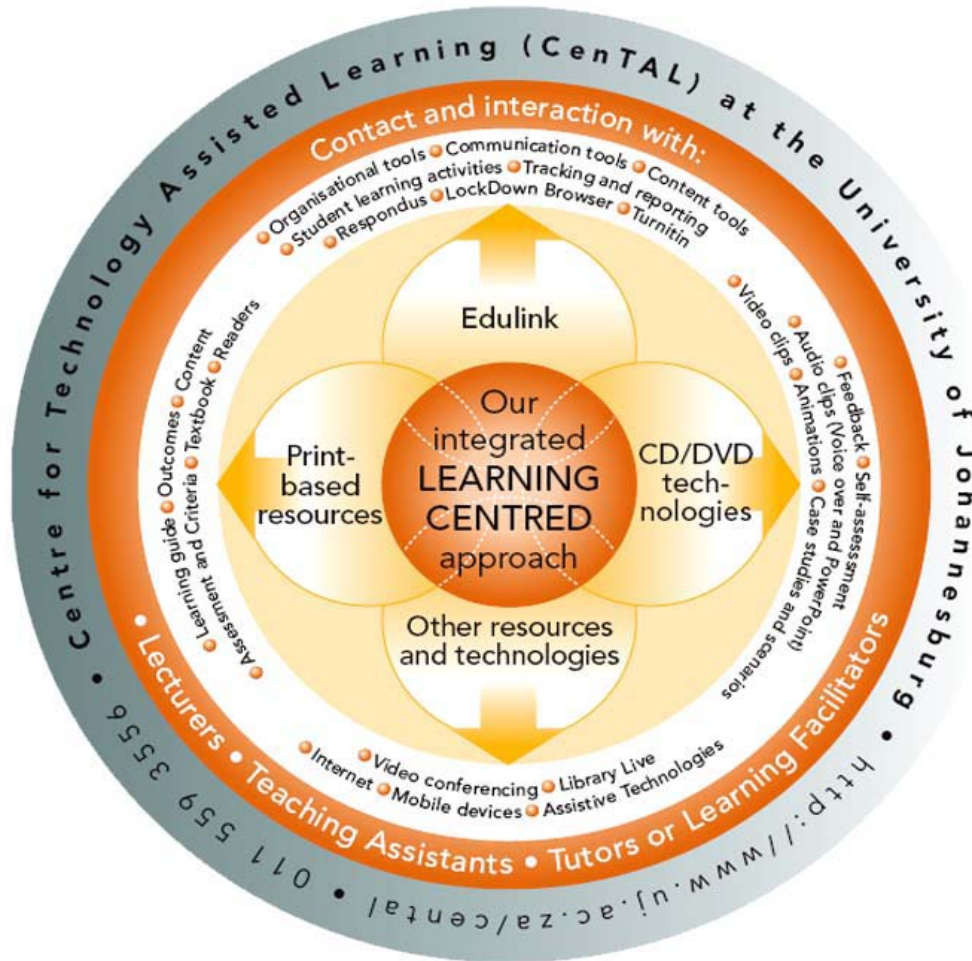
- Video conferencing
- Audio and video services

(See more info in *CenTAL Newsclips.*)

Integrating the learning environment



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Print-based resources

CD/DVD technologies

Edulink

Other resources and technologies

Great theory, but just how practical is all of this...?



- Lecturers' workload!
 - Class preparation, lecturing, marking, etc.
 - Research, papers and publishing
 - Community involvement
- Managing by JIT implementation for the most urgent matters
- Sharing a few PM stories:
 - Reaction when contacting 4 – 6 months prior to commencement of specific module
 - Too busy to share experiences and resources

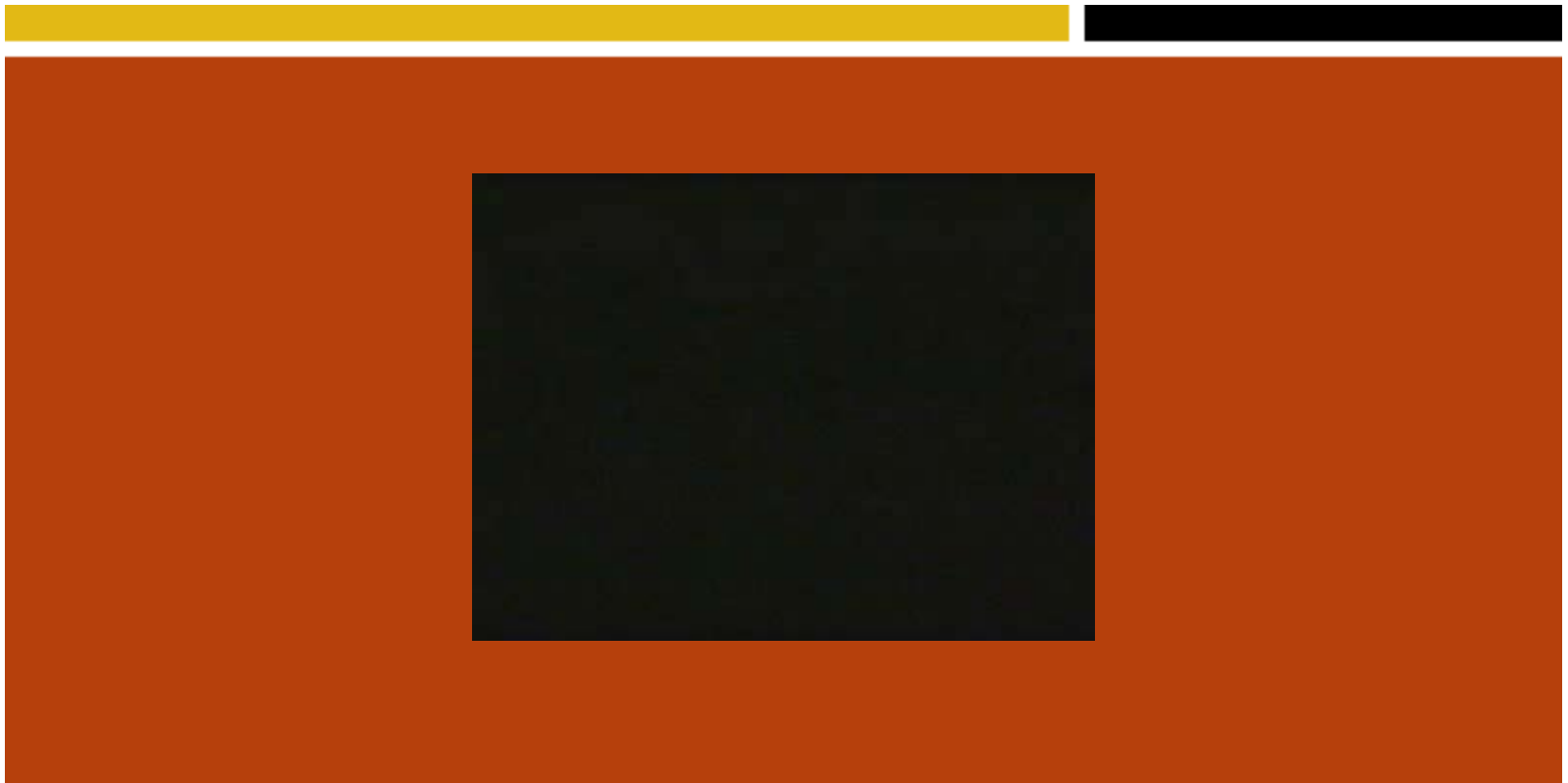
Not an easy road



- “I beg your pardon
I never promised you a rose garden;
along with the sunshine
there’s got to be a little rain sometime...”

- Yes, it’s true! **It is difficult**, especially in the beginning.
- And the *little bit of rain* time is often experienced as a *little bit of storm* time.
- You just want to jump on your horse, begin the race and get it over with!
- It might be worthwhile to reconsider your approach and to allow for a moment of clarity...

The moment of clarity...



CenTAL as partner in the teaching and learning game



- With CenTAL as partner in the teaching and learning game,
 - you can plan and manage your learning environments better
 - learn to integrate all the carefully selected tools for the specific module and
 - become experienced in using each tool for what it is best.
- TAL actually is not about the technology itself, but how we as team members use it to facilitate learning:
 - Read article about interactive CDs: well-planned, used together with learning guide, and Edulink; forming an integral part of classroom environment.
 - Plan for specific needs e.g. Erica and James for visually impaired students, Arno and Nelia, training for tutors – articles in *CenTAL newsclips*

- Talking to each other.
- Planning each step of the teaching and learning journey together.
- Sharing and saving time by using existing technologies and material.
- Linking tools and technologies to each other and the bigger picture.

- Let's go back to the drawing board together.
- Let the clicking begin – on paper, in our heads and well in advance of the commencement of the module.

Let's regard all of this neither as the easy way out or as Mission Impossible, but find the time to streamline matters and **connect all the little lights in our specific environment** to create one source of illumination to lead students towards the light...

In closure – where does all of this fit in globally and with UJ’s teaching and learning strategy?



Unlocking the Global Education Imperative – Core Challenges and Critical Responses compiled by Gordon Freeman, Vice President: Education Strategy, Blackboard Inc*

Statement in the welcome note* summarises the true purpose of Edulink and the other technologies and learning materials referred to in this paper:
“While Blackboard Inc is an education technology corporation, the focus of our effort here is *providing a general contribution to the improvement of education and training worldwide.*”

TAL regarded as a core component of UJ’s teaching and learning strategy:

At South Africa’s University of Johannesburg, “Technology-assisted learning, in our estimation, is a core component of how we train our students to become independent thinkers, to work in a team, to be able to connect with others elsewhere in the world, and to be competitive at the same time.”

Professor Derek van der Merwe
Pro Vice-Chancellor & Vice-Principal
University of Johannesburg South Africa

Thank you.

Any questions?