A Laboratory in the post: An exploration of the early years of teaching science and technology at the OU

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• Dealing with huge student numbers
• Printed materials
• Home Experiment Kits
• Teaching via TV
• Pioneering ways of communicating with students
• Summer Schools
• Assessment
Student numbers – some facts and figures

• 25,000 places were available for students for the first teaching year – 1971.

• There would be four courses available in the first year:
  • M100 – Maths foundation course
  • S100 – Science foundation course
  • D100 – Social Science foundation course
  • A100 – Arts foundation course

(T100 – the first Technology course – started in 1972)
Access to equipment at OU study centres

- Viewing/listening to OU programmes
- Access to computer terminals
Teaching via TV
Pioneering ways of communicating with students

Some key developments 1969-2000

- 1969 OU’s Institute of Educational Technology (IET) established
- 1970 Student Computing Service set up
- 1976-early 80s development of the Cyclops telewriting system
- 1987 Online Library search
- 1988 The first home computing policy
- 1994 Virtual summer school trial
- 1995 Knowledge Media Institute (Kmi) set up
- 1999 first fully online undergraduate module
- 2000 first virtual graduation ceremony

Student Assessment

- Exams
- TMAs (Tutor Marked Assignments)
- CMAs (Computer Marked Assignments)
THANK YOU

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