Facebook v Blackboard Discussion Forums in Teaching and Learning Mathematics

Vesna Perišić

CETL-MSOR Conference 2015
'Sustaining Excellence'
8-9 September 2015, University of Greenwich

Outline

- Motivation
- Action
- Evaluation
- Conclusion
- Further work
- References

Motivation

Thinking of teaching ….

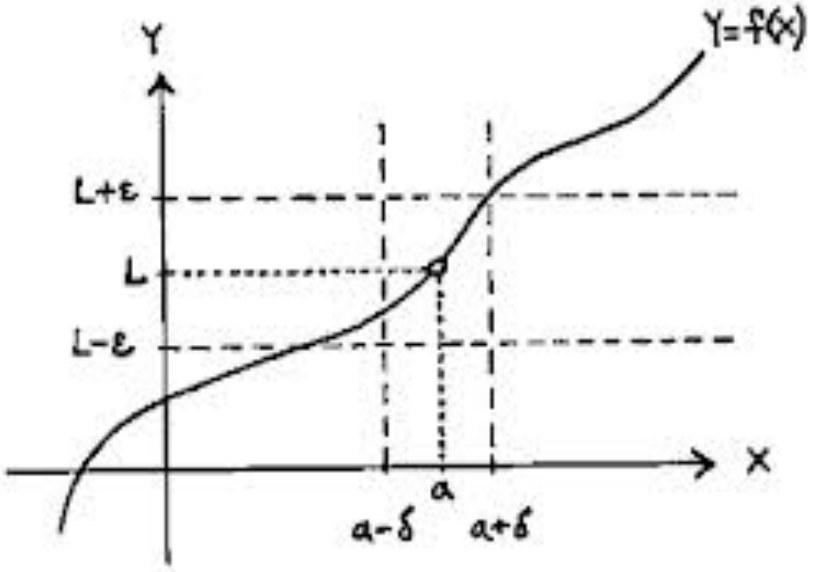
- Size of cohorts
- Diversity of cohorts (age, experience, background, aspirations,....)
- Abstract concepts - Mathematical rigour
- Anxiety

'...*daunting task that faces lecturers in responding to the pressure of mass HE*.' Biggs & Tan (2011)

History?

Mathematical rigour

(an example)



Communication

- Establish and maintain on going communication with students and among students
- Previous project: Use of social media (Facebook) to facilitate communication with students taking analysis module
- Current Project: Extend use of social media to include other modules I teach and complement it with discussion forums on Blackboard (VLE)

Action

In collaboration with Institute for Learnin Innovation and Development (ILIaD), UoS we:

- Set up Facebook group
- Support development of students' digital literacies, including managing their online identities and appropriate security settings
- Nominated moderators to support group discussions
- DigiChamps to help if students are not familiar with Facebook

What was going on ….

MATH2039_2013/14 About Events Photos Files

Write Post Add Photo / Video Ask Question Add File

Write something...

RECENT POSTS

Vesna Perisic

Tom Lehrer, as an example of mathematical career.

http://www.haverford.edu/astronomy/songs/lehrer/delta.htm

"There's a delta for every epsilon", by Tom Lehrer
www.haverford.edu
But one condition I must give: The epsilon must be positive A lonely life all the others live, In no theorem A delta for them.

Like · Comment · Unfollow Post · Share · Yesterday at 6:31pm

Vesna Perisic

The Class Test will cover the material until differentiation (differentiation not included)

Like · Comment · Share · Stop Notifications · November 20, 2013 at 1:35pm

Seen by 94

View 1 more comment

Vesna Perisic There is a practice class test paper on Blackboard (Assessment folder) No, it is not multiple choice.

November 21, 2013 at 10:08am · Edited · Like

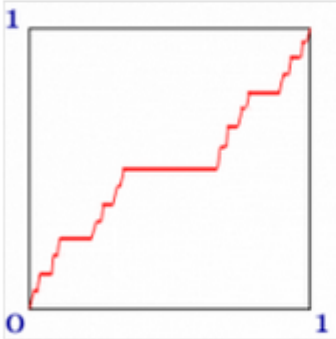
Alan Brook Ok thanks very much!

November 21, 2013 at 10:47am via mobile · Unlike · 1

Write a comment...

Joe Tait

Analysis related "cool" fact - A function which has derivate zero almost everywhere but still goes from zero to one. (Note that this will not be in the course)



Devil's Staircase -- Math Fun Facts

www.math.hmc.edu

If you plot this function, you get something called the Devil's Staircase .

Unlike · Comment · Share · Get Notifications · October 24, 2013 at 3:06pm

You and 3 others like this.

Seen by 97

Write a comment...

Vesna Perisic
http://southampton.web.ucu.org.uk/2013/12/02/strike-action-is-on-at-the
university-of-southampton/

FYI - what is going on locally ...

Strike action is on at the Universit
Southampton – Southampton UC
southampton.web.ucu.org.uk
Staff at the University of Southampto
tomorrow (Tuesday 3 December) as

Like · Comment · Share · Stop Notifications · Decemb

Fiona Harvey likes this.

Write a comment...

Vesna Perisic
http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6759

FYI

UCU - University and C
Pay Dispute 2013
www.ucu.org.uk
UCU members have voted
action and action short o
response to the employe
you a proper pay offer th

Vesna Perisic
http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=6759

UCU - University and College Union - HE Pay Dispute 2013
www.ucu.org.uk
UCU members have voted to take strike action and action short of a strike in response to the employers' failure to make you a proper pay offer this year.

Like · Comment · Share · Stop Notifications · October 24, 2013 at 8:57pm

Fiona Harvey and Joe Tait like this. Seen by 96

Crispin Hoad Will you be striking?
October 24, 2013 at 9:01pm · Like

Vesna Perisic Yes
October 24, 2013 at 9:03pm · Like · 2

Leo Allen does this mean no analysis for tea?
October 25, 2013 at 11:11am · Like · 3

Vesna Perisic I do not know. You may want to do self study or study with your peers (peer assisted learning). It sounds good, isn't it?
October 25, 2013 at 12:18pm · Like

Tom Munford Will you be striking again on Tuesday?
November 30, 2013 at 1:04am · Like

Vesna Perisic I will be striking again
December 2, 2013 at 5:58pm · Like

Write a comment...

Christmas MATH2039 tutorial

Events | Edit

Friends of Guests · By Vesna Perisic

Going (17)

Vesna Perisic (Host)

Charles Cox

Adolf Nomo

Recent guests (9 new)

Maybe (1)

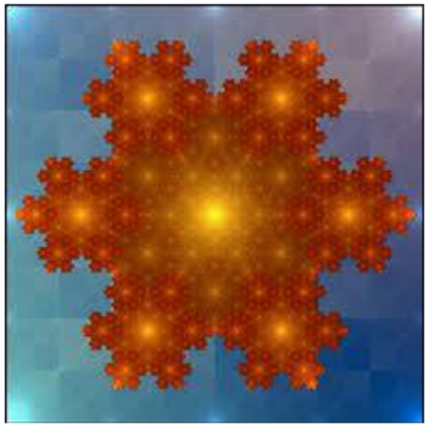
Friday, December 13, 2013 | 4:00pm until 4:45pm in UTC

07/3009

You have an opportunity to:
- collect last marked problem sheet with feedb
- collect all other uncollected work
- ask any questions
- eat LEBKUCHEN

Vesna Perisic

Koch's snow flake



Like · Comment · Stop Notifications · December 4, 2013 at 4:27pm

Sandra Pott, Dijana Svilicic, Diana Utrobicic Kablar and 4 others like this.

Write a comment...

‘Vegan lemon drizzle cake’

Continuing project …

- Continued using Facebook for communicating analysis
- Created Facebook group for the Engineering Foundation Year (EFY) cohort (2013/14)
- Created Facebook group for the first year maths students (2013/14)
- For each of the cohorts created a Discussion Forum on Blackboard (VLE) (2014/15)

Ongoing communication?

- Facebook communication

- Blackboard – 'Blanckboard'

Debate on Blackboard at the 'Technology Enhanced Learning' conference (ILIaD), April 2015, University of Southampton

More on Blackboard

- The University is pushing for Blackboard
- Blackboard has been most recently upgraded and there is a smart phone App for Blackboard
- UoS Managed Learning Environment (MLE) team promoting Blackboard: blog, twitter, YouTube, Google+
- Top tips – how to use Blackboard beyond basics
- MLE team provides information such as:

  Type of device used to access Blackboard

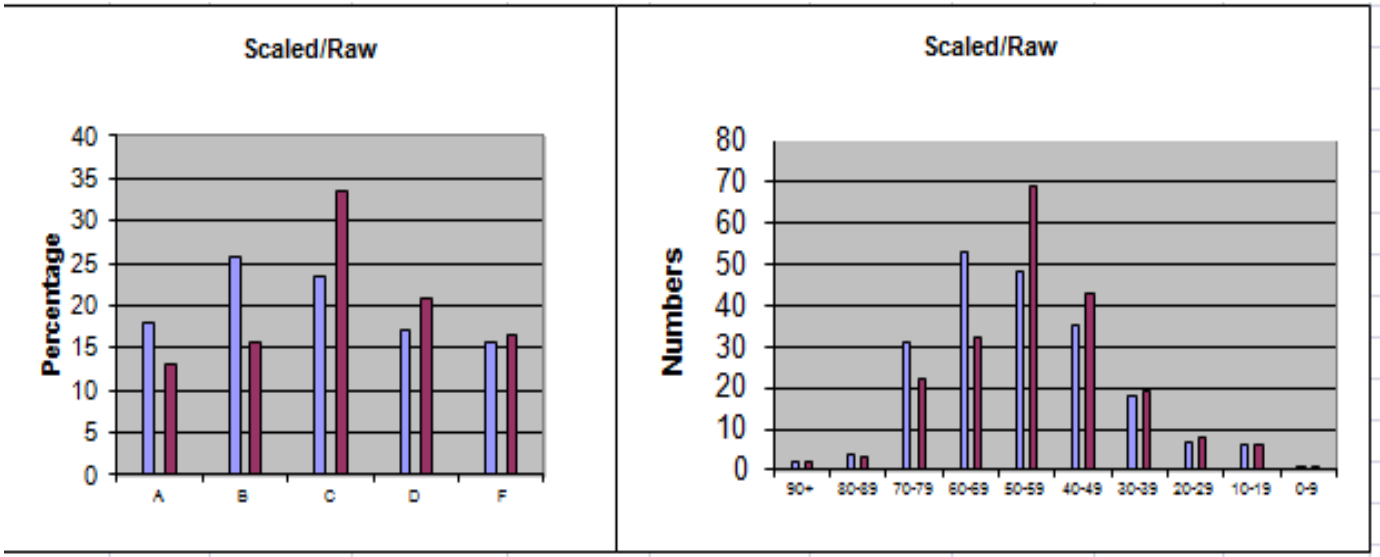
(August 2015): 88% desktop, 8% mobile, 4% tablet

Evaluation ??

- Exam results
- Student feedback (formal – informal)
- (NSS)

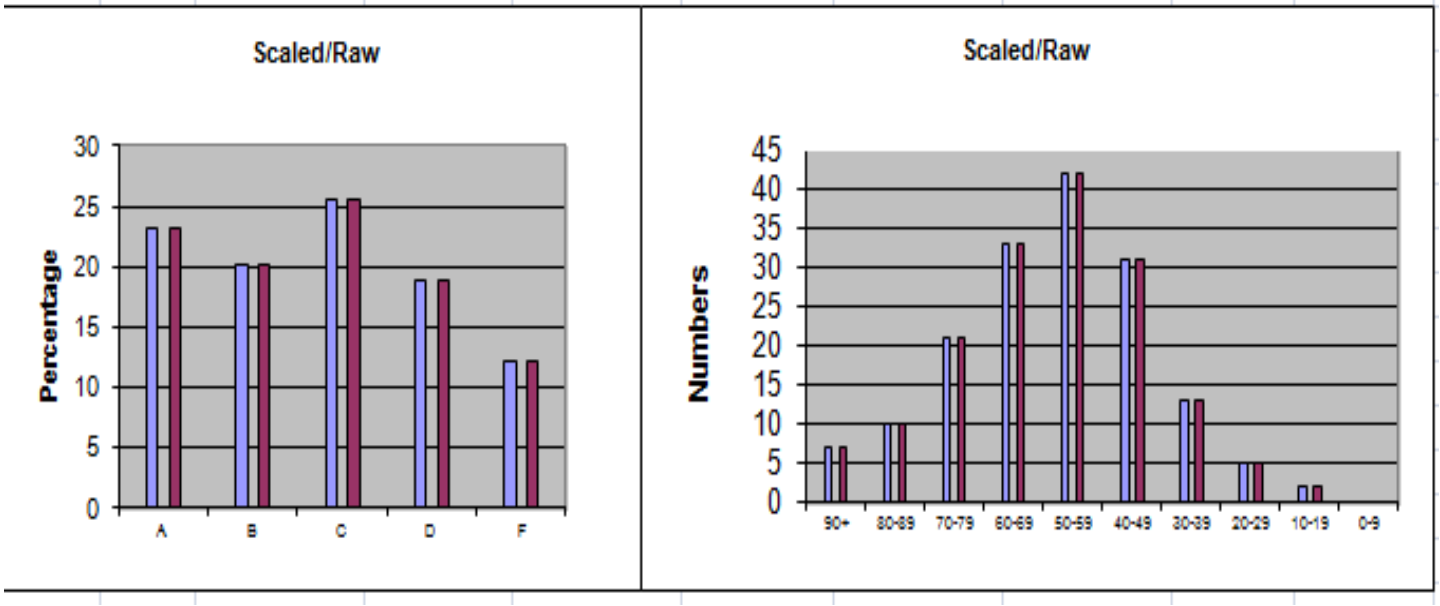
Exam Results

Before Facebook (BF)



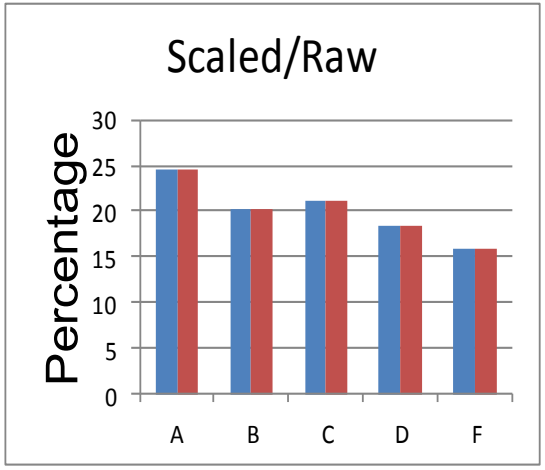
2012/13 analysis cohort: 205 students; average 55%/51%

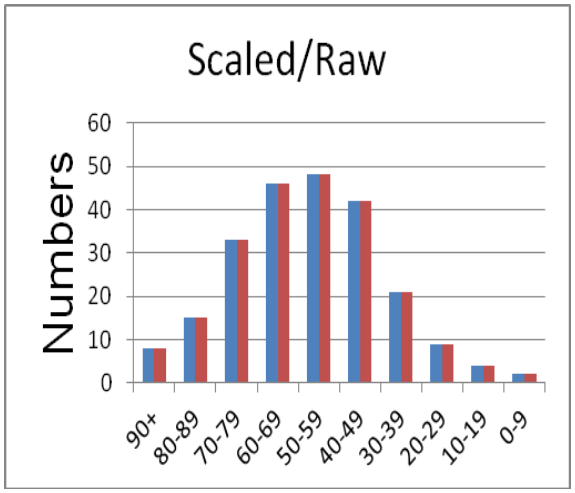
After FB has been introduced …



2013/14 analysis cohort: 164 students; average 57% /57%

With Facebook and Blackboard Discussion Forum





2014/15 analysis cohort: 228 students; average 55%

Student Feedback

- Formal: -Students evaluation questionnaire

  -Poll on Facebook

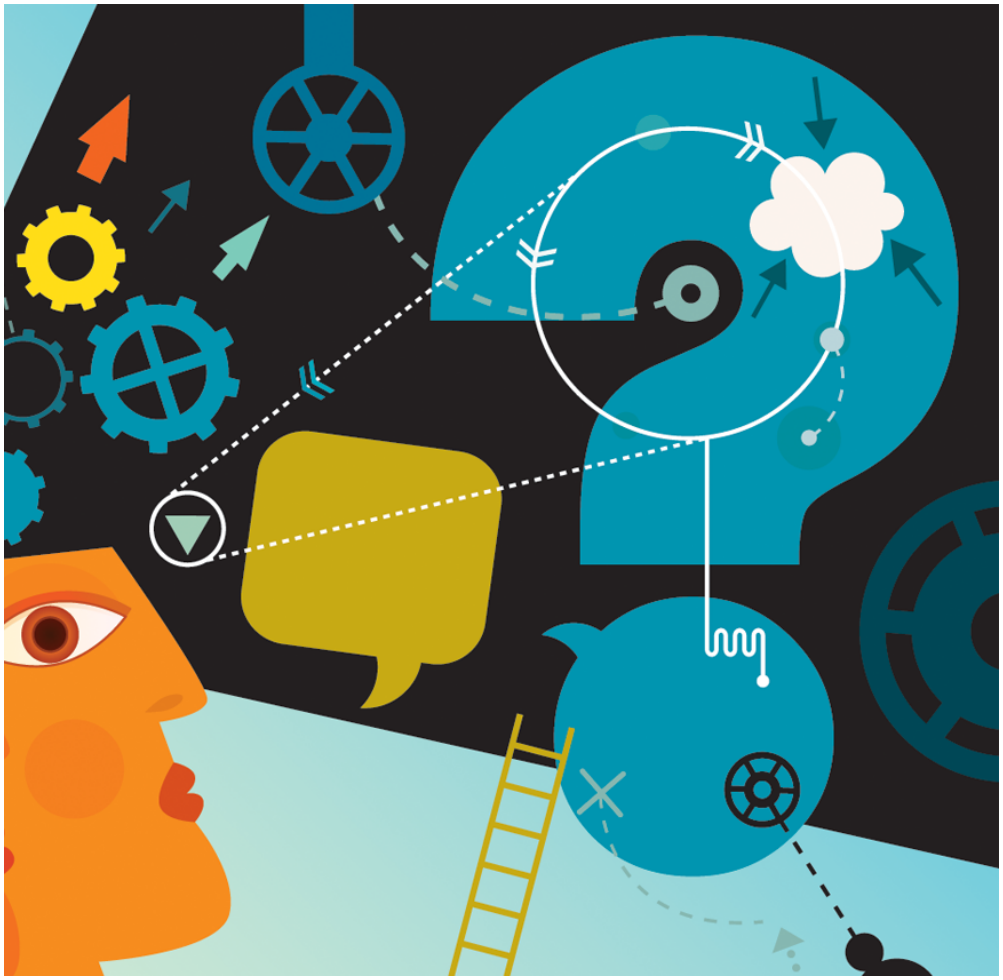
  -Survey (Ethical approval)

  Evaluation fatigue?

- Informal: *It is 'cool' to 'meet' a lecturer on Facebook*;

Helps to create more approachable and friendly atmosphere.

Conclusions



Further work

Implement some of the ideas I got here on this conference such as ‘outdoor education’

in order to develop a more *collaborative learning and teaching environment in partnership with students*.

References

Biggs, J. B. and C. Tang (2011). Teaching for Quality Learning at University, The Society for Research into Higher Education.

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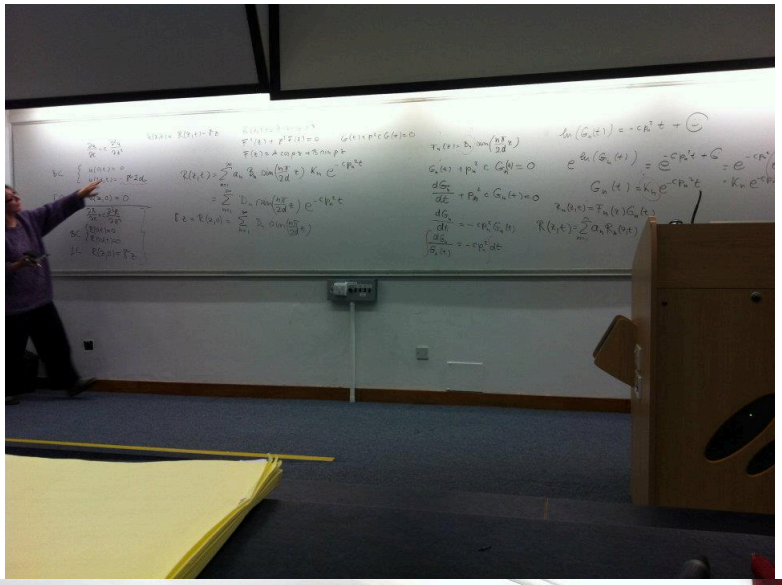
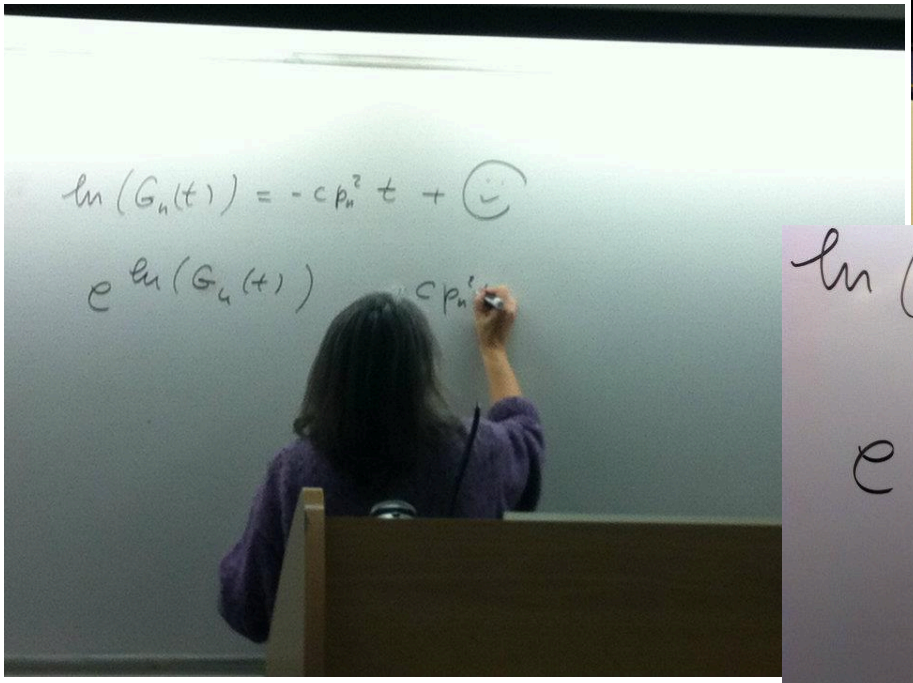
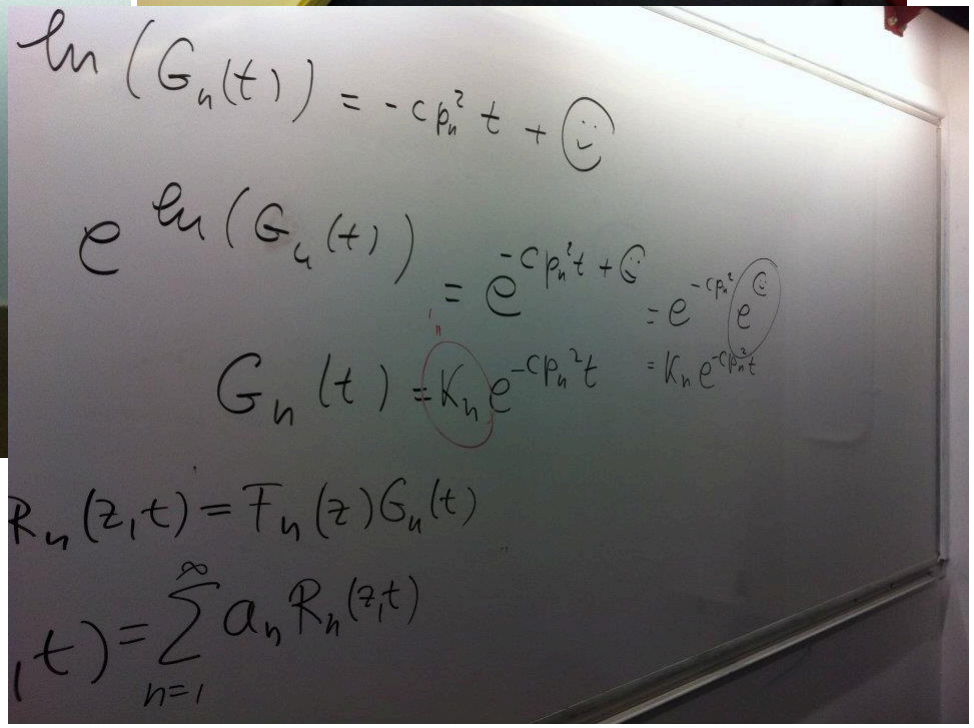
Rambe, P. (2013). Converged social media: Identity management and engagement on Facebook Mobile and blogs, Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 2013, 29(3)

Thanks!
Questions?