

# Fourth International Blended Learning Conference

"Engaging Students in the Curriculum"

17th-18th June 2009

De Havilland Campus - Weston Auditorium

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE

Poster Abstracts



**Guy Saward and Lynette Pye, University of Hertfordshire**

### **A comparison of social bookmarking approaches to sharing "found" resources**

Recent developments of the Internet, fuelled by socially generated content, mean learners have access to an ever increasing pool of resources. While this situation presents greater opportunities (JISC, 2004) and is integral to the development of blended learning (JISC 2007) it exacerbates the challenge of information overload. Social bookmarking is one way in which staff and students can collaborate to filter and make sense of a body of resources to support their learning.

Our work presents results of two case studies using different approaches to social bookmarking in teaching. In the first study bookmarking is closely integrated into a VLE while in the second students were encouraged to use a stand-alone service that was simply linked in to the VLE.

In comparing the two different approaches to using book marking services we explore issues such as:

- The willingness of students to engage with and share "discovered" resources
- The promotion and use of the system to encourage students to submit new resources and access existing ones
- The tagging or indexing of resources and the subsequent management of an emergent "folksonomy"

Despite the potential benefit of social bookmarking, a number of surveys (Safran et al 2007, White 2007, Saeed and Yang 2008, Luckin et al 2008) show it is the Cinderella of social e-learning (i.e. Web 2.0) and is less widely established in repertoire of blended learning than tools such as blogs and wikis.

Through our work we demonstrate the possible impact on the student experience of sharing resourced through social bookmarking. In doing so we aim to promote key features of effective curriculum design (Chickering and Gamson, 1987) such as reciprocity, active learning and time on task.

**Mariana Lilley and Andrew Pyper, University of Hertfordshire**

### **The use of the Flexilevel approach to support assessment and feedback**

The importance of timely and useful feedback to students is well represented in the literature (see for example Brown et al. (1998), Miller et al. (1998), Dunn et al. (2003) and Bull & McKenna (2004))

However, the provision of feedback that is timely and useful is not always within reach of even the most conscientious academic staff, and those teaching large groups of students in particular. Large student numbers often lead to:

- Slow feedback, with students receiving feedback on performance when the course has moved on or they are working on other assessment activities
- Feedback on performance that is restricted to an overall score, followed by a brief comment, or sometimes no comment at all

The two scenarios described above do not encourage students to engage in learning activities, nor do they offer suggestions for improvements that are within a student's grasp. A potential solution to this problem is an adaptive e-learning system that provides personalised feedback based on an individual's performance on a test. This proposal therefore relates to initial work conducted in this area.

A pilot study that used the Flexilevel approach (Lord, 1980; Wainer, 2000) to select the questions administered during a test is reported. In a Flexilevel test, the questions administered during the test are tailored to each student. Findings from the study suggest that students were not disadvantaged by the approach. Additionally, student attitude towards the Flexilevel test in a formative assessment context was positive.

The results of the pilot study indicate that larger studies are an appropriate next step. If these show similarly positive results for the use of Flexilevel, then comparison studies with other adaptive systems would be conducted. Ultimately, if the apparent potential of the Flexilevel approach is substantiated, the work would then focus on embedding it in a curriculum.

**Joanna Teague, University of Hertfordshire**

### **How can video be used to enhance flexible learning?**

This poster focuses on a case study: 'Students' and Tutors' Reflections and Insights into the Dissertation Experience' (STRIDE) <http://uk.youtube.com/strideproject> , and the findings from this ongoing project, which indicate that video recordings of students and staff sharing their insights and advice can be used to provide invaluable support in terms of motivation and opportunities for personalised and flexible learning for students who juggle work, part-time study and increasingly, have caring or parental roles.

Students and dissertation supervisors were interviewed about their insights and tips on managing the long and demanding process of completing a dissertation in part-time mode. The interview questions had been collaboratively designed with supervisors and students completing their dissertations. The recordings of these interviews were edited into 4-7 minute videos, with pre, while and post viewing learning activities. These Reusable Learning Objects were uploaded onto the university server and YouTube, so that students undergoing this process could benefit from these insights and tips. The videos have been used in taught module session, for personalised learning in independent mode and are increasingly being used as open learning resources by other universities.

The poster will feature students' perceptions of the videos and the use of video to support learning.

**Mourad Diouri, University of Edinburgh**

### **Moving from "Chalk and Talk" to "Surf & Connect": Blended eLearning of Arabic Language Education in HE**

In September 2007, CASAW received funding to launch an eLearning agenda to facilitate its aim of radically modernising the teaching of Arabic in the UK using technology-enhanced tools and strategies.

I had to adopt an innovative approach to delivering the eLearning side of a "blended" intensive Arabic programme. This was developed from scratch with a view to making it unique, imaginative and user-friendly.

I played an active role in leading, designing and delivering online materials (e-tivities, e-tests, e-resources, etc...) to support learning inside and outside the classroom.

Furthermore, the programme fostered the integration of different spaces (physical and virtual), offering students and staff the flexibility of where and when learning takes place, what resources can be used and how those resources can best be utilised.

Students were given access to a growing database of multi-media resources that maximised and reinforced their ability to master Arabic and supported their future research studies. The resources contained home-grown and third-party materials in many formats:

- Multi-media resources
- E-learning tools and technologies
- Audio resources
- Audio interactive language learning flashcards
- Self-assessment learning resources

Following the accumulation of the aforementioned resources, I launched the e-Arabic Learning Portal (eALP) at [www.e-Arabic.com](http://www.e-Arabic.com). The portal provided an access point to all eLearning resources and projects to support learning and teaching.

To further nurture collaboration amongst learners a number of projects were implemented successfully:

- eLingua Tandem Learning to promote collaborative learning through face-to-face and online language-exchange partnerships
- Students' Collaborative Wiki to enhance learning further beyond the traditional classroom
- Survival Guide to Living/Studying in the Arab World Wiki where Learners collaborate on creating a guide for anyone studying Arabic abroad

This poster will present some original research on the innovative use of eLearning tools and strategies in foreign language learning and teaching. The poster will draw on modern pedagogic theories of online and computer-assisted language learning.

With a view to encouraging teachers to adopt e-teaching strategies and disseminate innovative eLearning methods, the poster concludes with recommendations and suggestions on how to explore and utilize the growing eLearning tools available online for any foreign language.

**Helen Hanson, Doncaster College**

### **The unseen hero - Making technology integral to the learning process**

All learners should be at the centre of their own education and take some responsibility for their own learning experience. This is usually done through the student centred approach.

“The 21st century is an age of learning. It's not the information age. It's not the mechanical age. This is a learning age. So we need to focus a bit more on learning or we just won't be anywhere near the front of the queue.” Professor Stephen Heppell

Technology will be used as the stimulus for this project and will be done through a behaviourist approach concentrating on a group of learners who are studying on an Animation and Gaming course and two of their modules are being delivered through the use of technology.

All materials for the course will be delivered via the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) using various delivery methods e.g. discussion forums, word documents, PowerPoint presentations, quizzes, wikis, video, photos, games, games consoles, voting systems etc.

Learners will choose their own delivery method to fulfil the aims and objectives of the module being taught that will suit their own learning needs as discussed by Ward C (1980).

Learners will be given various technological skills and then given the option to use these skills to demonstrate their understanding of the subject knowledge that they are learning. The use of technology is embedded into their learning so that they are not only learning the subject content of the modules but also by default new technologies.

Learners at the moment are learning a new piece of software which is a 2D games engine, it is being used to create a game of their choice, which will give them understanding of sequential learning as they give rules to their characters within the game. They will be using video to track their progress as throughout the project. This will also be backed up with screen capture software to show how they created certain aspects of their game.

One of the 2D characters from the game will be chosen by the learner to create in a 3D software package, giving the learner new skills and understanding; finally exported in a format that can be accessed by our 3D printer so that learners will have a 3D model of their character. The final outcomes of the project will be brought together in the form of a DVD.

The subject of the module will be learnt through fun and interesting activities that enhance the learning experience and utilise new technologies. The learners will be asked to evaluate their experience of learning in this way and comment on the impact it has had on their learning experience.

This project will be used as guidance for future work on using new technologies and how this enhances the learning experience and the learners views will be taken into account. The learners will have the opportunity to give their feedback on their learning experience and share their experiences with other learners as well as other tutors on the way that media was involved in their learning.

### **Liz Chilton and Maureen Smojkis, University of Birmingham**

#### **Vicarious Learning Through Digital Stories: Listening to the authentic voice of mental health service users**

The past decade has witnessed an increase in the visibility of mental health service users in the education of health and social care workers, causing some critics to profess the creation of professional users. Over the past three years the Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health (CEIMH) has worked collaboratively with mental health carers and service users to ensure their presence within the interdisciplinary team and build the knowledge base for wider dissemination.

This case study discusses the creation of digital stories by mental health service users and their use with health and social care students. By viewing the stories, students are able to access the authentic voice of service users, gain insight into their world and understand their experiences of in-patient care. Some 11 digital stories were created by six service users.

Our case study suggests that digital stories offer service users a unique way of sharing their experiences without requiring a face-to-face presence with students. This results in students being able to learn from a variety of voices, which otherwise would have been unavailable to them. The resources created are service users' own testimonies; unmediated by others. This is particularly pertinent as our findings suggest that an important aspect of story development is the overall control service users exercise over the content of their own stories.

The variety of ways that digital stories can be used to engage students in a range of health and social care settings will be explored. Particular emphasis will be given to how digital stories contribute to notions of vicarious learning and the recognised value of such an approach in health and social care. Consideration is also given to the need to address the affective impact of the process of digital story creation on the service user and of the viewing of the digital story by the student.

**Janice West and Aidan Johnston, Glasgow Caledonian University**

### **Technical and academic partnership: building audio and video into a virtual learning resource**

Background: Increasingly available in digital formats, the recorded spoken words from the last 80 years reflect a wide range of cultural phenomena. Every day this rich source of voice material is added to by the archiving of "born digital" recordings of contemporary radio. Digital voice can be heard through the internet but is it of use in teaching?

Spoken Word Services has been developing various techniques to make audio available to teachers, students and other scholars. As the result of a licensing agreement between Glasgow Caledonian University and the BBC, a wide variety of materials from the BBC Sound Archives has greatly enhance the 'usability' of recorded spoken word in support of classroom related activities for students in a diverse range of disciplines.

Main Findings: Clydetown is a fictitious town that is populated by a number of virtual families, each with their own social and health issues that bring them into contact with a range of services and service providers. Students utilise these materials to construct their own understandings of the issues and to discuss and debate with others. They are encouraged to test the theories and understandings taught in more traditional forms (lectures, journals, etc.) against the authentic lived experiences of those who are directly involved. The media used combines original testimony and that provided by actors, both offering the students the opportunity to engage at different levels with this complex content.

Relevance to future practice: We propose to focus on how this staff collaboration has developed as part of a wider Community of Practice within the University. The presenters will explore the building and development of this collaborative venture and the mutual benefits that have accrued and how the integration of audio and video has enhanced the learning experience for students. The pedagogical influences will be explored with the use of audio and video being examined as adding an 'authentic voice' to the subject matter.

**Lorna Dodd and Anna Holloway, Newman University College**

**Integrating online-delivered problem-based learning scenarios into a health psychology module: Students perceptions to online collaborating and learning**

The study explored students' perceptions of their experiences of collaborating and learning in a virtual learning environment (VLE) to address problem-based learning scenarios (PBL), and focused on their views about the use of various technology features to aid and support this process. Participants were final year psychology students (N = 40) studying a health psychology module. Participants were novices to online learning but had experience of face-to-face PBL tasks. The structure of the module followed a hybrid curriculum of online-delivered PBL scenarios followed by face-to-face teaching. All PBL informational resources were coordinated through the institutions VLE 'moodle', using various multimedia formats (e.g., audio, video files, e-books). Engagement in the task required students to communicate and collaborate using various online tools (e.g., asynchronous discussion forums, synchronous chat, video conferencing, wiki's). Participants collaborated in small-groups (N = 8). The study was evaluated by a mixed method design. Participants completed pre-and-post measures of academic self-confidence that were analysed using the statistical test 'paired t-test' in SPSS. Qualitative data was obtained by means of focus groups and an online open-ended survey, where transcripts of the data was subjected to thematic analysis. Findings revealed that engagement in the online PBL scenarios increased academic self-confidence ( $p < 0.001$ ). Qualitative data generated a number of themes. Students felt that online PBL enabled flexibility in their learning (e.g., learn at their own pace and location). The online communication tools were highly valued, enabling students to obtain feedback from peers and encouraged self-study. Greater preference was for the wiki to communicate ideas. Students felt that the various multimedia resources supported different learning styles and made subject matter more interesting. Sufficient time to adapt to the online environment as well as clear guidance on effective discussions and decision-making would have enhanced the student experience, and this should be considered for future practice.

**Andreas Kukol, University of Hertfordshire**

**Effective Delivery of Practical Classes in a Blended Learning Environment**

The ability of science graduates for independent knowledge acquisition and problem solving is a key factor of employability. Laboratory practicals, however, follow a strict schedule so as to produce the expected results in the allocated time. In order to facilitate the development of those skills a guided independent study practical (GISP) in computational biochemistry was developed and delivered in a blended learning environment. The practical manual provided background knowledge and guidance that enabled the students to solve a set of investigative tasks independently. While practical classes usually require the physical presence of a student in the laboratory, it was shown that computer practicals can be delivered effectively in a blended learning environment. The software required is freely available through the internet and students obtained the data for analysis from the online Protein Data Bank. The GISP was supported by an online discussion forum and by an introductory and a follow-up face to face session. The analysis of online discussions and feedback revealed students' attempts at independent problem solving and full engagement with the practical. The majority of students received marks between 61% and 100%. In conclusion, it has been shown that the blended

delivery of practical classes was effective. The format of the practical helped the students to increase their autonomy in knowledge acquisition and problem solving. Future work will apply the methodology to other practicals.

**Julie Vuolo, Irene Anderson and Jacqui Fletcher, University of Hertfordshire**

### **CABLE Outcomes within the Tissue Viability Programme**

In 2006 the Tissue Viability Team made a successful bid to participate in the CABLE project (Change Academy for Blended Learning Enhancement). The Tissue Viability Programme is within the School of Nursing. Students are qualified nurses and the majority are mature students who work full time and have family and carer responsibilities. In 2006/7 there were considerable changes within the National Health Service with funding and study leave being cut considerably. This poster aims to outline the outcomes of the project and reflect on future development.

Aims of the project (06/07):

- Address the CPD needs of qualified nurses
- Provide flexibility in learning
- Develop an enhanced blended learning curriculum

Outcomes of the project so far (08/09):

- Development of a blended learning curriculum and increased capacity and capability for learning technologies, within the teaching team
- Development of a distance learning module, launched in Semester B 2008. Recruitment has been low to date but curriculum design changes this year and a re-focused publicity campaign will result in increased recruitment from September 2009. Other programmes within the School are developing similar initiatives with advice and support from the Tissue Viability team
- A collaborative project with the School of Art and Design which resulted in a teaching model, considerable media publicity and consultancy opportunities. The model is used in face to face teaching to enhance the student experience and has been part of the poster campaign to highlight the student experience within this institution
- Development of an induction DVD to introduce new students to study skills resources and to familiarise them with the managed learning environment. This has been very positively evaluated by new and existing students and has been adopted by other programmes
- Appointment of a Learning technologist within the School of Nursing

**Hajeb Kamali and Owen Lewis, University of Bristol**

### **Clinical Neurological Examination: An e-tutorial**

A significant challenge for medical students is applying pre-clinical knowledge (anatomy and physiology) to clinical scenarios (physical signs and symptoms). In our experience of 3rd year Medicine at the University of Bristol we found our teaching often did not help us to develop this skill. One area this is particularly challenging is the clinical neurological examination where integration of anatomical knowledge with clinical examination skills is crucial to accurately performing the examination and interpreting physical signs.

To address this challenge and provide teaching of relevant anatomy and physiology and clinical skills, we created a video based e-tutorial on the examination of the nervous system. We chose to create an online resource as we felt it was a flexible tool allowing incorporation of video and interactive questioning. When complete, it could be made available to all students regardless of location (home, library, wards).

We sent a questionnaire to 3rd year medical students to determine their preferences and expectations of e-learning and created two tutorials incorporating video elements of the examination and interactive questions about related content. Finally, we asked fellow students to offer informal feedback on the tutorials to allow further refinement of our material.

By creating these tutorials, we have improved our anatomical knowledge and examination techniques in addition to learning about teaching design and developing technical skills. Our personal experience of e-learning resources and insight into features that make a tutorial successful from a student's point of view has been invaluable in the development of our own tutorials. Our perspective as 3rd year medical students has been key in helping us to tailor the tutorials to meet the specific needs of the user. By focusing on essential skills, knowledge and challenges students encounter, we feel we have been successful in creating a highly interactive and engaging learning resource.

**Paul Snookes and Judy Barker, University of Worcester**

### **Creating Your Own Interactive Online Multimedia Content**

The University of Worcester Language Centre seeks to engage students in its curriculum through a blended learning approach, which involves both face-to-face contact and the online provision of interactive multimedia resources through a VLE. In response to student feedback the Centre is progressing from offering static VLE material, such as web pages and downloadable Word and pdf files, to producing interactive assignments that include 'homemade' audiovisual material.

To this end the Centre is implementing technological developments to see how they can benefit language students at UW. Having tested various software options the Centre has identified Articulate as a highly versatile and user-friendly authoring tool. Additional advantages include:

- Problem-free integration with the University's VLE (Blackboard), including online usage tracking and assessment
- Inclusion of remedial loops for weaker learners
- Attractive and engaging materials

Following a trial period the Centre was granted funding to further explore the use of Articulate and share its experience with other departments within the University. This has resulted in the production of authentic native-speaker video material using iMacs and the subsequent inclusion of this material in interactive assignments for VLE use.

Initial student feedback has been positive and the Centre is therefore currently developing more material and exploring ways of disseminating its experience among Language Centre staff and lecturers from other disciplines.

To conclude, the Centre would like to present students' views on the importance of face-to-face contact supplemented with online interactive material and the use of remedial loops in interactive learning.

**Kate Graeme-Cook, Dale Peterson and Darren Crook, University of Hertfordshire**

**Improvement in the transition of a student from secondary or further education into science higher education. Is there a mismatch between staff and students' expectations as to what is required to study science?**

The aim of this CABLE project was to consider if we could improve the transition of a student from secondary, or further, education into science higher education by analysing whether there is a mismatch between students and staff expectations of what is required to study science. In the School of Life Sciences at the University of Hertfordshire the vast majority of our students successfully cope with their first year at University and go on to achieve good degrees, but a number of students struggle with the change in the way that they are expected to learn and with the rigour of scientific analysis. We asked the questions 'What do students expect to encounter when they study science in our School?' and 'What are the key attributes of a science student?' The results are presented of our investigations with staff and students on Bioscience; Geography and Environmental Science; Sports and Exercise Science; Sports Therapy and Sports Studies programmes.

A questionnaire was developed and delivered to students in the first and second years of their programmes in which they were asked to reflect on their experience before and during their first year and to provide suggestions as to how that experience could be improved. Focus groups with academic staff were used to discuss and identify the common skills needed for science learning and research. Opinions were also canvassed from people with experience of secondary level science education. The information gathered will be used to give our students a clear and consistent message about our expectations from the day they accept a place on one of our courses. In addition, electronic material (including video and animations) has been created to help students prepare for science at University before they start, during their induction week and to support them in developing their scientific skills throughout their first year.

**Jane Bilson, Angela Dimond and Helen Singer, University of Hertfordshire**

**"i-Spy was informative, fun and relevant" – engaging students with i-Spy, the University of Hertfordshire's i-skills tutorials**

Background: In order to develop the i-Spy i-skills framework, staff and students at the University of Hertfordshire were consulted about their information needs and skills requirements. The result was a University-wide framework based on the way students learn in a digital environment.

Information consultants collaborate with academic staff to develop a suite of online reusable learning objects, which conform to a checklist of criteria of good practice for creating e-learning materials. Each tutorial is peer reviewed and then evaluated by students before going live. Tutorials provide a blended learning approach and are designed to be used online for independent study or in timetabled sessions.

The tutorials are generic and can be flexibly embedded into curriculum module content to give a subject focus.

Main findings: At a national (JISC, 2008) and institutional level, it has been observed that students are 'particularly in need of sophisticated search strategies and critical evaluation skills for online information.' i-Spy tutorials have been developed specifically to address these issues. This will be illustrated through 2 case studies where i-Spy tutorials are being used by Faculties.

Feedback from staff has confirmed the effectiveness of the i-Spy tutorials in developing students' information skills. The impact of the i-Spy tutorials is being monitored through the use of online evaluation feedback and face to face student workshops which in turn inform the development of new and existing tutorials.

Relevance to future practice: The latest tutorials being developed address recognising bias, academic reading, keeping up to date and final year i-skills. The framework continues to be populated with relevant tutorials that respond to the student voice as well as national developments.

### *References*

JISC (2008) Pedagogy in a Web 2.0 World - Student Experiences Available from <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/campaigns/studentexperiences/pedagogyweb2.aspx> [Accessed 18 December 2008]

**Karen Beeton, Jane Simmonds and Anthony Herbland, University of Hertfordshire**

### **Progress on CABLE 1 project - two years on**

Background: The aim of this Change Academy for Blended Learning Enhancement (CABLE) project was to enable the School of Health and Emergency Professions (HEP) to develop and embed sustainable strategic change to support the CPD education provision for professional staff in creative and innovative ways.

Main findings: During the time that the CABLE project was underway, the project team gathered intelligence on our market in order to more fully understand their CPD needs. This was undertaken in tandem with a review of existing CPD provision within the School and a common periodic review of existing MSc programmes in physiotherapy and radiography and validation of a new MSc programme in dietetics. In addition an e-learning technologist was appointed to assist academic staff to produce learning materials and to support blended learning delivery of short courses and modules.

Relevance to future practice: Although the CABLE team have now disbanded, activities have continued and include:

- Successful validation and periodic review of the MSc programmes
- Launch of HEP Postgraduate Framework in May 2008
- Successful delivery of the HEP Postgraduate Framework from September 2008 with students valuing the inter-professional opportunities afforded by the new framework and appreciating the range of e-learning activities that supports their learning

- Successful delivery of short courses alongside the postgraduate modules. Recently one of these short courses was offered for 5 credits and the lecture was available via Elluminate
- The development of two new programmes that will be included within the HEP Postgraduate Framework from September 2009. One of these programmes on Sport and Exercise Rehabilitation is a collaboration with Life Sciences. The other MSc programme is for paramedics
- Ongoing engagement with a range of staff to ensure that enrolment and registration of students is streamlined and efficient

This virtual poster will explore these new developments and some of our processes illustrating our journey over the last 2 years.

**Dominic Bygate, Keith Pinn and Julian Boyce, University of Hertfordshire**

### **BA Professional Studies - CABLE 2.0**

Project Aims: The aim of the School of Continuing Education and Partnerships (CEP) CABLE 2.0 project was to support the development of the BA Professional Studies, an innovative part time programme and to see how the experience and skills gained in this project could be applied to other programme developments.

Specifically the aims and objectives were:

- Support the development of the BA Professional Studies (BAPS) by embedding a blended learning across the programme in a coherent fashion
- Use project experience to influence future collaborative program development with respect to the embedding of blended learning at programme and module level

The outcomes of the project were:

- Production of a curriculum framework for the programme that a blend learning approach could be embedded in
- Design and production of modules that reflect a programme wide embedded blended learning approach
- Enable the experience gained in this project to be applied to future collaborative developments involving blended learning

**Alan Hilliard and Jenny Lorimer, University of Hertfordshire**

### **Integrating Podcasts/Audio Downloads and an Electronic Voting System (EVS) into module design – A Student Evaluation**

This poster illustrates work undertaken to investigate the impact of integrating podcasts/audio file downloads and use of an electronic voting system (EVS) to transform module delivery from a traditional mode to a blended delivery.

The student cohort was an undergraduate level 2 cohort studying for a BSc (Hons) in Diagnostic Radiography and Imaging. The student cohort was diverse in respect of age – the majority of students were direct entry students of the so-called net generation, whilst a significant number of students

(35%) are mature students. Would age be an influencing factor on the students' preference for the learning methods employed, or their willingness or ability to engage with the technologies?

The final evaluation discovered no discernable differences in the behaviour of the direct entry students compared to the mature students. Both groups accessed the podcasts easily, generally at home, and spent longer than if blended learning technologies had not been used. It was discovered that 84% of the mature and 76% of the direct entry students preferred the podcasts compared with traditional lectures. Both groups of students highly valued the use of the EVS to support learning, with 88% of direct entry students and 97% of the mature students stating that they perceived the use of the EVS helped their learning. 88% of direct entry students and 85% of mature students stated that they perceived the use of the EVS beneficial in helping them to prepare for the summative MCQ exam. The teaching team concluded that the blended learning technologies increased the students' engagement with their learning.

Following the initial project, the learning technologies have been introduced more widely into the teaching curriculum. The innovations are not subject specific, and are transferable to other disciplines.

#### **Darren Crook, University of Hertfordshire**

##### **The use of the ITN Newsfilm archive within a generative learning object (GLO) to enhance teaching and learning at the University of Hertfordshire**

This poster reports on a JISC funded and GEES subject centre supported project that incorporated news film on-line digital resources into the Geography and Environment curriculum at the University of Hertfordshire using a generative learning object or GLO. Special permission was given by JISC to consult the Newsfilm Online Archive before general public release in October 2008. The newsfilm contained materials from a number of organisations, principally ITN. A tutorial based on the 1984-5 Ethiopian famine was developed for a new final year module entitled 'Development, Tourism and the Marginalised World'. The poster addresses pedagogical issues such as the effective embedding of images within teaching; the development of historical understanding; development of critical thinking skills through contextual analysis of Newsfilm and related materials, and comparative work with textual materials such as print media and secondary sources; development of evidence-based argumentation skills; and the development of both summative and formative assessment that are designed to enhance employability. The poster also looks at the issues raised by uploading the GLO and film clips onto the University of Hertfordshire (UH) intranet known as StudyNet.

#### **Vincent Perera, Middlesex University**

##### **Exploring Responsive Inquiry Based Learning**

Despite the emphasis over the years on experiential learning, traditionally, the 'lecture' still remains the main teaching forum in many courses. This project blends in laboratory based practical work as the main learning activity. Related assessment and feed back is brought into the centre of learning. The lecture is brief – specifically designed only to introduce a subject or to give feedback on practical

exercises. The emphasis is on students learning amongst themselves. To facilitate this method, individual work contains a group element where students are encouraged to improve each others' attempts. Conversely, group work has an individual element, where students specialise and provide leadership in a selected number of topics and spread their knowledge within the group. Although there are set activities, students have a choice of case studies. This includes an option related to work-related experience or of innovation – such as a simulation or specification of a game.

For example in one of the weekly activities, students explore two conceptual approaches ultimately identifying a unifying theme. In another, they search on-line for an 'answer' only to find the limitations of their exploration. These activities lead to critical analyses resulting in deep learning.

Instead of a 'static' design where a course follows a predetermined structure, some exercises are framed in an inquiry-based 'dynamic' manner to help students learn. The assignments on-line (assessment for learning) provides guidance and diagnostics to the tutor on a regular basis so that they "know their students" and feedback to students on how successful they have been.

These experiences are possibly discipline-specific. The general pedagogic concepts may however, be applicable in other disciplines. Also, much has been borrowed from the experiences of others' in a variety of disciplines.

This research incorporates a recent ('Likert') survey and a variety of assessment instruments. The purpose of the survey was to elicit/analyse learner responses which should be helpful in further developing the module and research. Current findings include responses and comments from students and colleagues, suggesting that there is general acceptance of an innovative approach and satisfaction. Statistical analyses from a pilot and a follow-up forms part of the analysis.

**Johann Siau, John Hayes and Lenny Koh, University of Hertfordshire**

### **The Future of 3D Stereoscopic in Higher Education**

Stereoscopic imaging or 3D-imaging is a technique of recording a three dimensional image by the inclusion of depth to a 2D image. The illusion of depth in a two dimensional photograph or video brings a third dimension into the viewer's perception. The poster discusses the application and design of a miniproject surrounding the use of 3D stereoscopic within one of the undergraduate pathway. Students were seen to be actively engaging throughout the module and have shown greater understanding of the subject area. The technical setup and good practices in production of 3D stereoscopic video and 3D synthesised video is also discussed. The ability to stream 3D video over the network will provide a more engaging medium for students to engage in a '3D' learning space. With the advent of 3D TV, higher education should also be embracing the change.

**Yoeri Goossens, Jenny Evans and Amanda Jefferies, University of Hertfordshire**

### **Win-Win-Win - The Student-Staff Mentoring Project at the University of Hertfordshire**

Peer mentoring has been used by some institutions in order to help those who are less able at something to improve, by pairing them with a mentor of a similar background. Mentoring has been used in academic milieus, where one student will help another, and in more professional milieus where one colleague is paired to help another colleague. Mentoring of both types is already widely used at the University of Hertfordshire (UH) in the UK. However, the current project has a twist to it. What if we were to take the former part of the student mentoring example and the latter part of the colleague mentor example – reverse mentoring? In this poster, we share the results of this question - what happens when you mix it up and a student becomes a lecturer's mentor?

It will be shown that this student mentor project has proved to be very successful. As the title of this poster suggests, it's a win-win-win situation; the student mentors have a stretching work experience which has allowed them to work and get paid for it, and learn at the same time. Lecturers have learned about new blended learning techniques and technologies, and the University of Hertfordshire as a whole has benefited through the project's sustainability and transferability. Furthermore, feedback from both mentors and mentees is positive.

This is a highly transferable project which would also benefit from further research with a view to fine tuning its operation.

**Amanda Wilson-Kennard, Debbie Holley and Mimi Weiss, London Metropolitan University**

### **Overcoming student fear and resistance: the role of podcasting in formative exam feedback**

With students struggling to perform well in examinations, how do you provide help and guidance toward their success through formative feedback?

To maintain a professional institute's accreditation in this Honours level module, there is a 50/50 split between coursework and examination, where the coursework consists of an article and weekly tasks designed to be both engaging and enjoyable.

After investigation it was apparent that students were not accessing the available help for the examinations, why? Student feedback provided the answer, fear.

Although previous exam papers were provided within the VLE to experience and practice, very few students attended the session on offer and those that did were not the ones that needed help. It was agreed during consultation with the class that one session would be spent constructing answers to a previous exam paper; while the week that followed would have the students practice their exam writing.

Inviting students to take part in the formative assessment pilot held in the final week, promising to "Watch Mr Bean, eat chocolate and practice their exam writing", the participating students were provided with individual feedback in the form of a Podcast. Generic feedback, again as a Podcast, was provided to all students.

Using a personal MP3 recorder for the 'quick and dirty' approach to each Podcast it could be produced anywhere easily and with no editing required. 50% of the students arrived for the session, compared

with 3 the previous year. So what would happen in larger classes – is it scalable? How long did the recordings take, could the process be speeded up in any way?

**Louise McErlean, University of Hertfordshire**

### **Curriculum Design of a Nursing Bioscience Module - CABLE 3.0 Project**

The aim of the project is to design a curriculum thread that delivers appropriate bioscience to pre-registration nurses throughout their three year programme and to explore new and innovative methods of delivery that can be used to stimulate interest and learning, equipping student nurses with the skills to continue learning beyond their three years of study and with the skill to deliver high quality patient care.

The proposal is to change the first year bioscience module so that it is closely linked with the delivery of the first year skills module – so if the students are learning about blood pressure and pulse – that same week they would have a session on the cardiovascular system. If they are having a skills session on fluid balance, they would have a bioscience session on renal physiology and so on. The bioscience module would have to be delivered as small group sessions in line with the skills module. The current large lecture format is not the favoured method of delivery of the current students.

Student feedback also suggests that students enjoy the positive reinforcement of learning that occurs from the lab session within the current curriculum. However as lab availability is limited, investigation is ongoing to find resources that will allow the creation of a lab type experience within a classroom setting.

The impact the proposed changes will have on the student experience will be evaluated through student feedback ensuring the curriculum and delivery of bioscience continues to develop into the second and third year of the programme of study

**Mary Taylor and Sue Martin, University of Hertfordshire**

### **Outcomes of the UHBS CABLE2 Project: 'New Academic Staff Induction - getting Blended Learning right from the start'**

The UHBS CABLE 2 project has had a significant strategic impact on the Business School, delivering effectively on its main objective:

To inspire and empower new academic staff at UHBS to develop their knowledge and understanding of blended learning in their first year at UHBS.

Key objectives of the project were:

- The integration of blended learning into a revised UHBS induction process
- New academic staff (both visiting lecturer (VL) and Full time staff (FT)) to be fully aware of UH and UHBS BL strategy, know who to contact next, feel ready to 'hit the ground running'

- To consider provision of a secure web/wiki site which could be accessed by new academic staff
- The provision of inducted staff who have 'bonded', feel valued and are inspired
- To up-skill the local workforce by provision of UHBS training

Results so far:

- Integrated induction programmes ran in September 2008 and Jan 2009, generating high levels of appreciation and support for further staff development activities among both new starters and senior staff
- Dr Sue Martin, a member of the team, has been appointed as Faculty Director of Visiting Lecturer Development ( a new UHBS post) to lead further initiatives promoting the personal and professional development of our existing VLS, leading to improved employability and commitment to UHBS
- Newly set up StudyNet site accessed easily from 'Your Portal – Homepage' by VLS and new staff (Jan 2009), designed to encourage ongoing engagement with Blended Learning once the formal Induction process is complete
- Closer UHBS relationships with HR and the LTI, leading to the co-ordination of induction schedules and an ongoing dialogue about strategic developments

## **David Hubble, Open University**

### **Improving student participation in e-learning activities**

Collaborative online working is a central component of much distance learning and relies on active participation to be an effective part of the learning experience. In the online Open University course 'U316 The Environmental Web', there are some statistical links between participation level and academic success, however some less actively participating students are able to achieve academic success comparable to their more actively participating peers. Variation between tutor groups is noted, including where a single tutor moderates more than one group, and in many cases outweighs the effects of participation level. Factors affecting student participation are considered in order to distinguish between those that may be changed by actions at the individual tutor and/or course management level (such as students' perceptions of the participation required to attain academic success) and those that might not be (such as work and family-related time pressure and online computer access). Student and tutor interviews and statistical analysis of course results and participation levels are used to investigate what actions might be effective in improving student participation, particularly the early identification and follow-up of students who are late to start online work at the beginning of a course.

## **Olivia Corcoran, Stephanie Henderson-Begg and Rose Heaney, University of East London**

### **The UEL Second Life Biosciences Laboratory**

In recent years the integration of problem-based learning (PBL) with virtual world (VW) technologies such as Second Life (SL) has gained momentum across diverse subject areas in HE. At the University of East London (UEL) we have been investigating the use of Second Life in bioscience teaching and

learning. Increasingly, large practical classes and competing demands on staff time means that students often have only one opportunity to practise a laboratory skill. In addition, considerable financial constraints are associated with running large molecular biology practicals with expensive reagents. To address these problems, academic bioscience staff worked with Learning Technologists to design and develop a forensics Crime Scene house and a biosciences laboratory for conducting Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) experiments. Students have been invited to investigate the virtual crime scene and run through the laboratory experiments as part of their learning experience.

Students reported that the biosciences laboratory was useful for reinforcing the practical techniques they learn as part of their course, but stressed that it did not replace the real life experience of performing the experiments. For the forensics crime scene, it has been possible to evaluate student learning using scenarios that would not be possible in the real world.

Our preliminary work indicates opportunities for further development through employer-orientated partnerships. The integration of problem-based learning and virtual world technologies has the potential to enhance the independent-learning experience in bioscience and forensic science.

**Lindsay Jordan, University of Bath**

#### **Engaging students in the curriculum through the use of blogs; how and why?**

Context: This virtual poster will draw on established theory on reflection, learning communities and online collaboration to state the academic case for the use of blogs in higher education, and will provide a set of guidelines and considerations for those interested in using blogs in their teaching.

Ideas: Setting the scene with the role of action/activity and experience in learning, the importance of reflection, and the role of community, this virtual poster will demonstrate how the blogging process can engage students and enhance learning, and how specific features of blogs might be used to bring maximum benefit to the learner. These ideas will culminate in a set of considerations and guidelines for planning and designing blogging activities in an HE setting.

The display will focus on maximising student engagement by providing a route to learning that is both active and interactive, independent and collaborative. It will demonstrate how the blogging process can facilitate the development of connections across topics and contents, and how blogs can be conducive to reflection on situations and experiences.

Relevance: This topic will not only be of interest to those who are considering using blogs with their students, or are already doing so, but also those who have an interest in the concept of maximising social presence in learning activities and putting the student at the centre of the learning experience.

**Nathalie Ticheler, London Metropolitan University**

**Blended Learning and Modern Foreign Languages: Designing e-materials the easy way! Top Ten Tips**

In a context of significant evolutions in Higher Education, such as the widening participation of students from non-traditional social and educational backgrounds, together with the necessity to operate within budgetary constraints, e-learning is commonly presented in educational circles as an effective answer to current requirements, both at students' level and at institutional level. Hurd (2002:6), for example, comments on new ways of delivering learning in order to meet the students' needs:

"Increasing diversity in the student population, through widening participation, new technologies and new, more cost-efficient practices in course production are forcing a re-think of current activity and providing a challenge to all those involved in the design and delivery of learning constantly seek out ways of ensuring that the needs of our language learners are met."

In addition, numerous organisations such as the National Centre for Language Teaching (CILT), report on the precarious situation of Modern Foreign Languages in the United Kingdom, with issues such as the decreasing number of students on specialist language degree courses and the closure of university departments:

"Considerable concern has been expressed in the press about the long-term future of languages in UK schools and universities and about the implications for business." (2005:1)

In March 2005, the Department for Education and Science (DFES) launched a five-year e-learning strategy *Harnessing Technology: Transforming Learning and Children's services*, with implications in all areas of education, from primary schools to universities, where ICT was clearly presented as a participational and motivational tool:

"The new technologies are capable of creating real energy and excitement for all age groups. Used well, they should motivate, personalise and stretch."

(DFES 2005:11)

The following year, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) agreed to fund a programme to encourage the take-up of language courses in England. *Routes into Languages* was originally funded from HEFCE's Strategic Development Fund and will be running until 2009/10.

In this context, it appears particularly important for languages tutors to be able to design their own e-learning materials efficiently. This poster will present the pedagogical rationale for blended learning in the field of Modern Foreign Languages, with a particular focus on teacher empowerment and learners' experience. Top tips regarding e-learning design will be included, together with examples of relevant materials.

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**Dominic Bygate, Nick Achilleos, Julian Boyce and Jon Douglas, University of Hertfordshire**

### **Exploring The Issues Raised In Setting Up and Running Virtual Teams Of Students Across The Hertfordshire HE Consortium**

This project looks at setting up virtual teams of students to work collaboratively across the Hertfordshire HE Consortium.

The Consortium Colleges teach the Foundation Degree Business and Computing Programme at all four consortium colleges. This programme includes modules that involve elements of cooperative and collaborative learning and group work between students at a particular college on a particular module. It is a consequence of the geographical remoteness of the colleges from each other that there is little collaborative learning between students at different colleges.

Within the colleges there is collaboration and group working between students on modules and programmes.

Our project expands this collaboration and group working so that the students and staff in one college get a chance to work collaboratively with others across the consortium.

This will be achieved by setting up and enabling virtual teams of students and staff across the consortium. Initially doing this for single level 2 module - Human Computer Interaction that is taught across all four colleges and has a class size of approximately 10 students per college. This module lends itself particularly well to collaborative learning and the use of virtual groups is a natural extension of the collaborative work that has occurred in the past.

The students will be involved in a number of formative curriculum aligned assessments to collaborate on. Different modes of collaboration and cooperation will be explored as will the use of the different technologies available to facilitate the collaboration.

**Anthony Herbland, University of Hertfordshire**

### **Learning object: a versatile OSCE Timer**

Background: The Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) is made up of a series of stations. At each station, the student is required to perform a task within a given timeframe (Feather & Fry 2003). The OSCE timer has an important role in the logistics and station design.

Methodology: Once the OSCE starts, the timing is seamless and strict, with user-defined time for each station (i.e. 5 mins) preceded by only a user-defined time (i.e. 1 min) for the candidate to reach it the next station. The computerised timer outputs repetitive verbal cues on each cycle until the examination is over. For the students, it is important to have a large font for the timer display and a clear automated

voice; and for the examiner, the timing's settings must be user friendly. From the design specification, a Flash computer-based timer has been designed and implemented. The designed timer is accurate, web-based (or application-based) and cross-platform independent. The timings for the station time and change of station time can be set from 1s to 99mins and 59s with one second accuracy. This timer is more versatile than the timing system described by Alinier & Dodd (2007) by providing to examiner the choice of setting the timings with 1-second accuracy.

Conclusion: The advantage is that this timer application does not require to be installed and can run on any networked computer by freely accessing the following website:

<http://www.health.herts.ac.uk/cable/timer/webTimer.html>. This OSCE timer can therefore be easily used by anyone.

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### **Joanna Teague and Debra Frandsen, University of Hertfordshire**

#### **Reusable Learning Objects: students' and lecturers' perceptions from the School of Education CABLE 3 project**

The School of Education has increasingly been developing and using Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs) for onsite and flexible learning with full-time and part-time students. However, as McKenna et al (2007) note, there is considerable evidence that RLOs often rest in repositories unused. Academics and students within the School are therefore exploring the features which lead to an RLO being more, or less, likely to be reused, and different ways RLOs can be used for learning in different contexts. Students are featured in RLOs sharing their insights and advice on learning and have been collaboratively involved in the design and evaluation of these RLOs.

Issues which have arisen have included:

- What do we understand by the term RLO?
- What do students want to see in RLOs?
- From where do students, staff and universities want to access RLOs?
- When are RLOs used to replace or enhance elements of the curriculum?
- How reusable are RLOs?

The School of Education CABLE 3 team is currently exploring these issues and will share their experiences and findings as a series of slides in this virtual poster at the Blended Learning Conference.

**David Germany, University of Hertfordshire**

**Video support for laboratory experiments**

One of the outcomes from the AADE Cable 2 project at the University of Hertfordshire in 2008 has been the use of video streaming for briefing, instructing and giving feedback to students on their laboratory work. Engineering education requires laboratory work to develop student practical skills, aid the understanding of how theoretical principles can be applied and improve student motivation. Unfortunately as student/staff ratios have increased over the past two decades the use of supervised laboratory sessions have become unsustainable. The recent investment by the university in a video streaming facility similar to the BBC iplayer has expanded the range of experiments that can be offered on an open access basis without supervision and enhance the quality of detailed feedback to students on their work. This session will demonstrate a number of examples and stimulate discussion of where such technology could be used in other disciplines.