

SOLSTICE 2009: Abstracts

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Conference Programme

08:45 – 09:15	Registration and refreshments	Education Building Foyer
09:15 – 09:25	Welcome - Mark Flinn, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic), Edge Hill University	E1
09:25 – 09:40	SOLSTICE: Doing things better and doing better things <i>Mark Schofield, SOLSTICE Academic Director, Edge Hill University</i>	E1
09:40 – 10:25	Keynote 1: The Impact of Learner Experience Research <i>Dr Rhona Sharpe, Oxford Brookes University</i>	E1

10:30 – 11:10	Breakout 1: Papers	
Session 1	Enabling Students to Proactively Evaluate, Test and Adapt the Effectiveness of their Learning Through Interactive Online Formative Assessment - <i>Dr Arlene Hunter, The Open University in Ireland</i>	E16 – 1 st floor
Session 2	Vision On: using digital video as a research method to promote doctoral students' reflexivity and enhance students' professional development as researchers - <i>Carol Taylor, Sheffield Hallam University</i>	E17 – 1 st floor
Session 3	Surfing the Long Tail of Education Online: building a community of practice with mid-career professional postgraduate students - <i>Paul Lowe, London College of Communication, University of the Arts London</i>	E18 – 1 st floor
Session 4	The Simple Art of eLearning - <i>Derek Harding, University of Teesside</i>	E19 – 1 st floor
Session 5	Managing Real Group Working in a Virtual World - <i>Dr Trevor Barker, University of Hertfordshire</i>	E21 – 2 nd floor
Session 6	Time to Drop the “e” from “elearning”? - <i>Professor Andrew Sackville, Edge Hill University</i>	E22 – 2 nd floor
Session 7	The Use of Social Networking Sites: two practical examples - <i>Anthony Wall, University of Ulster</i>	E23 – 2 nd floor
Session 8	Blackbored? Forget Version 2.1 Whatever, What does Technology Mean? - <i>Phil Christopher, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University</i>	E24 – 2 nd floor

11:10 – 11:40	Refreshment Break & Poster Presentations	Waters Edge Restaurant
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11:40 – 12:40	Breakout 2: Chaired Presentations (3 per chaired session)	
Chaired Presentations Session 9	<p>a) Reflections on Using the Blackboard E-portfolio - <i>Alex Spiers & Bethan Hughes, Liverpool John Moores University</i></p> <p>b) HES – Higher Education Study Skills – Delivering and supporting HE Study Skills across a dispersed partnership - <i>Julie Swain, Claire Gray, University of Plymouth & Hazel English, City of Bristol College</i></p> <p>c) Bending the Blend: re-creating good practice in an online induction - <i>Denise Turner & Sue Myer, University of Teesside</i></p>	E18 – 1 st floor
Chaired Presentations Session 10	<p>a) E-Quality Street: made for sharing - <i>Laura Taylor & Adrian Cain, SOLSTICE Fellows, Edge Hill University</i></p> <p>b) The Impact of New Learning Spaces and Innovative Technologies within a Postgraduate Environment: a case-study for learning in Higher Education - <i>Dr Ruth Allen, Lancaster University</i></p> <p>c) Exploring the Technological Synergy between Further and Higher Education Vocational Students - <i>Rachel Butterfield, Writtle College</i></p>	E19 – 1 st floor
Chaired Presentations Session 11	<p>a) Square Pegs and Round Holes - <i>Linda Moss, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University</i></p> <p>b) College Teacher and Student Attitudes Toward eLearning in Language Instruction: a three-tier technology use model (3-TUM) perspective - <i>Wen-Kai Yu & Dr Yu-Chih Sun, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan</i></p> <p>c) No Pens, No Paper, No Books, Just Technology and a Big Black Hole - <i>Angela Hepworth, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University</i></p>	E24 – 2 nd floor
Chaired Presentations Session 12	<p>a) The Impact of eLearning on Student Identity - <i>Dr Damien Shortt, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University</i></p> <p>b) Innovative Teaching Challenges - <i>Roz Howard & Ben Mollo, University of Salford</i></p> <p>c) Repurposed/Sustainable eLearning: the future or a risk - <i>Peter Reed, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University</i></p>	E23 – 2 nd floor

12:40 – 13:40	LUNCH	Sages Restaurant
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13:40 – 14:25	Keynote 2: We've Spent Too Much Money To Go Back Now <i>Professor Tara Brabazon, University of Brighton</i>	E1
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14:30 – 15:10	Breakout 3: Demonstrations & Workshops	
Session 13	Is Audio Feedback an Option? - <i>Sue Murrin Bailey, Senior SOLSTICE Fellow & Shirley Hunter-Barnett, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University</i>	E16 – 1 st floor
Session 14	A Researcher Proposal Writer - <i>Dr Steven Jewell and Andrew Brooks, Coventry University</i>	E17 – 1 st floor
Session 15	Connecting Transitions and Independent Learning: an evaluation of read/write web approaches - <i>Dr Richard Hall, De Montfort University</i>	E18 – 1 st floor
Session 16	Constructing an Audio Based Online Module Utilising Video Feedback to Discussions - <i>Chris Jones, SOLSTICE Fellow & Ken Sumner, Edge Hill University</i>	E19 – 1 st floor
Session 17	Blending Re-Usable Learning Objects - <i>Beverly Leeds, University of Central Lancashire</i>	E24 – 2 nd floor
Session 18	The World of Virtual Worlds: a beginner's guide to virtual worlds and their educational applications - <i>Peter Beaumont, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University</i>	E22 – 2 nd floor
Session 19	Enriching Students Use of Diagrams - <i>Dr Kamaran Fathulla, The University of Northampton</i>	E23 – 2 nd floor
Session 20	Show and TEL: Creating video content on the cheap – <i>Mark Roche, Manchester Metropolitan University</i>	E21 – 2 nd floor

15:10 – 15:40	Refreshment Break & Poster Presentations	Waters Edge Restaurant
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15:40 – 16:20	Breakout 4: Papers	
Session 21	Exploring Immersive Learning Communities with ‘Inter-Life’ to Support Professional Development: a personal reflection - <i>Dr Madeleine Sclater, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University & Vic Lally, Glasgow University</i>	E16 – 1 st floor
Session 22	Using Face-to-Face Sessions and Focus Groups to Develop Online Support to Enhance Student Content Evaluation Skills in VLE Learning Communities - <i>Mike Leigh & Dr Lucy Mathers, De Montfort University</i>	E17 – 1 st floor
Session 23	Reflective Learning Logs: windows into the learners’ minds - <i>Nicole Cargill-Kipar, Heriot-Watt University</i>	E18 – 1 st floor
Session 24	Andragogy or Alchemy? Building a Learning Community in Cyberspace - <i>Cathy Sherratt, Senior SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University</i>	E19 – 1 st floor
Session 25	Online Peer Feedback in the VLE: impacting student learning - <i>Ollie Jones, Leeds Metropolitan University</i>	E21 – 2 nd floor
Session 26	Learning 2.0@JMU - <i>Leo Appleton & Alex Spiers, Liverpool John Moores University</i>	E22 – 2 nd floor
Session 27	Overcoming Barriers to the Knowledge Transfer Process: the experience of developing the Technology for Teaching programme at the University of Salford - <i>Amina Helal and Gillian Fielding, University of Salford</i>	E23 – 2 nd floor
Session 28	The Qualities of Effective Online Tutors – a literature review - <i>Jill Cochrane, Senior Lecturer/Learning & Teaching Fellow, Edge Hill University</i>	E24 – 2 nd floor
16:25 – 16:40	Closing note:- Professor Peter Hartley, University of Bradford	E1

Keynote Abstracts & Profiles

Keynote 1:



Dr Rhona Sharpe - Principal Lecturer in Education Development,
Oxford Brookes University

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The Impact of Learner Experience Research

This keynote explores the relationships between innovation, research and development within the context of research into learners' experiences of e-learning. This field of research is a good example of the SOLSTICE approach that research should inform educational change and vice versa. Institutions have undertaken significant investment in resourcing and promoting technology enhanced learning and learners' experiences should be a measure of their success – what has been the impact of this investment *which is experienced by learners?*

Learner experience research has developed rapidly in the last few years. For example, the JISC has supported a programme of carefully designed studies in post-compulsory education that have collected in depth, rich descriptions of learners' beliefs and expectations of technology. Many of the Higher Education Academy Pathfinder studies promoted institutional research including large scale surveys. We have developed new ways of eliciting, capturing and analysing learners experiences and have confidence in our developing methodologies. We are at the early stages of developing conceptual accounts to help us make sense of our findings. There is a large and growing community of researchers at ELESIG who are investigating and evaluating learners' experiences. Moreover, there has been much high profile dissemination, using what we know about what practitioners want and need to change practice. This research is timely, relevant, rigorous and carefully disseminated to have impact.

This keynote will assess what has been the impact of learner experience research in the UK to date, what more could be done in light of the research findings and what we can learn from this experience about the tensions between research, innovation and development.

Profile

Dr Rhona Sharpe, is Principal Lecturer in Educational Development at Oxford Brookes University, and has been working with the JISC and the Higher Education Academy since 2005 to review, investigate, synthesize and disseminate learners' experiences of elearning and their needs and expectations for the future. She is currently Associate Editor of the International Journal for Academic Development, holds a SEDA Fellowship and is a Visiting Professor at Edge Hill's SOLSTICE CETL.

Keynote 2:



Professor Tara Brabazon - Professor of Media Studies,

University of Brighton

Contact: brabazon.net

We've Spent Too Much Money To Go Back Now: credit crunched literacy and a future for learning

This is a presentation of activism and intervention. Tara will offer new models and modes of teaching and learning by aligning information literacy, media literacy theories and multiliteracy approaches. There is a priority on learning outcomes rather than technological choices, and social justice rather than transferable skills.

The aim is to show, through examples and applications in university assessment, how students can move from everyday competencies and skill development and into disciplinary and trans-disciplinary scholarship. With public funding under threat, the time for 'easy' technological solutions to complicated problems in widening participation agendas requires renewed commitment to literacy, professional development and academic expertise.

Profile

Tara Brabazon is Professor of Media at the University of Brighton, Director of the Popular Culture Collective, Programme Leader of the Master of Arts Creative Media, Visiting Professor at Edge Hill's SOLSTICE CETL and Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce (RSA).

Previously, Tara has held academic positions in both Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. She won the Australian National Teaching Award for the Humanities in 1998, along with other awards in the areas of disability and cultural studies. In 2005, Tara won both the Murdoch University Postgraduate Supervisor of the Year and the Teaching Excellence Award. She was a finalist for the 2005 Australian of the Year and also the 2005 Telstra Businesswoman of the Year in the Community Service category. In 1999 and 2002, she was short-listed for the Western Australian Citizen of the Year.

She teaches first year students through to doctoral supervision. She has written and edited ten books: *Thinking Popular Culture*, *Key Concepts in Popular Music*, *The Revolution Will Not Be Downloaded* (editor), *The University of Google*, *Playing on the Periphery*, *From Revolution to Revelation*, *Liverpool of the South Seas* (editor), *Digital Hemlock*, *Ladies who Lunge* and *Tracking the Jack*. Brabazon.net provides information about Tara's profile, publications and teaching.

SESSION ABSTRACTS

Papers**Session 1****Enabling Students to Proactively Evaluate, Test and Adapt the Effectiveness of their Learning Through Interactive Online Formative Assessment**

Presenters: Dr Arlene Hunter, Senior Lecturer/ Staff Tutor in Science

Institution: The Open University in Ireland

Theme: Impacting on students' learning - cause and effect

Whether we like it or not, when it comes to learning, most students are motivated by the desire to demonstrate success in the summative assessment component of the course, rather than implicitly develop their depth of knowledge, understanding and application of subject matter at hand. Viewing learning from this perspective, it is therefore vitally important to select and embed the 'right' assessment strategy as this will affect how and what students decide to learn, as well as how much time and effort they prioritise to different tasks and/or learning resources. In an attempt to break this cycle of assessment-driven learning, and in line with Vygotsky's work on learning progression in which intervention allows an individual to develop further than if left on their own, a formative learning framework was developed to encourage students to take a more reflective and constructivist approach to their learning. The framework (originally funded by the Centre for Open Learning in Maths, Science, Computing and Technology CETL at The Open University), was designed to enhance student awareness, understanding and recognition of competency levels from a learning outcomes approach, and to allow them to test their ongoing academic progress at predetermined and self-selected points throughout the year. By working through each of the formative assessments, it was envisaged that students would become more self-directed and confident in their learning skills and abilities, and that this in turn would aid retention. This paper will present data collected over two-years on how students have engaged with this learning tool, the impact it has had on their perceived learning abilities and progression, the variances between expected and actual use, and the lessons learned on how formative assessment can be used as a successful method of helping students to learn how they learn, and how to do this more effectively.

Session 2**Vision On: using digital video as a research method to promote doctoral students' reflexivity and enhance students' professional development as researchers**

Presenters: Carol Taylor, Senior Lecturer in Education Studies

Institution: Sheffield Hallam University

Theme: Researching elearning notions of impact and effect using technologies

This paper reports on the findings of a project on the use of digital video by doctoral students. The project was funded by the Higher Education Academy. The project had three

aims. First, to enable doctoral students to use digital video to produce a video narrative which recorded critical incidents on their research journeys, and to use these videos as tools for reflection on their research experiences. Second, to develop students' skills in self-presentation as researchers by incorporating their video narratives into video papers or e-portfolios which would serve as a means for personal and professional development. Third, to explore the use of digital video as a participatory research method and evaluate its role in promoting doctoral students' reflexivity. The project was implemented through video and editing workshops, audio interviews, and through a plenary which involved students' collaborative production of guidelines for the use of video as a reflective tool with doctoral students. The paper focuses on the potentialities and problems in the use of digital video as an innovative and participatory research method with doctoral students. It considers the advantages which video offers for self-presentation and professional development eg that it is a visual, embodied and self-reflexive mode of self-presentation. It situates the use of digital video within broader cultural practices which construct video as an 'everyday' participatory practice and as a democratising technological tool. However, it then presents evidence which demonstrates how doctoral students' may contest these dominant cultural understandings in their struggle to negotiate their own visual self-presentation as educational researchers. In doing so, the paper uses evidence from the project to explore the ways in which digital video as a method hinders or helps students in allying reflexivity, professional development, and self-promotion. The paper also explores the ethical implications of using digital video in this way, and notes the particular ethical dilemmas faced by the researcher (a doctoral student and project participant). The paper ends by summarising key considerations in the use of digital video with doctoral students.

Session 3

Surfing the Long Tail of Education Online: building a community of practice with mid-career professional postgraduate students

Presenters: Paul Lowe, Course Director

Institution: London College of Communication, University of the Arts London

Theme: Impacting on students' learning - cause and effect

The long tail of education online means that a focused course can appeal to an audience of mid-career professionals in a narrow range of specialisation. Finding an audience for such a distinct course is difficult in F2F environments, but synchronous online communication allows a community of practice to be formed on a global basis, attracting participants who are seeking to study from their 'office desk' and connecting them with established professionals from outside of the academic world as mentors. This has implications for practice-led education where the emphasis is on solving real world problems and developing professional experience. The postgraduate programme at the London College of Communication uses web 2.0 tools on the photography programme to develop a collaborative community of practice, drawing on Schon's (1984) concept of the 'practicum' as a 'virtual world' between the realities of business and the academic world, providing a 'sandbox' where students can develop their professional practice in a controlled environment. This correlates with Eskow's 'e-e learning', combining experience with technology so that the students become 'scholar practitioners'; whilst a social constructivist view of education leads us to recognise the importance of dialogue in learning. The combination of blog, synchronous web conferencing and social networking on the Ning platform, creates a powerful alliance supporting the participants in their learning journey. Blogs act as 'glue' that holds the rest of the e-learning experience together, connecting the synchronous spaces for lectures and tutorials with the asynchronous VLE. In this context,

using Wimba is particularly effective, allowing external mentors to contribute their expertise to the programme without the need to physically travel to meet the students. What follows is the potential of peer and collaborative learning between students, staff and professionals, collectively generating 'communities of practice' with much learning involving 'legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave, Wenger 1991).

Session 4

The Simple Art of eLearning

Presenters: Derek Harding, Learning & Teaching Consultant

Institution: University of Teesside

Theme: "In Development"

This paper is a case study of work undertaken with Fine Art staff who had very little experience of elearning. The activity drew on previous work and the need to keep the outputs simple and sustainable. The paper demonstrates that very simple ideas and techniques can produce very professional and exiting learning resources and opportunities which open up rich sources for students. Specifically four aspects of elearning were addressed: Image, Information, Interactivity and Pointers. These will be explained and illustrated and the position of the elearning materials in relation to conventional learning will be considered.

Session 5

Managing Real Group Working in a Virtual World

Presenters: Dr Trevor Barker, Principal Lecturer / National Teaching Fellow

Institution: University of Hertfordshire

Theme: Technologies and learning environments - physical and virtual spaces

There has been much interest at our university and many others in the use of virtual environments such as Second Life in order to support learning and teaching. The department of Computer Science at the University of Hertfordshire has established a virtual campus within the Second Life system where a fairly broad range of learning and teaching activities can take place. These include presenting textual, audio and video multimedia learning and teaching materials, delivering virtual lectures, asynchronously and in real time, providing simulations and the provision and use of group working areas. Building upon several years of research this area, a study was undertaken to investigate the effectiveness of the use of Second Life to support group working. In earlier research, the effect of cognitive load on working and learning in such environments was measured. Several important variables were identified in this research. It was found that such environments may present significant barriers to learning which need to be accommodated. This was especially true of part-time and distance learners and those with little experience of virtual reality systems. One of the most important affordances of such learning spaces has been identified: social

interaction. Modern virtual worlds are an interesting and exciting extension of web 2.0 social networks. In the research reported in this paper, the use of a virtual world to support group working was investigated. The paper reports on how group areas were established and used by the learners, the types of activities that took place and the effectiveness of the approach in this context. Quantitative and qualitative evidence is provided in this paper that there were benefits to be had by the use of virtual environments. Also discussed are the potential dangers inherent in this initiative related to individual differences and the cognitive burden imposed on learners.

Session 6

Time to Drop the “e” from “eLearning”?

Presenters: Professor Andrew Sackville, Emeritus Professor

Institution: Edge Hill University

Theme: Theoretical bases of elearning and learning environments

This paper reflects on the use of the term “elearning” in both academic and popular discourse. It questions the sometimes confusing use of language in relation to e-learning, m-learning, blended learning, web2.0 learning and related terms. It suggests that this use of techno-jargon can raise barriers for both tutors and students who might benefit from having their learning supported by the use of various technologies. The use of specific terminology may also inhibit communication between practitioners and lead to problems in comparing research findings which either support or question the effectiveness of the use of technology in supporting learning. The paper argues for a position which starts from the learning which is intended to be supported; and the theory on which this is based. It is suggested that proponents of elearning often believe their own model of learning is accepted by all, and that the only issue is how technology can support that learning. But in practice, different types of learning may be intended; and different students may feel more comfortable with learning the same thing in different ways. A related issue is - how much learning takes place using conventional methods of teaching and supporting learning which have simply been adapted for use in online situations? How many “new” teaching/ learning support methods have developed as a result of technology? Perhaps the main function of using technology to make us revisit our own teaching and learning support – to rethink our strategies? The paper argues that our focus must remain clearly on learning; with technology being perceived as a potential facilitator for such learning. It reflects a growing debate within the English-speaking world about the terminological confusion and techno-speak which surrounds supported online learning. Despite this it remains optimistic about the benefits of using technology to support learning – it just needs a more sophisticated pedagogic model to explain and explore its use.

Session 7

The Use of Social Networking Sites: two practical examples

Presenters: Anthony Wall, Senior Lecturer

Institution: University of Ulster

Theme: "In Development"

This paper looks at two different uses of Social Networking Sites at the University of Ulster. One of the schools within the university set up a site in order to boost the amount of confirmed acceptances and, once the students has arrived, as a method of interaction with and between them. A second school used a site as a means of getting students to communicate with one another before coming to university. This was in order to give them some sense of belonging to the university, thereby boosting student retention numbers. Both schools encountered different problems but generally found the initiatives a success. Having looked at the theory of social networking sites, the paper gives the rationale behind the use of social networking sites for both schools and their experience of setting up and running the sites. The paper concludes with some recommendations for the use of such a medium with students.

Session 8

Blackbored? Forget Version 2.1 Whatever, What does Technology Mean?

Presenters: Phil Christopher, SOLSTICE Fellow

Institution: Edge Hill University

Theme: Theoretical bases of elearning and learning environments

This paper aims to consider philosophical ramifications of the digital age and provoke debate about the impact upon culture and human development with particular reference to the pedagogic and creative spheres. The paper will explore the idea that human development has embarked upon two opposite but related journeys. One direction of travel is inwards discovering the molecular and sub molecular foundations of being in genetics. A second direction is an outward journey of extreme externalisation and objectification in which digital data and virtual distance are the primary elements. The paper will ask questions about the meaning of these evolutionary movements.

Presentations (Chaired Sessions)**Session 9****a) Reflections on Using the Blackboard E-portfolio**

Alex Spiers & Bethan Hughes, Liverpool John Moores University

Great Expectations: Reflections on Blackboard E-portfolio implementation. LJMU is focusing on the enhanced employability of our students through work-related learning and the development of world of work (WOW™) skills. The introduction of the e-portfolio system has coincided with this institutional initiative to promote student development of graduate skills. To promote students success in this initiative, engagement in personal development planning (PDP) is actively encouraged and supported using the Blackboard e-portfolio tool (Version 8 currently). This case study outlines the development, deployment and evaluation of an e-portfolio system throughout Liverpool John Moores University. In this presentation, we will examine the successes and challenges faced at various stages of the project. Positive aspects comprise of themes such as usability, accessibility, transportability, and flexibility. The challenges experienced vary from staff and student engagement, as well as specific technical issues. Towards the end of the first year we set up 3 focus groups for students who had used the e-portfolio, to allow them to tell us about their experiences of the tool in their own words. This feedback is drawn from variety of different subject areas such as Sports Science, Computing and Information Systems and Textile Design. This presentation/paper will be useful to those considering implementation of an e-portfolio system, and those who have already begun implementation or are considering upgrading. By sharing our experiences we hope to contribute to good practice in using e-portfolios and look forward to a dialogue on whether our findings are transferable to other institutions using the Blackboard E-Portfolio tool.

b) HESS – Higher Education Study Skills – Delivering and supporting HE Study Skills across a dispersed partnership

Julie Swain, Claire Gray, University of Plymouth & Hazel English, City of Bristol College

HESS (Higher Education Study Skills) The University of Plymouth Colleges (UPC) Faculty was established in 2003 and supports a network of nineteen colleges delivering higher education to students in their local area across the South West region. From a modest start in 1989 with just 450 students, provision has grown to more than 10,500 students in 2008. UPC has been recognised nationally and received an outstanding QAA Collaborative Audit report published in 2006. With the vast expansion and success of FD's in UPC, blended learning is fundamental to the core of its activity and future developments. With dedicated support to enable widening participation and online communities UPC has developed a blended learning strategy (Swain J.A, and Witt, N.A.J 2007) to move forward its strategic blended agenda. This has evolved from both the UPC and The Higher Education Learning Partnership (HELP) Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) strategy which is part of a national network of 74 CETLs which are funded by HEFCE to reward excellence in learning and teaching and to promote educational research. The HELP CETL is funded (2005-2010) to support HE in FE development. Its purpose is to develop, embed and sustain blended developments working with a multitude of different Information Technology systems and learning environments. Blended opportunities focus energy on pedagogical approaches that underpin innovation and reflective practice. The UPC toolbox (HESS) has been designed to support students and lecturers in Higher Education Study Skills. Within the application there is a wealth of resources, in many forms such as word documents, interactive quizzes and web links, all which support the user with their study skills. The 3D

Toolbox covers many different subjects, such as researching information, reflection and evaluation, developing your skills and being an effective learner. Each of these categories then has sub-headings which then in turn contain more categories that are topic specific. It has been designed to be a pick & mix approach with the benefit that all study skills resources are accessible within one package and are signposted by level of study. It's main aims are to support:

- students from non-traditional academic backgrounds who require additional study skills support
- part-time students who want access to support materials outside college/university open hours
- students who are accustomed to 24/7 access to materials
- staff who wish to use ready-made materials for their face to face study skills tutoring or to direct students to specific sections to support their individual needs.

Within the package is a built in evaluation function and upload of new resources. The toolbox has proved an excellent resource and we are currently researching and developing HESS II which will incorporate the feedback from staff and students and engage further with appropriate Web 2.0 technologies.

c) Bending the Blend: re-creating good practice in an online induction

Denise Turner & Sue Myer, University of Teesside

This presentation discusses the creation of an online induction, aimed at introducing students to library resources at the University of Teesside. Increasingly, new programmes are being designed for off-campus delivery, whether to support work-based learning, or to appeal to a non-UK market. One example is an online Masters-level programme in learning technologies, which will be the initial pilot for this online library induction. Traditional students receive a face-to face induction delivered in a lecture theatre by staff from Library & Information Services. This induction is already an innovative blend of a number of learning technologies such as video, electronic voting systems and a high quality printed guide. The face-to-face induction also enables students to engage with staff, thereby reducing barriers. Off-campus learners currently have access to a web page, which gives them the required information about the library, but without the advantages of the interaction provided by the face-to-face induction. In comparison, the web page appears dry and lacking in coherence. The challenge has been to re-create the blend of the face-to-face induction in an online learning environment, the University's VLE. The presenters aim to develop a range of materials such as videos, online interactions, and textual resources. This development has been supported by funding from the JISC-Emerge UKAN-Skills project. This presentation will look at some of the learning materials that have been developed, and consider some of the issues involved. We will discuss what has worked well, what continues to present difficulties, and how we intend to evaluate the impact of the induction materials with learners. We will also consider how transferable the materials would be to other groups of students, who might have less well-developed ICT skills.

Session 10

a) E-Quality Street: made for sharing

Laura Taylor & Adrian Cain, SOLSTICE Fellows, Edge Hill University

Successful widespread implementation of blended e-learning is problematic and can pose new challenges for heads of departments and programme managers who must prove quality is evident throughout all processes. This can be particularly problematic if existing quality

procedures and processes are inadequate or inappropriate to support the needs of blended e-learning. This presentation reports on a project underpinned by action research that led to the development of an e-quality model which captures the processes undertaken by one faculty to assure and enhance the quality of blended e-learning programmes. The model captures the procedures that require implementing to ensure that there is consistency of the standards required to embed online blended e-learning programmes. As well as aid the promotion of creativity that encourages new innovation while avoiding undermining confidence in the operations of online blended e-learning course design. Often these formal structures can be missing because they have not been set up or the need has not been recognised which may fall to the belief that online blended e-learning requires an entirely separate and distinct form of quality assurance. This is not the case (QAA 1999) as our findings indicate that it is possible to integrate existing systems to avoid preparing separate guidance on the quality assurance of online blended learning. The study also uncovered that product life cycle logistics are of importance to highlight the intelligent collaborative decision making required as online blended e-learning is not in the charge of only one person to take care of the whole process. Therefore this e-quality model is devoted to the purpose that e-quality is made for sharing. This presentation is likely to be of most interest to programme managers and heads of departments who are wrestling to ensure that quality enhancement reaches all aspects of online blended e-learning

b) The Impact of New Learning Spaces and Innovative Technologies within a Postgraduate Environment: a case-study for learning in Higher Education

Dr Ruth Allen, Lancaster University

The Postgraduate Statistics Centre at Lancaster University is a Centre of Excellence for Teaching and Learning (CETL) and benefits from an award-winning, innovative and sustainable purpose built centre equipped with dedicated teaching and social learning space, and technological infrastructure. As part of our commitment to innovative teaching and learning we are undertaking a thorough evaluation of the centre's impact on the individual and group learner experience as well as the role of the shared social learning space in creating learner identities. We are exploring the students' perceptions of learning and their experiences of postgraduate teaching with a focus on the way in which they construct an identity for themselves amongst their peers and tutors (Holland et al. 1998; Brown and Macrae, 2005) within a strong statistics research community. Furthermore, we are interested in the perceived 'success' of the new building's layout and facilities on teaching and learning from an educators perspective, recognising that teaching and learning space often ranks high in importance to the educators needs as well as the learners (Temple, 2008). The results of this on-going study will continue to inform the pedagogic principles that underpin the teaching within the postgraduate statistics centre and will highlight ways in which we can go further to deliver appropriate learning to both our students based at the university and learners who use the centre on a more transient basis either from other university departments or as visitors on short courses.

c) Exploring the Technological Synergy between Further and Higher Education Vocational Students

Rachel Butterfield, Writtle College

Writtle College is unique in that it is a dual-sector land-based institution with some fifty percent of its total provision in each of the Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) sectors. In common with other 'duals', seamless progression is a key institutional objective and student transition issues receive high priority. Learning technologies play a significant role in the educational development of Writtle students, and like many institutions in both sectors, Writtle College is currently embedding e-learning across campus. The

primary aim of this research project is to identify, through a comparative analysis of FE and HE learner' perceptions of their studies, the ways in which technology-enhanced learning might facilitate transition onto further studies or employment. Data is predominately student centred, and quantitative and qualitative methods of collection and analyses have been adopted. As this research is a work in progress with an expected completion date of July 2009, provision of findings will be forthcoming. However, based on current analyses it is the researcher's expectation that the degree of technology at the HE level is not being supported within the vocational FE level, and the concept that e-learning is not appropriate in Vocational Course design may be contested.

Session 11

a) Square Pegs and Round Holes

Linda Moss, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University

Square pegs and round holes; the development of e-learning strategies on an equality and diversity module. It is essential that we are open to new and smart online blended e-learning approaches in order to enhance the quality of the student online teaching and learning experience (Downing, Lam, Kwong, Downing and Chan 2007). This is important for nurse education programmes which must ensure that students are fit for practice and purpose as well as award. A project underpinned by Action Research methodology (Greenwood & Levin 1998) revealed a need to introduce online Team Based Learning (Palsole & Awalt 2008) into a three year undergraduate pre-registration nurse education programme. This presentation will examine the findings that provoked such a change as well as explore what is meant by Team-Based Learning and how it was established within the existing programme. The components of TBL will be detailed and discussion will include techniques such as, student generated scenarios on which to base their work, combined with a Problem Based Approach (Watkins 2005), in order to engage the students in a Team Based unit involved in asynchronised and synchronised activities working towards a common goal (Nel & Wilkinson 2006). It is also proposed that the use of an annotated webliography will be detailed and a summary of student experiences using this method will be included (Watkins 2005). This presentation will be of interest to online course designers and academics, who have concern for the dynamics of on-line discussion groups and the facilitation of blended approaches, when there is a need to generate discussion around subjects involving development of self-awareness and social literacy.

b) College Teacher and Student Attitudes Toward eLearning in Language Instruction: A three-tier technology use model (3-TUM) perspective

Wen-Kai Yu, & Dr Yu-Chih Sun, National Chiao Tung University

Researchers of e-learning have suggested that successful integration of in-class instruction and online interaction often hinges on instructors' and students' perception toward the tool they are using. However, within the extensive literature on e-learning, only scant research has focused on the relationship between teacher and student attitudes and the computer technology that they are using, especially in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. The purpose of the study was to investigate Taiwanese college teacher and student attitudes toward the use of e-learning through Three-tier Technology Use Model (3-TUM), a conceptual approach chiefly adapted from Technology Acceptance Model. A questionnaire was administered to all college language teachers who work under English-related departments or institutes to identify the factors for them to accept or refuse the use of e-learning. Yet another questionnaire was administered to students who take language courses offered at a university located in Hsinchu. Five major constructs were imbedded in the questionnaires, including: (a) the quality of e-learning, (b) perceived enjoyment, (c) perceived usefulness, (d) perceived self-efficacy, and (e) behavioral intention. In addition,

semi-structured interviews were conducted with volunteers to elicit comprehensive feedback. Quantitative method was used to discuss the relations of the possible factors influencing stakeholders' attitudes toward e-learning. Qualitative analysis of interview transcripts was applied to interpret the interview data. It is hoped that this study could shed some light on language teachers' and students' acceptance of e-learning. Findings and suggestions on the integration between traditional classroom and e-learning will be addressed.

c) No Pens, No Paper, No Books, Just Technology and a Big Black Hole

Angela Hepworth, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University

This presentation aims to demonstrate the process of managing extremely large groups of students in delivery, assessment and student feedback using 'Blackboard'. No pens, paper, books are required to resource a first year module delivering E-Learning with the use of technology. Analysis and Research has been carried out using data supplied by a cohort of 347 students, and this presentation will examine the data collected within the VLE to evaluate its use.

Session 12

a) The Impact of e-Learning on Student Identity

Dr Damien Shortt, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University

This presentation will reflect upon the findings of a SOLSTICE funded project on the way in which the utilisation of wikis impacted upon student learning and identity on a first year literature module. What the data imply are that student activity on the wikis was indicative, and predicative, of student attainment. With that in mind, suggestions will be made as to how and why (in this instance) online activity was so closely related to achievement in assessment. In order to support the arguments and explanations for the impact of the wiki tasks, reference will be made to elements of CHAT theory and to the ethical philosophy of Alasdair MacIntyre. It will be argued that the notion of social practices has a direct impact on the way in which a person forms and conceptualises their own identity, and that, through engaging with wikis, students were engaged in a form of social practice that altered their identity and thereby changed (possibly for the better) the way in which they engaged with the module content. The presentation will conclude with a critique of the way in which wikis were used on this project, and will highlight deficiencies and strengths that will go towards honing the use of this technology in future.

b) Innovative Teaching Challenges

Roz Howard and Ben Mollo University of Salford

If a patient/colleague suffers a cardiac arrest at work, they will have little or no chance of survival unless someone is able to give them emergency life support until professional help arrives. When working in the NHS this is Mandatory training and has to be repeated every 12 months to remain clinically competent in those techniques. Salford CPR online explains what to do when someone suffers a cardiac arrest. Students are shown on screen how to deal with the situation, so they are able to help should the worst happen. Salford CPR online is appropriate for all students, academic and support staff. It is especially suitable for people who have taken a face-to-face course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and want a refresher, but no prior knowledge or experience is needed. The easy to follow, step-by-step format of this online course means people can work at their own pace. Salford CPR online uses on-

screen text/graphics and demonstration videos to illustrate its main points. On completion of CPR training, the candidate should be able to demonstrate resuscitation of an adult in cardiac arrest. This is assessed at the end of the training, using a simulated incident and a resuscitation training manikin. This project is funded and in collaboration with North West Health Care Libraries Unit. This Online package will be delivered via the University's VLE. But to be innovative as part of the evaluation process, various file formats will be generated for students to download. Some students will be given an iPod and others will be encouraged to download to other media devices to test the step-by-step techniques. The presentation will present the results on how the online package is developed, how it enhances student experience by the evaluation results from students using the media devices as a different learning tool.

c) Repurposed/Sustainable eLearning: the future or a risk

Peter Reed, SOLSTICE Fellow, Edge Hill University

There are many benefits of e-Learning to both blended and completely online education; and well reported by seemingly household names such as Downes, Laurillard and Wesch. Embedding emerging technologies has revolutionised how contemporary education is both organised and delivered - all in attempt to streamline processes, enhance learning and improve the ensuing student experience. E-Learning, or 'Technology Enhanced Learning', affords a wealth of opportunities to provide flexibility for anytime, anyplace education, and a means of communication that breaks the mould of traditional pedagogical approaches i.e synchronous & asynchronous, formal & informal, between learner-to-learner, learner-to-tutor, and amongst wider Communities of practice. Further, and arguably more importantly, the affordances are beginning to impact upon pedagogical considerations and approaches, with many striving to innovate in this new age of education (Reed, Smith, Sherratt, 2008).

However, the many benefits also come at a cost: The extra physical and technical resources e.g. man-power, up-skilling, and time required to develop and run Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) courses, are more demanding than traditional face-to-face counterparts. Research suggests that as a result of these extra demands, e-learning developments produce a negative profit margin within the first year of implementation, and profits not seen until the 2nd instance onwards (Bishop, 2000). Of course it is with a sceptical mind-set that these thoughts emerge, and others would rather look long-term - comparing online courses with face-to-face counterparts through the alternative Cost-Benefit Analysis method. Thus the debate of a sustainable route for e-learning comes forth, and numerous national and international initiatives have attempted to fund investigation as to how resources might be developed, shared and reused, in order to provide a potential solution to the expensive and time-consuming development of content for blended and supported online courses.

This short presentation aims to introduce some of the initiatives focusing upon Open Educational Resources (OER), Open CourseWare (OCW) and Reusable Learning Objects (RLO); consider the lifecycle of a single Reusable Learning Object (RLO) alongside the pro's and con's of open content; and ultimately consider the question; "Is repurposed/sustainable e-learning the future... or a risk?"

This presentation calls upon the experience and insight gained from the recent JISC-funded ReFORM project (part of the RePRODUCE Programme).

Demonstrations & Workshops**Session 13****Is Audio Feedback an Option?**

Presenters: Sue Murrin Bailey, Senior SOLSTICE Fellow & Shirley Hunter-Barnett, SOLSTICE Fellow

Institution: Edge Hill University

Theme: "In Development"

Today 17.8 million people residing in Britain, aged over fifteen have three or more mobiles in their homes. 7,000,000 of these are adults have used their mobiles for social networking. In addition to this 69% of 16-24 year olds own MP3's (BMRB, 2007). The capabilities of mobile technology is still advancing and as yet, not been fully exploited within Higher Education (HE). Durbridge (1984) found that students learning benefited from the use of audio and with this in mind and the results from a study carried out by Informal Mobile Podcasting And Learning Adaptation (IMPALA) in 2006/2007, which confirms that "audio does seem to improve the emotional aspects of learning" it has been suggested that students in HE may be more receptive to audio assessment feedback. Following the work of IMPALA (2008) and The Sounds Good Project at Leeds Metropolitan University (2008) the workshop would be aimed at identifying potential technologies, and exam how successful electronic feedback could be delivered to students, with an emphasis on the enhancement of their learning experience. In order to authenticate this assumption a small-scale research project will be conducted with a cross representation of Business School student cohorts. This project sets out to review potential products and technology that would support the introduction and use of audio feedback. An evaluation of current technology and research in terms of available software, from both open source and bespoke sources will be conducted. This will establish whether there is a potential to enable audio feedback in this manner, enabling greater flexibility and enhancement to the feedback process. It will evaluate if the spoken word can enhance student responsiveness to feedback. In addition to this it is envisaged that the results of this project will show how audio feedback could be utilised in HE in general.

Session 14**A Researcher Proposal Writer**

Presenters: Dr Steven Jewell and Andrew Brooks

Institution: Coventry University

Theme: Theoretical bases of elearning and learning environments

Coventry University Business School has an annual intake in excess of 400 students, with over 80% being international. These students undertake a research project and write a 12,000 word dissertation. Prior to starting the project, they are required to submit a 3000 word project proposal. This proposal is assessed in terms of its feasibility. To write a workable research proposal is a highly demanding task as it involves tackling a number of complex concepts, made even more difficult by their cultural diversity. Historically the pass

rate has been between 75 – 80%. The target needs to be increased to over 90% to improve programme completion rates and student retention. Several initiatives have been made in improving constructive alignment to achieve higher pass rates : whilst these have significantly improved the performances of the stronger students, the pass rate remains unacceptably low. The initiative to be demonstrated, the Research Proposal Writer, is designed to help the weaker student. This tool will assist students to structure their research proposal and assess it against a grade book of assessment criteria. Its purpose is to focus students' thoughts on how they intend to conduct their research rather than regurgitating theory – a common fault of weaker students and those coming from a didactic style of teaching. The Research Proposal Writer is an e-Learning object that has been developed jointly with the University's CETL, the Centre for Interprofessional eLearning. The object sits within the University's electronic repository and the students access it via a link on their WebCT module page. Once the student has composed the various components of the research plan within the learning object with the help of exemplars, the grade book and a range of other multimedia resources ,a single mouse click will electronically compile the research proposal for submission and assessment.

Session 15

Connecting Transitions and Independent Learning: an evaluation of read/write web approaches

Presenters: Dr Richard Hall, e-Learning Co-ordinator

Institution: De Montfort University

Theme: Theoretical bases of elearning and learning environments

Recent studies on the student experience in Higher Education highlight that a framework of technologies, including both institutional and non-institutional, read/write web tools, are crucial in connecting students' informal and formal learning. However, there is very little research on how these technologies can be successfully integrated into the student experience upon transition into HE, in order to motivate their independent learning. With the HE sector focusing upon strategies for engaging diverse groups of learners, and for supporting employer engagement, and part time, flexible and work-based learning, understanding how a range of students can develop independent learning skills within HE is critical. This workshop will demonstrate the outcomes of a nationally-funded project that is evaluating strategies for enhancing the transition to independent thinking in HE. It will report on the formal and informal pedagogic innovations, which support structured risk-taking amongst two groups of students. The first involves: first-year students in: Game Art Design; History; and Politics; who are experimenting with a range of technologies to build subject- and personal mastery. The second involves level one students who are being mentored by level two students. The workshop will use the emergent outcomes from the project to draw out discussion themes for participants around: • the curriculum markers or interventions that enable level 1 learners to move towards independence and subject mastery; • the potential of these pedagogic strategies and tools for empowering learners who are new to HE; and • the identification a range of professional development needs for academic and support staff in promoting transitions towards independent thinking, using social media. At the heart of this workshop lies the theory that productive, structured social interaction and collaborative working extends the individual learner's perceived and actual ability to act in the academy and the world.

Session 16

Constructing an Audio Based Online Module Utilising Video Feedback to Discussions

Presenters: Chris Jones, SOLSTICE Fellow and Ken Sumner

Institution: Edge Hill University

Theme: eLearning notions of impact and effect using technologies

On line teaching materials are often text based and are intended to be read from computer screens. Anecdotally, students find reading from screens stressful, and frequently print out the contents to read in comfort. We have devised a flexible, editable and easy to construct means of delivering on line education which relies on PowerPoint presentations combined with audio discussions. This lends our technique an impressive on line stability as well as giving students many of the advantages of face to face delivery. To avoid text based responses to student groups' discussions we use on line video feedback to reply to each weeks students' debates. The technique for constructing these materials is cheap, easy to use, quick to develop and adaptable to many different contexts. It is our contention that it represents a novel approach to developing effective teaching on line materials.

Session 17

Blending Re-Usable Learning Objects

Presenters: Beverly Leeds, Senior Lecturer (Teacher Fellow)

Institution: University of Central Lancashire

Theme: "In Development"

There is much debate surrounding the definition and granularity of learning objects which can be a mystery to academic staff. This demonstration will introduce the audience to the rich and re-usable materials that have been developed by the REVOLVE and E-Evolve Projects. These materials have been designed in a format intended to be familiar to academics in order to facilitate the re-use and re-purposing of these objects. The demonstration will discuss the concept of re-usable learning objects (RLOs) the design methodology will be explained. The REVOLVE method for rapid development of RLOs by academic staff will be demonstrated and participants will be given the opportunity to design some online materials and re-purpose these for different activities or pedagogy. This method creates materials that are designed to fit into a modular template providing teaching staff with the flexibility to use materials in a blended environment. The materials have been developed at two levels; learning activity and re-usable materials. The learning activities are packaged learning content as a series of tasks using resources and materials. Each activity follows a specific pedagogy and provides learning outcomes for the activity. The re-usable materials are unpackaged raw materials to be used in different combinations. Attendees will be introduced to the flexibility of the REVOLVE method that allows for different pedagogies and re-purposing of existing materials. The 'reuse' of content will therefore be discussed and the issues that need to be considered when creating the learning objects will be presented. Details of the REVOLVE method and all materials are freely available to any UK higher education institution and the audience will be given a demonstration of how to access the materials from the repository as well as a showcase of the re-usable learning objects.

Session 18

The World of Virtual Worlds: a beginner's guide to virtual worlds and their educational applications

Presenters: Peter Beaumont, SOLSTICE Fellow

Institution: Edge Hill University

Theme: Technologies and learning environments - physical and virtual spaces

Virtual Worlds have received a lot of attention from the media and from educators over the last few years. However the large number of, and varied types available could leave a newcomer unsure where to start an exploration. In this demonstration we will explore some Virtual Worlds and frameworks for categorising them. We will also explore how these environments have been used for educational purposes, and what the costs and benefits of these uses might be compared to other methods, both now and in the future.

Session 19

Enriching Students Use of Diagrams

Presenters: Dr Kamaran Fathulla, Senior Lecturer

Institution: The University of Northampton

Theme: Impacting on students' learning - cause and effect

The power of understanding and using diagrams and other visual forms are generally considered as one of the most effective strategies for problem solving. Students are required not only to be able to interpret the richness and intensity of the diagrams they come across during their studies but also be good communicators. Visual literacy is often considered as a life skill and the ability to understand the diversity of diagrams is central to the fulfillment of such a skill. However, research and educational practice reports indicate that students lack the skills needed in their use of diagrams. Lecturers are frustrated when they find their students unable to be more creative with their diagrams and see the "big picture", i.e. make use of a variety of diagramming types and styles. Most real world diagrams contain a mix of semantics not specific to any one discipline or area of application. Whilst students may be happy with handling a few variations of diagrams specific to their own disciplines they are unable to transfer their diagramming skills into other types of diagrams outside their main areas of interest. The result of not appreciating the semantic richness of diagrams is detrimental to student's performance with using diagrams to aid their studies and often leads them to side step any creative uses of diagrams in their work. The ability to transfer such skills is highly important not only because the world is awash with visuals which we need to understand and interact with but also because the world needs graduates who are multi skilled and able to communicate their knowledge in various ways. This paper introduces a methodology for enabling students to make better sense of the richness of diagrams. The methodology is underpinned in the framework of SySpM (Symbolic, Spatial, Mapping). Applications of the methodology to interpret a number of semantically rich diagrams across various disciplines is also demonstrated.

Session 20

Show and TEL: Creating video content on the cheap

Presenter: Mark Roche, Senior Lecturer

Institution: Manchester Metropolitan University

The creation of video content used to require the services of professionals. Now Web 2.0 technologies coupled with the appearance of cheap video camcorders such as the Flip Ultra have enabled production of video content by both staff and students to become a fairly simple process.

This workshop will demonstrate how to create short video clips that can be easily embedded into VLEs, blogs or web pages. Participants will have the opportunity to produce their own clips as well as to discuss the challenges and opportunities that arise from this process.

No previous experience necessary!

Papers**Session 21****Exploring Immersive Learning Communities with 'Inter-Life' to Support Professional Development: a personal reflection**

Presenters: Dr Madeleine Sclater, SOLSTICE Fellow and Vic Lally

Institution: Edge Hill University, Glasgow University

Theme: Technologies and learning environments - physical and virtual spaces

Immersive 3-D worlds are becoming increasingly popular as a context for educational communities. The Inter-Life project (ESRC/TEL) investigates the use of Second Life to support the acquisition of life skills by young people to enhance their management of transition. The project is presently developing a mobile and three-dimensional (3D) virtual community called 'Inter-Life'. Educational and social transitions have significant impacts on performance, motivation and identity formation. Inter-Life allows participants to work together on transition activities in the community, whether they are logged in, or using their mobile device away from the desktop. It provides reflective and personal development tools and scenarios for transitions. The project adopts technology-enhanced data gathering and analysis. Phenomenographic techniques are being used - analysing personal accounts of participants across a range of settings. The project, funded under the UK ESRC/EPSCRC Technology Enhanced Learning Programme (TLRP/TEL), is investigating identity development from an Activity Theory perspective. This paper will report on the experiences, social interactions and reflections of project team members as they collaborate together in Second Life. It will concentrate on the preliminary findings where team members construct their own 'in-world' identities and develop scenarios to support transition. It will also include a report on the research strategies developed to support student participants' engagement with the Second Life environment.

Session 22**Using Face-to-Face Sessions and Focus Groups to Develop Online Support to Enhance Student Content Evaluation Skills in VLE Learning Communities**

Presenters: Mike Leigh & Dr Lucy Mathers

Institution: De Montfort University

Theme: Technologies and learning environments - physical and virtual spaces

Previous research into the use of VLE learning communities (Mathers and Leigh, 2008) found that there is a particular issue around students posting materials brought from the Internet onto the blogs and wikis. Specifically, it was found in a survey that nearly 69% of students agreed/strongly agreed that they had the ability to evaluate the academic worth of the materials that they posted. Using initial evaluation criteria an examination of the materials posted by the students in the various learning communities found that this was far from the case and that there was a need to enhance the students' ability to evaluate the academic worth and relevance of materials they bring to the forum. This paper presents the

results of a project that adopted an action research approach to the development of student evaluative skills. Initially face-to-face sessions (seminars and staff/student focus groups) were used which then migrated to on-line tutorials. These resulted in the production of an evaluative framework which was published on the VLE for use by students when posting selected subject materials.

The sessions had the following aims:-

- the identification of the evaluation skills needed when selecting content for use within Learning Communities and the development of a tool to assess those skills
- the use of this tool to allow students to evaluate their own skills and identify the extent of their particular training needs
- the design and implementation of on-line tutorials for skills development adaptable by students for their own personal needs
- to undertake a critical reflection of the tutorials and the process of how skills were being developed
- to test and ascertain the students' use and satisfaction of the framework
- to develop a generic information evaluation framework that may be used across disciplines

Mathers, E. L. & Leigh M. (2008) "Facilitators and Barriers to Developing Learning Communities" The Higher Education Annual Conference "Transforming the Student Experience" Harrogate 1-3 July 2008

Session 23

Reflective Learning Logs: windows into the learners' minds

Presenters: Nicole Cargill-Kipar

Institution: Heriot-Watt University

Theme: Impacting on students' learning - cause and effect

Last year's pilot use of a blogging tool in the institution's VLE with 4th year and MSc students as reflective learning logs was so successful in Computer Sciences (Module: Multimedia Design), that it was used in 08-09 with a large cohort of combined 1st and 2nd year students in the same department (Module: Interactive Design) with the addition of constructive feedback within groups, using the tool's comment function. As the educational researcher on the Computer Sciences modules, the author is analysing the reflective learning log data as part of a longitudinal research project, on the use of virtual worlds for individual and collaborative learning. The paper draws on this qualitative data analysis of students' learning logs and puts it into the context of motivation, to discuss the findings in the light of research into learner motivation. Evidence suggests that the reflective learning logs were not only paramount in designing-out plagiarism, but their additional strength lay in student self-analysis and evaluation, coupled with recording and fostering the process of achievement (that which has been done) and pride (emotional response). Thus providing an accessible and transferable record of the learning process - failure and success - and of problem solving. Finally, this paper gives recommendations for practitioners across subject disciplines on the successful use of reflective learning logs.

Session 24

Andragogy or Alchemy? Building a Learning Community in Cyberspace

Presenters: Cathy Sherratt, Senior SOLSTICE Fellow

Institution: Edge Hill University

Theme: Impacting on students' learning - cause and effect

This paper explores the emergence of learning communities online, how tutors might impact on this development, and why they might be important in supporting e-learners. In our postgraduate programme in Clinical Education at Edge Hill University, we use an asynchronous online discussion forum within the VLE. This is very simple & familiar technology, but we find that it is useful in supporting and enhancing the learning of participants. Indeed, when it works well, we can see an active learning community emerge (which could be seen as a 'community of practice'), allowing us to realise our social constructivist ideals, with students supporting and learning from each other. Some authors suggest that online students should best work together without significant instructor direction, whereas other authors focus on the importance of the leadership role of the instructor within online context. The role of the tutor is therefore unclear. Should we assume the role of co-learners, or is there an expectation that we will maintain more of an authoritative role? And what are the implications of this as regards facilitating the growth of an active and supportive online learning community? We have noted previously that the presence of 'peer facilitators' has a huge impact on achieving dialogue online, rather than the 'serial monologue' which a number of other authors have identified. This, therefore, has implications not only for the role of the formal tutor, but also for the overall learning experience of our students. From my current study on online students' experiences, a simple typology has emerged, identifying whether students expect to work collaboratively, possibly even without 'interference' from tutors; or whether students are more tutor-focused, looking to the tutor as an authority figure who will provide the 'right' answer. If students can be encouraged into a more self-directed phase of their learning, they become peer-focused rather than tutor-dependent, thus achieving a learning community where students (and perhaps tutors!) can work collaboratively, thus achieving a richer learning experience overall. The implications for online tutors will be discussed.

Session 25

Online Peer Feedback in the VLE: impacting student learning

Presenters: Ollie Jones, Senior Lecturer (Teacher Fellow)

Institution: Leeds Metropolitan University

Theme: Impacting on students' learning - cause and effect

This paper describes and evaluates the use of a VLE to provoke student interaction with each other and the VLE, and act as a precursor to more assessment and feedback cycles within the VLE in line with the principles outlined by (Nicol and Milligan 2006). It also provided early feedback to a piece initial formative assessment, but utilising peer feedback to reduce work load on the tutor, and improve the critiquing ability of students. Students signed up to pairs in the VLE , and were tasked to write an short pre-structured abstract for a Project, and to submit this online in the second week of the semester. This exercise was

formative, but a similar task would form part of the summative assessment at the end of the module. During the following week students were required to 'assess and mark' their pairs abstracts, using both criteria and free comment. The following week the tutor reviewed the comments and a sample of the abstracts and provided feedback on these selected statements, which was posted in the VLE in the form of a screen cast. Although this was Level 3 module this was the first time many students had participated in such an activity, and especially so early on in the semester. Many students were wary, but over 80% submitted a statement and commented on their pairs efforts. One motivational factor appeared to be the tutor specifying they would not release their feedback until a majority of students had both submitted and commented. The quality of statements and comments submitted varied significantly which allowed the tutor to give a range of useful feedback, and the activity was well received in the student evaluation, with some useful qualitative points for improving the process. The quality of the final summative assessment was significantly improved on the previous cohorts.

Session 26

Learning 2.0@JMU

Presenters: Leo Appleton, Planning and Business Manager & Alex Spiers

Institution: Liverpool John Moores University

Theme: Technologies and learning environments - physical and virtual spaces

Learning and Information Services (LIS) at Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) is a converged library and computing service providing learning resources, facilities and services to a large undergraduate and postgraduate student population. Proposals to blend staff roles so that a more flexible and responsive level of support was available for LIS customers, meant that there were several skills gaps, which needed to be addressed within the existing staff base. One such skills gap amongst the staff was a knowledge of the University's Technology Enhanced Learning initiatives and the role that emerging technologies, such as Web 2.0 platforms play within this agenda. The objectives of such an initiative were to enhance the support available for learners, and to encourage innovative ways of working amongst LIS staff. The resulting staff development programme, Learning 2.0 @LJMU is a hands-on, interactive learning programme that provides an opportunity to explore Web 2.0 tools and the impact these tools are having on teaching and learning. The programme was developed collaboratively amongst LIS staff and the University's Learning Technology department and commenced in January 2009, with all 140 LIS staff taking part. Delivered within the Blackboard VLE, Learning 2.0 introduces staff to all aspects of Web 2.0 technologies and asks participants to reflect upon how platforms such as Blogs, Wikis, Social networking, etc. can be applied within their environments. The programme makes use of e-portfolios and staff are divided into 'Learning groups' in order that they can follow and participate in the programme within small virtual communities. This paper will report back on the evaluation of the initial roll out of Learning 2.0 @LJMU, and will include an evaluation of the impact that such a staff development programme has had on the provision of e-learning support.

Session 27

Overcoming Barriers to the Knowledge Transfer Process: the experience of developing the Technology for Teaching programme at the University of Salford

Presenters: Amina Helal and Gillian Fielding

Institution: University of Salford

Theme: Technologies and learning environments - physical and virtual spaces

If a patient/colleague suffers a cardiac arrest at work, they will have little or no chance of survival unless someone is able to give them emergency life support until professional help arrives. When working in the NHS this is Mandatory training and has to be repeated every 12 months to remain clinically competent in those techniques. Salford CPR online explains what to do when someone suffers a cardiac arrest. Students are shown on screen how to deal with the situation, so they are able to help should the worst happen. Salford CPR online is appropriate for all students, academic and support staff. It is especially suitable for people who have taken a face-to-face course in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and want a refresher, but no prior knowledge or experience is needed. The easy to follow, step-by-step format of this online course means people can work at their own pace. Salford CPR online uses on-screen text/graphics and demonstration videos to illustrate its main points. On completion of CPR training, the candidate should be able to demonstrate resuscitation of an adult in cardiac arrest. This is assessed at the end of the training, using a simulated incident and a resuscitation training manikin. This project is funded and in collaboration with North West Health Care Libraries Unit. This Online package will be delivered via the University's VLE. But to be innovative as part of the evaluation process, various file formats will be generated for students to download. Some students will be given an iPod and others will be encouraged to download to other media devices to test the step-by-step techniques. The presentation will present the results on how the online package is developed, how it enhances student experience by the evaluation results from students using the media devices as a different learning tool.

Session 28

The Qualities of Effective Online Tutors – a literature review

Presenters: Jill Cochrane, Senior Lecturer/Learning and Teaching Fellow

Institution: Edge Hill University

Theme: Theoretical bases of elearning and learning environments

The transition from supporting learners in a face-to-face environment to that of on-line support can be challenging, and is a development which many tutors face with a mixture of enthusiasm and trepidation. The usual cues of body language and engagement are different or may be absent for both parties, and writing online calls for a different approach to that of lecturing or face-to-face communication. This literature review seeks to consider the current evidence for best practice, in order to help inform the novice online tutor. It will also provide elements of discussion for those online tutors who have embraced this pedagogy to interpret in the light of their experience.

