

Enhancing Learner Progression 2 Newsletter



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University of Bradford, University of Leeds, LeedsMet University

Welcome to the first in an occasional series of newsletters for the JISC funded Enhancing Learner Progression through Personalised Learning Environments (ELP2) project. As we near the end of the project, this and subsequent newsletters will help to disseminate all of the work that the project has been involved with.

Recent Presentations

Click on links to view presentations.

- [University of Bradford LTA conference](#), 3rd June
- CRA seminar: [web 2.0 & PDP](#), 4th June
- [SOLSTICE conference](#), Edge Hill University, 5th June
- JISC RSC-YH [Summer e-learning conference](#), 10th June

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IPA interviews full steam ahead

As part of our extended evaluation strategy, we are doing in-depth interviews to elicit the student and staff experiences of online learning based on an IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) method used on the [JISC-Lex](#) project.

Seventeen qualitative interviews have now taken place so far.

A further 9 interviews have been completed as part of Bradford's HEA [e-learning observatory](#) project, which has

'Tis the season to disseminate

The summer seems to mark the start of the mad rush to disseminate the work of the project.

June the 3rd saw [Bradford's LTA conference](#) and a poster presentation on eportfolios, which drew on ELP work.

The next day, the [CRA seminar](#) in Bradford drew upon ELP2 knowledge of web 2.0.

used a similar method to explore the first year experience. Specific questions related to technology have been added to further inform the ELP2 project.

Early analysis has highlighted 3 areas that impact on the use of web-based social tools:

- 1) **Influence factors**; what factors encourage the use of a social network or contribution online.
- 2) **Limitations**; what factors will limit use.
- 3) the **habits and attitudes** of the learners.

June 5th was the [SOLSTICE](#) conference at Edge Hill and a presentation on the need for online social learning spaces, with Bradford's MEd Training & Development student community a key case study.

Finally for June, the 10th was the JISC RSC-YH [Summer conference](#).

Foster Carers' Group Comes to an End!

Since January 2008 a group of 10 foster carers have been attending internet safety sessions at the University of Leeds as part of the ELP2 project. The sessions were planned to link in with the delivery of laptops for every child in care scheme currently being rolled out across the Leeds area.

The sessions included:

- Setting up and monitoring accounts
- How to discuss safety issues with children
- Keeping Messenger safe
- The golden rules of safe social networking
- Memory-What it is and how to increase it

The carers then took part in 3

sessions dedicated to creating digital stories. The participants enthusiastically created a variety of touching stories about their own lives, their families and the children in their care which they presented to each other at the last celebratory session.

The work of the ELP2 has fed directly into the continuing roll out of the laptop devices and has highlighted the need for stronger parental/carer controls and internet safety awareness across the region. A new cohort of carers will commence the course in September 2008 and this work has been further extended to other groups in Bradford.

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"Summer marks the start of the mad rush to disseminate."

BYDP onboard

The Bradford Youth Development Partnership ([BYDP](#)) and the Manningham and Frizinghall extended schools team has helped us get onboard a parent's group from Frizinghall.

The group will meet for 2 hours once a week to get them up to speed with technology and the Internet in a similar way to the Leeds foster carers' group (see article above).

The project started on the 9th June for 6 weeks.

Parents will come into the University to study:

- Basic computer skills
- Emailing
- Internet security and being safe online
- What is social networking?
- What tools could I use in my everyday life?

One of the key benefits, apart from the use of technology, is to get the parents into the University and using our facilities.

This is an important area for breaking down barriers between the University and the local community and raising aspirations.

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Long term pays-off

The work of the original ELP project continues to reap rewards and demonstrates the benefits of the project team being together for a longer period than the initial 18 months.

Neil's work knowledge gained with schools and the PebblePAD e-portfolio tool has helped Bradford's [Learner Development Unit](#).

Manchester Medical School are looking to the work, mainly done by Christopher for ELP, to inform their e-portfolio research coalition work.

In addition, the work of the ELP and ELP2 projects will feed in to the development of a new e-portfolio for medical students when the University

of Leeds Medical School launches its new curriculum in 2010.

The universities of Leeds and Liverpool are collaborating on a project to bring the Post-Graduate Foundation Year e-portfolio into the 4 and 5th years of undergraduate medical education to prepare students for the demands of post graduate life.

A joint event has been organised for the 9th August 2008 to create the 'prefect' e-portfolio for medical students using the findings of the ELP project as the foundation for development.

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"The work of the ...projects will feed in to the development of a new e-portfolio for medical students at the University of Leeds "

Using Facebook as a Student Transition Tool

The seemingly ubiquitous use of Facebook amongst University students led the ELP2 project to develop a transition group for those students who transfer to the Medical degree from the Bradford University Clinical Sciences course. Last summer a group of students utilised the social networking tool to ask existing medical students questions about the demands of the course, access book lists, find out more about accommodation and social events.

Existing Leeds University students joined the group to share their knowledge with the incoming students and ease their worries about the transition period. The project was a huge success receiving positive feedback from the Bradford students who took part. The ongoing evaluation of this project will feed into the use of Facebook as the primary transition tool for the students who transfer to Leeds in the summer of 2008.

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Widening Participation through the Medical Conference

For the last 2 years the ELP2 project has played a pivotal role in piloting the use of a social network to support students who attended the Leeds University School of Medicine Medical conference.

Learning from the physical conference day has been supported through the use of a social network containing activities designed to increase awareness about studying

medicine. The use of the network enabled students to link with each other and receive answers to questions from existing medical student mentors.

The findings from the pilots will shape the development of future online activity when the ELP2 Project has ended.

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Training on the Use of Ning

One of the biggest outputs of the project will be the training of mentors, tutors and carers on the use of the social networking tool, Ning.

The project findings to date have highlighted a huge gap in the knowledge of these groups not only in how to use the tool but also in identifying when the use of such a tool is appropriate.

Through September, October and November training will be held with diverse groups from the University of Leeds, Leeds City Council, Connexions and voluntary and community groups on the use of web 2.0 tools and in particular the use of Ning.

As a result, the project will produce open access user guides for creating a community in Ning.

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Enhancing Learner Progression through Personalised Learning Environments (ELP2) project

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ELP 2 is a [JISC](#) funded project which continues the work in ELP and extends it beyond; using a wider range of learners and a wider range of online learning tools which focus on social networking.

ELP2 will investigate and identify solutions to the issues and challenges that arise in providing a personalised learning experience which meets the needs of individual learners in a range of settings in their lifelong learning journey. The project will explore these issues through the implementation of e-Portfolios, web logs (blogs) and other social software to support widening participation and developing skills essential to successful lifelong learning.

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