

ELP2 Case Study

Use Case	ELP2-CSB01	Title	Communicating in an Information Age (blogs, wikis, e-Portfolios)		
Institution	Bradford	Timescale	Jan to Jun 2007 & Jan to May 08		
Project Officer(s)	NC	Risk level	Low Internal foundation degree module		
Contact	Ruth Whitfield, Learning Architect and Module Tutor, University of Bradford				
Target Groups	Young (n=)	Excluded (n=)	Mature (n=15)	BME (n=)	Non-trad (n=)
Description					
<p>Target group background: The students taking part were mainly mature students from ethnic background who live in the local area. For most, it will have been a while since they were last in formal education and it is fair to say that use of computers and IT skills were limited prior to the module. Part of the rationale for using online tools for this module was because students had to work together in groups but had little time to meet face to face due to work and home commitments.</p> <p>Module Background: A new method of delivery was being piloted on a module called “Communication in an Information Age”. The module used a range of blogs and wiki functionality in the Blackboard VLE and the PebblePAD e-portfolio. Group blogs and wikis were used to facilitate group discussion and the planning of group tasks. Students were also assessed on contributions to an online group discussion, a group wiki and an e-portfolio.</p> <p>The students felt that using the tools in practice gave a great deal of insight into the tools and the likely problems and successes of working with others in an online environment.</p>					
Progress					
June 2007	<p>Key findings: There are a range of non-technology skills that are important when building communities and working in groups in an online environment. A wide range of difficulties experienced on the module were due to personality clashes, group dynamics and personal learning skills such as information literacy, time management, organisational skills etc.</p> <p>Building effective communities online was difficult and required careful management by a facilitator.</p> <p>Specific learning related to the use of wikis: Often not used collaboratively but rather students work on their own separate pages or work on their own sections and don't tie them together. In extreme, cases the same material is repeated on the same page but by different contributors.</p> <p>Trust and rules between group members about editing needs to be negotiated – some students were unhappy that their work had been edited.</p> <p>Creating clear navigation of wikis can be confusing and difficult.</p> <p>Plagiarism needs to be discouraged from the start because it is very easy to just cut and paste from other websites into a wiki. Although of course, plagiarism in these cases is fairly easy to identify.</p>				

ELP2 Case Study

	<p>Specific learning related to the use of collaborative blogs:</p> <p>Using a blog to organise group work proved a difficult task.</p> <p>Using blogs created additional communication channels which added to work load – students were texting, emailing and using the blog often for the same purposes and posting the same messages in each place just to ‘make sure’ that everyone was informed.</p>
Outcomes	
June 2007	Module successfully completed. Some useful data about the use of blogs and wikis and the support needed to use them educationally
June 2007	Paper presented at University of Bradford Learning Teaching and Assessment Conference, 2007
Sept 2007	Short paper presented at ALT-C 2007, “ <i>Students aren’t prepared for web 2.0 learning, are they?</i> ”
Jan 08	2nd run through of module started with some changes made in the light of the initial evaluation
Apr 08	Further evaluation to be carried out

Target groups

1. Younger learners (13 to 16 year olds), particularly those at KS4; **Young**
2. Excluded school pupils; **Excluded**
3. Mature learners; **Mature**
4. Black, minority and other ethnic learners; **BME**
5. Learners from non-traditional routes, eg. individual learners, access courses, WBL; **Non-trad**

Issue

Version	Date	Description of Change	Author
Draft V0.0	26 Oct 2007	Draft for comment	CAH
V1.0	1 Nov 2007	TGs, description and Progress added	NC
V1.1	11 Apr 08	Additional information added about 2 nd run of module	NC