Case studies

An electronic learning curve: implementing e-portfolios

Richard Ingram, University of Dundee

This case study charts the experience of students and tutors during the first year of implementing e-portfolios into the BA (Hons) Social Work programme at the University of Dundee. The e-portfolio complemented the increasing integration of IT systems in learning and teaching, such as their VLE (Blackboard). The study suggests that e-portfolios contributed positively to the development of reflective learning. Issues relating to IT skills, assessment, the tutor/student relationship and access are highlighted and suggestions for future developments are presented.

Technology transforms English teaching and literacy at the Sheffield College

Literacy through technology: The Sheffield College experience

In the first of two case studies, by authors at The Sheffield College, Julie Hooper discusses the 'Young People Speak Out' course. This blended learning programme has illustrated how exploiting students' knowledge of technology and popular culture can help to re-engage disenfranchised learners in both literacy and education in general.
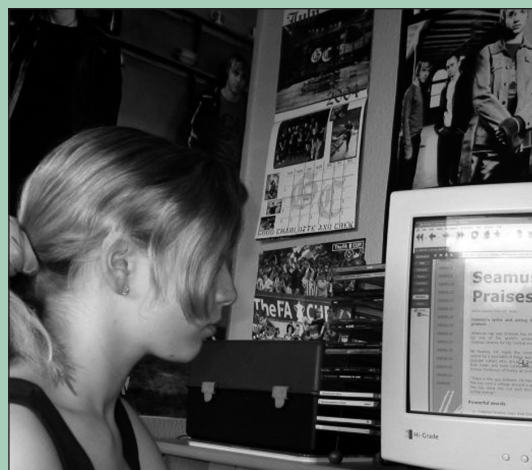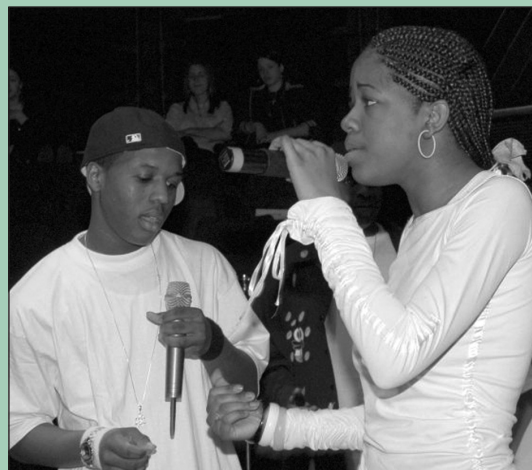
Hip hop - beats, rhymes and life

In the second article Matt Hine describes the 'Hip Hop - Beats, Rhymes and Life course', which fuses literacy, cultural studies, digital media and performance. Exploiting students' IT skills and awareness of Hip Hop music and culture has led to a classroom approach where learning is often shared by both tutor and students.

Viewed from the other side: student involvement in online course design

Stuart Hepplestone and Helen Rodger, Sheffield Hallam University

This article reflects on the benefits of employing students to assist teaching staff in the development of online learning materials. The Student Assistant programme has been operating at Sheffield Hallam University for over a year, employing students on a part-time basis to help staff with elements of course building and design. The programme has proved to be valuable on two levels: firstly, tutors gain insights into how courses are experienced from the student point of view, which brings a new perspective to their work; and secondly, the students involved gain experience of course planning and design, and the attendant considerations, which can be valuable to them during their time at university and beyond.

Some of the students involved in the Young People Speak Out and Hip Hop projects at the Sheffield College

NEWS AND REVIEWS

Executive Secretary's report

News from Seb Schmoller

Staff changes. Some members will be aware that Marion O'Dea, who began working for ALT as Operations Manager in January 2003 will be on maternity leave from 6 March 2006. Marion is planning to return from maternity leave on 2 October 2006. Bob Green, will be covering Marion's post from February, which helpfully allows for a good overlap with Marion before her departure. Bob is a management accountant who joins us from the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, having previously worked at a senior level in the e-learning industry.

We will shortly be advertising for a full-time permanent Projects Officer, who will be responsible for some of the projects in which ALT is increasingly involved, and in particular CMALT, the ALT Certified Membership Scheme. Full details will be posted on the ALT web site.

Research Committee. I reported in the October 2005 Newsletter that we are in the process of establishing an ALT Research Committee. The Research Committee will be chaired by Professor Robin Mason, from the Open University's Institute of Educational Technology, and its vice-chair will be John Cook, the current ALT President, from London Metropolitan University's Learning and Teaching Research Institute. The remit of the committee will include:

- developing the ALT Learning Technology Research Strategy;
- advising ALT on research related events and workshops, including the Spring Conference research strand;
- drafting responses for the Central Executive to research-related consultations;
- advising on research-related collaborations.

Further details will be provided in the next issue of the Newsletter.

CMALT. A new and professionally designed version of the prospectus for the ALT Certified Membership Scheme (CMALT) can now be accessed (along with full details of the scheme, and guidelines for applicants and assessors) from **www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt/**. If you require copies of this for use within your organisation, please send an email to **cmalt@alt.ac.uk**. Arising from our work with the Higher Education Academy on CMALT, I will be representing ALT on Academy's Standards and Accreditation Advisory Group, an informal advisory group established to "provide policy and strategy support to Academy senior officers in revising the (Academy's) accreditation process".

Membership Services Committee. We are currently planning the merger of two of our key committees – Events, and Membership – into a new Membership Services Committee. The rationale for this is that each committee has a role in shaping the services which ALT members receive, and there is sometime overlap between them, for example the provision of workshops (shaped by the Events Committee) which are relevant to the continuing professional development of holders of CMALT (shaped by the Membership Committee). I am working with Jane Seale (Chair of ALT) and the Chairs of the two committees (John Phelps and Barbara Newland) on the terms of reference of the new committee, which is likely to start its work before Summer 2006.

JISC Partnership. JISC and ALT have recently agreed to establish a formal Associate Partnership Agreement, to build on the practical collaboration which is already taking place. This will focus upon support for the learning technology research and practitioner communities, and our joint aim is that the agreement, once finalised, will result in:

- information exchange;
- regular senior management dialogue;
- the development of shared annual activity plan;
- strengthened participation and collaboration at events;
- consideration of capacity building initiatives.

sschmoller@brookes.ac.uk

Project updates

JORUM Contributor Service launched

Michael Dodds

JORUM (www.jorum.ac.uk) is a free online service for UK Higher and Further Education institutions, supporting the sharing, reuse and repurposing of learning and teaching resources. There will be two main elements to the Service in development: a Contributor Service and a User Service. JORUM Contributor will allow colleges and universities to upload learning and teaching materials, while JORUM User will provide access to the materials for institutions that have signed up. The Contributor Service was launched on 7 November 2005 and the User Service was launched on 30 January 2006.

JISC infoNet: Freedom of Information Survey

Steve Bailey and Andrew Stewart

JISC infoNet conducted a Freedom of Information survey during October/November 2005 which achieved a 50% response rate. It reveals that the Higher Education sector has responded both positively and successfully to the first year of the Act. Results also show that the overwhelming majority of the requests received by institutions are being answered fully, on time and free of charge.

Staff ICT and e-learning skills in Scottish higher education

Sarah Price

In 2004 the Regional Support Centres in Scotland prepared an online training needs survey, at the behest of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC), to gauge the ICT-related skills of staff in the 20 higher education institutions in Scotland (www.rsc-ne-scotland.ac.uk/hetna). This work, completed and published in 2005, helped give an accurate picture of the current situation, and additionally illuminated some areas of similarity between the experience of staff in further and higher education (FE and HE).

For full versions of all the articles here go to the ALT Online Newsletter at **newsletter.alt.ac.uk**

Conference reviews

A clear view and strong signal for mlearning

Bob Harrison

mLearn 2005 proved to be another milestone in the development of a worldwide network supporting the development of mobile and portable learning (mlearning). The 4th mLearn conference continued the tradition of exploring theoretical models, practical applications that will impact on learning and teaching.

Designs on eLearning

Ellen Sims

Ellen Sims gives us an account of the "Designs on eLearning – International Conference on Teaching and Learning with Technology in Art, Design and Communication," held in September 2005 at the University of the Arts London (UAL).

Case Study

Zalatwic - using MOODLE to accomplish things

Drew Buddie, Royal Masonic School

At the Royal Masonic School staff have been using MOODLE, Forum Blog and Wiki creation tools to explore how new forms of communication can enhance learning with school students online discussion in three scenarios:

- for gifted and talented students;
- self-evaluation and support for students of GCSE Information and Communication Technology (ICT);
- collaborative and shared learning amongst students of A-level ICT.

Drew reports that MOODLE has won over his colleagues in ways that no other package has done in his ten years as Head of ICT at the school.

Director's report

News from Rhonda Riachi

ALT-C 2006: submission deadlines approaching. Submissions opened on 9 December and will close on **14 February** for research papers and **28 February** for all other session types. Please help us to spread the word by circulating a brief email message to colleagues – contact Hayley Willis for the text (h.willis@brookes.ac.uk). Presentation guidelines, conference themes and the research paper template can be found at **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2006/papers.html**. Registration for presenters will close on 9 June, earlybird registrations close on 30 June, and final registrations close on 11 August. **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2006/index.html**

ALT-C 2005 archive. If you'd like some ideas of what previous ALT-C presenters have covered, you can read abstracts and download presentations from the ALT-C 2005 timetable at **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2005/timetable/timetable.php**. Click on the themes at the beginning of each day to see a full list of presentations in that theme, run your mouse slowly over ID numbers to see the full title, or search by name, title or keyword in the search box at the top of the page.

Spring Conference 2006: New connections, new challenges. Bookings have opened for this popular event, this year taking place at Leiden University, the Netherlands, on 6 and 7 April. Confirmed speakers include Prof Angela McFarlane, Prof Robert-Jan Simons, Scott Wilson and Leo Waaijers. The conference themes for 2006 are: Tools for lifelong learning: identity, movement and standards; Emerging technologies and the 'Net generation'; and Digital games: play and simulation. Once again we are running a research seminar on the second day in association with SURF (www.surf.nl) and ILTA (www.ilta.net), but you must book early as places are limited.

Leiden is a beautiful city and the home of the oldest university in the Netherlands. The conference venue is within walking distance of the hotel accommodation (special rates have been agreed), along quiet streets and canals. Spring is also the tulip season in the Netherlands, so book early to secure a hotel room. **www.alt.ac.uk/conferences.php**

ASCILITE: our partners in Australasia. In 2002 ALT and ASCILITE (**www.ascilite.org.au**) signed a five-year memorandum of understanding to encourage closer working between our associations, prompted by our exchange visit to Australia that year, jointly with SURF. Since then members of ASCILITE and ALT have enjoyed reciprocal discounts on our annual conference fees, and information about ASCILITE activities is circulated via the ALT email digest (see below). In November Prof John Slater, ALT Hon Treasurer, and Robin Mason, chair elect of the new ALT Research Committee, met Cathy Gunn, President of ASCILITE, to discuss further collaboration to benefit our members. The ALT trustees are now exploring collaboration on research, exchange visits for individual academics and more collaboration over events. ALT Vice-Chair, Linda Creanor, will also be looking at our partnerships with other associations to date and how they might develop in future. Contact me for more information.

News digest: 100 issues and still going strong! With well over 1,100 subscribers on the alt-announce list, the ALT fortnightly email news digest reaches more learning technologists than ever, and our international membership is growing. This is the best place to advertise learning technology vacancies and events, and it's free! Tell your colleagues to email relevant job adverts, conference announcements, calls for papers, etc, to alt@brookes.ac.uk in text format only (no attachments, please, and no pdf files) and contact us if you are not receiving the fortnightly message.

rriachi@brookes.ac.uk

EVENTS

Workshops

Bidding for learning technology funds: a one-day workshop

26 April 2006, Birmingham (tbc)

Presenters include: Mark Stiles, Staffordshire University, and Jeff Haywood, University of Edinburgh.

An excellent opportunity to learn the secrets of successful project funding applications.

Programme to follow soon - put the date in your diary!

Edublogs: the educational use of weblogs, weblogging tools and really simple syndication (RSS)

4 May 2006, King's College, London

Presenters: Josie Fraser, Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College, and Steven Warburton, King's College London.

Another chance to attend this popular workshop; bookings will open soon.

Contact: Hayley Willis h.willis@brookes.ac.uk

Conferences

Spring Conference & Research Seminar 2006
New connections, new challenges

6-7 April 2006, Leiden University, The Netherlands

In association with SURF and ILTA

Speakers include: Prof Angela McFarlane, Prof Robert Jan Simons, Scott Wilson, Leo Waijers, Igor Mayer

Themes:
- Tools for lifelong learning: identity, movement and standards
- Emerging technologies and the 'Net generation'
- Digital games: play and simulation

Research seminar, 7 April

This working seminar aims to allow researchers from the UK, the Netherlands and Ireland to further develop current thinking on tools for lifelong learning, the net generation and digital games. Participants will evaluate progress in the use of technologies, share ideas for future developments, and produce a research paper for publication.

Booking deadline: 5 March 2006

www.alt.ac.uk/conferences.php

ALT-C 2006: the next generation

5-7 September 2006, Edinburgh, UK

Conference co-chairs: Prof Terry Mayes and Prof Ron Oliver

FINAL CALL FOR PAPERS

- Research papers close **14 February 2006**
- Other streams close **28 February 2006**
- Submit now at www.alt.ac.uk/pss/index.php
- Conference themes: www.alt.ac.uk/altc2006/papers.html
- Submission guidelines: www.alt.ac.uk/guidelines_papers.html

The conference is for practitioners and researchers from all sectors involved in learning technology, as well as those new to the field. The conference welcomes research papers for publication in the peer-reviewed Proceedings of ALT-C 2006, as well as short papers, symposia, workshops, demonstrations and posters.

www.alt.ac.uk/altc2006/