

2015-16 JISC AWARD FOR THE EFFECTIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN FE**SOUTH EASTERN REGIONAL COLLEGE (SERC)****ILT Pedagogy Mentoring and Essential Skills Team****BLENDED LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT DESIGNED FOR ESSENTIAL SKILLS (BLADES)****The Planning: Purpose and Process**

- Originally piloted in 2009 and running since then as part of SERC's Learning Academy, the aim of the project was to raise Essential Skills (ES) achievement rates through bespoke CPD initiatives which improve tutors' pedagogical and technological skills, enabling them to re-engage a range of learner groups by exploiting Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL). The college sought to achieve this by:
 - designing, implementing and evaluating an Information and Learning Technology Pedagogy and Mentoring Programme (ILTPMP) extended to all ES tutors, developing their pedagogical and technological skills to re-engage the identified learner groups
 - raising ES achievement rates by 10% within five years by developing and implementing a range of innovative learning models mapped to the needs of the learners
 - achieving a 500% increase in Moodle use over five years, thereby developing digital literacy skills and enabling students to become more confident, self-directed learners
 - providing formal and informal learning opportunities for ES staff through mechanisms such as the Learning Engine, Moodle Mondays and Webinar Wednesdays.

Planning into Practice

- The college implemented the BLADES programme by applying ILTPMP in the classroom: peer mentors inspired change in their mentees using demonstration lessons, team teaching and peer observation.
- Tutors harnessed the interest of younger students through game-based learning and provided access to high quality online resources, creating opportunities to collaborate online, exploiting their interest in social media. Adult students benefitted from the seamless integration of traditional and online learning.
- Moodle templates were designed, agreed and rolled out across the college.
- On *Webinar Wednesdays*, 'live' and recorded webinars gave staff the opportunity to share good practice and this was highlighted internally using Yammer as the social media platform.
- Online webinars were made available on *Moodle Mondays*, focussing on developing tutors' blended learning skills.
- Restrained by limited access to technology in community settings, the programme invested in portable solutions such as the eBeam, enabling tutors to create interactive learning opportunities.
- To provide blended learning opportunities, a range of online modules were developed on the Learning Engine, an online learning management system using interactive multimedia content.
- New staff have benefitted from a 'flipped' staff induction: training is provided online prior to meeting face-to-face, involving the implementation of supportive processes.

The college has developed and implemented an online enrolment system, accessible on a range of devices, enabling students to research, apply and enrol on the courses of their choice.

Continuing Development

- As at July 2015, 50 ES staff have completed the mentoring programme and have commented that they have the necessary tools and skills to support, motivate and engage learners within their lessons.
- Individual lecturers have the opportunity to identify their professional development needs, develop new ILT and pedagogical skills and further develop existing skills to meet the needs of learners.

Profile 4

- The ILT Pedagogy Manager quality assures the programme by observing the mentor's demonstration lessons and mentee training. Mentors are appointed following an interview and an observed teaching session, to ensure that they have the necessary skill set. They are seconded for a proportion of their timetable to the Learning Academy.
- Training for the mentors is facilitated monthly by the ILT Pedagogy Manager through sharing good practice at team meetings and via Yammer. New mentors are mentored by the ILT Pedagogy Manager and complete the City & Guilds Level 4 Certificate in Technology and Learning Delivery.
- The ILT Strategy Group includes representatives from across the organisation, including managers, teaching and corporate staff, whose roles are critical to the effectiveness of the strategy. A group comprising of curriculum managers, mentors and teaching staff review the quality of the learning materials produced, giving guidance and feedback.
- Following the success of BLADES, the college developed online GCSE English and maths courses. Online delivery for the English GCSE began in September 2015 and delivery of the maths GCSE is set to begin in September 2016.
- Further internationalisation will be through a project which has been secured with partners in Ireland, Italy and Slovenia, as well as future opportunities with other FE Colleges through a transnational education network in which SERC participates.

Outcomes/benefits to date

- Since the award was announced, the BLADES approach has continued to have a positive impact as student achievement has remained consistently high and retention has further improved by 7%.
- A 13% improvement in ES was achieved from 2009/10-2014/15 with 2,000 students gaining qualifications which would not have previously been realised, with a total value added of £1m.
- The ES approach was extended across all curriculum areas, with over 630 mentoring cycles completed, benefitting over 400 lecturing staff from 2009/10-2014/15.
- 1,042 staff have completed their allocated online learning modules via the Learning Engine, resulting in estimated savings in travel and trainer costs of £400,000.
- The online enrolment system significantly reduced administration costs by £63,000 in 2013/14 in comparison to 2012/13. This system has been rolled out to other colleges, garnering very positive feedback.
- Following inspection, the Education Training Inspectorate (ETI), identified the ILTPMP as an area of best practice and the college was invited to speak at an ETI cross-college event to disseminate this approach. Training was provided to all 60 ETI inspectors on the whole-college approach to TEL and the ILTPMP. The ETI also highlighted the impact of ILTPMP in raising professional standards and embedding the effectiveness of technology.
- The ILTPMP has continued to receive national and international attention as training has been provided to a Japanese college and a Thai university. The online GCSE English and maths courses have been piloted with great success, and the ES team are engaging with schools to develop early interventions.
- SERC's Learning Academy delivered workshops on Technology Enhanced Learning and the ILT pedagogy mentoring model in the UK, Ireland, Singapore, Thailand and Japan.
- Approximately 500 staff have completed the ILTPMP which was rolled out across the whole College. It continues to be oversubscribed year on year. Moodle hits in 2014/15 were 4.1 million, 26% of which were accesses outside of College campus. Every course has an online Moodle site with a range of interactive learning resources.
- The award money has been used to provide a range of educational resources and to support and develop a complementary project-based learning programme.

Relevance and Replication

- This project has demonstrated excellent practice and effective use of technology. It is a showcase for other colleges and providers, demonstrating a highly effective blended learning approach, which is thoughtfully built upon pedagogic design and teaching CPD.
- The project benefits learners both in promoting lifelong learning skills and improving success rates. The overall impact, strategy, quality with scalability and sustainability highlight the greater strengths of this project.

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