



E-learning newsletter

Spring 2008

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Bloomsbury e-Learning Showcase 2008

Thursday 14th February 2008, 2-5pm

Birkbeck College, Room B33

Malet Street, Bloomsbury

London WC1E 7HX

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/maps/interactive>



Introduction

An opportunity to find out how academic staff in Bloomsbury are taking innovative approaches to deliver learning and teaching. Discover how to enhance your own practice and meet with

colleagues from the six Bloomsbury Colleges to share experiences, identify e-learning methodologies and explore possible collaborative opportunities.

Target Audience

This event is primarily for academic staff, but Learning Technology, Library and IT staff are very much welcomed.

Take part on the day

If you have a laptop with wireless capabilities which is running either Windows XP or Vista, please bring it along.

Programme

1400 Welcome, Professor David Latchman (Master of Birkbeck College)

1410 Welcome and Introductions, Sarah Sherman (BLE Service Manager)

1430 **Birkbeck College**

Submitting Coursework Online

Dr Richard Rayne (Head of School of Biological & Chemical Sciences)

1445 **Institute of Education**

Student Generated Content

Tim Neumann (Learning Technology Fellow) and colleagues (TBA)

IT Services



1500 [London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine](#)

The Clinical Trials' Experience (Distance Learning MSc/Diploma at LSHTM)
Christine Ce (Distance Learning Technologist) and Kendall Searle (Course Director)

1515 Break

1545 [Royal Veterinary College](#)

Supporting online CPD using live web-based lectures
Dr Panagiotis (Pete) Mantis (Lecturer in Diagnostic Imaging)

1600 [SOAS](#)

Using Wikis in Learning and Teaching
Dr Mark Humphreys (Learning & Teaching Services Manager) and Mr Alex Fischer (Lecturer in Law)

1615 [School of Pharmacy](#)

Narrated PowerPoint and Using Camtasia,
Dr. Les Fowler (Senior Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies)

1630 [Networking and refreshments](#)

Booking Form: <http://www.lkl.ac.uk/ltu/events/bloomsburyshowcase>

For further information, please contact Sarah Sherman, BLE Service Manager
s.sherman@bloomsbury.ac.uk, 07515 580 385.

[New BLE Service Manager](#)

At the start of the academic year, **Sarah Sherman** took up the new role of Service Manager for the Bloomsbury Learning Environment (BLE). This is the first post to be jointly-funded by the Bloomsbury Colleges who use the BLE.

The BLE is a shared learning platform (Blackboard) used by the Institute of Education, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, SOAS, the Royal Veterinary College and soon to be used by Birkbeck College in 2008-9. Each college has its own unique Blackboard installation, but they all benefit from coming under the one licence. The benefits include shared support, tools and remote hosting for Blackboard.

Sarah now liaises with Blackboard Inc. on behalf of the colleges as a single point of contact, logging requests, coordinating upgrades and new additions to the Blackboard suite. She coordinates the BLE Technical and Pedagogy groups and provides a link between those two groups and the BLE Steering Group. Since she started, Sarah has been spending much of her time in Bloomsbury, meeting various related groups such as the Bloomsbury Library, IT Systems and Staff Development Managers groups. She intends to act as a conduit between these groups and the BLE, with the aim of joining up and sharing e-learning activities.

Sarah's background is in education and e-learning training and support. Prior to this role, she was the e-Learning Adviser (HE) at the JISC Regional Support Centre (RSC) London, based at ULCC. In this role, she provided strategic advice to senior managers about the implementation and development of e-learning. She also developed and delivered training events for staff of all levels and supported the use of e-learning and learning technologies to enhance learning, teaching and research.

Sarah is a graduate of UCL (BSc Hons in Psychology) and the Institute of Education (Primary PGCE) and is currently a student at Birkbeck, studying for a certificate in counselling.

E-Portfolio developments

The Centre for Learning and Professional Development, in collaboration with the Faculty of Lifelong Learning, has been looking at e-portfolios as a way to enhance student experience. E-portfolios are now available in many universities in this country. Usage varies from place to place, but generally they offer some or all of the following functions:

1. A record of achievement or a transcript.
2. A developmental record of the student's progress towards his/her targets or learning outcomes.
3. A record of reflection on academic materials, and their meaning for the learner and their development.

To explore the usefulness of functions (2) and (3) for Birkbeck students, blogging has been introduced into three modules. A blog (or "weblog") is an online diary. It is simply a type of web page where the user makes a series of entries that are listed in date order. Each entry, or post, can contain links to other materials such as websites, entries on other blogs or files which the user uploads. Other users can then respond to posts, although blogs can also be kept strictly private to the user.

Blogging as a way to enhance learning

Students are invited or required to use blogs on the Personal Development Planning, the "IT in Practice", and the "Introduction to Lifelong Learning and Personal Development Planning" modules.

The Personal Development Planning module, taken by Foundation Degree students, provides the option for students to maintain a personal learning journal as a blog. Here they are asked to critically reflect on their academic learning alongside their learning in other relevant contexts such as the workplace, community and home. One specific activity invites students to record any critical incidents that occur in the workplace or during their studies. Using a series of structured questions, they are encouraged to reflect on the incident to gain deeper insight.

IT in Practice is undertaken by some first-year Foundation Degree students. It aims to ensure they have minimum IT skills to succeed in their academic and professional lives. An optional blogging task was included where students planned how they were going to continue to update their IT skills once the module had finished. They were encouraged to in-



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clude links to relevant web resources and then reflect on how they might best use them to improve their skills.

Blogging is also used as a way to enhance IT skills on Introduction to Lifelong Learning and Personal Development Planning. This module includes a requirement for students to improve their IT skills, but time constraints limit the amount of face-to-face teaching. Students therefore make use of the online IT training material for the European Computer Driving License and simultaneously keep a blog which encourages them to stay on track with their training and to reflect on its usefulness and how it impacts on their academic, professional and personal lives. Students are also encouraged to use their blog for critical reflection on their broader learning development and to stimulate on line small group debate with fellow students on key topics relevant to their programme of study. Tutors can read the blogs to track progress.

We used the blogging tool at www.blogger.com for all three modules. This is owned by Google, is free, and has proved both stable and easy to use. Initial response from students has been very positive. Students with weaker IT backgrounds have been particularly excited at the ease with which they can have a blog. Some of them have now set up blogs for their workplaces or personal interests (e.g. sports teams). As students start to submit their blogs for marking, we hope to assess the success of this approach for deepening learning.

Deborah Grange (CLPD) and Elaine Hawkins (Faculty of Lifelong Learning)

Online booking for ITS workshops

Workshop details	
Workshop:	Collaborative Authoring with Word and GoogleDocs
Date:	Wed Dec 19 2007
Location:	Malet Street, room 458
Time:	15:00 to 17:00
Type:	single session workshop
Your details	
<small>All fields are required</small>	
Username:	ubaap15
Name:	John Matthews
Phone:	0731
Email:	j.matthews@bbk.ac.uk
Email confirmation:	j.matthews@bbk.ac.uk
<input type="checkbox"/> Save my personal details for next time (if ticked a cookie will be saved)	
Remind me:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (if ticked an email reminder will be sent out 3 days before the course.)
<input type="button" value="book a place"/>	

Staff and students may now book for ITS training sessions via our website. The new system is simple, with login via ITS username and password, and allows quick booking from the online timetable of courses. To further streamline the system we have removed the need for a cash or cost-code deposit when booking so you need only fill in a few details, as shown in the

screenshot. If required, you may opt for an email reminder 3 days before the workshop, and can check your bookings online at any time from the timetable.

The timetable can be found on the quick link from the ITS home page or: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/its/help/training>