

CASE STUDY



BLACKBURN COLLEGE

CultureShift: embedding technology in staff and student practice

Collaborative learning

PROJECT LEAD

DEBORAH MILLAR

Head of eLearning

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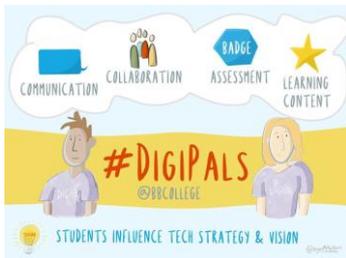
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1. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDY

Chris is a Sports Tutor and tells his story of how he worked with his learners to trial new learning technologies to enhance teaching and learning. Share this case study with tutors who are keen to try learning technology within the classroom but are unsure how to begin.

2. WHO COULD BENEFIT FROM THIS CASE STUDY AND WHY

The case study will benefit:

- Curriculum staff who are keen to develop their skills to introduce new learning technologies within the classroom;
- Quality Managers who wish to support staff with techniques and resources to embed the use of technology within curriculum;
- Human Resources/Organisational Development teams responsible for staff development who would like to develop staff technology skills.

3. ABOUT BLACKBURN COLLEGE

Blackburn College is a large Further and Higher Education college in Blackburn, Lancashire. The College has been delivering training and education for over 125 years and is the largest provider of college based higher education in the country.

Currently over 15,000 students are studying a range of qualifications, including:

- A Levels;
- Apprenticeships;
- Vocational qualifications from Entry Level to Level 3;
- Foundation Degrees;
- Degrees;
- Professional qualifications.

www.blackburn.ac.uk

4. WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO AND WHY

Blackburn College's staff 'DigiPals' worked with a number of staff across the College to improve their confidence and skills in the use of learning technology within the classroom. Chris' motivation to participate in the project was driven by his ambition to improve his teaching observation grade. Whilst his observations regularly received high 2s, he wanted to develop his delivery sessions and obtain Grade 1s. He was keen to try new learning technologies within lessons but lacked confidence, the relevant knowledge and skills.

“I was apprehensive for several reasons. My lack of knowledge was the main drawback. I didn’t want the students to see that I didn’t really know what I was doing.” Chris

Chris was also wary of the equipment and its reliability as well as the time it would take to set up activities.

“I didn’t trust the equipment and/or software to work properly and I felt that I couldn’t afford the amount of extra time needed to set up activities.” Chris

Chris saw participation within the Learning Futures project as a fantastic opportunity to improve his skills and gain direct support from a colleague through the staff DigiPal model.

The challenge was to identify a new learning technology which Chris could trial that would engage with his learners and enhance their learning. Chris chose to work with 15 learners studying the ‘Current Issues in Sport’ module as part of their Level 3 Extended Diploma in Sport qualification. ‘DigiPal’, Alex, attended sessions to showcase a range of Apps which both learners and Chris could use. Through consultation with Chris and the learners, they chose to trial the use of Twitter as a communication tool and Blendspace to support assignments.

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5. EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

“The Learning Futures project has helped my confidence tremendously. I’ve really enjoyed learning how to use I.T and the students seem to enjoy showing me their skills. The time factor was never an issue.” Chris



‘DigiPal’ (Alex) attended classes to show the learners how Twitter can be used to communicate with their peers outside of class and with the tutor. All 15 learners signed up with a Twitter account and followed one another. Some learners were already using Twitter and so they took the lead supporting both the tutor and their peers. This flipped learning approach worked very well and all the learners engaged with the activity. Learners followed key sports people and brands and they began to use Twitter effectively to communicate and collaborate with an UEFA qualified sports coach. This coach is now providing direct feedback to students and staff on their session plans and he has also agreed to do an online Skype interview with the learners.

As a result of this success, from September 2015 all Sports students (107) will set up their own Twitter account.

Learners trialled BlendSpace to complete their assignment for the Media and Technology in Sport unit. BlendSpace enabled quieter learners to increase their confidence in the classroom

and those who were academically weaker contributed more and helped others to use BlendSpace and Twitter.

The success of BlendSpace encouraged Chris to rewrite the assessment method for his module to incorporate use of the App and flipped learning. The module gained 100% pass rate, with 80% high grades. Chris has now pledged to use one digital assessment tool per module that he delivers.

The learners led their own learning, sharing resources and being more proactive about their research and assignments.

“The majority of students enjoyed submitting coursework much more than traditional reports” Chris

Chris feels that his delivery methods are more appropriate and that his learners are learning much more effectively. He believes that he has improved and he is awaiting his next observation with much more confidence than before.

As part of the College’s Staff Development Programme, Chris and Alex have delivered five staff development sessions on the use of Twitter and BlendSpace as communication tools both inside and outside the classroom and how it can be linked to assessment. Over 80 staff from across the College attended.

6. LESSONS LEARNED

Chris' confidence and skills of using learning technology for teaching and learning has increased. This was a great example of learners leading the way and working with their tutor to enhance their teaching and learning.

The initial reaction was to share a range of learning technologies with the learners. However, we soon realised that the learners felt overwhelmed by the variety and so we focused on Twitter and BlendSpace which worked well together.

Chris has now made some changes to his teaching delivery for the new academic year. He is developing a full online unit for Moodle for the Work Experience element of the course, where learners will access all resources from outside of the college. In addition, all assignments are now submitted via Moodle and he has incorporated BlendSpace as an assessment tool for his Level 1 and 2 courses.

Chris is continuing to work with Alex to trial other Apps and support his peers in their use of learning technologies.

7. TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

- Teaching staff with the enthusiasm to trial new learning technologies within the classroom;
- Availability of peer support roles and mechanisms to provide staff with practical support;
- Learners willing to engage and embrace new learning technologies.

8. SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- **Resource LearningWheel – BlendSpace;**
A visual guide that suggests a wide range of opportunities available within each of four modes of engagement for BlendSpace.
- **Resource LearningWheel - BlendSpace: Easy steps;**
How to set up Blendspace in 8 easy steps.
- **Resource LearningWheel - Twitter LearningWheel;**
A visual guide that suggests a wide range of opportunities available within each of four modes of engagement for Twitter.
- **Resource LearningWheel - Twitter: Easy steps;**
How to set up Twitter in 10 easy steps.
- **Contextualised LearningWheel - How to use Twitter to engage learners studying Sport & PE.**

68 suggestions how to use free digital resources (apps, websites, videos, slideshows) linked to Sport & PE curriculum that supplement traditional learning content.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

Deborah Millar, Head of eLearning

Blackburn College

Feilden Street

Blackburn

Lancashire

BB2 1LH

Email: deborah.millar@blackburn.ac.uk