

# CASE STUDY



## BLACKBURN COLLEGE

### *CultureShift:* embedding technology in staff and student practice

Using Twitter to engage with  
industry

**PROJECT LEAD**

**DEBORAH MILLAR**

Head of eLearning

Commissioned and funded by

The  
Education  
& Training  
Foundation



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/).

## CONTENTS

<b>1. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. WHO COULD BENEFIT FROM THIS CASE STUDY AND WHY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. ABOUT BLACKBURN COLLEGE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO AND WHY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. EVIDENCE OF IMPACT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6. LESSONS LEARNED</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>7. TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. SUPPORTING RESOURCES</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9. CONTACT DETAILS</b>	<b>9</b>

## 1. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CASE STUDY

Louise is a hairdressing tutor and she tells her story of how she and her learners discovered how Twitter can be used to support and enhance teaching and learning. Share this case study with those who are interested in using Twitter to improve learner engagement and achievement.

## 2. WHO COULD BENEFIT FROM THIS CASE STUDY AND WHY

The case study will benefit:

- 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 want to develop staff technology skills;
- Curriculum staff, particularly those delivering hairdressing qualifications, who are interested in how Twitter can be used to engage with learners beyond the classroom and bring industry experts closer to the learners.

### 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](http://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.

## Using Twitter to engage with industry

Louise chose to participate in the project as she was unsure about using learning technology within the classroom and keen to trial new Apps in order to increase learner engagement both inside and outside of the classroom.

The challenge was to work with the staff 'DigiPal' to identify the most appropriate learning technology to trial. Louise chose to work with 14 learners studying the 'Colour Lightening Hair' module as part of the Foundation Level 2 Professional Studies in Hair qualification. All the learners were female and had busy lives combining study with parental commitments. One learner had English as a third language.

The staff 'DigiPal' sat in the class to assess the tutor's and learners' learning style and following this they decided to trial the use of Twitter. The 'DigiPal' gave the learners a session on how to use Twitter. All the learners signed up and they chose some specific people, brands and industry experts to follow. The 'DigiPal' and Louise followed the learners and offered comments and encouragement through Twitter.

## 5. EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Over a short period of time the tutor and learners used Twitter to support their skills development by sourcing new industry techniques, tweeting leading industry brands, entering hairdressing competitions and enrolling on additional short courses.

Twitter has enabled the tutor to encourage learners and motivate them quickly and easily beyond the hair salons. It brought industry techniques into the classroom. Learners received retweets from brands such as Wella and were invited by Hairdressers Journal to share their pictures on Twitter to showcase their work.

All 14 learners passed the 'Colour and Lightening Hair' module exam the first time.

*"Amazingly it has lightened some of the workload for me. Students are offering to record demos, or upload links, resources and photos to Twitter to share with the whole group. The students have become Twitter champions within class and support mentors to both me and each other."* Louise

In addition, the learners were joined by the College's new Vice Principal for their Twitter tutorial session. The Vice Principal worked with the learners and she has fully embraced the

## Using Twitter to engage with industry

potential of the tool to engage with students, even creating her own hashtag.

Louise has become confident in the use of Twitter and as such has delivered a Technology Enhanced Learning session during staff development week.

Louise and her learners have delivered a bespoke Twitter session for the Hair and Beauty Curriculum Centre to encourage them to use Twitter in their sessions.

Louise has also been successful in her application to become one of the College's new Digital Advanced Practitioners. This is due to her knowledge, experience and achievements as a participant in the Learning Futures CultureShift project.

### **6. LESSONS LEARNED**

The main thing which worked well was the involvement and engagement of all learners. This is key to the success of the technology as it provides a peer support network within the class.

In order to improve engagement it would have been better to work with the staff and learners from the beginning of the academic year. This has been taken on board and will happen in the next academic year.

## 7. TOP TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

- Staff with the enthusiasm and expertise in trialling new learning technologies;
- Availability of peer support roles and mechanisms to provide staff with practical support;
- Learners willing to engage and embrace new technology.

## 8. SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- **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 Hairdressing.**  
68 suggestions how to use free digital resources (apps, websites, videos, slideshows) linked to Hairdressing 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](mailto:deborah.millar@blackburn.ac.uk)