

# CASE STUDY



## BLACKBURN COLLEGE

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

Using technology for virtual  
interviews and networking

#### 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/).

**CASE STUDY**  
**BLACKBURN**  
**COLLEGE**

Using technology for virtual interviews and  
networking

**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

Emma is an illustration tutor and tells her story of how she and her learners used digital resources to support each other's progress and network with professionals in the classroom and beyond. The group used social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to evidence the development process. Skype was also used to interview illustrators from around the UK.

## 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 illustration qualifications, who are interested in how Twitter and Skype 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.

Emma chose to participate in the project as she was eager to share and demonstrate her professional practice and ways of using digital technologies. She required support in encouraging her students to network and build a professional identity / portfolio online.

## Using technology for virtual interviews and networking

The challenge was to work with the staff 'DigiPal' to identify the most appropriate learning technology to trial. Emma chose to work with a group of higher education learners studying the 'Illustration' module as part of the BA Visual Communication at Level 5. This was a mixed group, with students of various ages and abilities.

The staff 'DigiPal' observed the lesson to assess the tutor's and learners' learning style and subsequently they decided to trial the use of Twitter. The 'DigiPal' delivered a session on how to use Twitter. The majority of learners signed up and they chose some specific people and industry experts to follow. For those who chose not to join Twitter, a Twitter block was embedded in to their Moodle page in order for them to still engage and follow discussions. *As a consequence, these learners began to recognise the benefits and later in the project joined up to Twitter.*

The 'DigiPal' and Emma followed the learners and offered comments and encouragement via Twitter.

Emma was keen for her students to network with professional illustrators and visit studios. It was decided that Skype was a familiar digital resource to enhance this aspect of the module. Two illustrators were scheduled for a virtual interview on industry practice. Student feedback was extremely positive.

## 5. EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Over a short period of time the tutor and learners used Twitter and Instagram to share their progress, allowing them to view and critique the work of their peers.

Twitter has enabled the tutor to feed industry information to students immediately, rather than in the next lesson, as well as allowing students to project their work onto a global platform.

*“I have gained a sense of pride in what I am enabling my students to achieve and perform in the illustration arena. It has integrated the commercial and education strands of my role – as it should” Emma*

Emma stated that the most rewarding aspects of the project include:

- Improving the quality of learning experience for the range of individual needs e.g. differentiation, inclusivity, accessibility;
- Providing further opportunities for learners to achieve higher level thinking;
- Feeding industry information to students immediately via Twitter (Moodle via Twitter feed) rather than waiting until next lesson;
- Seeing students participate more both in and out of lessons;
- Projecting students on to industry standard platforms e.g. Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tumblr blogs;
- Proving opportunities for students to network with AOI, other illustrators, publishers and agencies.

## Using technology for virtual interviews and networking

Emma has shared her practice within Curriculum Area meetings and is scheduled to deliver this to the College's University Centre during staff development sessions.

Emma has rewritten her scheme of work to showcase the Illustrator interviews recorded this year to inspire this year's cohort of students and help them to organise their own schedule of virtual interviews.

### **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 and 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

- **A 10-Step process for introducing Twitter as a powerful learning resource;**  
A guide to running a workshop for hairdressing staff.
- **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 Illustration.**  
68 suggestions how to use free digital resources (apps, websites, videos, slideshows) linked to Hairdressing curriculum that supplement traditional learning content.

CASE STUDY  
**BLACKBURN  
COLLEGE**

Using technology for virtual interviews and  
networking

## 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)