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LEARNING FUTURES PROGRAMME FINAL REPORT

CULTURESHIFT: EMBEDDING TECHNOLOGY IN STAFF AND STUDENT PRACTICE

BLACKBURN COLLEGE



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Project title

CultureShift: embedding technology in staff and student practice

Name of lead organisation

Blackburn College

Project summary

This project set out to support a cross-college *CultureShift*, embedding learning technology within staff and student practice. Whilst we recognised that this would not happen overnight, the project created new opportunities for staff development and engagement that are key to the *CultureShift*.

The College believes that education needs to move forward by embracing technology to enhance its provision, engage with learners and provide high quality training. Over the last two years, the College has invested considerable time and resources into the development of its Blended Learning Strategy, Blended Learning Team and their expertise. The Learning Futures project enabled the College to extend pilot initiatives such as the LearningWheel, 'DigiPal' roles and Communities of Practice across the College and share practice with the wider sector. It is these initiatives that support the College to create the *CultureShift*.

Who should read this report and why

This report will interest:

- College leaders and managers who wish their college to keep abreast of change regarding embedding learning technology within staff and student practice;
- Learning Technologists;
- Quality Managers who would like to adopt new CPD models;
- Teaching staff looking for support to develop their skills and knowledge of learning technology and how to use it within teaching and learning.

CPD resources developed

LearningWheels:

- A guide to the LearningWheel Prezi;
- LearningWheel Workflow;
- Resource LearningWheel - Twitter;
- Resource LearningWheel - Twitter: Easy steps;
- Resource LearningWheel - Blendspace;
- Resource LearningWheel - Blendspace: Easy steps;
- Resource LearningWheel - Assistive Technology;
- Contextualised LearningWheel - How to use Twitter to engage learners studying English Language;
- Contextualised LearningWheel - How to use Twitter to engage learners studying Hairdressing;
- Contextualised LearningWheel - How to use Twitter to engage learners studying Illustration;
- Contextualised LearningWheel - How to use Twitter to engage learners studying Sport & PE;

'DigiPals':

- Case Study - Supporting learners with additional learning needs;
- Case Study - Collaborative learning;
- Case Study - Using twitter to engage with industry;
- Case Study - From a learners perspective;
- Case Study - Staff 'DigiPals'
- Case Study - Using technology for virtual interviews and networking;
- DigiPals, a how-to guide;
- A 10-Step process for introducing Twitter as a powerful learning resource;

Supporting Materials:

- Learning Futures Conference Prezi – providing an overview of the project, highlighting its achievements, successes and challenges.
- Digital Literacy Skills Scan Survey – the template survey used by the College.

Please see the final section of this report for further details on individual resources.

Project lead contact details

Blackburn College is a large further education college in the North West of England with over 15,000 students.

For further information about this project contact:

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Members of partnership

Not applicable.

What the project set out to do and why

This project aimed to increase staff and student engagement in the use of teaching and learning technology in order to support a *CultureShift* across the College. The College recognised the need to embed learning technology in staff and student practice and that staff and students lack the skills and confidence to fully engage with technology.

The process

In order to support the *CultureShift*, the College developed, piloted and trialled a range of staff development initiatives:

- LearningWheels

A simple graphic device that guides staff through digital technologies by linking platforms, apps and web content to learning delivery. The LearningWheel can be adapted to create specific wheels for different learning technologies and subject areas.

- 'DigiPal' roles

'DigiPals' are a peer-to-peer learning model. Staff and student 'DigiPal' roles were recruited across the College to act as learning technology champions. Four staff

'DigiPals' worked with tutors to evaluate a specific module or course and trial technology to enhance the delivery. Six student 'DigiPals' were recruited to engage more learners in the use of technology for learning. They supported learners to identify new learning technologies that could be trialled by staff and students. The student 'DigiPal' roles were offered as a Scholarship opportunity to all students across the College. A £1,200 bursary was awarded to each student 'DigiPal'. Staff 'DigiPal' roles were advertised as Advanced Practitioner roles to all teaching staff across the College. Staff were offered 180 hours remission from teaching to dedicate to the project. They also received a £2,100 incentive per year.

- Digital Literacy Skills Scan

Working with Jisc, the College carried out a Digital Skills Scan Survey to identify the skills gaps of staff and offer CPD sessions.

- Communities of Practice

The College held a range of events bringing stakeholders together to discuss a specific topic. Communities of Practice were established for: Using iPads in Education; ePortfolio - OneFile; Moodle - Beyond the Repository and Assistive Technologies for Independence. Twenty external stakeholders were involved. The workshops were driven by the stakeholders in order to share expertise and best practice.

In addition, a LearningWheel online community has been established to co-create new LearningWheels.

- The Learning Futures' Blackburn College *CultureShift* Conference was held on 29th June 2015. It showcased the models and initiatives that the College has adopted in order to embed learning technologies within staff and student practice.

The results

Challenges overcome

The main challenge for the project was to begin implementing the *CultureShift* across the College to increase staff and student engagement and the use of learning technology.

The project sought to do this by recruiting staff and student 'DigiPals' and working with a group of participants, consisting of 12 tutors and their students from across the College. There were a number of challenges to this:

- Staff 'DigiPals' trying to work with too many participants. The 'DigiPals' focused on two staff members each which created a more positive ripple effect across departments;
- Staff 'DigiPals' experienced some resistance from teaching staff who felt they didn't need technology to improve their teaching and learning and they were being pushed to learn about it. The key to the success of the project was working with those staff members who volunteered as they had the enthusiasm and willingness to embrace new learning technologies and critically review their own skills and knowledge;
- Student 'DigiPals' we recruited to train student groups, however conflicting timetables meant meeting simultaneously was extremely difficult or lacked consistency. This negative became a positive in that we found that tech savvy learners within each tutor group became 'DigiPal' champions;
- Feedback from both staff and student participants stated that they wished the duration of the support was longer and that it would have been better if they had started at the beginning of the year and not March;
- Time - staff felt they couldn't dedicate sufficient time to the project in addition to their teaching roles. The 'DigiPals' worked with staff to ensure that the project wasn't onerous and that they could be involved easily. This was done by 'DigiPals' delivering practical learning sessions to the staff and students simultaneously;
- Timetables – matching up those of the teaching staff and the 'DigiPal' in order to schedule synchronous time for the project proved difficult. But with commitment from both, time was prioritised through shadowing of classes as an opportunity to learn from one another;
- Staff absence - a key challenge and one which cannot be anticipated is staff absence. Two of the 'DigiPals' left the project due to maternity leave and additional teaching commitments, which caused a delay in some activities. Additional staff were recruited and activities were picked up by existing 'DigiPals' and Head of eLearning;
- The staff 'DigiPals' originally identified a range of learning technologies which staff could try, but due to student feedback and the staff time constraints they focused on one or two reliable and flexible digital resources instead. This ensured that the staff member did not feel too overwhelmed by the technology.

Impact identified

CultureShift has made the following impact, with a ripple effect created through collaborative learning both within the College and the sector:

'DigiPals':

- Recruited four staff 'DigiPals' and six student 'DigiPals';
- The 'DigiPals' have worked with 12 members of staff and 57 students. Staff received direct one-to-one support to trial and implement new learning technologies with their learners;

"My 'DigiPal' was wonderful and supportive. I now have more knowledge of what's available and feel confident in assessing the needs of the individual student and matching them to appropriate technology that will enhance their learning."

Curriculum Support Tutor

- 269 learners have been involved in the project through the 'DigiPal' survey, 'DigiPal' roles and engagement with staff;
- The Head of eLearning and staff 'DigiPals' participated in 42 Learning Walks (a short 15 minute peer observation to share good practice) and 20 Dual Observations engaging with 62 tutors to support them in the use of technology in the classroom;
- Sports students have achieved a 100% first-time pass rate in their 'Current Issues in Sport' module with 80% of high grades;
- It has improved the confidence of staff and students to use technology and allows more reserved students to increase their contribution;

"I didn't want the students to see that I didn't really know what I was doing. However I have actually enjoyed learning how to use IT." Sports Tutor

"Improved communication and boosted class morale." Tutor

"A mature student lacking confidence, especially with use of technology, is now tweeting and recognises its value." Illustration Tutor

"Many thanks for today's Cloud Technology session. I found it very informative and it has inspired me to explore new ways of working." HE Student Engagement Officer

- Hairdressing students studying the 'Colour and Lightening Hair' module passed the exam first time;

- Two students with additional learning support needs passed their 'Injuries in Sport' module first time. Both students will progress, one to a Level 2 sports course and the second to an Apprenticeship in Sport;

"The 2 students I worked with are both severely dyslexic, and one also has attention deficit disorder. Problems in class revolved around them being disengaged from their learning and not being able to write assignments due to the fear of the blank sheet of paper and their nervousness around spelling. The feedback they gave was brilliant and for once assignment work was handed in on time, with correct spellings and good presentation. A pass was achieved by both with the first submission—the only time this had happened all year for one of the students." Curriculum Support Tutor

- 15 Level 2 Sports students are utilising Twitter effectively to communicate and collaborate with a UEFA qualified sports coach who is now providing direct feedback to students and staff. He has agreed to do a Skype interview with students. In addition, the Sports students have got professional athletes following them on Twitter;
- Leading Illustrators have participated in Skype guest lectures bringing the industry into the classroom;
- The use of Twitter by a Hairdressing tutor and students has enabled the tutor to encourage students and motivate them quickly and easily beyond the hair salons;
- In a participation survey, students were asked: "If you have used digital technologies with your teacher in your lessons, what has worked well and what did you enjoy?"

Their responses included:

"Lesson was fun therefore I felt I learnt more."

"iPads better than writing—makes it different. I am rubbish at spelling and it helps me to do it quicker."

"Watching videos/using Moodle to promote an event feels more engaged."

"Using technology in the classroom is very useful and works well."

- Staff have commented that the use of technology has improved efficiency for both them and their students:

"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." Tutor in Hairdressing

"Twitter Champions within class become support mentors to their peers and the tutor."

“Their organisation of class notes was not good—often 10 minutes could be wasted with them looking for handouts and assignments. The technology was fantastic—they were engaged and keen and this allowed me time to actually teach them instead of using my time and energy coaxing them and trying to motivate them to do work.” Curriculum Support Tutor

- 24 demonstration videos were created by a student ‘DigiPal’ resulting in 133 views to date;
- Three DigiKnow newsletters were created collaboratively by the student ‘DigiPals’;

LearningWheels:

- The Head of eLearning has presented the LearningWheel and ‘DigiPal’ models at over 10 external events/webinars, including Sheffield Hallem University’s Social Media Conference, Jisc CANogogy, Westminster Briefings, Leeds Beckett University, DIGIFEST and ALT-C. She has written blogs for Jisc, UKEdChat, Prezi and ThinkOutLoudClub;
- The early release LearningWheel Prezi has been viewed 660 times.

CultureShift:

- Seven staff members out of the 12 participating in the project, will conduct CPD sessions with their colleagues;
- 851 practitioners/assessors have engaged through the project via direct participation, ‘DigiPal’ roles, completion of the Digital Skills Scan, and visits from other organisations;
- The College has hosted visits from 11 training providers to share its models, including Grimsby College, Liverpool College and Marple College;
- 101 people attended the Technology Enhanced Learning Conference from 25 different organisations: Conference Prezi:
<https://prezi.com/xe4osp6m9fos/learningwheel/>;
- More staff members are following @bbcollege Twitter. The Head of eLearning has had a tweet reach of 10.2 million since tweeting about the LearningWheel from 1 July to 30 September 2015.

Key learning points

Key success factors:

- Organisational commitment and senior management buy-in to support and champion new initiatives;
- Identification of staff volunteers who have the enthusiasm to engage and learn new technologies;
- Resources to provide dedicated one-to-one and peer-to-peer support and ensuring that regular meetings are available to support staff;
- Engaging all learners within a class to ensure that they have the opportunity to express their opinion, become involved and contribute to the learning process both for themselves, their peers and the tutor;
- 'DigiPals' being proactive through offering praise and encouragement to staff and students through Twitter;
- Have an end goal of the Technology Enhanced Learning conference was ideal as an aim and to showcase and share our achievements.

Lessons learned:

- The timing wasn't ideal. It would be much more beneficial to start right at the beginning of the academic year;
- The Student 'DigiPals' need a focus from the very start. They need specific guidance and direction. Through the work with the staff participants, it also became apparent that although it's good to have key Student 'DigiPals' to support wider college events and staff, students in class are true 'DigiPals' without the need for Scholarships.

To implement similar initiatives, organisations would need:

- Executive and Senior Management commitment to ensure that they can champion and support implementation;
- The technology infrastructure and digital resources, e.g. wifi network and Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy;
- Staffing resources to support peer to peer learning;

- Collaboration between technologists and quality to ensure teaching and learning support.

Blackburn College is committed to the continuation of the *CultureShift* project:

- The 'DigiPal' roles and Scholarships have been included in the business planning process for the 2015-16 academic year. The College will have the same 'DigiPal' roles;
- The staff 'DigiPals' will follow the same model by supporting a specific number of staff, delivering one-to-one peer support, and sharing practice across the College;
- The student 'DigiPals' will be delivering staff and student development sessions. Whilst the Scholarship fee has been reduced, the opportunity has also been widened to allow students from University Centre at Blackburn College to apply along with further education learners;
- The Technology Enhanced Learning conference will be repeated in July 2016 solely for College staff to support the sharing of practice;
- The Head of eLearning will continue to work with the Quality department to develop good practice and support staff to embed technology within their classrooms through participation in Learning Walks and dual observations. The staff 'DigiPals' will also participate to widen the impact across college;
- A LearningWheel Community of Practice will be established, supported by the LearningWheel online community to support staff development;
- A 'DigiPal' online network will be created bringing together staff and student 'DigiPals' from across organisations to share their work, best practice and ideas;
- New technology will be purchased to improve curriculum. Estream (lesson capture software) has already been purchased to share best practice via video.

Resources

Change is a scary place! It's an unrecognisable landscape. It has an incomprehensible language. It is inhabited by aliens who approach life differently and exhibit behaviours that don't conform to what is believed to be the norm.

To support practitioners on a new journey of discovery the 'DigiPals' and LearningWheel were developed to guide and translate.

LearningWheels:

The LearningWheel is a simple graphic device to help bridge the gap between traditional teaching methods and contemporary digital learning content and resources. An ideal tool for a mere visitor through to a fully-fledged explorer.

The best way to orientate yourself with this toolkit is to start with the LearningWheel Prezi. This will provide an overview and help you to decide where to begin.

- **A guide to the LearningWheel Prezi**
A short presentation that introduces the what, why and how of the LearningWheel;
- **LearningWheel Workflow**
A visual illustration and description of the various categories of LearningWheels;
- **Resource LearningWheel – Twitter**
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;
- **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 eight easy steps;
- **Resource LearningWheel - Assistive Technology LearningWheel**
68 suggestions how to use a range of assistive technologies mapped to each of the four modes of engagement;
- **Contextualised LearningWheel - How to use Twitter to engage learners studying English Language**
68 suggestions how to use free digital resources (apps, websites, videos, slideshows) linked to English Language curriculum that supplement traditional learning content;
- **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;

- **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 Illustration curriculum that supplement traditional learning content;

- **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;

'DigiPals':

'DigiPals' are friendly staff and student guides who support teachers in the early stages of their digital journey, mapping a path appropriate to their needs and on call, as when they hit a crossroad. Please have a look through the Staff 'DigiPals' case study and the 'How to' guide first as this will help you implement your own model of 'DigiPals'. The individual case studies provide guidance and ideas on what worked and what didn't for different curriculum areas and learning technologies. They are useful for both individual practitioners and 'DigiPals'.

- **Case Study – Supporting learners with additional learning needs**

Elaine shares her story of how learning technologies can support those learners with additional learning needs;

- **Case Study – Collaborative learning**

Chris tells his story of how tutors and learners can trial new learning technologies learning from one another to improve the learning experience;

- **Case Study – using Twitter to engage with industry**

Louise explains how Twitter can be used to communicate with learners outside of the classroom and leading industry brands to support employer engagement;

- **Case Study – From a learners perspective**

Tyrone shares his story of how he worked with his Curriculum Support Tutor to trial new learning technologies and how it improved his teaching and learning;

- **Case Study – Staff 'DigiPals'**

Alex and Jade share their experience of being 'DigiPals', what they did, lessons learnt and the impact of their roles;

- **Case Study – Using technology for virtual interviews and networking**

Emma shares her story of how she introduced learners to an international networking platform;

- **DigiPals, a how-to guide**
A what, why and how guide to the 'DigiPals';
- **A 10-Step process for introducing Twitter as a powerful learning resource**
A guide to running a workshop for hairdressing staff.

Supporting Materials:

- **Learning Futures Conference Prezi**
A visual presentation including qualitative and quantitative data results from the Blackburn College Learning Futures Dissemination Conference on 29th June 2015;
- **Digital Literacy Skills Scan Survey**
An excel spreadsheet which outlines the survey used by Blackburn College.