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Re: Submission to the Commission on Vocational Teaching and Learning regarding its call for evidence on the characteristics and features of excellent adult vocational teaching and learning

Lin Armstrong, a lecturer in Childhood Studies, and Ihar Ivanou, college librarian, have collaborated for several years on exploring different ways emerging technologies can support learning. We pioneered use of blogging for reflective and collaborative learning in our college. This experience was shared at the JISC's e-fair in Nottingham in 2012 (presentation slides and a post-event interview - <http://nwhclibrary.wordpress.com/2012/06/29/college-for-the-jisc-e-fair/>). Learners used this opportunity to develop their IT skills alongside of critical thinking, engage in independent searching for topics they are passionate about and participate in a supportive and encouraging community of learning. This experience received a lot of interest from other tutors and blogging is steadily establishing itself as a common practice in the college.

This year, we are experimenting with use of Wikipedia for learning with HE students. They are working on new articles they are going to contribute to Wikipedia. At a later stage, they will edit each other's published work. This will give them a perspective on how fluid the online information content is; they will approximately experience the practice of peer-reviewed publishing; we expect they will become both more information literate and confident in public writing.

The library has introduced other solutions and tools now widely used across the college, in classrooms and outside, including social networking and emerging technologies learners find helpful for collaborative learning, as well as new tools like tablets (iPads) loved by tutors and learners for their ease of use and transportability.

These are few examples of an ongoing innovation work in our college. This has been made possible by collaborative working of teachers and support professionals, in our case – a librarian. Such collaboration, rather than competing or individualist practice, brings about the best fruits. We strongly believe that learners in FE and adult education need support and engagement not limited to a classroom and a teacher. They thrive on developing their creativity when supported by a variety of professionals.