Supporting excellence in initial teacher education in further education and skills

Case study for projects

To be submitted to LSIS by 5.00 pm on 31st October 2012 to deborah.moss@lsis.org.uk.
Please refer to the questions in each section to help you prepare the content.

ABOUT YOUR PROJECT

§ 1   Project Title

Developing a Blended Learning approach to delivering DTLLS, Mentoring and the Additional Diploma in Literacy and ESOL.

ITE008 University of Westminster and City Lit

§ 2   Project Summary

The five strands of the project to deliver from September 2012 are:

A. A blended learning free standing introductory course (PTLLS) for the first year *Planning and Enabling Learning* module of the DTLLS (CertEd/PGCE) programme to students working in different contexts in the lifelong learning sector through City Lit.

B. Blended elements into the DTLLS Year 2 on City Lit ITE courses.

C. An introductory online module for new Mentors at level 3.

D. A newly developed and validated joint Additional Diploma in Literacy and ESOL module, delivered in blended mode and at the University of Westminster.

E. A blended Mentoring module at level 7 at University of Westminster.

§ 3.1   ITE Provision

The University of Westminster supports an Initial Teacher Education Consortium of nine colleges offering a generic DTLLS (Certificate in Education/Professional Graduate Certificate in Education) and concurrent pathways in Literacy, ESOL and Numeracy.

Westminster Exchange, the University's professional development department, is the host department for the courses and supports the Consortium through programme leadership, staff development and quality assurance.

For the project, Westminster Exchange with City Lit, one of the Consortium colleges, aimed to develop new courses and elements of the DTLLS programme as pilots in 2012-13. These will be offered to the whole Consortium in 2013-14.

The project developed three new courses: a blended PTLLS as part of the first year programme; an online mentoring course; and an Additional Diploma in Literacy and ESOL (partly blended). Additionally, the project developed blended elements of our current courses that lead to a generic DTLLS.

The provision directly resulting from the project began in September 2012. All were validated through the University of Westminster. The two lead project teams were from City Lit and Westminster Exchange, with steering provided by Westminster Exchange. The project was multifaceted and was realised through an effective collaboration of staff from across the Consortium. Each element of the project is given below under the lead teams.

§ 3.2   City Lit
(Project Strands A-C)

A) **Blended PTLLS for Cert Ed PGCE Year 1**
Target: 12 students; 16 realised; target audience: in-service teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector, with a particular focus on adult and community learning.

The blended PTLLS provision, which we have developed as a self-contained programme, requires students to attend for five sessions; the remainder is online. The Year 1 DTLLS students use it to review and reinforce the fundamental principles and practice of learning and teaching.

In addition to students on the DTLLS year 1 programme, nine further students have been recruited to a free standing run of the course. There will be another free standing course commencing in May 2013.

There is the potential to reach a further 140 students once this blended PTLLS is rolled out to other Consortium colleges.

B) **DTLLS Year 2: Blended Learning Materials**
Target: 18 students; 31 realised; target audience: in-service teachers in the Lifelong Learning Sector, with a particular focus on adult and community learning; from 2013-14: *up to 320 students across the Consortium.*

The blended learning materials produced support students completing Year 2 of our DTLLS programme. These first materials (others are planned for the future) include:
  • an online reflective practice mini-course (part-module); and
  • interactive online packs to support our *Developing Management Skills* (for teachers) module.

C) **Online Mentoring Course**
Target: 10 Mentors from across the Consortium; estimate engagement 10

This is being offered to Mentors supporting students on the Consortium's DTLLS programmes. It consists of a short online course in basic mentoring skills at Level 3 and participants will receive a Certificate of Achievement on completion.

§ 3.3   Westminster Exchange (University of Westminster) with Consortium Specialist Staff
(Project Strands D and E).

D) **Additional Diploma in Literacy and ESOL**
  —freestanding; or with modules as a concurrent specialist DTLLS
Target: 10 from across the Consortium; 17 realised; participants *recruited from those seeking a subject specialist qualification from across the nine Consortium colleges*

A new Additional Diploma in Literacy & ESOL was developed through collaboration between the University Consortium Programme Leader and specialist Literacy and ESOL teacher educators from three of the Consortium colleges (Harrow College, West Thames College and Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College). The programme was validated by the University in July 2012.

The collaborating team has produced resources that are available online and shared with all nine of the Consortium colleges.

In the past, colleges have had to postpone single Literacy or ESOL courses due to the small numbers applying at each of the institutions. A particular feature of this programme (in addition to the online provision) is that, for the first time, it is being taught at the University by a course team drawn from subject specialists in ESOL and Literacy from different colleges. This has allowed students from all colleges to attend the new joint Literacy and ESOL qualification.

This course is particularly relevant for teachers in London owing to the numbers of ESOL students who are to be found in literacy courses.

E) **Mentoring Level 7 CPD module** (blended)
Target: 10 Mentors; predicted engagement: 10; from across the Consortium

New materials and a blended learning approached have been developed for the Masters level CPD module in *Mentoring Lecturers in the Higher Education and Lifelong Learning Sectors*. This includes online activities, web links and resources that are designed to complement the nine face-to-face sessions.

§ 4   Resources Used

As the costing for the following will vary from provider to provider we have expressed the 'cost' in terms of tutor time. We feel it is important to recognise that the online provision guides and supports independent study and so allows for enhanced face-to-face engagement and activities such as collaborative projects and seminars. The face-to-face time is reduced but should not be used to reduce staff workload allocation as staff engage online with participants. We also have regular and reliable e-learning support for our courses—a factor for others to consider in any similar provision plans.

A) **Blended PTLLS for Cert Ed PGCE Year 1**
- 25 guided learning hours (face-to-face)
- 2 hours moderation and marking per student
- 30 online study hours for each student

  NB: It is estimated that 15 hour's face-to-face time has been freed (through student independent online study) and so allowed for enhanced sessions.

B) **DTLLS Year 2: Blended Learning Materials**
- Moderation and marking interactive reflective course: 1 hour per student
- Moderation and marking Management interactive packs: 2 hours per student

  NB: It is estimated that the reduced face-to-face time freed for realising enhanced sessions amounts to:
- Interactive reflective course: 5 hours
- Developing management skills: 15 hours

C) **Online Mentoring Course**
- 10 hours support and certification

D) **Additional Diploma in Literacy and ESOL**
- 60 hours guided learning hours (face-to-face)
- 51 hours observation
- 102 hours marking

E) **Mentoring Level 7 CPD module**
- 27 hours delivery
- 20 hours marking
- 20 hours tutorial
- 10 hours online moderation

§ 5.1   Achievement against aims and objectives of project, and lessons learnt

All elements of the project have, or will expect to, exceed the targets set (see details in section 3). This collaborative project has had multiple strands and all of them have had considerable benefits for students and providers. The funding has been used to buy time to develop course content and online resources that will have long term impact on the DTLLS programmes across all nine colleges of the Consortium. The prospects for adding and developing further resources over time are strong. The online resources and the flexible approaches to delivery that have been developed have widened access particularly for those currently working in adult and community learning.

§ 5.2 Blended Learning (City Lit; Project Strands A & B)

The development of blended learning modules and courses was proposed as this offers an opportunity to attract students who need more flexible arrangements to study independently whilst not taking away the benefits of learning in a group. We consider being part of a 'community of practice' with peers as a crucial element of any effective teacher training course. The emphasis has been on providing better guided independent study to students so as to permit enhanced face-to-face time.

A screen shot of the PTLLS Welcome page on the City Lit Moodle site.

Blending PTLLS for DTLLS students has allowed the tutor to offer this as an option to students without a PTLLS qualification (usually a small number) without taking up class time redelivering PTLLS content. Others use the resources to review and reinforce their understanding of the fundamental principles and practice of learning and teaching. Additionally, this online provision supports all learners in terms of informing other assignments (e.g. by appropriate reference to principles and theories of good practice).

The freestanding PTLLS has again allowed for the recruitment of students from across London and from a wide variety of contexts, reaching an audience who might not normally attend our regular taught courses. One student commented:

> *With regards to this course at this institution, my choice was made for me really! I am a single mother and as such, found the 'blended' course an absolute life-saver, because I could do a lot of studying from home, and worry less about childcare.*

On the DTLLS Year 2, the blended learning modules have enabled the tutors to deliver over fewer hours as students are able to cover material at home that would otherwise be delivered in class. This has been a particular advantage on an evening option for Year 2 where it is difficult to offer the equivalent guided learning hours to the daytime provision. It also frees the tutors to use class sessions for discussion, practise teaching and support collaborative activities which are, of necessity, better enacted in groups.

Apart from the benefits in terms of staffing, rooming and flexibility, the online learning elements can offer structured reading enhanced by smaller formative activities set within a flexible framework. It works well to support less academically experienced students to engage in study.

Welcome to 'Reflective Practice' – PGCE/Cert Ed 2012/13

News forum

Interactive reflective pack - Upload deadline 29/10/12

This pack introduces you to the theory and practice of reflection, which underpins the **whole** PGCE course. You need to demonstrate your ability to reflect in all the assignments and this will prepare you to do so. It will be assessed, and forms part of your PPD portfolio.

Reflective Practitioner Pack

Reflective Practitioner Pack

Course Menu

- Topic 1
- Topic 2
- Topic 3
- Topic 4
- Topic 5

Show only topic 1

A screen shot of the welcome page of the online reflective practice mini-course on the City Lit Moodle site.

§ 5.3 Additional Diploma in Literacy and ESOL (UoW; Project Strand D)

This course has been extremely successful in attracting students from across Central and West London, where previously individual colleges had difficulty recruiting in sufficient numbers to be viable. It has also enabled City Lit to offer a *Skills for Life* pathway for the first time.

The combined diploma is particularly attractive to people working in one or other of these areas as often the students who teach in London find that their learners have both Literacy and ESOL needs. It therefore more adequately addresses the training needs of staff.

This project has been particularly useful in demonstrating the advantages of staff from different areas of the Consortium working collaboratively. ESOL and Literacy subject specialists have been able to share ideas, resources and subject knowledge in a positive and generous spirit of collegiality, which has contributed to their own professional development.

The course team has created a shared facility using Dropbox so that all students and subject specialist staff across the Consortium can access study materials. Once these have been piloted over 2012-13, the materials will be up-dated and available to the Consortium on a Literacy and ESOL University of Westminster website.

§ 5.4 Mentoring Courses (Project Strands C and E)

- **Online Mentoring Course** (City Lit; Project Strand C)

Attracting mentors to training at City Lit has always been challenging. The College recruit students from all over London, many of them at a significant travel distance. Mentors are not employed by City Lit and teacher trainers have very little control over quality where Mentors are recruited from outside of the College. Mentors are often extremely busy and many receive little remuneration for their support.

The online mentoring option is a significant way forward for City Lit Mentors who work in a myriad of providers across the capital. The certificate of completion will attract Mentors to the course as it will contribute to their CPD. The course is at level 3 and provides both an introduction to Mentoring and support to Mentors in fulfilling their responsibilities as required by the DTLLS programme. The course is inexpensive to run because it is un-moderated and completely online.

Activities

- 📋 Assignments
- ❓ Feedback
- 🧑 Forums
- 📄 Resources

city lit LSIS LEARNING AND SKILLS IMPROVEMENT SERVICE UNIVERSIT

(No news has been posted yet)

Recent Activity

Activity since Wednesday, 24 October 2012, 07:30 AM

Full report of recent activity...

Nothing new since your last login

Welcome!

...to the online

Mentoring Training

programme delivered by the City Lit's Teacher Education dept in partnership with the University of Westminster.

🧑 News forum

🧑 Cafe

Screen shots of the online Mentoring Training pages: the Welcome page (above) and the 'How to use' page (below) on the City Lit Moodle site.

How to use the online learning material

To support your online learning experience and help you get through this course it would help you to read the following information in sequence.

To find out more, click on the following links.

1. Getting started

2. Navigating through the training material

**3. How to access the resources**

4. Completing Activities

Resources

📄 Mentor Handbook
This handbook contains specific information relating to supporting trainee teachers who are currently on the PGCE/Cert Ed programme at the City Lit, in collaboration with Westminster Exchange, University of Westminster.

- **Mentoring Lecturers in the HE and Lifelong Learning Sectors**
  (Level 7, University of Westminster; Prj.E)
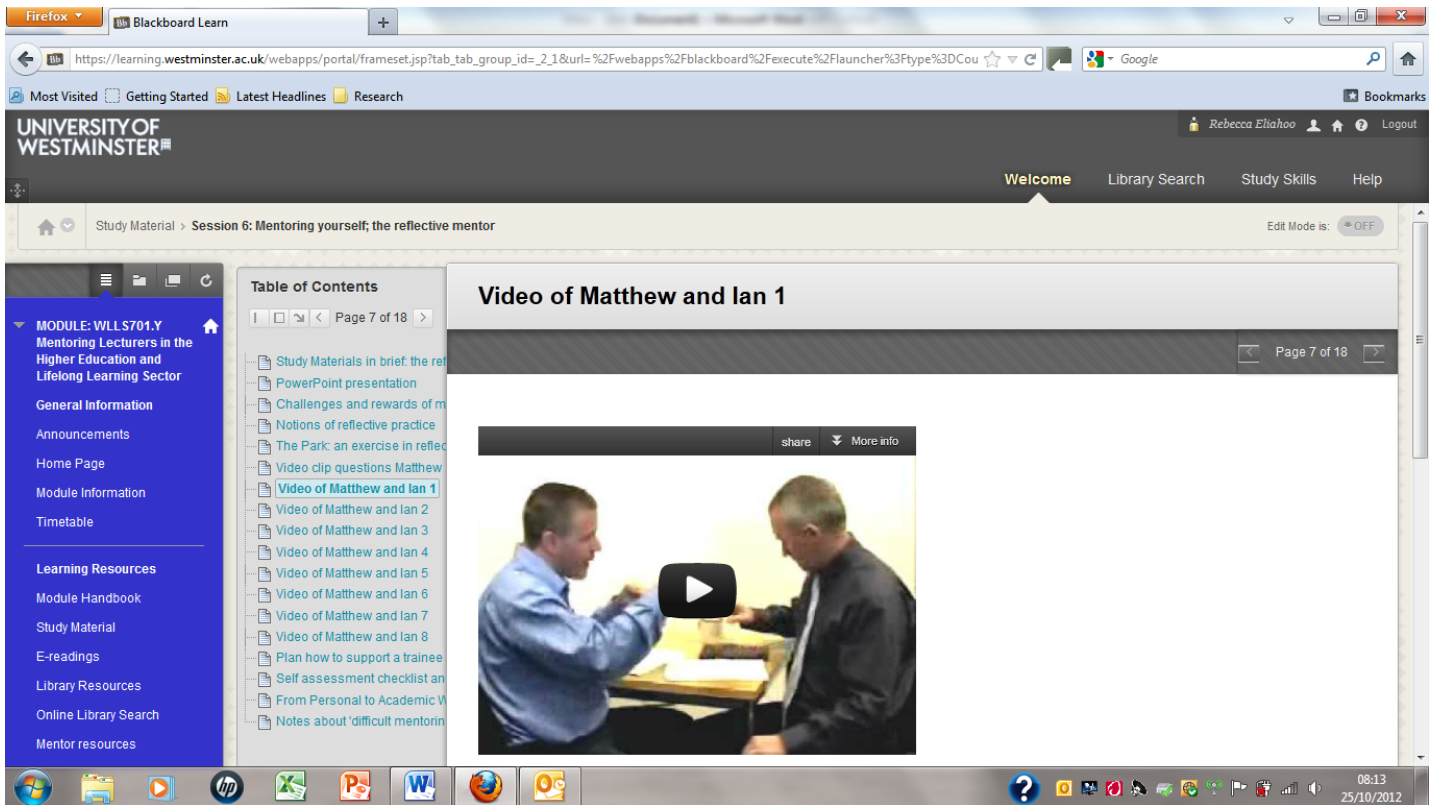
A screen shot of a Mentoring module page on the University of Westminster Blackboard site.

The nine face-to-face sessions for this module start in November/December and then continue in March/April. This is a practical course with a work-based learning approach during which the mentors support a new colleague or teacher trainee over a year, reflecting on the process and challenges of mentoring. The online and blended learning approach allows mentors to reflect jointly on mentoring practice during January and February and to discuss aspects of their assignments online as well as sharing resources and reflections. These assignments are based firstly on critical incidents from their own experience and secondly on the challenges and rewards of mentoring of a colleague over a year.

§ 5.5   Use of Technology

As with any teaching tool, technology needs to be used appropriately and imaginatively. The online appearance has to be attractive to the user, easy to navigate and above all—work! This project utilised the virtual learning environments at City Lit (Moodle 2) and the University of Westminster (Blackboard).

Creating attractive and effective online resources took longer than first anticipated but was a useful and productive collaboration. Utilising materials previously available in other formats involves more than a simple transfer to online. In practice, developing a structure, navigation and associated research activities took considerable time. Activities include short online videos, use of forums, blogs and wikis, facilities to upload and mark assignments online and online quizzes. There are multiple illustrations. Other time-consuming activities included devising narrative study materials and gaining permission to use certain materials. University and College librarians proved helpful in locating and explaining how to link to suitable e-readings.

The e-learning support staff at City Lit and the online educationalist at the University of Westminster were crucial to the development of materials—in developing the sites, trouble shooting and making the online materials inclusive. For example, subtitled video links for a deaf learner.

§ 6   Advice to Others

This project has evidenced the success of blending courses; of providing a constructively aligned meld of online and face-to-face provision to support learning. As a consequence, it has reduced class contact time for some areas of the curriculum. There are many who resist technological 'solutions' or approaches to professional development in learning and teaching. What is clear from this project is that the resources are beneficial in themselves. The real benefits of the online provision are that it:

- guides and enhances independent study;
- is more flexibly accessed; and
- facilitates an enhanced face-to-face engagement focused on higher order activities, extension and collaboration.

In addition to these pedagogic enhancements, the revised programmes have significantly enhanced access to learning; they have enabled the recruitment of students who are short of time to come to face-to-face classes and/or find travel time consuming and expensive (a particular issue in London).

Further, the online programmes have added value by offering revision opportunities and structured study. The approach encourages reflection and reading that is particularly useful for the less academically experienced. Formative activities can encourage students to reflect and be small, well-paced and interesting—for example, posting responses to open questions on the forums, watching videos of other teachers, and writing short case studies. These tasks prepare students to write longer assignments at the right academic level. The self-study aspects encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning.

The Additional Diploma in Teaching English element of the project in particular has demonstrated that there are many advantages to bringing staff together from different colleges from across the Consortium to design a shared programme offered jointly (in this case at the University). The main difficulties here have been in sorting out issues such as fees, payment of staff, and a shared VLE. Sharing resources between colleges has its administrative problems which are sometimes hard to overcome. Each college has its own systems and it is difficult to get these synchronised and to sort out finances.

The blended and online mentoring courses have many advantages for us as a Consortium. It is difficult for very busy staff to attend training sessions and offering training opportunities using blended learning at different levels and lengths gives a wider range of options. Where Mentors are based over a wide geographical area, online and centrally offered courses clearly have an advantage.

Blending elements of courses is already adding value to existing programmes. All the resources developed will be piloted in 2012-13 and extended to the whole Consortium in 2013-14. Once the pilots have been tested, they will provide models for blending further in the future.

Blending would be particularly useful, for example, for developing online extension resources that are more relevant to targeted cohorts of students. A good example of this would be materials in embedding language, literacy and numeracy in courses. Some of our students work out in the community with entry-level learners and more detailed input in these areas is crucial for them, but rather less so for those working with students at a higher level.

Creating the online materials took much longer than anticipated. Additional time was required to ensure that they were attractive, interesting and genuinely interactive. This time has to be costed. Skilled e-learning support from colleagues has been crucial in designing the materials, in exploring the full range of possibilities VLE's offer, and in dealing with the inevitable snags that appear as soon as online materials go live.

Creating resources is not itself difficult. However, how they will be perceived by students who access them on their own online is a huge consideration, especially as you must cater for a range of learning preferences. We would advise that those who wish to follow a similar approach that they take heed of the following lessons learnt during the project.

- The pedagogy of online learning needs to be considered when designing online learning resources—this takes time! It is not simply a matter of posting resources to a VLE or website. The student learning experience and journey needs particular attention.

- Resources need to be professional looking and attractive to engage learners working online. Resources need to be backed up with visuals and audio/video. They also need to be genuinely interactive. Additionally, resources have to use document formats that all learners will be able to access (e.g. converting to portable document format).

- Course designers need to avoid overburdening learners with too many activities but instead linking activities to assignments to enable them to make best use of their time. It needs to be kept simple.

- Online collaboration opportunities are easy to set up, but contributions to forums, or use of wikis, needs to be considered carefully as these are not the same as face-to-face participation. Students may be reluctant to contribute as they do in face-to-face sessions and the dynamic of asynchronous activity is entirely different. Strategies for changing to an online community of practice need consideration including making contribution an assessed part of the programme.

- Staff time and workload allocation is an important issue. The better use of face-to-face time is an important product of this online support development but the reduced class time should not be seen as a resource saving exercise; online support by staff takes considerable time and effort. Related to this, staff moderating and leading online elements of courses need to make it clear they will respond to e-mails and online activities on a particular day/time. Students expectations of immediate and continuous (24/7) support need to be modified with agreements.

Finally, it is important to recognise the professionalism of staff in the LLS. This project has clearly demonstrated that fact. All project staff involved went beyond their remit and have produced effective resources and programmes. So the final lesson: create collaborative space for dedicated professionals; give them the time and recognition and they will create resources that have high value and impact.

7. Contact information
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8. Resources available for others
All resources are online and password protected at City Lit and University of Westminster. Please contact to request access.

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