

Digital Resource Development via Peer to Peer Collaboration: 'Feed-forward for Informed Learning (FfIL)'

UWL Impact Case Studies 2012/2013

Lyn Greaves
Senior Lecturer, National Teaching Fellow
The Business School

Student Contributions:
Joanne Driscoll (UWL), Emer Shepperd (UWL) and Joel Singer (University of Bristol)

Description

Whilst attending the HEA Discipline Workshop & Seminar Series in 2011-12, students shared their perception that providing flexible resources to describe the types and purpose of feedback will enhance confidence and learner understanding. This perception echoed similar activities across the sector. JISC FfIL has responded to this need for additional flexible materials that specialise in enabling feedback for anytime, anywhere learning. The project builds upon the earlier work of the JISC LTIG project ALLE that focussed on resources designed to support information and digital literacies development. This JISC funded project is part of the Embedded Benefits Programme: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/embeddingbenefits2012.aspx>.

Approach

The FfIL project has an additional 'station stop' on the JISC ALLE Learner Journey (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/ltig/alle.aspx>). This focusses on feedback and feed-forward learning materials to support learner understanding. Students designed and developed the digital resources, lead the project wiki (<http://helpthestudents.com/>) and engaged with the wider UK student community. The concept behind the original learner journey was to support digital literacy development as a formal experience or a personalised model. It was designed as a sequential learner journey and reusable learning objects were created as a set of resources to provide bite-sized scaffolding for learning literacy acquisition (learning to learn, meta-cognition, academic practice, study skills). Learners can follow the digital journey as a complete learning experience as many times as desired. They can also select individual components of the journey when appropriate for their learning. The journey enables 24/7 access to structured learning literacy support. The learning objects selected or created for the learner journey are free to be used and repurposed (RLO). The learner journey can be adapted by other institutions, both nationally and internationally. The contents of the resources can also be adapted by tutors to suit their needs. The resources have been created using the GLO Maker learning object authoring tool developed by LTRI at London Met (<http://www.glomaker.org>). This is free to download and it enables tutors, learning technologists and those with an interest in creating learning objects to amend and customise the resources. The FfIL student project team approached the design and development of the additional station stop by using the development and design principles from JISC ALLE Learner Journey project. This included a case-study to scope the types and purpose of feedback and feed-forward activities, identification of what they considered to be the most important and the receipt of peer feedback.

Subsequently, they developed a discrete set of digital resources to support learner understanding of both the type and purpose of feedback and feed-forward activities. The individual outputs:

- Three reusable learning objects: 'What is feedback', 'What to do with feedback' and 'Assessment Principles';
- YouTube clip: 'The Highlighter Exercise' (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OX3WE6orEdw>);
- Student support wiki – 'helpthestudents.com'.



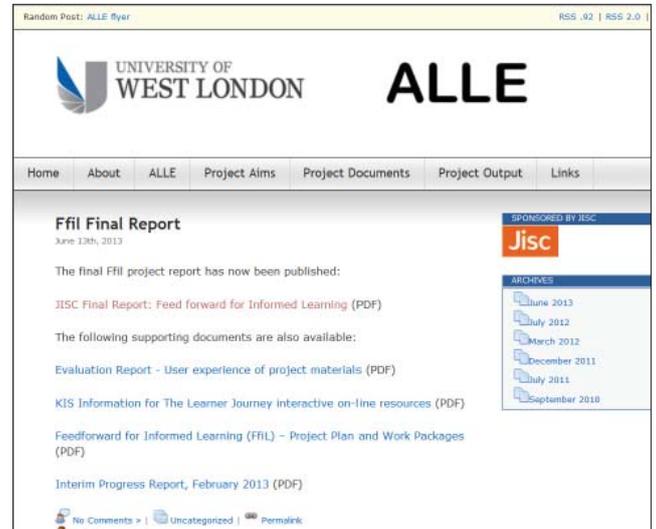
The digital resources were uploaded to the website and the student project team answered questions posted by other learners. The site was designed to act as a hub for learners to interact with each other. The site and materials were available to all students to enable additional 'student to student' support at anytime and anywhere. This placed the student at the heart of their learning experience:

<http://helpthestudents.com/learnerjourney/learnerjourney/journey>.

Outcomes

- Empowered 1st year undergraduates to design, develop and evaluate digital resources;
- Used a dynamic action research approach throughout and captured graduate attribute development of students through participation in a live project as collaborators;
- Delivered an additional 'station stop' on the Learner Journey (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/ltig/alle.aspx>);
- Enabled 1st year undergraduate students to evaluate their learning materials with a first year cohort to undertake impact analysis.

The project outputs are openly available to all HE learners through their various devices to encourage anytime, anywhere learning. The outcomes of the project were disseminated at a number of conferences, workshops and via journal articles and publications.



Impact

The student project team identified a number of evaluation objectives to explore whether the learners had used the resources, if they felt the resources were helpful and the type of personal technologies owned by the learners. Qualitative and quantitative data highlighted a detailed overview of the use of the resources (including the wiki). A questionnaire was used and this also provided an insight into student response to 'student to student' support. Of the 300 potential respondents 153 questionnaires were completed and returned.

Key findings:

- The online resources have been used by business students and were found to be useful, but the YouTube media clip was the preferred resource with over 2000 hits at the time of writing;
- 92% viewed the YouTube media clip 'The Highlighter Exercise';
- 86% who viewed it wanted more YouTube media clips support them in their studies;
- 7% mentioned visiting helpthestudents.com and 7% had used the Ask a Question facility;
- 43% stated that they used the Learner Journey and found it useful;
- Dell was the most popular type of laptop and Blackberry the most popular mobile phone.

Why was the student support site not more utilised? What was so appealing that students went onto the YouTube media clip and not on the 'helpthestudents' site? Did the YouTube media clip answer the learning needs of the students? To view the full report please see the project website.

Lessons learned

The student team project leader reported that individual term dates and planned holidays made it difficult to schedule collaborative work, whilst other deadlines and commitments caused delays. There were some conflicting priorities throughout the life of the project. The main challenge included access to resources and the timeframe. The benefits included direct tutor-student dialogue and a rich experience for a student project team. The tutor emphasised that students as co-collaborators in digital resource development offers clear gains with academic staff receiving feedback concerning 'what they need' and 'why we may have it wrong'. Funding for these initiatives is important and student ownership is critical. Engaging the students in the development aspects, whilst challenging has strengthened the quality of the digital materials that were produced.

Where next?

Subject to funding, it will be useful for learners to develop media clips to support the key concepts for dissertation work. This area lends itself to generic media clips such as the ones designed to support the first year students.