

PROGRAMME ABSTRACTS - Distance Learning Conference
23rd April 2009

Morning Workshops – 10.35-11.30am

Presenter	Session Title	Session summary
Will Stewart	Introduction to Second Life	This workshop will introduce delegates to the UoB island in the virtual world Second Life and demonstrate some of the features that can be used for distance learning - for example, simulation, meetings, presentations, exploration of artefacts. There will be an opportunity to explore the island and to share ideas on how Second Life could be used to enhance distance learning.
Fiona Meddings	Assessment & the Distance Learner – do we/should we do anything different?	This workshop will consider whether assessment needs to be any different just because learners are not situated physically within the four walls of the university. Perhaps the people who have shown an increased interest and concern with assessment and feedback are the students themselves (NSS results over 4 years). It should therefore be of concern to academics that doing more of 'the same' when learners are not currently contented with what this 'same' offers. The challenge may well be to seek new approaches to assessment, which will provide opportunity in assessment for learning whilst meeting the needs of the distance learner.
Claire Surr, Leslie Hardy, Jo Hirst	Creating a learning community using web-based approaches	This workshop will be delivered by academic staff and students who will provide an overview of how a learning community for students and teaching staff can be created using web-based resources such as NING, real-time or instant messaging software such as Skype and audio. It will also give participants a chance to try out these methods for themselves through engagement with a NING site and participation in a real-time discussion via Skype.
Donna Irving	What distance learners want and need - results from the 2008 distance learning survey	This presentation will examine the profile of distance learners at Bradford and discuss the results and themes of the 2008 Distance Learning Survey (library services for distance students). It will explore the support that students with different profiles are likely to expect and the problems they face.

Afternoon Presentations (1) – 12.00-12.25

Presenter	Session Title	Session summary
Murna Downs	Learning together using a social network site: a rookie's perspective	This presentation will describe my experience of using a social networking site as a learning community. It will cover why I was keen to use the site and what worked well and what was less successful. It will also outline areas for future development for using e-learning in distance learning programmes.
Helen Cook	Using reflection as a tool for learning on a pharmacy distance learning programme	Reflection as a tool for learning is often underestimated. This presentation will examine the use of reflection to support learning on a distance learning MSc Clinical Pharmacy for Community Pharmacy. It will also describe the types of assessment used on the programme and ways in which we have successfully engaged employers.
Felicia Ong	Virtual Classroom Trial Evaluation in the School of Engineering, Design and Technology	This presentation will describe a trial of the Elluminate Virtual Classroom software carried out in School of Engineering, Design and Technology. Several scenarios were conducted in evaluating the use of tools such as video and audio, and how these tools can aid in the delivery of a taught distance learning course. The various trial scenarios, including a trial session with our franchise partner in Malaysia, will be presented and the experiences that were gained in the trial will be discussed.
Chris Dearnley	Support needs of open & distance learners	Student support has a key role in any learning environment but for open and distance learning students this may take forms that are different to those of traditional, full-time students. This presentation will discuss recognised and specific support needs of open and distance learning students and suggests ways in which their tutors can ensure an appropriate mix of challenge and support, thereby creating an environment in which learning and development can occur

Afternoon Presentations (2) – 2.35-3.00pm

Presenter	Session Title	Session summary
Annette Parkinson	Creating an online community to support distance learning	This presentation will look at the use of the social networking site NING to support the learning and teaching of a group of distance learning students at the Bradford School of Optometry and Vision Science. It will describe the use the site for peer support and mentoring, and the creation of a cohesive community of learners. It will also examine the benefits of using podcasts and videos within the site to support learners.
Andrea Capstick	Practice Knowledge and Academic Style	I will discuss the use of teaching, learning and assessment strategies with distance learning students who are experienced practitioners, but who are less familiar with academic conventions. In particular I will look at students' constructions of the term 'professional language' in the context of their practice knowledge.
Alexander Mohr	What do students think of e-learning tools?	This presentation will examine the findings of an empirical study into the perceived usefulness of e-learning tools among business and economics students. The basic premise behind our study is the assumption that in order to be adopted, learning tools have to be perceived as useful by the learners. This study thus investigated how far various factors, such as learning style and cultural values, affected the perceived usefulness of e-learning tools. Co-investigated by Alexander Mohr, Dave Spicer and Damian Ward.

Workshop

Presentation