

JISC Regional Support Centres Advising the Work Based Learning Sector

A Note From The Editor

Welcome to the Winter 2010 Edition of WBL Wales. For me 2009 flew by and the pace of 2010 so far promises more of the same. RSC Wales is kicking off the new Year with a new venture – a series of cross sector roadshows on themes relevant to all educators, the first of which, Accessibility and Inclusion, has proved a huge hit with all those who attended. Subsequent themes will address Personalised Learning and Organisational Improvement.

Other current projects include raising awareness of the online Leadership and Management Toolkit, development of an online Soft Skills, or distance travelled measuring Toolkit as well as working with providers and partners on the use of technology in learning, assessment and collaboration.

Your WBL team are also planning to undertake and publish two pieces of research in the coming weeks. The first of which is a short survey gauging the prevalence with which ePortfolios are used. The second survey will follow up the online e-learning survey undertaken in 2008 and aims to measure the progress the sector has made in its approach to and utilisation of Information Learning Technologies. Your support in both pieces of research is greatly appreciated.

This edition is also packed with details of events, training opportunities, a case study on Diggio, an online bookmarking tool, and an article on Vyew, an online collaboration and “conferencing” tool – both **free**.

Finally it remains to congratulate Swansea ITeC on being shortlisted, for the second year in succession, for the Becta Next Generation Learning Awards. Winners will be announced at the Awards Ceremony at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham on 8th March.

Should you wish to comment on this edition, contribute to future editions or arrange a one to one visit to discuss your organisational needs please contact Russell or Alyson at r.symmons@swansea.ac.uk Tel 07814 698434 a.dacey@swansea.ac.uk Tel 07813 634356

Many thanks

The Editor



The Welsh Work-Based Learning Leadership Toolkit

RSC Wales has recently been attending Regional NTfW meetings to demonstrate the new online Leadership and Management Toolkit for WBL providers in Wales. The toolkit was created through the collaborative efforts of LSIS, Welsh Assembly Government and RSC Wales and launched at the 2009 NTfW Conference. Continued negotiations have resulted in this product now being **free!**



The leadership toolkit is an accessible resource tailored specifically to address some of the key organisational issues for work-based learning (WBL) leaders. Offering you the chance to learn at your own pace, at times that suit you best, the nine interactive topics cover the core business areas crucial to improved organisational effectiveness.

Each of the nine topics includes tips, practical exercises and essential information, which will be valuable not only to individuals operating within specific areas but also to colleagues who need to gain an understanding of the topic.

To view the toolkit and create user accounts visit

<http://www.leadershiplearning.org.uk/course/view.php?id=273> and enter the password **neonatal**.

For further information please contact Louisa Dunwell on 0207 297 8423 or

Louisa.dunwell@lisis.org.uk

Events: Game Based Learning Conference 2010 - March 29th-30th, London

Date: March 29th - 30th
Venue: The Barbican, London

The inaugural Game Based Learning Conference in 2009 proved successful beyond all expectations where our trademark community of international thought leaders, innovators and practitioners from the education, electronics and entertainment sectors came together to explore how video games and social media are positively transforming learning.

Game Based Learning 2010 takes place over two full days and includes an evening social event to make valuable connections in a relaxed environment. With a main conference programme running during these two days combined with breakout sessions for special interest groups there is something for everyone with an interest in using gaming and social media technology to improve learning, teaching and training.

Early Bird Registration ends on January 31st. Delegates registering in time receive a FREE digital camcorder to capture parts of the conference that interest them (we hope to collect individual reflections via a YouTube channel), a FREE pass to a special interest workshop of their choice hosted in London during 2010 by Playgen and save up to £250 on standard or late registration fees. To register head to: <http://bit.ly/gbl2010>

Events: RSC Wales on the road

RSC Wales is currently on the road bringing a series of free, cross-sectoral, hands-on 'roadshows' to a venue near you. Our objective is to bring people together to focus in a practical way on how technology can support educators to address the issues associated with a variety of themes. The roadshows aim to provide an enjoyable and effective experience that will benefit learners, staff and the organisation in a variety of ways.

January and February saw the first of the series of roadshows which addressed Accessibility and Inclusion at four venues around Wales. Organising and delivering the events was both challenging yet rewarding for the RSC team especially in light of the enthusiasm of delegates and the feedback that followed.

Participants took part in a number of workshops including discussions on barriers and potential solutions, demonstrations of AccessApps and practical activities that considered making documents available more accessibly and devising resources or learning activities in alternative formats.

As an ICT/Essential Skills Trainer I found the whole of the event extremely relevant and useful and will be using everything I learned at every opportunity.

Barriers exercise has got me thinking that one of the biggest barriers to my learners might be me!

The nature of the roadshows provided a rare opportunity for educators from all walks of the post 16 sector to share experiences, network and problem solve. It was soon apparent that all sectors were able to identify and, in a lot of cases, "bust" common issues.

A big **"thank you"** to all who took part from RSC Wales as your experiences have given us plenty of thought for future activities and events too.

For more information and feedback on the Accessibility and Inclusion events visit <http://blogs.rsc-wales.ac.uk/> and click on the Teaching and Learning tab.

The second round of Roadshows are entitled Learner Voice, Learner Choice. The aims of this roadshow are to identify and discuss methods of understanding learner experience and to investigate ways of empowering learners to express themselves and manage information. The four events will be held at the following venues:

24/2/10 The Village Hotel, Swansea
9/03/10 Beaufort Park Hotel, Mold
17/3/10 Esis Centre, Nantgarw
23/3/10 Technium, Bangor

Booking and programme details can be found at <http://admin.rsc-wales.ac.uk/events/> Numbers for all events are limited so early booking is recommended. Where an event is fully booked, RSC Wales operates a waiting list.

The final round of Roadshows will consider how technology can assist with Organisational Improvement. Diary markers for these events are:

27/4/10 The Village Hotel, Swansea
06/5/10 Beaufort Park Hotel, Mold
11/5/10 Esis Centre, Nantgarw
18/5/10 Technium, Bangor

Full details will be emailed as normal and placed on the [RSC Wales web site](#) when available

Events: Moodle-Wales User Group meeting

2nd March 2010

10am – 3pm

Media Resource Centre, Llandrindod Wells

'Prepare to share' is the theme of the first Moodle-Wales User Group meeting of 2010. The programme for the day has been devised based on the evaluations and feedback from the last meeting(s), where the most valuable parts of the day for many are those when you get to hear how practitioners are actually using Moodle with learners and a chance to share what you have found works in your own organisations. With that in mind this meeting will have 3 main parts:

Effective practise sharing - where, through the day, we have 3 practitioners who will be sharing how Moodle is used with their learners and how this has impacted on the learner experience

Moodle Share - where you all get the chance to share (in small groups) what you are doing with Moodle (including which resources and activities or additional modules you find particularly useful) and what is working well ... which will then be followed by an opportunity to explore some of these areas in more detail.

Something new ... details to be confirmed shortly!

All Moodle users are welcome to attend the meeting ... but please come prepared to share!

Full programme details and booking information is available at <http://admin.rsc-wales.ac.uk/events/>
Places for this event are limited so early booking is recommended.

ICT Excellence Awards – now open for entries!



Is your school or organisation making a huge difference with technology? Is ICT transforming the way that learners learn, parents communicate and staff work? If so, then Becta wants to hear from you!

Now entering their fifth year, Becta's ICT Excellence Awards provide a great opportunity to not only celebrate the amazing work of schools, local authorities and other supporting organisations but to share the experiences of those at the forefront of the use of technology in learning.

If you want to share your story or that of a school or organisation that you know, the ICT Excellence Awards 2010 are now open for entries. For more information on the categories and criteria, and to access the online entry forms, go to www.becta.org.uk/excellenceawards. The deadline for entries is 24 March 2010.

Research: E Portfolios in WBL



Research is currently underway that aims to assess the prevalence of e-portfolio usage by WBL providers in Wales. The online survey should take you no more than 10 minutes to complete and can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/ygxoea4>.

Initial findings suggest that WBL providers are using a diverse range of products - both open source and commercially developed. There is also interest in establishing a network or forum offering providers additional support and the opportunity to share knowledge, experience and good practice.

Once analysed, findings from the survey will not only be shared with the sector but also used to help inform RSC Wales on how to continue supporting providers. Your participation is therefore greatly appreciated.

Case Study: Swansea ITeC and Diigo

What is it?

An online bookmarking tool which allows you to bookmark websites online so they are available from any PC as well as:

- Tag sites for easy reference
- Highlight and comment on sections of text
- Leave public, private, or shared comments on a page
- Create and share lists of sites
- Comment on and discuss other people notes and highlights

Where do I get it?

<http://diigo.com>

The tool will run as a browser toolbar or a "bookmarklet". At ITeC we've been mainly using the bookmarklet with learners as it only requires dragging a button to the toolbar -- no installation required. This worked so well when we were testing the idea of using it out, that we carried on. In future we'd like to have the Diigo toolbar automatically installed on all PCs as standard.

Useful for...

- Keeping track of resources and crediting sources used for Key Skills projects
- Reading and Summarising evidence for Communications Key Skill
- Groupwork, sharing opinions and information
- Preparing collections of web resources for learners to use in a lesson

Challenges and Solutions

On the whole our learners took to using Diigo very quickly and the staff liked it from the start -- they'd all been in the boat of having bookmarked something on one PC then struggled to find it again on another so could instantly see the advantage!

Of the learners who had done previous projects keeping sources on paper there was a fairly even split of those who preferred Diigo and those who were more comfortable with "the old way". Interestingly the division wasn't clearly defined along IT proficiency.

We do keep an eye on their Diigo "libraries" and check that they are tagging and organising things consistently. As with any file management, including their paper folders, this is a weak area for many of our learners. On the plus side it's a lot quicker to "tidy up" by re-tagging a few links than by digging through a pile of printouts!

New learners who've started since we introduced Diigo as a routine part of the course take it in stride and we see it was one more IT skill in their armoury. We also try to stress that IT is a "tool" and it's never just about learning how to type in Word! Learning new applications, even small little ones like this is something they ought to be willing and able to do in order to progress in the workplace so it's all good experience

Examples in use

All learners doing Key Skills now use Diigo as an alternative to printing out and highlighting with a pen for their sources. We've found that it reduces lost work, eliminates a certain amount of "can't remember where I found that" when it comes to do the bibliography, and encourages them to think more about which bits of information on the page are really that relevant while they're highlighting.

The Diigo site also allows you to get an RSS feed for a particular user or tag, and we've used this to "pull" their sources automatically into their Mahara ePortfolios.

We'd also like to try it out in other areas of teaching, for examples in the Basic Skills numeracy class to mark up real examples of maths in daily life on, for example, news websites then "sticky note" some questions for learners to add discussion and answers too.

NIACE Training Courses



The schedule of NIACE fee-paying courses for 2010 has now been extended with new dates and new courses. Please see below for details and book your place early to avoid disappointment.

All NIACE courses: are developed using the latest research in the field; are delivered by trainers with at least 10 years' experience in the education and skills sector; provide excellent value for money and NIACE does not charge VAT on courses; and give you what you need to keep your CPD record up to date. All course participants receive a certificate of attendance with prompts for reflection.

Get more information about each course and book your place by clicking on a course title below:

[An Introduction to PRINCE2: A half day workshop](#)

Tuesday 23 February 2010, (Morning or Afternoon), London

[Engaging the Learner: The power of Storytelling as a teaching tool](#)

Tuesday 16 March 2010, (Morning or Afternoon), Manchester

[Screens and Pages: Technology and reading for pleasure](#)

Wednesday 17 March 2010, London

[Beyond the Worksheet: An integrated skills approach to meeting the everyday literacy needs of adult learners](#)

Tuesday 27 April 2010, London (New Date)

[Advising working people: Career Progression through work-based HE](#) (New Course)

Friday 7 May 2010, London

Tuesday 11 May 2010, Leicester

[Dyslexia Awareness training for work-based learning practitioners: "It's about so much more than pastel paper & pretty folders"](#)

Tuesday 8 June 2010, Leicester (New Date)

[Getting on Brilliantly 1: Leading and managing large and small groups and teams](#)

Tuesday 29 June 2010, London

[Getting on Brilliantly 2: Getting the best out of being a line manager](#)

Wednesday 30 June 2010, London

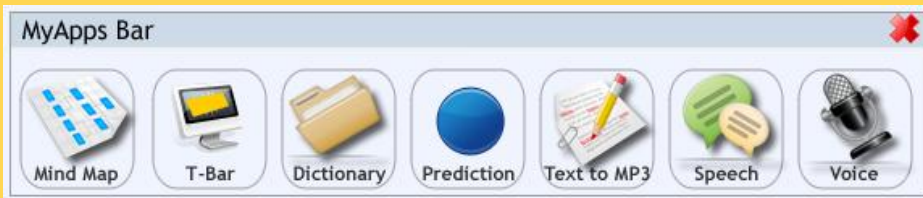
[Transforming your organisation through disability equality](#)

Tuesday 21 September 2010, Birmingham (New Date)

For a full list of all NIACE courses please go to: <http://www.niace.org.uk/events>

If you have any questions please contact me on 0116 2859661 or send me an e-mail at : courses@niace.org.uk

Accessibility: MyStudyBar



MyStudyBar is a suite of portable open source and freeware applications to support learners with literacy difficulties although MyStudyBar is beneficial to everyone and all aspects of e-learning. MyStudyBar also designed to work with Windows Vista and Windows 7.

MyStudyBar will run from a USB pendrive and from the desktop. It currently offers 7 open source and freeware applications designed to support learners with literacy difficulties, for example, [XMind](#) to help with planning and organisation, [T-Bar](#) to customise colour backgrounds, [Lingoes](#) to find the meaning of words, [LetMeType](#) to support accurate and speedy input of information, [DSpeech](#) with text-to-speech and text to MP3 conversion.

MyStudyBar also offers an easy-to-use text reader with Thunder which will read information in a document and on the desktop as well as read back individual characters, words, sentences and paragraphs as text is typed. And of course, if you have a computer with Windows Vista or Windows 7, MyStudy Bar makes good use of Windows Speech Recognition, an excellent voice recognition program which allows you to speak or dictate information into documents and use voice commands to control your computer.

More information on MyStudyBar can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/yhlzfgd>

Tooltips: Vview

Vview is a next-generation online collaboration and web conferencing service that brings people and content together. With Vview you can host LIVE conferences and work collaboratively on content asynchronously over time, ANYTIME.

Inside Vview you can author new content and collaborate with PowerPoint, Word, Excel, and PDF files, plus audio, video and images. You can also stream live or capture what's showing on your desktop. Built-in text chat and FREE teleconferencing make live collaboration sessions highly productive.

Content in Vview is automatically saved in "VviewBooks". VviewBooks can be shared in real-time or left "Always On" for collaborators to review, edit or comment on anytime - even when you're not present. You can also print VviewBooks and publish read-only versions of them as 'Vviewlets' anywhere on the web - embedded within blogs, social networks, and your web site! You can create multiple VviewBooks - saving them by topic, version or audience - and invite select persons to specific VviewBooks.

Vview works in under 10 seconds and is entirely web-based. There's no software to download and install - all you need is a Web browser and the free Flash plug-in which most computers already have. And Vview is FREE to use as long as you like - there's no limited time trial period. Simply register for FREE and you'll be given immediate access to Vview's rich shared workspace and tools.

Visit www.vview.com for more information and to download Vview

