

Havering College of Further and Higher Education. Department of ILT

Name of Capital Programme: Circular 03/06; e-Learning		
Name of Lead Institution: Havering College of Further and Higher Education		
Name of Proposed Project: Virtual Classroom tools to support distance learners		
Name of Project Partners: The Salvation Army, William Booth College		
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Length of Project: Two Years		
Project Start and End Dates: September 2006 to July 2008		
Total Funding Requested from JISC: £141,980		
Funding Broken Down over Project Years: Year 1: £59,565 Year 2: £82,415		
Total Institutional Contributions: £46,615		
Outline Project Description This is a unique opportunity to compare the effectiveness of the use of increasing technologically advanced tools to support e-learning for distance learners in the workplace. Phase one will introduce the use of LAMS. The assignment tool and grade-book to build e-portfolios of coursework, digital video content. a professionally authored course cartridge, MS producer and SMS (text) messaging. This will be compared with the current cohort who only use the Virtual Classroom tool. Phase two will add audio and or video to the Virtual Classroom situation, thus greatly enhancing the effectiveness of the synchronous communication tools for teaching and tutorials. Thus a second comparison can be made with the first and second cohorts from 2005 and 2006.		
I have read the Circular and associated Terms and Conditions of Grant at Appendix B (Tick Box)	YES ✓	NO

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Introduction

Background: BA (HONS) Pastoral Care & Psychology

Course Aim: To provide HE access for Salvation Army Officers wishing to update and increase their qualifications and professional skills.

Additional Information: The course is taught jointly by staff from Havering College and William Booth College. It comprises block residential courses at WBC, regional study days, and VLE delivery (Blackboard).

Assessment: Assignments, Portfolios, Case Studies, Presentations and examinations.

Progression: Successful graduates will be eligible for progression to post graduate study.

The current cohort are the first group to follow this course and are doing so by attending three 5 day residential blocks. This is supplemented by the use of communication tools in the VLE to host weekly synchronous "Virtual Classroom" sessions to support the geographically isolated learners.

The project will greatly enhance the e-Learning experience of the next cohort and studies will be made comparing the experiences of students and staff for each.

The e-Learning experience will be enhanced by introducing:

Use of LAMS (Open source Learner Activity Management System)

Use assignment tool and grade-book to build e-portfolios of coursework, providing feedback.

An on-line staff room

Digitise current video resources

Professionally published course cartridge

SMS (text) messaging

Audio and or video to the Virtual Classroom situation

The project will commence in September 2006, the first phase will be completed in July 2007. A second phase will be implemented during 2007 for completion by July 2008. This second phase will build upon the use of VLE tools and enhancements by adding synchronous audio and video communication capabilities.

Aims

The project will focus on the most effective use of the distance learning resources for synchronous and asynchronous delivery and support. The aim is to optimise the e-Learning experience by evaluating a number of technological and pedagogical approaches to support lifelong learners. This will include widening participation, work-based learning, flexible delivery and optimisation of personalised learning experiences.

Objectives

- The use of new technologies and innovation to support flexible delivery and personalised learning experiences. This will include pedagogic evaluation of the following:
 - Audio and/or video to the Virtual Classroom situation (year 2)
 - Use of LAMS

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- Use assignment tool and grade-book to build e-portfolios of coursework, providing feedback.
- An on-line staff room
- Digitise current video resources
- Professionally published course cartridge
- SMS (text) messaging
- Engagement with employers and students to ensure that provision meets the needs of students and the economy. To course has been developed to provide work-based flexible access for Salvation Army Officers wishing to update and increase their qualifications, and professional skills. The Salvation Army is the employer in this case.
- Raising the aspirations of and supporting the uptake of HE by learners from under represented communities. Prior to the introduction of this course there was no specific opportunity for Salvation Army Officers to gain HE qualifications to underpin their Pastoral role.
- The support of more learner-centred provision. The first cohort has not taken advantage of some of the facilities within the VLE to take control of their own learning. This project aims to shift the ownership of the learning to the learner by encouraging the use of peer to peer support and group work within the VLE.
- This project serves to facilitate access to HE throughout the life of a SA Officer, and can be applied to any person in a pastoral vocation. There will be a provision of local study groups to supplement the residential and distance learning.
- This is an example of a non-traditional progression route into and through HE which could be applied elsewhere.
- This is a partnership between William Booth College and Havering College of Further and Higher Education providing of HE in FE.
- Much of the learning will be provided in the work place (Salvation Army Centres).

Project description

The project will run over two years and will provide two opportunities for comparative studies. The first year of the course has been run with limited use of the VLE tools; this will be compared to the student and staff experiences operating with the full range outlined above. The third cohort of students will have the tools developed the previous year and will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of live video and audio for tutorials and 'Virtual Classroom' sessions. The final group's experiences can be compared with both previous groups to determine value for money in terms of the learner experience and results.

Project Plan

Action (Deliverables to be shared with the community are marked with an *)	Start Date	Completion Date
LAMS		
Install and configure LAMS V2 in VLE	09/06	10/06
Train HCFHE and WBC staff	10/06	11/06
Build and deploy synchronous VLE activities	11/06	Embedded
Evaluation and report*	06/07	07/07
VLE Course Cartridge – from book publisher		
Purchase sufficient user access codes	09/06	09/06
Install and Deploy In VLE	09/06	09/06
Build into VLE activities *	09/06	Embedded
Evaluation and report *	06/07	07/07
Digital Video Resources		
Digitise Current Video Collection (copyright cleared titles only)	09/06	12/06
Deploy In VLE	09/06	12/06
Build into LAMS activities *	11/06	Embedded

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Evaluation and report *	06/07	07/07
MS Producer – Video Lectures		
Purchase and install flexicams @ HCFHE and WBC	09/06	10/06
Train HCFHE and WBC staff	10/06	11/06
Build and deploy video lectures*	11/06	Embedded
Evaluation and report*	06/07	07/07
e-Portfolio		
Configure VLE Grade Book to create simple e-portfolio	09/06	10/06
Train HCFHE and WBC staff	10/06	11/06
Build and deploy on-line assignments	11/06	Embedded
Evaluation and report*	06/07	07/07
SMS Messaging		
Purchase, install and configure VLE SMS tool and message package	09/06	11/06
Train HCFHE and WBC staff	12/06	12/06
Deploy	12/06	Embedded
Evaluation and report*	06/07	07/07
VLE Video /Audio Virtual Classroom: Phase 2		
Tender process for laptops, insurance, webcams and service agreements	05/07	06/07
Selection of Broadband provider	05/07	06/07
Set up and configuration of learners' laptops	07/07	08/07
Purchase and configure VLE "building block" to enhance Virtual Classroom. Alternatively this could be developed in-house.	01/07	07/07
Distribution and training for learners at first residential block	09/07	09/07
Deploy	09/07	Embedded
Evaluation and report*	06/08	07/08
Dissemination		
Initial Report on Phase 1*	06/07	07/07
Phase 1 dissemination @ JISC RSC for London J'07*	06/07	07/07
Final Report on Phases 1 and 2*	06/08	07/08
Phase 2 dissemination @ JISC RSC for London J'08*	06/08	07/08
Research papers published*	06/07	09/08
Full dissemination event with workshops for each topic*		10/08

The evaluations, reports and dissemination deliverables will focus on:

- Demonstrating the use of e-learning to support cross-institutional delivery of lifelong learning.
- Analysing areas in which the project has been more and less successful, highlighting the implications and challenges of implementing e-learning to support cross-institutional delivery of lifelong learning.
- Evaluating learners' experiences of using the technology, and of its influence on learning.
- Transferable models of the use of e-learning to support cross-institutional delivery of lifelong learning.
- Use cases, case studies and scenarios analysing user needs and user interactions with systems.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Probability (1-5)	Severity (1-5)	Score (P x S)	Action to Prevent/Manage Risk
Staffing	1	2	2	More than one tutor and technical support is team based
Organisational	1	1	1	All SMT committed to project, institutional partnership agreed and ongoing beyond the length of the project.
Technical	1	3	3	Technical support is available from both

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				institutions and VLE vendor. Test VLE will be used before any implementations.
External suppliers	1	3	6	Current VLE supplier has proved reliable. Suppliers will be chosen based upon previous experiences.
Legal	1	1	1	Via JISC and JISC-RSC

Sustainability

Once each component has been introduced on the course it will become embedded within the delivery and incorporated into the ongoing course costs funded by HEFCE. The laptops and connections will be carried over into the second (final) year of the course. Decisions will need to be made for the 2008 student cohort, it may be that the Salvation Army will provide connectivity and resources through its own network to new and second year students. This will allow some of the initial laptops to be re-distributed. There may also be suitable equipment made available as HCFHE computer stock is replaced following its 3 year cycle. Funding for any shortfall in provision will need to be agreed.

IPR Issues

Copyright will be sought for all videos to be converted. Professionally purchased VLE resources are licensed by the authors. Research papers will be published in recognised journals and by JISC. Knowledge and experience gained will be shared via JISC.

Budget

One of the most significant lessons learnt from using the Virtual Classroom with the 2005 intake has been the variety of hardware, software and internet connections used in the learners' homes and offices. This has produced the largest obstacles to engagement and has still not been entirely resolved. Thus for the second phase of the project, introducing video, it is proposed to eliminate as many variables as possible.

The proposed solution is to provide learners and staff with loan laptops that can be recycled to the following cohorts. Also we will endeavour to homogenise the internet connections by purchasing connections for all learners and staff from the same ISP. We can install webcams and configure the laptops to ensure consistency.

Activity	Cost To Partners		JISC Funding Sought	
	Staff	Non Staff	Staff	Non Staff
Year 1				
LAMS				
Install and configure LAMS V2 in VLE	12 hrs			
Train HCFHE and WBC staff		£500	48 hrs	£500 ²
Build and deploy synchronous VLE activities			20 hrs	
Evaluation and report			20 hrs	
VLE Course Cartridge – from book publisher				
Purchase sufficient user access codes				£360
Install and Deploy In VLE	1 hr			
Build into VLE activities			4 hrs	
Evaluation and report			20hrs	
Digital Video Resources				
Digitise Current Video Collection (copyright cleared titles only)	20 hrs			
Deploy In VLE	5 hrs			
Build into LAMS activities			5 hrs	
Evaluation and report			20 hrs	

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MS Producer – Video Lectures				
Purchase and install flexicams @ HCFHE and WBC				£1000
Train HCFHE and WBC staff			12 hrs	£300 ^{2.}
Build and deploy video lectures	10 hrs		10 hrs	
Evaluation and report			20 hrs	
e-Portfolio				
Configure VLE Grade Book to create simple e-portfolio			10 hrs	
Train HCFHE and WBC staff/ build and deploy on-line assignments			24 hrs	£300 ^{2.}
Evaluation and report			20 hrs	
SMS Messaging				
Purchase, install and configure VLE SMS tool and message package				£3,000
Train HCFHE and WBC staff			12 hrs	£300 ^{2.}
Evaluation and report			20 hrs	
Year 2				
VLE Video /Audio Virtual Classroom:				
Tender process for laptops, insurance, webcams and service agreements	10 hrs			
Laptops / cameras 42 for staff and students				£25,200
Selection of Broadband provider	5 hrs			
1 year Broadband subscriptions X 42				£7,560
Set up and configuration of learners' laptops			40 hrs ^{2.}	
Purchase and configure VLE "building block" to enhance Virtual Classroom. Alternatively this could be developed in-house.	10 hrs			£4,000
Distribution and training for learners at first residential block			3 hrs	£200 ^{2.}
Evaluation and report			20 hrs	
Course Delivery and Management 2 years				
On-line "lectures"	864 hrs			
On-line staff meetings	576 hrs			
Course management	72 hrs			
Residential delivery	504 hrs	£1,200 ^{2.}		
Dedicated room for on-line tutorials and Virtual Classroom broadcasts. Year 2		£1,200		
Dissemination 2 Years				
Phase 1 dissemination @ JISC RSC for London J'07			18 hrs	
Phase 2 dissemination @ JISC RSC for London J'08			18 hrs	
Full dissemination event with workshops for each topic	24 hrs		48 hrs	£2,000 ^{2.}
Project Management 2 Years				
Project Director (HCFHE)			0.1 FTE	
Project Manager / VLE Management (HCFHE)			0.6 FTE	
Project Manager (WBC)			0.3 FTE	
Academic Research			30 hrs	
Consumables				£500
Travel (research, best practice, etc)				£2000
Subsistence (meetings)				£650
Totals	1249 hrs		442hrs X	£45,510

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	X £35 = £43,715		£35 = £15,470 Plus 1 x 1.0 FTE @£40,000 X 2 years	
	£43,715	£2,900 ¹	£95,470	£45,510
Grand Total over 2 Years		£46,615		£141,980

¹: Additional non staff costs borne by the institutions are not itemised but are recognised as significant. These include accommodation, VLE licensing, VLE support (technical and pedagogical), effect on host bandwidth, telephony etc.

²: Includes travel and subsistence

The outcomes for HCFHE include:

- Enhanced VLE capabilities. The college will be able to utilise LAMS, Text messaging and eventually synchronous video and audio capabilities. This will allow the college to offer more on-line and distance provision such as ESOL course to overseas students.
- Increased technical and administration skills for the VLE system.

Outcomes for both institutions:

- Broader knowledge of effective practice in e-learning and on-line learning.
- E-tutoring skills development.
- Raising of the college and researchers' profiles as an HE provider
- Broader Participation.
- Increased recruitment, retention and success for this course and, in turn, other course employing similar approaches in the future.

Key personnel

Key personnel will be provided from current staff within each institution. Where necessary, cover and additional staffing will be provided from within the organisation including hourly paid overtime. Reduced class contact hours will be covered from existing staff, increasing fractional posts and from the part-time staff pool. Depending upon additional workload a full-time inter-college project manager will be employed; this post will be advertised as soon as funding is available.

Project Director: Dave London, HCFHE, Director of ILT BSc (Hons) PGDip in Computing. Director of ILT since Jan 2000. Previously taught on BSc Computing courses at Havering. Currently responsible for delivery of a £300k ESF Objective 2 project delivering ICT assistance to local MLE's. Directs college IT procurement budgets and Network, IT and ILT teams. Responsible to the Principal for embedding e-learning and provision of ILT support for the curriculum.

Project Manager: Ashley Garner, HCFHE, VLE Manager. BSc (Hons). ILT Coordinator / VLE Manager since October 2000 at two FE Institutions. Previously taught HE in FE courses (foundation degrees). Managed a large scale, multi-college, ESF e-Learning project 2000-01. Two successful LSDA Q project bids. Project managed over 50 small scale e-learning projects.

Project Manager: Major Tom Stirling is responsible for undergraduate courses within the School for In-service Training and Development (SISTAD) at William Booth College (WBC). His responsibilities include managing and teaching on the Distributed Learning aspects of the jointly-provided course (A formal, validated partnership between HCFHE and WBC), and he acts as the interface between The Salvation Army's National IT Team (based at their London HQ), the William Booth College, and Havering College.

The Salvation Army have a long established expertise in a wide range of Distance Learning provision, particularly where this is supported by modern ICT systems – and courses are delivered throughout the UK (and beyond) throughout the year. Tom is currently engaged in

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evaluating the possible use of VLE to provide courses for TSA on an international basis – looking initially at provision in Africa and The Far East.

Curriculum Manager: John Morahan HCFHE is Area Head for Social and Behavioural Sciences at Havering College. In this role, he manages one of the largest programmes of HE in FE in the UK – 6 degree programmes in-house, and a growing range of HE courses being developed and provided across the UK, in Holland, Belgium, and, in 2007, Eastern Europe. In addition to managing a large and complex area, and teaching psychology, John has been responsible for the introduction of VLE delivery both within the campus-based programmes, and particularly, in partnership with TSA off-campus. He works closely with the college VLE manager Ashley Garner to constantly monitor, evaluate, and improve delivery

Course Tutor and Researcher: Neil Wood PHD: Dr Wood is currently Lecturer in Psychology and Research at Havering College. He has previously worked as a lecturer (& Senior Lecturer) and Research Co-ordinator at Oxford University, Liverpool University, Bristol University, and University of Chichester (previously University College Chichester). In addition he has held a number of major Research Posts in the NHS. His current publications include approximately 400 research articles in peer-reviewed journals, several books, and contributions to many other books. He is currently involved in 3 research projects. Neil's present responsibilities include managing the VLE aspects of the BA (Hons) Pastoral Care with Psychology degree, delivered in partnership with the William Booth College, and he is actively involved in the delivery of Blackboard lectures three times a week. His in-house teaching at HCFHE has been extensively enriched through the introduction and development of a wide range of interactive resources, particularly for courses in neuroscience.