



## JISC RSC Scotland South & West Case Study @ Langside College

### Access to Science project using CSI & ER based themes

This case study is written in the context of Langside College's (LC) participation in a European Structural Fund Project in partnership with sister college, Coatbridge. The case study will focus on the activities that involved LC staff and students and will outline the activities, impact and lessons learnt in the context of Langside College.

### About the College and the context of the Case Study

For over 60 years Langside College has been delivering courses to a wide community and holds awards for quality including Investors in People. The College enrolls over 10,000 students annually of whom over 1,500 are from countries out with the EU. The College operates over 2 campuses and in over 80 community based venues.

Langside College worked closely in partnership with Coatbridge College who were the lead applicant in the ESF (Priority 2) funded "Access to Science" Project. This innovative Project created online, multimedia rich resources which can be uploaded to institutional learning platforms based on the concept of the popular television series CSI-Crime Scene Investigation and ER. The Project aims to use these themes as a 'hook' for young learners to inspire their interest in further study of the physical sciences. The materials will be made available to the wider education community.

### The Challenge

The Project was developed in response to the Scottish Government's Action Plan for more participation in the sciences - Science and Engineering 21. The Project is designed to develop pedagogically sound multimedia and multi-sensory materials that will engage young (school) students with science by providing an entry level hook.

Education Secretary Michael Russell launched the Action Plan in early March 2011 saying "*.....International studies show us that we need to do more in Scotland to motivate young people to achieve in science.....*"

### The Activity

It was agreed that Langside College would focus on developing a Human Biology resource using the ER theme. This involved some staff training in the early stages of the Project at the JISC Regional Support Centre for Scotland South & West on new learning technologies, in particular social media and web 2.0 tools to inspire staff and to explore the possibilities for developing new and innovative learning materials.

When compiling the teaching materials a scenario based approach was adopted with

related Learning Outcomes and Performance Criteria related to SQA units at Access 3 / Intermediate 1 level. The activities of teaching Staff involved:

- storyboarding scenarios
- providing resources
- writing formative assessment to provide interactivity
- working with a multimedia developer
- checking facts / proof reading (an external medical consultant was also engaged in this process)
- piloting with schools group and existing students

### **The Outcomes**

As an outcome of the Project the new learning package has been uploaded to LC's virtual learning environment (BlackBoard) and is supporting units currently being delivered during the academic year 2010/2011.

Staff have gained experience of revisiting teaching strategies and developing new ideas that can be transformed into interactive multimedia learning resources.

### **The Impact**

The staff involved in the Project are very pleased with the results and are encouraged to see the final result realised and in use. Staff feel the materials have exceeded expectations in terms of the amount of multi media incorporated and see evidence of improved learner engagement.

One member of the development team said;

*"Through involvement in this Project there has been a marked improvement in my own ICT skills.*

*The materials developed are excellent teaching resources and I have embedded them within our distance learning programme and will continue to use them for students with a wide range of learning abilities.*

*I used the training received under the auspices of this Project to upload material for other courses to the VLE. This has also been well received; in fact a colleague was so impressed with this methodology that, after a short training session, he has adopted similar practices for his teaching materials."*

The learning materials have been well received by students. A student on the HNC Occupational Therapy Support said that;

*"The clear instructions, along with excellent pictures, made sense of complicated organs like the heart."*

Retention on this programme has increased by 20% in the past year. This may be due in part to the success of these teaching materials.

This Project has enabled partners to develop essential tools for future collaborative working including; online calendars and discussion boards, enhanced partnership agreements and project management structures. Working collaboratively ensured the Project benefitted from a wider range of skills, ideas and experience than would have been available at one organisation alone.

### **Lessons Learnt**

Staff skills are variable and it was ambitious to expect them to be able to develop relatively sophisticated multimedia materials. It is important to put together a team of people with different and complementary specialisms. It is also critical to develop and support good relationships between academic and support staff involved in collaborative projects.

Institutional Partnerships mean that reciprocal sharing of the development processes as well as the final products is an additional benefit particularly when one partner has in-house experience.

Even with additional funds the issue of staff cover to allow project participation although eased is not resolved and it is difficult to replace the teaching skills, subject knowledge and specialism of staff on a temporary basis.

### **Future Developments**

Mobile access is being retrospectively planned and the project team is confident that with small changes and minimal reengineering it should be possible to obtain full functionality for a range of mobile devices.

### **Useful Links**

[www.langside.ac.uk](http://www.langside.ac.uk)

[www.coatbridge.ac.uk](http://www.coatbridge.ac.uk)

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2010/03/01094638>

<http://www.rsc-sw-scotland.ac.uk>

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