MANCHESTER 1824

eLearning Team Report 2009

Faculty of Humanities

What we do

The team has a wide variety of skills to support the Faculty to innovate teaching and learning and to move forward with eLearning concepts and practice.

We have skills and expertise in:

- course/learning design
- interface design
- resource based learning
- staff development and support
- eLearning consultancy
- the development of interactive learning resources
- multi-media (including video and audio production, digital imaging)

and much more.

Support for course development

The eLearning Operational Plan set ambitious targets for the whole University for all credit bearing course units to have a Blackboard presence that meets minimum requirements.

The Faculty supported this by contacting individual course owners and offering a range of support to help them get started. We were able to give email, phone and one to one support to individual colleagues. Our staff development and drop-in sessions supported this process.

Level 1

~80% of Level 1 courses in the Faculty have a presence in Blackboard, with approximately 59% meeting the minimum support requirements.[1]

Level 2, 3 and PGT

The Faculty has over 800 course units for Semester 1 and All year at Levels 2, 3 and PGT. Over the summer and at the start of year the eLearning team supported colleagues to develop content in 158 of these, i.e. approximately 20%. [2]

Standard Course Structure

We also made it easier for colleagues new to Blackboard and eLearning to get started by developing a 'Standard Course Structure' (SCS) for each School. The SCS is attractive and well designed and includes help with meeting the minimum requirements. We also designed a specific SCS for Law: see "Enhancing Learning using Technology" for more information.

> "I am writing to thank [the eLearning technologist] who answered my call for help… .
>
> She was professional, extremely patient and effective as everything was done in an hour or so. I am so pleased and thankful that this was sorted out so quickly as I have been trying. I am very impressed that we have such professional and effective IT/BB experts."
>
> *An academic colleague in SLLC*

Developments for 2009/2010

The minimum specifications for a Blackboard space incorporates both support and enhancements: see www.campus.manchester.ac.uk/elearning/uomelearning/strategy4/

Enhancements are a key to supporting a blended learning approach:

> *'eLearning enhances the student experience by complementing face-to-face interactions between students and academic staff, and by supporting flexible learning and different learning styles'.*

We will focus our efforts in supporting Schools to identify how the Communication, Assignment and Assessment tools in Blackboard can enhance learning.

We will be doing this through:

- exemplifying current practice
- prompting eLearning across the Faculty with 'Show and T.E.L.' Roadshow events
- staff development/training support.

Changes within the team

Goodbye to Alan Tice, who retired in September, and hello to Jonny Crook, Emmett Flynn and Will Moindrot, who joined the team during the year. Helen Perkins has been on maternity leave since Summer 2009 and will be returning in 2010.

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[1] *Data collected as a result of a review of ~60% of courses at Level 1; Semester 1 and All Year courses reviewed in November 2008, Semester 2 courses reviewed in February 2009.*

[2] *Data collected as a result of a review of ~10% of courses at Levels 2, 3 and PGT in December 2009.*

General Blackboard and eLearning support

The restructure of eLearning — completed in June 2008 — resulted in the creation of eLearning teams in each Faculty; during that period, a common model for the support of eLearning was established. This involved logging eLearning queries either by calling the Service Desk on 65544 or emailing elearning@manchester.ac.uk.

The Humanities eLearning team handled over 1500 queries from Schools about eLearning during 2008/2009.

> **But I'd like to speak to someone in eLearning!**
>
> We widened our support in 2009 to include telephone support for urgent eLearning queries. This is also via the Service Desk on 65544.
>
> We will be publicising this service more fully in the coming year, working with the Service Desk to ensure we give high quality responsive support to Schools.

Working with Schools

During 2008/2009 we have been keen to develop clear lines of communication to ensure that Faculty and Schools are fully aware of and are involved in key eLearning developments. The eLearning Team wants to ensure we have appropriate good working relationships with Schools, to enable us to provide the type of support needed for Schools to innovate in Teaching and Learning using technology.

- Each School has an eLearning School Liaison person. This person does not deliver Operational Support but is a key contact for eLearning in the School
- Through the eLearning School Liaison person we have representation on key committees in Schools where appropriate
- We provide written reports to the Faculty Teaching and Learning Administrators Forum
- The eLearning manager attends and reports to the Teaching and Learning Committee
- We work closely with the Teaching and Learning Office to provide information for the monthly Teaching and Learning Bulletin.
  This is a key way to update the whole Faculty about developments in eLearning/Blended Learning.

Staff Training and Development

The eLearning team delivered a wide range of training and staff development, including:

- Introduction to Blackboard
- eCommunication surgeries
- eAssessment surgeries
- using Audio and Video in Blackboard.

Some of these sessions were scheduled and open to the whole Faculty, while others were designed and delivered to specific groups, such as:

- Teaching staff in the University Language Centre
- GTAs in SAHC
- Administrators in SoSS.

> "The course is tailor-made to our teaching interests. It's invaluable in getting you to know the ropes. It builds confidence in using Blackboard."
>
> *Lecturer feedback*

During the year we supported 39 staff with focused one-to-one support in our regular drop-ins. We ran 42 different training sessions which supported 156 participants. Many of the courses were run as a result of requests from Schools and specifically targeted to staff in Schools. However attendance has been low and some sessions were cancelled.

We are keen to increase participation and put on events and support that will have a real impact in Schools. So: what type of training and staff development will work in your School; what would you like us to support and how and when would you like it to run?

Developments for 2009/2010

- The Introduction to Blackboard sessions will be run centrally, delivered and supported by Faculty eLearning teams
- We will continue our programme of support for the Faculty, in particular opportunities which focus on enhanced use of technology
- 2009/10 will see the Faculty involved in a managed roll out of Turnitin (online assignment submission and plagiarism detection) and Grademark (online marking).

## Enhancing Learning using Technology

Examples of Projects supported by the eLearning team

The eLearning team has a variety of expertise and works with colleagues on a range of innovative teaching and learning developments.
Below are just a few of the projects we worked on with Schools during 2008/09:

- Worked with Nuria Yanez Bouza in SLLC to make effective use of Classroom Clickers on a second year course, increasing interactivity in a class of 130
- Supported Nuno Ferreira in Law by filming PG students' presentations to support external verification, peer review and personal evaluation
- In Law, trialled student submission to Turnitin by students (rather than administrator submission) to support a more efficient mechanism for plagiarism detection
- Supported the trialling of online Unit Evaluation Questionnaires in Education, Combined Studies and MBS
- Collaborated with Max Jones in Arts, Histories and Cultures to develop online Blackboard support using Newsreel online database resources
- Developed the Law specific Standard Course Structure: a template to give a professional and uniform appearance, with all the University requirements and assessment requirements available in a common format for all course units
- Worked closely with the Teaching and Learning Office to redesign and integrate more interactive learning resources into the Faculty Study Skills website, which is due to launch early 2010. www.manchester.ac.uk/humanities/studyskills/
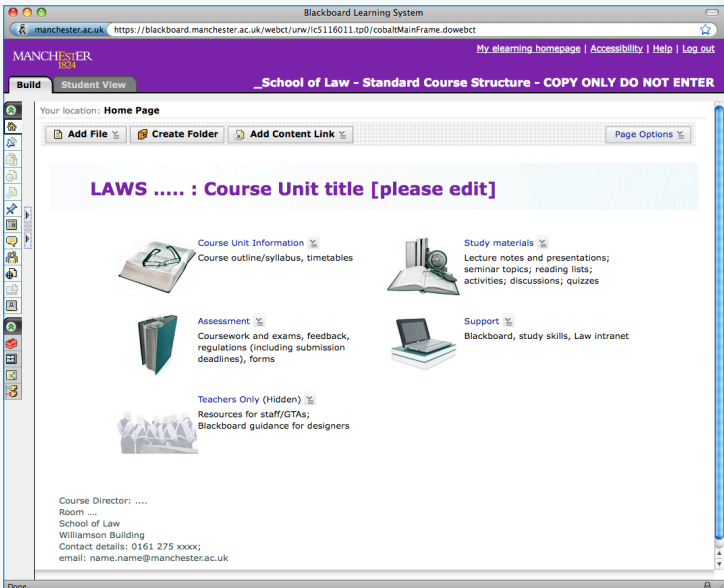
Blackboard Standard Course Structure developed for the School of Law
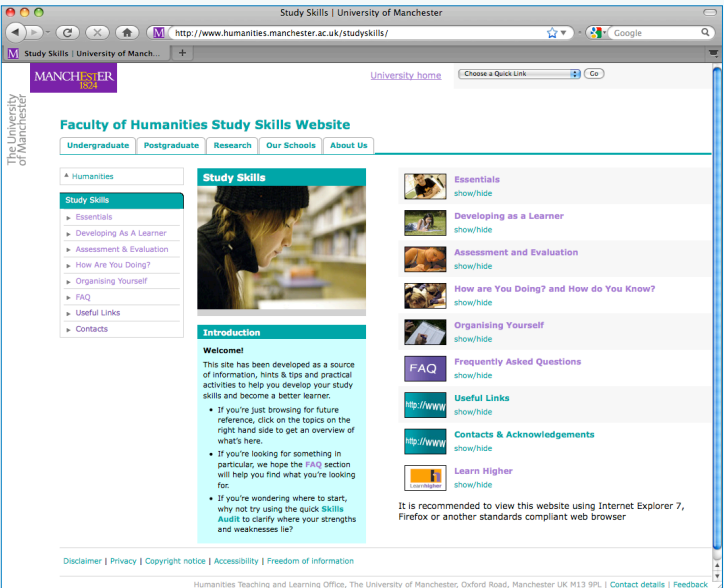
Redesigned Faculty Study Skills website

New Services

Support for Classroom Clickers

Giving support to Nuria Yanez Bouza using Classroom Clickers for feedback and interaction in lectures developed our team expertise in this technology. This contributed to the Faculty and University providing funds to purchase 200 handsets.

Watch out for Classroom Clickers in 2009/2010

We will be promoting the use of Classroom Clickers throughout the year. The eLearning team can support their use and is keen to develop a range of examples of best practice in the Faculty: can you help us?

Nuria's case study will be available through our new 'Blended Learning Examples' website. See "Up and coming: What's happening in 2009/2010" to find out more.

Digital Cameras and High Quality Audio Recorders available to borrow

The Faculty invested in two digital cameras and three 'Edirols' (high quality digital audio recorders). These are available to all Schools to book and use to develop resources for their Teaching and Learning. They have been used by colleagues in LLC, AHC and SED to create learning resources and induction materials.

Development of Interactive Learning Resources

The eLearning team has developed and increased its knowledge and skill sets and now provides increased support for the development of bespoke interactive learning resources. We ran a session for the Faculty to showcase examples of interactive eLearning resources and worked with colleagues in the School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures to develop resources in Italian, Chinese, Russian and Linguistics.
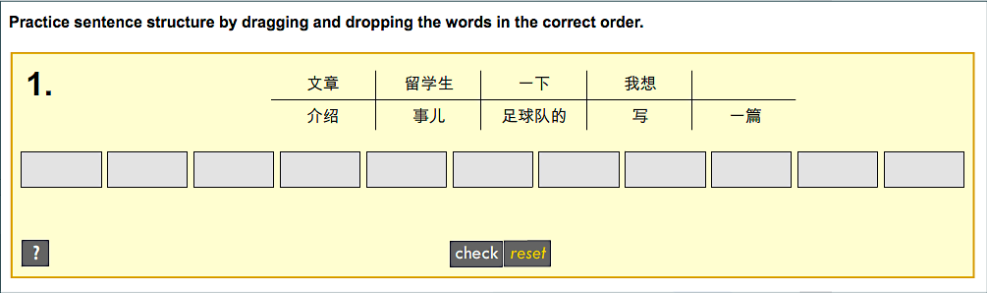
Watch out for more Interactive Learning Resources in 2009/2010

We will be working with Education to produce a feedback tool and will also be developing existing tools to make them more widely available across the Faculty. For example we will be developing a version of our 'Russian Keyboard' so it can be re-purposed for other languages.
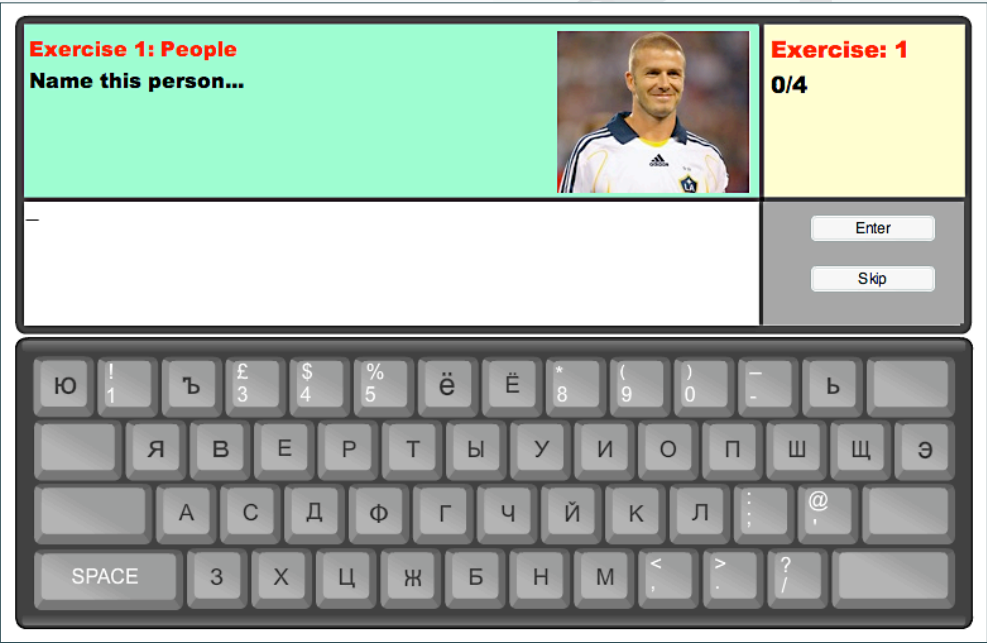
> "SLLC works closely with eLearning colleagues to develop interactive course content and this exists in many LEAP and core language course units.
>
> The School OPR includes encouragement to increase interactive content within Blackboard."
>
> *SLLC Periodic Review*

New Technologies

Turnitin

While Turnitin (Tii) itself is not a new technology for the Faculty, it can now be accessed via Blackboard using a 'Powerlink'. This enables staff to set up assignments in Tii via Blackboard. Students submit assignments which can then automatically be checked for plagiarism.

At the end of 2008/2009 academic year the Faculty eLearning team and the Teaching and Learning Office were working together to develop a project for the managed roll out of Tii. Schools were asked to put forward pilots.

Watch out for Turnitin in 2009/2010: The Faculty pilot will identify the current Assessment process and practice and then look at how technology can support these to increase efficiencies. The Faculty will produce a Tii Policy to clarify how to provide guidance to staff. The eLearning team will report in March 2010 on the pilot activity and identify appropriate practice and update the Turnitin policy as required.

Wimba Collaboration Suite

The Faculty was involved in a cross University initiative to evaluate several Video Conferencing applications. Colleagues in SLLC and Education participated in the evaluation. As a result the University purchased 'Wimba Collaboration Suite' over Summer 2009.

The suite consists of three products which are all integrated into Blackboard, making available various voice tools:

- voice capture tool ('Wimba Voice')
- video conferencing ('Wimba Classroom')
- instant messaging ('Wimba Pronto').

Watch out for Wimba Collaboration Suite in 2009/2010: If you are interested in opportunities for communication and collaboration these tools provide speak to the eLearning team. We will be running awareness raising sessions during the year, enabling Schools to find out more.

Up and coming: What's happening in 2009/2010

Some of our key projects and tasks in 2009/2010

- Build on the relationships established this year (*see above*, "Working with Schools") to identify eLearning support requirements
- Continuing support to achieve minimum requirements in Blackboard, particularly focussing on how to enhance teaching and learning through use of online Discussion, Assessment and Assignment submission
- Support online collaboration and communication using Wimba Collaboration Suite
- Run a pilot rollout of Turnitin for online submission and plagiarism detection, produce an evaluation report and advise on the next stage; also to support online feedback using Grademark
- Continue working with Schools in developing more interactive, media rich content
- Provide a searchable online showcase of blended learning examples – due to launch January 2010 – to support the widespread dissemination of eLearning practice taking place across Schools
 www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/tandl/elearning/exemplars/
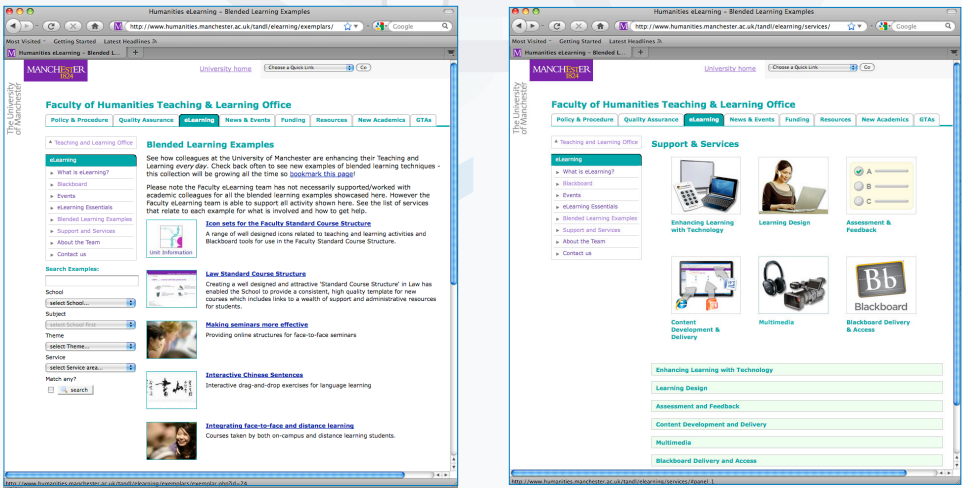
- Provide a full detailed list of services on our website, illustrated with examples, to ensure the Faculty is fully aware of the support, services and expertise available from the eLearning team. Due to launch January 2010.
  www.manchester.ac.uk/humanities/tandl/elearning/services/

Note: this report is a snapshot of the major activities of the eLearning team in 2008-09 — it does not capture all activity.

We are keen to ensure that the eLearning support is transparent and meets the needs of Schools. During 2009/2010 we'll be working to ensure we continue to capture appropriate information to ensure we can communicate clearly to the Faculty and Schools about the activity of the team.

If you have any feedback, comments or suggestions for the eLearning team, please contact Cath Dyson: cath.dyson@manchester.ac.uk

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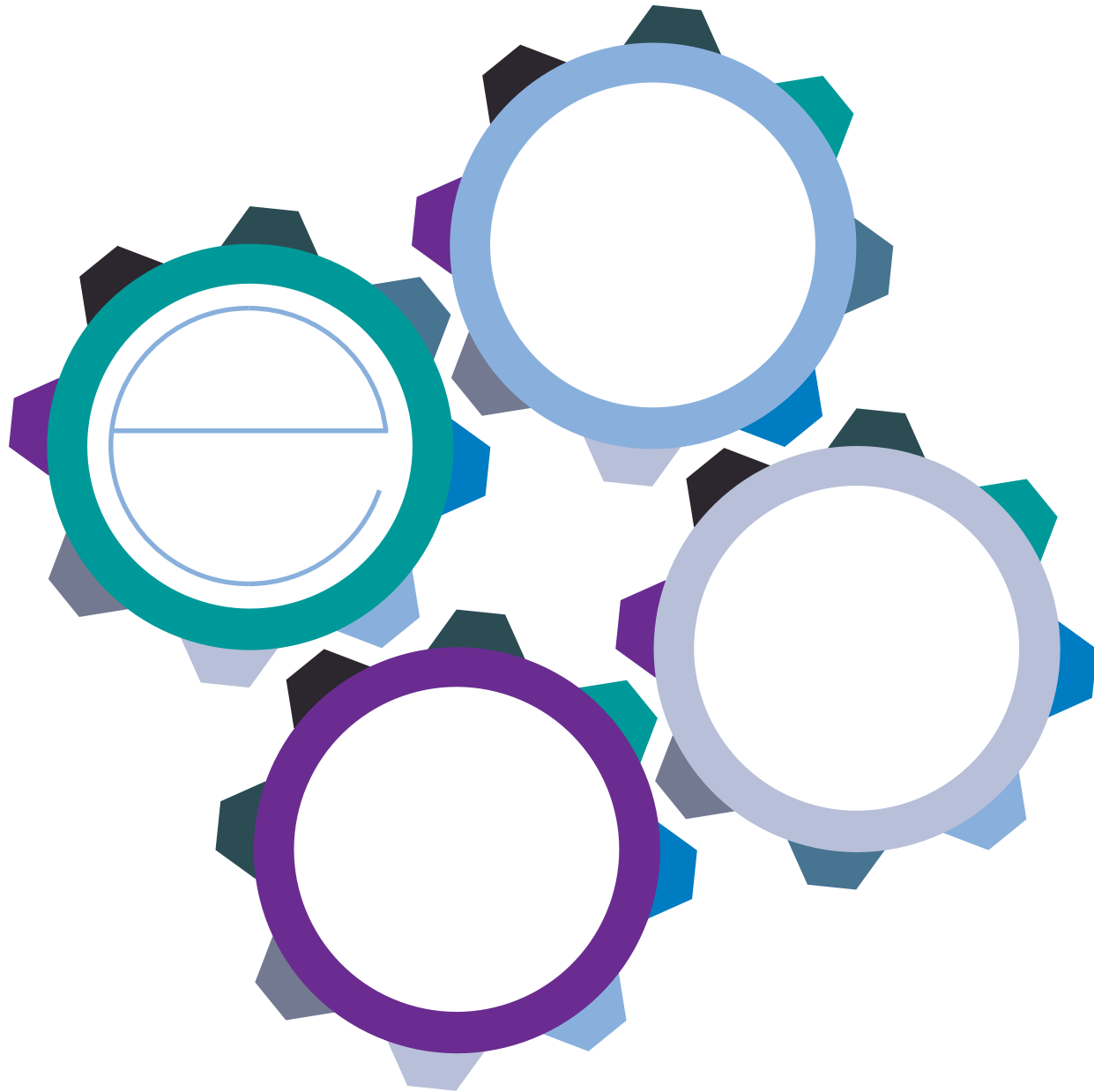
How can we HeLP you?

HeLP: Humanities eLearning People

Our HeLP support service for you and your students includes:

- **consultation and personalised advice** on all aspects of eLearning
- help to develop an **engaging and stimulating** Blackboard course
- **training and drop-in sessions** – from basic to enhanced
- production of **multimedia and interactive** learning materials
- … all this and more, in **user-friendly**, **plain English**…

HeLP is at hand!

Humanities eLearning People
elearning@manchester.ac.uk