

CETLView

Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning

February 2006 Issue 1

A warm welcome to the first issue of

CETLView!

"This is a new series of newsletters with a flavour of the many exciting and innovative projects undertaken by a wide range of staff working with our three CETLs.

Sheffield Hallam University has much to celebrate in its excellent provision of learning and teaching - and the CETLs play an important part in this. I hope that CETLView will whet your appetite to find out more and encourage you to engage with what the CETLs are aiming to achieve."

Philip Garrahan
Pro Vice-Chancellor for Academic Development

Celebrating Excellence

Sheffield Hallam has 3 Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Each has their distinct objectives to meet within a 5 year time frame.

CPLA (Centre for Promoting Learner Autonomy) aims to promote autonomous learning through diverse activities including peer tutoring, student led conferences, student led assessment and simulations and creates effective and enjoyable learning experiences.

E³I (Embedding, Enhancing and Integrating Employability) advocates the embedding and integrating of a coherent range of employability features in programmes, which will benefit all students, developing attributes needed for success in their chosen paths and lifelong development and supporting widening access to employment.

CIPeL (Centre for Inter-Professional e-Learning) is a collaborative CETL involving Coventry University and ourselves. CIPeL's aim is to develop and disseminate solutions to the barriers of inter-professional learning amongst students of health and social care professions, through the use of innovative e-approaches.

The vision for all CETLs is to recognise, celebrate and promote excellence by rewarding teachers who have made a demonstrable impact on student learning and who can enthuse, motivate and influence others to do the same. They are equally about the impact on student learning.

Anyone who wishes to try something different in their practice or wants to know how to get involved is encouraged to discuss their ideas with the CETL Directors. Please visit our CETL website at www.shu.ac.uk/cetl for further information.

The numerous developments currently under way impact on learning, teaching and assessment (LTA) in many ways. Here is just a flavour:

Collapsing the boundaries between employability, autonomy and inter-professional e-learning

Nick Nunnington, Associate Director in both the Learner Autonomy and Employability CETLs proposed **The European Challenge** project. It aims to develop students' understanding of working in the real world and gives the opportunity to apply a range of skills which can be demonstrated in practical situations. In January, 80 students from 8 European Universities engaged in a unique project working on a complex consultancy project simulating the relocation of an organisation to a new Headquarters building in Europe.

The students form multinational, interprofessional teams acting as consultants to the client. They become consultants to each other and experts in their knowledge themes. Nick says *"Employability enhancement is proven with solid evidence that the project stands out on a CV and is a major topic of interest at interviews"*. The students liked it too, as SHU Business Property Management Year 4 student Andy Pointon comments *"this has been a life changing experience and has equipped me not only with relevant advanced knowledge that I can apply in a practical way but a whole range of new skills from working under pressure to diplomacy"*.

On reflection the authenticity and the intensity of the experience were two aspects of the Challenge that were striking. The students are not playing consultants - they are *being* consultants. They were sharing their expertise, negotiating and working to impossible deadlines. Welcome to the real world! This is employability and learner autonomy in action.

Using audio in feedback and assessment

The Learner Autonomy CETL is supporting ways of using audio in student feedback and assessment. CETL Co-Director Anthony Rosie has been using innovative techniques with great success. He says, *"One example is to give students a one minute sound file response by email for them to listen to before they go through their written feedback. It is amazing how much can be packed into a single minute if the tutor has the student's work in front of them. It also creates a much friendlier feedback mechanism. So far we are finding that students own mp3 players and similar devices are being used to get and share their feedback. This is really useful when there is a long break between semesters"*.

Applied Social Studies tutors and others working on volunteering and also on PDP (Personal Development Planning) are taking forward work on using audio and visual objects with second and third year students filmed recounting their experiences and learning - it comes over in ways which first year students can relate to and find useful for assessment preparation.

Changing Study Programmes

The CETLs have a strong role in supporting institutional processes. In the Faculty of Development & Society the Head of LTA, Mike Green, has set up a series of workshops on different topics that colleagues explore in preparing for validation.

The Applied Social Studies Division is preparing for validation to impact on 3,000 students. Staff have explored how a learner autonomy protocol of 14 items could be used to chart current activity and provide a way of identifying new areas to tackle. Work is ongoing and we hope to provide you with an update of developments in a future issue.

Recent Learner Autonomy workshops saw several CETL secondees present examples of how they are working with students and attendees, exploring how they could build on this in their own work. Christine O'Leary (Faculty of Organisation and Management) showed how work in Languages could be taken up whilst Richard Pountney (Faculty of Development and Society) showed how e-learning in the MSc for E-learning and Consultancy could provide exemplars of tutor shift, of different ways of working with diverse student groups in different countries.

Supporting learning needs through learning environments

Investment in facilities

Sue Holmes, Assistant Director for Estates Planning is working on projects supported by the capital element of our CETLs which will be undertaken in a number of ways, building on informal learning needs and developments. These will be met by increasing and developing informal learning spaces and wi-fi provision in internal and external spaces.

Formal teaching spaces will be created or developed to foster innovative ways of learning with a focus on a suite of spaces in the heart of the city centre campus (the former Blackwells bookshop, floor 2 of the Atrium) and new specialist learning spaces and their support in a new building (Charles Street phase 1).

Staff needs will be met by an investment in a staff development and training suite with some new types of space to meet a range of needs (Eric Mensforth Building). There will also be additional moves for staff to co-locate in groups and with peers to enable integration of working and learning practices. (Collegiate Crescent houses and a new build at Charles Street, phase 1).

Student Placement Reflection

Sheffield Hallam is proud of its support for the CETLs in that we have funded three placement students directly supporting projects through active involvement in a range of initiatives. With their placements well underway, Nicky Harris, Katharine Westwood and Peter Capener are certainly great examples of 'students learning whilst on the job'. Nicky reflects on her experience so far:

"After nearly five months of working with the Employability CETL I can honestly say that I am 100% satisfied with my placement. It has exceeded my expectations on so many levels, allowing me to build a wide range of skills and knowledge that will benefit me for the rest of my degree, career and life. I really feel that meaningful work placements are one of the most effective ways to make students more employable."

"They give you a real taste of what the world of work is like, something you can't get in a class room. I have learnt so much about myself since I started this placement and gained so much confidence that I am no longer worried about what waits for me after graduation. It's so rewarding becoming more employable by helping other students to become more employable".

There are many other new, innovative and dynamic CETL activities happening which we will report on in the next issue including 'students supporting students', 'curriculum audit', 'student perceptions of PDP, career management and employability' and 'staff and student partnerships through reflection on learning - a mentoring module'.

Find out more

For further information, news, developments and a user friendly list of CETL FAQs please visit our website at www.shu.ac.uk/cetl

Look out for our next issue of CETLView in March.