# CETL

Improving the Learning Experience by Engaging
the Wider Faculty Across the Wider Campus

**BIRMINGHAM
City University**

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# CETL NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009: Including a Focus on Technology for Learning

# Furthering Educational Partnerships

The CETL at Birmingham City University has been offered the opportunity to provide a focal point across the University for providing strategic direction and proactive leadership for the development of educational partnerships. In particular, the Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic, Mary Carswell, has asked the CETL to focus on the development of partnerships with the **Further Education Sector**. This opportunity aligns with the original CETL goal of encouraging and enabling non-traditional applicants to the University.

Mary Carswell, Pro-Vice Chancellor Academic

Across the sector CETLs are nearing the end of their funding period and thoughts are turning to sustainability. The new focus on the FE Sector will be driven through the **Centre for Learning Partnerships** (CLP), the new name for the CETL, as we seek to ensure sustainability of CETL initiatives for the forthcoming years. The CETL has carried out significant partnership development work in the health care sector creating strategic partnerships with key NHS Foundation Trusts and a variety of partnerships at a project based level with other Trusts, Universities and businesses. The lessons learnt during that time will now be applied to the University's work with the FE Sector.

The initial focus of the Centre for Learning Partnerships will be on:

- Strengthening links with the Lifelong Learning Networks
- Developing progression agreements with partners colleges
- Highlighting good practice across the University through the sharing of experiences
- Offering support to Faculties in the development of work in this area
- Raising the profile of the University across the sector

In addition the CLP will support staff looking to develop partnerships with employers who wish to offer accredited provision, including Foundation Degrees.

Initial activities of the CLP have focused around the development of progression agreements with the Birmingham Black Country and Solihull Lifelong Learning Network (BBSLLN). The progression agreements will provide students with a guarantee that should they reach the required level in their college study that this will allow them to enter the University's admissions processes. This will benefit University recruitment and through improved dialogue between colleges and the University enable the students to be better prepared for when they move to the University.

The first progression agreements have been:

- through the Midlands Health Academy and Matthew Boulton College onto the University's BSc (Hons) Health and Wellbeing
- a network-wide agreement between University of Wolverhampton, Birmingham City University and all Birmingham and Black Country Colleges offering BTEC Level 3 Construction
- with seven partner colleges (Dudley, Halesowen, Matthew Boulton and Sutton, Sandwell, Stourbridge, Walsall and Wolverhampton) on to the BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography and BSc (Hons) Radiotherapy.

Two further progression agreements for Engineering and Health Sciences and Medical Technology are also near completion. Aligned to these developments the University's Education Liaison service will highlight these progression possibilities to college students as we seek to ensure a steady stream of students from identified sources.

We are acutely aware that there is a great deal of good practice taking place across the University and the CLP will instigate an informal network in the new year which will allow some of these experiences and contacts to be shared across the University. We have also agreed to host a conference for the Lifelong Learning Network in 2009 that will highlight the benefits of working with the University and raise the profile of what this University can offer the wider college community.

The work is being co-ordinated by Luke Millard who would welcome any enquiries or contacts from people who are interested in supporting work in this area or are looking to develop work with the University. The CLP is currently taking soundings from colleges and from staff within the University as to how the existing relationship operates and how it could be improved. Please contact the CLP through **luke.millard@bcu.ac.uk** if you would like to discuss working with the University in this exciting area.

**Luke Millard**
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# CETL Small Projects Scheme: Phase II

Since 2005 the CETL Small Projects Scheme has provided numerous funding opportunities for staff to develop and trial their own ideas for enhancing student learning, with a focus on partnership working in health and social care education.

In July 2008 this funding stream was opened up to the whole of Birmingham City University, in response to the move to extend the CETL across the university. Thirteen projects teams, representing many parts of the university, were each successfully awarded £5,000.


Rachel Moule and Dr Patricia Fell

Project work continues to be co-ordinated through Dr Patricia Fell and Rachel Moule, as we seek to widen the impact of individual project outcomes across the university.

Below are summaries of the phase II learning and teaching projects that give a real flavour of the innovative work being undertaken across Birmingham City University.

## Precious Metal Industry and New Technology Transfer

**Project Lead:** Gaynor Andrews, Course Director, School of Jewellery, Birmingham Institute of Art and Design.
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Tel: 0121 331 6469

**Background and goals for the project:** In September 2008 the School of Jewellery was pleased to welcome a group of thirteen students as the first cohort of the new top-up degree course titled BA (Hons) Jewellery and Silversmithing - Design for Industry. The CETL funding will enable these students to be part of a collaborative project, which links the expertise of the Jewellery Industry Innovation Centre (JIIC) with a leading jewellery company through the inspirational design and development of new jewellery products manufactured using the latest technology. This live project opportunity will result in an exhibition of finished pieces providing a valuable experience for the students and also promoting the strength and direction of the new course. Good design and the use of new technology are fundamental to the future of the jewellery industry and this project is intended to offer benefits for all participants and encourage future links with other companies.

This project will ensure that the students gain full knowledge of these processes and therefore maximise opportunities for employment on graduation.

## How well do we know our Students?

**Project lead:** Celia Popovic, Head of Educational Development Unit, Centre for Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT).
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**Background and goals for the project:** This project aims to identify lecturers' beliefs about the shared characteristics of students who do well and those who are most likely to fail a given course. While there has been a great deal of work in schools about the effect of teacher expectation on pupil attainment, less is known about this in the context of HE.

This project builds on a 2 year study with medical students and their lecturers at Birmingham Medical School. In this project we will randomly select 6 or 7 modules at Birmingham City University. Lecturers will be invited to take part in the research.

The results will be analysed to identify the key characteristics that the teachers believe are shared by the most or the least successful students. This will then be used to create a questionnaire designed to identify which students have those characteristics.

The questionnaire will be administered to all students on the course and findings compared with subsequent student performance.

Results will be reported back to the lecturers. This should provide invaluable information to assist lecturers in identifying student groups who would benefit from more support during the course for example, and may highlight misconceptions about lecturers' expectations or indeed may reinforce them.

### Expressions of Interest
I would welcome hearing from **anyone** interested in becoming involved in this project.

## Enhancing the Students Transition into Higher Education – A Three-Pronged Approach

**Project Lead/s:** This small scale project is being implemented by the Operating Department Practitioner teaching team in conjunction with the PDC supported by both CETL and CELT. The point of contact for further information is Simon Nixon, Programme Director, Faculty of Health.
Email: simon.nixon@bcu.ac.uk
Tel: 0121 331 7023.

**Background and goals for the project:** The transition of the student into the University community is a key factor in their retention and future success. For many of our students this is their first brush with Higher Education and they have many and varied concerns ranging from issues about their ability to complete assignments to child care arrangements. The transition of students is seen by the team as a continuous process encompassing induction and all that this entails. It is considered vital that the student feels valued as an individual and this is the philosophy behind this project.

The three strands include communication, integration and the development of a student support network. Communication with students during times that are associated with attrition is vital. We are going to use the medium of text. For example we shall send a welcoming text three days prior to the start date for our next course and will use this medium throughout the year to update students on assignment deadlines, room changes and alterations to the programme. Integration

and valuing students will be enhanced by the use of more informal meetings with students at key times during their first year. The third strand of this project is the development of a student support network; this will involve a number of our second year students meeting the first year students on a regular basis providing advice and support from the student's perspective.

## E-learning Environment for Moving and Handling

**Project Leads:** Stephen Wanless, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Health.
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Andrea Page, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Health.
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Gregory Sporton, Director, Visual Realisation Unit, Department of Art, Birmingham Institute of Art and Design.
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### Background and goals for the project:
Manual handling theory and practice is a mandatory skill which we have a Health and Safety obligation to teach. A recent study looked specifically at what constitutes effective manual handling training - a brief summary of these reports highlights that the principles taught in training are not applied to the workplace and that existing training has proven to be ineffective. This is supported by a number of studies reporting high injury rates occurring with staffs which have undergone training.

This project aims to develop an interactive e-Learning package combining motion capture, 3D technology and manual handling motor skills, which will address issues of manual handling legislation, principles, back care and tailored training using a problem solving approach.

Birmingham City University is innovative through this collaboration between the knowledge of practitioners from the Faculty of Health on manual handling principles and issues, with the specialism of 3D technology and motion capture technology from Visualisation Research unit that is part of the Birmingham Institute of Art and Design (BIAD).


Stephen Wanless

This project therefore aims to provide students and lecturers with a new opportunity to learn which is engaging and that will develop their experience and knowledge. We are planning to trial the e-Learning project with a sample group of students in July 2009. In the meantime we are planning a number of showcases to create interest in our work with students and staff over the next eight months. We will be looking at publishing our findings in relevant journals and presenting our project development at conferences.

## The Virtual Solicitor's Practice

**Project Leads:** Sarah King and Angela Kerry, both senior lecturers in the Law School have been awarded funding to develop their Virtual Solicitor's Practice. They both teach on the Legal Practice Course, a postgraduate course that qualifies students to go into practice.
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Email: angela.kerry@bcu.ac.uk or
Tel: 0121 331 5265

### Background and goals of the project:
The idea that students benefit from active and collaborative learning is well established. We have been equipping students with the skills required to become solicitors by using problem based learning in the classroom for some years. The aim of the project is to enhance this form of learning and teaching by creating a virtual learning environment which mirrors as closely as possible life in a solicitor's office.

We aim to bring to "virtual" life the way in which a solicitor's practice operates as a commercial enterprise. Students will learn how the business is set up, (including any contractual arrangements such as a partnership agreement), how they will operate as an employee of the firm, (for example achieving billing targets and undertaking marketing) and how to manage and deal with the sorts of cases that solicitors come across in practice, (by undertaking on-line problem based scenarios).

Although the concept is in its infancy we see the virtual solicitor's office growing into a resource that can link and interact with a number of other disciplines. Colleagues in other faculties and schools may already have scenarios used for teaching purposes that could link to the project and suggestions would be very welcome.

### Expressions of Interest:
If you would like to find out more about our project or would like to discuss potential collaboration please contact us on telephone or email.

## Applying Expertise in Context to Improve Vocational Education

**Project Leads:** Dr. Mark Addis, Reader in Philosophy and Cultural Theory, School of English
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and Professor David Boyd, Deputy Head, School of Property, Construction and Planning,
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### Background and goals of the project:
The project applies philosophical concepts about expertise-in-context to investigate and improve vocational education across the University thereby leading to redesign of the student learning experience. Research into expertise-in-context is pivotal for fully appreciating and articulating what professional competence in practice is and how it is best to be developed. The areas of vocational education examined in the project are education, health, management (including construction), and music. Expertise-in-context is everyday expertise understood broadly as covering various kinds of practical knowledge, attention based knowledge, skills, decision making and action planning and the like.

### The project has three main objectives:
1 Investigation into how expertise-in-context is taught in the participating Faculties and a literature review of existing work on expertise-in-context relevant to this. What vocational education can learn from expertise-in-context and its application to articulating professional competence in practice will be examined. The inquiry has conceptual and empirical aspects.
2 Development of better practice based on the applications of expertise-in-context and the use of this practice in redesigning student learning experiences in the Faculties. This involves valuing actual practice.
3 Communicating improved practice to Faculties. Faculty Champions will assist colleagues in diagnostic thinking.

### Expressions of Interest:
Colleagues in the University interested in participating in this project are invited to make contact.

## Aiding and Enhancing Student Reflection – a Guide Developed from Good Practice

**Project Lead:** Dave Smith, Lecturer, Birmingham City Business School.
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This project is being lead by Dave Smith in conjunction with (currently 36) academic colleagues from across Birmingham City University.

## Background and goals for the project:

Since September 2005 all Universities have been required to introduce progress files to help 'Personal Development Planning' for all new students. An important component of the PDP is where the student should personally reflect on their experiences and how they can improve their development.

Students have difficulties reflecting on the 'processes' required to fulfil tasks. In order to address this, the project sets out to identify and apply good practice to enhance students' learning. This good practice could allow the student to reflect in greater depth and be able to differentiate between task and process issues. This will be developed from strategies and perspectives from a range of sources (lecturing staff and students).

Focus groups of staff members will work alongside focus groups of students across Birmingham City Unversity. Once this information is collated internally within the groups, this will be shared. Presently discussions are taking place to identify the most appropriate method in a number of faculties.



All reflections and findings from the project will be uploaded onto a project Moodle site for sharing good practice. Staff that have identified good practice in this area could implement this in their specific disciplines. There will be a second questionnaire created, and completed by the focus groups to ascertain if there have been any improvements from any changes made.

## An Interdisciplinary Approach to Teaching Public Relations for Business and Media Students

**Project leads:** Peter Wilby, Degree Leader BA Media and Communication (Public Relations), Birmingham School of Media,
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## Background and goals for the project:

Our aim is to design an interdisciplinary approach to teaching public relations (PR) for undergraduates in both the Business School and the Faculty for Performance, Media and English. This will replace current provision separately taught within the two faculties. It will be adapted for the new university 15-credit structure and fit into the Joint Degrees by Flexible Learning [JDFL] across faculties.

The programme will be managed by the School of Media, whose current undergraduate PR provision is approved by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR). The new programme will be submitted for CIPR re-approval, enabling both faculties to deliver a coherent PR programme, meeting the needs of both Media and Business students with professional body approval.

One particular benefit for students will be access to the joint perspectives of media and business-based PR, through not only the syllabus but also direct contact with teaching staff from both backgrounds. The redesigned programme will establish Birmingham City University as a major and competitive centre of excellence in PR teaching and skills development, responsive to the needs of this growing and fast-moving industry.

## Key successes to date:

The project leaders have started research on other models of interdisciplinary courses, both here and in the United States, and have begun consultations with CIPR representatives and PR employers to establish priorities for learning and skills development.

## Improved Interactive Video Trainer

**Project leads:** Prof Julian Killingley, School of Law, Faculty of Education, Law and Social Science,
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## Background and goals for project:

Interactive video training packages have been around for more than 20 years. They present a filmed scenario where the trainee is typically expected to make decisions at fixed points. Dependent upon the trainee's decision, the film branches to reflect the consequences of the trainee's choice.

This project aims to demonstrate the feasibility of combining the maturing technologies of speech recognition and semantic computing with interactive video training. The product will be less structured and more natural than existing interactive video packages. The project involves simulating the role played by defence solicitors representing the interests of suspects in police custody. The trainee's role is superficially passive but requires vigilance to intervene at appropriate times during the interview to protect their clients' interests. Trainees are unprompted by menus and have to articulate their advice or objections appropriately. The simulator has to recognise the user's spoken interventions and extract semantic content from them so as to control the user's interaction with the training package appropriately and realistically.

There is the potential for many skills to be developed through such simulations including interviewing, negotiations, history taking, sales techniques etc. There is also potential for developing a new generation of computer games using speech recognition and semantic content extraction.

## Integrated Simulated Learning Environments

**Project leads:** Louise Khalid, Course Director, Faculty of Education Law and Social Sciences.
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David Hartley, Programme Director, Faculty of Education Law and Social Sciences.
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## Background and goals for project:

Education, Law, Social Work and Child Health are collaborating in the design of a new undergraduate programme, Children and Integrated Professional Care. This project reflects the policy aims of Every Child Matters and the Children's Plan, which emphasise the need for integrated working by the children's workforce.

The new programme requires students to engage with professional practice relevant to children's services, but this requires us first to equip students with appropriate vocational skills and practical knowledge. To achieve this, we propose to develop simulations of professional environments, incorporating legal, educational, social work and medical dimensions. We shall use open-source software which the Glasgow Graduate School of Law has developed for use on their own programmes. Other UK universities have already piloted local

applications of this software in law, social work, architecture and management science.

We intend to establish a working simulated professional learning environment, write and develop scenarios, including documentation and biographies, to support the simulations. We will also maintain contact with developers working on similar applications at other Universities.

**The goals of the project are to:**
- engage students in deep learning and provide an opportunity to work actively and collaboratively
- connect the use of simulated learning environments to innovative and meaningful assessment strategies that embed desired skills and knowledge
- enable students to engage with staff from different faculties in developing desired skills and knowledge
- evaluate the merits and effectiveness of the system to inform future use of simulated learning environments
- share innovative practice across the University and with outside partners.

## New Approaches to Developing Professional Studies through Research and Dissemination using Online Technologies

**Project Leads:** Professor Tim Wall, Director of Interactive Cultures, Faculty of Performance Media and English.
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Andrew Dubber, Arts and Humanities Research Council Knowledge Transfer Fellow. Faculty of Performance Media and English.
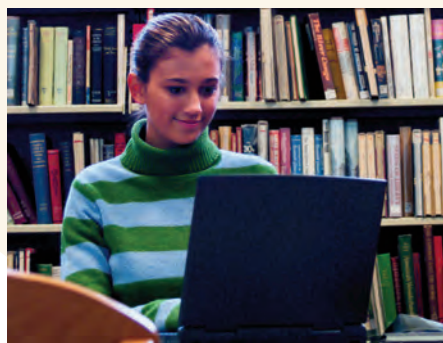Email: andrew.dubber@bcu.ac.uk
Tel: 0121 331 7265
Matt Grimes – Degree Leader Music Industries.
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**Background and goals for project:**
Building on the international collaboration with Veronica Radio School in the Netherlands and the Fellows partnerships with local music industry Small to Medium

Enterprises (SMEs) the project looks at new ways of learning and disseminating professional studies to further strengthen student skills in the local workplace, whilst contributing to the sharing of knowledge between students and industry.

Using new and emergent technologies and innovative ways of using existing technologies, students will be paired with local music industry SMEs over a period of weeks and will be tasked with getting to understand the issues and challenges facing them in a competitive marketplace and to use the knowledge they have learnt to apply solutions for those issues. Whilst doing this students will be tasked with recording and blogging their research in order for them to share with fellow students the knowledge they have acquired.

The project is important to the participants in two main areas: firstly, in that it provides students with an opportunity to undertake work in a professional environment outside the traditional placement model; and secondly, in the fact that it brings together professional production skills work with the intellectual research skills and communication and transferable skills that constitute the other elements of their degree qualification.

The project will also make an important contribution to the learning and teaching environment by producing a body of resources which will give students and teaching staff alike a valuable insight into industry processes and into the problems and pitfalls of working with new technologies in the professional environment.

**Expressions of Interest:**
Please get in touch if you want more information or to talk to us about this project.

## New Education Strategies

**Project leads:** David Kane, Senior Researcher Centre for Research into Quality, Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences,
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Professor Tim Wall, Knowledge Transfer Fellow, Interactive Cultures Research Centre, Faculty of Performance, Media and English,
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**Background and goals for project:**
A superficial understanding of new technologies, and zealous advocacy of their

use, has often resulted in a haphazard approach to their adoption in learning programmes. It is essential that institutions such as ours are alive to the difference between the deployment of technology because it makes a genuine and exciting contribution to the learning and teaching process, and the deployment of technology simply because it is present, new or popular.

This project draws on cross–faculty expertise and takes the form of a pilot study focused on the work of PGCE Secondary programme lecturers. These lecturers aim to understand how they can best use new technologies with their own students, as a means to encourage the thoughtful use of the same technologies in the classroom environment. The pilot project will explore ways in which lecturers can enhance their skills as teachers and, in this instance, how trainee teachers can develop their skills as future teachers, whilst at the same time enriching their learning experience and professional practice.

It is anticipated that the scenarios we intend to use for this pilot could be adjusted and applied to other faculties at the university. We would be very interested to hear from colleagues in other faculties who have experience of, or who are interested in, the application of new technologies in learning and teaching.

## Conclusion

In view of the partnership focus for our CETL we always encourage wider collaboration to maximise the impact and generic applicability. Therefore if you are interested in collaborating with any of these projects or would like to find out more, then please contact either:

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and/or

**Patricia Fell**
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in the first instance.

# CETL Leads Simulation Project with Medical Schools

The CETL was awarded £175,000 to lead a project for the Strategic Health Authority to vision the future for clinical skills and simulation in healthcare education. The status of simulation education at Birmingham City University meant that it was able to lead a project that was supported by the medical schools at the universities of Birmingham and Warwick.



The highlight of the project was a two day residential for an expert panel drawn from leaders in skills and simulation education in the UK and beyond. This included input from representatives from the University of Pittsburgh, Imperial College London, the Universities of Birmingham, Dundee, Hertfordshire, Sheffield, Portsmouth and Warwick. In addition representatives from Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust and the Centre for Advancement of Inter-professional Education (CAIPE) were able to add their perspectives. The panel was tasked with visioning how a strategic health authority should invest in clinical skills and simulation education as it considers training its future workforce.

The report highlights the need to focus on the provision of training for those seeking to offer clinical skills and simulation education as there was a realisation that



sufficient equipment and facilities already existed in the region.

The need for an education framework upon which to base simulation developments was also highlighted, as was the need to effectively map skills requirements across all healthcare curricula and therefore specify areas for most effective investment.

The innovative partnership with the medical schools has proven to be very successful and the partners hope to develop further collaborative projects as this work is taken forward.



Left to right, Julie Hall and Gerri Nevin (Birmingham City University) Professor Jim Parle (University of Birmingham) and Garret Taylor (Birmingham Children's Hospital)

For more information contact:
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# Virtual Case Creator Work Stream

It's been a really busy 18 months for the learning technology team within the Faculty of Health, and for a large number of staff working with us to develop a wide range of exciting and transformative learning resources.

In 2001/2 work started on conceptualising the development of an online simulation platform, the Virtual Case Creator (VCC). The VCC was a response to a perceived need to create more flexible and student focussed learning opportunities that situated the learner much more closely within the complex and messy world of practice. The VCC aims to provide students with opportunities to problem find and problem solve within information rich contexts that assess their decision making ability and cater to the visual and auditory cues present within the real world of practice for which they are preparing to engage.

The initial VCC cases were collectively called the Virtual Ward and these came on line in 2004. A major milestone in the production of VCC resources was a project with two Dutch Universities funded in 2006 by the Digital University Consortium in Holland (€250,000). The DU project provided a catalyst for the development and translation into Dutch of three new scenarios.



**VCC Website: http://vccweb.health.bcu.ac.uk**

An additional five VCC scenarios came online in 2007 to support Speech and Language Therapy, High Dependency Children's Nursing and Older Adult Nursing education.

By October '08 the suite of VCC health care cases will be increased by six with resources representing the fields of continence care, gastroenterology nursing, inter-operative care, recovery nursing, and anaesthetic nursing due for completion.

External endorsement of the VCC came this year in the form of a range of exciting externally funded projects.

These include two projects funded £130,000) by the SHA (West Mids) to support the development of four VCC cases in support of acute hospital and community care training, licensing of VCC to Middlesex University, Department of Adult Nursing and the development of two scenarios in support of teacher training in collaboration with staff from the Faculty of Education, Law and Social Sciences.



**Developmental Communication Needs**
Academic Lead – Oonagh Reilly, Speech and Language Therapy

## Impact on Learning and Teaching

**Questionnaire data reflecting the value that VCC holds for students enrolled on our pre-registration nursing courses indicates that this approach to learning is having a positive impact on the student experience.**

A survey of over 400 students who have engaged with the VCC indicates that where this resource is well aligned with learning outcomes and assessment it significantly enhances the student learning experience and supports more flexible student centred learning leading to increased confidence in skills ability.

Qualitative data reveals that VCC is impacting on student ability to reflect on their practice learning.

*'had a patient with shock, because there is so much going on unless you go and do your own background reading there isn't much time to ask questions you'd like to know, but if you come to the virtual ward it just makes sense of any questions you want to ask'*

Student Evaluation:
Virtual Ward Acute Adult Scenario



**Inter-operative Care Scenario**

## Further developments for 2009

**2009 looks like it will also be a busy year. Planning has already begun to create a Midwifery scenario and a suite of scenarios aimed at developing communication skills.**

We intend to appoint a senior programmer to the team in order to implement a large number of changes that will enhance learner feedback, make the scenarios more dynamic and further develop the VCC's content management system.

If you are interested in developing a VCC scenario in support of your teaching don't hesitate to contact **Nigel Wynne.** See **http://vccweb.health.bcu.ac.uk/** for more information on VCC.

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# The Benefits of RFID for the Mary Seacole Library

A new Radio Frequency Identification self-service system (RFID) was introduced at the Mary Seacole Library at the Edgbaston Campus of Birmingham City University in August 2007. This was a pilot project funded by the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

By using the same technology as is used for tracking the movement of goods in the retail industry, RFID has given the library the potential to manage increased demand and extend opening hours whilst maintaining existing staffing levels. Tiny RFID tags were put into every book, and these store detailed information which is sent via radio waves to a reading device.

The key benefit is that by freeing up staff time, staff and resources can be channelled into enhancing the learning experience at the Seacole Library by developing new services such as information skills training, virtual learning tools and web-based



access to electronic resources. It also means that staff have more time to give front-line assistance.

**Other benefits for both our users and for library staff:**

1 The new system issues several books at a time.
2 It is very easy to use, and the speed of the system means that students no longer have to queue to take their books out.
3 It gives us the potential for 24 hour book returns with instant clearance from the system and no library staff input required.

4 The library is much tidier as the system comes with a hand-held reader which eliminates time spent looking for misfiled books.
5 RFID labels can be easily applied to different types of media from books and journals to CD's and videos.
6 Possible with the hand-held reader to do a stock take using the hand held reader while walking slowly past each shelf without having to open a single book

Before we had the RFID system only 7% of all books were issued through the old self-issue machines, but by September 2008 this had risen to 92%.

For more information contact:
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# Student Enhanced Learning Technologies in Health Scheme (STEALTH)

Since 2002 the Faculty of Health has been providing placements to students from other Faculties in the University and from other universities in the region in response to two specific needs:

- A nationwide shortage of work experience opportunities for art, design and computing students during their courses
- The increasing need for art, design and computing skills by Health teaching staff in order to develop the interactive multimedia resources we have such high demand for

The STEALTH scheme provides non Health students with opportunities to work on real world projects commissioned by Faculty of Health staff in support of health care learning and teaching. A unique feature of the scheme is that all student projects are aligned with course assessments thereby enhancing the chances of student progression on their respective courses. By working on placements in Health, students form part of a team consisting of academics, learning technologists, illustrators and health care students in order to design, develop and evaluate resources for use by students and staff in the Faculty.

*'This scheme has helped me develop my skills, not only technically but also working within a team, by involving me in real life projects.., enhancing my CV/Portfolio in a direction I would have struggled to achieve elsewhere....'*

Matthew Stuttard:
STEALTH scheme student
Aston University 07/08

During 07/08 the scheme enabled the development of a range of learning objects in support of practice skills teaching.

A great deal of interest in the scheme was generated during a workshop ran by Nigel Wynne (scheme co-ordinator) and students Matthew Stuttard and Hiren Patel at the CETL Student Network Conference in Plymouth June 2008.
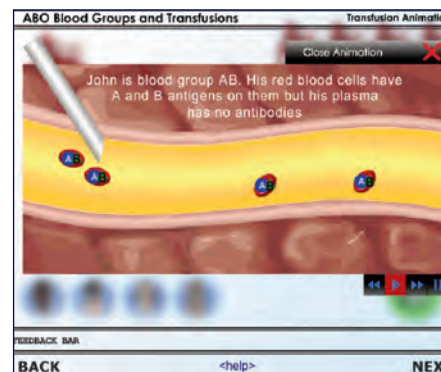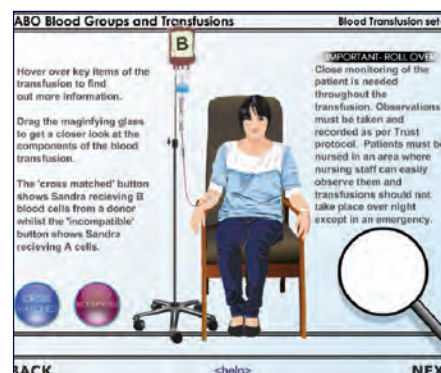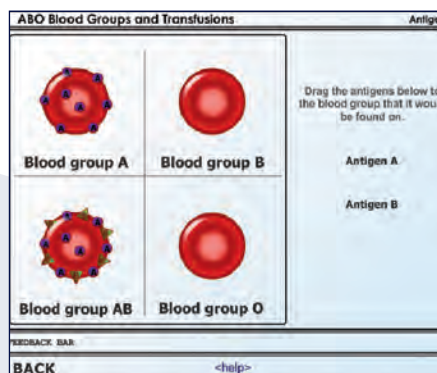
Currently we have Alex Poulton from Aston University with us for the next 12 months. Alex is working on a number of 3D projects, the first of which is a 3D Virtual Community.
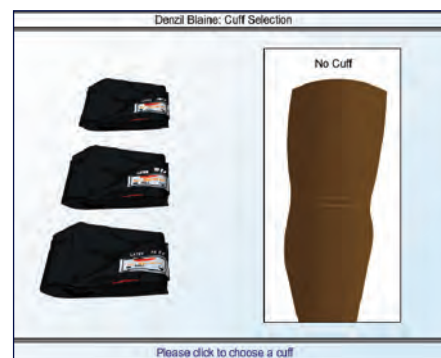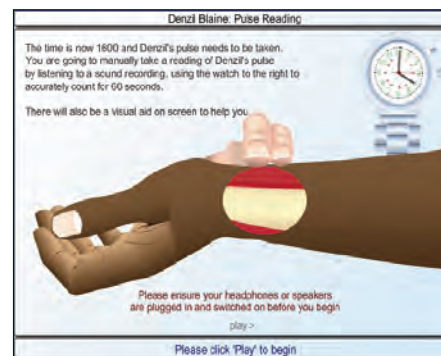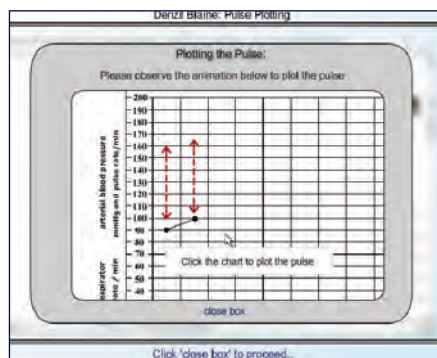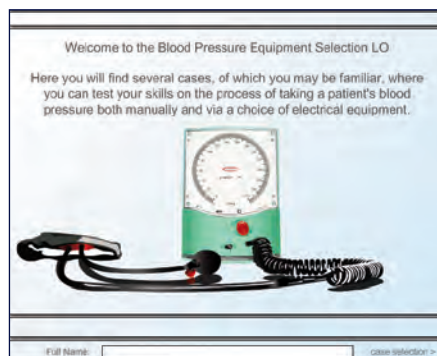


**Pulse and Blood Pressure Measurement and Recording Learning Object**
Academic Lead: Kirsty Wedgbury
STEALTH scheme student Matthew Stuttard



**Blood Cross Matching and Transfusion Learning Object**
Academic Leads: Jane Richardson and Pat Berridge
STEALTH scheme student: Hiren Patel

# Learning Community Initiative led by the CETL

Feedback from a recent National Union of Students survey has suggested that 57% of students in the UK would like to be more involved in shaping the content, curriculum or design of their course. We believe this is reflected in our own student population and the CETL is therefore leading a major initiative to develop a learning community at Birmingham City University.

Key representatives from the Students' Union, Faculties and the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching came together for a two day event to explore the concept of the 'learning community' and to identify ways in which we, as a university, can endeavour to create a more positive and engaging environment for both students and staff.

A number of areas were discussed through the event which will feed into future initiatives:

- Creation of a new partnership between students and staff where feedback is seen as an everyday and welcome event
- The development of the student representative system to enable more effective opportunities for students to work in collaboration with course teams
- A cross university showcase of student work and achievement to engender a greater awareness and sense of pride in Birmingham City University as an institution
- Opportunities for students to be employed as partners with staff to assist with research and learning and teaching initiatives

Hannah Newland, Representation and Campaigns Student Officer at the Students' Union said

*'We found the event extremely encouraging and exciting in terms of establishing a true culture of student engagement within the University and its academic practices, ultimately enriching the student experience. The Students' Union is looking forward to helping CELT shape the learning community for our future students.'*



This work will be strengthened by the University's recent collaboration with LearningLab the central learning and teaching department at Copenhagen Business School (CBS). CBS is renowned for the quality of its student experience and the equality of status enjoyed by students and staff.



Work developing the idea of Birmingham City University as a learning community continues and further developments will be outlined in the next few months.



For more information contact:

**Rebecca Freeman**
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# CETL Supporting Radiography Skills

The radiography skills suite was officially opened on September 24th by Mr Michael Graveling, President of the Society and College of Radiographers who along with Prof. David Tidmarsh, Vice Chancellor and Prof. Ian Blair Executive Dean, Faculty of Health addressed the audience. Amongst the invited guests were representatives from the Strategic Health Authority, Local NHS Trusts, Xograph, staff from the University of Hull who developed the VERT Project, staff and students.



The facilities available within the skills suite include a fully equipped computed radiogram x-ray room, Rebecca the mannequin who has a full skeleton and internal organs, URSULA, the ultra sound simulator who is programme with specific cases, she also talks to provide students with relevant information to aid diagnosis. There is also a computer room where there are 10 reporting stations and 30 standard pc's for film viewing all of which are attached to the Picture Archive and Communication System (PACS).

For radiotherapy students there is a virtual environment for radiotherapy training (VERT) and planning room which has seven work stations utilising state of the art planning software which assists second year students to complete their planning portfolio.

Students at Birmingham City University are amongst the first in the country to use a virtual reality system to learn how to treat patients with cancer.

The system, known as the virtual environment for radiotherapy training (VERT), projects a life-sized treatment



room - with all its equipment as well as a patient on a treatment table – on to a large screen which allows trainees and qualified radiographers to practise delivering

treatment in a real life situation.

The CETL entered into a partnership with creators of VERT to develop the facility and in early 2007 became the first University in England to have an on site virtual system. This has since been upgraded. Costing in excess of £200k, the current equipment was funded jointly by the Department of Health and the University's CETL (Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning).

**Julie Hall, Project lead for CETL, explains:**

*'The system works by using an actual radiotherapy handset in combination with 3D technology which recreates the radiotherapy machine (linac), the room in which it is situated and the patient lying on the couch. This reinforces the learning experience and makes VERT a viable alternative to the real thing. We can also do things that are not normally possible such as looking inside the virtual patient to see the anatomy, the location of the tumour and radiotherapy treatment beams.'*

*'The VERT system is starting to transform the way we teach students. It allows students to acquire skills that they would normally only be able to develop whilst on clinical placement. They are able to learn to use the linac at their own pace, in a stress-free environment where they can learn from any mistakes. Students can therefore be better prepared for clinical practice. They have told us that this means they are more confident about using the equipment when they go on to their first placement with real patients.'*
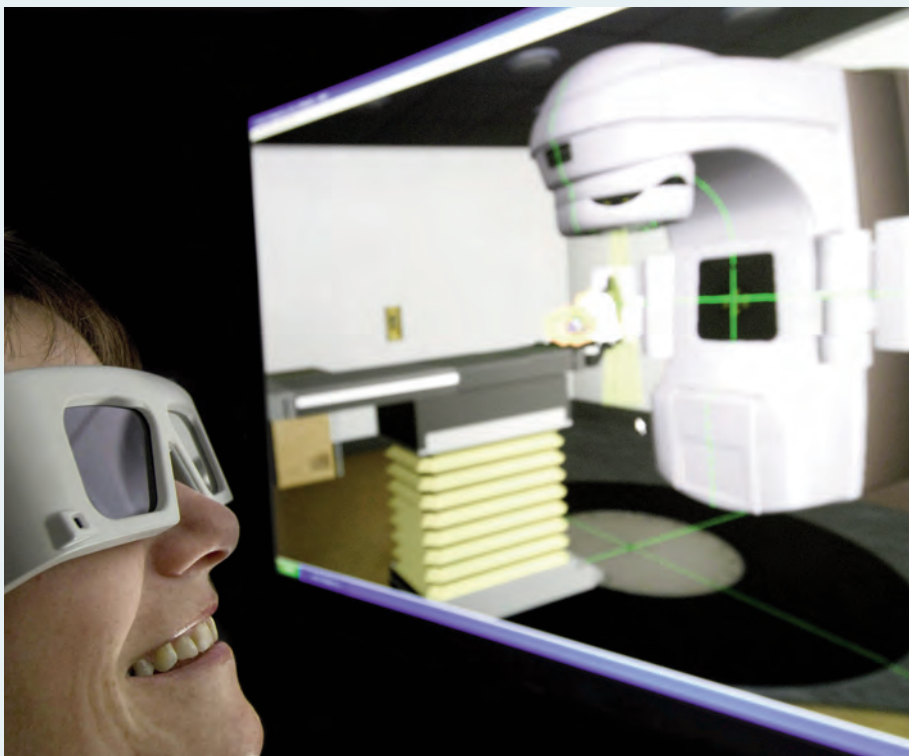
Birmingham City University is one of only 10 educational institutions in the country to offer Radiotherapy training, and the only Midlands' provider of Radiotherapy and Radiography programmes.

For more information contact:

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Tel: 0121 331 5508

# CETL Student Network Collaboration with the NUS

The CETL Student Network held their annual conference at the University of Plymouth in June this year. 80 delegates from 26 CETLs, the Higher Education Academy, and the National Union of Students attended the conference, 'Staff-Student Collaboration Partnerships within CETLs'.

Delegates, both staff and students, gathered to engage in workshops focusing on the following themes:

- Student led evaluation
- Student led initiatives
- Engagement in peer mentoring and tutoring
- Working as partners in research
- Student engagement in learning and teaching
- Sustainability of the CETL Student Network beyond the CETL initiative

The conference received excellent feedback from both staff and students who attended the event.

*'The conference provided the opportunity to engage with peers and staff from other universities, to establish what problems they encountered, and more importantly how they were overcome. The event gave me a new perspective on staff/student collaboration in Higher Education'*

Representatives from the National Union of Students and the HE Academy attended a session led by coordinators Rebecca Freeman, Birmingham City University and Linda Graham, University of Northumbria which looked at the sustainability of the Student Network onto the future. On the basis of this session the NUS and CETL Student Network have formed a collaboration which will enable continued support for students engaged in Learning and Teaching projects and encourage an enhanced focus on learning and teaching within Students' Unions in the UK.

Since the conference the committee have been working closely with the NUS to develop links with Students' Unions around the UK in order to embed the work which has taken place in this area through the CETL initiative.

As part of the NUS collaboration Rebecca Freeman, Network Coordinator and CETL Research Assistant, facilitated a session for Course Reps and Students' Union officers at the recent NUS Course Rep Conference. The session focused on building partnerships between students and staff for curriculum development. Within the session students designed a number of activities for student engagement to implement in their own institutions.

For more information about the network and student engagement with learning and teaching across the UK contact Rebecca Freeman.

Rebecca Freeman and Linda Graham

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# CETL Teaching Development Suites

The CETL Teaching Development Suites are now in full use within the faculty and are evaluating well. The development of these suites arose from the CETL staff consultation in 2006 in which staff were asked how flexible and modern approaches to learning should be created within the faculty.

Seacole 251 and 253 were opened in May 2007 with both suites containing moveable tables and chairs that are ideal for promoting group working activities. Additionally both rooms have laptops facilities that allow for collaborative online learning within sessions. Seacole 255 opened in March this year and contains moveable furniture with the addition of 4 PC stations located in the suite.

The suites are proving popular and are being used in various ways by many members of staff. In terms of teaching, the suites are increasingly being requested to carry out workshops and seminar sessions which are based particularly around group work activities. The informal nature of the suites has also made them ideal for those wishing to hold focus groups or more interactive consultations.

Feedback gained from those who have used the suites indicate that they provide a more relaxed and informal environment to teach in and that the flexibility of the furniture allows tables and chairs to be moved to suit the nature of the sessions.

Additionally, comments received suggest that the suites promote a more student –centred approach to learning that encourages student interaction and contribution.

These suites can be booked by contacting:

**Health room bookings**

**For further information please contact:**

t: 0121 331 6082
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w: www.bcu.ac.uk/cetl

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