

JISC

Effective Practice with e-Learning

An abstract, layered composition of geometric shapes and a playing card. The background is a mix of light blue, white, and orange tones. Overlaid on this are various shapes: a large, semi-transparent 'G' or 'C' shape, a smaller 'W' shape, and a playing card (the King of Hearts) with its face and suit symbols visible. The overall effect is one of depth and complexity, suggesting a multi-faceted or integrated approach.

# Case Studies

An integrated approach to  
designing learning

Kemnal Technology College

## e-Learning in practice case studies

### An integrated approach to designing learning

#### What is the intended outcome?

Designing a sequence of activities in an online environment to reinforce and extend conceptual learning. This could form part of a course delivered mainly in the classroom, or be a remotely delivered component.

#### What is established practice?

- Practitioners set a range of tasks and use a variety of tools to cover the content and skills requirements in the area of the curriculum for which they have responsibility
- These are delivered in a sequence of face-to-face sessions, with extension and reinforcement activities completed in learners' own time
- Learners collaborate in face-to-face activities
- Practitioners assess and provide feedback on learners' performance
- Learners' abilities improve over time
- Practitioners work in small teams to develop appropriate tasks which are rarely shared with other teams

#### What advantages can e-learning bring?

- Use of the new generation of learning design tools, such as the Learning Activity Management System (LAMS), can build short sequences of activities to keep all learners, whatever their preferred learning style, actively engaged and challenged while working in a collaborative environment
- The variety of activities that can be integrated into one sequence keeps learners engaged and develops a full range of skills
- A successful sequence can be shared with other curricular teams with similar objectives
- A similar approach can be taken by using combinations of e-learning tools in conjunction with established practice to create sequences of related learning activities. Mind-mapping software, Microsoft® Word templates, interactive whiteboards, web pages and discussion forums are examples of tools which can support a multi-faceted approach to designing for learning

“Staff appreciate anything that will enable them to focus on learning in the classroom, which is what they came into teaching to do. LAMS is part and parcel of achieving this.”

Vivienne Hughes, Vice Principal, Kemnal Technology College.

## Making learning active

Kemnal Technology College

### Background

Kemnal Technology College (KTC) is a comprehensive school for boys aged 11-18, with a mixed sixth form. The college teaches all subjects in the National Curriculum, plus a range of vocational qualifications. The College is currently piloting LAMS (Learning Activity Management System) in conjunction with the Specialist Schools Trust and the DfES.

### The challenge

A guiding principle for KTC is raising educational standards and learner achievement. The management team at KTC is keen to explore ways of improving teaching and learning without increasing practitioner workload, especially ways of developing learners' cognitive skills.

### The e-learning advantage

Most practitioners agree that learners will achieve more once they have a deeper conceptual understanding of a subject. This is where an innovative e-learning application, LAMS (Learning Activity Management System), may offer a solution. Rather than acting as a repository of resources, like most Virtual Learning Environments, LAMS is an authoring environment for practitioners to design and deliver sequences of learning activities. These could include online discussions, polling, sharing of resources for analysis and file submission.

Once a sequence has proved to be effective, it can be repurposed for use in different contexts, creating a repository of proven templates. This efficient re-use of the time spent in creating sequences can help to reduce practitioners' workload.



## e-Learning in practice case studies

However, learners have also benefited. Andrew Parry, Head of e-learning at Kemnal Technology College, believes that using online activities improves conceptual understanding and cognitive ability by encouraging learners to reflect on what they are writing, participate in discussion, maintaining their interest and willingness to learn through well-designed sequences of tasks. This integrated approach challenges learners and develops their understanding of a topic. It has proved particularly successful with younger learners at Kemnal.

As with any software, LAMS works best when its functionality is carefully targeted to meet specific needs and objectives. LAMS is an innovative tool for designing learning sequences, the application of which is still under trial. The extent to which it can raise standards is yet to be established, but the trial conducted at Kemnal has produced strong indications of a positive outcome.

### Key points for effective practice

- To be successful, any application of e-learning should form part of an overall strategy that is supported by management and takes account of learners' needs and course and session objectives.
- Practitioners can share effective learning sequences by removing or adapting resources on which activities are based.
- Learners of all types benefit from a variety of activities which enable them to develop a full range of skills for successful learning.
- The flexibility of learning activity sequences can support a range of pedagogical approaches.



### Final word

**By encouraging all learners to take a more active role in lessons and by incorporating a range of pedagogical approaches in one sequence, LAMS could potentially have a long term impact on learner performance.**