EducationFocus

The Learning Services Newsletter for the Faculty of Education

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A novel role for Elliott…

Elliott Hodgeon is one of the new Vice Presidents of Edge Hill University Students' Union with responsibility for liaising with students in the Faculty of Education. Learning Services welcomes the establishment of this new post as a further opportunity to engage with the student voice. We decided to ask Elliott about how he sees himself working with our teams.

Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?
I am originally from Rochdale and studied my A levels at Holy Cross College in Bury. When I expressed an interested in entering the teaching profession my tutors there suggested that I apply to Edge Hill because of the University's excellent reputation. As a result, I

studied the BA in Primary Education for three years and really enjoyed my student experience here. I graduated with a first class degree and I have been encouraged to publish my dissertation on mathematical pedagogy. I've also recently completed the first module on the MA in Education. My role in the Students' Union is a brand new one and runs until June 2012, after which I can run for re-election for a further term if I choose to do so.

How do you see yourself working with Learning Services?
I see that I have an important part to play in acting as an intermediary between students and Learning Services. With the increasing importance of the National Student Survey, I feel that I can have a central role in helping to increase Learning Services' NSS score as well as that of the Students' Union. I talk to students on a daily basis and so if any issues are brought to me which concern Learning Services I can pass those on to the relevant staff.

How can students bring their concerns to your attention?
There are a number of ways in which students can raise issues and concerns. I will be holding a drop-in surgery in the Faculty of Education building once a week, there will be a series of Faculty Forums and we will be holding a number of focus groups for part-time students.

Do you have plans to raise your profile with part-time students?
This group represents over 60% of the student body and so we are eager to engage with them. We have been given

a grant by NUS in order to do so and this has helped in allowing us to set up the part-time focus groups. I am pleased that you have invited me to one of your outreach roadshows. I feel this is a positive approach because it will increase the partnership of Learning Services and the Students' Union. It is an opportunity for me to publicise the Union to outreach students and let them know that I am there to represent their interests.

Elliott can be contacted on 01695 657310 or email suvpeducation@edgehill.ac.uk

STOP PRESS

Decoding the hidden messages...
QR codes, pixilated black and white squares, enable access to web-based information on the go. You'll see several examples of QR codes in this newsletter.

3 Steps to Reading a QR Code:
- You need a smartphone
- Download a free app - search for barcode reader
- Point and click the camera at the code to scan and access the hidden information

A good read-ing list

Every year Learning Services receive large numbers of Faculty reading lists- over 190 in 2010/11. Have you ever wondered why we request them? As part of our drive to ensure resources match student need, we purchased over 7,000 titles last year from your lists. We also aim to improve accessibility to those lists. Michelle O'Doherty, Senior Lecturer on the Masters in Teaching & Learning programme has worked with us to develop and promote her lists since the programme began in 2010. We asked for her feedback.

How do reading lists fit with your teaching on the MTL programme?
The saying is that you 'read for a degree' and this is as true for work based professional learning as any other academic programme. Our participants want to improve their practice and they cannot do this without engaging with current thinking and the latest research - and access to this is key. The reading list is a means of providing a current map of the discipline for any practitioner engaged in professional enquiry and therefore a vital part of the 'toolkit' we offer our teachers.

Our distance learning students are working full time whilst undertaking a masters programme and they need to work smartly. The annotated list helps participants focus upon an area relevant to their practice We signpost to suggested chapters and where an ebook is available we indicate this. We don't want participants to feel overwhelmed by the reading list, rather that it gives them possible routes of interest to follow.

Can you outline your particular needs for this programme?
As a distance learning, primarily online course, the trend is increasingly towards the use of ebooks and digitised chapters, quite simply students expect that these will be available. The availability of ebooks, electronic journals, digitisation services and postal loans make the delivery of online courses and work based learning possible. Such resources gives 24/7 access enabling students to engage in professional development as

and when they choose. The ease by which they can access the resources they need is one of the key indicators of their satisfaction with the course.

What help have Learning Services given you with your lists?
My reading lists for the MTL have always been compiled with the help of Learning Services. Working in collaboration ensures that our participants have access to recommended core sources.

In addition, because I have had the support of Learning Services throughout the development of the MTL and have been able to give added value by sourcing other texts that would be useful, arranging for digitisation and obtaining e-books where necessary.

The communication with Learning Services has been excellent and our students have benefited from the professional advice and expertise available. Once the reading list is compiled for example, a direct link can be embedded in Blackboard, thus saving time for students.

Would you recommend this type of collaboration?
In my experience, delivering an online, workbased learning course like the MTL without collaborating with Learning Services would be impossible. If I have learnt one important lesson, it is to get my reading lists in as early as possible to maximise the time available for advice from the expert team. My experience of the benefits of professional dialogue means that I would recommend this type of collaboration wholeheartedly.

And finally- we also run staff development workshops on creating and revising lists -timely for those revalidating this year. For more information contact Andy Tomkins email: andy.tomkins@edgehill.ac.uk

Just Ask!

Learning Services has a new look, and a new 'Ask' desk on the first floor of the library. Ask your question and there is a wide-ranging team of our staff to give you an answer, or signpost you to specialist support. The SpLD team are located in the adjoining office, together with members of the academic skills, IT and library support teams, to provide a focused and well informed source of expertise for both students and staff. By applying their skills and knowledge, they can help you make the most of yours.

The University Library has had a face lift!!

In response to customer feedback the University Library, Ormskirk campus, has been re-modelled over the summer and is in heavy demand! There are many new features including;
- New silent study room – with a mix of formal and informal seating and individual task lighting

- Improved spaces for individual, quiet and group study – with new furniture and clearer zoning of areas
- Co-location of the law collection with law books and journals as well as group study tables
- Increased shelving for book stock to support the growth of our collection
- New PCs – with Windows 7 and Microsoft 2010
- Improved rooms and new 'pods' for 1-2-1 support and collaboration

We have already received lots of positive feedback from students and staff, both about the physical changes and the accessibility of library staff who can offer support with more specialist enquiries. We would encourage you and your students to come and have a look around!

Spotlight on…
Mark Wilcock
ICT Developer

How long have you worked within Learning Services?
I became part of Learning Services in May 2010, though I have been part of the institution since January 2005. Prior to joining Learning Services I worked within the Computing & Information Systems department.

And what is your background?
Although I have worked for the University over the past 7 years my professional career started within industry. From leaving college in the 1990s I worked for Trinity Mirror plc as a Technical Engineer. I have achieved many professional qualifications over the last 10 years but my proudest achievement is my Computing BSc Honours degree I gained part time at Edge Hill in 2010.

What does your role involve?
My role requires me to provide ICT support and development mainly for the Faculty of Education and various classroom ICT equipment located across numerous sites. Most recently I have been heavily involved in the software and hardware testing and roll out of the Windows 7 upgrade across Education classrooms. Other tasks in my role include a variety of learner support activities such as Apple Mac training and user research for educational scenarios, and invigilation in the QTS Skills Test Centre.

How do you spend your time away from work?
I love spending time with family and friends. I've a daily addiction for workouts at the gym, so I can say I love keeping fit too. I also like to relax by having an "eat whatever you want" day on either a Saturday or a Sunday.

Contact Mark at: mark.wilcock@ edgehill.a.uk

PebblePad – Getting Technical

Learning Services provide technical support for Faculty of Education students using PebblePad. There have been 4 common areas of support that we have identified and the steps below should help students successfully access and use PebblePad.

1. **Accessing PebblePad**
   A PebblePad panel with an automated login is available in Go. To add it log into Go, hover over Tools, click Add content, then click PebblePad. Alternatively, the PebblePad login page can be accessed directly at www.pebblepad.co.uk/edgehill.
2. **Logging into PebblePad**
   The PebblePad username and password are synchronised with the Edge Hill network username and password. Edge Hill password problems can be resolved via a Learning Services Helpdesk.
3. **Running PebblePad**
   PebblePad can be run on Internet Explorer 6 or above, Firefox 1.6 or above, Opera 7 or above and Safari 2.0 or above. It requires Adobe Flash 7 or above and Javascript enabled. A browser check is available on the PebblePad login screen to see if you meet these requirements.
4. **Uploading files to PebblePad**
   During the file upload process PebblePad will use pop-up windows, so enabling pop-ups temporarily or permanently from www.pebblepad.co.uk will allow file uploads.

If students have any other problems with PebblePad, an enquiry can be logged with a Learning Services Helpdesk (Lsdesk@edgehill.ac.uk or by calling 01695 584286) who will then investigate.

Supporting you – online

Did you know that we have developed new online materials aimed at helping students to get started in higher education and also with helping them to develop a full range of academic and information skills? A series of mini presentations covering all aspects of Induction such as logging in to the Edge Hill University network and providing vital information introducing students to Learning Edge are now available. Other new materials include short online videos ranging from structuring an academic essay to finding your reading list and giving students an alternative medium to access information.

Faculty of Education students will also be interested in a new 'Learner Support' tab on the Resources page which provides a range of self-help guides covering information and academic skills. Tailored for education students, they include materials giving a step-by-step guide to finding information and developing research skills in order to get the best from our full range of electronic and printed resources. The tab also provides links to other useful sites providing advice and guidance on academic skills and may be of particular interest for those students writing at levels 6 and 7.

Find all these exciting new resources at:
edgehill.ac.uk/ls/gettingstarted/
edgehill.ac.uk/ls/support/academicskills/
edgehill.ac.uk/ls/resources/education/#learner

Learning Edge goes mobile!

Last year students told us they wanted to access Blackboard, now Learning Edge with a mobile app. Happily, this year we were able to give the students what they wanted and the Blackboard Mobile™ Learn app was launched on the 5th September.

Use is growing rapidly, and we've only received positive feedback from staff and students who have used it so far.

Students on the Clinical Education programmes commented that they find Blackboard Mobile™ Learn particularly useful as they are distance students who work full time. They have found the app is helping them fit their studies around their busy workload, because they can now easily read content material and contribute to the online discussion boards in their breaks or whilst on call.

Being able to use their own mobile device is comforting as they don't have to become acquainted with a new computer or technology - they already know their phone or tablet, they have it setup just the way they like it and can navigate easily and quickly.

Often getting computer time in work (or even at home for some!) is difficult, so again using a device that most people now carry around, enables them to study on the move whenever and wherever is most convenient.

Many of the Clinical Education students started using Blackboard Mobile™ Learn in a 'sandpit' discussion forum where they could play and experiment in a place separate from the actual course forums, without fear of breaking anything! Perhaps this is something you could provide for your students?

If you haven't already, why don't you download the app to see for yourself how useful it is and spread the word ... by recommending the Blackboard Mobile™ Learn app to your students today!

Apple   Android   Blackberry

The Learning Services year on your desk

All colleagues should now have their Learning Services desktop calendar. As a new venture we would really appreciate your feedback. One of the key drivers for us was to highlight some of the our services and support including staff development for all our monthly themes.

Over the next few months we will be offering:

- Ref works (sessions for both new users and advanced)
- Literature searching
- Introduction to publications: print, electronic and other media
- Keeping up to date using Web 2.0 social media
- Emerging technologies – we are delivering a session every month around new technology and innovations
- Bespoke sessions for Learning Edge

For more information and to book onto the workshops please visit the HR staff development wiki on the intranet.

Learning Edge- 5 Top Tips for Instructors

There is a wealth of good practice taking place in Learning Edge. Here are just a few ideas to help you help your students, enhance the visual appeal and relevance of content within your course and save you time.

LEARNING EDGE BLACKBOARD 9.1

Check your students' progress with the Performance Dashboard

1. Embed YouTube videos into discussion posts with Add Mashup
2. Monitor which key readings and resources are being accessed with Statistics Tracking
3. Create custom grade book views of selected students or assignments with Smart Views
4. See how your course really looks to your students with Add Test Student

To find out how to put all of these top tips into practice visit http://www.eshare.edgehill.ac.uk and browse the Learning Edge guides.

Edge Hill University

Contact Details
Learning Services enquiry and help line 01695 584286 or #4286
EDGEHILL.AC.UK/LS

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