



Newsletter December 2011

Bridge to Success (B2S) offers open, free content to help students cross the barrier to gaining the skills to learn, providing "bridging" content in mathematics and learning to learn. Thanks to a Next Generation Learning Challenges grant, the project began in April 2011 and has now reached its halfway point! Congratulations are due to all the team for contributing new ideas and continued enthusiasm against a backdrop of meeting tough deadlines. So where are we at the halfway stage?

The First Pilot makes a Splash!

The first of B2S's pilots using the Learning to Learn (L2L) material, completed in November. Shelley Hintz, Coordinator of Student Engagement from the University of Maryland University College led the first cohort, who were preparing for college-level classes at UMUC. Students "found the L2L materials helpful" and "the course easy to navigate and access."



Successful pilots of L2L materials as part of the Step Up for Success, Reading and Writing for Success and Adult Basic Education Programs at AACC Arundel Mills campus also completed during October/November. A future Step Up pilot of Succeed with Math (SWiM) at AACC is planned for January 2012. With over 50 institutions and organizations across the US interested in piloting and using B2S materials, the project team are currently preparing for the next phase of pilots and the release of the SWiM materials in January 2012.

If you are interested in piloting L2L or SWiM at your institution, contact David Lascu at the email address below for more information.



B2S Project Meeting

B2S project members from all partner institutions met in Maryland in September to spend valuable work time together. Much was achieved during the week covering all the main strands of the project. Especially important to the team were face-to-face discussions around the direction that the research should take and the methodology to be used, plus defining the structure of the mathematics course and how best to present it online. Members of the team also presented to the Maryland Distance Learning Association and led a webinar "Enhancing Social Presence." A further project team meeting is planned for Spring 2012.

Research and Reflection

With all new students enrolling at AACC set to use L2L materials as part of their Orientation program in January 2012, ensuring that relevant data is captured for research and evaluation is of paramount importance. Team members from across the project are collaborating to ensure that data collection occurs regardless of how B2S content is used. In addition to accounting for the different needs and contexts of piloting institutions, team members have been examining the concept of "openness" in relation to B2S materials and Open Educational Resources (OER). Working with OER specialists the project is currently examining different ways to enable educators to tailor B2S materials to their own requirements. These will be tested via a small number of experimental pilots.



Team members continue to gather information on individual users of B2S content, interview instructors who have piloted the materials and periodically conduct research action interviews, capturing the thoughts and ideas of the team, as the project develops.

At the beginning of December 2011 LabSpace had been visited by 431 unique users, of which 90 had registered to use L2L materials.

Webinar Series

Following a successful series of webinars in 2011 (including presentations on "Retention in Distance Education" and "Facilitating new forms of discourse for learning and teaching") 2012 will begin with a focus on the research methodology and remixing OER materials. Further details available shortly!

Register your interest and view details of past and future webinars, via the "Educator" tab on the B2S website.

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