



Newsletter March 2012

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 successfully published all its content online as free Open Educational Resources (OER): <http://labspace.open.ac.uk/b2s>

Bridge to Success is MDLA 2011 Distance Program of the Year!

We are very pleased to announce that on 1 March 2012 B2S was awarded Distance Learning Program of the Year (2011) by the Maryland Distance Learning Association (MDLA.) Congratulations to everyone on this outstanding achievement! Speakers at the 11th Annual Spring conference addressed a wide range of questions in Distance education. Kathy Warner (UMUC) and Sabrina Marschal (Shippensburg) presented on *Bridge to Success: Learning to Learn*. Sabrina is currently piloting all of L2L, which has been incorporated into a new course at Shippensburg: *Introduction to Higher Education*. Our US Project Manager David Lascu also provided an overview to the project, walking participants through the courses available, and showing how they promote retention and recruitment.



President of MDLA, Rhonda Spells (l), presents Jean Runyon, Dean at AACC (centre) and Kathy Warner, Associate Dean at UMUC with the award



Diverse applications: Diverse audiences

Bridge to Success materials were designed to engage users with real world examples, develop self-reflection and confidence... and help transform lives! Getting the "word out" about B2S has been central to making institutions across Maryland and beyond aware of the project and how they can get involved. In addition to visiting institutions and meeting with educators and students, team members have been tirelessly promoting the project and the benefits of OER.



Sabrina Marschal (l) and Kathy Warner at MDLA 2011

With the US administration focused on decreasing unemployment, The Public Policy Institute of California predicts that 41% of jobs in 2025 will require a college degree. College education has become a pre-requisite of many entry-level employment opportunities and increases earning potential. Our widening audience is a testimony to the relevance and flexibility of B2S materials: from inclusion in library resources, Freshman Year experience programs, workforce development programs in the US, pre-GED (General Educational Development program), GED and high school diploma students, to adult basic education courses serving marginalised populations, courses not only

aim to educate users, but also expose them to online learning, whilst inviting them to consider their future life and education goals.

Spreading the B2S message is Prince Georges Community College (PGCC), Maryland. Mailing over 8.000 people who previously enquired about opportunities at their institution, PGCC is offering potential students the chance to take both L2L and Success with Math (SWiM) as taster courses. PGCC is a fantastic example of how the project's original remit of enhancing retention and recruitment has expanded. As David Lascu explained "the use of B2S materials to increase enrolment is pivotal to the project's success."

The project also continues to engage with practitioners, administrators and educators through online webinars and presentations: Open Education week saw team members discuss adoption of the project, debate "Big" and "Little" OER, and work with SCORE (Support Centre for Open Resources in Education) to create a "commitment to open education" online

petition and videos showcasing OER projects such as B2S. In the UK team members updated colleagues at the Open University on the project's progress at the annual Learn About Fair: the OU event for learning about technological developments in education.



OU Learn About Fair
Left: Chetz Colwell (l) and Anne Jellis discuss accessibility issues with participants. Cathy Jones (below) on the eBooks stall

More Project Success!

With the SWiM course now live, at the beginning of March 2012 775 unique users had viewed, and 164 registered, to use the materials. L2L registered user numbers increased to 368, whilst 1389 unique users have viewed the course.



Project team members at the OU Institute of Educational Technology (IET) recently completed a full accessibility audit of LabSpace. We are pleased to announce that the platform for our materials is both US and UK accessibility standard compliant!

Looking Forward

Busy times ahead for the team in March and April. Later this month the UK research team will be visiting Maryland to meet students and instructors piloting B2S material. Look out for a full report on the trip in April's newsletter! During April team members will be presenting at, and participating in, the Open Courseware Consortium 2012 conference and the American Association of Community Colleges annual convention.

