



# Newsletter 08

## INTRODUCTION

As the Engaging Diversity DP's first newsletter of 2007, we are pleased that the research programme is now in full swing, with several thousand due to take part. The wealth of information available on learners' feedback and opinions on equality & diversity issues, and obtaining valuable research on e-learning methods is phenomenal. Since the commencement of the project the DP provided innovative and internet based e-learning modules to 2340 beneficiaries.

## PROGRESS SO FAR

The cumulative figures for modules completed so far are:

- Race Module = 2040 beneficiaries finished
- Disability Module = 1420 beneficiaries finished
- Gender Module = 1160 beneficiaries finished
- Age Module = 847 beneficiaries finished
- Welsh Language = 540 beneficiaries finished
- Religious Beliefs = 331 beneficiaries finished

All organisations to some degree have developed their own style and approach to deploying the modules which in turn provides valuable information to innovative approaches to learning using different methods. We hope that the information from these approaches will lead to a better understanding of e-learning. Partners are also helping by providing personalised case studies to include in the Mark 2 Versions.

Another important advancement in the coming months is how to get the best out of e-communities, and to train individuals to run

*Our Modules include:*

*Age*

*Disability*

*Gender*

*Religion & Belief*

*Sexual Orientation*

*The Welsh Language*

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effective e-communities of practice. E-communities can be used to create new networks, share ideas, empower beneficiaries, and develop best practice amongst partners, and also have the potential to provide alternative work structures that can assist in work-life balance.

The combination of e-learning modules and e-communities can be engaging and informative. Partners are finding this approach rewarding and interesting way to communicate as it allows beneficiaries to have a method in feeding back their thoughts and emotions on the modules as this reflects their needs.

## RESEARCH

The University of Wales (UWB) submitted 2 reports on *Existing Pedagogy and Learning Methods in e-Learning* and a *Report on ICT Skills & e-Learning*; to the partners at the 5<sup>th</sup> DP Meeting held in Llandrindod Wells on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2007. The purpose of the reports was to investigate current research

into existing pedagogical practices and methods in e-learning environment, to consider leading trends in e-learning, and to examine current technical developments that are shaping future e-learning, and evaluate the effectiveness of e-learning with particular consideration for the effects on the affective domain of the participants.

Eleven Coordinators from 9 project partners were interviewed and the findings demonstrated that a clear 'digital divide' exists in the partner organisations between skilled regular ICT users and unskilled or low skilled non-regular ICT users. E-learning in organisations is possible if a number of factors are in place. Many of these can be managed by the organisation involved, if not actually controlled by them.

- Technology must be in place.
- ICT skills of learners must be sufficient
- Organisational culture must support the activity
- Staff must want to participate

e-Learning has a great

potential to support learning for employees. The multimedia aspects on our modules make the content enjoyable and accessible, and the delivery options mean it can be used in almost any learning situation where the technology is available. Most employees now have the ICT skills and experience to make good use of the new medium. Well designed learning systems are simple and easy to use, so they do not interfere with the learning. The barriers it raises for low skilled learners can be managed and reduced. The modules developed by the Engaging Diversity DP address these issues.

Please contact BTC Group Ltd if you wish to obtain copies of these reports or they can also be found in the Equalities Network Library.

## TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERS

The next TNP meeting will be in Olsztyn Poland in late April. Partners continue to work together through e-communities to development an e-community guideline.