

South Yorkshire e-Learning Programme

SYeLP

www.syelp.org



The South Yorkshire e-Inclusion Projects



achievement

self esteem



access

inclusion

progression



collaboration



transition



communication

relationships



personalisation

family

learning



life-choices



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The South Yorkshire e-learning Programme (SYeLP) was set up in 2001 and is a partnership of the four local authorities in South Yorkshire: Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and Sheffield City Council.

SYeLP is funded by the European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund through Objective 1 and supported by the Learning and Skills Council.

The project is aimed at improving the digital skill levels of the current and future workforce in the sub-region, and at harnessing e-learning across the curriculum. It involves secondary schools, colleges and community organisations across South Yorkshire.

The South Yorkshire e-Inclusion Projects

In July 2007 the South Yorkshire e-Learning programme approved investment in a series of one year projects designed:

- To test and support use of technology to address social and educational exclusion
- To identify 'what works' and support the adoption of this effective practice

By e-inclusion, we mean the use of appropriate digital technology to provide access to personalised learning for those isolated from the mainstream educational system. These learners are a spectrum of young people who are excluded from educational entitlement by force of circumstances, which may include:

- disaffection with existing educational provision;
- anxiety and phobia about attending mainstream classes or schools;
- long-term illness;
- events such as family change and teenage pregnancy.

It was recognised that inclusion, even without the 'e', is a complex agenda with significant variations reflecting local partnerships and specialist learner groupings such as Looked After Children, hospital and home services and Pupil Referral Units. Effective projects would therefore need to be localised and specialised.

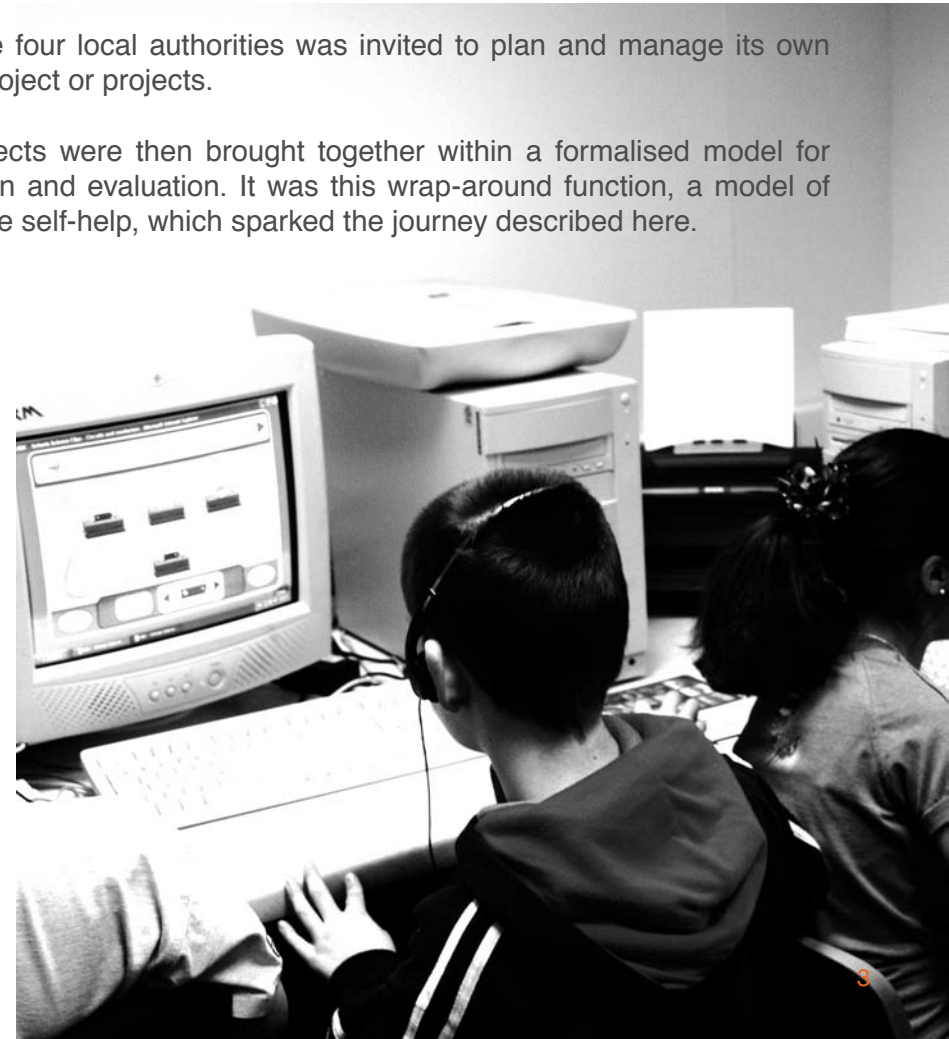
However, it was clear that similar challenges of practice, effectiveness, empowerment and sustainability are experienced across the range of inclusion and re-engagement services, largely irrespective of partnership or

client group. Furthermore the practitioners are often professionally isolated on account of their specialisms and the nature of their mission. They often lack the critical mass to share practice, to solve systemic problems and to access value added funding.

The South Yorkshire e-inclusion projects were therefore explicitly structured to take both the specialism and common ground in to account.

Each of the four local authorities was invited to plan and manage its own localised project or projects.

These projects were then brought together within a formalised model for collaboration and evaluation. It was this wrap-around function, a model of collaborative self-help, which sparked the journey described here.



CAMEL

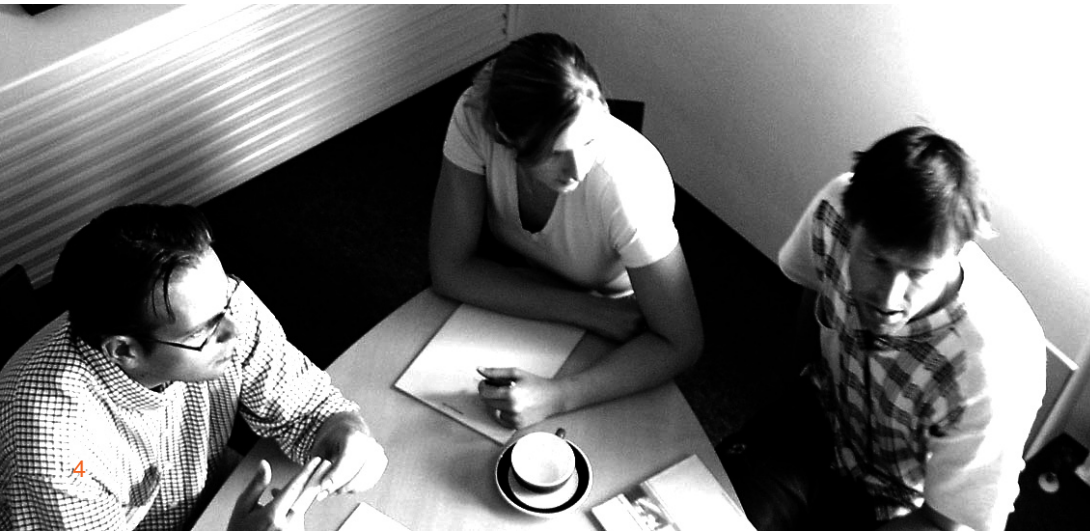
CAMEL stands for Collaborative Approaches to the Management of E-Learning. A “CAMEL method” has become established through a series of successful e-learning projects in Higher and Further Education, the first of which was run in 2005-2006¹ by JISCinfoNet and the Association for Learning Technology (ALT)².

The CAMEL method is explicitly modelled on an approach taken by a Uruguayan farming self-help group. It enables a dispersed group of managers and practitioners to collaborate and share their practice in using technology to support teaching and learning in a diverse range of contexts.

Key features of CAMEL projects include:

- Infrequent face-to-face exchange visits between all participants, with social as well as professional activities
- Each partner organisation’s activities being subjected to critical and supportive scrutiny during each of the visits, with each concentrating in turn on the work of one partner
- Active facilitation of each visit to a collectively agreed plan, with a different focus for each
- On-line communication between participants in between visits³
- An explicit commitment to openness – rather than showcasing their work to each other, participants concentrate on the issues and activities on which they need support and advice

In the context of this project, therefore, each local authority committed to enabling between three and five staff to attend each of the workshops; with participants drawn from a range of roles including: teaching staff; support staff; ICT support services; SYeLP Borough Project Manager; e-Inclusion Project Leader.



¹ The project was from the Higher Education Funding Council Leadership, Governance, and Management Fund – <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lgm/build/lgmfund/>

² <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/>, <http://www.alt.ac.uk/>

³ In the case of the activity described here we used the social networking system NING – <http://www.ning.com/>

Enabled, Capable & Confident

In *Harnessing Technology 2008*, Becta has set out the importance of 'step change', of climbing the ladder from simply being technology enabled through increasing professional capability to confident technology supported learning, offering the sort learner choice that will particularly benefit vulnerable groups.

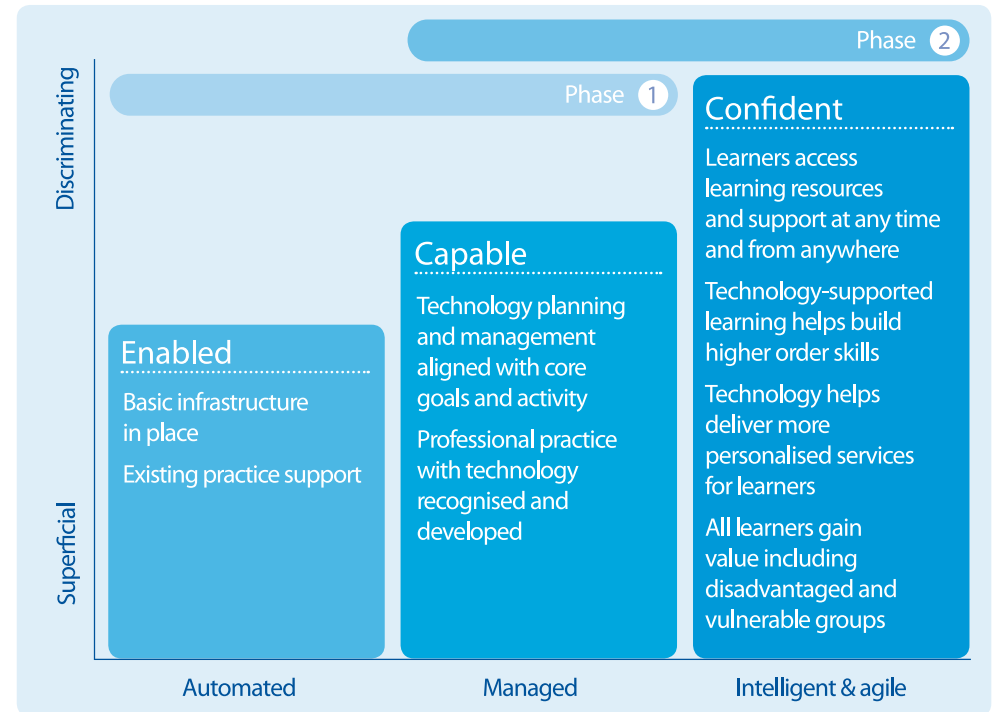
At the outset of our CAMEL journey, our group exchanges emphasised that climbing this ladder is an (ad)venture that must jointly and dynamically involve practitioners and management (as well as the learner).

Furthermore it was very clear that different practitioners were in very different places on that journey, resulting from a combination of factors including

- Personal experience and expertise
- Physical learning locations
- Timing and focus of funding
- Management decisions and systemic approaches

However, as our stories unfold, it will also become clear that 'step change' is not necessarily slow or linear. Furthermore, it may or may not be sustainable once achieved, especially in services supporting vulnerable learners.

Developing an 'e-confident' system



¹ Diagram taken from Becta's "Harnessing Technology: Next Generation Learning 2008-14", which can be downloaded from: <http://publications.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?resID=37346>

Barnsley

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council's allocation of the SYeLP e-inclusion funding was wholly assigned to the Springwell Community Special School which encompasses BESD (Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulty) students, the Key Stage 4 Youth Support Programme and is Barnsley's Pupil Referral Unit.

Due to the number of exciting ICT initiatives taking place within Barnsley, it was decided that, rather than introducing another initiative, Barnsley would spend its funding on improving the current ICT network and infrastructure. This would help embed the use of ICT in teaching and learning at Springwell, thereby supporting the development of a diverse set of courses for different abilities, skills and interests.

These courses were aimed at delivering the following outcomes:-

- Increased self esteem
- Academic achievement
- Improved ICT skills and knowledge
- Preparation for working life
- Access to a wider range of life choices

Here we introduce the three projects that have directly benefited from this funding.

Environmental Group

The Environmental Group is made up of male students within the Youth Support Programme. The majority of them have been excluded permanently due to behavioural, emotional and/or social issues and have difficulties staying in mainstream schools.

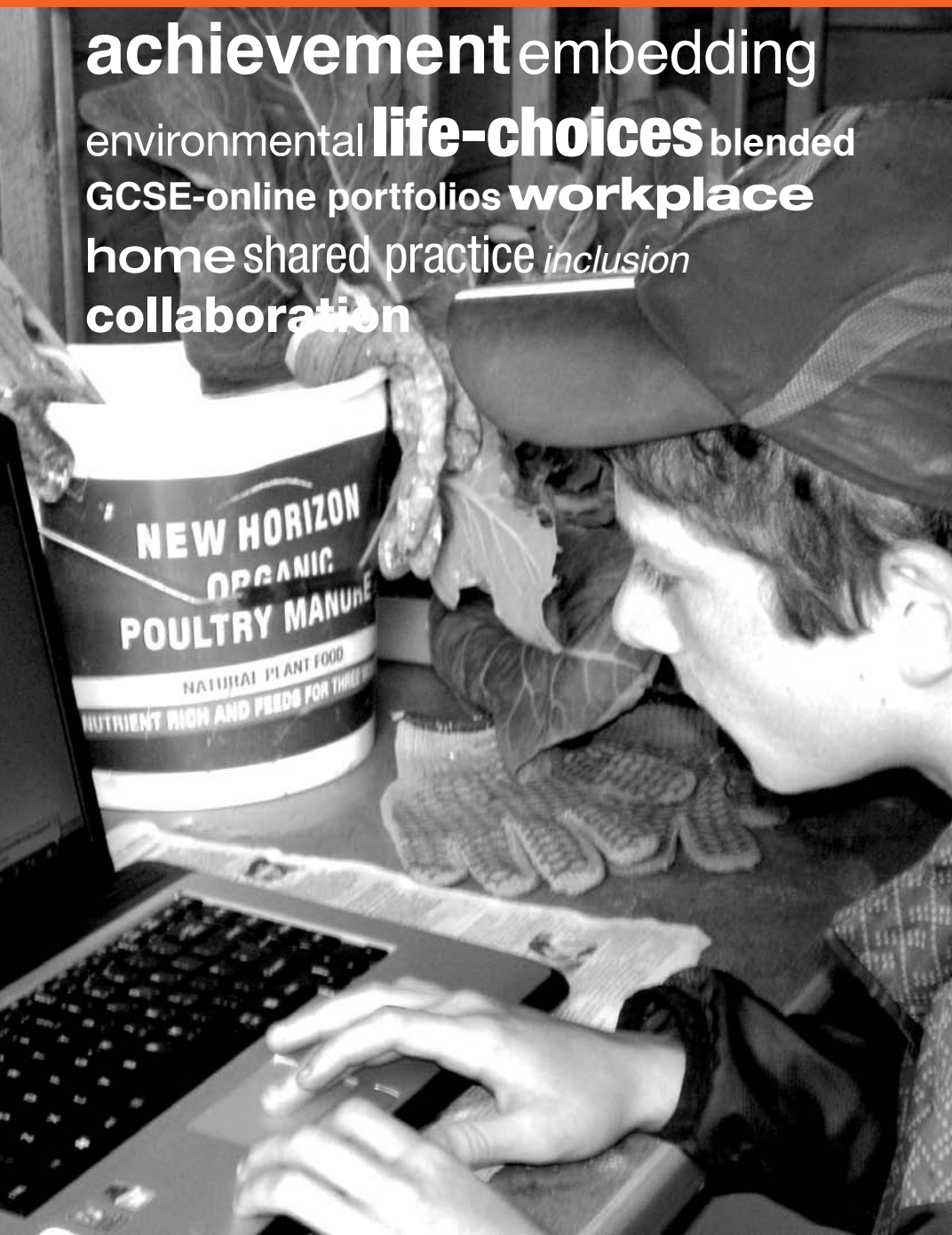
These students are all recognised as having 'hands-on' aptitudes rather than academic classroom abilities. Although the majority struggle with basic key skills, they have all shown a keen interest, and have demonstrable abilities and skills, in practical outdoor activities.

To support and nurture these interests and skills, increase self esteem and help the students attain a recognised qualification, the group focuses on a number of environmental initiatives. These include the management of an allotment, regeneration work at Howell Wood and clearing the Royston Canal, where the students will be rewarded with fishing rights.

The group are working towards an accreditation which is equivalent to a GCSE. Each student completes diaries and worksheets in order to build a portfolio. The funding has enabled Springwell to purchase laptops and memory sticks, which allow students to complete their work whilst out working on the site. It is felt that using ICT with this group is an innovative way of motivating the students as well as increasing their basic key skills and helping them gain accreditation.

Barnsley

achievement embedding
environmental **life-choices** blended
GCSE-online portfolios **workplace**
home shared practice *inclusion*
collaboration



Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)

Barnsley currently has a number of tutors employed to deliver tutoring to students who are not at school. Instead, they learn at a variety of locations such as at home, in resource centres, Youth Centres and libraries. These students all have difficulties accessing mainstream provision for various reasons such as medical, anxious and phobic, and teenage pregnancy, so they need to be taught in smaller groups or one-to-one. This ensures that they receive a good quality education leading to improved attainment, standard qualifications and access to a wider range of life choices.

A number of laptops, memory sticks and educational software were purchased to support these students and their tutors in delivering and receiving education. At the moment, they are being deployed on a needs led basis but it is anticipated that, as further funding becomes available to purchase internet connectivity, it will be possible to deploy the equipment on a long-term basis so that students can use it within their homes.

The students are currently using the laptops to access online training opportunities such as ASDAN and Adult Literacy and Adult Numeracy. The equipment is also used to help the pupils build their portfolios and allows them to access the Studywiz VLE and Portal.

Without the laptops, these students would have no way of using ICT to compile their portfolios or complete any ICT based qualification or online coursework. The laptops have allowed them to gain experience of the world of technology, without which the digital-divide would have been further perpetuated.

Barnsley

Collaborative Working with our South Yorkshire Counterparts

The development of an online programme which allows students to gain an English GCSE in their own time has resulted in collaborative work between Barnsley Council and Sheffield College, arising during the course of the e-inclusion project.

Through the CAMEL meetings, Springwell Community Special School and extended Services within Behaviour Support learnt of the GCSE online project and were excited and enthusiastic about its potential to benefit their students.

Staff from KS4 Youth Support Programme (Springwell) visited Sheffield College in April 2008 for an introduction to the learning resource. Sheffield College staff delivered a training day to help the Barnsley staff understand the main barriers to learning and how the blended GCSE resource could be used to meet the needs of the students in English and Literacy. The outcomes of this day were excellent, not only in terms of increasing staff knowledge of the resource, but also in building relationships and sharing ideas across the two boroughs.

Benefits of this programme are:-

- It is accessible from anywhere with an internet connection
- It offers Blended Learning, engaging students through both paper based and online learning resources
- There are no time limits on completion
- Support is available for the tutors from the college
- It is free

Next Steps

This is currently a free resource and so it is intended that all students on Barnsley Youth Support Programme will be enrolled on this course. Students have already started on the pre-GCSE coursework and tutors have identified those who will be able to undertake the actual GCSE from September 2008 by completing the necessary coursework online.

Without the CAMEL meetings, it is unlikely that Barnsley would have had the opportunity to find out and participate in such an exciting initiative.



Doncaster

Doncaster undertook a bold approach to the SYeLP funding by focusing attention on one project, E-Learn4life, which aimed to employ the effective use of e-learning resources and techniques to benefit individuals, families and society.

From experience, the team considered that success happens more frequently if the whole family unit is involved. Therefore E-Learn4life was designed to positively involve all family members and to encourage everyone to use the resources provided.

It was felt that an approach via schools would not be suitable, productive or cost effective as the funding might become absorbed into general school budgets and produce no discernible positive outcomes.

By liaising with schools and local social agencies, the team selected people who they felt would benefit most from E-Learn4life. The schools and agencies also highlighted the areas of education that would be more suitable for the recipients.

E-Learn4life

The project started in December 2007. Working in co-operation with social and educational agencies, it identified members of the community who were given the opportunity to use e-learning to improve IT skills, correct educational disadvantage and enhance life chances. Laptop computers were provided and SMART targets were agreed. Software was installed as required and progress monitored. If the clients met the SMART targets at the end of the course, then they were allowed to keep the laptops.

Although courses were focused on one specific named learner, encouragement was given to all family members to participate and develop individual learning programmes.

The scheme helped over 90 young people and their families in the Doncaster area. Participants included young parents, people who used English as an additional language and students in interim tuition. It also targeted pupils in hospital, those who had Autistic Spectrum Disorders and those with specific and severe educational needs.

All applicants were very excited about the possibility of earning and learning with a laptop, so participation exceeded the team's expectations. One family recorded over 70 hours learning in one week by various family members.

Software included basic literacy and numeracy programmes, word-processing, spreadsheets, keyboard skills, English as an Additional Language and social context education. Supervision was given to learners by project staff and this meant there was a quick response to problems, keeping frustration to a minimum.

The project saw an explosion of self-esteem and confidence in all the learners and brought great satisfaction to those who ran it. Working with agencies and families created a springboard to enhance the life chances of all the participants.

Doncaster

Here is what the supporting agencies and their clients have said about their experiences:

“Kelly* is a single mother with an 11 year-old son who has Down’s Syndrome. She is looking to improve both her and her son’s basic skills so she can offer more family support and enhance her life and employment chances.”

“Joe* was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at an early age, resulting in him staying in hospital three to four times a year for life, for two or three weeks at a time... I strongly believe e-learning will benefit Joe and his family and go some way to enhancing and equalising his educational chances.”

“Our whole family has worked on the computer and improved our skills and English. Michael* is more confident at school and enjoys his new found knowledge of IT.”

“We have given our clients the technology they need to access good learning experiences. They have responded positively because we have invested in them. Their esteem and confidence have improved tremendously.”

“I liked the NLN modules. They helped me know how to behave when I wasn’t sure...”

“Please continue this project. It has done great things for our students...”

“I do think it is a brilliant project....Parents and grandparents have had the courage to get to grips with modern technology”

“Clients have responded positively because you are investing in them. Confidence has taken off...”

“Visits to the student’s home every few weeks in the start up period allowed them to keep up their motivation and achieve their targets... which some of them thought were impossible!”

laptops content
personalisation family
learning relationships **support**
agencies **incentives** rewards
self esteem



Rotherham

Rotherham joined the SYeLP e-inclusion project late but a successful team of committed educationalists with knowledge of vulnerable groups was quickly set up. This group met and networked with a forum of like minded people through the CAMEL visits, sharing ideas and airing concerns in a very open environment.

The Rotherham projects have helped some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the authority by re-engaging them with learning and giving them more opportunities to access the internet and learning platforms. Programmes such as Notschool and mobile internet access have helped the Hospital Teaching and Home Tuition Service, Looked After Children and permanently excluded learners.

The project has made it possible to:

- Enhance the sparse ICT facilities at a primary emotional & behavioural unit
- Pilot and evaluate the pros and cons of virtual schools
- Equip mobile teachers/tutors with laptops, a sustainable internet connection and up to date engaging software

Here are some examples.

Mobile Internet Access for HTHTS

The Hospital Teaching and Home Tuition Service provides education for pupils of all ages and abilities who are unable to attend school for medical reasons. The service exists to provide an educational experience as similar to school as possible.

Unfortunately, some pupils do not have access to a computer or the internet at home and therefore their tuition has not been as wide ranging or as stimulating as it could have been. Wherever possible, pupils are transported to centres where internet access is available. But in cases where this is not possible, some pupils have missed out on enhanced educational experiences.

With the SYeLP funding, this has been addressed by providing mobile internet access via laptops. These laptops allow home tutors to offer their pupils a greater range of activities and also give house-bound pupils a wider window on the world. Under tutor supervision, pupils are able to e-mail their friends as well as send and receive work. They are able to engage in research, use online simulations and utilise educational websites just as they would do if they were in school. In short, they have equality of access to the Internet.

The laptops also benefit the tutors as the mobile internet access enhances communication across the service. This means that tutors no longer need to work in isolation as information sharing via the internet is now much easier.

Rotherham

Engagement through Notschool

Sarah* is a 15-year old who has been permanently excluded from mainstream schools in Rotherham. She became disaffected with learning for a variety of reasons including sexual abuse when she was younger, ADHD, difficulties at home due to marital breakdown and also substance abuse.

Since being permanently excluded, Sarah has tried a range of courses including adult literacy, numeracy and IT, as well as more vocational options such as beauty therapy, construction and hairdressing. Factors such as her inability to sit still or concentrate for any length of time made it difficult for her to complete these courses. She also had a lot of absences because she refused to use public transport or taxis to reach the training providers and wanted to stay at home with her mother who was concerned about her safety in town.

Due to these issues it became obvious that another route was required to help bring Sarah back to learning. This route was e-learning and was delivered via Notschool, a virtual online learning community, accessed through an Apple computer with broadband connection in the home and is available 24/7. Sarah joined Notschool in collaboration with Sheffield LEA. Since joining Notschool, Sarah and her mother have both been much happier. The system is well suited to Sarah because it allows her to work from home so her mother does not worry about her whereabouts or playing truant. Notschool also offers flexible working times and access to an online mentor.

Sarah has made an excellent start. She is re-engaged with learning and has a much more positive attitude. She actively asks for more work and her behaviour has improved. Sarah is starting to look to the future and has achieved some valuable accreditation which will help her progress. She wants to continue with her learning to do even more. She would ultimately like to join the police force and knows that by continuing her e-learning this goal is more achievable.



re-engagement
mobile access collaboration
positive progression
accreditation achievement
no size fits all point of need

Sheffield

The Sheffield e-inclusion project was developed because of a need for an online learning service for excluded pupils that offered greater flexibility than existing models.

By providing students with computer, printer and broadband facilities, the project aimed to enable access to a purpose built Learning Platform. A Moodle based e-learning environment was established at www.springlane.org.uk, on which students were registered, and from which they could access their courses and tuition. Each student was also assigned an 'e-tutor' who worked with them both online and on a face-to-face basis via home visits.

In our experience, the model implemented was unique in that it allowed for:

- Personalised Learning
- Short periods of attendance
- An emphasis on achieving qualifications
- The provision of pastoral care
- Opportunities for social interaction with other students
- Earlier intervention to prevent complete disengagement

- Earlier transitions back to mainstream education
- Access to work experience and work based learning
- More emphasis on progression



A School Phobic

Leanne* was referred to the Spring Lane e-learning programme from the Sheffield Notschool programme. She was a school-phobic Year 11 student, who stopped attending her school whilst in Year 10. The primary reason for her transfer was that her parents were concerned that she would be leaving secondary education without any of the GCSE certifications she needed to get a place at the local college.

Her school was contacted and was highly co-operative in providing details of work completed, examination boards and syllabi. Because of this partnership, Leanne was able to prepare for her GCSE entry in Mathematics and Religious Studies. She was a hardworking student who was willing to put in the effort to make up for lost time and she quickly established good working relationships with tutors who helped her online, at home and eventually at Spring Lane College.

Although Leanne would not attend her secondary school, she was willing to come in to Spring Lane, initially to do coursework assignments and eventually for revision sessions and tutorials. At first she was picked up from her home and driven into Spring Lane, but as she became more at ease with the environment she started making her own way in. Leanne also came in to sit her GCSE examinations in Maths and Religious Studies. She also successfully sat Levels 1 and 2 ALAN testing in Literacy.

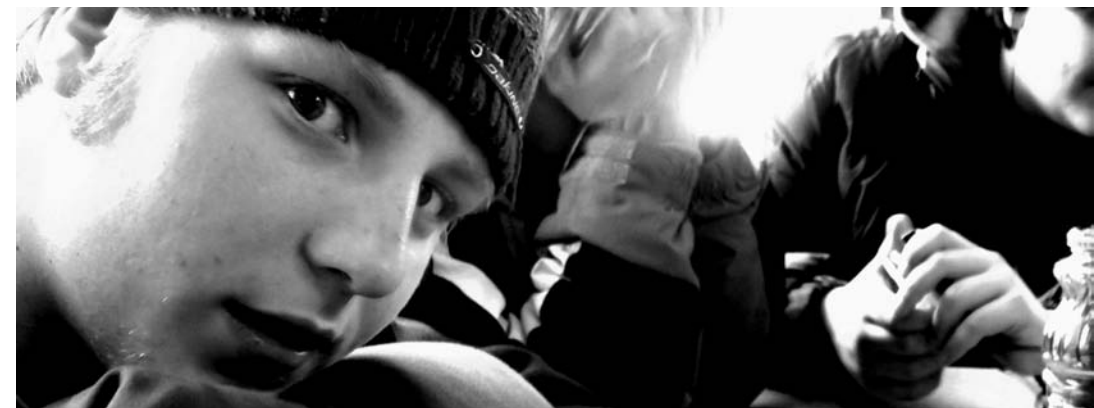
She made good use of the Learning Platform, where it was possible to set up an online Religious Studies course exclusively for her. She had previous experience of online learning through her Notschool activities, and this benefitted her ability, and willingness, to communicate with tutors via the Learning Platform. With the help of her tutors, Leanne has also looked at potential college courses and they also helped her with the application form, ensuring that it was submitted.

A disruptive student

Jamie* had been attending Spring Lane since Year 10, but was proving to be a highly problematic and disruptive student. He had been withdrawn from classes due to his behaviour and he was reduced to coming in for a few hours per week, on a one-to-one basis. When Jamie joined the e-learning programme, it was seen as an additional measure to keep him positively engaged in the learning process. He still attended his regular placements for two days a week as well as coming in to Spring Lane for two hour sessions twice a week, and worked on the e-learning activities for the rest of the time.

This provided a mix which worked well for Jamie as he was not confined to working online at specific hours. He was able to work when it fitted in with his domestic arrangements and this was evidenced by some of the evening and night time postings which he made. He was one of the first students to make the most of the Learning Platform for communication and uploading work and proved keen to use the facilities

He also developed a sense of achievement and was quick to inform staff when he had successfully completed a practice test, meaning speedy positive feedback could be provided. Although Jamie was not an academically strong student, he was eventually able to develop the ability to persevere with tasks which was a significant result. This allowed him to achieve Level 1 ALAN testing in Literacy and Numeracy.



A family history of disengagement

Sadiq* was referred to Spring Lane in the winter term, but had not attended and did not intend to do so. Both he and his father were disenchanted with the education system as a result of their negative experiences with a former school, which led to his eventual referral. Part of his problems in school had stemmed from cultural difficulties which had led to misunderstandings and confrontation. As a result of this, he was at high risk of dropping out of education altogether.

When he initially started on the programme, his father was very demanding of the tutors' time and appeared to believe we were offering a home tuition service. Over a period of time, good working relationships were established between the staff and the family. Sadiq maintained a balance between his online learning activities and more 'traditional' methods of learning. It was necessary for his tutor to spend more time on home visits focusing on his studies in English, a subject which he found challenging, whereas the Maths and Science could be supported to a greater extent via the online facilities.

As a result of the team's continued efforts, Sadiq was persuaded to come in to Spring Lane to complete the coursework assignments for his Maths syllabus. After coming in to the school on several occasions, his concerns were allayed and he increasingly enjoyed the opportunity to meet other students.

Sadiq successfully took GCSE examinations in English Language, Maths, and Science and was offered a provisional place on a college course. His father has become a strong supporter of Spring Lane College activities and has thanked the team on a regular basis for positively re-engaging his son.

PRU non-attenders **connectivity**
moodle personalisation **1:1** e-tutor
communication transition
qualifications
progression



Lessons Learned

The CAMEL exchange experiences have highlighted 'what works' towards overcoming isolation, accessing entitlement and achieving inclusion. They have reminded us that learning is for life, not just in school and for school. They have taught us that, in the most challenging areas of inclusion and engagement, the best work is done by good practitioners, amongst whom enthusiasm is contagious.

Such practitioners value opportunities to

1. Break out of the professional isolation inherent in highly specialised work
2. Share practice across the spectrum of disadvantaged client groups
3. Address issues across role and discipline boundaries in trusted, task focused, collaborative groups
4. Harness technology that makes practical sense

They recognise their learners typically to be

5. Disengaged and isolated from support services and opportunities
6. Challenged by low self-esteem as much as by any other disadvantage
7. Denied equal opportunity to access quality infrastructure

8. Frustrated when technology means 'one size fits all', not personal choice
9. Empowered when entrusted with access to and ownership of personal technologies

These practitioners need to be

10. Involved with management in thinking, planning and decision making
11. Accountable for selecting solutions and content at the point of need
12. Trusted to access appropriate services and content
13. In touch with their peer networks about content, curriculum and delivery

Together, Practitioners and managers need the support and wisdom of experience to

14. Identify the creative potential of awards and curriculum opportunities
15. Position technology appropriately in learning or social processes
16. Develop finely tuned awareness to select the right tools for the job
17. Visualise content in its learning and support context, through dialogue not window shopping
18. Shape sustainable solutions

Harnessing Technology

The attitudes and aspirations of practitioners from the four projects and the lessons learned map strongly on to the Becta Harnessing Technology performance framework.

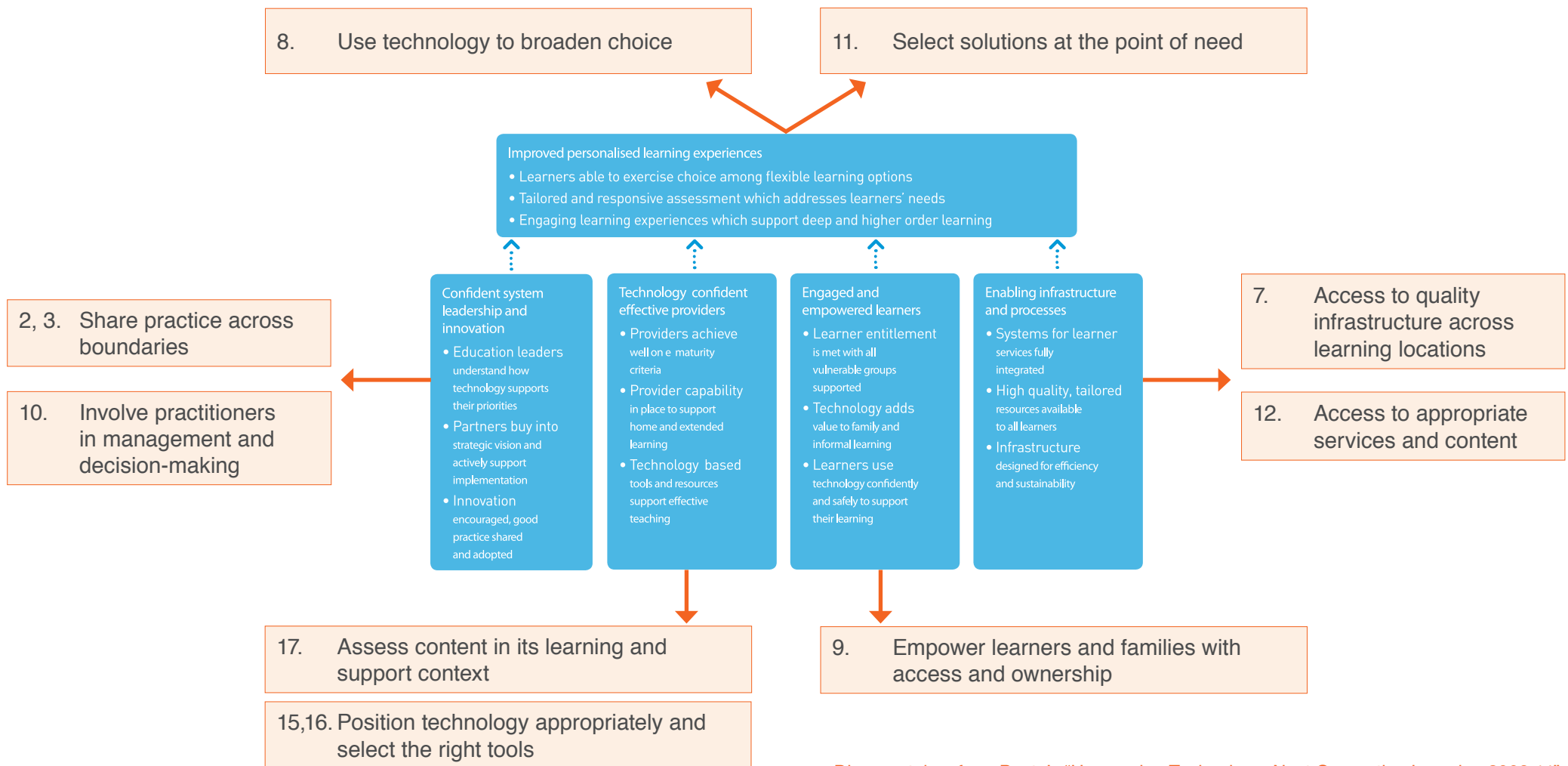


Diagram taken from Becta's "Harnessing Technology: Next Generation Learning 2008-14"

Credits

“The positive outcomes from this initiative result from the activities of a group of committed practitioners. They worked together in a spirit of openness and collaboration and it was an enlightening and uplifting experience to share their enthusiasm.” Kevin Donovan, CAMEL Facilitator



Credits

17 local authority colleagues were involved in the CAMEL exchange visits:

Barnsley: Sharon Copping, Claire Guest, Dominic Sleath and Becci Thornton

Doncaster: Ian Archer and Anjam Aslam

Rotherham: David Ashmore, Katy Edmondson, Lorraine Lichfield, Paul Meakin, David Talboys

Sheffield: Tricia Anderson, Peter Danieluk, Pauline Good, Nick Jeans, Steve Ward and Paul White

Guest contributors to the exchange visits were:

The Sheffield College: Julie Hooper and Eleanor Leitch (GCSE English Online)

Education Leeds: Ian Thompson (ASDAN COPE)

Tribal Group: Jo Colley and Geoff Stead (Mobile learning)

Sero Consulting: Kim Balmer, Barry Phillips and John Popham

Josie Fraser (e-Safety) and **Jane Hart** (25 Tools)

The CAMEL facilitators were Kevin Donovan, David Kay and Seb Schmoller

Further information is available from Sero Consulting - info@sero.co.uk - or from each team:

Sharon Copping, Barnsley, sharoncopping@barnsley.gov.uk

Ian Archer, Doncaster, arch42@gmail.com

Katy Edmondson, Rotherham, katy.edmondson@rotherham.gov.uk

Paul White, Sheffield, paul.white@sheffield.gov.uk



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achievement

self esteem



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personalisation



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life-choices



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