

nln Materials World

Quarterly newsletter of the NLN Materials Development Programme

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New materials now online — and more on the way

A range of brand new, free e-learning materials are on their way from the National Learning Network, offering colleges more scope than ever before to integrate e-learning into the classroom.

Environmental Conservation, and Sport and Recreation are available online now and Engineering, Maths and Performing Arts are on their way.

The new materials are part of the second round commissioned by the NLN Materials Team last year, and over the next few weeks a wide range of subjects will be put online at the NLN materials website [www.nln.ac.uk/materials] for colleges to download and use, completely free of charge.

Joyce Martin, Head of the NLN Materials Team says "The Round 2 materials build upon the successful aspects of the first round. Having the experience of Round 1 behind us means that we've been in a position to work with developers to help them create new materials that are even more engaging and have a greater degree of accessibility — they are also designed to run through the college virtual learning environment (VLE). I'm pleased to say that tutors and learners in the user trials have been very enthusiastic about the new materials."

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Access all areas

FEEDBACK FROM the Royal National College in Hereford, where new materials are tested for accessibility has also been very positive. The college's ICT/ILT Task Force Sue Lobb and Grahame Allen organise the accessibility trials with their students and tutors.

Sue, the Task Force Co-ordinator, says "Our students and tutors were very enthusiastic about the new sport and recreation e-learning materials. We tested these with a mixed ability group and all of them found the materials interesting. Those that were studying the subject found that it was a good opportunity to effectively consolidate their knowledge.

We also trialled the maths units with our students and found that they worked extremely well with screenreader software, making them simple, clear and easy to navigate. The Help facility was also found to be very useful and clear.

On a more general note, the staff here in the Task Force at the Royal National College have seen some very positive developments with all the NLN materials in the past 18 months or so, since we started carrying out the trials, and it's great to see that our input has had such a good effect on the work that is being done."

For a subject expert's view of some of the new materials please see the centre pages of this issue of NLN Materials World.

The way to e-learning excellence

A new reference document detailing the working practices and methodology developed and implemented by the NLN Materials Team is due to be published this summer. The document, entitled *Paving the Way to Excellence in e-learning*, sets out the procedures followed by the team in order to ensure that the e-learning materials commissioned for the NLN are of the highest quality possible.

Since the NLN programme first began in 1999, the NLN Materials Team has been responsible for commissioning and managing the development of over 800 hours of electronic learning materials across a wide range of subjects, working in partnership with subject matter experts in FE colleges and commercial developers.

This has given the team a wealth of experience to share with others who may be developing, or commissioning e-learning materials.

The guide covers pedagogy, accessibility (both design and technical requirements), technical standards and quality assurance. It also contains information about the implementation and dissemination activities carried out by the team to encourage the integration of the NLN materials into the post-16 sector.

Paving the Way to Excellence in e-learning will be distributed to colleges across the UK.


national learning network
M A T E R I A L S



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