



Digital Excellence Impact Case Studies

2021/2022

Utilising Adobe Creative Software across the
School of Health and Life Sciences

by SHLS



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School of Health and Life Sciences

Dr Helen Tidy

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“Being able to present learning materials in other forms than PowerPoint is so important to the student journey, Adobe Spark allows that to happen”

Dr Helen Tidy

Staff in the School of Health and Life Sciences have really been embracing being part of an Adobe Creative Campus with the use of Adobe products edging into their teaching and professional lives. Adobe Spark has become a firm favourite within the School with many staff achieving their Level 1 Adobe badges. You may already have seen the recent Case Study by Dr Mark Butler which documents his use of Spark in undergraduate assessments:

<https://blogs.tees.ac.uk/lteonline/2021/08/12/mark-butler-case-study-2/>

Here we further outline some of the ways in which staff are using Adobe Spark within the School.

Teaching Practice:

Many staff are using a range of Adobe products to develop and deliver a more dynamic learning experience, Dr Sharel Peisan is particularly innovative in this area as she explains:

“Digital competence is the group of skills and knowledge that are needed when using information and communication technologies and digital devices to consume, evaluate, create learning information, to collaborate and communicate with others for learning purposes [Br. J. Educat. Technol. 50, 1744–1758]. In this jet age, students and academics with low digital competence are liable to be left behind in learning. This phenomenon highlighted the importance of continuous and reflective professional development. Teesside University, as an Adobe Creative Campus, is embracing cutting-edge digital technology in reaction to the massive shift towards the use of new technology to enhance student learning experience.

I was fortunate to attend some training sessions in order to continue my professional development, for example Blackboard Ultra training (Blackboard Certified Practitioner Award) and Adobe Spark training (Level 2 Adobe badge).

I have included an Adobe Spark training session and an Adobe Spark presentation for an in-course assignment (ICA) within the Advanced Inorganic Chemistry module (Level 6). Students were asked to create a web page on a Chemistry research topic as a creative way to present work in an interactive format. In addition, I have organised an Adobe T-shirt giveaway for students who were doing an ICA Adobe Spark presentation, to encourage them to learn new digital skills which are vital in supporting students' employability. This allowed the 'gap' to be filled between students' conventional learning and 'the experiences and skills needed to enter the information economy'. The ICA tasks worked well with the students echoing this in excellent student feedback via Evasys. One student in particular noted that 'giving strong pointers to the skills required in employment, thus preparing the students for post study environment. The introduction of applications like Adobe spark gives students some heads-up to the use of some of these applications in presentations...'

In the future I aim to use technology (digital tools) to provide learning experiences that help students improve their digital skills and develop their employability. My next step is to design a Spark Video assignment on experimental design so that students can share their experiment plan, results and future experiments."

When Dr Peisan was asked what digital excellence means to them, they said "We need to embrace cutting-edge digital technology for effective teaching and learning that helps to improve student's digital skills and enhance employability."

Dr Peisan is not the only one using Spark to create a more dynamic teaching environment, many other SHLS staff are too, such as Dr Helen Tidy. Dr Tidy is using Adobe Spark to present teaching material to students in a more interactive manner, such as the example below:

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/RD3miBadr3ih1/>

Professional Practice:

As well as using Adobe Spark in Learning and Teaching, SHLS staff have been exploring its use within their Professional practice too. Dr Claire Jennings has been using Adobe Spark to create information about the professional laboratory space within the National Horizons Centre (NHC):

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/RQsK1Ei8AoGmL/>

As Dr Jennings explains, she has found Adobe Spark to be easy and satisfying to use as it can deliver professional results within a short period of time. Being able to share a link to an Adobe Spark page with colleagues internally, allows information on research capabilities to be shared quickly, without having to take time to visit the laboratory to find out more. She has found that using Adobe Spark to provide an overview of instrumentation, allows colleagues to compare our research capabilities with those of other organisations or those used in research methodology from literature searches, therefore facilitating development of research ideas and grant applications. During online meetings with external partners or prospective collaborators, it is also helpful to share a link to the Spark page to readily promote the instrumental capabilities of the NHC, either during the meeting or for further exploration later.

When referring to digital excellence, Dr Jennings believes that “Digital excellence allows connectivity and accessibility for rapid delivery and dissemination of information to showcase our state-of-the-art facilities, expertise and capabilities, to both internal and external stakeholders”

Dr Jennings is keen to develop further Spark pages to share information about ongoing research projects and applications within the Analytical Laboratory at the NHC.

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Dr Claire Jennings

In addition, our researchers are turning to Adobe Spark to enhance their presentation skills as Dr Susan Jones demonstrates. Dr Jones used Adobe Spark to talk through her research experiences and provoke discussion around patient and public involvement in her project. She says “Digital excellence provides a platform to be able to present a variety of topics in interesting and clear ways for different purposes and to different audiences; for example: this could be ideas, information, instructions, for teaching, disseminating research, promoting discussion or presenting guidance, to students, academic and non-academic staff, researchers and members of the public.”

Adobe Spark offered her a fresh alternative to standard slides and the use of images learnt itself well to keeping the overall topic before the audience in an interesting way:

<https://spark.adobe.com/page/gECUt7kSCm3yh/>

