

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Glossary

*A jargon-busting guide to the terminology of the world of online communities*

### **asynchronous communication**

taking part in online dialogue at a time that suits you, rather than having to participate at exactly the same time as everyone else

### **blended learning**

a learning experience that includes online, private study and face-to-face elements; one that includes formal and informal learning approaches as well as both content and community activities

### **champions**

members of an online community who take a lead in developing and nurturing colleagues, individual activities and/or communities

### **closed communities**

communities restricted to a specific membership

### **community (online)**

a space where like-minded individuals can contribute information via a computer in order to socialise, network and share their learning, knowledge and skills

### **community lifecycle (online)**

the stages through which an online community develops from inception to long-term sustainability or closure if its work is done

### **contribution**

text, images and/or sounds added to an activity in the online community by an individual

### **conversation**

the simplest type of online forum where all typed contributions are made in the same way by each participant and appear one after another in the same coloured text.

Contributors are identified by their name and a photograph (icon). The time and date of their contribution is displayed

### **CPD**

continuing professional development

### **debate**

an online forum where contributors adopt one of up to five possible positions on offer to them when making their online contribution. This type of forum allows participants to debate and argue for or against a particular point. Each position is represented by different coloured text. There is an option to vote at the end of the debate. Contributors are all identified by their name and a photograph (icon). The time and date of their contribution is displayed

### **DfES**

Department for Education and Skills

### **discussion**

a very flexible online forum which offers the most participant choice. Participants can define the subject of their contribution, respond to topics raised by others or choose to start a new topic for discussion. There are options to expand the text in full or contract it as headings, and to determine how the page is formatted

### **e-learning**

online learning and e-learning are sometimes used synonymously and can be defined as: learning that takes place in an environment or situation that is enabled, enhanced or supported by online or electronic technology

### **e-learning facilitator**

education professionals who support NCSL online communities within talk2learn. E-learning facilitators plan, design, evaluate and develop online communities. They encourage and enable groups of school leaders to share their learning in a friendly environment, in which members feel comfortable about participating in online discussion, sharing information and publishing their own items

### **emoticons**

little icons, often faces or symbols, that depict an emotion on line

### **engagement**

the act by which participants hold a dialogue

### **Fast Track**

a national scheme in which high-performing graduates are brought into teaching with the expectation of fast promotion

### **facilitation and facilitator**

facilitation is a personalised process that empowers and challenges individuals and groups to engage in significant learning. A facilitator is a person with the knowledge, skills and understanding of effective facilitation. An online facilitator encourages, supports and enables groups such as school leaders to share their learning and maintain a friendly environment in which members feel comfortable about participating in discussion, sharing information and publishing their own items

### **formal learning**

instructional approaches such as educational courses and programmes. The learner is taken through a body of knowledge in a structured, step-by-step way. These online courses may also lead to certification or accreditation in some way

### **forum**

a space for online collaboration which enables participants to communicate using typed text

### **hotseat**

an online forum that enables questions and answers. Contributions appear directly under the relevant question. Other contributors are able to reply to answers provided and points raised by the person in the hotseat

### **icon**

a small graphic or on-screen representation of an object such as a document, program or folder. All talk2learn members can have an individual icon next to their name

### **informal (or non-formal) learning**

unstructured approaches to learning. They include the social construction of knowledge in online communities and access to online resources such as presentations, documents, journal articles and discussion forums

### **knowledge management**

the collation of online activities, contributions and information to provide digests or summaries for future use. The process of annotating and describing all collaborative activities, contributions and information

### **leadership learning**

exploration and development of ways that leaders can learn individually and together

### **leading-edge school or partnership**

a pioneering, forward-thinking school or partnership where practitioners work together to

tackle some of the more difficult challenges facing the education system

### **learning behaviours taxonomy**

a model that can be used by participants and tutors to review their contributions to online discussions

### **learning facilitator**

a person with the knowledge, skills and understanding of effective facilitation

### **Learning Gateway**

NCSL's online portal which allows access to a range of online and face-to-face learning activities. The Learning Gateway is a managed learning environment that supports NCSL's core business of delivering continuous professional development to school leaders

### **learning journey**

the journey of an individual through a range of learning activities

### **learning pathway**

the route taken by an individual through a range of learning activities

### **LftM**

NCSL programme called Leading from the Middle

### **lurker**

a term used in the early days of online communities for those who read but do not contribute to discussions. They are now more commonly referred to as readers

**member**

a person who has access to a community or a number of online communities

**managed learning environment (MLE)**

a range of information systems and processes of an organisation that contribute indirectly to learning and its management, such as the NCSL Learning Gateway

**NCSL**

National College for School Leadership

**NLG**

Networked Learning Group

**NPQH**

NCSL programme called National Professional Qualification for Headteachers

**online community learning environment (OCLE)**

space in which participants collaborate to enhance learning activities and contribute to activities

**online learning**

sometimes used synonymously with e-learning. Can be defined as learning that takes place in an environment or situation that is enabled, enhanced or supported by online or electronic technology

**participant**

a user of one or more online communities who actively takes part in online dialogue

**pathways**

a structured route through talk2learn to a community area. Pathways may contain communities and other pathways but cannot contain any community content. This is also sometimes called a breadcrumb trail

**programme**

a development course offered by NCSL to support school leaders, recognising the different strengths, needs and aspirations of leaders at all stages of their careers. A list of all programmes can be found in the NCSL Prospectus

**programme community**

a community associated with a development programme linked to the NCSL Leadership Development Framework. Examples are NPQH and LftM

**reader**

a term used to describe those who read the content of discussions but do not contribute. Reading online dialogue is viewed as a valuable learning experience

**single sign-on (SSO)**

a one-click mechanism that enables a user to log in just once to access all the e-learning resources provided by NCSL's managed learning environment and talk2learn

**SLICT**

NCSL programme called Strategic Leadership of ICT

**synchronous communication**

simultaneous online dialogue in which everyone contributes at the same time (see asynchronous for the opposite)

**talk2learn**

the brand name for NCSL's online community learning environment (OCLE)

**Talking Heads**

a talk2learn community for headteachers only

**taxonomy**

a model of online learning behaviours that can be used by participants and tutors to review their contributions to online discussions

**think.com**

the original software used as the basis for Talking Heads and talk2learn, created by Oracle

**tutor**

a person responsible for executing a programme module for a specific group of participants

**Virtual Heads**

the online community supporting the NCSL programme NPQH

**vote**

an online tool for capturing opinions anonymously

**weaving**

the summarising and collection of the ideas from an online dialogue to aid further discussion. Often used part way through a dialogue

## Appendix B:

### Top ten tips for developing your community as presented at the BETT show 2007

- 1 Facilitation and community champions. Investing in your staff to help them become online facilitators and champions will reap a rich reward.
- 2 Build participation by nurturing a culture amongst your staff and students that 'donating learning of their own' and acknowledging the personal gain from the experiences of others enriches the learning
- 3 Hold regular dialogue with guests. Specialist! Experts! Provocateurs! Presents a great opportunity to use staff, student and parent expertises.
- 4 Measure the volume of the buzz in your online community as it contributes to the development and growth of the community and to the learning that takes place there. Know your impact socially and on
- 5 Developing the 'blended' approach to learning.
- 6 Evaluate the online learning environments that are on offer by keeping in front of you a copy of what you have agreed about how e-learning will support your organisations ambitions. This will help you ask the right questions about VLE, MLE and intranets.
- 7 Always keep the user/learner in mind when developing the online community. If in doubt what to do next go back to the learner's needs. Root your online communities in a theoretical base. This will bring
- 8 Make technology the servant not the driver by having a vision.
- 9 talk2learn provides a safe and supportive environment for school leaders to experience online learning through collaborative dialogue. A place to try it out first for yourself, so you can lead by example later.
- 10 Begin with your learning and teaching policy for developing any such online community.

## Appendix C: Acknowledgements

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*“ talk2learn has helped me overcome  
that element of isolation from  
which many heads suffer ”*

*“ It has opened a new world of  
contacts and opportunities for  
professional dialogue ”*

*“ The wisdom of other heads was  
invaluable in shaping what we  
eventually developed ”*

*“ I think talk2learn has been of  
seminal importance ”*

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