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## **E-LEARNING DEVELOPMENT GRANT**

### **Final Report**

#### **Slade Knowledge Base**

Slade School of Fine Art

#### **Overall aims and objectives**

This project creates a new online knowledge base for resources and techniques in Digital Media, Electronic Media, Digital Print and Photography. This knowledge encompasses best practice and will ensure consistently high quality information is provided to all students equally. When a student starts to explore a new technique, this will ensure they are given the same basic and correct grounding on which to develop.

Prior to launching the Knowledge Base staff usually provided assistance to students individually, in person or via email. This has been the best way to address their individual work and research which frequently differs in both approach and outcome between students. There is a basic level of information which remains the same, which we provided as handouts, during workshops, or in reply to student emails. By making this information available online for students to access as they need, it not only allows staff to spend more time on the deeper levels of teaching, but also allow students to browse and discover new ideas serendipitously.

A student developer assisted in the transfer of material from various forms (printed handouts, email) into a standard and semantic online format in sections, categories and with tags.

The Knowledge Base has now established a framework for other areas at the Slade - such as Print, Sound, Film, Video, Sculpture and Painting - to transfer their similar print based materials online into one central Knowledge Base. This will be made as simply as adding additional categories. The Knowledge Base is a stand alone resource that can link to Moodle, the Slade Intranet, the publicly accessible Slade website, and can be utilised via links anywhere online. We can easily extend this to allow the newly appointed Teaching Fellow for Sculpture and other members of staff to add information.

The material is written or collected by Slade staff. For original material Slade would hold the copyright so they can be released under Creative Commons online. Material collected by Slade staff from other resources or books will be restricted to the UCL network and not made public.

A central place for the information ensures students can find it easily as part of the Slade Intranet. Where there are overlaps between staff's knowledge, this Knowledge Base will ensure the same information based on best practices is available to all students. The Knowledge Base is a valuable and ongoing learning resource.

In implementing the Knowledge Base, the Slade School of Fine Art has strategically embraced open access for teaching. With benefits such as efficiency savings, promotional opportunities and enhancement of the student experience, the Knowledge Base is designed to foster increased use, reuse and publication of resources by staff and students. It aims to improve the understanding of the impact the resources have on teaching and learning, and aims to measure the effectiveness of open resources as a promotional tool.

## **Methodology**

May/June 2010 - Advertise and appoint student(s); set up framework; test framework; start collating and sorting potential content. We found one student capable of undertaking all the work and tasks. A document scanner was purchased and an easy to follow PDF workflow created to allow all Slade staff to contribute with minimal training and effort.

June 2010 - training with students; students start transferring content. The student was given skill development training in scanning, PDF creation, use of an online content management system and file management. Student scanned a large volume of printed material that was heavily requested by Sladents in previous years. Staff started to collate information into a standard format and grammatical style so could be incorporated.

June 2010 - initial feedback from group of students and other staff. Relating to the material and new topics and topics that could be included.

July-September 2010- transferring of majority of content online. This was planned for the summer, but could not happen as student helper and staff were not in London.

end April 2011 - enough content to make the Knowledge Base public in time for start of new academic year with new students. At the moment over 150 articles with 200 PDFs have been added. Each PDF is linked from an article which is categorised and tagged. The article contains an introductory paragraph to the PDF. The introduction, tags and categories allow for multiple ways to find the correct information and to allow the search function to produce more relevant results.

After June 2011 Project naturally continues into the future. More staff are trained in adding material.

October 2011 - as new workshops and student requests take place in first term, information is put straight into the Knowledge Base in first instance.

## **Project outcomes**

In the first week after announcing the official launch of Knowledge Base, it received almost 2000 unique article views. Most were generated from links in UCL emails, some were generated from natural searches, and there were even links from Facebook.

At the moment over 150 new articles with 200 PDFs (several thousand pages) have been added. Each PDF is linked from an article which is categorised and tagged. The article contains an introductory paragraph to the PDF. The introduction, tags and categories allow for multiple ways to find the correct information and to allow the search function to produce more relevant results.

Areas covered were expanded and include Media and Photography, Sculpture and Painting – this means all studio areas of the School are included. This exponentially increases the benefit of the Knowledge Base as a resource. All students should have times when they consult the Knowledge Base, therefore increasing their use of it to look up information in other topics. As the Knowledge Base becomes the first place students look for advice, it increases the speed at which they can access basic information, and therefore creates more time for staff to answer more complex and in-depth questions.

The sculpture department are keen to include videos. Using Vimeo, two have already been added – these are publically accessible.

## **How was the project evaluated? How did you ensure that you achieved what you set out to achieve?**

Analytical and static tools were built into the Knowledge Base. These produce reports on popular articles, popular topics, search queries, visitors data, URL refers etc. By looking at these reports we can see when people visit and track the information they find useful. This allows us to use them as templates for new articles, find out which topics are popular, and which may need revision.

## **Other benefits**

Once the framework and workflows were established it became easy for staff to add new notes and information via a simple web-based password protected interface (that will be the same as the main Slade website CMS in the future). It will be made the default route to share teaching aids with students. New "handouts" will go straight into the Knowledge Base. It uses a similar editing interface to other Slade websites, so minimal staff training is required. The technical aspects are based on popular open-source projects which will provide ongoing support at no additional cost apart from staff time. Staff time will be better used in providing the information online, which reduces the repetition of delivering information to students. The Knowledge Base will be integrated into a redeveloped main Slade website in the medium-term future; by making it integral and students relying on it will mean it will continue to be supported and developed. The information is stored and sorted using semantic web principles ensuring it can continue to be used long into the future with minimal (or no) editing.

## **Scalability and sustainability**

How will the project continue after the ELDG funding has discontinued? Is it possible that this project can be expanded to other areas of UCL?

There are no direct costs in running the Knowledge Base. We have an established workflow and CMS for adding and editing materials.

We have trained other staff in the process of old converting or adding new material to the Knowledge Base. We have also asked all students to request of the relevant staff member information they would like to see added – to generate a momentum.

We now direct students to the Knowledge Base when they ask for information. We show them how it works so they get the idea of using it for themselves in the first instance.

## **Appendixes**

The Knowledge Base is accessible at: <http://ucl.ac.uk/slade/know>

Screenshots are attached.

## **Contact details**

Martin John Callahan, Sarah Pickering  
Slade School of Fine Art, UCL  
m.callanan@ucl.ac.uk

- Media +
- Photography +
- Print +
- Sculpture +

Search the Slade Knowledge Base

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Knowledge Base statistics > 143 articles 27 categories 1 comments

No categories

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Know > Sculpture > How to > How to Make a Silicone Mould

How to Make a Silicone Mould



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posted by Lilah

posted on 19 May 2011

updated on 20 May 2011

viewed 7

No categories

[How to Make a Silicone Mould](#) from [Slade Knowledge Base](#) on [Vimeo](#).

About / Help

Directions on making a silicone mould from an object to use for casting. The video describes the processes of pouring and mixing the silicone and making a plaster jacket for both sides of the object that will be cast.