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**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

## ESMOS WP9 report – communication trialling (tripartite blogging)

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<b>Title</b>	ESMOS WP9 report – communication trialling (tripartite blogging)
<b>Authors</b>	Keegan, H
<b>Publisher</b>	ESMOS
<b>Type</b>	Monograph
<b>USIR URL</b>	This version is available at: <a href="http://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/2802/">http://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/2802/</a>
<b>Published Date</b>	2006

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# ESMOS

Enhancing Student Mobility  
using Online Support

## WP9 Report – Communication Trialling

*This report describes the development of a communication strategy/methodology, utilising technology, to enhance the tripartite relationship between students, tutors, and host organisation.*

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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## WP9 Communication Trialling

### 1) INTRODUCTION

When students go away from home to take part in an international study exchange or work placement, it is widely recognised that ongoing communication with peers and tutors assists them in overcoming feelings of culture shock and homesickness. With regards the use of ICT for supporting international mobility students, email and discussion boards have traditionally been employed. Email is generally used for day-to-day administrative support (and occasional 'counselling'), while discussion boards are occasionally used for pedagogical support and peer-to-peer communication facilitated by the tutor.

After examining the potential of the technologies used by each project partner to support international mobility students, and taking into account the shift towards 'Web 2.0', the ESMOS partnership have explored the potential of 'blogging' in order to establish tripartite communication between students and tutors involved in mobility schemes.

The area of real interest is that of the use of a 'shared online space' (e.g. 'blogs' or 'wikis', virtual classrooms etc) to facilitate a tripartite relationship between the student, home tutor and host tutor in order to increase transparency and encourage ongoing reflection while the student is away from the university taking part in a study exchange or work placement abroad. In the case of ESMOS, we have worked on a series of case studies where blogging has been an integral part of the student's mobility experience (see **"Using blogs as a support tool for Adult Nursing students at home and abroad"**, and **"Tripartite communication between students, home and host tutors using a group blog"** in the resources section of the ESMOS website at [http://www.esmos.eu/case\\_studies.php](http://www.esmos.eu/case_studies.php)). For a fuller description of blogs and blogging, see WP7 – Protocols Development.

## 2) TRIPARTITE BLOGGING – Between who, exactly?

While there are tutors who are able/willing to engage in tripartite communication and dual supervision of international exchange and placement students, for reasons explained in the following section it can be quite difficult in practice to establish such 'shared spaces'. However, the tripartite relationship does not necessarily need to be between the student and home and host tutors. In fact it may be equally (or even more) beneficial for the student to have tripartite communication with peers and their tutor. Two of the ESMOS case studies (**Using blogs as a support tool for Adult Nursing students at home and abroad**”, and **“Tripartite communication between students, home and host tutors using a group blog**) have explored group blogs as a way of supporting international mobility students, where the tripartite relationship is between placement students, their peers and their home tutors. This has proved to be an effective way of supporting students who go overseas for a work placement, and it also offers 'virtual mobility' to home-based students as it allows them to gain an international perspective on their work through sharing experiences with students who have gone overseas.

The notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' is important here, as placement students are constantly learning from colleagues in the workplace, gaining subject-specific support which they can then feed back to their peers in the home university using group blogs which support a 'Virtual Community of Learners'. In this sense, the tripartite relationship is between mobility students, their peers, and their tutors – peripheral to this is the support provided by colleagues in the workplace, which placement students then report back to the group.

In the following section we discuss the practicalities of tripartite support between students, home tutors and host tutors/workplace mentors.

### 3) INTERNATIONAL WORK PLACEMENT

In the case of the international work placement, blogging allows students to keep a reflective journal which can be continually assessed by the tutor. This is similar to the placement journal that students have traditionally submitted to the host institution, although these are (traditionally) handed in and assessed when the placement has ended.

The strength of blogging is that the tutor can guide and offer feedback to the student throughout the placement, which enhances the mobility experience for the student and enables the tutor to identify any problematic areas as and when they arise. Such 'shared online spaces' have great potential for the international work placement student, as there is a need for greater transparency with regards the demands of the employer and the demands of the home institution. In spite of learning agreements, there are occasions when a student undertakes a work placement and is then asked to perform different duties from those originally agreed. This may be the cause of considerable psychological distress for the student, due to the perceived need on one hand to 'please' the employer; and on the other hand, to gain experience which is relevant, valid and within the requirements of the corresponding module at the home institution. By establishing an online tripartite communicative relationship, the student, home tutor and host tutor can communicate on a regular basis in order to support the student, therefore avoiding misunderstandings and ambiguities about what exactly is expected from the work placement.

Unfortunately it can be very difficult to establish a tripartite relationship between a home tutor, workplace mentor and a student. Here is a quote from a UK based academic who gave us his view on the difficulty in engaging workplace mentors in blogging as a student support mechanism:

*"That's the sticking point. Most companies are already pushing the boat out by taking the student on, paying them, and supervising them. In many places I've visited, 'official' student interaction between industrial tutor and student is < 1/2 hour per month...although the student will get lots of 'on-the-job' instruction from colleagues as a direct feed into commercial objectives.*

*I really don't think the company I currently work with would welcome any additional admin (to them) cost alongside a placement student - and since we are already effectively in their debt, I'd be rather reluctant to ask them."*

This is the view held by many – the reality is that it can be extremely difficult to engage a workplace mentor in engaging with student blogs as workplace mentoring itself is a very small part of their workload and they are reluctant to take on blogging as they feel that it will take up more of their time (which is already in short supply!).

However, there are instances where companies actively encourage students to blog; for example Renault, who have a dedicated section on their site for student placements:

<http://www.renault.co.uk/IndustrialPlacementBlogs.aspx>

Here, blogging is used mainly as a tool to promote their industrial placement scheme, so really it's used as a kind of promotional tool. While it's great to see that blogging is encouraged, this also demonstrates how blogs are used for a wide variety of reasons and the 'student placement blog' as a promotional tool may contrast with what an academic tutor would want in terms of content (i.e. honest reflection and a description of the learning process).

So there may be a tension between a) what the company wants, and b) what the placement tutor wants. From the student perspective, while it is great to have the opportunity to write about their placement for the website of a large company, without having comments and structured guidance from their tutors they are not necessarily getting any educational support.

However, the fact that student blogging is being encouraged by the company is positive, as the other difficulty (apart from workload balancing and other responsibilities) is trying to establish a tripartite student/mentor/tutor relationship when blogging is *not* part of the institutional culture (of either the university or the company). It is for this reason that we need to understand the relationships which need to be developed between the Universities and their placement organisations and to identify where and how blogs can be utilised effectively.

Here are some examples of student placement blogs from the University of Salford (UK) [http://www.salford.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/year\\_away/](http://www.salford.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/year_away/)

#### **ERASMUS and me. My time in France 06/07**

<http://ianross121.blogspot.com/>

Ian is currently studying for an MEng in Aeronautical Engineering. He's currently studying in France and has recently secured an internship placement at CNES - The National Space Centre in Toulouse.

#### **Germany, Aeroplanes and Me: Placement Year 06/07**

<http://skylark3f.blogspot.com/>

Jack is also studying for an MEng Aeronautical Engineering at the University of Salford and is now doing an internship with Airbus Deutschland GmbH in Bremen in Northwest Germany.

#### **A Year in France - One Wonders How This Ends**

<http://dethomas1.blogspot.com/>

Darren is in his second year at the University of Salford and is studying for a BEng in aeronautical engineering. He is currently on work placement in Compiègne, France.

#### 4) INTERNATIONAL STUDY EXCHANGE

As in the case of the international work placement, blogging allows students to keep a reflective journal of their learning and day-to-day lives while taking part in an international study exchange. There are many examples of Erasmus student blogs on the internet, such as those found at <http://www.erasmusblogs.com>.

Students at the University of Salford are now writing blogs as part of their Erasmus exchanges; an example can be viewed at <http://redmacmax.blogspot.com/>, a student blog entitled “Happy haplessness: rescued by ERASMUS” which is kept by Mac, who is doing a BA (Hons) English with History at the University of Salford. Mac took a semester 1 study placement at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands as part of the ERASMUS scheme, and kept a blog during his time spent overseas.

However, student mobility blogs are generally used as a single-author journal, as opposed to a tripartite (or group) communication tool; it is unusual to find a student blog where BOTH home and host tutors comment and post. One of the goals of ESMOS is to establish tripartite online communication between staff and students in order to enhance academic, social and psychological support, which can be increased even further by using a group blog where student peers can also comment. In terms of student support, both home and host tutors, and international office staff can join and comment/post on the group blog which, in turn, facilitates an open dialogue between students and their mentors which can enhance the mobility experience for the student. Through establishing an online tripartite communicative relationship, the students and their home and host tutors can communicate on a regular basis in a way which enables all parties to collectively work through issues as they arise. The added benefit of this approach is that there is additional psychological support for the students, as they are reassured by the fact that all tutors are monitoring their progress, and working together to resolve any problems, such as difficulties with language and offering them academic support.

The following section describes our tripartite online communication trials, describing the issues that need to be explored and resolved in order for all parties to successfully use group blogs so as to enhance the mobility experience for international students. This innovation requires a much more integrated approach to supporting learning and supporting students. It requires the technical support, technical development, student records, the academic tutor and placement tutor to all work together to develop robust infrastructure, content and support which is generic and appropriate for use in the different partner organisations, consequently decentralising the provision of educational services. The responsibility for the provision of educational services is shared between several universities. As the organisation and the responsibility of educational processes cuts across several institutions, this initiates the process of changing educating into learning support. It helps to shift the focus from organizing students learning to development of the learning environment and organizing learning resources and supporting bodies around student’s needs.



Taking a student-centred approach, we have explored how differences in culture may impact on the methodology and design of the support system. The impact on the users is that through the support they receive they become more engaged in their experience and ultimately more motivated and have much more confidence. In summary this study demonstrates an effective and sustainable stream of communication both with the supervisors and with their peers, and more extensive use of technologies both by students and their tutors – encouraging them to use technology in a more effective way.

## 5) TRIPARTITE COMMUNICATION – THE STUDY

### **Background:**

Three Economics students from the D. Tsenov Academy in Shishtov, Bulgaria spent three months at the University of Calabria in Italy from February to April 2007. The students were provided with additional academic, social and psychological support from home and host staff, and their student peers, through online communication using a combination of group blogs complemented by instant messaging.

### **Technologies used in the communication trial:**

#### **BLOGGER** – <http://www.blogger.com>

Blogger is one of the most popular web based blogging platforms, and is an excellent starter blog as it is one of the easiest to use and understand. It allows users to set up a free account and create their own blog (or multiple blogs, if required). The site has basic step-by-step instructions, taking the user through the process of setting up an account, naming the blog and choosing a design template. Although the service was designed for individual bloggers, there are tools to support multiple authors.

#### **SKYPE** – <http://www.skype.com>

Skype is a free instant messenger which allows users to chat over the internet. Skype is free to download, easy to install and operate. It works on Windows, Linux, MacOS, Pocket PC and mobile phones. It has an easy to use group chat option, and it also allows communication with voice and video for free between Skype users all over the world. It is possible to save a conversation, so as to refer to it later (which is not possible by telephone). Also, instant messages typically get logged in a local message history (which closes the gap to the persistent nature of e-mails), and it facilitates the quick and safe exchange of electronic documents.

### **Methodology:**

- Bilateral agreements established
- Students selected
- Exchanges organised by tutors and international office staff
- Initial email communication between staff at both institutions in order to establish the objectives for the study exchange and the goals for the tripartite study
- Exploration of a variety of blogging tools in order to ascertain their suitability (it was decided to use a web-based blog as the study cuts across several institutions)
- All staff trained in blogging
- Staff blog established
- Student blog established
- Skype used as an additional means of student communication with the home tutor

### Staff blog:

Staff from Bulgaria and Italy received face-2-face blog training sessions in January 2007. A series of different blogging tools were trialled: ELGG, Edublogs and Blogger. It was decided that due to the cross-institutional nature of the support system a non-institutional/VLE blogging tool would be most appropriate, in order to minimise bias/institutional ownership. Blogger was then chosen as the platform due to its ease of use. Although other blogging platforms were tested (and Edublogs and ELGG have more functionality), after lengthy discussions and trials with the staff involved, it was decided that essential functionality was minimal and that ease of use was a priority.

Rather than have all communication on one blog, it was decided that a more practical and effective approach would be to establish 2 blogs; one for staff and one for students. These two blogs were then hyperlinked so that staff could easily move between the two and keep the more in-depth discussions about the student exchanges to the staff blog so as not to 'interrupt' the student's reflections with lengthy practical negotiations.

Staff involved:

- 2 academic tutors from home university (BG)
- 1 representative from the international office at the home university (BG)
- 1 academic tutor from host university (IT)
- 1 representative from the international office at the home university (IT)
- 1 technical support and researcher

### Introductory post on staff blog:

*Hi everybody!*

*This is our private blog for us to discuss the student blog. Here we can share ideas, suggestions, and decide what to ask the students each week.*

*I will set up a separate blog for the students, on which we can all view and post comments. The blog will be written in English, but if one of the students finds this difficult she can write in Bulgarian and Agop will translate.*

*Here is the word document **Ideas for blog** with some useful links to other blogs, and some ideas for how to use blogs with students. BUT each blog is unique, so I think we should negotiate what we want students to write about in their first post e.g. cultural issues, academic issues etc.*

*I'll write a brief user guide for you - we can use the same one for the students.*

*But if you have any difficulties posting let me know and I'll help you out. It might feel a little strange at first but we'll soon get used to communicating via a blog, I'm sure!*

*Bye for now*

### **Student blog:**

The representative from the international office at the home/sending institution (BG) had 2 face-to-face sessions with the students before they went overseas in order to discuss the practicalities of the exchange (financial, linguistic, academic requirements etc) and also to discuss what was required in communicating via the blog.

The students were asked to post on a weekly basis, describing their experiences and their thoughts about their studies so that the tutors could assess the contents of the blog and offer support throughout their mobility experience. The representatives from the international offices at both institutions then posted supportive messages to the student blog in order to welcome them and wish them luck for the study exchange. This type of supportive communication is integral to the success of the blog as it demonstrates the online social presence of the tutors and helps the students to feel valued, which in turn increases the likelihood of the students engaging with the added mode of communication. The student's peers from the home and host universities were also invited to follow the student blog and comment where appropriate in order to nurture an online community for mobility support.

### **Skype Communication:**

Skype was used by the supporting tutor from the international office at the D. Tsenov Academy in Bulgaria for ongoing communication with the three students, where they would discuss everyday difficulties and get advice and support. This enabled the students to express themselves easily as Bulgarian is their first language. The tutor would then report back to all staff via the staff blog, where they could discuss any problems and make decisions, and then one of the tutors would report back to the students on their own blog.

By using the 3 platforms to communicate (student blog, staff blog and Skype) they were able to overcome any difficulties in expressing themselves on urgent matters, while using their own blog to write posts in English which was the common language for all parties. The students were more likely/able to express themselves in Bulgarian (Skype) when communicating with their home tutor, who then acted as their 'virtual rep', raising issues with staff involved on the staff blog, finding solutions and then reporting back to students on their own blog. This approach worked well as students could see that they were being valued and cared for.

### **Languages used:**

Only one of the three students spoke Italian. Both blogs were written in English (common language to all). Bulgarian was used in Skype communication with home tutors. The host tutor gave 1 lecture per week in English.

A diagram showing the flow of communication is shown below:

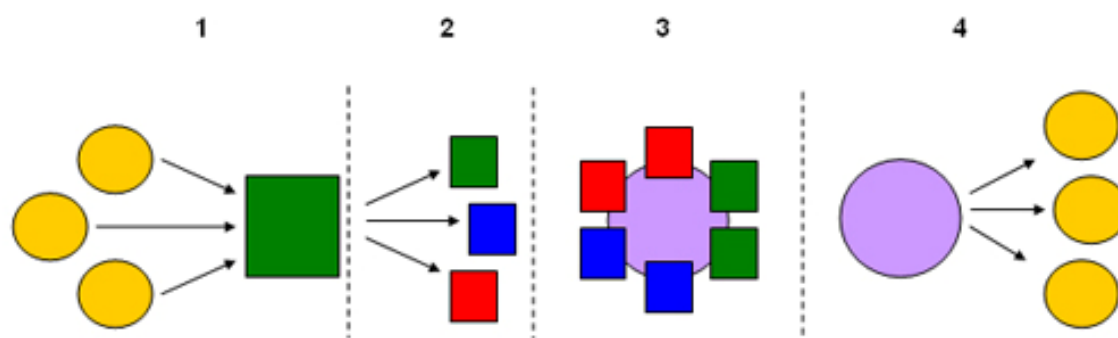
### Tripartite Communication Diagram






1) SKYPE - 3 students to 1 representative from International Office at home/sending institution communicated in Bulgarian

2) STAFF BLOG - Representative from International Office then reports to staff blog (communicated in English)

3) STAFF BLOG – all staff from both home and host institutions then discussed and resolved issues on (in English – although there was added face-to-face communication between staff who were in same location)

4) STUDENT BLOG – staff then reported back to the students on the student blog (in English)



-  Bulgarian students
-  Bulgarian tutors/international office
-  Italian tutors/international office
-  Technical support
-  Tutor from either BG or IT

## Activity and issues discussed across the 3 platforms:

### Staff blog – posts

The staff blog was active from 5.2.2007 – 21.4.2007. During this time there were 17 discussions which centred around:

- a) The tripartite communication itself
- b) Reports on student progress
- c) Organisational issues
- d) Language issues
- e) Academic issues

### Student blog – posts

The student blog was active from 10.2.2007 – 30.3.2007. During this time there were 22 posts/discussions which centred around:

- a) Messages for tutors, friends and family back home in Bulgaria
- b) Organisational issues
- c) Language issues
- d) Academic issues

The student blog was especially 'rich' in terms of communication and the formation of a 'virtual community', as their peers back in Bulgaria kept in touch via the blog and posted lots of supportive comments, as did their Italian 'buddy' (the student who looked after them while they were at the University of Calabria).

The blog itself was subtitled 'Our purpose is to share our emotions so that we can share them with you', and the students wrote some wonderful posts describing their experiences overseas which were full of warmth, humour and honesty.

Notable highlights included their posts on:

- The journey itself
- Accommodation arrangements
- Language issues
- Cultural differences between Bulgaria and Italy
- An international dinner with their Italian friends, where they ate a mixture of dishes from both countries
- The differences between Italian and Bulgarian education systems
- Academic requirements
- Differences in body language (lots of confusion regarding head-nodding!)
- An online photo journal of highlights of their trip

Tutors/international office staff from each university would also post responses after discussions on the staff blog (depending on the issue, i.e. academic, organisational). Because discussion *between* the staff themselves was carried out on the staff blog, this avoided overloading the reflective student blog with lengthy discussions about practicalities.

## Skype chats

Skype was used by the supporting tutor from the international office at the D. Tsenov Academy in Bulgaria for ongoing communication with the three students, where they would discuss everyday difficulties and get advice and support. This enabled the students to express themselves easily as Bulgarian is their first language. The tutor would then report back to all staff via the staff blog, where they could discuss any problems and make decisions, and then one of the tutors would report back to the students on their own blog. Skype was used from 8.2.2007 – 19.4.2007, and chats took place weekly (sometimes daily – especially at first when they had many questions and concerns). Summaries of the Skype chats are shown below:

### **8.2.2007**

Most of the first chat was dedicated to the initial preparation. There was some initial optimism, but also some uncertainty and uneasiness. The tutor supported them by encouraging them to go and reducing their initial fears. Matters regarding documentation were also discussed.

### **17.2.2007**

The main topic of the second chat was dates; required length of stay under the Erasmus scheme, whether it was possible to return earlier and the fact that the academic year in Calabria is divided to 4 semi –semesters instead of two semesters, as in the D.Tsenov Academy of economics and they were worried about how this could work practically across both institutions. The tutor spoke to the National Agency and the Rectors council to clarify the approval of their semester abroad. They also discussed the requirements in terms of the blog.

### **26.2.2007**

The main topics of the third chat were related to accommodation and some problems that they had experienced with transport on arrival. They were stressed as only a very small number of students could speak English, and so they felt like nobody wanted them there – however, this was largely due to the lack of a common communication environment.

### **1-9.3.2007**

The main topics of the fourth chat were academic and language issues. The students were surprised to learn that all their lectures would be in Italian<sup>1</sup> and only one of them actually spoke the language (she would help the other two students). They joined an Italian language course and the home tutor advised them to communicate more with Italian students and to watch more Italian television. They had spoken to one of the Italian tutors who gave them course material in English which was a big help. They also clarified exactly which documents were needed in order for their semester to be recognised in Bulgaria.

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<sup>1</sup> The Italian tutor then agreed to deliver the Wednesday lecture in English to all students as a gesture of goodwill

**10-12.3.2007**

Everything was beginning to settle down. The Bulgarian students started to integrate into the foreign environment and culture and really started to appreciate the opportunity of going abroad under Erasmus. They were making lots of friends, and having Erasmus parties with their Italian friends and other Erasmus students.

**5-6.4.2007**

Everything is ok now – the Bulgarian students are happy and feel very content – the adaptation has been successful! They have started to talk basic Italian which also helps a lot. Now their main concern is the exams – the first one has already been taken and they hope that they have passed! The result will be known on 30th of April. They are now talking about prolonging their stay! They have made good connections and friendships with other students and are now starting to ask if it will be possible under the Erasmus scheme for them to come back next year – what a change in their attitude and mind!

**10-11.4.2007**

The students are really happy and enthusiastic, wanting to return to Calabria again next year and saying (in their words) that Erasmus is an 'incredible experience'! They are really happy about being able to communicate with their home-based peers online, and for the care all the tutors have taken (both f2f and online).

**15.4.2007**

The students are stressed about their exams – the tutor from the International Office in Bulgaria reassures them and calms them down.

**16-19.4.2007**

The discussions centred on academic issues, course materials and exam worries... the Bulgarian tutor gave them advice, reassurance and encouragement.



## 6) DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Staff and students feel that they have benefited from online tripartite communication. The tutors feel that the students have been better engaged in their experience, ultimately more motivated, and have much more confidence than they would have had without the added modes of support. Students have established an effective and sustainable stream of communication both with the supervisors and their friends and peers.

This blended approach to mobility support, using blogs and Skype for tripartite communication, has built on the provision of web-based support (email) to improve the participation, well-being and motivation of the students during their mobility activities, extending the use of VLEs to accommodate effective support methodologies and student-centred learning approaches.

Because the partnership have a wide practical understanding of how to support international mobility students, we have been able to look generically at the support required, but have been able to meet the needs of individual programmes and learners, understanding what differences in culture may impact on the methodology and support system.

This approach has required the technical support, technical development, student records, the academic tutor and placement tutor to all work together to develop robust infrastructure, content and support which is generic and appropriate for use in different partner organisations. It is a much more integrated way of supporting learning and supporting students; decentralization of provision of educational services can be considered as an additional innovative aspect of the ESMOS project. Furthermore, the responsibility for the provision of educational services has been shared between several universities. The organisation and the responsibility of educational processes cuts across several institutions, and has initiated the process of changing educating into learning support, helping to shift the focus from organizing students learning to the development of the learning environment and organizing learning resources and supporting bodies around the student's needs. Ultimately, this study has initiated more extensive use of technologies both by students and their tutors, encouraging them to use technology in a more effective way.

## APPENDIX 1 – STUDENT NURSE DIARY

<http://www.staffnurse.com/nursing-news/student-nurse-diary.html>

Student Nurse Diary

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- 1 [Student Nurse Blog Year 3 - Week 6](#)  
09/10/2006 Today was the first day in my urology rotation. I started at 830am this morning and was shown around the outpatients' department by CNS. We then went down to the larger outpatients' department (where they also have the Primary Care Cent  
- October 14th 2006
- 2 [Student Nurse Blog Year 3 - Week 5](#)  
02/10/2006 Today was the start of my fourth week on placement. This week I am spending my time with the Dermatology Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS). I arrived at the dermatology department for 9am and met with CNS. She gave me a tour of the depar  
- October 14th 2006
- 3 [Student Nurse Blog Year 3 - Week 4](#)  
Well today was the start of my head and neck rotation. It was also the day for my intermediate practice placement interview. The day started well. I arrived at the Head and Neck ward on the surgical floor a little before 8am, ready to meet my CNS for  
- September 27th 2006
- 4 [Student Nurse Blog Year 3 - Week 3](#)  
Today was the start of my second week on specialist placement. This week is my respiratory rotation being spent with one of the Respiratory Clinic Nurse Specialists. In preparation, I spent yesterday revising the A+P of the respiratory system and the  
- September 22nd 2006
- 5 [Student Nurse Blog Year 3 - Week 2](#)  
Well, I have to say what a fantastic start to my placement! Although, I am only on day three (Wednesday) I can already see the challenges that such a innovative placement can bring when it comes to meeting the competencies within my clinical practice  
- September 22nd 2006
- 6 [Student Nurse Blog Year 3 - Week 1](#)  
Hi everyone, I am now back off my holidays and started university yesterday for our final year! I can't believe how quickly it's all gone!  
- September 22nd 2006
- 7 [Year 2, Semester 4, Community Placement - Final Week](#)

well, it's the last week of my placement and I can't believe how quickly it has gone by. What a fantastic placement I have had, and what a wonderful team I've been able to work with!

- June 29th 2006

8 [Year 2, Semester 4, Community Placement week 8.](#)

Well, this morning I attended the second of the three insulin start up clinics. Everyone turned up at a little after 9am with all the things they had collected from their GP and pharmacist. They had their sharps bins, insulins, second insulin pen

- June 29th 2006

9 [Student Nurse Diary - Semester 4 Placement Final Week](#)

Well, it's the last week of my placement and I can't believe how quickly it has gone by. What a fantastic placement I have had, and what a wonderful team I've been able to work with!

- June 22nd 2006

10 [Student Nurse Diary - Semester 4, Placement Week 8](#)

Everyone turned up at a little after 9am with all the things they had collected from their GP and pharmacist. They had their sharps bins, insulins, second insulin pens, needles, and a box of hypostop. There were a couple of people who hadn't been giv

- June 22nd 2006

11 [Student Nurse Diary - Semster 4, Placement Week 7](#)

This morning I was at the Diabetic Centre at the City hospital to sit in on a 'Insulin Start up' group clinic. This is where people who are due to change over treatment from tablet control to insulin control attend.

- June 22nd 2006

12 [Student Diary - Semster 4, Placement Week 6](#)

Last weekend was a Bank Holiday weekend, so I had the Monday off. Normally the District Nurses within the team all work on a Bank Holiday Monday, providing services as normal. However, because I do extra study in my own time, and work late on several

- June 22nd 2006

13 [Student Diary - Semester 4 Placement Week 4](#)

My community placement with a District Nursing team is going really well. My mentor and I were on duty this weekend, so we had all of the daily visits to cover for our catchment area. We had around eleven patients to see on the Saturday, some of whic

- June 22nd 2006

14 [Year 2, Semester 4, Week 11 - Placement](#)

My community placement with a District Nursing team is going really well. My

mentor and I were on duty this weekend, so we had all of the daily visits to cover for our catchment area.

- May 24th 2006

15 [Student Nurse Blog - Year 2, Semester 4, Week 9 - Placement](#)

Hello everyone, Firstly I would like to apologise for the long delay in properly updating my blog, but I have been very busy over the last month or so and my workload is increasing.

- May 24th 2006

16 [Student Nurse Blog - Year 2, Semester 4, Week 7 - Placement](#)

Well yesterday I started my community placement. It was great. The district nursing team are brilliant and very supportive of students.

- May 24th 2006

17 [Student Nurse Blog - Year 2, Semester 4, Week 6](#)

Hi everyone. This week is a very short week for us at university.

- May 24th 2006

18 [Student Nurse Blog - Year 2, Semester 4, Week 4](#)

Well guys and girls, it's been a good week this week at university. On Monday it wasn't such a productive start for me academically.

- May 24th 2006

19 [Year 2, Semester 4, Week 5](#)

Hello, all, I hope that you are all keeping well! This week at university has been okay, as weeks at university go !

- May 24th 2006

20 [Year 2, Semester 4, Week 3](#)

Hey guys and girls, hope you are all keeping well. Another week at uni over with.

- May 24th 2006

## APPENDIX 2 – STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRES

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS

*This short report on your experience concerning the Erasmus programme will be a useful information for future exchange students and will contribute to a better implementing of future programme management by the host university. Could you please publish your reports in your blog and then bring in signed copies of it to the international office of host university, before leaving. We thank you for your precious help.*

#### 1. Student's data

Surname.....  
Name (first name).....  
Home university .....

#### 2. Period of study

from..... to.....  
Name of Host University .....

#### 3. Information and support

How did you obtain general information and information about the study programs of the host university?

- Home university  Host university  
 Internet  other (specify)

.....  
.....

How useful was this information?

- (scale 1 / 5 1: not at all 5: very useful)  
 1  2  3  4  5

What was your impression of the campus upon arrival?

- bad  sufficient  so and so  good  very good

Were any Socrates/Erasmus events organized during your study period?

- yes  no

if the answer is yes, specify which and by who were they organized:



.....  
.....  
Now that you are going to finish your Erasmus study abroad, don't you think that you overlooked some of your initial problems (lodgement, adaption, others.)?  
.....  
.....  
.....

.....  
How would you judge the academic result for your Erasmus period?

(scale 1 / 5 1: bad 5 : very good)

1       2       3       4       5

Please, specify why  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Concerning didactics, were there differences of teaching styles respect to the ones you were used to in home university?

Could you explain the main differences?  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

#### 4. Overall evaluation

Which aspects of your Erasmus period did you particularly appreciate?  
.....  
.....  
.....

Do you think that this experience will contribute in any way to your university or work carrier?

(scale 1 / 5 1: bad 5 : very good)

1       2       3       4       5

Please give an overall evaluation of your Erasmus study period in the host university:

(scale 1 / 5 1: bad 5: very good)

1       2       3       4       5





## **APPENDIX THREE – BLOG ASSESSMENT RUBRICS**

Study exchanges and work placements generally involve some kind of learning agreement, and often in the case of work placements this is established mutually, i.e. the placement organisation records what the student is required to learn in terms of either knowledge or competencies, while the student records additional learning experiences that they hope will be gained during their time spent abroad. It is mainly for this reason that it may be undesirable to produce a generic assessment scheme for many students, as their experiences/requirements may be very different. However, it is often suggested that assessment rubrics are particularly useful in assessing student blogs. The following pages show 4 examples which have been developed and used by the ESMOS partnership and which may serve as a useful starting point for tutors to decide what it is they want to assess. There are 2 example assessment rubrics for each situation (study exchange and work placement); one focuses on the experiences and levels of engagement, the other focuses on academic/placement progress.

## Study Exchange Blog Rubric - assessing academic progress and ability to reflect on own learning

Name of student:

Placement organisation:

Week no:

	<b>Beginning (1)</b>	<b>Developing (2)</b>	<b>Accomplished (3)</b>	<b>Exemplary (4)</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
Academic elements					
Knowledge of subject matter					
Comprehension of new information					
Connecting topics and relating concepts					
Ability to cope/recognition of new styles of teaching					
Insight into individual learning experience					

## Study Exchange Blog Rubric - assessing experiences and engagement with exchange

Name of student:

Placement organisation:

Week no:

	Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Accomplished (3)	Exemplary (4)	NOTES
Accounts of Daily Life					
Insight into individual learning experience					
Cross-cultural awareness					
Involvement with student activities					
Ability to cope/recognition of new styles of teaching					
Language issues					
Evidence of peer support (if using group blogs)					