

## 2010 UNIVERSITY ANNUAL LEARNING & TEACHING CONFERENCE

*Research and Teaching – correlated or co-related?*

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2010

### Abstract Template

#### **The Graduate Virtual Research Environment: Networked Learning Across Departmental Boundaries**

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**Theme:** Institutional research to enhance the student experience

**Type of contribution:** Workshop

**Abstract:**

The Graduate Virtual Research Environment (GVRE) was established to support and enhance research skills and employability training across the University of Hull for postgraduate research students and early career researchers. The GVRE provides an extensive range of resources including video reflections based on the experiences of students and staff, and students are encouraged to comment and engage in discussions on these resources. Our approach is framed using social theories of learning and the role of communities in the support and development of research students. The GVRE was initially made available over 600 students and is implemented in eBridge using Web 2.0 technologies.

In this workshop we explore how we have challenged the silo nature of the postgraduate research experience by providing an integrating and integrated approach to research skills training, in answer to previous problems identified in the literature. In particular we aimed to help students to build collaborative networks outside of their specialist research area and motivate why these are useful.

In the workshop we will give participants the opportunity to use the site with our guidance and explain how we implemented the various features. We will ask participants to evaluate and discuss the various mechanisms we have used to promote networking, and then we will invite them to compare our site to their own or another eBridge site. This will help the participants to gauge the usefulness of networking features and how they can be enhanced to improve the student experience.