

# making the case

## PebblePad: designed to enhance learning

The needs of the learner are at the heart of the design of the PebblePad Personal Learning Space. Our design approach is underpinned by sound educational theory. PebblePad supports a range of learning activities, from the creation of narrative based reflective e-portfolios through to evidencing of personal attributes against highly structured professional standards. The recording process is scaffolded to help users create meaningful records of learning, achievement and aspiration with a reflective structure underpinning all elements. Practitioners value the way the system supports and encourages reflection and many have commented on the higher levels of reflection from users compared to other approaches they have tried. PebblePad offers learners a different and complimentary set of

tools to those available within an institutional **Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)**. The VLE is often perceived as ‘*what lecturers do in class*’<sup>[1]</sup> and is controlled by the tutor. PebblePad is the learners’ own, personal space where they can develop ideas, record their activities and collect evidence. Importantly the learners’ activities in PebblePad are not confined to a single episode of their learning such as a course assessment. In using PebblePad an individual can create a **lasting record** of their activities wherever they occur and these records are transferable from one phase of their learning journey to another.

“ *As I become more familiar with the affordances of PebblePad, it becomes an excellent tool to demonstrate the complexities of multi-layered learning. Each layer can be made more visible whilst retaining a holistic or metacognitive conception as an end result.* ”

*Caroline Marcangelo, senior lecturer in academic development, University of Cumbria, UK.*

“ *With PebblePad we give students a tool that actually enhances their learning. This is their lifelong learning journey in a protective environment. It’s there to support their learning and their work.* ”

*Claire Hamshire, senior learning and teaching fellow, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK.*

### Learning through Assessment

“ *The greatest impact that PebblePad has had is on reflective learning.* ”

*Neal Sumner, Senior Lecturer in Learning Development City University, UK.*

The breadth of tools and ease with which imaginative and authentic assessment can be created in PebblePad is unparalleled. At Pebble Learning we believe assessment should always support learning. This is why the PebblePad assessment functions put the learner at the centre of the assessment process; the learner chooses which items are to be part of a submission for assessment and when a tutor can have access to them. The system supports peer and tutor feedback to ensure learners can receive feedback regularly in a safe, secure environment. Course designers find that PebblePad gives them choice and variety in the type of online assessment best fit for course learning outcomes.



[1] Alan White University of Northumbria

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The range of tools in PebblePad provides tutors with a variety of options for assessing learning, including:

- ✓ blogs as learning journals
- ✓ action plans to support development
- ✓ peer to peer marking or reviewing
- ✓ anonymous marking or reviewing
- ✓ webfolios to create a portfolio of evidence or a digitally enhanced patchwork text assessment
- ✓ competency frameworks/professional standards for evidencing abilities.

“ *PebblePad encourages participants to be more reflective than when using paper. Participants are encouraged to link in or add thoughts.* ”

*Dr Anne Wheeler, Aston University, UK.*

We are proud of the fact that many of our customers are keen to share how they have used PebblePad with their learners. For more ideas, look out for our book ‘Pebblegogy’ published July 2011.

“ *I wouldn't reflect as well without it. The prompts encourage me to consider the impact of my CPD.* ”

*Anne uses Reflect, which is a bespoke version of PebblePad used by the Institute for Learning.  
Anne Schofield, Institute for Learning, Regional Advisor, UK.*

“ *The shared record of learning on placement provides the student with a portable record that supports their life-long learning.* ”

*Dr Jackie Haigh, Senior Lecturer, University of Bradford, UK.*

“ *With PebblePad, tutors have a window into what the students are doing and the portfolio becomes a 'live document'.* ”

*Geraldine Jones, eLearning Development Officer, University of Bath, UK.*

## Contact



Email: [enquiries@pebblepad.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@pebblepad.co.uk)  
Web: <http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/>



Email: [enquiries@pebblepad.com.au](mailto:enquiries@pebblepad.com.au)  
Web: <http://www.pebblepad.com.au/>

