

Tour of OurSubject

1. Welcome to this tour of OurSubject, the national VLE for all practitioners in the Lifelong Learning Sector.

You have reached the demonstration specialism, which is for testing and training purposes only.

All subject specialisms are laid out in exactly the same way as the demo, so if you investigate the different facilities as described, you will be able to navigate your way around any subject on the VLE.

The screenshot shows the 'OurSubject' website interface. At the top right, it says 'You are logged in as Fiona Smith (Logout)'. Below this are navigation links: 'How to', 'Site Map', and 'Contact'. The main header is '00. Demo Specialism' with a row of five user profile pictures. Below the header, there are three main sections: 'Welcome', 'Networking', and 'Resources'. The 'Welcome' section features a microphone icon and the text 'Community Forum - News, Ideas and Issues'. The 'Networking' section features a person icon and the text 'Podcast'. The 'Resources' section is currently empty. Below these sections is an 'item of the week' box with a yellow background, containing a flower icon and text about 'Additional Learning Support (ALS)'. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a box showing 'Activity since Tuesday, 1 September 2009, 01:19 PM' and a link to 'Full report of recent activity...'. The footer contains logos for ASSOCIate Online, HUDCETT, LSIS, and Institute for Learning (IfL).

2. On the left hand side, you will find various blocks.

3. Our Menu

- Each subject specialism has a **Moderator** and clicking on this link will take you to their profile.
- Clicking on the **Members** link will take you to the list of members in the subject specialism and you will be able to read their profiles. Completing professional profiles is an important aspect to finding others through the VLE, a topic to which we will return later.
- Professional Interests** are identified by members in their profiles and appear as tags on the VLE. You will be able to identify your own interests and use the tags to find others who share them.
- The **Contents** link will take you to the list of contents of the specialism.
- By following the **Recent Activity** link, you will be provided with information on what has taken place recently within your specialist area.

This close-up screenshot shows the left-hand navigation menu. The 'Our Menu' block contains links for 'Moderator', 'Members', 'Professional Interests', 'Contents', and 'Recent Activity'. Below it is the 'Online Users' block, which shows '(last 5 minutes)' and a user profile for 'ASSOC Admin'. The 'Messages' block shows 'No messages waiting Messages...'. At the bottom is the 'Search Forum' block with a search input field, a 'Go' button, and a link to 'Advanced search'.

4. Online Users

Members who are online at the same time are shown in the **Online Users** box - you can send an invitation to Live Chat and can accept or decline invitations from others.

5. Messages

You can see also at a glance if there are any **messages** waiting for you.

6. Search Forum

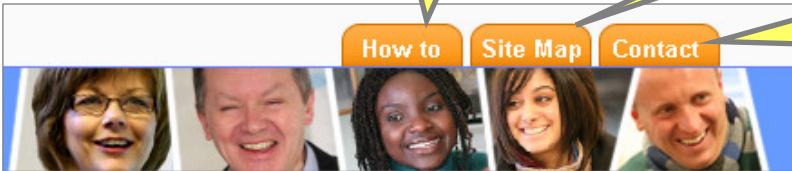
You can use the **Search Forum** tool if you have a particular interest and wish to find out if there has been any discussion about it without having to read through all forum postings.

7. There are three small orange tabs at the top of every page.

8. Following the **How to** link will take you to help sheets with instructions on how to use the tools in OurSubject, from completing your profile to uploading into a database.

9. The **Site Map** link takes you to a list of subject specialisms and each of these has a number of sub-specialisms. This is very useful to determine which subject or subjects on which you wish to enrol.

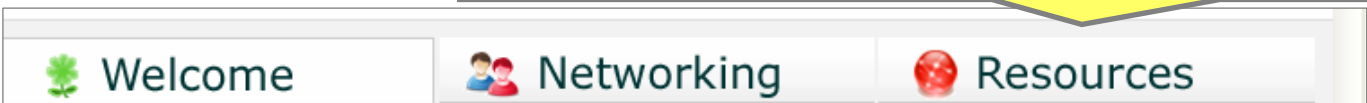
10. **Contact us** is for you to contact directly the administration of OurSubject. However, your first point of call should always be the named person within your institution.



11. At the bottom of every page you will see some logos for **HUDCETT**, **LSIS** and the **IfL**. These are all links – by following these links, you will be taken directly to their web sites.



12. There are three main tabs **Welcome**, **Networking** and **Resources**.



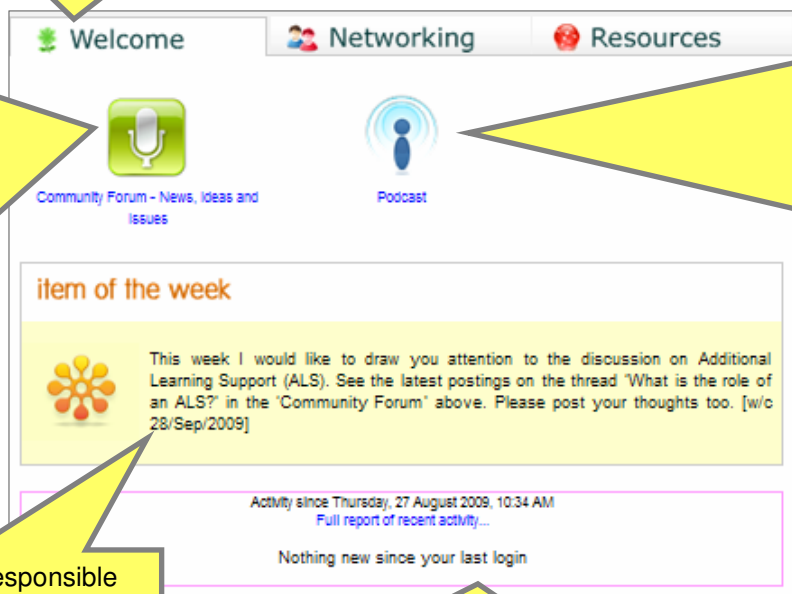
13. **Welcome tab**

14. The **Community Forum** is a place for subject specialists to ask and answer questions, debate issues within their specialism and for pedagogical enquiry. Transcripts of contributions to discussions can be used by all practitioners to evidence engagement with a wider community of practice and updating specialist knowledge.

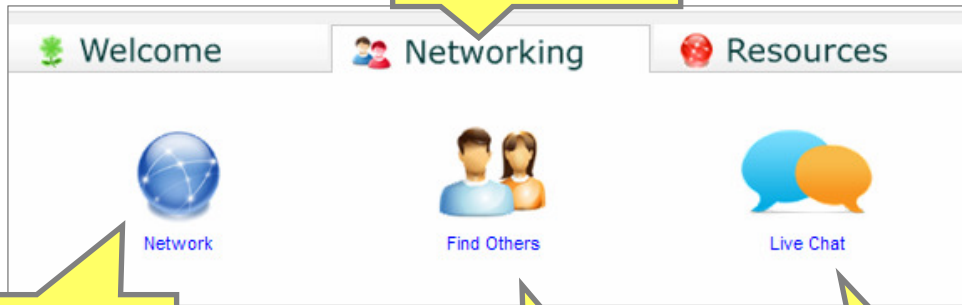
15. There is a **podcast** from the moderator of the specialism, which will change periodically. The moderator will be online regularly to consolidate Community Forum discussions, keep the specialism updated and check uploads and postings.

16. The moderator is responsible for **Item of the week**, which is their recommendation for members to visit in the subject area. This could be a pertinent forum posting, a new upload, a resource or any other item of interest to members.

17. **Activity since last log in** is a personalised recap for the member, to show what activities have taken place since they last visited the VLE.



18. Networking tab

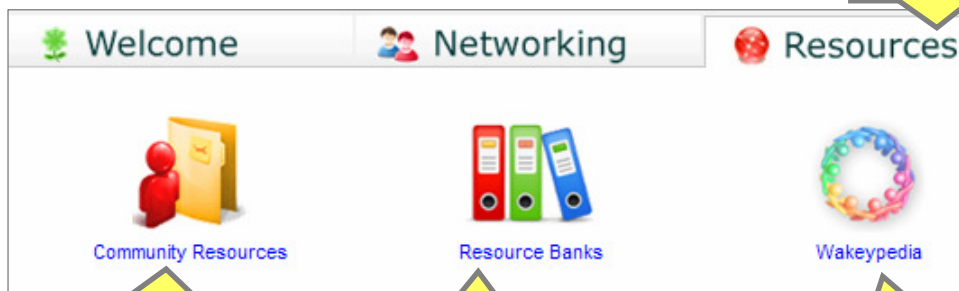


19. Clicking on the **Network** icon will take you to a database of practitioner and professional networks which you can browse or to which you can add your own contributions. This provides further opportunities for networking with others in your specialist field.

20. **Find Others** is a tool you can use to find other practitioners within your specialist field, across various contexts, levels and sub-specialisms. Your profile can be matched to the profiles of others, putting you in touch with other teachers nationally.

21. **Live Chat** is an opportunity to chat with members who are online at the same time. You can send invitations to chat and can accept or decline the invitations of others.

22. Resources tab



23. **Community Resources** is a database of specialist resources recommended by members. Any member can upload a resource or provide a link to a resource. As a member, you will have access to a wealth of resources that others have tried and tested within your subject specialism, and you will be able to share yours.

24. **Resource Banks** is a database of generic resources that are of interest to members. Some examples of these are the Excellence Gateway, National Learning Network and Skills for Life.

25. Clicking on this icon leads you to **Wakeypedia**, a wiki concerned with teaching and learning which members can read and to which they can contribute.

26. Becoming a member of OurSubject (part of the **ASSOCIate Online** family) means you become a member of a vibrant national community of practice that engages in subject-specialist debate and shares resources and practice. Your contributions to the VLE will be valued by a national community and you will be able to use evidence of those contributions for diverse purposes as a professional in the Lifelong Learning Sector, e.g.:

- if you are an ITE trainee, you can utilise them to evidence achievement of some of the assessment criteria in your initial teacher training course (see mapping of OurSubject to LLUK units of assessment for detailed information);
- if you are a practitioner applying for ATLS or QTLS, you can use them as evidence of engagement with a wider community of practice and updating your subject specialist knowledge;
- as a Lifelong Learning practitioner, you can use your records to demonstrate CPD activity as part of the IfL CPD requirements.

Please explore the facilities in this demo area and consider how they could help you in your professional practice. We look forward to working with you online.