TITLE   The use of distributed learning to support students with dyslexia.

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PROPOSAL.
Within the disability field some research has been done into issues of graphic design, background colour, font size and page layout which affect the readability of web pages for those with dyslexia or visual impairment. However issues of easy access for dyslexics lacking in confidence and the suitability of the electronic medium of communication have not been well researched.

The proposal is to set up and evaluate an electronic network using WebCT to enable students with dyslexia at the University of East London to collaborate and communicate with each other and with their tutors. There are more than 600 dyslexic students at the University spread over three campuses and served by a part-time co-ordinator, a part-time learning support tutor and a number of hourly-paid tutors who visit the different campuses. Communication within the system is not easy and it is not always possible to provide the support needed at the right place at an appropriate time.

Students with dyslexia tend to lack confidence and their self-esteem has suffered. There are often associated memory and organisational problems and appointments and deadlines are missed. It is intended that an electronic forum will give an additional channel of communication within the department and a distributed community of dyslexic students and their tutors will emerge.

The paper will report on the setting up and design of this WebCT site and evaluate its use by dyslexic students.