Use of electronic tools with students on work placement

Conference or Workshop Item

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Use of Web Logs and other Tools to support Students’ use of Reflective Journals

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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Overview

• Background and context
• How we implemented the features
• Different approaches
• What next
Background and Context

- Discussion tools in VLP
- Blogs for u/grad and PGCE:
  - Community blog
  - Individual reflective blog
- Wiki
Overview of the VLP Discussion Forum

• Pros
  – Readily available – tools and access
  – Known environment
  – Protected
  – Within NTU environment
  – Notification of new entries

• Cons
  – Navigation
  – Bookmarking
  – Lack of features
  – Constrained to one module – default
  – Lack of ownership – personalisation and customisation
  – Cannot post via email
So what's a blog then...?

• A blog is a user-generated website where entries are made in journal style and usually displayed in a reverse chronological order.

• Pros
  – Can upload text, images, videos, sound
  – Blog spaces are usually customisable.
  – Individualised
  – Bookmarkable
  – Notification of new entries

• Cons
  – External to NTU
  – Advertising – on LiveJournal
  – Not a known environment
  – Students have to register to create a ‘Community’ blog
Application of Blogs

• Where?
  – JHP – introduced to Year 1 pilot group
  – PGCE Secondary – ICT and English strands
  – BA Primary

• Why?
  – An alternative to reflective journals/diaries
  – Support work based placements
  – Higher order learning
  – Constructivist learning
  – Collaborative work
  – Students seem to enjoy it
  – Student engagement
Comparison: discussion board v blog

- PGCE Applied ICT
- BSc (hons) Business and ICT, year 2
Examples

- Discussion Board
- Pre-course discussion board

Choice of Blogging tool

- Blog
- Blog after changes
How to use the Blog

- Students need to register
- Give you access as a friend
- For Community blog – you need to ‘manage’ and give permission
  - Welcome message
  - ‘Rules’
  - Encourage personalising area
Success

- Difficult to gauge on u/grad course, but will be part of assessment
- Dependent on tutor’s attitude
- Much improved on 2nd placement – photos being used and customisation of site
- Coherence – sense of community – only works if students engage

Comments from students:

- Fantastic
- Very supportive on placement
- Don’t forget to post
Wiki

• What is a Wiki? – collaborative web page
• Which tool we chose and why
• Pros
  – Collaborative working
  – Version control
  – Tracking contributions
  – Attach documents
  – Simple to use and Intuitive
  – Permission control
  – Email when someone has contributed
  – Very easy to customise – gives more personal front end
  – Simple to set out information – very similar to MS packages
  – Simple to upload files, edit, delete, etc
  – People can work when it is convenient to them – flexible
• Cons
  – External to VLP
  – Not owned by us so could be taken down
  – Cannot contribute to the same page at the same time
  – Unknown environment
Wikis on PGCE ICT

• Students had to produce and deliver a lesson which included teaching resources

• Comments from last year’s group

• Each group chose to use the Wiki

• Access originally only for group members

• After presentation, all wikis were accessible to all students to edit

• Used the Wiki to teach their lesson – gave all students access to the resources

• Example


Wikis on BA Joint Honours Programme

- Collaborative task
- Why it worked
- What we would change

- Example
Success?

• Students chose to use them
• Really enjoyed the experience
• Engagement
• Now using Wikis in their own teaching – so we are impacting in schools across the East Midlands ..... And beyond
Work in Progress: Futures

• Analysis of use on these PGCEs to be conducted at the end of the year
• Iterative – to inform practice for next year
• To disseminate to other PGCEs and programmes
• Staff development
• Informs VLE replacement project
Any Questions?