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?