Using MOODLE to help teach about plagiarism and copyright.

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Plagiarism and Copyright can be large problems in any educational environment. Students undertaking their Higher School Certificate exam in 2008 will now have to complete a subject entitled "All My Own Work" completely devoted to understanding plagiarism, copyright and collusion. This paper will show how one school has integrated the entire course into their school network and now runs this as an online course through MOODLE.

What is MOODLE?

MOODLE is an acronym for Modular-Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment (Wikipedia, 2007) It was developed by Martin Dougiamas as part of his Ph D studies while he was at Curtin University in Western Australia. It supports the constructivist teaching and learning approach and is available as freeware internationally. User statistics in November 2006 showed 18,204 users with 7,270,260 users in 712,531 courses. It is compared to other programs such as Blackboard and WebCT, (Wikipedia,2007)

Why use MOODLE?

At our school, our intranet runs as an external webpage with password protection. The students have access to all information inserted by staff using Dreamweaver for construction. My desire was to provide an interactive section of the Library website, so that the students could complete quizzes, add to discussion and participate in a form when needed. The current website did not have this ability. There are, of course, other programs that provide the facility of a quiz, for example "Hot Potato" but I was looking for a program that would mark the quizzes and provide feedback for me in a numerical format where required. This process will also give me as the Teacher Librarian the ability to have the students used to completing on line tasks in a library atmosphere and leave us scope to develop further online tasks at a future time.

"Asynchronous classes, learners take classes at their own pace in their own time" (Pollack, 2005 in Wikipedia) This is vital to our requirements. We had approximately 124 students who needed to be able to access and complete work at the same time. They also needed the ability to "catch up" if absent.

"Robustness and reliability haven't been a problem…….. it is transparent and simple, and allowed them to focus on the teaching materials rather than the delivery system." (Parker,

2006 in Wikipedia) The students merely had to access the school intranet and the program was available to them. It required no intense instructions and was easy to use.

The cost of purchase was a large consideration and as Moodle is freeware, this helped us immensely. The next consideration was the installation of a freeware tool on our security conscious network. A staff member downloaded MOODLE to his laptop so that we could demonstrate to other staff and the network staff the ease of application. With some convincing the network administrator was able to help us. The program was loaded. We were ready to go.

Background to Task

My position in the School has been to administer to two libraries, one in Junior School (K-6) and my location in the Senior School (7-12). My responsibilities include staffing by 9 team members (including part time staff), teaching programs in the senior school, support for teaching staff and students and maintenance of the collections. An extra part has been for the production and maintenance of the Library Web page. We have integrated many items including access to our print collection, all our on line subscriptions (including encyclopedias), many of the free research links available, reading lists and researched links for the assignments for the students.

In our current programs we teach face to face many classes on avoiding plagiarism and knowledge of copyright and try to integrate these points in our team teaching situations. Library seemed the perfect place to teach this new program. As a whole year group was to complete the course in a relatively short period of time, devising an online access seemed to be the answer.

Issues

Although in our higher learning institutions, on line learning in this fashion is an accepted practice, it has not filtered down to our general education sector.

The major issue was the ability to download the freeware MOODLE into our network. In the hundreds of schools run by the Department of Education and Training in New South Wales, the network is so tightly controlled as to make this ability to download not a possibility. In some selected schools, the hardware has been supplied with the software installed, but this is a rarity. Some schools have proven their innovation by constructing their own website with MOODLE installed and allowing their students do access it in an off school site.

Our school is an Independent school that does not have this Departmental supervision of our network. We do, however, have a vigilant Network Manager who had to be convinced of the educational advantage of downloading this software. This was achieved by downloading to an individual teacher's laptop and demonstrating what we wanted to achieve. Thankfully this worked.

The amount of computer access for students can sometimes be an issue. These quizzes are required to be completed by large groups at the same time. We are luck in this school to have access to 6 individual labs and the library at the same time so that access was not a problem. With the students sent to seven different areas at the same time, supervision was a

greater issue. This was solved at our school by scheduling the course during a time when there were less classes at school. This was after the Higher School Certificate Exam and the Year 12 students had already left the school, freeing up teaching spaces.

While the value of the Teacher Librarians and the Library has been recognised, it is not always seen as part of a set curriculum area. We constantly team teach across many faculty areas, but seem not to belong to one area in particular. As we do not participate in the marking of the finished product, this adds to the issue. With time always an issue, the focus is often on the finished project, not the process, so sometimes our team teaching time is seen to be unimportant if time is short and easily forgone.

Although we are qualified as both teachers and librarians, students do not always recognise this fact.

As the School Certificate and Higher School Certificate are external exams, they become the focus of teaching and any other classes that are not examined fall by the wayside. Teaching this course through the Library would mean that the status of the Library is raised both throughout the school and in the student's eyes.

The Board provided many resources for this course. At the end of each section it provides multiple choice and true false questions to test the students. The students do not need to log into the site. It keeps no records of their participation. It does provide feedback after each question, informing the students of the correctness of their answer. It does not provide total or group feedback on their results in an organised fashion.

In short, we required some sort of proof that the student had completed the quizzes, that we could print out and keep for our records.

Task

The task is two fold. The information is available on the website from the Board of Studies themselves. There are five (5) modules in the course.

> Scholarship Principles and Practice
> Acknowledging sources
> Plagiarism
> Copyright
> Working with others

Firstly the information has to be converted from the Board of Studies website into the format required by MOODLE. There were two types of conversions required.

The background information, FAQ and other general information were converted to PowerPoint presentations. There was one presentation completed for each section. Some of these PowerPoint presentations ran up to 50 screens. I made no adjustments to the information on the Board of Studies website. The basics of the information was visually presented, with the scope of speaking to the presentation and providing any extra information required.

In the case of the questions, I chose to use notepad. I printed some of the pages from the website, but mostly had two (2) screens open and literally typed the questions into notepad, using the formatting required. This meant that both true/false and multiple choice

questions needed special bracketing. The true/false questions used a reverse approach. That is, if the question required a "true" answer, the bracket contained a marker and the correct answer. The multiple choice questions needed the use of tildes and equal signs.

A sample is printed here:

Information you have summarised doesn't have to be acknowledged. {F#No that is incorrect. Summaries must be acknowledged}

Ethical {~guidance ~right ~assessment =integrity ~honest} is part of your responsibility in doing your own work.

Sources used in the creation of a piece of work should be acknowledged to fulfil {~seventy ~plagiarism =moral ~attribution ~author} and legal obligations.

A reference list and a bibliography are different terms given to the same thing {F# A reference list contains sources actually referred to in the piece of work. A bibliography contains any source consulted.}

We don't have to register in Australia to be protected by copyright.{T#Copyright protection is automatic}

A statutory {~anthology ~amended ~royalties ~dealing =licence} can give certain institutions exemptions from copyright obligations

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Presentation of task.

The process contained the following steps: The presentation of the material to the students, completion of the quizzes by the students and collection of the quiz data for the school records.

The students were together for the initial presentation. The 124 students were placed in the lecture theatre and over five different teaching periods, I presented the background information on each topic. As the PowerPoint presentations were presented, I allowed times for questions and discussion time for the scenarios presented. These scenarios were straight from the Board of Studies and were composed of a statement of intent or issue and queries as to what the correct course of action was. The students were generally correct in their thoughts, but heated discussion occurred at times.

After each individual PowerPoint presentation was completed. The students were escorted to computer laboratories to log into our network and complete the relevant quiz.

Software

MOODLE's quiz format has many useful parts. It is possible for two (2) students to sit next to each other and complete the same quiz, but not be able to use each other's information. You have the facility to rotate the questions and, even better, rotate the multiple choice answers within the question. This means that even if they log in at the same time that the same question will not come up and even if it did, the correct answer will not be the same

for each. If the student is repeating the course, the same will apply. The questions will be mixed from their previous attempt. This must aid their concentration and memory.

The ability to open and close the quiz was extremely useful. We did not open the quiz until the day the students received the PowerPoint presentation so that they could not work on ahead and complete the future tasks. In some cases that could be detrimental to the students who were keen to work ahead, but in the initial year of this course, we wished to keep a tight rein on the content.

The students can see their own results, but no others. On the completion of the quiz, a result is shown and they are asked did they wish to sit the quiz again. There is also the inbuilt facility to limit the number of times they can resit at any time, or they can have a time gap between resubmits, eg half an hour.

One of the major benefits for the administrator of this on line course is the statistics provided by MOODLE. You can produce many different reports. The several reports that we found most useful included the individual quiz results which produced names, when attempted, how long the quiz took and the highest score achieved. There is also the cumulative report which provides a list of each student and the score gained in each quiz with a cumulative total. This was probably the most useful for our School Executive. It is downloaded into an EXCEL worksheet and easily printed off for presentation at staff meetings. Anther report showed me, as the teacher in charge, how many times the student attempted the quizzes and how many times they had checked with the PowerPoints that were uploaded.

You can graph the usage pattern over time. As a teacher I found the most interesting report was the item analysis report. This report showed the responses to each question and the percentage of students who had got the question right or wrong. This is invaluable in checking which concept the students had the most problems with for later revision.

Alternative Tasks

It was not necessary to set alternative tasks for this course, as access could be allowed to students who missed the original times. One of the benefits of MOODLE is that you can set opening and closing times and these were adjusted so that the absent students could complete the tests easily.

Findings

When I started this process, I explained to the students that they had to gain a 90% pass rate. This is actually greater that the expectation of the School Executive, but I felt that the topic was too important not to have an in depth understanding.

To our joy, ever student did gain over 90% and one even gained a full score of 100%. Some of the students took several attempts to reach this level of expertise, but still achieved it in the time allocated. The benefits gained by the students reinforced their learning. They could revisit the presentations and quizzes until they were comfortable with their results and indeed achieve the required outcome. All this is achieved without drawing attention to themselves in a class situation. The students quickly became comfortable with the learning style and are now looking forward to using this method in other subject areas.

Another bonus was that, due to the success of the program, the students now recognise us as teachers and the rest of the teaching staff see us as a valuable part of the teaching staff. We have been called upon to help other Departments set up their learning packages and this has been a great asset to our promotion of the library and its services.

Online learning, although common in our Universities, is only just reaching our local schools in a simple and useful way. MOODLE is aiding this movement. Unfortunately, some of our Government schools will not have this opportunity as their LANs do not allow the individual schools the facility to download MOODLE, this will be their loss, unless some major changes are made.

Success has come in many ways. Due to my involvement with our professional association "Australian School Library Association, New South Wales" we have been able to run a total of 7 training sessions, teaching many fellow professionals how to set up and administer our course in Moodle. Due to the sharing nature of our professional, we have encouraged approximately 150 other teachers to use our work as a starting point and either use it as it is or modify it to fit their student body in their school. This will mean that those 150 schools will have completed the course as this goes to print.

The success gained from using MOODLE in this course has spread throughout other teaching faculties in our school. The staff can see and utilise the benefits. Many Departments are now using MOODLE as part of their teaching programs with great success. This whole movement is of major benefit to the students, as they learn in their own time and space.

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