

JISC RSC Scotland South & West Case Study @ Kilmarnock College

Eco Learning using e-learning

Summary



This case study is based on the pilot delivery of an HNC unit, delivered using no paper for either delivery or assessment. The HN unit – Network Technology and Data Communication is delivered as a traditional taught unit over one academic year of one hour per week. Kenny Girvan the eLearning Manager developed all the teaching materials and assessments suitable for delivery through their learning platform and provided supporting communications and tutoring using the college VLE (Moodle). Students access the VLE both during class and out with, their comments are included in the case study in italics.

About Kilmarnock College

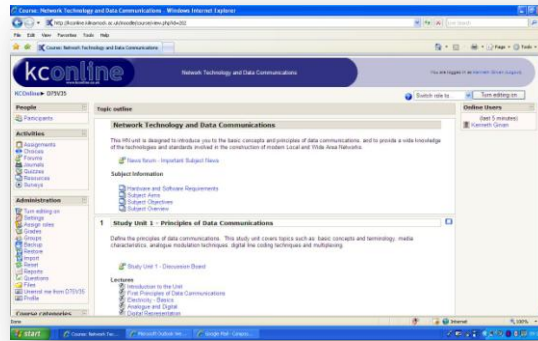
Kilmarnock College is a community college which serves a range of communities and employers throughout Kilmarnock and the surrounding areas of East Ayrshire and North Ayrshire. The college enrolls approximately 9,400 learners annually.

The challenge

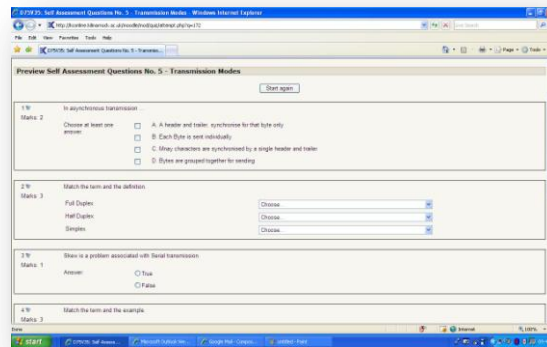
The motivation for the pilot was to reduce paper usage/wastage of a fairly typical SQA unit whilst providing learners with an improved learning experience through the increased and efficient use of the college VLE. The project was also motivated by the desire to utilise the functionality of the Virtual Learning Environment more fully.

The activity

All content was uploaded to the VLE and a phased release of materials put in place. This included PowerPoint Presentations, Word and Excel files, web links, pdf files and some instructional multimedia. Much of this content in the past would have been printed and handed out to the learners. Face to face sessions included instruction and demonstrations using the materials directly from the VLE.



A series of relatively short formative assessments (mainly restricted response) were created to support class lessons. These provided learners with immediate feedback and focused learners on gaps in their knowledge. The formative assessments could be completed multiple times and could be completed as 'homework' and 'revision' 24/7. The formative assessments also allowed learners to become familiar with the interface before the summative assessments were completed.



All final summative assessments were created and uploaded/delivered by the college VLE. The first two summative assessments are 30 and 20 question restricted response assessments. These were delivered in class time, meeting normal college/SQA guidelines for assessment delivery but delivered using the VLE rather than traditional paper based versions. Students received immediate feedback over their mark and whether they had successfully completed the assessment. The third assessment task is a technical report based on the students own research etc over a period of time. Again this was delivered 'paper-free' using the VLE to deliver the question and in turn the students submitted their answer in the form of a Word document via the VLE. The tutor then accessed the answers electronically and marked and provided feedback using the VLE tools.

The students also on occasions used the VLE forum tool for collaborative investigations and feedback. Seeded by the tutor, the discussion forums encouraged the students to collaborate, comment and share information and enabled an element of peer review.

The outcomes

The college did not provide any paper resources for the delivery of this unit.

"it's good as you don't get masses of paper"

Students were encouraged not to print unless necessary and then only to print what was required and carefully choose the format etc. (In practice very few students chose to print, and those that did were very selective and often printed at home). Many students instead took the opportunity to download resources onto USB drives.

"I don't lose any notes and they don't get crumpled in my bag"

"I misplaced my notes and was able to get a replacement from the VLE"

All assessments were delivered efficiently and effectively through the VLE.

"we don't have to wait for lecturers to mark papers, it shows you the answers and results after submitting"

"you get your marks back straight away and there are no mistakes in the marking"

The students engaged well with the online/VLE resources and appreciated the ease of access to resources and immediate feedback of formative and summative assessments.

"I could access from home and is better for revision"

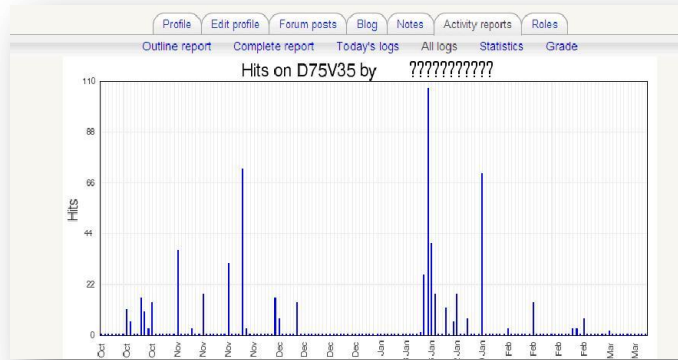
Lecturer time spent on uploading and creating VLE content is compensated by time saved photocopying, printing, and marking. In addition all materials are easily accessed from the VLE in class without the need to carry large amount of materials from room to room.

The impact

Delivering the HN unit using solely the VLE drastically reduced paper usage which meant that there were no photocopying and stationary costs to the college. Students were encouraged to consider their paper usage and most chose not to print but rather download to USB memory sticks and keep the materials in electronic format.

Students had 24/7 access to learning materials including files, documents and formative assessments. Records show interesting patterns of usage especially before summative assessments. Students missing classes, late or ill could access the materials and formative assessments. Overall engagement with course materials beyond the face to face sessions was higher.

"self assessments and mock tests online was a great way of preparing"



Both formative and summative assessments were delivered using the VLE with no barriers to participating students and no technical issues with access or reliability. Students received immediate feedback on restricted response ‘quizzes’ both formative and summative.

Students engaged well with the materials and achievement and retention figures were good. Although this is hard to attribute to the online nature of delivery with any great certainty, the positive student feedback suggests that it may have contributed.

Lessons Learnt

It is critical that access to the VLE is available at the start of the course and that some time is spent to familiarise the students with the learning platform.

Sell it to students at the beginning, engage them with the concept and highlight the advantages - 24/7 access, immediate feedback, more control, environmentally more sustainable.

Moodle allows you to ‘hide’ resources and activities, use this to phase the release of content until it is required.

Monitor each individual’s progress and establish who is accessing VLE out with class, encourage them to complete online formative self assessment questions out with class.

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