Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-Based Learning

Application for learning technology support for development of EBL in online teaching, learning or assessment

This application should be returned electronically to ceebl@manchester.ac.uk by 21st November 2008.

1. **Unit/programme of study/student group to which project relates**:

MSEC30052 – Interdisciplinary Sustainable Development

2. **Number of Students**

Approximately 100 students (from 7 Schools in EPS)

3. **Faculty/School/Department**:

Manchester Enterprise Centre

4. **Project team** (Put team leader's name first, with contact details):

Mrs Helen Dobson (e: helen.dobson@manchester.ac.uk ; t: x68483)
Mr Tim Jones
Mrs Rosemary Tomkinson
Mr Bland Tomkinson

5. **Summary of proposal or interest in receiving EBL consultation** (Include where possible your aims, objectives and anticipated outcomes – max. 150 words):

MSEC30052 – Interdisciplinary Sustainable Development (www.eps.manchester.ac.uk/tlc/sd)

Building on the introduction of Blackboard Vista and Googledocs last year, support is needed in making best use of e-tools in delivering this interdisciplinary EBL course, in assessing assignments and in facilitating collaboration of the students virtually between class sessions.

It is hoped all projects can be presented to the students with the minimum of paper copies required, and that electronic tools can enhance their enquiry based learning experience.

Help will be needed in setting up the course and inducting/supporting the students in the early stages of the course-unit.

6. **Benefits** (identify the possible benefits e.g. in terms of student learning. – max. 150 words):

There are hurdles to be overcome when attempting group projectwork by students from different disciplines who are located all over campus, with different timetables that make face to face meetings difficult outside the short class-time dedicated to the unit.

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The enquiry-based format of the modules makes significant contribution by the students outside the timetabled sessions essential.

Electronic tools such as Blackboard Vista and Googledocs can help overcome the difficulties of collaborating remotely on researching literature and report writing, aiding communication and understanding and thereby enhancing the learning experience.

Without access to effective online tools, students find communication difficult and waste time in low-value activities. This is frustrating for them and reduces the quality of work they are able to achieve.

However, both staff and students need assistance in making best use of this relatively new technology if it is to be a help rather than a hindrance to effective working.

7. **Project action plan** (Indicate stages in implementation. - max. 50 words):

    - November 08 -January 2009: Course-unit development – designing Blackboard Vista Course Framework, creating project files and uploading to Blackboard Vista, training staff participating in delivery of the course-unit.

    - Jan 2009 – Send electronic guide to e-tools to students and ensure all registered.

    - 4th Feb 2009 – Student first session, support needed.

8. **Evaluation** (Please provide us with a brief description of the mechanism you intend to use for evaluating the achieved outcomes – max. 150 words):

Staff and students involved in the course-unit will be asked to provide feedback in writing at the end of the course, describing how useful they felt the e-tools were in enhancing their learning experience, what they felt were the main benefits, what (if any) the main problems are with them that need to be resolved. They will be asked for suggestions to improve the tools and resources for future cohorts.

9. **Other CEEBL support requested** – additional support from CEEBL (e.g. training, financial, Student Intern support, facilitation training, preparing students for EBL, evaluation and research – max. 150 words):

Use of the CEEBL space itself would be useful for future cohorts (including both Semester 1 and Semester 2 next year), for student EBL teams and facilitator training.

Electronic guidance on using e-tools such as Blackboard Vista, Googledocs, that can be made available to students in advance of the course starting, would be useful. Generic material about EBL that could be sent electronically to students in advance would also be helpful to prepare them for the experience.

Research topics of future interest include assessing the impact of facilitation style on team performance, and how to evaluate facilitator effectiveness given the differences in facilitator style and in their student team capabilities.

Support in delivering facilitator training specific to this course-unit and maintaining a database of PDRAs at the University interested in EBL and facilitating would be useful for future cohorts.

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