

# ***Opening the doors to a virtual school***



Foundation Degree in Learning Support  
Joe Hodgson  
University of Worcester  
Sharon Smith  
(South Worcester College )

## **In the beginning.....**

---

.....there was a very conventional module, which required:

- a presentation
- a written evaluation.....there was a problem:
- too much overlap with 'similar' year one Module
- the students were losing momentum

## **The solutions(?)**

---

- Idea from another course in another institution.
- Connection between 2 institutions in the FDLS wider partnership.
- Inspiration and enthusiasm!
- Thinking outside the box.
- Provision of a generic scenario to enable and facilitate students in their learning.

## **The problem.....**

---

‘You have been appointed as Teaching Assistant responsible for working with a child with a named disability. As an acknowledged ‘expert’ the school has asked you to make a presentation to ALL staff to facilitate the inclusion of a such a child.’

# The creation.....

---

Welcome to  
Collingsbury CE Primary School  
School scenario provided through VLE



**Click the picture above to enter the Collingsbury Church of England Primary School Website**

## **Using the VLE.....**

---

- Evaluated student 'attitude' before the module began;
- Initial training from ILS
- Established ILS contact for students with difficulties with access. (This worked particularly well in both colleges!)

# Introduction to PBL....

- Autonomy to decide on groups (size, gender etc.)
- The nature of PBL was done using the VLE and required students to be interactive.
- Introduced students to the school's virtual Head and SENCo. (Access was 'live' but limited to reality ie the head and SENCo went on courses.....)
- Role play.....
- Group work produced finished presentation.
- Peer assessment

# The learning journal.....

---

Parallel to all of this, students are required to keep a reflective diary which might contain :

- The length of the session
- The tasks discussed
- The nature of the discussion
- Your specific input – this could be research based or practical input (Case study etc.) You might present an evaluation of an article.
- An analysis and evaluation of the discussion identifying clearly your task before the next session.
- Any sources used, and after the first planning session, evidence of your research.
- Entries need to be restricted in length and should average 350 words.

# **Outcomes.....**

## **Student comments**

---

- Using a VLE to provide a flexible learning tool
- Alternative group work
- Appreciated the value of Peer Assessment
- Using online discussions
- Access issues
- Attitudes - can't do this
- What should I do next?
- Where will I get the support?
- What groups do we need to be in
- Keeping a journal

# Looking back.....

---

## Starting Out

- Setting up Web Ct modules - seeing the finished piece. Matching the vision with technical possibilities
- Creating content and organising content
- Identifying the scenario and methods of delivery
- Identifying the students needs in relation to using the VLE and identifying the challenges
  - This might relate to technical issues or attitudes

# Setting up.....

---

- Uploading content for a particular group of students to access
- Training for students to access Moodle – ILS staff involved to help with passwords and technical concerns – A MUST
- Explaining concept of virtual school and making links to other modules for content

# Peer Assessment

---

“Peer assessment was very useful especially as it meant a wider audience than our usual small group”

“We actually changed the order of our presentation after peer assessment, we felt it had a better flow”

“ We had three spelling mistakes on ours that no one had spotted”

# **What have we learnt ?**

---

- Life outside conventional modules
- Learning together
- Control over diaries limit entries by providing a focus
- Effective use of ILS (partnership)
- Access through Moodle has enabled all students to participate

# **Schools out for summer!**

---

- Disseminating best practice to colleagues
- Developing partnerships
- Developing the school to be more interactive