Teaching in an International context – Student centred e-learning

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Shetland
Islands Unst
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Foula

80 km
40 miles

GCU Global: Internationalisation Strategy 2012-2015

GCU is committed to:

◇ Focusing its activity towards greater internationalisation.

◇ embedding internationalisation across all relevant University activities.

◇ internationalisation of the curriculum (IoC) and therefore it is at the heart of our approaches to learning and teaching.

First steps

How to develop our students' understanding of:

◇ Criminal justice

◇ Globalisation

◇ Serious and organised crime

◇ Cultural differences

◇ Jurisdictional differences

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Getting started

✧ 2004 - 2005 E-mail pilot versions: 1 UK and 1 US university.

✧ 2006 – 2009 IEE: 4 UK and 4 US Universities: 7 weeks asynchronous discussion involving around 500 students each year

✧ 2010: move towards virtual-authentic with increased emphasis on time management of tasks

✧ Skills development: ICT, communication, autonomous learning, reflection, critical thinking.

✧ Expanding knowledge and awareness of cultural and national differences; understanding criminal justice in other jurisdictions.

✧ Online learning environments are seen as one way of breaking down the traditional boundaries limiting debate and

Project design informed by experience

✧ Ever-increasing academic administrative burden (victim of its own success)

✧ Inflexibility of generic VLEs

✧ Lack of administrative support

✧ Wiki formats offer an alternative as they are flexible, offering online, open access.

Why online collaboration?

✧ Provides students with a 'no-cost' option to traditional international exchange programmes

✧ Produces a demanding yet rewarding experience for students

✧ Creative use of technology enhances the student experience

✧ Collaboration across institutions is not easy but there is pedagogic value in developing, and embedding as routine, communication and information technology

✧ The design is also transferable to other disciplines that hold the pedagogic desire to stimulate critical awareness, analytical thought and reflective practice

✧ New relations in ownership of knowledge

Pedagogy

✧ Based on the principles of problem solving

✧ Student engagement

✧ Student as learner

✧ Student as educator

✧ Student as producer

Collaborating across institutions is not easy but there is pedagogic value in doing so and the design is also transferable to other associated disciplines that hold the pedagogic desire to stimulate critical awareness, analytical thought and reflective practice.

What do we do?

✧ Students are randomly assigned to virtual groups of 10.

✧ They are required to work as a group although they are individually assessed over a four/six week period.

✧ They are also required to take responsibility for meeting deadlines during the project.

✧ Group work projects have had different formats although they have all had the shared aim to encourage discussion and exchange information on issues of interest to/concern for criminology and criminal justice.

✧ Encourage self-development and development of key graduate/employability skills.

Current Project Format

✧ Students are required to develop their group rules.

✧ They are provided with case studies and encouraged to critically think about -

✧ Links with the community

✧ Investigation of evidence

✧ Release of information – press releases

✧ Final output this year was a power-point presentation with an individual reflective slide.

Assessment

✧ Currently students are individually assessed on –

✧ Timeliness of contributions

✧ Engagement in all of the aspects/tasks of the project including

✧ Evidence of critical thinking

✧ Relevance of their posts

✧ Fulfilment of responsibilities

✧ Sharing of resources – referencing

✧ Written communication and presentation skills

✧ Individual reflection on the project experience.

Feedback from students and staff

✧ Staff

"I feel that my teaching has been challenged and invigorated, students have experienced a unique learning environment, and everyone involved has learned."

"I gained new perspectives from my international partner from the outset. I am more convinced than ever that these collaborations are invaluable for students and instructors around the world particularly for students with limited opportunities to travel abroad, the opportunity to share an educational experience with students from other cultures and countries is very important."

✧ Students

"It was fascinating to see the different perspectives concerning the topics we discussed in the course. It changed my perspective."

"It challenged me to think in new ways."

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What students say continued…

✧ I was able to fulfil my work at times that were convenient which meant that I could contribute more as a result.

✧ My week could be managed easier as I knew I could fit in my wiki work at any time during the week.

✧ I think this project has enhanced skills way beyond what I could have done in an essay or exam. Why don't we do more of this sort of work? All teachers should be able to design this type of thing to really get us thinking critically.

✧ I have done an online project before and enjoyed it so I was looking forward to this one.

…students' knowledge structures move from a base level of 'knowing the facts' through a sequence of progressive contextualisation of the material…

Outcomes

✧ Students enjoy the experience

✧ Encourages more engagement with the literature

✧ Provides a unique experience for stay-at-home students

✧ Provides a platform for academic collaboration

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