

Masters Induction For All - Development Of A Distance Learning, Stand-Alone, Electronic Learning Object For All

Christine Ferris (HWB)



Abstract

The aim of this project is to produce and evaluate a distance learning, stand-alone, electronic learning package for induction of all (international and UK based) students accessing any Level 7 modules. This project is incomplete and full evaluation has still to take place.

Objectives and outcomes

- Scope existing Level 7 learning induction resources within H&W (please see Diagrams 1 and 2 for list of available material). A number of induction resources were available. Different professional groups and courses produce their own material however there are similarities between them. DL learning objects and general induction material are being developed on a continual basis. Different levels of emphasis were placed on the structure and value of induction generally. A streamlined and coherent approach is recommended.
- Form a steering/consultation group. A consultation group of course leaders was identified however it was difficult to engage them and this is an ongoing piece of work. Timing of enlisting support from course leaders seems key. Consultation was encouraged via a Blackboard site (please see Diagram 3).
- Repackage current provision into a stand-alone learning object for use within all Level 7 modules. This was not achieved as other work was progressing in parallel, however this is ongoing.
- Make accessible to all students including those with disabilities and those from overseas.
- Evaluate using focus groups and Blackboard.
- Disseminate and make results available to academic staff.

Background

Changing to DL highlighted a need for students to engage with the requirements of Level 7 study through the VLE. Individual programmes have developed their own resources. Over the last 12 months we have pooled resources and now require these to be redeveloped and evaluated. Many Level 7 students access individual modules along with modules that are part of an award. The move towards blended and DL requires increased learner autonomy. Induction is the first impression students get and helps to orientate the student to the demands of the autonomous learning demanded at this level of study.

Method

The scoping exercise involved contacting all course leaders of level 7 courses to identify level 7 induction packages already in existence. This has generated the lists in Diagrams 1 and 2. The items are used on some level 7 Blackboard sites for some modules that are studied as stand alone. Students will be asked about how useful this material is in focus groups. We are particularly interested in international students and those with dyslexia as the aim is to create material that is accessible and inclusive. Staff will be asked for their feedback via a dedicated Blackboard site.

Method

The scoping exercise involved contacting all course leaders of level 7 courses to identify level 7 induction packages already in existence. This has generated the lists in Diagrams 1 and 2. The items are used on some level 7 Blackboard sites for some modules that are studied as stand alone. Students will be asked about how useful this material is in focus groups. We are particularly interested in international students and those with dyslexia as the aim is to create material that is accessible and inclusive. Staff will be asked for their feedback via a dedicated Blackboard site.

Contact: Christine Ferris c.m.ferris@shu.ac.uk

POSTGRADUATE STUDY SKILLS (2009/10) (65-Z-50295-20090) > INDUCTION > MSc INDUCTION PACKAGE

MSc Induction Package

- MSc Induction**
[Introduction to PG study - What is M level? \(159 KB\)](#)
 Please look at the attached presentation if you are a new student or an existing student in need of a refresher.
- The Concept of Critical Appraisal**
[Concept of critical appraisal \(Package File\)](#)
 This simple presentation will explain what we mean by "critical appraisal" and give you some pointers to help you develop your skills. Click on the underlined file link!
- Critical Appraisal Skills Programme**
 The NHS (National Health Service - UK) produces useful guides to critically appraising research. The guides are, in themselves a useful way to learn about which elements of research are considered most important when judging the quality and relevance of a study. You will find the section on Critical Appraisal of Diagnostic Tests particularly useful for imaging studies.
- Critical Appraisal of Research Articles**
[Critical Appraisal_1.ppt \(1.083 Mb\)](#)
 As part of your M-level studies when presenting your assignments you are expected to evaluate the research literature that you reference, this is important because:
 1. There is no such thing as a perfect piece of research where human subjects are involved so there maybe factors other than the intervention (if it is a clinical trial) that has led to the results produced.
 2. Showing evaluation demonstrates that you have in-depth understanding of the topic area.

Benefits

The benefits will be:

- Increased learner autonomy for postgraduate students, making the transition from undergraduate to Level 7 studies
- Improved progression and retention of postgraduate students, as their autonomy increases, facilitating achievement of generic and subject specific Level 7 learning outcomes
- Innovative learning object for use by staff, undertaking support of UK and international students on new postgraduate programmes, in subject areas previously under-represented in delivering similar provision
- Facilitation of excellent, co-operative working practices between staff, drawn from across student support, business and academic boundaries in the re-structured Faculty, which promote the learner autonomy agenda and improve student experience
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness by utilisation and development (as appropriate) of existing good practices.

Rationale

The goals of this project were to encourage student engagement with electronic learning in an autonomous manner and begin to build an on-line peer support system. The concept of autonomous learning is not new (Gardner & Millar 1999) and informs debates on life long learning and independent thinking. Student preparation for the level of learner autonomy required at level 7 is undertaken in different ways by different courses and groups of students. This project attempts to identify priorities of skill development for this level and to offer some indication of suitability for distance learning.

POSTGRADUATE STUDY SKILLS (2009/10) (65-Z-50295-20090) > DISCUSSION BOARD

Discussion Board

Search After Jun 13 2010 12 00 AM
 in Before Jun 14 2010 12 00 AM

| Forum | Total Posts | Unread Posts | Total Participants |
|---|-------------|--------------|--------------------|
| How do you think we should prepare students for Distance Learning? | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| What are the essential ingredients for postgraduate/ level 7 study? | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| What are the needs of international students who engage with postgraduate study at a distance | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| What are the needs of students with disabilities and learning contracts. How can we support them through distance learning? | 0 | 0 | 0 |

OK