Augmenting the student experience through digital innovation

Ryan Thomas
Phil Brown
Mathew Dowling
Presentation overview

• Sport Development HUB
• How has it come about?
• Why was it needed?
• What does it do (show and tell)
• Successes/challenges to date (data gathered)
• Future Plans
Background

- Education is being forced to change through new technologies (Edwards & McKinnell, 2007)

- Successful internal Digital Innovation Award 2015-2016

- Good practice in student enhancement activities ‘hidden’ within modules

- No central repository to capture and promote these activities across the whole curriculum

- Students outside of such modules therefore missed some excellent opportunities to augment their university experience

- Mechanism to capture, promote, disseminate and celebrate these activities
Links to University strategic direction

• Digital innovation (identified in strategic plan)

• Student experience / enhancement (Teaching and Learning Strategy)

• Employability and industry links / experience

• Improving communication

• Promotion tool for programmes (outward facing on course pages).
Marjon UniSPDEV @MarjonSPDEV · May 8
Marjon Sport Dev event management students doing a sterling job at the Chestnut Cup @MarjonSPDEV @marjonuni

Dr Mathew Dowling @matdowling · Feb 24
Insightful student-led Q&A w/Jon Rudd and @BenProud @MarjonSPDEV #SDEC01 #SDEH07
Development

• Worked with University e-learning team (MeLT) to bring ideas to life

• Ongoing development and functionality of a web-based interactive platform

• KEY CONSIDERATION - Staff and student driven
Staff/student partnerships in learning activities

• Assumed the stance of Bryan (2015) in that the focus for us as educators is to be creative in finding multiple ways of actively engaging the diverse student population in their learning

• A digital platform was chosen to promote these additional learning opportunities

• Evidence suggests that almost 80% of university students access course management systems through a range of devices at least once per week (Ellis & Goodyear, 2010)

• Arguably, the use of technology would make the promotion of these varied opportunities considerably easier
Patently obvious that working with students in order to create a HE environment in which students were diligently involved with us as academics as part of a community of learners (Ramsden, 2008) would be crucial to not only the success of the project; but also in fostering a togetherness between all stakeholders that would lead to students acting as co-creators, co-producers, and co-designers of knowledge and learning (Healey, Bovill, & Jenkins, 2015)
Student engagement & consultation

- Through a theme of reflexive engagement, teacher-learner relationships were a central tenet to this project (Tennant, McMullan & Kaczynski, 2010)

- 2 student pilot sessions run involving SSLC members, providing consultation on:

  1. Overall/general opinions - Initial thoughts; the good, the bad and the ugly
  2. Content - the information that is provided/could be provided on the calendar/portal – and whether calling it a ‘calendar’ was appropriate
  3. Structure/navigation - how you move around the calendar/portal, and what types of information/events should be placed on there?
  4. Aesthetics/visual - how does/could the calendar/portal look (colours/tabs)?
  5. Interactivity - in what ways could the calendar/portal be used to perform actions (payments, documents, reviews?)
Progress to date – functionality

- Website
- Smart phone app
- Embeddable ‘widget’
- Links to social media #hashtags
- Book yourself onto this event!
- http://elearning.marjon.ac.uk/marven/ts/event_page.php?eventID=130
Focus group (qualitative) views

- Felt involved in design/creation of HUB
- Concept initiated by staff, but students felt that they were listened to and ideas acted upon
- However, only 6/10 students had engaged with HUB this year
- Saw it as event info/booking of activities
- Many expressed issues with finding it through VLE (widget), and/or only used it when staff encouraged them to (email reminder for events)
- Felt that it needed to be integrated into Marjon Mobile App for greater coverage/usage
- Need to ingrain culture of use from year 1 (students HAVE to go on it) as many are used to gaining information through other various means
- However, all saw its potential
Lessons learned

• Key lessons

• Academic staff needed ‘remission’ rather than financial resources (technical expertise in-house)

• Student engagement in the processes was highly beneficial, but have they really engaged with/used it? What can we learn from this?

• Professional Services colleagues key to ongoing operational support

• Critical mass likely to be the key to success – open the HUB more widely

• Consider the cost in relation to the perceived benefit (Edwards & McKinnell, 2007)
Future Plans?

• Successful Digital Innovation Application for 2016/2017

• Sports Hub 2.0

• Expand the HUB to include all sports programmes and Sports Fed / SU

• Generate greater critical mass

• Work with external partners to enable direct upload of events

• **Sports Event Hub would be the central location, one area that is updated, but which is broadcast across multiple platforms improving student opportunities and enhancing communication**

• Sports News Widget (employment ops, volunteering, fixture results)
References


