

Use of Online Submissions and Feedback Tools

Overview

Summary



The coursework submission method was changed from hard copy to electronic submission via online learning portal (MyPlace). Provision of both assessment and feedback was delivered via online tools (TURNITIN). This allowed students to see assessment against the rubric, relevant comments and content, issues of originality and to keep a long term record of feedback to refer to later. It also allows the academic to also keep a copy to refer to as required and use as examples of future work. This intervention was taken first in 2014-15 and each year I have built on the successes.

Context

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Faculty of Engineering

Contact Details

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Themes

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Rationale

Beyond my teaching philosophy of providing a clear, fair and transparent assessment criteria for all coursework and assessment, a number of specific issues provided the rationale for this intervention:

- Students were expressing specific feedback that they were unsure as to what the assessment criteria were and how feedback and grades related to clearly these.
- Copies of all final (4th and 5th) year course work must be kept by Department for review by the external examiners. This resulted in students being able to see coursework for only a limited period and not able to review feedback at times when required – e.g. not at exam time.
- Academics do not generally keep a copy of the submission and was unable to refer to previous feedback provided if further feedback was requested by students.
- Students did not often refer to previous coursework assessments and feedback when producing the next assessment.

The development, availability and integration of online feedback and assessment tools (such as TURNITIN) into MyPlace offered an opportunity to address the factors above.

Successes

Specific success are:

- Student feedback was very positive on clarity of assessment criteria and relevance of both general and specific feedback. They also appreciated keeping copies of feedback for timely use.
- The quantity of hard copy marking material was significantly reduced, along with the environmental benefits of less paper use.
- Marking could be achieved anywhere with access to the internet (usually my iPad on the train). Backing up to the servers must be regular but this is done automatically.

Other colleagues have observed success of this and broader use across the department has begun.

Lessons Learnt

Specific lessons include:

- Show the students where the information is, how to access it and what to do with it. Use the "student view" options to get their viewpoint across. Never assume they know where the information is and what it means.
- Check the connectivity of all systems before opening to students
- Be aware of software updates/changes and never assume because it worked last year, it will this year!

Challenges

Challenges still arise from student involvement and engagement. A level of familiarity with the software/technologies is required and some students are not as experienced as others. A solution is to run demonstration/training during lectures and to make help guides available on my place. A particular issue still arises from students not engaging with the information provided in advance and in reading feedback afterwards – this can be monitored via the online tools but you cannot compel the student to access the information with tools! There is a requirement to motivate students to do this.

There are a number of technical issues that arose during each year (particularly in terms of "how do I do this now on MyPlace" following software upgrades...). The first and immediate port of call should be the Learning Technologies Team (Alistair Campbell ext 3770).

Scalability

This can be applied to any course where there are coursework submissions. Given the broad range of software types that now interface with these tools, virtually any submission type can be assessed.

Class sizes this was applied to were typically around 100 students. The benefits of more flexible marking were immediate.

Suggestions for Transferability

I would wholly recommend using this approach to feedback and assessment. It is transferable, the only limiting factor is the confidence of the academic to embrace the tools!

Attachments

N/A

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