Cairns School of Distance Learning Delivery Model

Purpose : to produce a policy for maximising use of digital learning opportunities

Where have we come from?

For many years core learning in distance education was provided by paper materials provided by an education department operation called Access Ed. Paper based correspondence courses were provided, supplemented by video tapes, audio tapes, textbooks and other support materials. These materials were supplemented by HF radio (subsequently teleconference) lessons and periodic field program face to face activities. This system provided a broad yet thorough curriculum for student learning. However, whilst it was undoubtedly a step forward when introduced there were obvious disadvantages.

The first was the significant time lapse between students' completing work and receiving teacher feedback, sometimes up to 3 weeks.

The second drawback was the difficulty and expense of reviewing and updating these materials. They were expensive to develop and then unchangeable without further major investment.

The third problem was a lack of opportunities for interaction .

After 2002, a decision was made that the materials needed renewing. A Materials Development Forum was established comprising representatives of Access Ed, Schools of Distance Education and SODEA. A significant decision of this group was to develop future materials digitally so that they could be amended and changed as required. It was also recognised that it was not possible to produce materials for digital and paper formats of equal quality. The most recent iteration of Distance Education course material development, C2C, was completed within the above framework. However despite MiStick digital course disks being available and courses also being available to access in BlackBoard we still send everyone a print copy of programs.

Where to from here?

Recognition of these developments necessitates a plan to change the culture of engagement with learning materials from paper to electronic. Gradually teachers have increased use of opportunities provided by email to facilitate timely feedback, employed Blackboard as a repository of study courses and used Elluminate to enable real time interactivity.

Therefore, whilst paper materials will still be available in black and white on request, Cairns SDE will phase in use of digital programs as the default option, recognising greater student independence in teenage years as well as the popularity of on-line learning. It is stressed that handwriting, textbooks and novels will not be neglected and will retain an important part of the packages.

The following is a timeline for the phased introduction of a system whereby paper is only provided on the written request. This will be in the form of an email to the Principal outlining the reasons why.

Semester 1 2014   Years 7-10 C2C

Semester 2 2014   Years 4-10 C2C and CLC

                                      Years 7 – 12 all other subjects in Bb/DVD format

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Semester 1 2015   All P – 12 subject offerings including years P-3

N.B. CLC materials are available in Bb and on disks

This plan will address the advantages of digital program development and the disadvantages of paper as outlined in the rationale above. It will also ensure the following important issues are addressed.

- Timelines of delivery, updating of materials and feedback

- Materials are developed for on-line as optimum version

- Financial consideration

- Prioritisation of finite resources