DESIGNING E-CURRICULUM BOOKS FOR UNDERGRADUATE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY: LESSONS LEARNT

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Context
Complexity of the OT curriculum

- Problem Based Learning (PBL)
- Science of Occupation
  - Occupational Performance and Dysfunction
  - Management, Programmes and Research
- Occupational Therapy
  - OT applied to Physical Conditions
  - OT applied to Psychiatric Conditions
- Foundation Sciences
Original Curriculum Book

- Printed and bound book - 150 pages
  - High printing costs
- 2003 = CD of Word Documents
  - Folder of documents – electronic version of print.
  - Difficult to navigate
  - This continued till 2008
Blended Learning

- Blended learning was introduced 10/2008
  - Face -2- Face
    - PBL course delivery
  - Virtual Learning Environment / course (Moodle)
    - Supplement Face – 2 – Face learning activity
    - Online Student : Lecturer interaction
  - E-Curriculum Book
    - Guide the Learning Objectives
- 1st task was to create an e-Curriculum book to suit the millenial learner
  - 2009 = e-Curriculum Book (HTML)
  - Easy to navigate – access to right information
  - Reduced costs / student
Content Management

- e-Curriculum Book contains:
  - the university rules and regulations,
  - course unit structure,
  - PBL problem outlines,
  - learner objectives and
  - requirements for fieldwork and assignments

- Additional content – links, video’s, docs, forms
Lessons Learnt

• Content Lessons:
  – Print friendly
  – Template documents
  – Cast in stone
  – Quantity vs. quality in 700MB

• Design Lessons:
  – Colour association
  – Layout and navigation familiarity
  – 3 click maximum
  – 3D curriculum

• Process Management Lessons:
  – Too many cooks
Content Lesson 1: Print Friendly

• Experience:
  – HTML is not easily printable
  – Students could manipulate content

• Lesson:
  – content that of high importance = .PDF
  – printer icon also = NB!
  – Unable to edit ⇒ prevent unethical student behaviour
Content Lesson 2: Template Documents

- **Experience:**
  - Students like submitting electronic assignments

- **Lesson:**
  - Template documents in .RTF
  - Students can submit electronically
  - ? Concern of inter-student plagiarism
Experience:

– Disadvantage ⇒ once the CD’s are burnt the documents are fixed for the year.

Lesson:

– Requires careful planning and proofing,
  • Current, relevant and accurate documents.
– Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) support minor updates.
Content Lesson 4: Quality vs. Quantity in 700MB

• Experience:
  – Disc has a lot of data space that can be used.
  – To be used wisely.

• Lesson:
  – Prioritisation of content.
  – NB don’t create an information overload ⇒ dilute knowledge development.
  – Opportunity to include large size files (e.g. video).
Design Lesson 1: Colour Association

• Experience:
  – Lecturers and tutors need quick recognition of course year.

• Lesson:
  – Each curriculum year has a colour.
  – Lecturers have all 4 years on 1 CD = easy recognition
Design Lesson 2: Navigation and Layout Familiarity

• Experience:
  – Students are resistant to change = anxiety
  – Usability is dependant on familiarity

• Lesson:
  – **Minimal changes**
    • to the design images and background look
    • users readily observe the annual update,
  – **Navigation consistent**
Design Lesson 3: Three Click Maximum

• Experience:
  – Students and lecturers want to access the right information fast!
  – Not get “lost” in the CD

• Lesson:
  – We have ensured that there is a 3 click maximum from the menu page
  – to ensure speed and efficiency of navigation
Design Lesson 4: A 3D Curriculum

• Experience:
  – Print Book limited by linear sequence

• Lesson:
  – The virtual contexts allows for “3D” content relationships through hyperlinks, multi-directional linking of information
  – Result is contextualised and integrated content knowledge
• Requires intensive process management demand on an annual basis.
• All lecturers edit and update their teaching and learning content.
• Updating, proofing, design and production requires strict communication protocols and record keeping for quality assurance.
Process Management Lesson 1: Too Many Cooks

Experience:

- Up to 13 content contributors and two developers.
- Document over-stamping, footnote dates and document name changes \( \times \).
- Collaboration tools such as wiki’s?
  - Poor document review.
  - Unfamiliar editing tools.
  - Bandwidth issues.
Lesson:
• individual .rtf documents per HTML content page.
• use the track changes function
• edited documents to the course co-ordinator.
• The e-Learning developers receive documents from course co-ordinators
  – use the document date-stamp to verify the most current document version.
  – scan for “track change” areas of documents and only convert those portions
• in the future a content management system should be explored
CONCLUSION

• As per other study – poster
  – Students and lecturers have positively embraced the switch from paper to virtual.
  – a greater sense of course ‘citizenship’

• e-Curriculum books provide
  – Students are well informed of learning requirements and objectives.
  – better cross-referencing within the curriculum.

• e-Curriculum books will continue to develop
  – Incorporate podcast and vodcasts

• interface between the e-curriculum books and the course VLEs is not yet seamless,
  – but the design “look and feel” is similar.
e-Curriculum books have made an innovative contribution to the quality of teaching and learning in the undergraduate occupational therapy curriculum.