4ydd Gynhadledd Dysgu ac Addysgu

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# Crynoldebau / abstracts

Avoiding Plagiarism

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In the last academic session (2014/2015) in SMB we had over 70 cases of unacceptable academic practice/ plagiarism and students were constantly telling us in the unacceptable practice meetings that 'they were not aware their actions constituted plagiarism' and there was a strong feeling within the SMB that we needed to actively address this issue. With this objective in mind the existing learning resources that were available to students were scrutinized and although useful and informative and contain the AU regulations/ lists of advice and resources/ interactive exercises and internet detective, the learning object is very simple. Thus the Avoiding Plagiarism course, provided by Epigeum was proposed which offered all this and much more.

Within the SMB we made it compulsory for all students to complete the course, including both UG and PG’s and over 600 students successfully completed. When completing the training students are introduced to different types of plagiarism, students learn how to avoid plagiarism and to correctly use citations, paraphrasing and references. The course includes scenarios, students’ views, how plagiarism has hit the news headlines, which helps contextualize the content through links to recent articles on real life cases of academic plagiarism, review quizzes and practice exercises. It is extremely interactive throughout.

The course gives us assurance that students have been adequately prepared for their assignments, and provides evidence that students have received training in how to avoid plagiarism. This of course helps us comply with the QAA guidelines on plagiarism training.

Students log onto the website with their Aber id and take the 60 minute course and once completed they receive a certificate as proof of completion. Staff have admin rights so that they can then check which students have engaged.

This is the crucial benefit of this course in that it can be policed. We know which students have engaged and which have not.

Students were asked for feedback after completing the course and the comments provided show how useful they found the course and the success story for the SMB is that so far this academic year (2015/2016) we have only had 3 reports of plagiarism, compared to 70+ last year.

The current licence expires in October 2016, thus our new First year Undergraduates and Masters students will complete this during induction week. Currently the Epigeum is on the running agenda for the Student Success Plan group on Skills and Learning Development.

The Epigeum licence was acquired for one year only as a pilot and proof of concept. Whether using this product or some other method, we have found that proper resources for training students in good academic practice are needed and valuable to students in their learning.