

A Digital Development Program (DDP) Encouraging Teachers to Teach Digitally (Poster)

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Abstract

This poster presents an ongoing 7 year professional development project implemented in the English department at Ruppin Academic College. Self-reflection surveys, professional training, ongoing support and course audits have been key elements in the process of empowering and enabling a team of over 20 English teachers to implement a range of e-learning technologies in their courses. The commitment and hard work of all parties concerned has resulted in a digitally literate staff with the skills required to develop and deliver pedagogically sound, blended learning modules of instruction.

In 2007 Ruppin Academic College began to integrate MOODLE as the Virtual Learning Environment. This gradual integration was met with some resistance by teachers who were unsure of the technology and how it would impact their teaching and their student's learning. Research has shown that inadequate, inappropriate professional development is a significant barrier to successful technology integration in schools (Kopcha, 2010). In addition, Koehler and Mishra (2008) identify content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge, and combinations of these as necessary for effective teaching with technology. Based on these principles we piloted the first MOODLE courses in our EAP program, following these guidelines:

- a. Professional development workshops covering pedagogical theory and training
- b. Clear outline of Moodle features/functions to be used
- c. Ongoing sharing, case studies and follow up support delivered via our English Teacher's Virtual Staff Room
- d. Identification of milestones in the use of Moodle for blended/online learning course.

During the years 2007-2010, the use of VLE activities became an integral part of all Ruppin English Courses. Our team was seen as pioneers in Moodle and we gladly shared and supported teachers from other disciplines as Moodle became required in all Ruppin courses.

Recently, due to needs which emerged from the field, our systematic approach to enhancing digital knowledge and skills among our staff has enabled us to enter the realm of fully blown blended and online courses. This poster outlines how we motivate, empower, guide and support the English staff with the essential skills to be active players in the ever changing educational landscape.

Keywords: professional development, digital literacy, blended learning.

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