![Dearborn Schools logo]

CASE STUDY

Dearborn Public Schools creatively uses Moodle

to invest in their educators and learners

Dearborn Public Schools is a group of 32 comprehensive K-12 schools located throughout the district that include the entire city of Dearborn, Michigan and a small portion of Dearborn Heights, both located in the Greater Detroit area.

All of Dearborn Public Schools offer high quality education curriculum

and specialised programs to over 21,000 students, focusing on student achievement.

The school district is part of a growing, vibrant area that traces its history back to the 1800s when the first school in Dearborn was nothing more than a simple, one-room log cabin.

Today, the Dearborn Public Schools is an award winning district, offering programs and services to meet the needs of all students.

To find out more about Dearborn Public Schools visit their website at https://dearbornschools.org/

Problem

Dearborn Public Schools started using Moodle in the early 2000s as their teachers wanted to use it.

Since then the school has continued to develop and extend the use of Moodle creatively as part of their basic tenet that "one is always investing" either in someone else or in yourself.

This case study looks at the many creative ways that the technology team at Dearborn Public Schools and their educators continue to innovate Moodle's powerful and flexible features to encourage collaboration in building online model courses to be used by their students across the district.

Action

Dearborn Public Schools decided to use Moodle for a number of reasons, including:

- They wanted a platform which did not have an escalating fee structure and would continue to improve and grow with the needs of the organisation;

- Flexibility to reach the needs of learners and educators at a number of different levels. With students that range from young 5's (pre-school) to postsecondary (college), the schools needed a platform that could be presented in a variety of ways;

- Moodle's tools allow teachers to enrich the learning environment by enabling such features as facilitating automated feedback, gathering necessary data to allow for informed instructional decisions, allowing teachers to administer assessments with previously inconceivable parameters, enabling peer-assessment with accountability, and creating interactive content;

- Teachers wanted to use it! They saw a lot of potential in open source and being able to customize the learning system to meet our needs.

- The use of Moodle at Dearborn Public Schools started when a small group of teachers at the high school level wanted to use the open source learning platform.

- The school set up a server and integrated logins with district credentials, which made the process of authenticating easier. Next, every teacher was given the ability to create new courses and the tech team tried to eliminate as many roadblocks as possible to getting in and using the system.

- Dearborn Public Schools have continued to develop and extend the use of Moodle, as illustrated below.

Results

Since its adoption many educators in the Dearborn district have taken advantage of Moodle's ability to provide a complete platform for learning which can be customised fully to meet the individual needs of the eductor or learner.

Here is a selection of the creative ways that Dearborn Public Schools have done with their Moodle:

Chris Kenniburg (an Internationally Helpful Moodler) and one of the Moodle "gurus" at Dearborn, designed, implemented and shared the Fordson Theme. The theme focuses on making it easier to discover Moodle's powerful features and create a more attractive interface;

Chris has also worked with Sean Williams to develop the Easy Enrollment plugin, aimed at lowering the barrier for students to get enrolled in a teacher's course;

A fifth grade elementary teacher who teaches newcomers in a class where students are new to the United States. The students have a range of proficiency in English. Ms. Fakhreddine has created a course that lets students pick a language other than English. She also translates material verbally and embeds those recordings into Moodle so that the students who need that accomodation can take advantage of it.

Middle School teachers (Ms. Julie Wooton and Ms. Marla Wiacek) who implement Peer Editing. Several teachers have used the Workshop Module to allow students to take the lead on learning including an elementary school teacher.

Tech Coach Robert Harrison worked with Social Studies teachers who needed to provide a review for high school students. Dearborn high school students take a social studies test in eleventh grade. Some of the material hasn't been covered for a while. Using Moodle, the teachers created a self-paced, self-checking review course for the students.

Tech Coach Amy Gwizdz assisted in creating scaffolding and differentiation opportunities; the 4th grade spelling course also provides a differentiated experience in spelling. Check out the blog post for more information.

District wide evaluation: Creating an evaluation process for non-instructional employees. This gives Dearborn the reporting and follow up needed without additional cost.

Required training: All Dearborn staff needs to participate in a variety of trainings. These are presented through Moodle. Each employee completes the training and is awarded a badge for each course. Currently, the training includes Bloodborne Pathogens, OCR, Response to Bullying Behavior and ADA compliance.

Teacher Professional Development: Moodle allows Dearborn to create district-wide "any time, anywhere, any place" learning opportunities for our staff.

Troy Patterson, Dearborn's Director of Technology and Media Services summarises the school's experience with Moodle: "We've chosen to invest in ourselves with Moodle."

"We now have a rich environment that focuses on student and teacher learning. Our effectiveness and efficiencies continue to grow because of that investment."

More information

Dearborn Public Schools offer the following tips and tricks for Moodlers starting their Moodle journey:

It is important to review Moodle settings for your use. There are a ton of settings and options. This is both the greatest asset and the biggest challenge in using Moodle. If all of the switches are set to maximize the use for your needs, it is incredibly powerful. If not, Moodle can be frustrating.

Moodle can be pretty and efficient. Following best practice strategies is important. It is extremely important to spend some time making Moodle work for your specific district. We're partial to the Fordson Theme. This puts the settings and choices that teachers need right where they can get them.

Follow Dearborn Public Schools' Tech Coaches and the wonderful things that they do with Moodle.

Pick up additional tips and tricks from Dearborns Internationally Helpful Moodler by following Chris Kenniburg on YouTube.

Learn more about Dearborn Public Schools by visiting their website: **http://dearbornschools.org.**