

Embedding a large first year course into an online learning environment

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As part of a review of the two first year anthropology & sociology units at the University of Western Australia, the team most involved with teaching the units joined forces with library specialists to help embed the revised courses into a single on-line learning environment. Conscious of the need to maintain the standards of excellence already achieved in the first year courses, our primary aim was to ensure that we used the online learning environment to enhance our courses. Both units are taught to a mixture of Perth-based students and off-campus students based at university centres in Albany and Geraldton. This paper focuses mainly on *Anthropology & Sociology 101 Online*, a unit of study that was designed to complement rather than replace face-to-face teaching. Incorporating Outcomes Based Education principles, it aims at flexibility of learning from both on and off the campus by providing opportunities for students to enhance their information literacy skills, as well as their essay writing and research skills. The online learning environment also offered students numerous opportunities for self-evaluation, mainly through the use of quizzes written especially for the unit.

In this paper we discuss our experiences in designing and implementing Anthropology & Sociology 101 Online. We also draw upon various forms of student and tutor evaluation to reflect on what we have learned through the process of embedding a large first year course into an online learning environment.

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