**Elmwood College - Learner Engagement - Hospitality Students**

Introducing students to Moodle and Mahara has made huge improvements to the way our department deliver to learners and how students can take more responsibility for their own learning.

It allows students to have access to a virtual learning environment 24/7 as they can access it from home, work or on their smart phones etc. The two students that this was trialled with - in hospitality had dyslexia and had significant difficulty with prioritising and organising their individual workloads.

Having access to this system has improved the student’s attitude, enthusiasm and confidence as the lesson is more accessible for their individual learning style. If they have any issues or want to discuss a curriculum topic/content - as it is personal to them, they can communicate freely with other class members or they can use it as an informal social discussion to sound out other group members.

Mahara is a system that very much allows learners to engage with their own learning as it happens step by step. It not only allows them to take control of their e-portfolios but they can also download photographs and see what they have produced , keep a record of recipes and also reflect critically on their progress and development block by block throughout the term . There can also identify what they can be doing to improve their culinary skills in a clear and consistent style.

By using this system learners can share their personal portfolio pages with the Course Tutor which allows them to receive on-going feedback and they can keep a record of how far in the course programme they are, by keeping their individual checklist up to date.

This is regularly checked by the Course tutor which should in theory will keep learners appraised throughout term with their portfolio evidence.

This save’s their time, the course tutors time as it stops having to chase up any outstanding work at the end of the term for paper based portfolios. This system in turn will utilise staff time more efficiently and save money by the end of the term on additional teaching time ,extra resources for learners, such as folders printing and extra tuition as all of the evidence is already on line..