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STUDYWELL – GIVING THE EDGE: STUDENTS GETTING AHEAD

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QUT Library has established an integrated model of learning service and support, underpinned by a conceptual “integrated literacies” framework of knowledge, skills and capabilities. This portfolio consolidates responsibility for integrated service provision and support for study skills (academic literacy) as well as research skills (information literacy). This important mandate strengthens QUT Library’s strategic focus on leading learning service innovation and actively engaging in teaching and learning at QUT.

The release of a new integrated learning resource in 2010, Studywell, emphasises this commitment. Targetting undergraduate learners (particularly 1st year/transition), this online learning environment provides 24/7 access to academic and information literacy learning tools and resources. Studywell applies effective use of emerging technology and learning design to accommodate diverse student needs, time commitments and learning styles, and to engage students in positive experiences of learning self-sufficiency. Underpinning the extensive suite of student-focussed learning services and support already provided by QUT Library, Studywell’s deliberate articulation with QUT First Year Experience policy and Curriculum Design Principles assures strong alignment with the University’s objectives regarding enhanced student experience, flexible delivery and online learning.

Studywell’s visual design and innovative use of current technologies facilitates self-directed discovery-based learning to encourage interaction with content, and facilitate what is described by Oblinger (2008) as “discovery infrastructure” - the distribution of resources to promote learning in “Education 3.0”. Studywell’s discovery platform promotes learner autonomy and responsibility, and guided incidental learning encourages multiple pathways and active engagement with content. A “3-click max” principle minimises learner frustration and facilitates quick access to materials, and the cognitive constructivist design facilitates the effective embedding of curriculum-based learning.

This paper describes the design and development of Studywell, explores models of implementation and integration by academic staff and Library professional teams (including librarians and skills advisers), and analyses student engagement and satisfaction with the resource.