Students Supporting Businesses & Non-Profits through Social Media and Other Applications
In the online course entitled "Office Admin Computer Applications," students learn and create applications to support a real business or non-profit need, using tools like SurveyMonkey, Blogger, WordPress, Eventbrite, Facebook, and Twitter. This session will share the results of these applied projects, including the use of discussion forums in which students posted their projects and engaged in conversation about them, and the use of Screencastomatic to engage students in online learning.

Program Outcomes
Fourth semester Office Administration Executive (OAE) students are technically proficient, working on their second placement and experienced with social media and web use. These students "learn by doing" so the course is focused on production. The role of the Office Administrator now includes responsibility for updating social media and web content. A current vocational learning outcome (VLO) states that OAE graduates must "build and maintain a business web page" as well as "design web pages using web authoring tools". Proposed changes to the VLO include "maintain a web page" as well as "select and use communications technologies appropriate to the workplace including social media".

In the last five years students have learned how to create and maintain web pages using:
- Dreamweaver (a web creation software application)
- HTML and CSS
- WordPress

Elements of the Course
Students use free, accessible internet applications to support business needs. These applications are all free to use, although most have an upgrade possible for a fee. We work within the limitations of the free software to show students what can be done. For example, SurveyMonkey is limited to 10 questions in the free version - that is sufficient for learning.
The course includes labs in the following:
- Blogger
- SurveyMonkey
- Eventbrite
- Social Media – in this lab students identify why and how businesses, government and non-profits use social media. They examine what are the strengths and weaknesses and think about what attracts them to social media. They also reflect on their own "brand" as reflected through social media.
- WordPress

Students then create an applied project for an organization of choice. The project steps are to:
- Define the project purpose and reasons for using that application
- Share the applications with peers through the discussion board
- Post two questions to other students and answer questions posted to them
- Edit and make changes to their final web applications
- Submit for marking identifying the strengths and challenges of the project.

D2L Tools used:
- News
- Content
- Dropbox
- Screencastomatic*
- Discussion Board

What worked well?
Students chose the organization to develop the project for and many will continue to maintain that application for a client including Dragons Den Tattoos, Rainbow Daycare, Williams Constructions, CF Painting, Equestrian Center and Joe Persechini.

In some cases students developed the application as part of a work placement experience including Port Hope Fire, Peterborough Social Planning Council, Optical Mart and CF Painting.

Discussion was engaging and helped build cohesion in an online course (one student was not in the OAE program).

What didn't' work well?
Number of views seem to indicate Screencastomatic was not viewed by many students. This is understandable given these students technical skills. The labs also provide step by step instructions.

As with any class a few students posted too late to benefit from the discussion boards.

Applied Projects created:
http://oakridgesequestriancentre.blogspot.ca/
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JJJM7JF
http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/37WCV72
https://twitter.com/ThriftThrifty
https://www.facebook.com/dragonsdentattoos
http://opticalmarketangus.blogspot.ca/
https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/rainbow-daycare-new-friends-day-tickets-16529848221
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/57ZP9QR
www.joep4eg.ca
https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100007349777747I
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Joe-Persechini-East-Gwillimbury-Councilor-Elect/711110938926810?ref=hl
https://twitter.com/JoeP4EG
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/57ZP9QR

Conclusion
I would repeat most of the course elements, but am considering deleting blogger and instead including an applications for business travel, or have students identify a free application for business use.

Any questions? Please contact darlene.sherwood@flemingcollege.ca.