Innovation Projects 2012

Themes for this round of funding included:

Assessment and feedback to students: supporting elements of the University’s Assessment and Feedback Strategy
- e-learning (efficient and effective use of resources)
- Employability and connections to professions
- Research and Enterprise in Teaching and Learning

In addition the following criteria were prioritised:

- the promotion of collaboration across Schools and Services
- the potential to feed into external bidding to generate further income
- further embed existing Teaching and Learning Projects with real potential to make a major impact through publication or generating external funding

1. **Meet and Talk (in) English (MATE):** Led by Lynn Avison from the Business School. The aim of this project is to pilot a study to investigate the impact on international students of allocating them an English language ‘buddy’ or MATE in order to improve and develop their confidence in spoken English and to attempt to integrate them into the general student population. We also hope to develop and enhance their employability skills and encourage them to take advantage of career opportunities both at the placement and postgraduate stage.

A number of students have volunteered to be MATEs and they have each been allocated 3 or 4 international students to mentor. It is proposed that this will be done through regular informal meetings and social events and monitored via regular feedback from both parties

2. **ReVERiFy: Research Extension of the VERiFy Project:** Led by James McDowell from Computing and Engineering. The ReVERiFy Project aims to effect sustainable and efficient institution-wide change through the technological enhancement of assessment and feedback practices and follows on from the project VERiFy: Video Enhanced Response in Feedback Loops.

ReVERiFy has a broad aim of effecting sustainable and efficient institution-wide change through the technological enhancement of assessment and feedback practices, with two streams of activity directed towards the realisation of this aim through achieving three key objectives:

- The development of innovative effective examples of video-enhancement in assessment and feedback, and implementation of a conversational framework approach within the institutional AFS
- The expansion of engagement with mobile learning through the use of appropriate devices
- The formation of an institution-wide community of practice on assessment and feedback

**Collaborators:**

- Ebrahim Akudi, Computing and Engineering
- Liz Bennett, Education and Professional Development
- Dr Robert Clarke, Art, Design and Architecture
3. **The More the Merrier?**: Led by Tina McAdie from Human and Health Sciences. This project seeks to investigate, using qualitative methods, the student experience of multiple work integrated learning opportunities, and their influence on learning, personal development and preparation for work. It builds on the project called Are placement students better psychologically prepared for life and work? An International Comparative Study

**Objectives:**

- To identify key aspects of particular students’ work integrated learning experiences that enhanced their learning and development.
- To identify elements of work integrated learning experiences that inhibit learning and development.
- To examine whether and how self-perceived skills, knowledge and competencies progress across multiple work integrated learning experiences.

**Collaborators:**

- Professor Nigel King, Director of the Centre for Applied Psychological Research, Human and Health Sciences
- Dr Tina McAdie, Senior Lecturer, Human and Health Sciences
- Lisa Ward, Teaching and Learning Institute Manager
- Stephen Boyd, Head of Careers Service
- Andy Blunt, VP Education, Students Union

4. **The Roving Librarian**: Led by Alison Sharman from Computing and Library Services. The project aims to provide regular access to subject librarians within buildings across campus, including informal space such as cafés and other social areas to reach students who may otherwise be library “non users” by equipping librarians with tablet computers.

Work already undertaken in the library on low/non usage of library resources has indicated variable patterns of both physical and electronic resource usage across schools, and a general correlation between resource usage and attainment. The Roving Librarian project will enable subject librarians to demonstrate and promote online resources in non traditional library environments such as cafes and other social areas and reach students who may otherwise be library “non users”. To facilitate this new mobile service slates (iPads and their equivalent) are to be purchased. The project aims to evaluate the use of such devices and their effectiveness in supporting teaching on the move.
5. **Preparing for Practice Assessment Tool (P-PAT):** Led by Janet Hargreaves from Human and Health Sciences. The project aims to create a self assessment tool that students complete prior to placement experience to reflect on their personal preparation and needs.

**Objectives:**

- To facilitate reflective preparation for practice
- To support PDP
- To facilitate risk assessment.
- To facilitate disclosure of impairment where appropriate
- To identify any issues that might or potentially might, prove to be a problem with employment in the future and therefore enable a realistic assessment and evaluation to take place earlier rather than later

**Partners / Collaborators:**

- Jo Mitchell: Student Disability Support Services
- Margaret Culshaw: Applied Sciences
- Margot Swift: Art, Design and Architecture

The team have now developed the tool and you can go to the Preparation for Practice (PPA) self assessment tool website. PPA has been designed and developed by a collaboration between students, technologist, academic, support and placement colleagues and aims to help students to think about and prepare for placement experience.

6. **Investigating efficiency and benefit of different feedback methods:** Led by Robert Allan from Applied Science. The project aims to explore students’ perception of feedback and explore the most appropriate mechanisms to deliver quality feedback to students in the most cost efficient manner for staff.

This project is borne out of the student evaluation survey of Science Foundation which indicated a poor perception of feedback.

**Objectives:**

- Collect quantitative and qualitative data student perceptions of different feedback mechanisms and how they use it.
- To identify any similarities and differences in those perceptions and relate the data to current practice.
- Examine mechanisms to provide personalised feedback particularly using existing technology.
- To identify the most appropriate mechanisms to deliver quality feedback to students in the most cost efficient manner for staff.
- To produce a piece of research, the results of which are publishable and that can help improve scores in Course Evaluation Survey and possibly influence the National Student Survey.

**Collaborators:**

- Joanne Graham, Human & Health Sciences
7. Using tablet computers to facilitate giving and receiving instant written feedback: Led by Martyn Prigmore from Computing and Engineering. The broad aim is to evaluate tablet computers as mechanisms for giving feedback to, or gathering feedback from, students. Capturing handwriting is particularly useful when marking student presentations, since students find it distracting if staff try to record audio or video clips during their presentations. We’ll investigate the currently available technologies for capturing handwritten notes and standard input (e.g. web forms) on a range of tablet devices covering the major operating systems. We’ll also test out some rugged tablets suitable for use in a chemistry lab. At the end we will have a clear idea of the effectiveness of current handwriting capture and recognition technologies for gathering feedback.

8. Penfield Virtual Solicitors: Development to Web Based Learning: Led by Vince Pescod from the Business School, this is the next stage of an on-going project and aims to reformat legal case materials currently accessed by students via a database to a file format that can be incorporated into a web based system.

Tutors in the School of Human and Health Sciences developed the Penfield software programme and computer based VLE for use in the training of nursing and other health related disciplines, incorporating a series of ‘real life’ case studies. The Penfield method of teaching utilising the “transactional learning” model sits beside other more traditional face to face teaching sessions, thus creating a blended learning environment in which healthcare professionals are taught. The Penfield software was successfully adapted into a virtual solicitors firm called Firth Street Solicitors. The pilot took place in the postgraduate Legal Practice Course (LPC) Family Law Module. Cases were obtained, anonymised and inputted into the Penfield system. The majority of students using the system felt that it enhanced their overall learning and found the system easy to use. In addition, the School of Human and Health Sciences have developed the ‘In Context’ software and within this system have created a database of anonymised ‘real’ case files of patients. This database is available to registered users who can create their own exercises and contribute to discussion boards. Funding was granted, to obtain more legal files to populate and adapt the ‘In Context’ software to create a legal database.

The School of Human and Health Sciences have recently transferred the Penfield Virtual Hospital to a web based application. Funding has now been obtained to transfer the case materials into a file format that can be incorporated into the web based system so the web based Penfield system can continue to be used within the professional Law courses in the University School of Law. We now have funding in place to employ a student on a one year placement to adopt the case files for use in the web based system.