Innovation Projects 2013

Themes for this round of funding included:

- Inspirational teaching - how to motivate students to learn and broaden their horizons
- Student retention factors: engaging and enabling students to succeed (including contact time)
- Employability and connections to professions

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

The following projects were funded in this round and run from September 2012 to December 2013:

1. **Second Year Blues: Developing Interactive Resources for Progressive Curriculum Design: Led by Amanda Tinker and Rowan Bailey from Art, Design and Architecture.**

What is commonly known as the ‘sophomore slump’ or ‘second year blues’ can be attributed to several stress related factors: fears surrounding increased levels of independent learning and self-directed study, social group cohesion with peers, personal development issues with pressures to cope with new life challenges, such as housing and finance issues (Schreiner, 2010). Evidence suggests that due to the amalgamation of these factors, students often experience a loss of engagement, struggle to manage a smooth transition into year two and, consequently, to get the best out of their intermediate level of undergraduate study (Grump, 2007). One of the issues identified in a recent Academic Skills Report (ADA, Learning Development Team, 2011) was that only 19% of those undergraduate students who booked a tutorial were at intermediate level. This pattern was mirrored in taught session delivery of undergraduate students in Art, Design and Architecture in 2010-2011.

This research project proposes to respond to the key findings identified above to develop new and innovative strategies that might better embed progressive learning across the curriculum and in particular, at intermediate level. It will analyse relevant case studies (of two degree programmes in the Schools of Art, Design and Architecture and Music and Humanities and Media), to further implement and embed clearly identifiable ‘progression points’ into curricula design. We will showcase new ways to facilitate the development and growth of student confidence in their self-directed application of knowledge and skills at intermediate level.

**Partners / Collaborators:**

- Dr Pat Hill - Academic Skills Tutor (SMHM)
- Martin Plant – Head of Staff Development
- Sue Ford - Assistant Registrar – Registry
- Other Academic Skills Tutors across the University
This project extends the existing Lemontree project. The first phase used techniques from the game industry to encourage positive interactions with library services. It delivered a service which will be extended using the feedback from users in the first phase. This second phase will aim to extend the service, using the feedback from users in the first phase. Most importantly we will also gather a considerable amount of feedback from users and more thoroughly measure impact.

Read more in a blogpost from 4th Dec 2012 Lemontree project: Phase two

The CMent project will build on the university-wide ReVERIfy project in which the video-enhanced assessment and feedback practices forming the VELOCITy strategy have been extended around the institution through a community of practice formed of Academic Champions. CMent seeks to deepen the involvement of the Learning Technology Advisors’ (LTAs) with this initiative through the identification of specific opportunities to work with academics to embed these techniques within their teaching;

LTAs will be encouraged to document this work as part of the development of their CMALT (certified member of the association for learning technology) portfolio, and will be mentored through this process by the Project Lead, combining both his role as Lead for ReVERIfy and his status as a CMALT Assessor.

In line with the University of Huddersfield’s Teaching and Learning Strategy, CMent will therefore contribute to the aim that academic-related colleagues will be “high-achieving reflective people, at the forefront of their fields ... [and] active in appropriate professional practice”.

The following LTAs have already agreed to act as collaborators on the CMent project:

- Vidya Kannara (SADA)
- Benjamin Fisher (SMHM)
- Abdul Jabbar (SBus)
- Steve Bentley (SAS)
- Paul Dagg (SHHS)
- Jane Merrington (SCE)

The project aims to increase employer engagement in the Humanities curriculum and to ensure that humanities students see their subject-specific and transferable skills as marketable.

This project will develop the current History placement model with a view to making Humanities-based work-placements the centre of a holistic and embedded employability strategy. The project will fulfil an aim of the University’s Teaching and Learning Strategy, ‘[to] produce employable and enterprising graduates’ who learn ‘from/in professional contexts’.

The successful and unique History work-placement has run for over 20 years and engages with a number of different employer/placement providers. This will be rolled out to the wider department from Sept 2012. This project is cognisant of the danger of an approach that is purely about skills development,
at the expense of subject learning. By focusing on the student experience before, during and after the placement it will work to enhance the longer term benefits of the work-placement on both learning and career development. It will transfer existing good practice across the department, with an emphasis on bringing employability into the heart of the student experience, encouraging students to see connections between subject-specific and transferable skills, and increasing employer engagement (in what is a recessionary economy). The project takes a student-centred approach, with a main driver in the new curriculum developments being the needs and aspirations of the student body.

**Collaborators:**

- Dr Sarah Falcus, Music, Humanities and Media
- Mary Mellor, Careers Service
- Stephen Boyd, Careers Service

**5. Flipped Classroom: Led by Steve Bentley from Applied Sciences.**

This project aims to explore whether the “flipped classroom” is an effective way to engage learners at less selective institutions, and whether Peer Instruction is effective in non-scientific disciplines.

This project will investigate whether it is possible to emulate the success enjoyed by Bates and Galloway in improving engagement and achievement of physics undergraduates by combining peer instruction with the inverted (or flipped) classroom model of blended learning. A model where content delivery occurs through directed private study rather than lectures, and contact time is spent engaging in more collaborative and discursive activities which promote critical thinking at the higher orders of Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy.

Bates and Galloway provide evidence from attendance records and low-stakes continuous assessment that these techniques promote commendable levels of student engagement. We wish to investigate whether similar success in motivating and inspiring students can be realised with cohorts of a very different academic profile at Huddersfield.

The project will also seek to provide evidence that students who have learned through Peer Instruction have a deeper understanding of the subject than students taught in more traditional ways, as demonstrated through performance in summative assessment.

We will also consider how these approaches can be transferred to non-scientific disciplines, particularly peer Instruction which was designed for use within STEM disciplines. The modules chosen for this study will be of different cohort sizes, offering the opportunity to consider whether class size influences the effectiveness of these techniques.

**Partners / Collaborators:**

- Dr Rob Allan, Applied Sciences
- Dr Jane Bradbury, Applied Sciences
- Dr Deborah Pufal, Applied Sciences
- Fiona Moffat, Business School

Read more in a blogpost from 19th Nov 2012 The Flipped Classroom and Peer instruction
6. **UCB Discussion Forum: Led by Julie Berry from Computing Services (UCB).**

This project aims to provide students' with access to alternative sources of information (e.g. peers) in the absence of specialist support staff. Because of the size of University Campus Barnsley, if a member of support staff is not available e.g. sickness, holidays, meetings etc, then there is often not a suitable alternative on site to offer the support that a student may require at that time. Examples include Subject Librarians, IT Support staff, Academic Skills Tutor, Disability Support, Careers Service etc.

The UCB Discussion Forum, which is divided into a number of areas, was launched for use by staff and students in September 2011. The aim is to provide students with access to alternative sources of information (e.g. peers) in the absence of specialist support staff. This would be in the form of an online learning community for students both on and off campus, providing support and feedback to peers in the use of University services. The forum would include an online social space for students who are not regular visitors to campus and additionally would encourage an online version of the community spirit which exists within the Barnsley campus.

**Partners / Collaborators:**

- Debbie Laing, Student Services
- Cheryl Morley, ASIS Manager, UCB
- Sarah Munks, Computing & Library Services
- Joanna Brown, Student Services
- Sue Daley-Yates, Academic Skills Tutor, UCB
- Students’ Union
- All UCB students

[Read more in a blogpost from 5th Nov 2012 UniPal Project](#)

7. **Developing a culture of publication: Led by Joanne Garside from Human and Health Sciences.**

The aim of this project is to test a “writing retreat” workshop model to convert high quality student projects into co-produced publications and establish a community of scholarly practice.

Many students at all levels of study produce excellent course work which given support and opportunity would clearly be of a publishable standard. This potential has not been fully developed with health care professional (HCP) students. Increasingly funding councils offering postgraduate awards are expecting indicators of potential, e.g. publications, to differentiate between the growing numbers of excellent applications. Supporting the novice author through the publication process may contribute to their employability, research internships and ultimately successful postgraduate awards.

Strategies to foster a writing culture with publication naïve staff have been used in HHS including bite size writing and supporting the conversion of conference presentations into journal outputs, both with some success. Although lack of focused time to think and concentrate on outputs remains a recurring complaint. The use of facilitated off campus writing retreats for staff have been reported as effective. The successes afforded by this type of opportunity include setting aside other commitments to undertake concentrated work, embed good writing habits and produce outputs. This model has considerable potential for adaptation to facilitate students working intensively with supervisors/tutors with mentorship from experienced ‘writers’.

**Collaborators:**
8. **QR Code Referencing: Led by Sarah Munks from Library Services (UCB) and Nicola Howorth from Computing and Library Services.**

Recent research has suggested that the rise in the use of mobile technology is resulting in more learning taking place outside the traditional classroom or lecture theatre. Students want more choice with regards to when and where they learn and increasingly want to be able to use their mobile device to access teaching and learning materials.

QR codes are square barcodes that contain information in text format or a web link that is accessed by scanning the code with a mobile device. Adding QR codes to key texts from reading lists that link to information showing how to produce a reference and in-text citations for that specific title offers students help with their studies that they can access whenever and wherever they choose.

Referencing is an element of study that students often struggle with. Using QR Codes is an ideal way of utilising technology to enhance and support students learning and sits well with the key themes of our Teaching and Learning Strategy. We conducted a short survey that revealed 66% of students owned a smart phone, and 68% of these students would use it to access help with referencing.

9. **Analysing feedback to produce audiovisual feed-forward: Led by Chris Ireland from the Business School.**

This project aims is to produce a set of audiovisual essay feedback items which can be shared and reused by those providing electronic feedback on essays. Based on an analysis of feedback provided to students through QuickMarks in GradeMark, the project will identify the most common feedback topics and produce short screencasts to accompany electronic feedback provided on these topics. In doing this the project addresses aims of the University’s Assessment and Feedback Strategy by facilitating the provision of feedback which is ‘clear and accessible’ enabling students to learn and to seek further clarification and to have feedback which lets them know what can be done to improve.

The specific objectives are:

- to calculate the most common writing skills related feedback items provided via Grademark by lecturers from participating schools;
- to produce banks of QuickMarks in Grademark which contain writing skills related audiovisual feedback items for use in collaborating schools;
- to make a generic bank of QuickMarks available for use across all schools;
- to save academics time in the production of non-content specific feedback in GradeMark.

The current economic downturn is forcing employees and employers to rethink their skill development, it is reported that online resources are likely to become crucial both in the public and private sectors (Tims, 2011). In Higher Education there is a general trend to move to an anywhere anytime learning model in which the VLE must be developed to support the diverse needs of the learner. Digital literacy amongst staff in terms of embedding E and M learning is varied. The VLE thematic review (University Teaching and Learning Committee, 2010) recognises the fact that staff are most likely to engage with learning technologies through training that is directly related to their own teaching requirements. It is also of the view that a multifaceted approach is needed, to ensure technology enhances the student learning. A recent survey in creative arts found significant variations in the use and development of interactive and blended learning resources. Similar analysis has been undertaken in the school of Music Humanities and Media with similar findings. Whilst the overall results are encouraging, showing a year on year increase of advanced use, there is significant further work to be done to support the transition to ubiquitous blended learning.

Partners / Collaborators:

- Vidya Kannara, School of Art, Design and Architecture
- Ben Fisher, School of Music, Humanities and Media
- Dr Cath Ellis, School of Music, Humanities and Media


During the past 20 years the notion of “information literacy” has become one that is widely accepted in the university sector. It is now regarded as a key aspect that is linked to notions of lifelong learning, independent learning and in its broadest sense to global citizenship and human rights. The University currently has an information literacy strategy that is based on the SCONUL Seven Pillars approach and was updated with minor amendments in 2009. We are in the process of revising this strategy, and taking it through appropriate University channels for ratification. Strand 1 involves developing an information literacy framework and materials for researchers. The aim of this project (strand 2) is to construct a detailed framework and accompanying materials for the undergraduate students, turning the strategy into a practical resource which is deliverable by both library and academic staff. It aspires to see information become deeper and more seamlessly embedded into the teaching across the University. This can only be accomplished with by obtaining buy-in from the academic staff in the Schools through collaborative working and effective liaison between library and academic staff. Consequently, this project requires collaboration with academic staff in all the Schools in the University.

Read more in the 14th Jan 2013 blogpost Practice and Pedagogy: A new undergraduate information literacy framework for a new information landscape