



Teaching and Learning Academy Curriculum Enhancement Projects

SUPPORTING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION ACROSS THE INSTITUTION

2016-17

Funding was made available by Offices of the Vice Chancellor and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) to support Curriculum Enhancement Projects across the institution in 2016-17. Proposals were invited under three enhancement project funding streams:

1. **Responsive mode:** projects outside the theme identified below but aligned with School/Faculty/University strategic plans.
2. **'Adopt a Scheme':** projects that adopt and embed previously funded curriculum enhancement interventions into a different programme of study or academic discipline.
3. **Thematic mode:** the specified theme was 'Building Collaborative Learning Communities'.

Funding was available for proposals between £5,000 and £20,000 and projects related to enhancing undergraduate student retention was prioritised for all three funding streams.

Any staff member on a permanent, or on a fixed-term contract of three or more years, and on the payroll of LJMU were eligible to apply.

Curriculum Enhancement Project Guidance was circulated with the application form. Guidance included selection criteria and scope for funding requests. Proposals were sent to the respective Faculty Associate Dean (Education) by 26 February.

Applications were reviewed by a panel comprising: Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education); Director, Teaching and Learning Academy (Chair); and Associate Deans (Education) at the beginning of March.



Professor Clare Milsom, Director of the Teaching and Learning Academy

Feedback that matters

Anne-Marie Adams, Natural Sciences & Psychology, SCS



Further information

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The role of academic self-efficacy in students' perceptions of and responses to tutor feedback

Relationships have been identified between academic attainment and students' perceptions of and responses to tutor feedback. Whereas high achieving students strove to ascertain the wider meaning behind tutors' comments and applied this broadly in future assessments, non-high achieving students tended towards a more fragmented approach relating comments only to specific instances of their work. Critically, the latter approach was also associated with higher levels of dissatisfaction with feedback. Academic self-efficacy (ASE), the self-belief that one is capable of achieving academic goals, is closely related to academic achievement, and indeed may underpin this attainment/feedback association.

In the current project students' ASE will be assessed and used to identify individuals of high or low ASE. Four homogenous focus groups (two each of High/Low ASE) each comprising six Level 5 students, will then discuss their experience of and responses to tutor feedback. A grounded theory analysis will be used to ascertain and compare the perceptions and responses to feedback of students with high or low ASE. Both the theoretical and practical implications of the project will be explored. For example it will inform a shared perspective of feedback consistent between tutors and students and develop our theoretical understanding of the critical features underpinning the self-

efficacy/response to feedback/attainment relationships.

The practical benefits of the project include the creation of a resource highlighting the critical features of a shared perspective of feedback and the development of a diagnostic tool to identify students at risk of failing to capitalise on feedback and thus who may most benefit from an intervention highlighting the critical features of feedback, barriers to its effective implementation and strategies to effectively implement the advice to improve future academic performance

Project team

Anne-Marie Adams (Project Lead, NSP), Sue Palmer-Conn (NSP), Julie Money (SSLN, EHC), Jamie Fearn (SCS Placement Learning Support Unit), 'Temporary Research Officer' [to be appointed] (NSP)

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Mind the Gap!

Barbara Walsh, Sport Studies, Leisure & Nutrition, EHC



An investigation into what a 21st century learner looks like

In order to investigate student connectedness to their courses, a better understanding of what a 21st century learner looks like and what they require from a university education is required. The project aims to align induction with the needs of all students to motivate and welcome them into a community of learning, where the students feel connected to their peers, programme, tutors and subject.

The project will go beyond the lecture theatre to explore with students and lecturers institutional and structural forces that may alienate and/or engage students. The School of Sport Studies, Leisure and Nutrition (SSLN) recorded the worst retention levels across the university in 2014/15 as noted in the School AMR and the School retention action plan. This, despite the fact, that NSS scores relating to personal tutoring are amongst the highest in the university.

Project aims

The aim of the project is to investigate student attendance over the first week, the first six weeks and the first semester as part of this interplay between the individual and the learning community.

The broad intention is to discover what causes academic dis/engagement exploring issues such as;

- Are students isolated, distracted or distracting to others?

- Do students see tasks as irrelevant to the outside world and their own needs, interests and experiences?
- Are the learning experiences of students relevant to the 21st century learning requirements?

Whilst programme teams recognise that there may be multiple causes of and reasons for dis/engagement, and that issues of structure and agency are at play, this project will focus on the 'interplay' between the individual and the learning community as the unit of analysis of dis/engagement.

- During the three phases (the first week, the first month and the first semester) data will be collected via questionnaire and focus groups on student engagement, attendance and perceptions of their transition into university.

- Tutors will also be interviewed to ascertain their perceptions of student 'buy in' to the programme and the student's level of engagement. This will ascertain if students have already started to disengage

- The project will also incorporate local attendance data collected by the programme administrators which allows programme leaders to see patterns of attendance across and in individual modules. The data will be collected over the first semester and used to correlate attendance with levels of dis/engagement.

Project team

Barbara Walsh (Project Lead, SSLN), Julie Abayomi (SSLN), Steve Burns (SSLN), Track Dinning (SSLN), Julie Money (SSLN), Danny Cullinane (SSLN), Sally Starkey (SSLN), Wendy Johnson (SSLN), Tom Fletcher (SSLN), Vicci Boyd (SSLN), Kaye Richards (SSLN), Angie Walton (SSLN)

FURTHER INFORMATION

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To engage or to disengage the 13 month student experience?

Claire Hennessy and Emma Ball,
Education, EHC



An evaluation of the use of learning analytics and peer mentorship

This project aims to critically evaluate the use of a 'Total Student Experience Tracker (TSET)'. This learning analytics tool will bring together a range of data including previous achievement in further education, attendance at Welcome Week, overall attendance in weekly modules, engagement with Peer Mentoring and achievement in assessment throughout the first year of study.

From the data collected, the project will then be able to devise interventions, using our established Peer Mentoring scheme as a conduit to scaffold appropriate support. It will build on previous successful Curriculum Enhancement and Internship projects (Ball and Hennessy, 2014; 2015; 2015) by coalescing Peer Mentor related activities into a conceptual model of student engagement

across a number programmes in the Faculty of Education, Health and Community.

Central to this project will be the evolution of Peer Mentor interventions that are informed by TSET data collection. The project will therefore culminate in the evaluation of the short, medium and long term assessment of engagement risk factors, with a specific focus on academic failure, within the first 13 months of a students' academic career.

Project aims

- To gather a range of different data regarding individual students throughout their level 4 student journey. We are proposing tracking the data (as described above) on all students on undergraduate programmes in the School of Education and a further 5 programmes in the School of Sports Studies, Leisure and Nutrition.
- To establish at an early stage students 'at risk' leaving programmes from consideration of available data.
- To use Peer Mentoring as a tool to develop appropriate interventions to support students at risk of leaving the university. We are not aware of any current scheme that uses Peer Mentoring in this way.
- And, of those who do leave the university, to establish the reasons for this by means of an exit interview.

Project team

Claire Hennessy (Education), Emma Ball (Education), 'Research Officer' (to be appointed)

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Holding difficult conversations

Mal Kelly and Jan Rowe, Education,
EHC



Developing a positive approach to the impact of the Prevent duty on teacher training

The Prevent duty (under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015) places new and significant obligations on front-line staff across all sectors to ensure that they: challenge prejudice constructively; counter extreme ideas; build resilience and provide alternatives to young people persuaded by extremism.

The swift introduction of Prevent has caused concern, particularly amongst British Muslims, that in the absence of appropriate training for those responsible, the duty is compounding fear and mistrust within and across communities.

This project will enable staff within all Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes at LJMU to address the skills gap and enhance the current curriculum by developing and implementing innovative training packages which will improve student teachers' skills, knowledge, confidence and competence in facilitating sensitive, constructive approaches to the issues raised by the Prevent duty. The training will be integrated into each ITE programme and include materials which LJMU primary and secondary student teachers can trial themselves in schools. It thus responds to an institutional and national deficit in current training and has significant potential to be

rolled out to professionals in other disciplines across the faculty and to practising professionals across the LJMU Partnership.

Project aims

The project aims to enhance the expertise of LJMU student teachers in managing difficult conversations in respect of the Department for Education advice for schools in relation to the Prevent duty by:

- Collaborating with the Foundation for Peace (Warrington) to design and deliver bespoke training programmes for both staff and student teachers to build knowledge and expertise about how extremism can be challenged;
- Adapting curriculum design in order to provide training for student teachers to develop the required knowledge and understanding of how to challenge prejudice constructively and counter extreme ideas and narratives in schools
- Developing, in collaboration with school partners, appropriate school-based resources to facilitate sensitive, constructive discussion of extremist views, in order to challenge them and build resilience to them amongst learners of all ages.
- Evaluating the impact of the training materials on student teachers, schools and their learners and identifying how they might be adapted and used by professionals in other disciplines.

Project team

Mal Kelly (Education), Jan Rowe (Education),
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(Education), Elizabeth Malone (Education)

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Assessing the research preparedness of students

Matthew Tucker, Built Environment, FET

The creation of a research preparedness diagnostic tool

The pinnacle research activity that undergraduate students undertake during their degree programme is the completion of a Research Project which takes place in their final year of study. However, there is often a misconception from final year students about the intended purpose and benefits such research activities have, often creating anxiety and scepticism about completing them. In particular, students often do not see the tangible benefit of developing research skills in order to help them succeed once they make their transition from education into employment.

This raises critical questions concerning how prepared students are to embark on research activities and assessments throughout the transition of their degree programme from Level 4 to 6. In particular, through experience as Module Leader for the final year Dissertation, students tend to associate extrinsic values to the Dissertation, rather than intrinsic values. In other words, they focus on outputs such as word length, duration and topic areas, rather than the actual skills and processes developed in carrying out research.

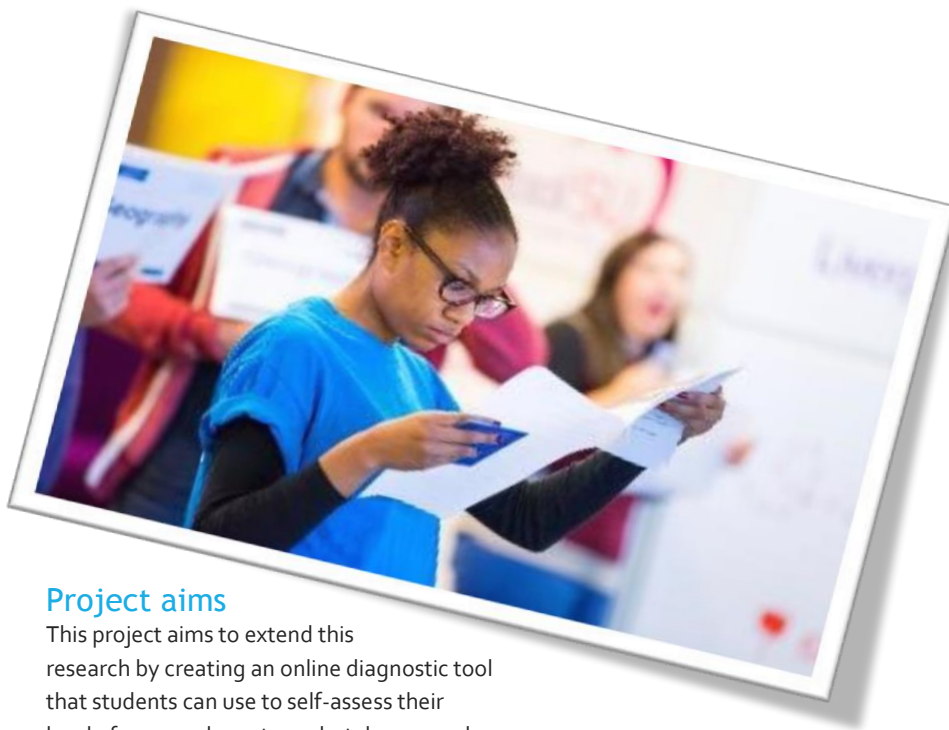
This project builds on a previous Curriculum Enhancement project which showed that students are generally underprepared to undertake research and indicated that more support towards the preparation and ethos to undertaking research needs to be embedded early in curriculum design.

As such, the Department used the findings to inform the level of research-informed teaching activity within the 2015-16 validation of its programmes. Most significantly, this included the insertion of new Level 4 modules on Academic and Digital Literacy, and a new Level 5 module on Research Methods being introduced to all undergraduate programmes in the Department.

capability as they progress their studies through Level 5 and Level 6.

Project team

Matthew Tucker (Built Environment), Mal Ashall (Built Environment), Phil Rothwell (Teaching & Learning Academy), 'Student intern' (to be appointed).



Project aims

This project aims to extend this research by creating an online diagnostic tool that students can use to self-assess their level of preparedness to undertake research activities. This can be achieved by embedding such a tool within Blackboard and integrating into Grade Centre for increased transparency.

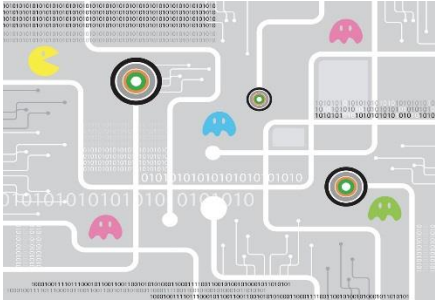
Finally, the intended research has a direct alignment to all four pillars of the University's Strategy Map 2012-17 and the Faculty's Teaching and Learning Action Plan. Most significantly, by contributing to addressing current endeavours to significantly improve student retention trends. It is felt that this solution would, not only address the valid student feedback that has been provided towards their lack of preparedness to research but, also positively address current student retention trends by providing students with clearer opportunities to engage in research activity early in Level 4 and will ensure they can successfully transition and mature their research

FURTHER INFORMATION

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LJMU GameJam 2016

Stephen Tang, Computer Science,
FET



Computer gaming is embedded in the culture of young people or digital natives in the

modern era. It is mostly regarded a form of entertainment but the interactive content can be repurposed and designed for serious application such as marketing, education, simulation, training or other applications.

The LJMU GameJam 2016 (24-26 May) is an event that invites students from across the University to take part in a game design and development activity for across three days from 9am-9pm (instead of the usual 48 hrs format). This event is a good way to bring industry experts and students from a range of disciplines together to enjoy the process of creating games.

This year's event will build on the successes of GameJam 2015 with an exciting collaboration with the Daniel Adamson Preservation Society and the launch of the International Game Developer Association (IGDA) student chapter for LJMU – the first UK student Chapter.

Project team

Stephen Tang (Computer Science), Carol Oliver (Computer Science), Lindsay Sharples (Open Labs), Andy Goodwin (Open Labs), David England (Computer Science), Martin Hanneghan (Computer Science), Abdenour El Rhalibi (Computer Science), Chris Carter (Computer Science), Mike Baskett (Computer Science), Po Yang (Computer Science), David Lamb (Computer Science), David Tully (Computer Science), Curtis Maines (Computer Science), John Melthis (Computer Science)

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