Teaching development priorities
Looking ahead

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2/ The Hub/ November 2012/
As the still relatively new Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, I am naturally asked about my priorities in this portfolio. Over the past three months I’ve taken pains to get out to schools and to the campuses in Malaysia and China to listen to staff and students about their concerns. This edition of The Hub now provides me with an opportunity to set out my initial ideas and activities arising from those conversations.

There will, of course, be a continuing need to carry on with work in a number of areas – student satisfaction, curriculum review, student engagement, rewards for excellent teaching, teaching spaces, and the management of quality. In doing so, I will be building on the efforts of my predecessor, Saul Tendler, and the many advances made during his period of office.

What I want to highlight in this article, though, are three particular items that are at the top of my list at present: student transitions, online learning opportunities, and assessment.

A well-attended event on Study Skills at the UK campus in September (see article on page 16) brought home to me the importance and many issues involved in supporting students’ transitions from school to university and then on to further study and employment. Schools are already active in this field and much excellent work is being done, especially on our China and Malaysia campuses. There is a clear need, though, to invest more in academic skills development and to provide better coordination of effort at the University level. Equally we need to be more creative in the way in which we think about induction and the transition to university, and to focus in particular upon the ways in which we can identify and intervene to help those who are finding the transition difficult.

In the news recently have been a number of stories regarding the growth in distance learning provision (see Wyn Morgan’s article on page 19). We already have strengths in online learning; producing a coherent institutional approach to developing our online presence further can, I believe, contribute greatly to our educational mission and the fulfilment of our institutional aims.

This is not just about creating more distance learning courses; it also involves integrating online and face-to-face teaching (blended learning) and making teaching and learning material available online to the general public (open learning). In particular, the adoption of Moodle across the University presents us with an exciting challenge – how can we ensure that students across the university experience the same level of seamless, high-quality online support.

The last edition of The Hub concentrated on the Assessment in the Digital Age conference that took place in April. The event sparked numerous ideas and my subsequent meetings with Schools have revealed a considerable appetite for reviewing and enhancing assessment practices. Several schools have taken the opportunity to rethink their whole curriculum and design an assessment structure which is both flexible – combining formative with summative, and varied – assessing group work and oral and presentational skills. One possible way of helping such rethinking is through the TESTA (Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment) project which maps a school’s assessment practices and benchmarks it against the same subject area in comparable UK HEIs. Already three schools are trialling this approach. I am particularly interested through this and other means in helping you to network with colleagues in a systematic and supported manner with a view to improving our approaches to assessment.

Please do let me have your thoughts on all of the above, and do get in touch with your own ideas and priorities so that you can play your part in determining how the University will enhance teaching and learning over the next few years. Just email me at alan.ford@nottingham.ac.uk or contact the University's Director of Teaching and Learning, Professor Wyn Morgan at wyn.morgan@nottingham.ac.uk.

Professor Alan Ford
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning
Congratulations to the following for their success in the Higher Education Academy’s competitive funding programmes:

### Doctoral Programme project:
**Drawing & Dissection: Improving understanding in neuroanatomy**  
Dr Shaaron Ainsworth,  
Learning Sciences Research Institute

Shaaron is supervising an HEA funded student who will be investigating the contribution of drawing to student learning, and assessment, in anatomy. The project is built on research that shows that “experts draw visualizations to develop new insights, record their understanding, and explain findings to colleagues”. This work will investigate whether and how students also benefit from drawing in their learning, and how it might complement traditional teaching methods such as dissection.

Peter Wigmore, Biomedical Sciences, is second supervisor on the project; his classes will provide the research environment for this work.  
[www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/Shaaron_Ainsworth](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/Shaaron_Ainsworth)

### International Scholar 2012
**Dr Sergio Altomonte, Architecture and Built Environment**

Sergio is building on his international research experience in sustainable development to “deepen his expertise in education for sustainability”. He will be working with the University of California at Berkeley to gain a better understanding of teaching practice and the transferability of new methods to the UK context.  
[www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/Sergio_Altomonte](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/Sergio_Altomonte)

### Individual Teaching Development Grants:
**Twee-ed: Exploring the utility of Twitter for flexible and enriched learning**  
Roger Kerry, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy  
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/nmp/people/roger.kerry](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/nmp/people/roger.kerry)

**Production of plastinated anatomical specimens for teaching veterinary anatomy**  
Dr Karl Klisch, School of Veterinary Medicine and Science  
[www.nottingham.ac.uk/vet/people/karl.klisch](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/vet/people/karl.klisch)

**Assessing Active Class Participation in a Sino-British Context**  
Dr Dirk Moosmayer, Nottingham University Business School, China  

### Departmental Teaching Development Grant:
**Embedding Employability in English: work related learning and reflection in the creative industries**  
Dr Jo Robinson, English  

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The following programmes are currently open to applications...

**Nottingham-Birmingham Strategic Funding Scheme**
Funding is available to enable collaboration with colleagues from Birmingham in teaching development activity. Creativity funding (up to £5k) supports the exploratory stage of identifying shared objectives and complementary strengths. Accelerator funding (up to £40k) supports projects based on a sound collaborative relationship. The call for applications is open and applications may be submitted at any time.
https://workspace.nottingham.ac.uk/display/NBSFS/Home

**HEA Discipline Change Programme**
The Higher Education Academy runs Change Programmes to give access to consultancy and practical support in addressing issues arising from the NSS or KIS data. A structured year-long programme is intended to help Schools make immediate changes and develop longer-term capacity. The cost per participating team is £3,600. The call for proposals is now open and closes on 3rd December 2012.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/change/UD-AP_12-13/UD-AP_Call

**HEA International scholarship scheme**
Funding of up to £20k is available to academic staff with at least 5 years' experience to spend 3 to 6 months visiting international institutions to explore collaborative opportunities. Matched funding is encouraged. The call for proposals is now open and closes on 9th January 2013.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/international-scholarship-scheme

**HEA UK Travel Fund**
Up to £300 can be claimed to contribute to travel, accommodation, subsistence and event fees incurred by staff and/or students who are attending teaching and learning events, crossing national borders within the UK to attend events, or attending events to present papers on teaching and learning practice. The call is ongoing until 30th June 2013.
www.heacademy.ac.uk/travel-fund

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New teaching and learning head at the Ningbo campus

Professor Julie Sanders, currently Head of the School of English at The University of Nottingham UK, will take up the post of Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) in 2013.

Professor Sanders said: “Teaching and learning is close to my heart and I believe the student experience should be at the centre of our approach. We need to recognise that every student is unique and develop a range of teaching and assessment strategies that allow for different learning styles whilst enabling each individual to achieve their full potential.

"[The Ningbo China campus] is a young and dynamic environment offering opportunities for the introduction of new blended learning solutions alongside some of the more traditional methods. China is a technologically advanced country and many of our students are ‘digital natives’ which means expanding the use of e-learning and developing more electronic materials such as podcasts and videos will be essential.

“I am also keen to explore new models of delivery such as summer schools, and part-time and distance learning to meet the growing demand for postgraduate study and provide viable solutions for those who may find a conventional route challenging due to domestic or geographical constraints.”

This is an extract from a recent press release. For the full Nottingham News story, see www.nottingham.edu.cn/en/news/new-teaching-and-learning-head-at-uncn.aspx
Valuing our teaching

Lord Dearing Award winner statements

The Lord Dearing Awards recognise an “outstanding contribution to the development of teaching and student learning”. Staff are nominated by colleagues or students, and their personal statement supported by the input of three referees. Up to 20 awards are made each year.

Here, the 2012 Lord Dearing Award winners are listed, with a brief statement encapsulating the approach that their peers on the awarding panel have recognised.

Derek Chambers, Fern Todhunter and Bob Hallawell, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy (Joint Award)

“Student nurses should incorporate culturally appropriate knowledge and skills within their practice. However, opportunities for placements overseas are limited and lecturers have to develop innovative means to deliver global experiences. We were interested in the way that technology, in the form of online learning environments, may be used to foster and support new learning opportunities for students and to enable flexible approaches to teaching. We designed a teaching and learning framework that would give a blend of academic and social exchanges as both are prominent in students’ lives.”

Svetlana Clark, School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies

“When I teach I always try to imagine myself being a student in my class and try to make my lecture/class interesting, informative, and enjoyable. I strive to create an atmosphere of journey and discovery at every lesson, make students question their assumptions, listen to others, work as a team, enjoy challenge, take pleasure in knowledge creation and nurture the awareness of personal development.”

Simon Clifford, School of Veterinary Medicine and Science

“The veterinary profession is a very ‘hands on’ career which requires a high degree of practical competence. To help our undergraduates develop the skills they require outside of formal teaching, I have tried to design and develop facilities and processes which give students every opportunity to practice both basic and advanced practical techniques and skills on a regular basis in a relaxed, safe and controlled but mentally stimulating and challenging environment.”

Malcolm Cobb, School of Veterinary Medicine and Science

“For veterinary graduates it is important that they understand the clinical relevance of the basic science and, in turn, how basic science and research informs clinical decision making. To help achieve this I try to encourage students to find their own evidence, come to their own conclusions and importantly to have the confidence to make their own decisions and then evaluate and reflect on their performance.”

Alison C Clark, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy

“I work with colleagues to enhance the status of the faculty as a centre of excellence for Intra- and Inter-professional learning. My teaching philosophy centres on improving students’ engagement with their professional and personal development within a supportive system. I use ‘reflective focused conversations’ to challenge their perceptions and enable their learning within both classroom and practice contexts.”

Andrew Fisher, School of Humanities

“My ‘philosophy’ of teaching is very simple. I treat all students with respect, I am genuinely interested in them as people, and truly want them to achieve the best they can. Everything follows from this.”
Sarah Grandage, School of English  
“My approach to teaching has always been student-centred, aiming to put the learning experience of the students at the heart of what I do. I encourage students to bring curiosity, creativity, and self-reflection to bear in the way they engage with the material encountered, and to enjoy learning whilst developing confidence and autonomy.”

Brean Hammond, School of English  
“Teaching is about having original things to impart and doing so well, thus imbuing students with the desire to learn more for themselves because they are excited and enthused by their teaching. Students will learn well and will turn in good work if they care what their teachers think about it.”

Kevin Harvey, School of English  
“What lies at the core of my pedagogical approach is an irrepressible drive to stimulate and engage students, to convey my love of English to them, to make, in short, their university education a memorable one which fosters a lifelong interest in the study of language.”

Chris Mahon, Nottingham University Business School  
“As I am primarily involved in entrepreneurship education, I place great emphasis on creating learning environments that truly engage students. My goal is to replicate the experience of entrepreneurship for students, as I believe that learning comes easier - and lasts longer - when it is linked to doing something real.”

Jayne E Marshall, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy  
“Being enthusiastic about my subject and an insatiable learner, I encourage my students to aspire to their full potential and feel confident in their knowledge and skills acquisition to meet the demands of contemporary midwifery practice. Using research and examples from my own clinical experiences gives students tangible application to assimilate midwifery theory in their own learning and professional development.”

Julie McGarry, Susan Thompson and Aimee Aubeeluck, School of Nursing, Midwifery and Physiotherapy (Joint Award)  
Julie:  
“My philosophy of teaching and learning centres on an enquiry based approach and as such my role is that of a facilitator within this process. It involves engaging students in the recognition that knowledge is constantly shifting and supporting professional and personal development through this process.”

Susan:  
“When teaching I feel that the ability to connect with students is vastly important and I take this as my starting point. I seek to develop materials that students can engage with, hence the development of videos for PBL which helps to bring theory to life using authentic situations. I also strive to appear human and, yes, likable through use of anecdotes and humour. Once engaged students gain the confidence to contribute more and enjoy learning. After that informal and formal evaluation is key to ensure that your aims have been achieved.”

Aimee:  
“I am passionate about teaching and learning and my leadership practice is embedded in who I am as a person and influenced by my own student experiences. My school roles have given me the opportunity to make positive differences to students’ lives through high quality and compassionate leadership and this is reflected in the feedback I have received from both students and my peers.”

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Valuing our teaching

Adam Morton, School of Politics
“I attach great importance to the reciprocal learning relationship between lecturer and student to underline the shared basis of educational experience. My goal in teaching is to generate an approachable style so that students feel emboldened and confident to develop their own ideas as critical thinkers and as independent learners in and beyond university life”.

Alison Pilnick, School of Sociology and Social Policy
“I use my own research to demonstrate the epistemological and methodological issues that all researchers have to deal with on a day to basis, demonstrating why I made the choices I did and what consequences that had for the project. I believe that effective teaching-research links serve a two-fold purpose: increasing student awareness of and active engagement with research, and at the same time inducting students into the research community themselves.”

Gary Schwartz, Nottingham University Business School, UNNC
“I co-designed an active class participation system which awards 20 percent of the overall student mark based on the quality of their classroom contributions. The system received highly positive reviews from three external examiners, as it reduces subjectivity and possible bias in the assessment.”

Jonathan Tallant, School of Humanities
“I find that the most successful learning occurs when I focus my efforts on thinking about how my students learn and then try to find activities that support that process. For example, I shape 2 hour lectures to include time for small-group discussion, and use feedback from these groups to dictate content in parts of the lecture.”

Chris Walters, School of Biology
“I work to change the perception of administrators and erode the barriers between students, staff and administration, to foster a greater sense of community. I do this by treating students as individuals and working with academics to ensure administrative processes are optimised to the needs of all users.”

Simon Wilkinson, Information Services
“In e-assessment it is essential that an online exam tests the domain under scrutiny rather than the students’ ability to operate the software. To achieve this in Rogō I employ a user-centred design philosophy to ensure that user interfaces are intuitive, easy to remember and efficient to use.”

Leong Yut Moy, CLAS, UNMC
“I always believe that I am not teaching, but working together with students. In order to help students cope with difficulties in language acquisition, there is always something we can do to make these processes less painstaking and more ‘enjoyable’. It might be difficult but I try to be empathetic, creative and patient.”

Mary Bailey, School of Education
“I believe that starting my teaching career in two contrasting environments at about the same time - university and secondary school - helped me to identify clear principles that continue to guide me. These include a strong focus on fostering independent learning and critical reflection as well as a commitment to developing creative, inspirational approaches to teaching, within a collaborative team. I also see teaching and research as inextricably linked, particularly as most of what I do in the School of Education is teaching about teaching, supporting teachers to inquire into their own professional practice.”

The call for nominations for the 2013 Lord Dearing Awards is now open. If you would like to nominate a colleague, please contact Molly Fleischer (molly.fleischer@nottingham.ac.uk) with their name, job role and contact details by the 10th December 2012 deadline.
How the School of English won their Student Oscar

Staff in the School of English are really proud of what many of us refer to as the ‘Nottingham ethos’.

We are proud of the fact that our teaching and research covers the broadest possible range of subjects that can be studied under the general heading of English: from literary analysis to creative writing, from performance practice to second language acquisition, from Viking Studies to professional communication, from Shakespeare to the latest Booker prize nominations.

We are glad that we operate an increasingly ‘borderless’ School where administrative and academic staff come together on projects such as the transition from school to university, feedback, and internationalisation.

We teach literature and language in a global context and we are excited by what our discipline makes possible. But nothing makes us prouder than our students who do all the thinking and learning and doing required to make us a success on a day to day basis. It is their energy and commitment that makes the School what it is and which led to us winning the Student Union Oscar for ‘Best School/Department’ in 2012.

Let me describe just a few of the things our students have been engaged in recently. For the past two years the taught courses team in English has been pioneering a concept of ‘Applied English’, seeking to make visible in our degree programmes the numerous ways in which English as a subject can be applied in real-life contexts: from publishing to health communications, from teaching to acting, from speech therapy to gallery curation, from journalism to marketing.

We introduced a project-based dissertation for third-year undergraduates that has led to projects on adult literacy being presented at a national conference, and a case study on theatre in education that the Nottingham Playhouse will be publishing on its website.

Projects this year include work with schools literacy volunteers and the University’s Archaeology museum. A current Higher Education Academy project led by our Director of Teaching Dr Jo Robinson has seen students interview successfully for placements with theatre companies, the Lakeside Arts Centre and the University’s marketing department.

All of this activity – performed with gusto and verve by our amazing students – sits alongside a busy timetable of lectures, seminars and workshops. You could power lighting off the energy in our corridor some days.

Our Learning Community Forums, in which our students take an active lead in determining School priorities and engage in genuine collaboration with staff on mutually beneficial projects such as the Joint Honours experience, are the best example of the way in which the students collaborate with us to make the School the vibrant and innovative place it is. Amy Pearson, SU rep for English last year, sent me a special thank you prior to her graduation saying: ‘I know we’ve all especially found this year to be a brilliant LCF’ but she knows as well as I do that it was a joint effort, as is everything we do.

Professor Julie Sanders
Head of School

An External Examiner for the School of English recently commended the “strong curriculum design allowing development of independent thinking and transferable skills.”
Heads of School were invited to nominate one member of staff per campus to receive this recognition for contributions made to the quality of teaching within a school. Student opinion was used to inform nominations and APM staff in the School who contribute to teaching quality through their active support for teaching were also eligible for the award.

Faculty of Arts

English Studies:
Mrs Wenonah Barton
The University of Nottingham

Humanities:
Dr Gabrielle Neher
The University of Nottingham

Cultures, Languages and Area Studies:
Dr Franziska Meyer
The University of Nottingham
Dr Joanne Lim
UNMC
Dr K Cohen Tan
UNNC

Faculty of Social Sciences

Nottingham University Business School:
Dr Swee-Hoon Chuah
The University of Nottingham
Dr Mohamed Khaled Omar
UNMC

Associate Professor Shameen Prashantham
UNNC

Contemporary Chinese Studies
Mrs Yannan Guo
The University of Nottingham
Economics
Dr Vincent Anesi
The University of Nottingham

Education
Professor Monica McLean
The University of Nottingham
Mr James Arthurs (CELE)
UNNC

Geography
Miss Teresa Needham
The University of Nottingham

Law
Mr Ian Bainbridge
The University of Nottingham

Politics & International Relations
Dr Bettina Renz
The University of Nottingham

Professor Neville Wylie
UNMC

Anna Greenwood
UNNC

Sociology & Social Policy
Dr Rachel Fyson
The University of Nottingham
Faculty of Science

—

Biosciences
Mrs Arlene Barton
The University of Nottingham
Dr Sue Azam-Ali
UNMC

Chemistry
Miss Zena Marsh
The University of Nottingham
Dr Gail Hopkins
UNMC

Computer Science
K R Salvaraj
UNMC

Amin Farjudian
UNNC

Mathematical Sciences
Dr Richard Graham
The University of Nottingham

Pharmacy
Dr Ziad Omran
The University of Nottingham
Dr Kuan Hon Lim
UNMC

Physics & Astronomy
Mrs Julie Kenney
The University of Nottingham

Psychology
Dr Mark Haselgrove
The University of Nottingham
Dr Matt Johnson
UNMC

Faculty of Engineering

—

Department of Chemical & Environmental Engineering
Mr Christopher Somerfield
The University of Nottingham
Dr Jun He
UNNC

Department of Civil Engineering
Dr Rick Munro
The University of Nottingham
Edwin Goh Boon Hoe
UNMC

Department of Mechanics, Materials & Manufacturing
Mr John Prentice
The University of Nottingham
Dr Hoon Kiat Ng
UNMC

Faculty of Medicine & Health Sciences

—

Biomedical Sciences
Dr Angus Brown
The University of Nottingham

Community Health Sciences
Mrs Andrea Baker
The University of Nottingham
Dr Angeli Santos
UNMC

Graduate Entry Medicine & Health
Mrs Rebecca Guest
The University of Nottingham

Nursing, Midwifery & Physiotherapy
Ms Bridget Gilliatt
The University of Nottingham

Veterinary Medicine & Science
Ms Michelle Dickson
The University of Nottingham
The Postgraduate Teaching Assistant Award recognises and celebrates examples of innovative teaching and support of learning and is recognised as a mark of distinction within the University. This annual award is open to all postgraduate research students who teach either individually, or as part of a group, at The University of Nottingham. Applicants may support teaching and learning through a wide range of activities, including: demonstrating in laboratory classes, distance learning, leading seminars or tutorials, supporting project work, lecturing or assessing and giving feedback on student work.

In 2012, the following postgraduates won the award:

**Samuel Beatson – School of Contemporary Chinese Studies**
Samuel has taught in seminars for both undergraduate and postgraduate students and he used a variety of approaches for these sessions. He utilised the ‘Turning Point’ keypads and video and audio resources to enhance students’ participation. Additionally he has used mindmaps to provide a visual overview of topics and to stimulate debate.

"Sam is creative, enthusiastic and dedicated to his role as a teaching assistant."
Dr Xiaoling Zhang
School of Contemporary Chinese Studies

**Helen Wainwright – Department of Art History**
Helen taught on two Art History modules for first years and has used feedback to improve the structure of the seminars. She uses a variety of techniques to keep students engaged and participating in the seminar; including a cabinet of curiosity to develop skills of visual and material analysis.

"Helen is an engaging teacher, has the ability to think on her feet and adapt activities if required and has a very good rapport with the students."
Dr Lara Pucci
School of Humanities

**Peter Watts – Department of Theology and Religious Studies**
Peter taught on two Introduction to Biblical Greek modules which have previously seen diminishing student numbers. Drawing on his own experiences he has shown students the benefits of learning Greek and used interesting and relevant examples to involve all students. Subsequently the numbers of students continuing with Greek has improved and he has received excellent SET feedback.

"Peter is a wonderfully lucid expositor, is enormously positive and is highly committed to his students."
Dr Karen Kilby
School of Humanities

In addition, two applications were highly commended:

**Rebecca Harper – Department of German Studies**
Rebecca has taught seminars for two first year modules and has been a visiting tutor on a second year module. Following student feedback from the previous year, Rebecca improved the way the module is taught by varying the exercises using different learning styles. The students produced posters and used snowball teaching techniques to generate discussion.

"Rebecca communicates well with the students and is highly committed to teaching."
Dr Rachel Palfreyman
School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies

**Jeanie Holstein and Shelley Clark – Business School**
Jeanie and Shelley taught on the People and Organisation module for all 624 first year undergraduates. They creatively helped to plan the sessions and used a variety of approaches to engage students, including interactive videos, case studies, small group discussion, mini lectures and a learning styles questionnaire.

"Jeanie and Shelley used peer teaching, observation and reflection to review each other’s sessions."
Suzanne Edinger
Nottingham University Business School

If you would like details about how to apply for the award, or any further information, please contact Helen Cowley in Professional Development.
Over the last two years, academics from the UK, Malaysia and China have joined together to take part in a week of sessions and activities for the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) course. The first fully cross-campus PGCHE Summer School took place at Malaysia Campus in August 2011 and the second one at Ningbo Campus in June 2012. Plans are now underway for the 3rd PGCHE Summer School that will take place in Nottingham in June 2013 and it is anticipated that it will be the biggest one yet.

The PGCHE is a 60-credit qualification and most new lecturing staff at the University of Nottingham are required to complete 30 credits of the course. The overall aim of the course is to help lecturers develop their teaching and so enhance student learning. The PGCHE course has been running in Malaysia since 2002 and in China since 2008 and has mainly been delivered via annual week-long events supported by staff from the UK PGCHE Course team.

By inviting participants from other campuses (funded by their Schools), the usual week-long event became a ‘Summer School’ and consisted of:

- An introduction to the PGCHE Course
- Workshops related to two of the course modules

This meant that alongside the usual group of new academics starting the PGCHE at the hosting campus, there were also 6-8 academics from the other two campuses attending the sessions, making it a truly international experience for all.

Nuala Byrne
PGCHE Course Director

"The PGCHE Summer School is intensive yet relaxing, thus facilitates me in getting a clear big picture on what's covered in PGCHE and what one should do to complete the program. I particularly enjoyed the group discussions as getting opinions of participants from the three campuses does widen my perceptions on Teaching & Learning. And of course, I made new friends during the summer school."

Joshua Yap Lip Vun, Science, UNMC
The project was prompted by the following observations:

- The University of Nottingham aims ‘to be the best in the world’ for teaching and learning provision (The University of Nottingham Teaching and Learning Strategy 2011-15, p1 and 2).
- Academic Support figures show increasing demand for study skills support and specialist learning support to the point of overload.
- The gap between what ‘A’ levels prepare students for and the reality of university seems to be increasing.
- Increasing numbers of students from our international campuses are arriving without a detailed knowledge of our academic culture.
- Student expectations about university service provision are increasing.

We interviewed staff from academic Schools and Support Services (e.g. IS, CELE) and a student focus group, as well as exploring centrally available web-based resources to identify gaps in perception and reality of provision.

Perceptions of ‘study skills’

Since the 1990s there has been a discourse in HE about a lack of key skills (CDELL, 2001) and employers have continually emphasised the need for graduates to be equipped with a set of marketable competencies. ‘Study skills’ or ‘key skills’, ‘transferable skills’, ‘common skills’ and ‘core skills’ all refer to skills in communication, information management, use of ICT, people and personal skills (see for example Fallows, 2003).
Staff agree with students that study skills provision needed to be more relevant to the subject-specific curriculum and to teach students to become independent, creative learners in their fields:

‘It’s very much about embedding the study skills in the subject that they’re studying’ (Dr Jo Robinson, English Studies)

‘What we’re trying to achieve really is independence of thought and the ability to think for oneself – the ability to ask questions’ (Dr Nick Thomas, History)

This perception was reflected in the student focus group, when asked what they understood ‘study skills’ to be:

‘...about how to cope with stressful situations i.e. essay deadlines, timing in exams, time management, self-motivation, essay writing, etc.’

However, whilst the term ‘study skills’ at Nottingham has often referred to the above generic definition, students described generic ‘study skills’ as an ‘overused term’, ‘wishy washy’, ‘patronising’, ‘another thing to do’ and ‘sounds like something they would teach you at school’ [General consensus].
There is evidence that blending study skills into a subject-specific curriculum has tangible outcomes:

‘In written work I can’t tell you how much of an improvement there was… I really noticed… the confidence with which students went beyond their reading list and did some independent research for their essays, which for me was quite unusual for first year work’ (Dr Eva Giraud, Film & Media Studies)

Transitions into and through university

Staff and students also agreed that study skills can complement support at key transition points, which can be problematic: ‘For me [starting university] was a big shock … thought I had some experience … but still when I came, it was totally different to what I’d done before’.

‘I personally found the step up to year two a lot bigger than A level to year 1 – suddenly in year two you’re into so much more detail, and they’re expecting so much of you that you have to step your game up quite a lot …’

Some staff recognised the need for support at transition points and have built this into their approach to study skills:

… yes, [it is] partly about the subject, but a lot about the kind of skills that we expect students to have which they don’t necessarily have coming out of 6th form because they’ve been taught to different types of agendas and different types of goals’ (Dr Jo Robinson, English Studies)

Study skills provision maps and examples of practice

The audit ‘mapped’ the teaching of and support for study skills across the university to discover provision for students in each School and highlight good practice. Whilst the nuances of study skills delivery within each School are difficult to capture precisely, the broader trends have been ‘mapped’ in a series of diagrams.

In these maps we have indicated:
• whether study skills was embedded into the curriculum or taught mostly as generic ‘key skills’
• whether these sessions were taught as one-off sessions, at the start of the academic session, or built in throughout the module
• how Schools were delivering these sessions
• whether this component was compulsory and credit-bearing or not
• whether students’ work was assessed and whether feedback on this was provided
• where Schools used external bodies to deliver these sessions and
• where Schools had mentoring support in place, either for first year students, or international students.

We also produced a set of video/audio resources where staff discussed the resource/s they had developed, including study skills modules. These are available on the Talking of Teaching blog (see page 20) http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/talkingofteaching

Impact

The Study Skills audit found where good study skills resources and practices exist, however Schools are increasingly struggling to design and deliver quality academic development alongside their regular workload.

When interviewed, staff expressed a need for support in delivering study skills and for better collaboration and sharing across the University. This need echoed feedback received by Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching & Learning, Professor Alan Ford, at a recent Study Skills Project dissemination event.

Staff indicated that ring-fenced resources for study skills work would be important, and several participants suggested the availability of ‘Study Skills Champions’ at local level to support staff. Participants agreed that the availability of such resources would indicate the University’s commitment to developing teaching and learning.

Academic Support is working with Professor Alan Ford and the Teaching & Learning Board to follow-up on these comments.

Dr Kim Lawson and Laura Higgins
Academic Support

References:

CDELL (2001) Introducing and supporting key skills in higher education: agendas, ideas and issues for university departments, Centre for Developing & Evaluating Lifelong Learning, The University of Nottingham.


Project contributors include Tory Hayward, Dr Lisa Rull and Dr Barbara Taylor, all of Academic Support.
The past few months have seen a plethora of stories relating to the rise of open access, on-line courses being offered across the world. For example, the so-called MOOC – Massive Open Online Course – has been added to the lexicon especially since Stanford’s Sebastian Thrun’s course on artificial intelligence attracted over 160,000 students when it launched in autumn 2011. More recently, the launch of collaborative provision of on-line courses such as edX (MIT and Harvard) and Coursera (Stanford with others including Edinburgh and the University of London) has seen institutions make significant steps into this market.

Some of the coverage has been filled with hyperbole, with some even suggesting that this movement could signal the end of the traditional university and while many claims are perhaps over-stretching what is likely to happen, it is useful to consider how a university might respond to this discussion and more broadly how it engages with learning in an on-line environment.

At the heart of this movement is the growth open educational resources (OER), materials provided openly on the internet for use and re-purposing under a creative commons licence system. The University of Nottingham has engaged in this area since 2007 under the U-Now project which forms part of a wider Open Nottingham programme designed to provide greater access to a range of University resources. Generally, OER were initially not offered with accreditation or qualifications based on studying these materials but recently the MOOCs and collaborative programmes have started to offer some limited accreditation of study.

Clearly, then, the space between face-to-face provision and distance learning provision of whole courses is becoming crowded with a variety of new models. The question for any campus-based institution – including Nottingham - is where does it wish to position itself in this space? While for a host of reasons this is potentially difficult to answer, perhaps a more pertinent question is how does an institution engage with on-line learning such that if it wishes to move into the market for distance learning, broadly defined, it has the flexibility to do so?

Teaching and Learning Board is currently considering and discussing with colleagues the aspect of on-line learning to help inform Management Board of the potential for development in this area. Key to this is that on-line learning can in fact support all forms of delivery, not simply the more niche distance learning markets that might exist. There is a great deal that can be offered online to students to enhance their face-to-face experience; it offers flexibility in engagement with their course materials, potential for self-assessment and feedback, interaction with their peers and the opportunity to tailor their learning to their own timetable. Almost incidentally, once materials are created in this way, there is scope to re-use them in a variety of environments to meet many needs. However, there are a range of issues to consider in meeting such an aspiration and they will form part of the TLB discussions too.

If you would like to offer views on the development of on-line learning, please contact me.

Professor Wyn Morgan
Director of Teaching and Learning
Talking of teaching

The Talking of Teaching blog is a way to communicate more widely about what our teaching is like and what our staff are thinking about in their teaching development. As a collection of pieces written by a number of colleagues, this is a shared space rather than a single-author voice. As the blog description reads:

“Talking of teaching” offers a window onto the University’s teaching culture and practice. Contributions include interviews, examples of teaching and short pieces on current issues.”

Here are a few extracts from recent and forthcoming blog posts:

**Embedding study skills into the International Media and Communications degree**

*Dr Eva Giraud, School of Humanities*

“We'd noticed that we'd spent quite a lot of time in the first year helping students get their essay writing and research skills to the necessary standards and quality to do really well in the second and third year. And we were having to spend time in other modules working on those types of skills. And what we found was that if we dedicated a particular module to study skills then that would help enhance the degree programme as a whole and allow them to go into the second year with confidence.

“It was really important to give students a space to get to know each other to aid integration on what is a very international programme.

“In the second semester we split students up into small study groups and their task for the whole term was to develop a particular publication, including the content and design. The publication was a guide for Nottingham students on how to approach study so they had to re-process some of the skills they’d learned in the first term to explain them to other students.”

(Extract)

**Employability skills in Politics teaching**

*Dr Lucy Sargisson, School of Politics and International Relations*

“We identified a need to update the curriculum to meet changing demands and to increase relevance in the School of Politics and International Relations. We want to offer a curriculum that supports students' transition to becoming independent learners and also enhances staff skills, knowledge and expertise with regard to their teaching. “All the module documentation in the School was reviewed and improved module handbooks have been being produced for the 2012/2013 academic session. These now show the employability skills opportunities available within each module and the relationship these skills have with different careers.

“Work experience opportunities could be developed and the School is offering a workplace based Nottingham Advantage Award module in 2012/13. We hope to develop this into a credit bearing module (with research and employability skills) the following year.”

(Extract)

**Audio-visual recordings and student learning**

*Joel Feinstein, School of Mathematical Sciences and Claire Chambers, School of Geography*

“Classes have become more interactive and there are new ways of supporting students with extra online resources, which they can access after class. We’ve run workshops for staff to help those with less experience to produce high quality videos. Staff from the Audio Visual unit (within the IS Learning Team) have helped with advice and practical support about vodcasting, lecture capture, field work videos and video diaries, amongst other things.

“Currently we have a range of equipment available to staff, including an assortment of cameras, tripods, webcams and wireless microphones - staff can choose what they need depending on their activity.

“Students have also been involved in producing their own materials for their courses, such as recording field trips. The technology is well appreciated, but we must be cautious to balance our gains and losses in moving forward, as we need to keep an eye on the effects it has on student learning.”

(Extract)

Read more at: [http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/talkingofteaching](http://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/talkingofteaching)
Student engagement in teaching development

Three years ago I ran to be a Computer Science Course Rep and was elected, with the following two years being spent as a School Rep. Now that I’ve had time to reflect, and have the viewpoint from being Students’ Union Education Officer, I have a few musings to make, including what the next steps for student representation and engagement should be.

My first experience of representing students’ views wasn’t until a few months into my role, when I was asked by a module convenor to gather feedback on the format of their group tutorials. Until then, I’d sat in LCF meetings, but had only really represented my personal views. Sure enough, I fed back that students would like the tutorials split into two sections for group/individual work and the format was changed.

This event had an interesting effect – students immediately clicked onto the fact that not only is there a student there to represent our views, but that staff do actually act upon what we say, and it wasn’t long before feedback was filling my inbox and students were catching me in the lab to chat about their modules. It dawned on me the following year that asking open-ended questions to students yields so many experiences that you can effectively map out the learning experience for a particular module and the issues students are facing become very clear. Being able to draw these experiences out and relay them to the relevant people in a way which is constructive and informative proved key to effective representation.

What I did struggle with over the first two years was the proactive collaboration between staff and students on topics which affected either party. If I’d have known that the School would part-fund an academic trip for the Computer Science Society (CompSoc) because they see the benefits, I would have asked sooner! Similarly, if the senior academics had known that students would be so opinionated on personal tutoring, we could’ve drawn up our ideal tutoring community much earlier on. Third year was the year this all fitted into place – every time students had issues, they made them heard; and whenever staff were considering changes, students were consulted and engaged in the process.

The feedback I got from students about their learning experience this year was the most positive it had ever been.

Moving from apathy to representation and from representation to engagement is my next hurdle. Students having input into decisions which affect their teaching and learning experiences and knowing that their voices will be heard gives students ownership over their learning, and we all benefit from an informed, engaging, exciting university experience for staff and for students.

Matt Styles
Students’ Union Education Officer

Contact Matt via email using sueducation@nottingham.ac.uk
Moodle Update: Autumn 2012

Implementing Moodle in the School of Biosciences

The key question for us in changing from WebCT to Moodle was whether this would be a change for the better or a change for the sake of it. Initial glimpses at the Moodle pages did not inspire confidence – what were all those icons and buttons? Where do you begin? However, with the help of colleagues in our School who were already piloting the system, along with the support of the Moodle team and key administrative staff, we quickly figured out what to do and rolled the system out in the School.

One of many benefits is how easy it is to enrol new users, and we immediately saw the potential for improving communication with colleagues in Malaysia where a range of our courses and modules are being taught. Now, with the click of a couple of buttons, we can add the Malaysian staff to our modules so they can see what we’re teaching and at the same time module convenors in the UK have been added to the Malaysian versions, so we can see what they were delivering.

We also created a new ‘module’ for students on exchange between Malaysia and the UK with lists of tutors etc. And as soon as teaching started, it was a simple task to enrol new students without the need to wait for Saturn lists to be updated.

Most colleagues have found their feet in Moodle, aided by the Moodle helpline. There are still some constraints. For example, it is not a simple task to make handouts available just to selected students, ie academic referrals, in advance, although some argue that they should be available to all students in any case. So far, the advantages outweigh the disadvantages compared to WebCT, and we are gaining the confidence to press even more of those buttons and icons as part of thinking about our students’ learning.

Professor Matt Dickinson
School of Biosciences

Using Moodle in the School of Education

Our first major use of Moodle came with delivery of its PGCE International (PGCEi) course to two cohorts of students: in Dubai in March and in Kuala Lumpur in April. The PGCE follows a blended model, with a face-to-face induction event (in one of ten international locations) followed by a nine-month period of online study, and it is therefore essential that the learning environment is one which enables and encourages effective interaction between the participants: it became clear early on that Moodle was a distinct improvement on WebCT in this respect.

Even seemingly small things – like being able to add pictures to one’s personal profile – added interest to the forum postings, and the environment seemed to encourage a certain amount of exploration and experimentation on the part of students, with many of them quickly discovering, for example, how to embed video and audio into their posts. “Most encouragingly,” says course leader, Paul Thompson, “we noticed that students were keen to share amongst themselves the uses they were making of Moodle – the beginnings of a genuinely collaborative community.”

Our next course to be launched in Moodle, in May, was the MA TESOL (web-based). Unlike the students on the PGCEi, many of the students on this programme had already been studying online for a year (using WebCT), so we could look at differences in student engagement with the environment. These students were also quick to explore and experiment: “They made inventive use of the ‘autobiographies forum’, and began to forge the relationships which formed the lively academic community we see today,” says course leader, Jane Evison.

One problem we did find was a certain amount of confusion around the differences between messaging within Moodle and the forwarding of forum postings to email accounts. These issues would probably be best dealt with by the adoption of particular communication protocols – and increasing familiarity with Moodle.

Matthew Nilan
School of Education

Help and Support
Moodle Helpdesk
Contact learning-team-support@nottingham.ac.uk – we are available every day

In your School
We have been working closely with Schools and now in each School there are designated Category Managers and School Support staff who can help locally with enrolling staff and students, and adding and editing material.

Moodle Help website on Workspace: https://workspace.nottingham.ac.uk/display/Moodlehelp/Moodle+Help or search for Moodle Help

Training courses:
• Key Moodle Basics (two hours, every fortnight)
• Moving on with Moodle

Book through the Short Courses Website http://training.nottingham.ac.uk/cbs-notts/
Launching the VLE

On Monday 8th October 2012 we broke a record.

We had 850 users within 5 minutes on Moodle: pretty much 850 people using it at once. That’s much greater than the number we would have expected for the old learning environment, WebCT, at that time in the term and illustrates Moodle’s popularity.

Moodle now provides online learning support for tens of thousands of students and thousands of staff in three countries. It’s the first time a single online learning environment has been used right across the University. Expecting this kind of peak in usage at the start of session, the Moodle team have been providing enhanced levels of support including a telephone helpdesk, temporary all-day drop-in and extra staff to deal with support calls.

As with all new systems, especially such a big undertaking, there were one or two teething problems which were quickly fixed and which affected only a very small proportion of our thousands of users.

Helen Whitehead
IS Learning Technology Section

Development activity:

- Moodle is linked to SATURN to automatically enrol users, and with the University’s central timetabling system, and further developments are in process.
- A new design is in development with Marketing and Communications and a demo site will be made available for feedback.
- Integration with the Equella file management system, providing local storage for files in the international campuses and synchronisation across all three sites
- Integration with Rogō and Xerte Online Toolkits.

Follow the Learning Technology Team Blog – for the latest news on developments and case studies of Moodle use in the University

Moodle feature blocks:

- University Resources (library and learning resources)
- Module Resources (catalogue and reading list)
- Business School blocks to smooth the transition from Nexus
- Tools including a Formulary for the Medical School
- Echo360 link to lecture capture recordings
- Section Navigation (replicating WebCT Learning Modules)
- Migration Tool to import material from WebCT

Course organisation options:

- Calendar (from University timetabling)
- Collapsed Topics to mitigate a long scroll

Additional activities:

- Absence reporting
- Allocation tool
- Voting
- Turnitin Assignments
- Tutorial Booking and sign up sheets
To help Schools address teaching development issues within the discipline, TLB have appointed two colleagues to act as Academic Teaching Advisers. Here Martin Luck (Biosciences) and Tom Cross (Engineering) outline their understanding of the role.

Over the next few months Martin and Tom will be contacting schools to discuss the teaching challenges currently being faced by colleagues across the University. Please feel free to contact them if you would like to discuss any teaching related issues.

Martin:
t: +44 (0)115 9516309
e: martin.luck@nottingham.ac.uk

Tom:
t: +44 (0)115 84 68488
e: tom.cross@nottingham.ac.uk

Martin Luck

The quality of teaching in universities is under the spotlight as never before. With students paying heavily for their studies and course data becoming instantly available, we have to show that the education we provide is first rate. My role as Adviser is to spread the quality message and help colleagues achieve the best. Effective teaching happens when several elements come together: well-designed courses, purposeful learning, innovation and skilful communication. The strong research ethos at Nottingham helps to make our teaching current and exciting but it needs to be backed up with positive relationships in the classroom or lab and an awareness of how students learn.

I’m excited by the prospect of working with colleagues across the University to help them improve what they do. I’m also keen to hear about innovations and share expertise. Development happens best in a local context, reflecting the culture and demands of the subject as well as the enthusiasm, commitment and experience of staff.

My background is in the biosciences but the principles of good education go beyond subject boundaries. I’ve been writing about developments in teaching and learning for some while and been involved with national and international projects.

As a Nottingham graduate, busy academic and Senior Tutor, I understand that excellent teaching and learning have to be part of the complete student experience.

Over the coming months, Tom and I will be contacting as many schools as we can, to find out what’s working and where extra help or guidance might bring rewards. We welcome specific requests for support or consultation and will be very pleased to help colleagues work through the challenges they face.

Brief biography:
Graduate of Nottingham, Leeds and the Open University; member of academic staff at Sutton Bonington since 1990 and currently Associate Professor in Animal Science; twice received the Lord Dearing Award; made a National Teaching Fellow in 2011.
When I noticed the call for applications for the role of Academic Teaching Adviser it had an immediate appeal as a potentially fascinating secondment and a positive indication of the University's commitment to provide a high quality, research-led, international education. Research underpins our teaching in a variety of ways, from making an introductory level module more relevant and exciting, to providing cutting edge final year and master's level teaching.

To me the role of an Academic Teaching Adviser is to help to develop the teaching potential of all staff. This can only be achieved through establishing a constructive partnership with schools and departments. There is more to teaching than lecturing to a group of students and I think our main role is to encourage effective learning thereby helping students to achieve a deep understanding and love of their chosen subject.

Since joining the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering I have built up a wide range of experience at University, Faculty and Departmental level; including four years at the Malaysia Campus and I hope that this will enable me to bring a broad view to the role.

I freely admit that I don’t have all the answers. However, I hope that with the help of colleagues across the university we can all learn more about how to become the excellent teacher to which we all aspire.

Brief biography:
Graduate of the University of Wales, Bangor; BSc 1973, PhD 1983.
Employment with the Marconi Co and National Foundation for Cancer Research (USA) before joining the University of Nottingham in 1984. While at Nottingham I have been Director of Studies for Electrical and Electronic Engineering at both UK and Malaysia campuses; Engineering Undergraduate Vice-dean and currently Deputy-head of Department.
Moodle training
New dates are announced for the Introduction to Moodle/Key Moodle Basics training course for academics and support staff using Moodle for teaching. The course is two hours long and gives you the basics of uploading materials to Moodle, designing your Moodle space and using the features that are available. There are also plenty of chances to ask your questions.

New dates are:
- University Park (Science zone) Tuesday 13 November, 2pm - 4pm
- University Park (Science zone) Wednesday 28 November, 4pm - 4pm

Register at:
http://training.nottingham.ac.uk/cbs-notts/

We are also planning more advanced training sessions around other features of Moodle – if you have any ideas please let us know.

OER 2013 conference
26-27 March 2013
Addressing the use and development of Open Educational Resources (OER) the conference strands are Evidence, Experience and Expectation. For more information or if you are interested in submitting a paper, go to www.ucel.ac.uk/oer13/

Curriculum Review conference
Spring 2013
Colleagues are invited to discuss intended outcomes for graduates in the light of debates around employability, internationalisation and sustainability and to consider practical routes to programme design to embed explicit values in the curriculum.

Details will be circulated through School contacts and on the Teaching web site.

LSRI learning lunches and seminar series
The Learning Lunches are weekly informal gatherings (bring your sandwiches) for semi-structured conversations around shared interests in learning practice and research.

For dates and topics, see
www.lsri.nottingham.ac.uk/events/lunches

For the research seminar timetable see
www.lsri.nottingham.ac.uk/events/seminars

Central Short Courses
A catalogue of courses offered by Professional Development, CELE, IS and others is available at http://training.nottingham.ac.uk/cbs-notts/

Events regularly updated at:
www.nottingham.ac.uk/teaching/events