



REAP Completion Report Managerial Finance, Caledonian Business School

Project Sign-off

1. Project achievements

*Have all **project activities or deliverables** been completed? What, if any, work remains outstanding from your plans for this academic year?*

The Module Leader and E-Champion are satisfied that most activities and deliverables have been completed. Subject to extra funding being made available, (This has been provided and a PhD research student is engaged in this analysis) we have identified a statistician who could work with us on the data analysis to explore the extent to which the introduction of on-line 'low stakes' assessments (quizzes) has improved the overall performance of the students.

Over the summer months we will be defining performance thresholds to guide students through each quiz and clarify what good performance is. (Principle 1 of Nicol & MacFarlane's seven principles of good feedback practice)

At the end of the project, do you feel you achieved the aims and objectives identified at the start? What is missing? What have you done that wasn't in your original plans?

The Module Team is satisfied that timing and quality of feedback to students has improved significantly as a direct result of introducing on-line 'low stakes' assessments (quizzes) and has succeeded in 'delivering high quality information to students about their learning.' (Principle 3 of Nicol & MacFarlane's seven principles of good feedback practice)

It was not our intention to reduce staff time as part of our initiative. Nevertheless, now that the quizzes have been embedded in our assessment strategy, this has resulted in us increasing the stakes from 10 to 20% for the on-line assessment and removing the Group Course Work from our Assessment portfolio for next Session.

During the last Academic Session, we introduced an Electronic Voting System (EVS) which was in addition to our original aims and objectives of our project. We recognise that further development will be necessary to fully embed this system into the module but note the positive student feedback on trialling the system last Session.

We recognise that EVS does '... encourage teaching and peer dialogue around learning' (Principle 4 of Nicol & MacFarlane's seven principles of good feedback practice) and 'provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape the teaching' (Principle 7 of Nicol & MacFarlane's seven principles of good feedback practice).

2. Impact on students

What has the impact of the project been on students? Have marks, attendance, retention, progression or other key indicators changed or improved (please give details)? Do students demonstrate differences in their satisfaction with the class or course? What evidence can you draw on (please give details)?

As highlighted earlier, we are keen to explore the data we hold to consider the extent to which overall student performance has improved. We should be in a position, subject to funds being available, to give a view on the key indicators identified above. From the qualitative responses we have captured, students provided feedback that the quizzes 'encouraged positive motivational beliefs and self esteem' (Principle 5 of Nicol & MacFarlane's seven principles of good feedback practice) and their ability to re-take the tests as often as they wished and therefore 'provides opportunities to close the



gap between current and desired performance' (Principle 6 of Nicol & MacFarlane's seven principles of good feedback practice)

3. Impact on staff

What impact has the project had on staff? Has workload changed significantly? Do staff members involved in the project feel differently about the class or course now that changes have been made? How?

The Module Leader and E-Champion were the only members of staff involved in implementing the on-line assessments. Given the nature of on-line assessments and the automated feedback, we took the view that there was no need to involve the seminar tutors in an initiative that could be managed via Blackboard. It is the case, however, that the tutors are aware of nature of the assessment and its purpose. The staff members directly involved in the project appreciate that the quizzes can be rolled over and that their time investment during last Session will be non-recurring.

As already stated, it was not the intention to reduce staff workload. Furthermore, it would be naïve to think that feedback could be improved at the same time as reducing staff time. Nonetheless, the staff members are satisfied that feedback has improved significantly and we are considering ways in which feedback could be improved further albeit without increasing staff time e.g. getting the students to write feedback on the questions held in our database and which could be reused by students. What is obvious is that to give 800 students individual weekly feedback on their performance would have been extremely onerous if not impossible without the use of automated processes

4. Impact on costs

How do you think that the changes you have made will affect the efficiency of class or course delivery in the future?

Given that up to 800 students participated in the module last session, the learning gains for students being able to access automated feedback far outweighs the cost of producing the feedback.

Have costs been reduced? Or has quality improved significantly with no additional long-term costs?

The quality and quantity of our feedback has improved and the costs incurred through the project were used to build up a re-usable resource.

5. Sustainability

Explain how current project activities will continue in the department.

As already highlighted, the module descriptor has incorporated on-line assessment as part of the assessment strategy and is now an assessable element of the module. The staff members intend to explore the notion that students should write their own feedback and that this will '...facilitate the development of reflection and self assessment in learning' (Principle 2 of Nicol & MacFarlane's seven principles of good feedback practice).

The lecturers on the module have also committed to developing their use of EVS during the coming Session.

What measures are in place to ensure that activities are embedded? Who is responsible for ensuring sustainability?

The original project has now been embedded and is now written into the Module Descriptor.

6. Plans for further development

Are other courses or classes in the department planning to change their assessment practices as a result of your work (please give details)?



The Module Leader and E-champion are now working with colleagues in the Division of Accounting & Finance to introduce on-line assessments in the fields of Financial/Management Accounting at levels 1 and 2 as well as a module in Finance at level 2.

What do you think would need to change in your department if your REAP-supported ideas were fully adopted across all courses and years?

Not an easy answer to give but we have talked to colleagues and held workshops to consider the benefits of introducing on-line continuous summative assessment.

7. Lessons learned

What changes contributed most to improving the quality of student learning?

What changes contributed most to reducing costs?

In the context of the project, we do not believe at this stage that we have reduced costs.

What implementation issues were most important?

If you could start again, what would you have done differently? What lessons would you pass on to other departments undertaking similar projects?

Trying not to re-invent the wheel! Always check with publishers and other institutions concerning existing material. It is the case now that some publishers are in the process of establishing databanks of questions that could be used more efficiently than writing up your own feedback.

8. Future Research

Have any issues emerged from the project which merit further investigation or future development work by your department, by CAPLE or by other organisations?

The big question that we are trying to address is to what extent our initiative has improved student performance.

9. Dissemination

List the dissemination that has been done (or is being done) since January 2007 about project findings and outcomes, e.g. journal articles, conference presentations. Please give details.

- CBS Workshop – Brown Bag Event through REAP
- Divisional Workshop – To promote the use of on-line assessments in accounting/finance modules
- Possible Conference in May 2008 (BAA Special Interest Group, Seville, Spain)