REAP Completion Report 44128 Introduction to Tourism, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management

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 majority of project activities have been completed. EVS technology was purchased and put into use, as planned, in semester 2 of the past academic year. Five videopodcasts were created and rolled out to students. We still have one videopodcast in the bank. It is my intention to create this before the end of this month.   Since the class content is changing in the forthcoming year, we felt it prudent to retain one slot which could be amended. It will also be necessary to change the narrative of some of the podcasts to cope with the altered timing of the classes in the forthcoming year. I hope that Spoken Word Services will do this for us as a good will gesture.

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?

Key drivers for change were are follows:

- Increase attendance;
- Improve student experience;
- Decrease contact hours and increase private study time, perhaps supported by peer assessment;
- Improve group cohesion;
- Increase interactivity of lecture slots (on-demand teaching);
- Greater use of diagnostic testing to assess student progress;
- Allow/facilitate student assessment of own knowledge;
- Increase enjoyment of subject;
- Assist weaker students;
- Improve feedback to students, including feedback from peers;
- Make better use of educational technologies;
- Ensure greater alignment of teaching and assessment.

Achievements related to these aims and objectives will be discussed in the sections below, to which they relate.

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)?

Although attendance was improved from previous years, it was still at a lower than desirable level. The Monday slot achieved roughly 50% attendance but the Friday slot was around 30% only. We are still attempting to get a timetable change for this slot which will hopefully improve attendance further. Figures on retention and student achievement are certainly an improvement over last year. Equally, student performance has improved over the previous year. In the academic year 2005/6 40 students were deemed Not Qualified to take the class and the overall coursework average (including NQ

students) was 47.8. In 2006/7 30 students (i.e. 25% fewer than the previous year) were NQ and the average coursework mark rose dramatically to 60%.

Student satisfaction levels were evaluated by the REAP team. Students ranked lectures and podcasts as the most popular formats for receiving information and findings suggest that students, in general, preferred the format of the lectures in semester 2. Students also categorically that the use of EVS technologies increased their understanding of course content and concentration in lectures.

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?

Creating the podcasts and revising lecture notes to include questions and make them suitable for EVS based lectures was time consuming. Although there was no decrease in the number of hours taught, the fact that the lecture was duplicated however meant less material to prepare overall and in future the amount of effort should be reduced. However, it will be necessary to review the content of the podcasts to avoid the examples appearing dated. Teaching staff also consider that questions used with the EVS technology could be improved in future.

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

Quality has arguably improved, the question is whether students see it this way. Some of the qualitative feedback from students suggests that they do not greatly value the use of lecture time to reinforce other materials (podcasts and text book). Rather they expect to be exposed to new material in lectures. Achieving a balance between these two will be a challenge for the future. Indirect costs for the class have been reduced only in the sense that the large lecture theatre is no longer required since the group is split in two. Since there is heavy demand on the large lecture theatre, presumably this is a desirable outcome.

5. Sustainability

Explain how current project activities will continue in the department. What measures are in place to ensure that activities are embedded? Who is responsible for ensuring sustainability?

There has been a change to the teaching team from previous years, however the new member of staff has already been in contact with the REAP team to investigate what support can be offered for his use of the EVS technology.

An application for funding was lodged with the HEA subject network for the creation of further podcasts to cover the second semester. Unfortunately, due to high volume and quality of bids this was not forthcoming. However the HEA have offered a smaller sum of money to conduct an indepth evaluation of the use of videopodcasts by the 2007/2008 student cohort, with a view to funding further podcasts in the following year.

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

A colleague has expressed an interest in using the EVS technologies for core classes in Accounting and Finance for the Hospitality and Tourism Industries in the second and third years.

7. Lessons learned

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

I would be able to answer this question more fully with access to the raw data from the student evaluation. From the report produced by REAP, both quantitative and qualitative results indicate that the EVS technologies made a very positive contribution to learning for the majority of students, but that there was a minority of students who considered them either intrusive or as a sort of 'dumbing down'. Podcasts also made a significant contribution for those who watched them, but technical difficulties unfortunately prevented many students from gaining access.

What changes contributed most to reducing costs?

Having videopodcasts in the bank will hopefully contribute to a reduction in the production of teaching materials for a few years.

What implementation issues were most important?

Serious IT problems were experienced with regard to accessing the podcasts from within the Strathclyde University campus. Delays in dealing with this issue on the part of IT Services unfortunately contributed to this implementation issue. Support from REAP with regard to use of the EVS technology was excellent.

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

It is important to ensure that IT Services are made aware of plans involving any sort of new technology. One should never assume that, just because something works at home or in another university, that it will work here!

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?

As stated above, it will be valuable to investigate in greater detail precisely how students use the podcasts and what effects they have on their learning. The presence of different segments of students within the cohort is also worthy of investigation. It appears clear that students have different needs and wants and a study of how these can be reconciled would be valuable.

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.

List any additional publicity your part of the project has received, e.g. press coverage, awards.

I am currently working on two different publications with members of REAP and CAPLE. I have agreed to give an LEN seminar at Strathclyde University in autumn 2007. Dissemination will also take place though the forthcoming HEA funded project.