



		University Department	Strathclyde	
		Module	Modern Languages	
		Module	French 1A	
		Overview	Language teaching is staff intensive and close to lab-based teaching. The first year course comprised 60 hours of tutorials and 12 hours of guided listening tasks. An exemption scheme was based on a few traditional class tests, written assignments and oral/aural work.	
		Drivers for change	<p>Material: reduction in staffing level made it too difficult to run the existing teaching and assessment procedures without a risk of loss of quality.</p> <p>Social: many students work and need more support, more flexibility of access, place and time to complete set tasks.</p> <p>Pedagogical: need to promote better adequacy between requirements specific to the topic and its teaching and assessment. i.e. the need for short and more frequent tasks to be completed to a high level before progressing to the next stage. Need for more students' involvement with the tasks and more interactivity.</p>	
		Intervention	<p>The aim of the intervention was to use the VLE / IT facilities to the full to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase students' satisfaction, autonomy and engagement with their learning by providing extensive information about and support for the course. - improve students' participation with the use of an electronic voting system while reducing the number of contact hours from two to one a week. - improve the efficiency and reliability of continuous assessment and exemption system through a range of compulsory, frequent and structured formative self-evaluation tests and summative class tests online. 	
			Activities	
PROCESS	EMPOWER-MENT	NICOL'S 7 PRINCIPLES OF GOOD ASSESSMENT DESIGN	Principle 1 (clarify criteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly structured self-assignments exercises with in-built feedback on WebCT which can be retaken by students as often as they want until they are satisfied with their progress. - PRS based lectures: students are actively engaged in the task, are given immediate feed back on their answers, and can assess their strength and weaknesses immediately.
			Principle 2 (self-assess, reflect)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher and peer dialogue is central to tutorials which remain the pivotal element of a language course. - The dialogue and feed back is helped by a better framework of support and preparation on line before the tutorials. - There is a close link between on-line listening tasks and tutor and peer feedback.
			Principle 3 (tutor feedback)	<p>As requested by the nature of the course, most of the class work is of a factual rather than an analytical nature, good performance largely means getting the right answer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PRS gives immediate feedback on the class response while encouraging students to discuss and finalise what the right answer should be - On-line exercises have in-built feedback in 2 forms : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The right answer: leaving students to spot their errors 2) An explanation of the main difficulty in the question
			Principle 4 (peer feedback)	<p>The scaffolding nature and cycle of the on-line assessment are geared to help students improve their performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supportive exercises on line: from home or campus, for autonomous practice, answers and feedback provided. Students can do them as often as they want, until satisfied that they are ready for the next stage of self-assessment tests. - Self- assessment tests: based on the supportive exercises. Completed from home or campus in their own time and based on the formative tests. No resubmission. Some are taken into account for the continuous assessment - Class tests: done on line under exam condition, on campus, they are based on all the previous tests. - Listening tests follow a slightly different pattern but allow students to resubmit. The number of possible resubmissions is reduced as the year progresses. 2 tests are done under exam conditions. - PRS lecture allows students to discuss and resubmit answers until the right answer is reached



ENGAGEMENT	GIBBS & SIMPSON'S 4 CONDITIONS OF TIME & EFFORT ON TASK	Principle 5 (motivation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students gain confidence by being able to compare their answers with the feedback provided - The unmarked formative exercises, the possibility to resubmit work, as well as the PRS lectures give students 'the right to get it wrong' particularly important in a subject where mistakes are unavoidable Students can support each other through the WebCT forum
		Principle 6 (close feedback loop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students gain understanding through receiving immediate feedback. - The focus on learning rather than marks should enhance students' motivation - Students undertake repeated cycles of learning activities through regular practice exercises, self-assessment and class tests that support the general level 1 assessments.
		Principle 7 (shape teaching)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PRS lectures give instant feedback to tutors as to the degree of understanding achieved by the whole class and they can act on it immediately. It also pinpoints exactly to the nature of the students' difficulties. - Frequent electronically marked self-evaluations on WebCT allow tutors to have an immediate overview of students' performance and then adapt their teaching accordingly.
		Condition 1 (in and out of class)	- In order to encourage students to devote enough time and effort to the tasks they found most difficult (listening tasks) they can retake the frequent tests as often as they want to achieve the best possible results. The formative aspects of the task (degree of understanding) taking precedence over its summative value (mark).
		Condition 2 (spread evenly)	- Interactive lectures, tutorial activities and on-line practice exercises with in-built feed back helps students to engage with the type of learning appropriate for the nature of the topic studied.
		Condition 3 (deep not surface)	- Interactive lectures, tutorial activities and on-line practice exercises with in-built feed back helps students to engage with the type of learning appropriate for the nature of the topic studied
		Condition 4 (high expectations)	- The use of WebCT allows for self-assessment with in-built feed back and model answers. Learning objectives can be clearly stated for each module.
OUTCOME	Efficiencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savings in terms of staff teaching time by - reducing tutorials from 48 to 24. - reducing the amount of traditionally marked tasks while increasing the number of tasks (electronically marked) undertaken by the students 	
	Informal Learning Gains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased engagement with the learning tasks. - Better class attendance. 	
	Formal Learning Gains	The failure rate in the final exam has been reduced in 2005/06 from 24% to 4.6% in 2006/07	