

Moving Forward Event – Wednesday 25th February 2009

Flipchart notes

Group 1

Induction/Transition issues –

- Being a professional is being a student
- Breaking down barriers – dialogue
- Making connections
- FE/HE articulation – tailored approach
 - Social factors/practical issues rather than academic
- Confidence
- Mentoring helpful
- Encourage student/student support
- Technology as social resource
- Learning and teaching themes
 - Role of technology
 - Assessment and feedback – formative and summative
 - Developing independent learning skills
 - Teaching approaches
 - Student engagement with programmes
- Communication plan
 - Online Community of Practice
 - Database of resources
 - Face to face – monthly/lunchtime/themed
 - Include student association
- Green post its
 - CoP – sharing of good/best practice.

- Discussion of challenges and best practice examples and support from the peer group
- CoP – colleagues with similar interest and different experiences – considering and offering opinion on new directions. Motivation: to better understand my own practice and help contribute to generic ‘good practice’
- Improved communication leading to exchange/sharing of ideas and good practice – improved quality of student experience
- Improving staff feedback to students – making it more effective and useful for them – less time consuming for us. Revising assessment strategy to make it more effective for us and them
- Change
- Chance to exchange and develop ideas in a safe and nurturing environment
- Information and sharing of good practice from different disciplines within and outside of the university
- New ideas for assessment/feedback (types, styles, forms, efficient, etc)
- To take back information and best practice to SWAP students in order to better prepare them in terms of study skills and independent learning
- Sharing ideas
- To develop practical ideas to change/enhance methods of learning and teaching. Sharing information/ideas
- Good ideas and taking forward – practical and simple implement. All change happens in modules?

GROUP 2

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (INDEPENDENT LEARNING)

- Need for a sense of belonging and identity with GCU for staff and students. Do both identify with their programmes rather than 'GCU'?
- What does 'Independent Learning' mean for students? The myth of 'being left alone to do it for yourself'. Others are fully aware of the meaning, but face pressures of work/family etc. competing with 'independent learning' time.
- Students should be equipped with a 'toolbox' of 'Independent Learning' skills (time mgt, prioritisation, finding and using resources etc). GCU should provide the toolbox but it is up to students to decide how to use it. 'Supported choices'
- Staff accessibility, levels of engagement and motivation (or lack of) can affect the learner experience and therefore the student levels of engagement. Needs to be balanced against workloads and shrinking resources for staff.
- 'Structured feedback' which highlights good and bad student work, and signposts to appropriate staff and services if needed.
- Do students see 'asking questions' as a deficit? How do we shift to enhancement model – 'asking questions is the job of a student – clever students ask questions'
- Do we make it difficult for students to ask questions (lack of accessibility to teaching staff – knowing which service is best for your issue)?
- '24/7 culture' means students learn at different times. Work being done at 1a.m. etc.

PEER SUPPORT/SOCIAL NETWORKS: FILPCHART NOTES

- Are some groups affected more than others?
- Away from home (homesick), International, Direct Entrants. Part Time Evening, Mature Students etc.
- Fostering a sense of community in GCU difficult – fragmented and diverse student body – 'Post 92' vs 'ancient uni' culture.
- Staff networks important too.
- Research needed on effectiveness of Peer Support/Networking
- Should students be paid or volunteer?
- Closer liaison with programmes to identify issues
- Peer support/mentoring group at GCU already established – interested parties invited
- Roll out peer support across GCU – who does this – resources – coordinated approach?

Group 3 – Independent Learner

The group initially focused in the idea of 'The Independent learner'

- The final speaker of the morning session had been a representative from the Students Association. He had raised an issue about the apparent tension between encouraging students to take control of their own learning and then taking attendance at classes, or insisting upon a certain level of attendance. The discussion raised specific issues such as how policies regarding levels of attendance were difficult to implement in programmes delivered cross school (example given was from CBS). One specific issue was the question "why is attendance poor?" This led to a discussion on quality of lectures and the value of lectures – should notes be distributed beforehand, or only after the lecture. One lecturer described his success with providing outlines in advance which allowed lectures to provide tangible 'added value', but the fact that the issue was raised demonstrates that some staff are unaware of the value of such simple practices, or that they do not work in all contexts. It was accepted that a key reason for poor attendance might be practical problems with students who are juggling family and work commitments alongside their study. There is therefore a need for more flexible provision of learning content – online, as podcasts etc. Of course developing independence in learners enables a more flexible approach to be adopted. Smart timetabling (avoiding having a student come in for a 9am lecture, and a 4pm lecture) is also an important consideration. At present the fine details of course programmes and timetabling probably reflect a need for efficiency rather than the specific content needs of a programme (market needs).
- The discussion then focused on what it means to be an independent level and the importance of conveying expectations to students from the outset – at induction. Students should be encouraged to engage immediately with the question – what do I want from my university experience. The morning talk from Irene Bonnar provided an example of how students can be encouraged to reflect on the relation of their learning to the profession they hope to join on conclusion of their studies. There was some discussion about how there were discipline specific issues – for instance in vocational courses, it is easier to draw the connection between what you are studying and what you will do when you leave, but it is more difficult in non-vocational programmes – "I'm studying fashion, why do I need to go to lectures on business?". But perhaps this merely reinforces the need for induction sessions which explicitly address these questions. The group debated how generic induction modules could be tailored to the needs of the individual school or programme but that a single generic induction module would not work.
- It was recognised that students come to the University at different stages on their personal development, but that the University experience as a whole should be designed to help them become more independent. The aim of first year in particular should be to scaffold the learners development by moving away from tasks which require descriptive activity to those which require a more analytical approach.

- There was a brief discussion of the role which alumni could play. Although hundreds of potential mentors and work placement opportunities have been identified, it has proved logistically difficult to match these to students needs.

Groups 4 and 8 – Small group discussion

- How can a PoP style module be applied in other schools?
 - Solution for non-vocational programmes. ** modules in psychology, history

- Use of PoP
 - Can this be embedded without lowering profile?
 - More generic employability
 - Beyond skills for employment
 - Development of choice
 - Becoming a GCU student

- Wikis
 - Time to assess and how it can be done
 - Control Moderation
 - Alternatives use by students
 - Staff time

- Vidcasts
 - Articulation issue – student experience

- Attendance at lectures

- Importance of groups/Tutorials

Group 5

- Wiki and weblog learning
- Wiki – project partner interaction
- Shared definition needed of Independent learning
- Space for individual self assessment, re. independent learning
- Remember power of current mobile phones
- Do we listen to students during induction?
- Share – I-learn framework with feeder colleges
- How to support 20% students who have no access to computers (should we buy)
- Make available to students more self assessment instruments to better understand themselves/learning styles and link to idea of independent learner
- Use dialogue with students to discuss what they are learning and how
- Know its different – but don't know how – key for developing topics for new induction – flexible delivery using comments – reflective from existing students
- Some sort of PoP module used for/as part of induction programme
- Vidcasts, enhancing study skills

Group 6 – Liaison with schools and colleges

Examples of Practice

- Encouraging students to take ownership
- Induction
- Sense of belonging to the university – Academic Registry
- Involvement of students family
- Virtual learning environments – making accessible for all
- Academic teaching styles
- E-Learning – healthy but as an additional tool
- Summer school
- Health and social cares involvement with second life

Liaison with Schools and Colleges

- Curriculum – matching – i.e. maths
- Cultural transitions
- Develop Info Literacy skills with schools/FE/HE
- Liaison with schools/colleges tends to be market driven
- Admission policies
- Distance between progression routes and articulation agreements
- Decision making

Group 7

- Schools/College visits
 - a. Leading to a long thin induction
 - b. Introduce students to group work and other issues
 - c. Integration
- College perspective
 - d. Motivation improves if universities visit the 'undecided'
- Mentoring students
 - e. View other students perspective as relevant
- Summer support of academic development

- **Today's talks**
- Vidcasts
 - Useful support
 - Identify key themes

Does this support/discourage attendance?

Attendance is part of ownership

Target support

- Belonging and becoming important concept
- Also applicable to college entrants
- Move from generic to embedded
- Place for both
- Vidcasts and other support – must be additional to and not a replacement

Group 9 – Enhanced communication

- Aims of Community of Practice
 - Clarifying relationships between comm. Common sources throughout GCU, acting 'locally', thinking globally (recognising the local, develop the global – brand). Linked to student lifecycle – what's happening when and by whom
 - Raising student and staff awareness of range of information, guidance and support
 - Social integration – developing relationships of students and of staff and students to develop community. Use of web 2.0 tech
 - Keeping relationships going on entry – follow up
 - 'warming them up and keeping them warm' – raising and meet expectations dealing with hope and disappointment
 - Communication with partners e.g. colleges – about all services GGAP
 - Need learner support representative on College Partnership Board
 - Membership
 - Learner support
 - Marketing and communications
 - Academic registry
 - Schools
 - Student's association
 - Information services
 - Meeting of representatives
 - Way international support uses social networking to support integration
1. Programme approval/re-approval process – how embedding outcomes of Moving Forward in their programmes. Quality office identify list of areas that need to be explored
 2. SLS – elements of all e.g.s
 3. PoP – BNE – clear identity
 4. Visions Sciences – very prescribed programme – no commonalities with Psychology. Pop approach would not work. Psychology Level 1 module – embedded PDP and develops independent lifelong learning skills. 'Employability and career development' in Semester B

5. Challenges of Learning and Teaching modules – work of programme based rather than module based programmes
6. Use of younger, more recent graduates to speak on Pop Module – relevance of 1st year topics to professional area/employability
7. Challenge of staff engagement in use of wikis and blogs. Fear of use of new technology amongst staff
8. International and other students, e.g. part time students, prefer fact to face approach rather than VLE/new technology
9. Blackboard does not support on-line discussions well or easily
10. Need to develop oral communication skills of students. VLE/new tech approaches should not replace face to face communication
11. Psychology – use of videocasts – interviewing researchers discussing their work and its relevance to psychology

Group - ~Induction

- Academic induction?
 - When does this start? – college/school
 - Demystify university life
 - Programme for students
 - Commence week (*minus*) 1?
 - Social integration
 - Dual deliver
 - Duplication necessary as opposed to unnecessary
 - Address all I needs required
 - Choice with support
 - Combine/compliment
 - Identify weaker students or students needs
 - Undisclosed problems affecting learner
1. Actions to improve – Transition and Progression
- a. Define induction
 - b. What types are there in the uni?
 - c. Induction mentors are key
 - d. Students delivering the messages/support
 - e. Smaller groups improves socialisation/communication
 - f. Students want one person to speak to
 - g. Early/earlier introduction required
 - h. Possibly going out to students prior to entry
 - i. Induction needs to be viewed as a continual process
 - j. Early induction allows classes to start when they think they should – no time wasted

- k. Identify the types and indentify intervention
 - l. Use of summer school
 - m. Resourcing priorities
 - n. Communication of best practice – how? Today – cops
 - o. Vidcasting
2. Community of practice for induction –
- a. ADTs, all programme organisers, HLTQs (key to delivery)
 - b. Regular meetings required
 - c. ‘preaching to the converted’ – how do you make consistent?