USC Commissioned Learning and Teaching Grant

Developing a Multi-Site Communication Model to Support Staff Communication and Engagement

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Project rationale and background

- **Expansion** of USC program offerings to multiple locations

- **Challenges** created:
  - engaging full-time and teaching staff at each location so they feel connected with colleagues at other locations
  - ensuring quality of content delivery across locations
  - ensuring consistency in assessment and moderation across locations

- **Potential negative outcomes** if challenges are inadequately managed
Project objectives

• **Ultimate aim:**
  – to develop a **multi-site communication model** for enhancing staff engagement and building staff capacity in multi-site delivery of undergraduate and postgraduate programs

• **Specific aims:**
  – evaluate most appropriate **communication technologies**;
  – build **staff capacity** in use of technologies for communication and collaboration;
  – develop a **good practice guide** incorporating a model for effective multi-site communication and engagement between staff.
Project approach

• **Phase 1:**
  – Investigating Current Technological and Staff Capacities

• **Phase 2:**
  – Trialling Pilot and Evaluate Chosen Technologies

• **Phase 3:**
  – Development and Dissemination of Good Practice Guide
Observations from semester 1 trials (Phase 1)

• Investigation of available technologies:
  – Blackboard Collaborate, Acano, Skype for Business
  – ACC221/ACC521 (Peter);
  – ACC311/ACC611 (Michelle);

• Very positive experience overall:
  – some technical issues
## Comparison of technologies

### Online Collaboration - Tool Comparison Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>Blackboard Collaborate Virtual Classroom</th>
<th>Acano Video Conferencing</th>
<th>Skype for Business Staff Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target audience</td>
<td>students</td>
<td>staff</td>
<td>staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available to students?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record session</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard annotation</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available in Blackboard courses</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text Chat</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile app</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upload and Share documents</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screen Share</td>
<td>Y (only in Chrome)</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Available on MyUSC:  
Semester 2 progress (Phase 2)

• **Evaluation** of use of technologies
  – large introductory level course (BUS106)
  – smaller advanced level course (IBS220)

• **Teaching team meetings:**
  • **Early:** intro to course, teaching approach and assessment;
  • **Mid:** student progress and attendance, assessment task 2;
  • **End:** student progress and attendance, final assessment task, course review

• phone interviews and online survey
Feedback on technology use so far

**Positives**
- Bb Collaborate mostly intuitive to use
- Far more positive team connectedness
- More inclusive seeing others
- Greater reassurance and direction for team
- More effective and engaging than emails
- Greater convenience and flexibility

**Negatives/Suggestions**
- Audio/video quality dependent on eg internet connection, gear etc
- Coordinating meeting times still an issue
- Availability of staff for training and meetings
- Need for technology hardware on campuses
- Does not replace face-to-face
What next???

• **Remainder of 2016:**
  – online survey of teaching team members
  – analysis of survey/interview results
  – initial planning for Good Practice Guide (GPG)

• **First half of 2017 (Phase 3):**
  – development and dissemination of GPG
  – conference presentation and journal publication/s
Questions/Comments???