To Create and Test Prototype Modules for Interdisciplinary Studies

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FINAL REPORT

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1. Introduction:

Following the Kings/Warwick 'Graduate Pledge' project, an interdisciplinary module on Faust developed with funding from The Reinvention Centre, and various transdisciplinary modules in English and Law, a proposal was made to the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) to launch a pilot suite of interdisciplinary modules. Following a successful bid for IATL strategic funding, WBS hosted the project with the aim of involving the widest range of departmental faculty and students.

The report describes four modules launched in academic year 2011/12, gives a detailed case study of one of them, Images of Creativity, and analyses and reviews the benefits and issues at an institutional level and the challenges and opportunities for both faculty and students for this new strategic development in teaching and learning. Following the conclusions a number of recommendations are offered.

2. The Proposal

The IATL fellowship allowed me time and resource to
- Identify and transfer learning
- Design a suite of new interdisciplinary modules
- Explore the design with students and faculty
- Support the final module designs (materials, lecturers and practitioners, delivery and assessments).

The project was generic for four draft modules for development and testing in Warwick Business School in Spring/Summer 2011.

This proposal was a detailed project to develop interdisciplinary teaching and learning across the University, building on from the Kings/Warwick 'Graduate Pledge' and the initial iteration of an interdisciplinary module, developed by Dr Paul Prescott and launched in the Department of English in 2010/11: The Faust Project (Interdisciplinary and Creative Collaboration)
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/modules/fulllist/special/interdisciplinaryandcreativecollaboration/ .

The project used the King's Warwick agreed definition of interdisciplinarity in teaching as:

> the encounter with knowledge sets, methodologies and skills from more that one established academic discipline combined with reflection on the relationships between the sets of knowledges, skills and methodologies explored.

The prototype modules would initially use WBS as a launch platform, collaborating closely with IATL, to develop four wide-reaching themes to attract students and staff from a range of other departments. The location within WBS offered the environment of a large department in terms of both research and teaching faculty, access to students on both WBS courses and those joint or linked with other departments and robust administrative and quality procedures. Student numbers for the modules were estimated at 100 in total with a cap of 250.

The project was planned for 2010/11 as small discrete events, aiming to develop, promote and test with 2nd year students modules which would be launched to the widest population of 3rd and 4th year students in 2011/12. Module approvals would proceed in parallel to the prototyping and testing, to coincide with administrative calendars and procedures.

The taster module sessions in the Spring and Summer terms 2011 would inform the target student audience, provide experience for academic colleagues interested in interdisciplinary learning approaches, including Open-space Learning, and allow action-researched evaluation and contributions from the student participants.

The project complemented the IATL project, Making Space for Interdisciplinarity, proposed by Professor Karen O'Brien in 2010 and continued by Dr Nicholas Monk, exploring University logistics and procedures, with the aim of IATL creating a generic 'docking bay' for any department wishing to launch a cross-faculty interdisciplinary module.

Anticipated outputs were:
- A report on the prospects for the modules in 2011/12, and lessons learnt from the action research.

- A detailed practical handbook for Faculty for interdisciplinary module planning and implementation across the University.

- An article in the Reinvention Journal from student participants in the module tasters and action research

- Conference papers

- Dissemination Workshops at Warwick

- A series of prototype modules to be used in 2011/12 and onwards should the project spark sufficient interest amongst students.

Outputs to date and forthcoming:
•   A report on the prospects for the modules in 2011/12, and lessons learnt from the action research: submitted to IATL November 2012.

•   An article in the Reinvention Journal from student participants in the module tasters and action research: Miloslav Cupik invited to develop a feedback paper for submission to the Journal.

•   Dissemination Workshops at Warwick: Interdisciplinarity and Images of Creativity. Window on Teaching, Teaching Grid, 2 and 9 May 2012 Part 1. For Creativity's Sake; Part 2. Critical Thinking
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/teachinggrid/exchange/recent_events/images ofcreativity/

Anticipated outcomes were:
- The 4 prototype modules would provide academics with detailed knowledge of undergraduate responses and demand and of contributions both to these specific modules for 2011/12 onwards and to future full interdisciplinary modules.

- The handbook and workshops for faculty would describe the praxis and processes for these type of modules.

- The students with positive experiences of the taster modules would form the cadre for the full modules in 2011/12, providing evidence of demand to departments and generate viral promotion to peers.

3. Actions

3.1. Module Creation and Approval

In the autumn of 2010 I scoped four modules which were presented to the WBS Undergraduate Committee in January 2011 together with a position paper which demonstrated how this initiative fitted into WBS's strategy (App. 1). The following module proposals were accepted by the Committee with minor emendations.

- Forms of Identity, led by Dr Nicholas Monk (IATL) IB3H30
- Styles of Coaching and Team Leadership, led by Ashley Roberts (WBS) IB3H40
- Images of Creativity, led by Grier Palmer (WBS) IB3H50
- Varieties of Decision-making, led by Professor Jonathan Tritter (WBS) IB3H60

3.2 Advertising and recruitment

Taster sessions were advertised in March 2011 for two modules to be taught in the Autumn Term (Identity and Creativity) and in May/June 2011 for the other two modules to be taught in Spring 2012 (Coaching and Team Leadership, Decision-making) directly to all 1st, 2nd and 3rd year students using the University's massmail system.

This was followed up in early September by emails to all departmental secretaries with notices for display about the modules and the registration procedures.

a) Forms of Identity (two taster sessions were offered on 16 March):
- 49 students signed up from 18 departments (Biological Sciences, Classics, Economics, Engineering, English, Film and TV Studies, French, History, Law, Maths, Philosophy, Physics, Politics, Psychology, Sociology, Statistics, Theatre Studies, WBS).
- 35 students attended the taster workshops,
- 15 expressed interest in signing up for the module.
- 13 students had registered by close of registration on 1 July, from 5 departments (Economics, Philosophy, Sociology, Statistics) of which 3 had attended the taster session (WBS 1, Philosophy 1, Sociology 1)

- 5 students from 5 departments (Philosophy, English, Sociology, Statistics, CLL) actually took the module which ran in Autumn Term 2011. WBS students withdrew just before the module began.

b) Styles of Coaching and Team Leadership (one taster session offered on 13 May)
- 29 students signed up from 14 departments (Sociology, Engineering, Philosophy, Biological Sciences, History, Economics, MORSE, Maths, History of Art, Psychology, Computer Science, WBS, PPE, Law) including two postgraduates.
- 33 students had registered by close of registration on 1 July, from 7 departments (WBS, Engineering, Statistics, Economics, Maths, Computer Science) of which 1 had signed up for the taster session (Sociology)
- 26 students actually took the module which ran in Spring Term 2012: 12 from WBS, 11 from joint degrees with Computer Science, Engineering, German, Law, Physics, and 3 students external to WBS: Engineering (1), Sociology (1), CLL (1).

c) Images of Creativity (one taster session offered on 17 May)
- 23 students signed up from 15 departments (Sociology, Theatre Studies, Maths, PPE, Biological Sciences, History, Economics, Statistics, French, PAIS, Film and Television, Engineering, Philosophy and Literature, Philosophy, Engineering).
- 8 students attended the taster workshop
- 23 students had registered by close of registration on 1 July, from 6 departments (Economics, Maths, English, WBS, Computer Science and Statistics) of which 1 (Engineering) had attended the taster session
- 21 students actually took the module which ran in Autumn Term 2011 (15 from WBS, 2 from joint degrees with Engineering and Law, and 4 students external to WBS: Life Sciences (1), Engineering (1), Philosophy (2).

d) Varieties of Decision-making (A short video, with the module leader and Grier Palmer, and text were posted on my.wbs, the Warwick Business School VLE, in June)
- 13 students from 10 departments (Economics, Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, English, Maths, PAIS, History of Art, Engineering, History) expressed interest after the first advertisement
- 21 students registered by 4 October from 8 departments (Physics, WBS, Economics, Computer Science, Statistics, Philosophy, Sociology, Law). 40% were from WBS. None of these had registered an earlier interest.
- 14 students actually took the module which ran in Spring Term 2012 (8 from WBS; 3 from joint degrees with Engineering and Law, and 4 students external to WBS: Maths (1), Economics (1), Law (1), Philosophy (1)

3.3 Feedback

3.3.1. Students
All WBS students are requested to complete a standard online feedback form for each of their modules. For detailed feedback back see Section 4.1-2 below and App. 4 for Images of Creativity.

3.3.2. Faculty

In April 2012, by which time all four modules had been taught, module leaders were asked to reflect on their experience. They were asked a number of questions including:

- What do you think about the structure and content of your module?
- Did student dynamics differ form a traditional module? In what way?
- How was your experience of collaborating with colleagues from outside their home department and with external guests?
- What changes would you make if you intend to teach the module again in 2012/13?

See Section 4.1 -2 below for responses.

4. Module Structure

A standard structure was created and then adapted for each module. The core design was that each week a subject specialist delivered 60 minutes of discipline-grounded material followed by 60 minutes in which students and the module leader developed a synthesis of the learning in an interdisciplinary style. The structure diverged from WBS practice by including a Reading Week (Week 6) to give students time to reflect, read and prepare presentations. Each module aimed to examine and illuminate the subject through a variety of approaches from different disciplines and in practice offering a practical and pluralistic appreciation of the subject relevant to all students in their personal and professional lives. Each module could be taken for 12 or 15 CAT points with assessments adjusted accordingly. All modules were taught outside WBS buildings in non-traditional, 'open' learning spaces (Humanities Studio, CAPITAL Studio, Teaching Grid).

Course materials were dealt with differently in each module. Creativity provided an annotated bibliography for students and staff as well as selected key texts for use in class via the Reading Week. Decision-making offered materials, online through my.wbs, specific to each class/speaker; Team Leadership and Coaching, which had the largest number of students, provided copies of key texts for each group as well as a bibliography; Forms of Identity provided a reading list.

Although three modules used Open-space learning techniques, the module teaching styles reflected the personality and style of the module leader : Creativity (Grier Palmer) offered a significant number of external speakers from the creative world (film- maker, designer, theatre practitioner) and a wide mix of disciplines; Coaching and Team Leadership (Ashley Roberts) was very practice-based and interactive; Varieties of Decision-making (Jonathan Tritter) was more traditionally didactic using a single evolving scenario to explore the different disciplinary ideas over the duration of the module; Forms of Identity (Nicholas Monk) used a variety of Open-space Learning techniques combined with sessions more akin to seminar discussions.

a. Forms of Identity

The module consisted of nine two-hour sessions plus two hours preparation in Week 10 for a creative and performance-based workshop which was formatively assessed. The teaching and learning approach was based on open-space learning and included reflection and discussion .

Assessment: essay and reflective journal

b. Styles of Coaching and Team Leadership
The module consisted of eight two-hour sessions plus a Reading Week plus two hours preparation for the group project. Across the module students, in groups, developed a short coaching project , focussing on designing and delivering coaching help to first year undergraduates. This helped to integrate and thread the weekly sessions and themes together. The project was presented in Week 10 as an assessed group assignment. .
Assessment: essay, group presentation, reflective piece.

c. Images of Creativity
The module consisted of eight two-hour sessions plus a reading Week, plus a two hour presentation for a group project. In Week 10 students' creative results were reviewed in an assessed presentation which formed the springboard for individual essay assignment and the completion of a reflective piece on the creative project as a learning experience.
Assessment: essay, group presentation and reflective piece.

d. Varieties of Decision-making
Each session began with a lecture of 50-70 minutes including 5-10 minutes of questions, followed by a 10 minute break. Normally there was a discussion of the lecture for 20 minutes and then 20-minute small group discussions of an evolving scenario relating to decision making. The final 5-10 minutes was a class discussion of the scenario
Assessment: Essay and reflective piece.

Assessment was offered for 12 and 15 CATS to accommodate varying tariffs in the home departments of the students. Assessment varied between modules to accommodate the content and pedagogic preferences of the module leaders (See App. 2 Module Proposals). Students had different experience of assessment depending on their home departments. A common requirement in the four modules was for student reflection, to emphasise and reinforce the connections between disciplines and to support the transition from knowledge-based to discursive methodologies which students can find challenging.

4.1 Student Feedback on Module Content and Delivery:

This information is drawn from feedback forms which all students taking WBS modules are expected to complete although it is not compulsory.

  1. How appropriate was the method of delivery (e.g. balance of lectures/seminars, group work, class participation, etc.)?

a. d. Identity

Student rating: 100% excellent

Response from module leader

- Overall I was very pleased with both structure and content. The model of discipline-specific presenter or the first hour, followed by a session with the module leaders

and students developing the ideas is workable. A disadvantage is that detailed preparation for activities in the second hour is difficult as the module leader has to work constantly on the hoof.

b. Team Leadership

Student rating: N/A

Response from module leader
- I personally thought this worked well – the students appreciated the inter-disciplinary content at the start and then the more practical focus towards the end of the course.

c. Creativity:

Student rating: 60% excellent

- Classes were really fun and exciting. Personally, it was a highlight of my week but creativity is such a broad subject and it was hard at times to consider how all the information presented was relevant or connected.
- While it was interesting seeing different perspectives on creativity, some speakers contributed more towards developing understanding. Perhaps a balance between guest speakers and tutor led sessions would help ensure key learning outcomes were met while creating a practical understanding of creativity

Response from module leader:

- Reflecting on the feedback and the teachers' experiences we should offer more guidance in the first two to three weeks on the learning approach that the course demands.
- We should help the students to use the Reading Week more and to work with group colleagues earlier for their Week 10 assessed presentation, to encourage the development of a group synthesis.
- We deliberately designed a wide range of subjects: culture, sociology, English, chemistry and accounting. Also the practitioners (with backgrounds in film-making, theatre and design) represented an eclectic mix, two with a commercial bent. Through the lectures and readings we introduced a large variety of academic models and concepts as well as creativity techniques. Was this mix and range too rich for one term and for students with a variety of learning experiences?

d. Decision-making

Student rating: N/A

Response from module leader
- Early in the module one student sent me a message in relation to one of the readings I had included saying that it was the most influential reading he has come across in the three years of his studies.

2. Based on your experience of the module, what do you think we should stop doing, what do you think we should start doing, and what do you think we should continue doing?

   a. Forms of Identity

   Student response:
   - Consider how to get students from a wider range of disciplines aware of, interested in and able to study the module. Workshop style of learning is great!

   - Continue having the seminar straight after the lecture.

   Response from Module Leader:
   - o The module has recruited significantly greater numbers this year than last from a wider range of departments. I put this down to the easier administrative arrangements now that the module is situated in IATL.

   b. Team Leadership

   Student response:
   - The way we learnt things through doing was great for forging proper memories of the content and the embodied meaning of the strengths and weaknesses of various coaching and learning styles.

   The variety of practitioners that were made available to us was incredible.

   Response from Module leader:
   - I would limit the guest speakers to 1.5 hours per slot so that there is more time for student group discussion.

   - The students appreciated the interdisciplinary content at the start and then the more practical focus towards the end of the course.

c. Creativity

Student response:
- Define the module better, continue to encourage interactive learning, work on structure of the module and continuity.
- Keep on allowing different lecturers' perspectives, keep on having the interactivity, keep challenging people to think outside the box. Maybe think about doing more of the module, or a module to look deeper into the sphere of creativity?
- It was incredibly enjoyable and engaging but it lacked focus.
- There needs to be clearer guidelines for the assessments and more preparation time.

Response from Module leader:
- Try to introduce more visual material and more case examples.
- Be consistent and persistent with the blog and aim to get other presenters contributing.
- Resist simplifying by narrowing the focus but recognise the need to explain better to students the benefits of a pluralistic approach.
- It's a neat idea to have a second more practice-based creativity module to allow for more time for practicing techniques and investigating creative organisations.

d. Decision-making

Student response:
- Continue doing: this module!!! I found it to be very interesting. It was the first time that I actively cooperated with students from other departments. It would be nice if this could be further expanded. Many students came from WBS or law which are kind of similar. I therefore found it be very interesting to work with two students from maths and philosophy/literature in my group. Having more exposure in that respect would be great!!!! I really enjoyed the subject as well as this is something out of the ordinary and found it be great to hear different lecturers from different departments. Furthermore, the small class and atmosphere in the Teaching Grid really created an excellent arena for discussions.

Response from Module leader
- I would try to be more direct with potential contributors. I will be more directive in the seminar aspect following the lectures.
- I am considering including a web-based discussion forum based on key points in each lecture and a series of questions and then opening it up to students for comments. I would not expect to moderate this discussion but rather have it as another mechanism for encouraging ongoing deliberation. The genesis of this idea is from one of the students.

4.2 Feedback: Assessment in relation to outcomes and Learning objectives

1. How useful were the assessments in terms of enhancing and evaluating your own learning:

a. Forms of Identity:

Student rating: 100% excellent

Response from Module leader:

- Assessing work from groups that are cross-faculty is a real challenge. One student in my group, for example, had never written an academic essay – or any other kind of discursive piece for marking. … The differences in expectations concerning assessed work are huge between departments and faculties, as are the differences between conventions. Unless academic support if provided to students taking these modules their (the module's) development will be undermined significantly.

b. Team Leadership:

Student rating: 66% excellent

- For me, I lacked guidance on this module. We were left to our own devices a lot of the time, which worked effectively at making us think but the essay question is so open ended, finding clarity amongst it all has been challenging. We had very few lecture notes and the notes I took from the lectures were not of great use to me as they were too case specific.
- The module was great over all however with regards to assessment the reflective piece should be given more of a word count and greater weighting, and consequently reducing the essay word count and weighting.

Response from Module Leader: None

c. Creativity:

Student rating: 80% above average, of which 40% excellent.

- It's a great module! I wish the assessment was a little more precise in its needs and not so open to interpretation. Otherwise great fun.

Response from Module Leader:

- I aim to make the advice and instructions for the assessed creative presentation clearer early in the module.

d. Varieties of Decision-making

Student rating : 50% excellent

Response from Module Leader:

- One of the assessments was a reflective diary and a majority of the submissions stated how much they valued the format, style and content of the module.

5. Administrative Processes

In order to reach effectively the maximum number of potential students for these modules Departmental Secretaries were asked in early September 2011 to respond to a number of questions about local administrative procedures:

- Do your students have the opportunity to register for optional modules outside the department?
- What CATS (Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme) weighting is required if they do?
- How are optional modules advertised to your students and when?
- How do your students register for optional modules?
- What is your deadline for optional module selection?
- What is the last date at which module selection is finalised?
  4 departments (English, History of Art, Engineering, History) responded of 22 canvassed.

5.1 External optional modules:
Departments often have no objection to their students taking external modules but do not advertise these opportunities (Engineering). Some departments will circulate information about external modules if they are supplied (English). Some departments allow optional modules only for certain years (History of Art Yr 2 only).

There were some issues about students overloading CATs above the requirements of their courses which discouraged the taking of additional modules. No cap is imposed at a cross-University level on the number of credits a student may attempt in any year, although no more than 150 credits taken in any year may count towards an undergraduate student's degree classification. Students' module choices are approved by their departments, and departments are not required to permit overloads; many do not.

5.2 CATS weighting:

The pilot modules were offered at 12 and 15 CATS. Some departments (e.g. History, Engineering (Yrs 1 and 2), History of Art) offer only 30 CATS modules which made it difficult for students to take ONE pilot module although there was no objection in principle to their taking TWO.

5.3 Advertising:

The common practice is to use direct departmental briefings (English, Engineering) in May/June and online descriptions (WBS, History of Art). The pilot modules were not represented at the departmental briefings. Advertising depended on direct contact with students for the taster sessions (which was effective) and then notices sent to departments (which produced variable and disappointing results).

5.4 Registration:

Departmental deadlines for collecting information may be earlier and some use a paper-based system for this preliminary stage (English) or for unusual options (Engineering). History of Art asks students interested in modules in other departments to register with those departments and to check with them that the selection is suitable. Some use an online system through their intranet (History of Art). Warwick Business School has its own registration system through its VLE my.wbs.

Deadlines for module selection can vary from early June to end of the summer term (July) with some changes allowed as late as week 2 of the Autumn Term (English and WBS).

The University uses an online Module Registration system (eVision Module Registration or eMR) to record most taught course students' module/CATS weight and assessment method choices. The eMR system is open from mid-September (two to three weeks before the beginning of the academic year) to the end of week 3 of Autumn Term (http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/examinations/emr/keydates/)

5.5 Remuneration for teachers:

In 2011/2 the pilot modules were supported by an IATL grant . The costs of speakers, external to the University, were covered from the grant as was the creation of bibliographies, etc. by WBS postgraduate tutors.
WBS calculates TAP for all staff contributing. Departments outside WBS were paid the equivalent of TAP hours for the contribution of their staff. The exception was Forms of Identity where Warwick colleagues (from History, Philosophy, German, WIE, WMS, Sociology) contributed pro bono and the module leader's time was covered by his home department, IATL.

5.6 Credits:

For these pilots there were no arrangements for WBS to receive any inter-departmental 'credit' for teaching UGs from other departments.

5.7 Future arrangements:

From 2012/13 IATL will coordinate new cross-faculty modules which might throw up administrative difficulties in organisation, accreditation etc. in order to remove some of the obstacles to academic colleagues to develop and launch interdisciplinary modules. Modules in existence or to be developed within a single faculty or department will continue to be hosted there.

A proposal to transfer the administration of the four pilot modules to IATL was discussed at WBS Steering in January 2012. The decision was to approve the transfer of IB3H30 Forms of Identity, as it was taught by a member of staff from outside WBS; and to retain the following led by WBS staff: IB3H40 Styles of Coaching and Team Leadership; IB3H50 Images of Creativity; IB3H60 Varieties of Decision-making.

WBS's decision to keep three of the modules in-house is a sign of its commitment to interdisciplinarity and to the success of the modules to date. All three modules leaders intend to teach their modules gain in 2012/13.

The modules have been offered for 2012/13 being advertised at the taster sessions for the IATL modules , via the IATL web page http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/iatl/modules and on my.wbs. To date 83 students have registered with 78% from WBS.

REGISTRATIONS for 2012/13 (JUNE 2012)

Forms of Identity (IL001): 25 Warwick students to be taught jointly with Monash University undergraduates in Spring 2013: WBS 1; Maths 1, Biological Sciences 1; Philosophy 2; History 2; American Studies 1; Law 1; PAIS 1; CLL 1; English 3; French 1; Physics 1; Film and TV 1; Life Sciences 1.

Styles of Coaching and Team Leadership (IB3H40): 28 students: WBS 24; German Studies 1; Maths 1.

Images of Creativity (IB3H50): 32 students: WBS 24; Philosophy 1; Economics 3; Physics 1; Statistics 2; CLL 2.

Varieties of Decision-making (IB3H60): 23 students: WBS 17; Maths 2; Statistics 3; Computer Science 1.

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6. Conclusions

6.1 Cross-faculty engagement

Only the Creativity modules utilised a significant number of staff from outside the University though all used colleagues from other departments and had students registering from across the University. Nevertheless the greatest take-up was from within WBS. This is likely to be due to:
- the use of my.wbs for registration
- the differing timetables for module registration across the University.

Forms of Identity, the only module not led by a WBS staff member, eventually recruited no WBS students

6.2 Pedagogical challenges

6.2.1 Learning

The scope and content of these modules recommended teaching strategies unfamiliar to many students taking part: group work, social construction, collaboration. In these pilot modules students were expected to be partners with faculty in constructing the meaning of their learning and they found this process exhilarating but challenging. Simple and reinforced explanation of the pathways to learning are required and more time for reflection and preparation are needed than for more traditional modules.

6.2.2. Assessment

Assessment of these modules aims to help students and staff and give feedback to staff on
- students' reflective development
- the groups' construction of learning
- creative engagement with the different disciplinary approaches and ideas
- independent synthesis to create an interdisciplinary perspective

The requirements of the assessments does necessarily not match the previous learning experience of the students in their respective departments and may require additional support for example in the writing of discursive essays, in presentation skills, and self-reflection.

6.3 There are multiple benefits for staff in Interdisciplinary teaching:

6.3.1 Teaching with a range of colleagues from other disciplines:

Feedback from module leaders:
- This has been one of the most interesting modules I have taught. My own knowledge and understanding has been stretched both by the excellent contributions from colleagues in other Departments and by the seriousness of the student interaction. The lectures were all interesting and the variety of styles added to the learning experience.

- In addition to my learning in an interdisciplinary environment which I thoroughly enjoyed I have generated many research leads through this module – both internally within the School (with WMS) and also with my external guests. I have invested a lot in building these relationships and they should be prosperous both for myself and the other party. I am also looking to taking to take my experience of this module to Monash (a University partner) to work with Grier with our Harvard links and to publish from the interdisciplinary content.

- The collaborative elements were the most enjoyable. Colleagues were interested, enthusiastic and committed.

6.3.2. Improving Student Dynamics

In all the modules the students were energised by the collaborative learning and the weekly variety of content. Being forced to articulate, share and compare their subject areas led to

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increased interdisciplinary understanding. For example see App. 3 for Case study of the interdisciplinary essay assessment in Images of Creativity.

Feedback from module leaders

- There was far more interaction and discussion. The small group work provided an opportunity in groups of students from different disciplines to engage in debate over a common issue. The questions asked of the lecturers were varied from very well informed to relatively uninformed. This meant that some questions were basic which I think was helpful. Much of the discussion also drew on personal experiences; decision making is both an academic area and an aspect of everyday life.
- There was far more interaction and discussion. The small group work provided an opportunity in groups of students from different disciplines to engage in debate over a common issue. … some questions were basic which I think was helpful. Much of the discussion also drew inn personal experiences…
- The varied nature of the material, and the fact that students were not fluent in the disciplines that were represented, generated a sense of experiment and adventure. It also meant that students were less afraid that their lack of knowledge would be exposed. This led to a sense, for the first time in my experience as a tutor, in which we all felt we were learning together. This, of course, had significant knock-on effect in terms of broader dynamics – things became very relaxed.

6.3.3. Increased staff satisfaction

Feedback (staff) :
- Overall the module has been the most rewarding module that I have had the pleasure of coaching. The students have been terrific, with them acknowledging the enlightening experiences that have borne out of the module; the visiting practitioners were excellent. … Due to the research that is to follow as a result of this creative module I can honestly say that the module perfectly fits my mantra of not only research-led teaching but teaching-led research.

6.4 Benefits to Students

> These modules have proved to be very popular and extremely well-received by the students, with each of the four modules earning glowing feedback from the first cohorts to take them.
> (Warwick Business School, Departmental Annual Course Review Report: UG Courses, 2011/12, p. 4)

6.4.1 Higher student confidence.

Being immersed in one of these interdisciplinary modules seems to have boosted students' personal and professional confidence, evidenced in their reflections, in the way that they relate to teachers, etc . This seems to stem from the total experience of a different way of learning, a interdisciplinary range of subjects and meeting students from a range of departments.

6.4.2 Enhanced student experience

A combination of a variety of subjects, teachers and styles with the methodology of Open-space learning and group work creates a vibrant student experience, memorable for the majority of participants, evidenced by the strong word-of mouth recommendations to fellow students, leading to a high number of early registrations in 2012/13.

6.5 Recruitment:

- That the number and range of students interested in interdisciplinary study is significant (especially in Philosophy).
- That locating modules in a single department with a non-standard registration procedure discourages registration by students from other departments and faculties.
- That communication with potential students is key and that current departmental structures do not facilitate a flow of information to students about optional modules offered outside the department
- That taster sessions do not convert general interest into registrations.
- That final decisions about optional module selection are not made by students until the last minute and as late as the second week of the Autumn Term which hinders planning and delivery.

7. Recommendations:

7.1 That in future teaching credits should be allocated to individuals in their departments for leading, teaching and assessing these modules, e.g. in WBS TAP hours.

7.2 That resources be made available to support interdisciplinary modules at either University, Faculty and/or departmental level:
- The costs of speakers i.e. practitioners external to the University
- Administrative resource to promote modules effectively across the University, e.g. in WBS either within subject Groups or centrally through Working Capital.

7.3 That seed-funding be provided for academic time to design and recruit colleagues across the University to develop new interdisciplinary modules, e.g. via IATL grant streams or, in WBS, via Working Capital.

7.4 That interdisciplinary modules be promoted strongly to ensure a good mix of students for the benefit of the students taking part, so that not only the content but the group learning experience is fully interdisciplinary.

7.5 That departments be requested proactively to encourage their students to consider the interdisciplinary modules available as optional modules/electives: and to be aware of any possible departmental obstacles to their registration, e.g. variable CAT weightings, reading weeks.

7.6 That the benefits of standardising procedures for students to register for optional modules and for ring-fencing an interdisciplinary slot in all undergraduate timetables should be recommended to the University Teaching Quality and WBS Programme Quality.

7.7 That departments should consider the possible benefits of different models of assessment used elsewhere.

7.8 That the University should offer study skills specifically to introduce students to different learning approaches and requirements encountered in interdisciplinary modules.

7.9 That interdisciplinary modules offer an opportunity to take advantage of student-led teaching options, for example Open-space learning, Student as Researcher, experiential and group-based learning.

7.10 That module leaders should lead in facilitating student interdisciplinary learning across the different subject inputs, e.g. by post-session blogging.

7.11 That continuing modules should be subjected to operational fine-tuning post pilot.