Implementation plan

Provider name/consortia members	Bournville College Reduce marking time 66% improve student grades by 11/2 and improve retention
Project title	**Improving achievement and independence, while reducing teacher marking time.**
Project summary	This project aimed to develop and deliver an effective induction and study skills program, building on the concepts of accelerated learning, assessment for learning and learning to learn. The learners develop the skills of a successful independent learner, identifying their current understanding and setting effective, smart targets to improve achievement. The project took the form of a holistic approach to inducting students, involving teaching of study skills, the development of effective independent learning plans (ILPs) and tutorial support program in the form of workshops - a number of activities that are usually planned independently of each other. This was demonstrated by a workshop programme incorporating, learning to learn and effective feedback. The programme delivered a demonstrable savings of £*4500 as had been intended at the offset of the project*.
What were the aims of the project?	Improve achievement of first year level 3 students, improving pass rates by 10%. Increased independence of first year level 3 students. Reduce marking time for tutors by 10%.
What did you do?	The induction and study skills program was trialled with two groups of first year level 3 science students. Achievements of this project were rolled out to two AS tutor groups in a first instance and then shared amongst the science department and then the sciences faculty. The next step will be dissemination to the wider college and then to the network of schools and colleges - SWAN. Personal tutors for the first year students were selected with a view that they would work closely together and with the curriculum team, so that the tutors would be aware of the students' work. Tutors met for an hour every week to track and discuss student progress and determine the structure of the next tutorial and workshop session. Early work with the students included identification of learning styles (and how this information is used to help revise and achieve); an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (with linked SMART targets) and determination of long-term goals, to construct relevant targets. Students used and helped to develop their Individual Learning Plans (ILP) recording learning styles, goals and target grades, results and targets for achievement. One of the tutors was linked directly with the delivery of the teaching, as well as co-ordinating the delivery and developing the structure of the first semester. Delivery of units was changed so that all students worked on units shared between tutors in short periods of time (e.g. all tutors taught the scientific project unit, unit 3, over a period of 4 weeks). Previously each tutor would independently teach one unit over a period of 18 weeks (e.g. one tutor would have taught unit 3, for 3 hours a week, for 18 weeks).

| | Assignment briefs for students were re-written to focus on clear task instructions, making as clear as possible what has/not been achieved and space for feedback. Modifications included removing "teaching" content from task instructions, limiting them to an identification of what needs to be achieved. A hand-in check list was included at the end of the assignment.

CPD was delivered to staff focusing on feedback; reference was made to Hattie's effect sizes and Assessment for Learning. Key points were Praise, remediation feedback (phrasing remediation as tasks to complete as opposed to summative comments) and a clear demarcation between feedback on the front sheet and highlighting of good/bad practice within the assignment (see "pink and green"). Subject tutors increased the quantity/quality of feedback that was given on first submission, focusing on what the student should modify to improve learning and achieve. |
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| What did the project cost, including LSIS funding? | The project cost LSIS 1/hr a week teaching time for two members of staff. This equated to £2049.12. In addition to this, staff contact time contributed to the development of the project, totalling 16 hours a week (equivalent to £16,394.96). |
| Impact including What were the savings and benefits? How did you calculate them? | Time taken to mark re-submissions decreased dramatically from 2012 , **typically down by 66%,** more if the student did not need to resubmit (students who achieved on the first submission will reduce marking time but this factor cannot be linked to the feedback of first submission, it is discussed later in this section).

For a group of 18 students this would mean that the first assignment total marking time dropped from **18 hours to 12 hours, saving £171**. This saving, applied to the first seven assignments, for two groups of students, totals a saving of **£2392.**

For the last five assignments, there were further time savings on tutor marking time as on resubmission as the students/tutors had developed a clearer understanding of how to phrase feedback and what to do in response to it. First marking time was the same as last year, but typically resubmissions would take no longer than 10 minutes per student, totalling a saving of £1708.

As a positive result of the project the improvement in assignment briefs and tutorial instruction linked to learning and achieving on the course helped students achieve more criteria on first submission.

This may explain why the time required to give feedback on first submissions decreased as the semester progressed. In some cases students achieved all criteria on first submission, meaning that even less time was needed for marking second submissions. Across the different assignments this totalled approximately 3 hours marking time, or £85.

Furthermore, many students found themselves making only minor corrections for a resubmission, which did save tutor time on marking, this time saving is in the area of 2-5 minutes of the 10 minute second submission marking, while this data is difficult to quantify due to the lack of accuracy at this level a 2 minute saving across half the year group equates to approximately 30 minutes, or £14, which would be £227 over eight units. |

More importantly, with students achieving more criteria on the first submission, they had more time to focus on and achieve the corrections they needed to do. They also had time freed up to make a better first attempt on any new work they had, forming an upward spiral of achievement. Achievement will also have been influenced by units being shared between tutors, which resulted in less assignments due in at the same time (though the same number of topics were covered as last year). Tutorial input, with ILP and learning to learn methods will also have contributed.

Last year, with a cohort of 28 students:
- 19 (68%) had not passed unit 3 on second attempt;
- 19 (68%) had not passed unit 5 on second attempt, 2 students were working to merit level and 5 at distinction;
- 12 (43%) had not passed unit 1 on second attempt, 2 achieved a distinction.

This year, with a cohort of 28 students:
- 9 (32%) had not passed unit 3 on second attempt, 2 students achieved merit and 10 a distinction.
- 8 (29%) had not passed unit 5 on second attempt, 7 students achieved a merit and 8 a distinction.
- 6 (21%) had not passed unit 1 on second attempt, 7 achieved merit and 4 achieved distinction.
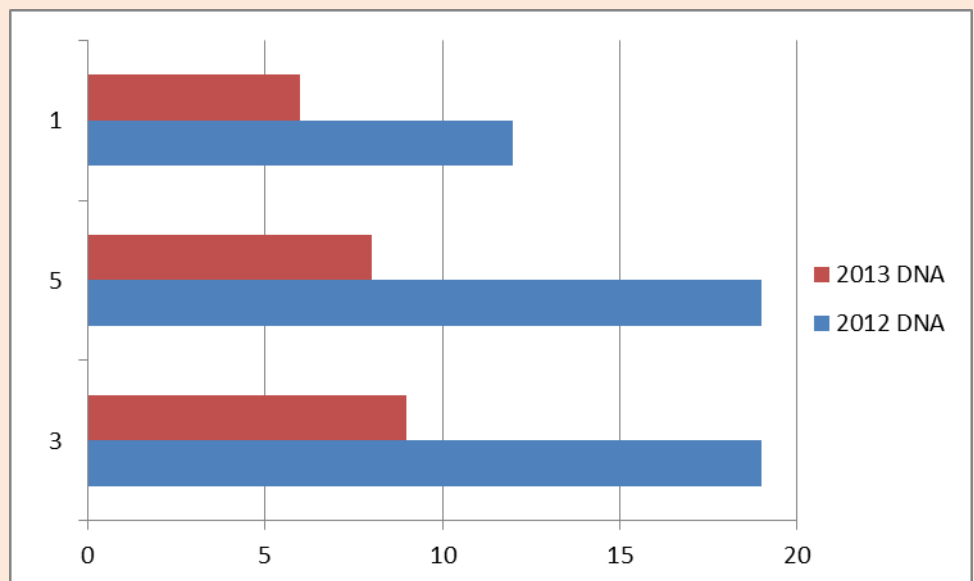
This Figure shows the number of students **who did not achieve/complete units 1, 3 or 5 in the first semester**. 2013 is the current cohort (investigated), 2012 is previous year.
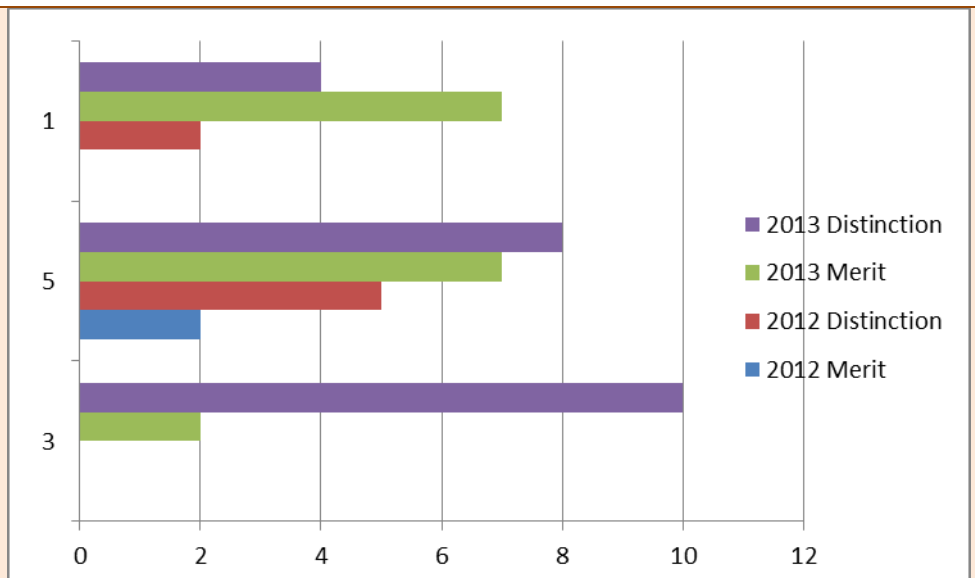
This Figure shows the number of students who achieved Merits and Distinctions (indicated seperately) in units 1, 3 or 5 in the first semester. 2013 is the current cohort, 2012 is previous year.

Over three units this totalled an improvement of 14 merits and 15 distinctions, which is 440 credits, an average of 15 credits per student. Projected across the year this would be a change in 45 credits per student, or one and a half grade boundaries.

This year no students abandoned the course in the first semester. This compares with two students who abandoned in 2012. This would equate to an increase in generated income of approximately £4,100 compared with last year. The effect on success rates can only be quantified at the end of the year, though the improved achievement of the cohort does not suggest an issue.

The delivery of these units was planned by the same tutor that taught last year, with similar assignments and tasks; however two changes were made to the student experience (beyond the project) which may have affected feedback time and acheivement:
- A feedback policy highlighting "green is great" and "pink means think". As part of this policy good work is highlighted in green, while issues that need to be addressed (including use of language and math) are highlighted in pink. While the assessor can use their professional discretion to give further guidance, the onus is on the student determining the issue and the process required to correct it. This will have affected marking time (but not written feedback time) and the development of students as independent learners.
- The introduction of a 90-Credit Level 3 qualification, similar to an AS year. This meant that students were told that they had to achieve a Merit overall for this year to progress to the second year, where previously students would progress to the second year as long as they had completed all units. This higher requirement will have been a more immediate motivator for students, which may have had a positive effect on achievement.

What were the benefits of the project?	Improved student achievement by 0.75 grade boundaries on average in the first semester, with a projection of 1.5 over the year. Retention has improved by two students. Improved student learning skills, with students able to use feedback to improve grades (higher achievement) without the need of tutor input beyond assignment feedback. Students are also better able to manage workload and deadlines. Reduced staff marking time, reducing marking time by 66%.
What were the lessons learned?	Increased/improved feedback improves achievement and reduces marking time in the long run. Additional input at the start of the year in planning/delivering tutorials and preparing the students pays off in achievement and marking time.
What tips do you have for other providers? How will you share the learning with others?	Invest the time in planning teaching the year prior and invest the time in a good induction, focusing on learning skills and behaviour of successful students. You will save time and payback will be measurable within the first three months. You need to implement this with the students from the start and they need to buy-in (as do staff!). At the start of the year students know no better and will accept that this is the way it always is. Half way through the course they will be reluctant to change. Tutor choice is very important, they need to be able to see "the big picture", work closely together and buy-in to the process. Once staff buy-in to the process it is easy to be "transparent" with the students and explain to them why they are doing the activities. Once they understand why and can measure the effect themselves they buy in rapidly (e.g. when targeting with an AS Physics group we used Hattie's Table of Effect to help identify the best changes students could make, the following lesson, students who would previously have been reluctant to peer teach chose to do so, because they understood the learning gains they would make). Student buy-in can be increased by allowing them to help develop the process. We had two groups of engineers who re-drafted the target sheets they use in lesson, this was then emulated by an AS group and a BTEC group. At this point the students are taking the lead on how they do target setting. Starting small scale (two personal tutors and three other teaching staff) allows for more, close, control of the project. This can then be disseminated within the department (e.g. in team meetings). Our next step was dissemination to the wider college through a management training session, comprising 25 Curriculum Managers, Assist Curriculum Managers and Program Area Directors. This was two days prior to completion of this report, so it is hard to comment further than to say that feedback from the audience was positive. A sample of the

	feedback is: **WHAT WAS THE IMPACT OF THE ACTIVITY?** Positive as it encourages continuous learning. We will implement this into our induction process. **REFLECTIVE ACCOUNT** Will feedback to team and roll out to learners. Must get them on board. Could lead to developing learners 'employability skills. Will disseminate to team and use with tutor group asap to get into place and part of their thinking and culture as soon as possible. Our next step will be to disseminate to our local college and school network, SWAN. If students can benefit from these effects earlier in their educational career, this will hopefully increase the number of eligible applicants to our courses and the number of successful students on our course.
Further information and key resources	Evidence Based Learning – Petty Visible Learning for Teachers – Hattie Assessment for Learning – Black and Wiliam Learning to Learn Pocketbook – Barwood and Hailstone The Lazy Teacher's Handbook – Smith and Gilbert
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