PTAS Project Report   (for SMALL PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title: Exploring the relationship between Learning Technologists and teaching staff a year on from the initial shift to hybrid and online teaching

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Grant recipients are expected to submit a brief report at the conclusion of their project which outlines briefly the following : nature of work completed; outcomes; benefits to student learning/student experience; dissemination activity (where relevant – actual and planned) and how the activity could inform future work or be transferred to other subject areas in the University. The brief report will be published on the IAD web pages.

Brief Report (maximum 500 words)

This project set out to explore and better understand the relationship between digital education colleagues and teaching staff working with learning technologies in CMVM, and whether the challenges we have faced in recent years may have changed this.

Collecting information from digital education staff allowed us to explore their views from to understand if they had any pre-expectations of the 2020/21 academic year, together with the views from teaching staff who have been supported by digital education colleagues. Through a survey sent to colleagues whom we have supported and collaborated with we set out to learn what existing relationships looked like, how these may have evolved together with any new emerging relationships with the purpose to better what can be done to further improve a relationship that supports the continual development of our portfolio of programmes and student experiences.

What did you do?
We liaised with a small number of academic colleagues who helped the project lead to better formulate the questions we wanted to answer. This helped us to understand what we were wanting to gather from this activity. These conversations helped to change the approach and type of questions we had initially prepared to ask staff. We moved to use a single survey and remove the semi-structured interviews that we initially planned.

After gaining MedEthics approval a survey (managed on Bristol Online Surveys) with the following questions was sent to all staff that digital education colleagues had identified as being teaching staff they support/collaborate with. We had 50 responses, which was a 57% response rate.

Question set
- *When academic colleagues work with LTs and the nature of the engagement*
- *Content and course development*
- *Learning design*

- *Delivering training*
- *Coordination of teaching/tech*
- *Support activities*
- *Researching new things*

Questions for academic colleagues

1. Where are you based? (List Schools/Deaneries)
2. Which teaching spaces do you work in? (UG, PGT, PGR, On-campus, Online, Public engagement, Other – select all that apply)
3. Which of the following are you involved in? pre-clinical teaching, clinical teaching, non-clinical research (tick as appropriate)
4. How would you primarily describe your role? teacher, clinician, researcher (tick as appropriate)
5. I am comfortable in using learning technologies for teaching activities. Yes/No
6. How often do you work with learning technology colleagues? ('Monthly', 'Couple of times per semester', 'Once per semester', 'Couple of times per year', 'Annually', 'Never')
7. At what point(s) during your teaching or project work would you expect to engage with learning technology colleagues?
8. How best describes this engagement? Select all that apply. a) a problem-based activity b) task-based c) pre planned collaboration, d) other.
    8.1. Please add any further details here.
9. Read the following statements and select all that apply to you:
    9.1. I have access to learning technology colleagues
    9.2. I am well supported by learning technology colleagues
    9.3. My engagement with learning technology colleagues changed during the 20/21 academic year.
        9.3.1. This change involved an increase in volume of time spent working with learning technology colleagues
        9.3.2. This change involved different activities than in previous years
            9.3.2.1. If you selected this, what was different?
        9.3.3. These changes have continued in to 21/22.
10. Learning technology colleagues assist me with the following activities: (select all that apply)
    10.1. Educational and course design
    10.2. Learning resources development
    10.3. Improving my digital skills
    10.4. Reactive technology support
    10.5. Supporting online teaching activities
    10.6. Supporting campus teaching activities
    10.7. Other [please add detail]

11. What would you like to see in continued relationships between learning technology and academic colleagues?
12. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about this relationship?

Questions for learning technology staff (LTs, DEU etc.)
1. Where are you based? (List Schools/Deaneries)

2. Which best describes the spaces you work with? (UG, PGT, PGR, On-campus, Online, Public engagement, Other – select all that apply)
3. How would you describe your current role? *(multi-option answer – based on Beetham et al. role analysis)* (Learning technologist, academic developer, educational researcher, technical researcher, technical developer, content developer, project manager, team manager, other)
4. Number of year's experience in learning technology role(s): Under 2 years, 2-8years, 8 years +
5. Rank the following activities in order of time spent on each activity as part of your role during the academic year?
    a. *Developing new learning resources*
    b. *Course development and setup*
    c. *Learning design*
    d. *Delivering training*
    e. *Coordination of teaching/tech*
    f. *Support activities (for example uploading of content, content access issues)*
    g. *Keeping abreast of new developments*
    h. *Team management*
6. What other functions are included in your role?
7. Has the nature of engagement with academic colleagues changed as a result of the 20/21 academic year? Yes/No
    a. If Yes, what was changed?
8. What would you like to see in the continued relationship between learning technology/digital education and academic colleagues?

What did you find out?
The data is allowing us to understand how academic colleagues work with digital education colleagues and *when* they would consider working with them, or calling on them. One of the themes that came out strongly in terms of continuing the relationship is to continue and in some places increase ways to collaborate.

Having digital education colleagues collaborate on learning and teaching initiatives and/or alongside teaching activities from as early as possible has been evidenced from the responses as having a benefit in terms of additional expertise, experiences and supportive ethos to continue to provide the level of teaching we aspire to.

How did you disseminate your findings?
Results from the survey have been shared amongst the digital education units and related teams in CMVM. From and external perspective we are exploring whether this can be disseminated in the form of a poster or on-demand presentation at a future learning technology conference.

What have been the benefits to student learning?
The focus of this project to explore the staff relationship between faculty and professional service colleagues who combine to support programmes at CMVM. The output and space the project has carved out will allow colleagues to continually consider how they work together in order to better the student experience we provide.

How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?

This was very much focused around the CMVM environment, for whom there are three digital education units supporting three different areas of the College. In terms of extending this piece to other parts of the University, a recommendation would be for digital education colleagues in other parts of the University to discuss the approach that was taken and to have access to the question set that was used, to be reviewed and adjusted for their own areas. This is due to the variation of services that could be offered by digital education colleagues across the University.

Before submitting the initial project proposal a suggestion was made to open this up to a wider group, but we felt given the differences in setup (and even names of roles in our own college) an approach for CMVM would yield more meaningful data.

Who can be contacted for further details?
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