Improving student learning through departmental student feedback self-studies

Possible Action Plan (F) for a Participating Department

Desired Outcome

One or more pairs of tutors, in different disciplines, wish to find out what critical features or incidents in tuition are deemed by their students to contribute most to significant learning

Method

1. Each member of the pair arranges with two willing students that they will be contacted by the other (the enquirer), following a teaching and learning activity, of whatever form. The students are forewarned that they will be asked for up to two or three instances of significant learning or development which arose for them during the session, and to describe what it was in the programme or the efforts of the tutor which contributed to this meaningful learning.

2. Tutor A conducts the session in the normal manner, and afterwards notes her or his own impression of the main learning points and the tuition which occasioned them.

3. Tutor B, the enquirer, contacts students (by phone if they are distance learners) to ask the declared questions, only asking further questions for clarification or expansion of the answers given. The enquirer asks students if they mind their answers being reported back.

4. Tutor B contact tutor A, asks tutor A to declare her or his list of learning points and efforts to bring them about, and then reports the feedback from the students.

5. If the mismatches are noteworthy, tutor A may wish to consult some or all of the other students in the group, to find out how typical the first feedback has been.

6. Tutor A decides privately, if preferred, what is of importance in this feedback and what action if any to take.

7. As soon as possible after these events, tutors A and B reverse roles. If more than two pairings are involved, then it will be useful for pairings to change, and for a joint tutors' plenary to be held discuss outcomes, after perhaps 2-3 enquiries per tutor.

Action intended

- Confirmation of effective practice
- Mismatches
- Identification of unexpected outcomes
- Dissemination of good practice

Analysis of Feedback

1. The tutor who was responsible for the tuition will categorise the items of feedback under each of the three heading listed above – with perhaps a further heading reserved for items which cannot thus be classified.

2. Confirmation of effective practice should not be modestly shrugged off, but noted for future planning.

3. Mismatches between the tutor's expectations and reading of the situation, and the feedback from the students, will be thoroughly explored, to influence future planning and delivery

4. Unexpected outcomes will be explored with the current class group, to enhance learning if that seems needed, and to influence future planning and delivery.

5. When the pair or pairs of tutors involved join together in a discursive plenary, they will each expect to identify examples of good practice which individuals will wish to pillage for their own practice, or have already done so.