

The 4th HKUST Teaching & Learning Symposium 2011
Notes of Group Discussion Session

Group : Capstone Project
Session : PM (2:30 pm – 3:15 pm)
Chairperson : Prof Robert WRIGTH (PolyU)
Note-taker : Mr Buck NG (VTC)

1. Recap of the morning discussion and the challenges identified (5 minutes)

- activities used
- assessment
- implementing of Inquiry-based Learning (IBL)

2. Possible solutions: Based on the sharing done by faculty & students on “Strategies for Engaging Students in Research and Inquiry” in the afternoon session, further produce possible solutions for the identified challenges.

20 minutes

Challenges

- In a normal course, the inquiry based learning (IBL) courses are not included
- Lack of marketing or promotion strategies to attract more students
- How to get students motivated about the inquiry-based learning?
- How to sustain IBL courses?
- Funding, e.g. the International Genetically Engineered Machine Competition (iGEM) is not funded this year
- Lab facilitates or appropriate spaces needed (learning spaces)
- Students found the followings challenging: time management, communications, working with team members, in other words, “soft skills”
- Students are overloaded
- Lessons are mainly conducted in classrooms which may be focusing mainly on theories and textbook contents
- There are a lot of good practices discussed. Some are included in the curriculum but some are not.

Solution

- University's commitment is important. It is necessary to have a strategy to coordinate the IBL at the university level
- We need flexibility to allow students to take them as part of the electives
- Bring it into the curriculum and give higher credits as incentives for students
- From student's point of view, they need some kinds of recognitions, not necessary to be credit bearing. Just a few credits and no need to be 10 credits or so
- May change independent study to design competition
- Manage students' workload and enhance their time management skills etc.

3. Future Actions: Identify future actions for moving forward. How should we take the undergraduate research and inquiry agenda forward?

15 minutes

- If inquiry based learning courses are important, it should be made at the University level
- University needs to define a clear direction
- Faculties to share at departmental level
- Bring in students and discuss together on what are the solutions and what could be done
- Take stock of the current state and involve students during the process so that we know where we are
- Make it credit bearing so that may reduce their workload on other subjects
- Start from the beginning of learning and include that in student orientation as well
- Student's opinions are important

4. Wrap up

Nil recorded