

Learning and Skills Research Network Conference 25th November 2010

Usage of Skype technology to improve
dissertation and project supervision;
A case study with policy recommendations.



Introduction

This presentation looks at:

- ❑ Problems involved in Dissertation/Final Projects
- ❑ Postgraduate focus
- ❑ Supervision techniques
- ❑ Methodology of research
- ❑ Results from Research
- ❑ Policy Recommendations
- ❑ Conclusion/next steps- social network usage



Problems involved in Dissertation/Final Projects

- Jan-Mar/Apr Research Approaches module
- Apr-Aug Dissertation/Final Project
- Annual holiday for academics-July-August
- Usage of GTA's for supervision

Postgraduate focus

- ❑ Final year undergrad and Masters international students 'leave unofficially' Mar/Apr
- ❑ Need for research in home country
- ❑ Costs of accommodation/living in UK Apr-August
- ❑ Lack of meetings for supervision in this time period
- ❑ Lack of opportunities to work since 'credit crunch'



Supervision techniques

- Face to face
- Email
- Telephone
- Skype



Methodology of research

- Interviews with 10 of twelve students at Masters Level at School of Business, UOE
- Interview with Postgraduate administrator
- Interview with Director for Postgraduate programmes and students
- Questionnaires to HEI's on dissertation and final project supervision and timetable (in progress)



Results from Research

- ❑ Low cost/free means supervisees have no additional costs
- ❑ Also facilitates supervisors in working from home
- ❑ Low costs allows more flexibility in scheduling meetings
- ❑ Increase in access of students to supervisor
- ❑ Allows for stringer support of students with difficulties at differing stages of researching/writing
- ❑ A certain 'novelty' factor
- ❑ Addresses issues of attendance at HEI and consequent student costs
- ❑ Enables research in home country
- ❑ For UK based simply reduces transport costs/time/stress
- ❑ May 'free up' academics during holiday period
- ❑ Enables usage of non-full time academics
- ❑ Reduces reliance on GTA's
- ❑ Supervisee's appreciate academic and not GTA support

Policy Recommendations

- ❑ Skype should be more widely used for student supervision in dissertation/final project
- ❑ Skype usage for double marking/exam boards
- ❑ Further usage at earlier stages in course
- ❑ For part time students (Birkbeck-case) enables flexibility in supervision throughout course
- ❑ Online study options enlarged



Conclusion/Next steps

- Skype for research interviews
- Social Networks-usage of blogs for student questionnaires



Questions and Answers
