Increasing Retention Through Innovative ICT Platforms

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- 5 Schools across 4 campuses
  - Social Sciences
  - Communication, Culture, and Languages
  - Psychology
  - Education
  - Human Movement, Recreation and Performance

- 2200 commencing students in semester 1, 2008
Attrition

Krause (2004) found that VU students

• have a lower academic orientation
• have relatively high levels of dissatisfaction with course and unit choices
  • are less ready to choose a university course on leaving school
  • are given lower levels of help and advice from both family and friends and support staff (eg at secondary school level)
• have high levels of engagement in full time work
• have little or no financial support or savings
• experience significantly greater problems with daily travel

• Retention rate - 2006 undergraduates: 77%
Retention initiatives

Krause (2004) also found higher levels of ICT use among VU students
• eg use of e-mail to contact staff, sms messaging

A number of retention initiatives developed for start of semester 1, 2008
• An interactive game, SCOOT, at ‘O’ Day
• USB ‘Toolbox’
• First Class Talk website
• and Transition Coordinator
SCOOT - Orientation Day Semester 1, 2008

- An interactive hybrid game adapted for our purposes by designer Deb Polson from QUT and Newishmedia
- Feral ‘carnies’ are attempting to take over VU – the mission of the students is to save their campus by finding 5 consoles or ‘carnival boxes’ hidden at various locations on campus (Library, Faculty Office, computer labs etc)
- Played in teams of 4
- Clues received via sms
- Tasks at each console
- Prize: iPod to each member of winning team

Aims

- Social networking: designed to allow students to meet and forge relationships with their peers
- Familiarise themselves with key buildings on their campus
USB ‘Toolbox’

- 1 gig USB given to all commencing AEHD students at enrolment
- designed by AEHD project officer
- direct links to key pages on VU website
- free downloadable software and on-line resources
First Class Talk

- first class talk website – developed by Multimedia students in December 2007; a ‘work in progress’
  - Info on course coordinators
  - Footage/interviews of students
    - shot by Multimedia students
  - Anonymous help
  - Bulletin board
  - Public transport planner
  - Photo gallery
  - Movie and music reviews
  - Competitions
    - prizes: movie tickets or $30 gift vouchers
  - In the pipeline – Facebook group

- How do we encourage students to access this website?
  - Focus group: next Monday
Transition Coordinator

Position created February 2008

• Transition support
  • available to answer questions from students
    • face-to-face, online, sms, phone, e-mail
    • my contact details available to students
      – website, flyers, unit guides
  • as appropriate, advice re support services (academic and pastoral)
• Making contact with ‘at risk’ students
  • refer to support services (academic and pastoral)
• Maintain website and moderate bulletin board
• Teach in a compulsory foundational unit (load: 6 hours)
• Retention strategies
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