TY-01: History of Graphic Communication

We aim in TY2GC *History of Graphic Communication* module to encourage 'hands-on' learning through use of the Lettering, Printing & Graphic Design Collection. Students work with real artefacts and participate in practical demonstrations of printing using historical equipment to enhance their understanding. We have widened and improved student access to the collections outside lectures and seminars through improved storage, documentation and material on display. Increased use of collection material during lectures and seminars encourages greater engagement for students in close observation and the development of research skills.

To date the project has achieved a good deal of success in that a new area has been created that brings together the equipment needed to demonstrate the three major printing processes, something not previously possible. Student feedback on the demonstrations has been very positive as it has provided the opportunity to develop hands-on skills.

'It was easier to understand the printing processes through demonstrations, because through descriptions alone they were hard to envisage.'

The changes to this module, including the print workshops and the increased use of collection materials, are now firmly embedded in to the curriculum.

Project Code: TY-01   Discipline: Typography & Graphic Communication   Project Title: History of Graphic Communication
Description: We aim in TY2GC History of Graphic Communication module to encourage 'hands-on' learning through use of the Lettering, Printing & Graphic Design Collection. Students work with real artefacts and participate in practical demonstrations of printing using historical equipment to enhance their understanding. We have widened and improved student access to the collections outside lectures and seminars through improved storage, documentation and material on display. Increased use of collection material during lectures and seminars encourages greater engagement for students in close observation and the development of research skills.

A **What is the perceived problem or challenge?**	B **Enabling Factors** What resources will facilitate the project?	C **Processes** How is this project going to be achieved?	D **Objectives** What is the end product or result of the project?	E **Evaluation Data** What methods can be used to demonstrate the success or impact of this project?	F **Unintended consequences** What have been the unintended consequences of enacting this project?
To make the collections and 'hands on' learning a focus for our teaching of the History of Graphic Communication: Helping students to look and interpret what they see. Confines of one-/two-hour lecture limit student contact with archival material. Students are unable to engage with research without fully understanding the context of printing technology. Making sure the items can be viewed and handled without damage.	**Staffing** Staff in Typography will remove barriers to student access to the collections by: providing access to the collections and supervision. running drop-in 'surgeries' for students undertaking research dissertations rehousing and reorganising material to proper archival standards developing collections descriptions (databases, lists, location index etc) and teaching materials to support the traditional lecture programme **Equipment** A workshop has been equipped for students to participate in printing, using relief, intaglio and planographic processes. Custom-built storage and conservation materials and equipment enables rehousing and reorganisation of material to make it accessible to students. The installation of a wireless network means that students can work with their laptops throughout the Department, often alongside archives & collections.	Re-housing and reorganisation of material and development of collections descriptions will remove barriers to student access of the collections. Collections particularly relevant to undergraduate teaching will be given priority. Awareness of the collections by improving the way information is given about the collections and developing promotional material. Weekly 'Show & tell' sessions with selected items from the collections, and free student attendance at specialist seminars and conferences (run by The Ephemera Society and Printing Historical Society) will further develop student's understanding of printing technology and their skills for independent learning. Resource packs relating to the lecture programme stimulate students to further engage with a topic.	To give students a deeper understanding of printing history and processes through 'hands on learning' – through handling real artefacts, practical involvement in printing and demonstration. Students are able to make connections between technology and interpretation, showing an understanding of how technology shapes printed documents. Students develop their observational and analytical skills. Students are stimulated to engage further with a topic by having access to a wider range of resources than is possible in a normal lecture situation.	Baseline student feedback collected at outset of the project Specific questions relating to the value of 'hands on' learning included in forms for student feed-back and evaluation issued at the end of the module. Records will be kept as to use of the collections by students as part of their independent study. Monitoring of examination answers and essays for evidence of answers informed by 'hands on' learning.	Some students have been inspired to take their interests in practical printing further. Some students have considered working in museums, art galleries and archives for a career as the result of work experience with the collections. Improvements to facilities and documentation as a result of increasing access for undergraduates has also enhanced the facilities for a wide range of users – the result has been an increase in interest and awareness of the collections by academics and the general public. Students benefit from contact with outside individuals and bodies who recognise the status and value of our collections and the building up of a research environment. Students taking the module from other departments (such as English and History of Art) have benefited from access to the collections and have responded to this learning style. Contact has increased awareness of the relevance of our collections to undergraduates in other subject areas.

TY-01: History of Graphic Communication

1.   Project Progress and Timeline

1.1   Timeline

Many of the activities listed below were carried out concurrently and by different members of staff. Therefore it has been difficult to construct a precise timetable.

Done	Project stage post	planned end date	actual date
	Start April 2005		
☒	Developing teaching material content with academic staff.		
☒	Setting up of print demonstration workshop	Oct 05	Sept 05
☒	Organising and selecting further materials from the Departmental and University Special Collections to enhance lecture topics.		
☒	Comparative survey of existing resource packs.	Dec 05	Dec 05
☒	Observation of lecture/seminar course (20 sessions).		
☒	Evaluation of use of collections including discussion and questionnaire.	Mar 06	Mar 06
☒	Designing and developing resource packs (prototype)	Oct 06	Oct 06
☒	Digitisation of lecture slides	Mar 07	Mar 07
☐	Trial use of resource pack with Part 2 students	Mar 07	
☐	Revision of content of resource packs in light of student feedback	Apr 07	
☐	Designing and revising resource packs	May 07	

1.2   Enabling Factors: State resources used in this L&T-enhancement project

This project has involved two main strands of CETL funding: capital expenditure and staff. It is difficult to be exact about the capital expenditure on this particular project as it has benefited significantly from the general expenditure on the reorganisation and rehousing of the collections to enhance student accessibility. This is documented in the 'access to collections' evaluation sheet. In addition capital expenditure on a slide scanner and the installation of interactive smartboards has enabled the use of digital images during lectures and seminars which have benefited this module.

The project was managed by two of the Teaching Associates: Martin Andrews who is 0.2fte CETL funded, but who is also the convenor of *TY2GC History of Graphic Communication* module and the departmental curator of Archives and Collections, and Nadja Guggi who is 0.4fte CETL funded. The project also received invaluable support from staff of the Design & Print unit, and additional help from volunteers and Alan Hardie (studio printer).

1.3   Processes: What were the key challenges in delivering this project?

TY2GC *History of Graphic Communication* is a mandatory part 2 module, involving both use of the collections in teaching and Practical Printing demonstrations. The module's key aims and learning outcomes are appended in Appendix 1.

The key challenges that this project sought to address were as follows:

- to improve access to collections – physical access as well as documentation;
- to increase awareness amongst students of the resource and its potential;
- to increase the opportunity for 'hands on' use of the collections, and the opportunities to have practical experience of printing processes;
- to digitise Lecture slides;
- to develop teaching packs; and
- to create a printing workshop to demonstrate relief, intaglio and lithographic printing.

The installation of storage facilities (roller-shelving, planchests etc.) involved major upheaval, and the task of moving large amounts of material and furniture proved to be a considerable logistical, physical and time-consuming problem. Whilst the collections have always been used in teaching they were muddled, and the CETL staff used in this project provided the expertise to organise and catalogue the collections.

The physical reorganisation of the collections enabled the creation of a dedicated space for students to use materials thus increasing the opportunity for hands-on learning. In addition to raise awareness and increase opportunities for using the collections, thematic open sessions and informal sessions have been run in the collections area thereby encouraging students to develop their skills.

Although a specialist slide scanner has been purchased, in reality the scanning of slides is still a relatively slow process, and we have had to re-assess the timescale needed to carry on with the digitisation of the huge collection of existing slides. There was also a delay in the ordering and delivery of the scanner.

In terms of the teaching packs three prototypes have been produced, and are ready for testing. These packs include additional visual material and facsimiles of key documents as well as supplementary annotations, a bibliography, and a list of related collections and resources. The intention is to extend the range of packs over time.

Whilst there had always been facilities for student printing, they were not well organised. To create the printing workshops a new area has been equipped which has brought together the equipment needed to demonstrate the three major printing processes. Installing the presses and organising appropriate equipment (period items) proved a considerable task. Moreover, additional presses and equipment were acquired from the Fine Art Department, which has added greatly to the facilities available in the print workshop, but necessitated a re-organisation of equipment which took additional time and effort.

2.   Outputs and Evaluation

2.1   List the evaluation evidence/data collected

Date	Quantitative or qualitative	Evaluation by	Description / Method
Dec 05	qualitative	TAs	Comparative survey of existing resource packs
Mar-06	quantitative	Pt 2 Students 05/06	Module evaluation forms (includes convenor's report)
Mar-06	both	Pt 2 Students 05/06	Evaluation of use of collections in teaching through discussion and questionnaire

2.2   Summarise the key results from your data

Generally, student feedback has been very positive and confirmed the value of our approach. Students are overwhelmingly in favour of hands-on involvement, and the printing demonstrations in particular are rated as very useful. In 2006, 19 students taking the *History of Graphic Communication* module were asked to comment on the usefulness of practical printing demonstrations in terms of enhancing their understanding of printing processes. All 19 students rated the demonstrations as 'quite useful' or 'very useful'. Here are some of their comments:

'[Printing processes are] quite hard to describe so actually seeing the process was helpful.'

'A verbal description is inadequate to fully understand the processes.'

'It was easier to understand the printing processes through demonstrations, because through descriptions alone they were hard to envisage.'

'Everything was explained in detail and shown to us in great depth.'

'The demonstrations showed how processes worked in practice, when in theory it sounded as though they wouldn't work (lithography).'

Feedback from student on the use of collections in teaching has also been positive. The handling of objects from the collections has been facilitated by the programme of collections rehousing and reorganisation, particularly the insertion of delicate printed materials into protective polyester sleeves which has increased the range of artefacts that can be handled safely by students. In addition specialist tools and equipment, such as powerful magnifiers, allows students to examine the material in greater detail.

2.3   How would you, as the PI, summarise the success of this project?

Considerable progress has been made with all parts of this project and, overall, we would assess the project as very successful. This is reflected in student feedback and involvement with the collections. The use of material from the collections in the teaching of History of Graphic Communication has been further developed in the light of student feedback.

The Print workshops in particular have been enormously successful. The challenge was to get the balance between demonstration and hands-on activity correct for groups of a maximum of ten students at a time and within the timeframe of a one-hour seminar.

Adjustments have been made in the light of experience but the printing demonstrations are now firmly embedded in the curriculum in a way not previously possible.

Whilst the teaching packs have not as yet been evaluated they have been trialled recently with part 2 students, and we had one undergraduate student working with us on the design of these packs.

With the digitisation of lecture slides material relating to new lectures was initially given priority in order to deliver the programme. This has resulted in 14 lectures now being available in digitised form. Lectures are delivered making full use of the recently installed smartboard, and are then placed on Blackboard in PDF format.

3.   Impact and Consequences

3.1   How many students (and at what level and in which programme areas) has this L&T enhancement project impacted on?

TY2GC *History of Graphic Communication* is obligatory for all our undergraduate students so the project will have an impact on all students at some point in their undergraduate career. Since 2005, 42 undergraduates have undertaken the module. Occasionally students on other programmes take the module, which have recently included: English, History of Art and Architecture and the Study Abroad Programme.

Lectures and seminar are also attended by a number of our postgraduate students, and undergraduate students from other departments.

3.2   Has this project positively contributed to the teaching environment and satisfaction of the academic staff delivering this provision?

This project has become a model for this kind of teaching that involves close observation and handling of real artefacts. This has encouraged other lecturers to make greater use of our collection material for both lectures and practical projects.

Widening use of University collections has been encouraged through some lectures taking place in the Special Collections and Archives.

3.3   Summarise the unforeseen consequences of this project

The impact of this project extends further than the obligatory module. Many students continue an interest and an involvement with the collections, for example leading to an archive-based dissertation. Some of our students have been inspired to take their interests in practical printing further. Some are considering careers in museums, art galleries and/or archives as the result of their experience. Students taking the module from other departments (such as English and History of Art) have also benefited from access to archival material and have responded well to this style of teaching.

Contact has increased awareness of the relevance of our collections to undergraduates in other subject areas and this has had an impact on our plans to increase joint-programmes. The success of our approach to the teaching of printing history has meant that the potential has expanded to new audiences such as postgraduates and outreached to the general public.

Awareness of the value of the collections has also increased (see Typography: improvement of student access to the Lettering, Printing and Graphic Design Collections).

4.   Dissemination

4.1   Log dissemination activities relating to this L&T Project

Throughout the project, talks and lectures have been given on the collections, both within the Department and outside, to interested bodies and local societies etc. More specific talks have been given on aspects of the collections in this country and abroad, including the Conference of the Printing Historical Society and Friends of St Bride Library.
The collections are always featured as part of our Open Days to encourage recruitment both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. On these occasions, our approach to teaching through the collections has always been emphasised. We are also planning a study day about using collections and archives in arts and design education, which will bring together practitioners in the field as well as some of the students who have benefited from this kind of teaching.

4.2   Beyond this evaluation, do you see any scope for pedagogic research in this area of learning?

No.

Project Developer's names:

Martin Andrews – Module convener, Curator of Archives & Collections, 0.2fte CETL TA
Nadja Guggi – 0.4fte CETL TA and Collections Officer
Support from the staff of the Design & Print unit

Appendix 1: Description of module content in 2006/7
TY2GC: History of graphic communication

Aims:

The module aims to provide students with knowledge and understanding of Western European graphic communication from c. 1450 to the end of the twentieth century, in terms of the processes, tools and machinery, resultant artefacts, key practitioners and practical treatises. Particular focus will be on pictorial images in print, the book, and printed ephemera. The module builds on the Introduction to the History of Graphic Communication (TY1HG) providing a more in depth study of specialist topics.

Assessable learning outcomes:

By the end of the module students should be able to:

- explain the different processes and recognise the distinctive characteristics of each
- outline the chronology of the principal printing processes and development of machinery
- account for the interaction between tools and processes, and their effects on the artefacts
- discuss the impact of key practitioners' treatises on the development of the processes
- demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret historical material
- discuss the social and economic impact of printing

Additional outcomes:

Students should develop a further understanding of methods of handling rare materials, together with an ability to record direct observations about printed artefacts. They should also develop skills of oral presentation and information handling.

Outline content:

The module will explore themes such as 'the information explosion', 'from craft to technology', 'pictures into print', 'new processes' and focuses on specific genres of printing, innovatory practitioners, and key treatises.

Topics such as the following will be included:

- private presses
- Impact of photography
- Colour printing
- The medieval manuscript
- Newspapers and periodicals
- Advertising and packaging
- Scientific illustration: botanical illustration and Vesalius
- Development of Penguin Books
- Thomas Bewick and William Blake
- Jan Tschichold
- Dürer and the early woodcut

Brief description of teaching and learning methods:

A mixture of teaching methods, including lectures, seminars with student oral presentations, and a study visit will be used. Each weekly session consists of a 50 minute lecture followed by a 50 minute seminar). The observation and handling of original artefacts is emphasized and brought into as many sessions as possible.

Appendix 2: Printing workshop & demonstrations

A printing workshop has been set up to provide opportunities for 'hands on' learning, supporting the History of Graphic Communication modules. The workshop supports the three major printing processes of letterpress, intaglio and lithographic printing. Printing demonstrations have been firmly embedded in the curriculum, with overwhelmingly positive feedback from students.

Letterpress workshop with printing equipment including metal type, ink rollers and formes. The wall panels explaining the three basic printing processes were researched and designed by UG students. Lithographic press with lithographic stone and ink rollers Intaglio press with copperplate and prints

Intaglio press with copperplate and prints and ink rollers

Lithographic press with lithographic stone

Staff explain and demonstrate the major stages of the process during a lithography demonstration.

A student inks up a forme of type ready for a printing at a letterpress workshop

A student grinds a lithographic stone using levitator to prepare it for drawing and printing.