GroupNotes

Project Description
The aim of this research is to determine whether students interacting with their selected peers in small groups using their own mobile devices, such as tablets and smartphones, increase their levels of engagement with the topic during a lecture.

Your Role
You will fill out a questionnaire prior to testing to provide some personal characteristics related to use and ownership of touchscreen devices as well as prior knowledge of the content we are delivering in the pre-recorded lectures and which you will be tested on.

There are four separate tests and you would be required to participate in all of them.

The first test is conducted with you working individually while the remaining tests will be conducted in a group with one, two or three others. Your group would then remain unchanged for the remaining tests.

The testing will involve viewing a lecture (approximately 30 minutes) and then undertaking the following methods:

1. Traditional note-taking on your own using pen and paper. (no talking permitted)
2. Pen and paper note-taking as part of a small group using a shared workspace and where audible discussion amongst members is encouraged. (talking permitted)
3. Electronic note-taking on computers (including laptops, netbooks and tablets) with a specific application, such as Google Docs, to allow for collaboration within a small group where all discussion must occur on the computer. (no talking permitted)
4. Electronic note-taking using Android-based tablets and our custom developed collaboration application providing real time text communication between group members. (no talking permitted)

At the conclusion of each lecture there will be two activities to complete

The first activity is a small quiz which will gauge your level of engagement through your ability to answer questions on the content of the lecture and should require less than five minutes.

The second activity is a questionnaire which will seek your opinion about your level of engagement with the lecture content and, as you progress through the different methods, your opinion on how your level of engagement varies in relation to the different methods you have experienced. This activity is not expected to exceed ten minutes.

A final questionnaire will be delivered as the last activity to this testing to determine students reaction to GroupNotes and whether it is effective in increasing engagement from their perspective.

We would particularly welcome participation from small groups of students who are already voluntarily engaged in collaborating to improve their learning outcomes through such practices as sharing of lecture notes; or regular, scheduled content revision sessions.

Counselling Services
We do not anticipate any situation occurring that would require you seeking counselling but should the need arise there is a free counselling service available through the following website:
http://www.flinders.edu.au/current-students/healthandcounselling/counsel.cfm

Contact Details
You may contact Dr Haifeng Shen at any time with any issues relating to your participation in this experiment. Contact details are provided in the letterhead of this document.
Alternately you may contact Mr Mark Reilly on 8201 2237 or m.reilly@flinders.edu.au.

Privacy and Confidentiality
We respect your privacy and confidentiality.
Any and all information provided by you will be kept in an anonymous format, and you will not be personally identifiable from the stored data or in any future publication.

Right to Withdraw
Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you withdraw from the study, you may do so freely, without prejudice.

Funding Source
This research is funded by a Flinders University Research Scholarship.

Reimbursement
You will receive a total payment of $80.00 as reimbursement for your time in undertaking this testing.

Dissemination of Results
Results will be published in one or more of the following: a PhD thesis, peer-reviewed journals, conference presentations or other professional forums.
Regardless of the type of publication, any information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified. Results of the study will be provided to you, if you wish.

Benefit to the community
Successful implementation of the social learning paradigm into the lecture environment using the increasingly accessible mobile devices provides an opportunity for all students to increase their engagement during lectures and contribute to improved individual learning outcomes.

The extended benefit to the wider community of Australia is the retention of talented individuals whose learning preference does not conform to the traditional didactic lecture style which is still common. These students form part of the large numbers of first year students who fail to begin their second year of study and who may now choose to continue their education in their chosen area.

This research project has been approved by the Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee (Project Number 5438). For more information regarding ethical approval of the project the Executive Officer of the Committee can be contacted by telephone on 82013116, by fax on 8201 2035 or by email human.researchethics@flinders.edu.au.