



Project Document Cover Sheet

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Lead Institution	Lewisham College		
Project Director	Patricia Forrest		
Project Manager & contact details	Jo Burbidge, jo.burbidge@lewisham.ac.uk , T: 020 8694 3212, F: 020 8694 9163		
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Project Name: Making the New Diploma a Success

Report compiled by: Jo Burbidge

With contributions from: Beverley Owens, Patricia Forrest, Adu Antwi, Tascha Stockbridge, Sharon Muncie, Jane Teh, Paul Herbert, Shahul Mohideen

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Section One: Summary

Lewisham College aims to apply the best use of technology to make the new Diploma a success. This project builds upon our work on Personalisation to include the 'Learner Voice', learner autonomy and ownership via the development of a 'Learner Portal' and the use of mobile technology to add flexibility, adaptability and extend access to learning. During this reporting period we have entered the third phase of our project - Implementation.

The Portal was introduced to learners in September and as a result of one of the unexpected outcomes noted in the previous interim report it was launched College wide rather than just to Diploma students making it the Lewisham College Student Portal (eME) rather than the Diploma in IT Portal. This decision has proved incredibly successful and we have been able to see a multitude of uses that may not have been evident with just the Diploma learners. Best practice examples of uses elsewhere in the College have been shared with the Diploma teams.

During the Autumn term both staff and learners were familiarising themselves with the functionality of the Portal and using it primarily to provide course materials and assignments online as well as using the Personal Development Plan (ePDP) to review goals and set targets.

The biggest hit with the curriculum team has been the use of online assignments for learners to submit their work and receive electronic feedback. All subject tutors are now using this tool to mark students work and provide instant feedback. They report that by having this linked to the gradebook, it is very easy to track learners' progress in different units, agree targets with them and record these using the ePDP. Learners also like being able to submit work and get feedback electronically because it is quick and easy.

All learners on the Diploma courses are now using the electronic ePDP to set their targets and reflect on their progress using the self evaluation section. Both tutors and learners are completing termly progress reviews

For learners the high point has been the ability to access their own timetables and attendance and punctuality data through the portal. They feel that being able to see their attendance and punctuality motivates them to improve, whether their existing attendance and punctuality is good or not. This, combined with the target setting process, contributes to their sense of independence. The popularity of the timetable and attendance and punctuality reports with both learners and staff has led us to extend this further to provide learners with more reports that relate to their financial situation.

Section Two: Activities and Progress

For most of the period of this report learners have been working on controlled assessments which has limited the opportunities for the full functionality of the Portal to be exploited.

Controlled Assessment is the process used to internally assess coursework on the new Diplomas under exam conditions. It means that the assessor has to supervise the production of assignments, access to resources and time controls. Controlled assessment will continue for the whole of the Spring term so we have had to review the timing of some of the enhancements we are planning to introduce. This means that there is limited delivery taking place during this period and has mainly affected the use of Mahara which will now be fully implemented during the summer term.

In response to our overall objectives the following activities have taken place during this reporting period.

Empower learners to take control of their learning using a variety of devices at the time, place and pace of choice in order to achieve their individual goals.

Learners do feel that they have control of their learning and that the Portal has enabled them to access materials and assignments at a time and place that suits them. Whilst we piloted the use of Asus Eee-PC's during the developmental phase of the project and have continued to use these during the implementation phase there is no evidence to suggest that these are being used outside of class time to access resources. Learners feel that the devices available to them at College (Laptops and PCs in the classroom and Learning Centres) are sufficient for them to complete their coursework and there is no need for them to either use their own devices or the Asus Eee-PC's to do this.

Provide learners with an online support network to enable them to make the most of their time at College and support them with their coursework and in making possible and realistic choices about their future.

Sites have been created on the Portal giving learners access to information and services available to support them during their time at College. They are using the messaging feature to contact their tutors online outside of class time to get support with their assignments. Feedback we have received from learners suggests that they do not want online support from the Entitlement and Support team (EST) as they would have concerns about the confidentiality of any such communications. They would however like to be able to use the Portal to book individual face to face sessions with support staff.

The Learning Facilitator associated with the School has been involved in delivering a programme of study skills covering; writing professional e-mails (language and style), revision skills, note-taking and summarising, skim reading and scan reading, essay and report writing, referencing, persuasive speaking and presentation skills. These sessions have been using different technologies such as Smartboards and YouTube and have given the Learning Facilitator the opportunity to bond with the learners in preparation for using Mahara as an online support mechanism when they are creating their CVs.

Further online support will be provided by the Jobs & Careers team, Learning Facilitators and potential employers next term when students start looking for and participating in work placements.

Enable learners to use a reflective approach to evidencing their achievements, create their own portfolio of evidence and share selected elements with their tutors and employers.

Learners have started to use Mahara the e-Portfolio integrated within the Portal but so far it has not been used to showcase their work. This has been attributed to two issues; they are concerned that whilst preparing work for assessment sharing this with their peers could lead to plagiarism and also during the period of controlled assessment there are limited opportunities for feedback on their work. We plan to focus on Mahara next term to help learners to build up a portfolio of evidence that will be used to showcase their work and skills to potential employers or for gaining access to further studies.

Empower learners to become more independent, confident and self-directed by helping them to understand how they are learning, relate their learning to a wider context, articulate their personal goals and evaluate their progress towards them.

All learners on the Diploma courses are now using the electronic PDP to set their targets and reflect on their progress using the self evaluation section; this is supplemented with termly progress reviews completed by both tutors and learners.

The majority of students feel that the ePDP has helped them to think about their goals and what they can do to achieve them. [Attendance and punctuality data](#) has been made available to them via the ePDP showing their overall termly percentage and enabling them to drill down to see all of their register marks. This has proved very popular with the learners and they all agree that if their attendance and punctuality was good they would try to maintain it and if it was not so good that being able to see this motivates them to try to improve.

Learners also currently have direct access to their [timetables](#) through the portal.

We are working on extending access to include EMA records of payments and individual financial status.

Create opportunities for collaboration between the College, Bonus Pastor School and Education Business Partnership (EBP Lewisham Borough).

Because there are two different delivery models in place: Bonus Pastor 14 – 16 over two years and Lewisham College 16+ over one year opportunities for collaboration with Bonus Pastor took place during the early stages of the project as we shared the development of curriculum materials and the design of delivery plans as well as participating in a joint CPD programme. It is anticipated that this will lead to the development of joint delivery, between Bonus Pastor, Addey and Stanhope and Lewisham College in the new academic year. Meetings will take place in the summer to finalise plans but it is envisaged that Lewisham College will deliver the Multimedia and Hardware and Software Principle Learning. The Diploma Road show, which took place on 11th and 12th of February was also an invaluable opportunity to work together and meet other Lewisham Borough schools who are interested in the Diploma.

The EBP will once again be providing two week work placements for all the Higher Diploma students in IT Departments in the local borough. This proved to be a very positive experience last year, underpinning the ethos of this new curriculum. To support this, learners are allocated mentors from the business world and they communicate regularly via email.

The use of Mahara within the portal will enable students to create their cv's online and to share these with employers and other support personnel. This will enable them to receive comments and feedback on the best way to present themselves to employers.

Enable learners to have their say, get involved and contribute to College life.

The Portal provides learners with information about key events taking place at the College and enables them to participate in online activities such as quizzes and polls during these events.

Most learners have contributed to online surveys and discussion forums and the majority felt that the opportunity to express views and opinions made them feel valued and enabled them to contribute to College life.

Project Outcomes

The following outcomes have been achieved:

- Learners work is submitted electronically using Moodle from a variety of locations.
- Tutors assess work electronically using Moodle and provide effective and timely feedback.
- Learners have access to a wider and more varied range of course materials
- Learners are able to access course support from their tutors by using online communications.
- Tutors and learners have access to the ePDP at any time from any location and use this to collaborate on goal setting and reviewing progress.
- Learners are informed about events and activities and contribute to polls and discussion forums relating to these.

There have been no changes to the workpackages and all milestones have been achieved.

Adu Antwi (Deputy Head of School Business and CoVE in Computing) has replaced Steve Stallard (who left the College in July) on both the Project Team and Project Steering Group.

Section Three: Outputs and Deliverables

<p>Project reports</p>	<p>Project plan, interim reports for August 2009 and March 2010 are available from the project website. http://www.lewishamdiplomas.co.uk/</p> <p>A final project report will be added once the project has been completed.</p>
<p>Case studies</p>	<p>Case Studies have been produced for the following and are available from the project website: Asus – Eee-PC Video conferencing</p> <p>The following will be completed at the end of the summer term: Case study on how the implementation of a Learner Portal has affected curriculum delivery. Case study on use of ePDP Case study on use of ePortfolio</p>
<p>Training/Guidance materials</p>	<p>Training materials are being constantly produced and updated and are available from the Portal: How to Moodle course Moodle Tips course Mahara course ePDP course</p>

<p>Technical guidelines</p>	<p>Technical documentation has been produced and made available via the project website: Report on setting up of LDAP Setting up streaming server</p> <p>We will also be producing reports on; The process of setting up the ePDP System diagram</p>
<p>Project website</p>	<p>The project website is available at: http://www.lewishamdiplomas.co.uk/</p>
<p>Evaluation report</p>	<p>Baseline and interim reports are currently available from the website. The final evaluation report will be published at the end of the project looking at what is available at the moment, what has changed as a part of the project and what impact this has had on learners.</p>
<p>Dissemination reports</p>	<p>Blogs have been created and are being maintained for: Project Evaluation Mahara Curriculum</p> <p>Videos and simulations are also available for: Project Overview Event - Engaging the teams Portal Simulation</p>

Section Four: Evaluation

The factors to evaluate and measures of success are unchanged from the evaluation plan.

Activities undertaken:

- Discussion forums established with two diploma groups (25 learners)
- Electronic questionnaires delivered to two diploma groups (25 learners)
- Whole class session with Advanced diploma class using electronic voting buttons (13 learners)
- Tutor interviews which were videoed
- Course blog with contributions from course tutors

What has worked?

Learners have been given the opportunity to contribute to discussion forums during class times which has proved to be very successful and provided some useful insights into how the learners are using eME and their opinions.

Electronic questionnaires about their use of the Learner Portal were completed by learners in both diploma groups and have provided good feedback. They were asked to complete these by their course tutor and given class time to do so.

Using the electronic voting buttons worked well – the learners engaged with the technology and enjoyed participating in the session.

Tutor videos have provided rich feedback although not as many staff as anticipated were able to participate.

What has not worked?

Timing of the learner forum with the Higher Diploma group was considered inappropriate as it coincided with the commencement of the controlled assessment phase of the course and learners were too nervous to contribute. With the Advanced Diploma group, a decision was made to use electronic voting buttons (in conjunction with a PowerPoint presentation with the questions) to record learner responses and to then prompt discussion around the individual questions. This proved more effective.

The course blog has not provided as much reflection as we had anticipated with only the course tutor contributing.

Key Activities for next six months

The learners will be commencing work placements after Easter and it is hoped that this will be the time that the Portal will be further used to support the learners. When the work placements have been completed, the questionnaires and interviews will be repeated and feedback sessions will be conducted with the learners using the voting buttons as these methods have provided the majority of data to date.

Employers will be asked to complete an electronic questionnaire to obtain feedback on the usefulness of the Mahara electronic CV features. Learners will be encouraged to contribute to a discussion forum whilst they are on work placement and immediately on their return in order to measure the amount of support the Portal has provided them with whilst they are away from the College.

In addition, 13 learners studying on the Higher Diploma in Creative Media will be included in the final evaluation of the diploma delivery. They are all 14 and 15 year olds who are at school but attend the College one day a week. This will allow for wider evaluation of stakeholder input to the ePDP as the delivery of the qualification is split between their school and College. They will also be using Mahara to showcase work.

March 2009 Contributions to tutor blogs to obtain ongoing feedback from tutors

April 2009 Contributions to tutor blogs to obtain ongoing feedback from tutors

May 2009 Contributions to tutor blogs to obtain ongoing feedback from tutors
Discussion forum set up for IT students prior to work placements

June 2009 Contributions to tutor blogs to obtain ongoing feedback from tutors
IT Learners to contribute to blogs and discussion forums post work placements
Employer questionnaires – post work placements
Learner questionnaires (3 groups)
Learner focus groups (3) (using voting buttons)
Tutor interviews

Section Five: Outcomes and Lessons Learned

Online Support and Communications

Our intention was to use the Chat facilities within the Portal for learners to get support from both their tutors and the EST. The results of our research have highlighted several important issues regarding this. Firstly learners are reluctant to use the group Chat claiming issues of the practicalities of being online at the same time and the need to go online for group Chats when outside of the College. However one to one communications with the course tutor have proved to be successful as learners can see when their tutors are online and “talk” to them outside of class time to get help with assignments while they are working on them. They also love the opportunity to talk to their peers using this facility.

As far as communicating with the EST is concerned there was a very strong feeling amongst the learners that they do not consider that this is secure and that any issues they may want to raise with a guidance or support officer is better done face to face. They would like the facility to be able to book a session via the Portal and this is being considered for the future although it is unlikely to be implemented during the lifespan of the project.

Assignments

The assignment tool has proven to be the most popular function for the tutors and all are now marking work and providing feedback using Moodle. Learners have expressed similar views preferring to be able to submit class activities and homework without printing and to get feedback almost immediately.

ePDP

For learners the most popular and motivating tool has been access to their timetables, attendance and punctuality reports. The impact of this has been that our Registry office will no longer provide learners with a printout of their attendance reports but provide them with an information sheet of how to do this themselves using eME. Although the financial impact of this has not yet been calculated it is anticipated that a significant saving will be made especially when learners can also access details of the status of their EMA payments.

Whilst we had anticipated that the EST would be able to contribute to the ePDP, this has also proved difficult in a similar vein to that of online communications. The type of issues that learners want to raise with the EST is not something that they necessarily want to be known by the tutors and as the ePDP is accessible by anyone teaching on the course we are continuing to use a different system to monitor and manage learner contact.

Learner Voice

This process has enabled us to capture the learner voice and they have confirmed that this has made them feel listened to. It is important for learners to know the actions and results that come about as a result of any feedback that they give.

Access to an all in one, integrated system has helped to make learning fun through the provision not just of formal learning resources but through access to enrichment activities and communications.

Timing

The fact that this term has been almost entirely dedicated to controlled assessment has had an impact on our implementation proving that not all tools are appropriate for use at all points of the curriculum delivery.

Collaboration

One of our initial challenges was to enhance collaboration between the College, school and employers. Both the Higher and Advanced Diploma's in IT are run independently from the schools and we recruit our own learners for both courses. Although there was collaboration initially in terms of developing the course structure and delivery methods this collaboration is no longer appropriate as the course is delivered independently. As a college we are delivering other diplomas this year and we hope to get some feedback on collaboration in the final term.

Focus Groups

Running a focus group with young learners using a series of questions and discussion points proved difficult. This worked much better when voting buttons were introduced to get statistical responses which would then be used to prompt discussion.

Section Six: Communication and Dissemination Activities

Dissemination Activities

Nov 09	Presentation at the AOC conference about how the Portal contributes to personalisation
Nov 09	Portal simulation available at JISC Innovating e-Learning 2009
Dec 09	Presentation "From Vision to Reality" at Moodle Wonderland
Jan 10	Presentation to London College of Beauty Therapy about the process we went through to set up the Portal
Feb 10	Presentation at Becta Technology Exemplar Network initial mini-network meeting raised interest in sector
Feb 10	Presentation at Kingston College sharing our experiences of the process.
Mar 10	Presentation at Teaching Experts Group about the project

We are currently working on a campaign to find a student who will become the face of eME and will use students in the School of Creative Industries to design the publicity materials.

Blogs are being maintained by the Project Manager, Evaluator, Curriculum Team and eResource Manager on the implementation of Mahara. These can all be accessed from the Blog page on the project website.

Internally, we have published articles in both the [staff](#) and student magazines. The School of Business and Computing are currently preparing to deliver the Diploma for Business, Accounts and Finance and Diploma for Retail. They have completed two staff development sessions where the Diploma in IT team have been able to disseminate best practice on innovative delivery of the Diploma.

Section Seven: Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

From our original risk assessment those with the highest scores (organisational priorities and change management policies) have fortunately not materialised. We have dealt with some of the risks outlined in our original plan and there have not been any detrimental effects.

One of the risks that we had not considered was the need for staff to familiarise themselves not only with a new curriculum but also with new delivery technologies. We have managed this by assigning an eLearning mentor to the team to provide support and assistance in the use of the new technologies. This has proved very effective but has possibly slowed the uptake of some of the functionality available within the Portal.

One of the key challenges that we have faced has been the period of controlled assessment which has again impacted on the use of the Portal during the spring term. We hope that

some of the activities (showcasing work through Mahara, streamed lessons) planned for this term will now take place during the summer term.

In our previous interim report we mentioned a number of new initiatives that were being introduced in September alongside eME. One of these was ASPIRE (**A**ssessment of **S**tudents **P**erformance **I**n-year to **R**each **E**xcellence). This is an online course review system that enhances our personalised approach to learners by helping to ensure they are on the right course, getting the right support with planned progression routes. As part of this new process teaching staff meet in their teams to review each individual course and the learners on it. The outcomes from these reviews are then used as a basis for the learner tutorials and contribute to their target setting. This is still a potential challenge because both ASPIRE and the ePDP are new tools and there is a need to clarify some of the processes to prevent duplication and integrate the procedures where possible.

The project has provided us with many opportunities. The decision to launch the Portal cross college rather than just to the Diploma groups has proved incredibly successful and we have been able to use examples of good practice to enthuse and motivate the curriculum team and help them to see how the functionality of the Portal can enhance their delivery styles. This has resulted in an increased demand for training.

The popularity of the timetable and attendance and punctuality reports with both learners and staff has led us to extend this further to provide learners with more reports that relate to their financial situation. This has led to time saving in departments such as Registry and the Campus offices.

The development of a new add-in by ULCC of an assessment manager will also give us the opportunity to further extend the use of the Portal for NVQ/Criteria based qualifications.

By making the Portal available to all areas of the College we have been able to see a multitude of uses that may not have been evident with just the diploma learners. Whilst Mahara the ePortfolio has not been widely promoted cross college we have seen a variety of used by both staff and students. Staff have been using Mahara to maintain their own CPD portfolio and provide views of key educational sites and issues that they share with their learners. Learners also use Mahara as a social networking tool enabling them to communicate with their "friends" and set up groups for special interests.

In September we introduced the Higher Diploma in Creative Media which is being jointly delivered by Lewisham College and Addey and Stanhope School. We are currently working with the Courses Tutor to explore how they can contribute to this project.

Section Eight: Collaboration and Support

We attended the programme meeting in October which gave us the opportunity to network with the JISC team and other projects.

We hosted a cluster event in December and as a cluster participated in the Elluminate workshop 'Engaging and responding to learners'. This was quite an interesting experience which prompted lots of discussion around the table although we probably didn't contribute too much to the overall event.

As our closest neighbour and a member of our cluster we have had most contact with Kingston College and have been sharing resources and experiences regarding the move from Blackboard to Moodle with them.

