



Project Document Cover Sheet

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Project Information			
Project Acronym	L-MAPS		
Project Title	Dynamic Learning Maps		
Start Date	1 st April 2009	End Date	31 st March 2011
Lead Institution	Newcastle University		
Project Director	Dr Steven Ball		
Project Manager & contact details	Simon Cotterill (S.J.Cotterill@ncl.ac.uk) Gordon Skelly (Gordon.Skelly@ncl.ac.uk)		
Partner Institutions	n/a		
Project Web URL	http://learning-maps.ncl.ac.uk		
Programme Name (and number)	Transforming Curriculum Delivery through Technology (08/08)		
Programme Manager	Lisa Gray		

Document Name		
Document Title	<i>Interim Progress Report</i>	
Reporting Period	<i>To 31st August 2009</i>	
Author(s) & project role	Simon Cotterill & Gordon Skelly (Project Managers)	
Date	Filename	
URL	<i>if document is posted on project web site</i>	
Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Project and JISC internal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General dissemination

Document History		
Version	Date	Comments
Draft 1.1	02/09/2009	

Section One: Summary

Provide an overview of the project to date, highlighting key developments, deliverables/outputs and achievements for the reporting period. This section may be used to inform the Programme and Support team, and may also provide the basis for an update to inform the sector about the project.

After careful consideration and with consultation with JISC the project start has been deferred by 6 months following protracted recruitment problems. On March 31st 2009 the project had a successful launch event involving key stakeholders including curriculum leaders and senior managers. Project set up tasks, such as the establishment of an Advisory Board, project planning and creation of a project Website/blog have been completed and a full-time Project Officer (John Peterson) has now been recruited. The project team have developed detailed user scenarios as part of the formative evaluation processes and there has been considerable development work in preparation for piloting. The team have also undertaken a short review of Web-based mind mapping, concept mapping and other related software as part of a review of current practice in areas related to this project. In addition to engaging with programme and cluster events there has been project dissemination at three regional events and two national conferences.

Section Two: Activities and Progress

Report on activities in support of project objectives for the reporting period.

Project Management and Set-up

1. Project management procedures have been established, including weekly meetings and regular meetings with the core project team (Project Directors, Project Managers, & 2 Project Officers), drawing in additional team members as appropriate.
2. An advisory Board has been established and includes:

Geoff Hammond (Chair)	HOS, Newcastle University, Director CETL4HealthNE
Suzanne Cholerton	Dean of Undergraduate Studies, FMS, Newcastle Uni
David Davies	Warwick University
Charlie Ellis	Education Officer, Student Society, Newcastle Uni
Ella Ritchie	PVC (Learning & Teaching), Newcastle University
Megan Quentin-Baxter	Director, HEA Subject Centre, MEDEV
Jamie Thompson	NTFS, Northumbria University

+ JISC representative(s),
External Evaluator (David Baume)
Critical Friend (Peter Hartley)
3. After careful consideration and discussion with JISC the project start date has been put back 6 months to 1st April 2009 (date of a full meeting for the wider project team and advisory group). This was because of initial difficulties in recruiting a full-time Project Officer, which had an adverse effect on progress with the project. The project will continue to engage with the programme events as normal and produce a detailed interim report at the original end of the project to fit in with other programme deliverables. This would be written to the same depth and completeness of a final project report. Once the project was fully complete we would provide a comprehensive final project report. This will be done within the existing budget for the project. It is envisaged that this re-profiling will help maximise the impact of the project and has the advantage of incorporating Semester 1 of the 2010/11 academic year, which will enable additional piloting/refinements and evaluation. The project's 'Critical Friend' and External Evaluator both supported this course of action.
4. Paul Horner joined the team as Senior Project Officer (40% FTE) in April 2009 following successful completion of the JISC funded EPICS-2 and Leap2a projects (as planned).
5. A full-time Project Officer, John Peterson, was successfully recruited during May 2009 and began work on the project on the 13th July 2009.

6. The Project Plan and Evaluation Plan have been revised in relation to the change in project time-line (point 3, above).
7. A project blog and Website has been set up at: <http://learning-maps.ncl.ac.uk>

Review of Current Practice

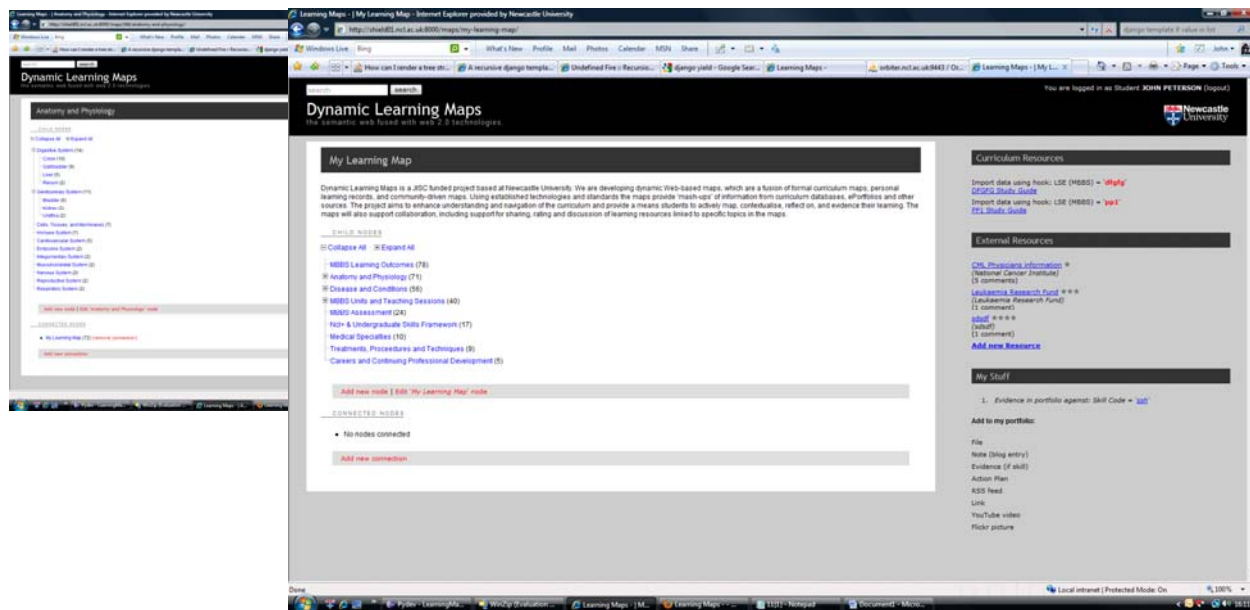
8. We are conducting a short review of mind mapping, outliners, concept mapping and related Web-based software including graphical rendering tools that may be informative for our project. The report is at an advanced stage (draft attached).

Consultation with Stakeholders

9. In February 2009 a small number of 4th year Medical students (n=4) provided feedback after viewing the semi-functional project demonstrator. The students were all keen on the concept of Learning Maps and having the ability to get an overview of the curriculum and being able to share and rate resources. However, one student stressed the need for training, especially for those less confident with IT. Another asked if it could be used as additional feedback mechanism from students to lecturers (see 33 below).
10. The first full meeting of the wider project team, including Advisory Board members was held on 31st March 2009. Participants included the project team, curriculum managers (Medicine, Speech & Language Sciences, and Psychology), senior managers (PVC for Teaching & Learning, Dean of Undergraduate Studies for Medical Sciences), the External Advisor and Critical Friend. The meeting included an introduction to the Learning Maps project and an outline of Curriculum Mapping. David Baume (External Evaluator) also led a session on baseline data and refining the project goals. There was a high level of discussion in the group exercises around refining stakeholder requirements which provided useful feedback to inform developments. There were noticeable differences in perceptions around stakeholder needs (already partially reflected in consultation at the bid-writing stage) partially reflecting perceived differences in vocational (highly specified maps) vs. less vocational programmes (more emphasis on mapping done by students) programmes, modular vs. non-modular / more complex curricular.
11. There have been additional meetings with specific stakeholders / curriculum groups.

Developing the Dynamic Learning Maps software

12. Technical work on a specification (living document) and development of a prototype is underway taking into account the pre-bid consultations, the project proposal, stakeholder feedback and user scenarios. It is recognised that there will be several iterations of the software and underlying data models, which will need ongoing refining in light of stakeholder feedback and piloting.
13. The application is being developed using Open Source software, including Django (a Python framework), JavaScript libraries (including JQuery), and a backend MySQL database.
14. The basic nodal structure of the maps, connections, resource linking/rating and related management tools are now in place. At present a predominately text-based interface has been developed (see screen shots below). Work on a graphical interface(s) will begin once the data model and pedagogy are more mature.



Engagement with the Community

15. The project team have participated in Programme and Cluster events and engaged with the Circle social networking site. Programme-related events and meetings in which the project team have engaged with include:

- 10th Dec 2008, JISC report writing workshop
- 15th Jan 2009 Evaluation workshop, Birmingham -09-02
- 3rd March 2009, JISC Programme event, Birmingham
- 24th March, visit from Peter Hartley
- 23rd April, London Programme Meeting
- 12 May JISC Programme Meeting
- 27th July, meeting with Peter Hartley (Critical Friend)

16. In addition the project team have engaged with the wider community (see Section 5 below)

Section Three: Outputs and Deliverables

What outputs are you expecting to arise from the project? Specify the audiences your expected outputs will be for. (Note: you should have received a mapping tool to help you specify these). This should include a short paragraph summarizing expected technical outputs/system integrations etc.

17. As part of the set up, engagement and formative evaluation processes:

- case scenarios x 3 - as part of the formative evaluation process
- external evaluator – refining objectives and outcomes for plan
- development of project website EXTERNAL
- kickoff meeting EXTERNAL, engaging with course directors and data owners to raise project profile and setup foundations for getting access to critical data sources (see point 10 above for details).

18. Work in progress:

- Development of a prototype application for piloting.
- Development of VLE feeds for project and analysis of workflows and procedures in managing these feeds.

- Development of a feed aggregating tool for pilot
- Development of data and system architecture for project evaluation.
- Training materials and information sheets
- Presentations relating to the project
- Evaluation reports

What outputs, if any, have you produced in this reporting period? Include any outputs, including interim and work in progress, that you have shared with other projects e.g. via the Circle site or workshops. Are there any other outputs you would like to share at this time? Please describe, provide URLs or attached documents etc

Section Four: Outcomes and Lessons Learned

What key messages have arisen from your baselining process that might be of interest to the wider sector? Please tell us:

- *What you now consider to be the key problem(s) or challenge(s) in curriculum delivery within your department(s) / institution?*
- *How your project will enhance curriculum delivery and/or address the problem(s) within your department(s) / institution in light of your baseline activities?*
- *What measures you will use to assess the impact of enhanced curriculum delivery on the range of stakeholders in your department(s) / institution, and what sources of data will be used to evidence the changes? What evidence have you collected so far?*

19. Medicine has a complex curriculum which is delivered by a large number of teachers, many of whom are remote from the central campus and some who contribute only small amounts of teaching. It is therefore a key challenge to provide these teachers with a better way of contextualising their teaching and see what prior learning and future learning is planned for a specific project. Overall programme evaluation has very high satisfaction rates, however, students have fed back that they feel that some teaching is duplicated or occasionally not pitched at the right level. Sometimes topics are deliberately duplicated (the concept of a 'spiral curriculum' where topics are revisited on a number of occasions, but each time at a more advanced level) and this may not be recognised by students, other times it may be unintended duplication due to clinical teachers not having a clear oversight of the curriculum and knowing what previous / future learning is planned. We believe these issues are common across health-related subjects which nearly all involve clinical teaching across a dispersed area.

20. In developing a navigable map of the Medical curriculum we hope to help reduce these problems related to duplication of teaching by providing both teachers and learners with a convenient way of better contextualising their teaching and learning within the curriculum.

21. In modular based programmes a different challenge exists in that teaching and learning can sometimes be too 'compartmentalised'. It can be a challenge for learners to link and synthesise their learning across different modules. Also, it may not be easy for learners (and teachers) to understand where modular-level learning links to and contributes to programme-level or higher-level employability outcomes/skills.

Section Five: Communications and Dissemination Activities

Provide details of any activities or events which have involved liaison or collaboration outside the project consortium, including key project stakeholders. Attach or provide URLs for any appropriate dissemination or presentation materials.

22. Activities at this stage of the project have focussed on dissemination for awareness. In addition to dissemination at Programme and Cluster events the project has been presented at a number of meetings and conferences including:

Dissemination at National Events

23. On 1st July 2009 Paul Horner gave a presentation on Learning Maps at the JISC/CETIS “**Competences for learning, assessment and portfolio**” event held at Manchester Metropolitan University Business School. This included discussion on interoperability in the context of developments in Leap2a and other specifications relevant to the JISC/CETIS community.

http://wiki.cetis.ac.uk/Competences_2009-07-01

24. A poster on Dynamic Learning Maps was presented at “**eLearning in Health: working together to enhance learning**” attended by Paul Horner and Tony McDonald from the project team. This was a well attended event held at Warwick from the 16th – 17th July 2009, and organised by the Higher Education Academy Learning and Teaching in Health Network Group University of Warwick, and King’s College London.

<http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/news-events/eventsbox/2009/elearningcon/>

Dissemination at Regional Events

25. On 25th June 2009 a poster on the project was presented at a “**Clinical Teachers Forum**” attended by clinicians and medical educators from around the North East. The event was attended by a number of the project team and there was considerable interest in Dynamic Learning Maps.

26. A summary of the Learning Maps project was included as part of a presentation by Simon Cotterill and John Moss at the “**North East Regional Teaching and Learning in HE Conference**” held at Durham University on the 1st April 2009. A project flier was also circulated

27. A brief outline of the Learning maps project was included in a presentation by Simon Cotterill at a regional workshop “**Work based learning: Can Technology Help?**” held at Trevelyan College, Durham on 30th January 2009. This was to raise awareness of the project and explain how it built on the outcomes of the JISC funded EPICS-2 project. A project flier was also circulated.

<http://www.epics.ac.uk/forum/?pid=202>

Additional Dissemination

28. Simon Cotterill distributed project fliers at the JISC/Netskills event “**How Can e-Portfolios Support 21st Century Learning?**” held at Newcastle on the 2nd February 2009.

29. The Learning Maps project was outlined by Simon Cotterill in a meeting with the School of Education, Communication & Language Sciences on the 25th February chaired by David Leat, Professor of Curriculum Innovation.

30. In liaison with the MEDEV Subject Centre Simon Cotterill and Tony McDonald attended a dissemination event for the JISC funded HeLMET project (<http://www.medicine.manchester.ac.uk/helmet>) on the 15th April 2009. Simon gave a presentation on Learning Maps as part of a discussion of future developments by both teams from Manchester University and Newcastle University.

31. Simon Cotterill was invited to give a presentation on Learning Maps to School Executive (School of Medical Sciences Education Development) on the 12th May 2009.

Section Six: Evaluation

Provide brief details of progress to date in terms of the development and implementation of the project evaluation plan, including what you feel has worked, what has not, and any aspects you have changed.

Refinement of the project goals and objectives has been a major component of this period's work. Consultant with stakeholders, small focus group user analysis and the external evaluator has been pivotal in developing the project plan.

Please outline the key evaluation activities you will undertake in the next 6 month period. Please tell us briefly, the rationale/purpose for activity, planned method, participants, and timing.

32. The External Evaluator (David Baume) has recommended developing detailed user scenarios as part of the formative evaluation process. We have developed scenarios on how specific stakeholders might engage with Dynamic Learning Maps, including a student, teacher and curriculum manager perspective. These help with refining and clarifying the project aims and objectives.

33. Small scale informal focus groups (mentioned above, point 9) were held with Medical students (n=4). Key points were:

- Very keen on concept
- Would need training, especially for those less confident with IT
- Could it be used as additional feedback from students to lecturers?

☺ "This idea has engaged me from the outset and has potential, I believe, to revolutionise the MBBS course (as well as other courses) in many ways."

☺ From a students point of view, one could be much clearer on 'the big picture', as you have a curriculum map laid out in front of you, it is simpler and easier to find out curriculum content, learning outcomes and formal resources, all linked together, and also seeing how similar topics are interlinked throughout the course."

"It seems a really good idea but it important that we get training on how to use it."

34. In preparation for piloting we will hold additional focus groups of Medical students and teaching staff to discuss the Learning Maps concept and how it might be used in 2 taught units of the programme. This will be use to refine the Dynamic Learning Maps prototype application.

35. Following the initial refinements to the prototype (point 39) additional focus groups will be arranged with students and other stakeholders in Psychology and Speech and Language Sciences.

36. Write-up baseline data and current practices (including points 8 & 10 above)

Section Seven: Issues and Challenges

Report on issues or problems that are impacting on the development and implementation of the project. Detail what impact any issues may have on the achievement of project targets, and set out how you plan to tackle these issues. Report on any unexpected project achievements.

37. The main problem has been the delay in recruiting the Project Officer – now addressed (point 3 above).

38. A key challenge is the diversity of stakeholder requirements, what they want from a mapping tool, differing concepts of what a curriculum map is. This was very evident at the project launch event (point 10 above). It was known that there were differences between disciplines during the bid writing process and it was part of the project design to produce a flexible tool and apply it in different ways (e.g. producing a highly specified granular curriculum map for Medicine v.s. a more skeletal map for psychology) and specifically wanted to pilot with both modular and non-modular programmes. The diversity of requirements should help contribute to a more rounded application, however, some level of cohesion will be required for the project to be a success.

39. Another challenge is getting access to existing institutional data and developing feeds/interoperability with other systems (e.g. VLE) within the time-frame of the project. The project has links with the JISC funded

ID-MAPS project running in parallel at the same institution, which is having an impact in this area.

What strategies have you found useful for engaging stakeholders at this stage of the project?

40. Development of case scenarios and walking stakeholders through concept demonstration systems to identify new issues.

Section Eight: Collaboration and Support

Briefly summarise contact with the programme manager, critical friends and support team, formal or informal links with other projects, programme-related activities, and ways in which you have been able to influence the development of the programme.

41. There has been a regular one-hour monthly meeting with the programme manager and the project team for discussing, agreeing and planning each stage of the project to date. This process has been supplemented with discussions ranging from:

- working up the baseline and evaluation criteria and project objectives with an external evaluator,
- discussing challenges, concepts and techniques with the project's critical friend,
- discussions with academics at conferences
- and informal advice and knowledge interchange with subject centre fro medicine.

Do you have any specific needs, requests or suggestions for support?

No.

Do you have any suggestions for how we could make use of the face-to-face time available at programme meetings? For example:

- *Would you be interested in using the time in small groups, working around specific themes?*
- *Would you be interested in using the time to hear from external experts on specific themes?*
- *Would you be interested in using the time for presentations from projects?*
- *Other...?*

42. One member of the team notes: "I think the option for presentations would be useful is they where short and focussed on what topics the project team would like to explore within small group discussions."

How have you found the process of working with your critical friend and Cluster? Please highlight what has worked well and what hasn't worked as well, and any recommendations for how to improve the process.

43. The opportunity to openly discuss challenges with peers at cluster meetings is a valued (occasionally duplicated at Programme meetings?) and the building of relationships with our Critical Friend has worked well, resulting in useful advice regarding the re-profiling of our project time-line.

Section Nine: Financial Statement

In this section you should detail the expenditure of the project so far. Against the budget headings you should set out the expenditure for the reporting period, noting any significant over/under spend giving reasons for this. You should also state the total expenditure to date against each budget heading. The table below is designed to help this reporting process. Additional budget headings may be added to fit an individual project's budget. Projects may find it more appropriate to use a spreadsheet to report financial information.

Total Grant		Duration of project	
Reporting Period			

Budget Headings	Total budget allocated	Expenditure this reporting period	Total expenditure to date	Further information

Checklist:

Before you return this report:

- Ensure that your project webpage on the JISC site is up to date and contains the correct information. Attach details of any required amendments to this report. Project webpages can be found from: www.jisc.ac.uk/curriculumdelivery
- If there have been any changes to the original project plan and/or work packages, ensure that amended copies of the relevant sections of your project plan are attached to this report.
- Identify and name any areas within this report that you'd like removed before the report is made public (*see below)

***Please note** the interim reports will be made available on the JISC website and on the Circle site with the budgetary information removed. We recognise that projects may occasionally address very sensitive issues. We would like you to present as full a picture in this report as you can as the lessons you learn are valuable to us. We assure you that any issues you identify as confidential are removed before the report is made public. Where such issues do represent valuable lessons for the community we will involve you in further discussion as to how they could be passed on without identifying institutions or individuals.