

## Interim Reporting Template

<b>Project Name</b>	Coeducate
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<b>With contributions from</b>	Others who have contributed information for the report
<b>Reporting period</b>	Project start - October 2009
<b>Section One: Summary</b>	
<p>The overall project methodology has served us well in providing a significant amount of time to allow us to 'understand the curriculum development problem' at the University of Bolton (UoB), project objective 1, and through the activities associated with this also raises awareness &amp; build capacity for critical examination of the UoB curricula starting to address project objective 4.</p> <p>Although it is too early to make any definitive conclusions, the following observations have been offered to the UoB for their consideration and as a basis for planned actions:</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. The University's validation procedure is fit for purpose, and does not pose any significant obstacles for curriculum development of the sort proposed by the project</li> <li>3. There is some concern that module information is held in several databases that do not update each other; a technical intervention could result in a more efficient process</li> <li>4. Many module descriptions can be interpreted in different ways, with different emphases; the main implication is that if multiple instances are offered of a module, there needs to be a high level of coordination between those teaching them and in the setting of assessments if bias is to be avoided</li> <li>5. This is likely to be even more the case in process-oriented modules.</li> </ol> <p>[REDACTED] Coeducate has made good progress with the development of new courses based up the Interdisciplinary Inquiry-based <a href="#">framework</a> (IDIBL). A successful pilot course 'Masters in Learning with Technology' delivered by the <a href="#">Institute for Educational Cybernetics</a> (IEC) has run for one year. In February 2010, two further schools will begin piloting courses based on the IDIBL framework.</p> <p>It is worth drawing attention to point 2 in that we had anticipated in the project plan that there would be a significant amount of work to be undertaken around validation processes but, at this stage, this appears not to be the case.</p> <p>Points 4 and 5 are highly significant for the Coeducate project. Like most universities, Bolton offers a predominantly traditional, face-to-face experience. Many modules usually have only one concurrent instance, resulting in a single interpretation of the course content and assessments that are inevitably bound to the specific instance – a prescribed unit of learning as defined by the teacher. A large number of modules involve a large quantity of assessments, and are not sufficiently focused on the efficient assessment of learning outcomes. This makes it even more likely that multiple concurrent instances of modules would inevitably diverge. So the problem is not with quality processes, but with practice that relies on individual interpretation of course content.</p> <p>We have identified a preferred approach to tackling this problem which is to develop modules in 'open learning' formats, including module descriptions, course materials and formative assessments, which would allow modules to be supported by different staff with limited variation. However, the exact nature of the formats will require a significant effort to determine its exact format so as not to be overly prescriptive and de-professionalise the role of the teacher.</p> <p>Clearly, moving to this position is a serious challenge for any institution. As a starting point we</p>	

have the backing of the senior management team to run a 20 credit Continuing Professional Development (CPD) module to 8/10 UoB staff on the development of open learning modules. Two staff members from each school will be invited to participate, and they will be paid overtime from project funds. It is envisaged that the module will involve 12 three-hour sessions and will have expert guest speakers to support the inquiry-based curriculum. The aim is to collaboratively develop a model for "Bolton Open Learning", and then for these staff to champion this within their schools.

A technological intervention is planned to address points 3 and 4. This will involve tools to support a model for developing open learning courses as well as some work to better integrate critical curriculum and module development systems to make processes more efficient and improve the quality of planning and decision-making. A key component of this work will be to make it possible for a broader base people and organisations to participate in the course development process.

### **Section Two: Activities and Progress**

The overall project approach remains as outlined in the project plan. However, the emphasis of work undertaken by the project team over the coming year will reflect the circumstances outlined in section one.

A detailed account of the project activities to-date can be found in the Baseline Report, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009. Briefly, this required a strategy to be developed based on Participatory Action Research to find out about the initial situation through various approaches including interviews, focus groups, analysis of documentation and modelling of business processes and technical and organisational systems.

The team listed in the project plan or people in their roles are will remain significantly involved in the project as do the aims, objectives technical approach, deliverables workpackages & milestones. To strengthen the external overview of the project, Martin Weston who is an associate of fdf has agreed to join the steering group from January of 2010.

### **Section Three: Outputs and Deliverables**

## Institutional Approaches to Curriculum Design Programme

Expected outputs:

Output	Audience
1. A number of discoverable and interoperable learning technology tools (widgets) that would enhance course design	Curriculum developers, learning support staff and IT staff in other Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Based on the <a href="#">Wookie Widget Server</a> using w3c (XML spec) providing the facility for aggregating instantiations of widgets authenticated against individuals and accessible through open technologies such as Wordpress & Moodle.
2. Open learning course on “Planning and Developing Distance Learning Courses”, level 7, 20 credits	Curriculum developers and learning support staff in other HEI.
3. Curriculum development ‘Bolton Open Learning’ handbook’ as an outcome of course above.	Curriculum developers and learning support staff in other HEI.
4. Integrated course development system	Curriculum developers, learning support staff and IT staff in other HEI. This will integrate a number of different technological platforms at the UoB (course management and marketing databases) as well as incorporate other tools to help academics plan courses collaboratively including with employers. In particular we hope to draw on the work of other Jisc projects including Phoebe and the Viewpoints Curriculum Design project at the University of Ulster.
5. Evaluative reports of curriculum initiatives including the IDIBL project and the Professional Development Framework	Curriculum developers and learning support staff in other HEI.

### Section Four: Outcomes and Lessons Learned

One of the most surprising findings from our work is that apart from a few ‘rough edges’ the validation regulations and process are reasonably agile and responsive. We believe that technology does have a role to play in supporting the creative process of designing new courses and of saving labour, but the validation processes themselves are in reasonable shape – they don’t inhibit change.



### Section Five: Communications and Dissemination Activities

- CAL 2009 Conference Paper Presentation, 23<sup>rd</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> March
- January 2009 NUCCAT workshop  
<http://www.nuccat.ac.uk/NUCCAT%20workshop%20full%20brochure%202008-09.pdf>
- Regular Blog posts <http://coeducate.bolton.ac.uk/>
- IDIBL project – approach integral to Coeducate  
<http://resources.glos.ac.uk/ceal/resources/casestudiesactivelearning/undergraduate/casestudy11.cfm>
- CRA Board Presentation 20th February 2009
- SITE panel presentation, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2009
- Edusummit, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009
- Ulearn presentation, Christchurch, 6<sup>th</sup> Oct 2009
- John Parkinson, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Director, Northgate Education 21<sup>st</sup> October

### **Section Six: Evaluation**

Baseline activities have enabled us to gain a good understanding of the ‘problem’ of curriculum development at the University of Bolton and these are detailed in the Baseline Report, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2009. Modelling activities are continuing as we seek to develop our high level ‘table top’ view of the UoB enterprises with more detailed drilling down where we believe that there is the potential to identify key interventions that will yield gains in terms of efficiency and quality.

Findings have been shared with stakeholder groups including senior managers to validate the problem identified and the plan of actions for the coming academic year. Activities to date have included around 10% of the UoB teaching staff in discussions and awareness raising and planned activities for this academic year will see that number raise further. Courses have been validated using inquiry-based approaches based on the IDIBL framework that has enabled us to begin to develop models for initiating new curriculum approaches. As these courses recruit in departments across the university we will gain experience of delivery and will be able to say with more confidence what impact this is having across the university.

### **Section Seven: Issues and Challenges**

No significant issues thus far that are impacting on our ability to develop or implement the project other than that which might be anticipated - change is difficult!

Stating the obvious about engaging with stakeholders, but:

- be supportive, friendly and listen;
- have some good and creative ideas about how to solve their problems as well as your own – people like to talk about solutions best.

### **Section Eight: Collaboration and Support**



## Institutional Approaches to Curriculum Design Programme

Travel and subsistence				
Equipment				
Dissemination activities				
Evaluation activities				
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### 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/curriculumdesign](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/curriculumdesign)
- 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.