



Project Document Cover Sheet

Project Information			
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Partner Institutions			
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Interim Reporting Template

Project Name: T-SPARC Project at Birmingham City University

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Reporting period: November 2009 – April 2010

Section One: Summary

The project remains on target, with little deviation from plans outlined in previous documents. Progress has been made in relation to:

- Wider consultation with stakeholders, particularly the engagement of students through the development of a new stream of work – The Learning Community Initiative.
- Business process mapping of our review and approval procedures. This has informed the development of proposals for new processes.
- The purchase of some equipment to facilitate stakeholder engagement.
- Identification of staff development needs.

Some minor changes to the project team are reported, the net effect of these changes is that the project has a slightly higher staffing level than before.

Some of scheduled activity for the project has had to be modified (to be carried out sooner) to fit in with other University priorities.

Section Two: Activities and Progress

Following on from the document we offered for the last reporting period we offer a summary of our progress with reference to the phasing of the project as laid out in section 3.3 of our Project Initiation Document:

In relation to *'Review of current processes and practice'*:

The review of the 'lived experience' of curriculum design as described in the last report has been disseminated at high levels within the University – to the Working Group responsible for the development of new institutional approval and review mechanisms and then directly to senior and middle management of three of the six faculties (by invitation). Presentation to the University's Learning and Teaching Committee is pending (due 18th May 2010).

Additionally the review was used as part of the preparation for an event with each of the Faculty's Senior Learning and Teaching Fellows. This event (20th January 2010) sought to engage faculty representation in the design of a plan to engage a wider cross-section of academic staff in the aims of the project. This in turn has led to the planning of six events through which we will seek to escalate the engagement of our staff in the aims of the project.

We are holding these events on:

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- Friday 14th May 2010
- Monday 24th May 2010
- Tuesday 1st June 2010
- Wednesday 2nd June 2010
- Thursday 3rd June 2010
- Friday 4th June 2010

In our last report we noted that we had developed an outline business process map of our institutional approval and review mechanisms; this work has been developed further leading to the authoring of two comprehensive process maps – one for our approval processes and one for our review processes. These process maps will be used as artefacts for discussion, comment and stakeholder review at each of the above events.

Additionally, parallel but more detailed versions of the process maps are being developed for the purpose of product specification in collaboration with our Corporate Information and Communications Technology (CICT) Department. These versions will inform the development of our use of SharePoint to facilitate the workflows associated with the production and sharing of the definitive documentation related to the curriculum design and programme approval / review processes.

These more detailed versions will additionally represent personnel roles and the specification of the documentary artefacts to be shared. Hybrid business process modelling techniques are being explored by the project team to support this work.

In addition to being asked to critique our business processes and feed back on our representations, participants of the above events will be exposed to a number of technologies that may support their curriculum design activity. We will seek to 'sign up' some programme teams to undertake some mini-piloting of some of these technologies in advance of the full piloting of a more complete suite of resources later in the project.

In relation to *'Understanding the issues and identifying the changes desired by the end of the project'*:

As described in our previous report, two main strands of work have been conducted:

1. Multimedia review:
This review attempted to share, through the use of indicative video clips, the 'lived experience' of curriculum design. Factors that impact on curriculum design practice were identified and organised into sixteen themes. This multimedia artefact continues to be of use in catalysing debate around curriculum design and programme approval.
2. Evaluation of RoLEx:

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Three overlapping themed work streams emerged from our evaluation of the RoLEx process. They were:

- Learning community
- New ways of working
- Staff development

We can report progress on each of these work streams:

Learning community:

A major University initiative has been launched within this reporting period – this initiative, designed with cross-faculty collaboration and in full partnership with the University's Students' Union seeks to engage students in co-creation of the curriculum. The main vehicle for this engagement is the Student Academic Partners (SAP) scheme, which allows for the employment of student partners to work with academic staff to develop or evaluate aspects of learning and teaching.

Although this scheme, in its current pilot form, pays students from funds outside the T-SPARC Project, members of the T-SPARC team are heavily engaged in the facilitation of the scheme. Additionally, a number of new SAP opportunities funded by T-SPARC are planned; this will allow us to engage students in the ongoing framing of the project.

New ways of working:

By way of a pilot, an event to catalyse the further development of collaborative working between staff and students will take place in the Business School across the 12th and 13th of May. This event will support an institutional change agenda. Again, although this event is funded from outside the T-SPARC budget, members of the project team have contributed to its planning and we will be interested to learn what we can from this pilot, with a view to funding other such events should we consider the model has potential in forwarding the aims of the project.

Staff Development:

The T-SPARC project has facilitated a number of opportunities for conversations about curriculum design to take place. As a consequence, we have identified a need for enhanced staff support in relation to assessment design. In response to this need, we are in the early stages of developing a staff development course, as part of our MA Education, in assessment design.

In parallel with the T-SPARC project, colleagues within the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching are developing a new technology-based resource: 'Learning Activity Designer'. This resource allows staff build representations of curriculum designs all the way down to the sessional level.

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We feel there is tremendous potential in this tool for technology-supported curriculum design – our initial ideas for potential use include:

- Bridging the design spaces between curriculum design levels – programme, module and session.
- Educating staff as to the affordances of various tools and teaching techniques at their disposal.
- Producing representations of curriculum design for the purposes of providing a focus for discussion on potential designs.
- Producing representations of proposed designs for the purpose of informing programme review and approval.
- Produce representations of designs that demonstrate clearly the alignment (or otherwise) of learning opportunities and assessment.
- Producing accurate representations of designs that have run for purposes of evaluation by stakeholders.

This tool will be made available to programme teams as part of the suite of technology based tools we will offer to support curriculum design.

In addition to the two strands of work (1 and 2 above), we can now report on an embryonic third stream of activity:

3. Engaging with students in the rejuvenation of curriculum design:

Although many of the activities reported above relate to the engagement of students in the ongoing framing of the T-SPARC project, we have taken a decision to bolster our capacity to carry out such work. We have purchased a number of technology-based resources to facilitate this work:

- 70 Flip video cameras
- 30 MP3 audio recorders
- 3 Voxur units (following a discussion with JISC CETIS)

In our initial plans we had indicated an intention to commission three fixed video pod / rooms for the purposes of collecting student feedback on a number of issues. However, as the project team has come to understand stakeholder engagement more fully, through our adaptation of the Ladder of Engagement model, we have come to the conclusion that we needed to be more flexible in how we facilitated this engagement; we need to ensure that the methods we adopt minimise the ‘distance’ between the students we engage and the staff who will be acting upon the outputs of such engagement.

These technologies will be made available to programme teams for piloting and will, in the first instance, be introduced to the participants of the six consultation days detailed above and the culture change event to be piloted within the Business School – although we will support staff in their use, we remain open-minded as to the precise way these resources will be used. We will, at all times, encourage stakeholders to try to appropriate the resources in ways that will work for them and with reference to the

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Ladder of Engagement, will encourage teams to use the available technology to enable students to make a meaningful contribution to curriculum development.

In relation to *'Planning innovations in curriculum design processes to realise desired changes'*:

Our software infrastructure (as it relates to the T-SPARC project) is broadly in place. Although SharePoint is installed, configuration to the specific purposes of the T-SPARC project is pending. Business process modelling of our current curriculum review and approval workflows has taken place in consultation with our CICT department and once consultation for new workflows has concluded, these will be reworked to represent the new workflows and to act as part of the product specifications for CICT.

In relation to *'Piloting the innovations'*:

The consultation events detailed above have been designed to introduce many of the technologies we are making available to programme teams. An opportunity to pilot technologies is being offered in two ways:

- Through the offering of early 'mini-pilots' of individual technologies to programme teams – e.g. piloting of Flip cameras or Voxur units to programme teams for the collection of student data. This form of piloting is being offered in response to a suggestion made by the University's Senior Learning and Teaching Fellows at the consultation event that took place on the 20th January.
- Through the offering of participation in a curriculum design 'jamboree', currently planned for July 2010, whereby curriculum design challenges, specific to a particular programme team, will be presented to a group of experts who will then consider the issues and suggest a selection of technology based tools to address the team's issues. The T-SPARC team are hoping to make available expertise from the other curriculum design projects as part of this event. Liaison with other project teams is ongoing at the time of writing this report.

In relation to *'Evaluation of the new processes'*:

In our previous report, we stated that extensive evaluation of the process of undertaking curriculum design was conducted by the RoLEx Evaluation Group (albeit within the specific context of the RoLEx agenda). This data has directly informed our activity this year, leading to the running of a culture change workshop and the inception of the Student Academic Partners Scheme.

We also reported on the collection of narrative accounts as part of a multimedia 'baseline' review, this activity yielded data that has been fed into the working group tasked with changing the programme approval process; this in turn has led to further consultation events which themselves will inform the ongoing redesign of our approval processes.

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The offer to participate in early 'mini-pilots' includes the offer for programme teams to be supported in their evaluation of the tools they choose to use. We will seek to evaluate technology use patterns and to report on the impact the introduction of such technology has in supporting curriculum design.

In relation to '*Embedding the innovations and planning for sustainability*':

Progress towards embedding the conclusions of the consultation events into University's arrangements and mechanisms for programme approval and review is well developed. New proposals are scheduled to be put before the University's Academic Standards and Quality and Enhancement Committee and the University's Senate in July 2010 – for implementation from September 2010. Although it is likely that many of the processes will remain 'manual' in nature – the pattern of workflow will be established and automation of these processes (largely through our implementation of SharePoint) will become a focus for the T-SPARC team in the 2010 / 2011 academic year.

Section Three: Risks, Issues and Opportunities

Each item of our initial risk analysis is discussed below with reference to our current context:

- There is a risk that critical, identified resource is not available for specified stages of the project e.g. caused by illness, allocated to other projects, overloaded with other tasks from inside and outside the project:

Competing demands of the time of the project staff is an ongoing issue, with staff being hived off to work on parallel work streams fairly frequently. Although this has some limited impact on delivering against the schedule of the project, this risk is offset by:

- The advantage of the aims of the T-SPARC project being represented in a wider range of institutional contexts than might otherwise be possible.
 - Better team awareness of how the T-SPARC project may interface with other work.
 - The willingness of the JISC to accommodate some degree of later reporting when flexibility is required.
- Human resources not to the identified and required expertise:

A Project Officer was formally appointed in February 2010 to provide support for the T-SPARC project (following a period of employing the same individual through an employment agency). The appointee was then seconded to Academic Registry to work on the development of a new format for student handbooks. A member of staff from the Faculty of Health has been seconded to the project for 12 months as a replacement.

Unexpected opportunity: The new secondee has significant expertise in administration at the University and this has increased the capacity for the inclusion of administrative and support staff in the development of the project.

Realisation of risk: The new secondee lacked some of the awareness of the context of the project and our cluster.

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Mitigation: We have sought to include the new secondee in programme and cluster level events and have retained the services of our seconded Project Officer for one day per week to help facilitate some continuity.

- Identified technical products/ platforms not of required quality to progress project:

A potential risk remains here, though we now have good uptake of Mahara within the University that has allowed us to develop a higher confidence level in the software. Institutional commitment to this software is high and we have (outside of T-SPARC funding) commissioned some development work with an external company to build some additional features into Mahara. These desired features emerged from feedback from academic users. Uptake on the system by students has been strong and this is beginning to generate questions regarding the scalability of our current systems. This issue will be communicated to CICT in the first instance.

SharePoint remains somewhat an unknown quantity for T-SPARC; we continue to develop process maps and to work with CICT and have received reassurances that SharePoint can support the processes that are beginning to be envisaged. We have become aware of the use of SharePoint by the University of Southern Queensland for similar purposes to our own requirements. Until we actually begin to deploy SharePoint facilitated workflows, we will have limited opportunity to re-evaluate risk in this area of the T-SPARC project.

- Institutional re-organisation:

The project continues to have good institutional support. As the project is closely aligned with the wider RoLEx process, which is a key priority of the University we have received significant support from senior management.

Ongoing restructuring across the University in response to changing business needs, both locally and across the wider sector creates a challenging context within which to engage stakeholders in 'additional' change. We have tried to incentivise engagement by offering multiple opportunities and ways to engage, so as to fit in with the needs of our stakeholders.

- More transparent systems being regarded by some members of staff as offering a potential mechanism for monitoring the activities of staff:

We are aware that the representation of course design development and processes through technology may create an environment in which staff feel exposed and potentially vulnerable. In line with our stakeholder engagement model we are therefore seeking to generate buy-in for the philosophy of the project through the meetings with L&T Fellows across faculties and through the away days that are open to all Programme Directors and other interested academic staff. We hope to utilise the away days to develop an understanding of the values behind the representation of programmes in this way whilst being sensitive to any concerns held by staff.

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- Complexity of project content:

We have found that successful communication of the philosophy behind the project has been best achieved where we have engaged in dialogue with course teams and been able to relate the project to their specific programme context. The consultation events will provide an opportunity for these discussions to take place and for deep understanding to be developed.

Opportunity: As mentioned above, it is fairly commonplace for T-SPARC project team members to become engaged in other agenda within the University and that these activities often create opportunities for tighter integration between T-SPARC and other University business.

Risk: It has become increasingly difficult for all members of the T-SPARC team to have oversight of all the work streams across the University that overlap with the T-SPARC aims. As a consequence, the authoring of this interim report has been delayed. Although the work had been distributed to other project members, only the Project Manager had been sufficiently exposed to all of the overlapping areas of work and thus needed to take over the writing of the report at a late stage.

Mitigation: It is acknowledged that the project team will need to develop mechanisms for more effective sharing of peri-project developments and to take steps to ensure that team members other than the Project Manager will be more aware of overlapping University work and will be able to fully contribute to formal report writing in the future.

- Scope of project expands:

Our project's approach to stakeholder engagement has led to a shift in the scope of the project as we seek primarily to develop processes that are shaped by the needs those who will use them rather than the technology available. Where possible, in line with our philosophy, we have sought to utilise technology to empower students and staff, which has led to a greater focus on culture change. It is anticipated that this shift in focus will enable greater and more sustained change for curriculum design at the University.

As detailed above, project team members are frequently exposed to parallel initiatives within the University and their agency becomes deployed in this new work. Curriculum design in any university is a pervasive activity and as such, is not easily bounded within the fixed aims of a funded project such as T-SPARC. Although such 'project creep' could be seen as problematic, the opportunities to influence wider issues and to facilitate integration of T-SPARC aims with other University agendas offers a degree of sustainability that would be difficult to achieve by other means.

By way of mitigation, the project team will continue to ensure the 'core' aims of the project and the critical success factors as laid out in the project initiation document remain on-target to be delivered, while remaining open to making contributions to parallel University agendas.

- Integration of the project timescale with other institutional departments and priorities:

No change in risk is perceived against this item. Minor changes in timing to some consultation events has had to occur so that findings can more easily be accommodated into the work of the University group responsible for changing the programme review and approval mechanisms. The enhancement to the sustainability of the aims of the project greatly outweighs the slight change to our plans.

Section Four: Outputs and Deliverables

Outputs arising from the project are listed below:

- A multimedia review sharing, through the use of indicative video clips, the 'lived experience' of curriculum design. The review is organised around sixteen themes:

http://moodle.bcu.ac.uk/file.php/260/Amended_Review/Review%20Amended/T-SPARC_Review/Introduction.html

Videos from this review have been made available via the T-SPARC YouTube channel (see section seven).*

- 'Video lecture' style video resources relating to curriculum design; these resources still need to be reviewed by external agency before we release them to the wider community.
- A model for stakeholder engagement adapted from the ladder of engagement (Rudd et al, 2006) expanded to include anticipated outcomes of indicative activity.
- Business process maps of our current institutional approval and re-approval have been developed and have been uploaded to 'Circle'. These maps are being used internally as a focus for consultation and will be replaced by new maps once our new processes have been developed. The current maps therefore represent the first half of a 'before & after' process mapping artefact.*
- Based on our developing focus on student engagement in curriculum design we are developing a series of 'how to' guides aimed at students and staff, exploring approaches to the use of technology to support student engagement. These resources are being developed in collaboration with the staff and students involved in our pilot work.*

*Produced in this reporting period.

Section Five: Evaluation

Much of our evaluation work continues to be located around a review of existing systems and processes – albeit with more detailed representations of these processes available to staff through the sharing of the business process maps we have generated. Gathering very rich narrative data on how people live with current processes and what their aspirations for new process are is a core (and key) activity for this phase of the project.

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This is consistent with the activity we predicted in our last report:

‘In the next six months we will conduct a more thorough evaluation of communication practice as it relates to curriculum design and work with our stakeholders to develop ways in which technology can play a part in making curriculum design workflows more effective and more efficient. The purpose of this evaluation activity will be to begin to develop ‘product specifications’ in the form of technology supported workflows and so generate work packages for the delivery and piloting of these processes.’

This activity is being actioned through the consultation days mentioned above. Since this report is a little late in being submitted to the JISC, the first event has taken place and it would seem useful to share an outline of the process and outcomes of that first event here:

Following a brief presentation on the aims of T-SPARC:

- Participants were presented with a table-sized process map of the programme approval process and asked to annotate it – both for accuracy of representation and by way of critiquing existing processes. A facilitator observed the group and made notes relating to the discussion this activity catalysed.
- Participants made responses to the questions below and recorded their rationale for their choices on video camera:

For each of the 16 questions, choices were recorded along a visual analogue scale between the two statements / words at either end of the scale:

Current opportunities for engaging with students during course design are:	
Insufficient	Sufficient
Staff uptake of current opportunities for engaging with students during course design are:	
Under used	Well Used
Student uptake of current opportunities to engage in course design are:	
Under used	Well used
Current opportunities for engaging with employers during course design are:	
Insufficient	Sufficient
Staff uptake of current opportunities for engaging with employers during course design are:	
Under used	Well used
Employer uptake of current opportunities to engage in course design are:	
Under used	Well used
Current opportunities for engaging with other members of the programme team during course design are:	
Insufficient	Sufficient
Staff uptake of current opportunities for engaging with other members of the programme team during course design are:	
Under used	Well used
Opportunities for staff to have rich and useful (formative) dialogue with members of an approval panel are:	
Insufficient	Sufficient
Opportunities for staff to have rich and useful (formative) dialogue with members of an approval panel are:	
Under used	Well used
Definitive programme documentation is produced:	

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Last minute	As we go along
The institution's approach to encouraging innovation in curricula design:	
Creates barriers	Makes it easy
My faculty's approach to encouraging innovation in curricula designs:	
Creates barriers	Makes it easy
My overall satisfaction with the way we currently <i>design</i> courses:	
Dissatisfied	Satisfied
My overall satisfaction with the way courses are <i>approved</i> :	
Dissatisfied	Satisfied
Once a course has been approved:	
There is a lot of work still to be done	It is ready to run

The video data from this phase of each of the consultation days will be subject to thematic analysis – coding criteria will emerge from the data set.

- Participants then focussed on what they wanted from new processes that support curriculum design and approval and were invited to discuss their aspirations in pairs and collaborate to generate ten key words or statements.

All of the data from this first event will be collated with data from the remaining events and shared in the next report.

In other areas, such as the new Student Academic Partners scheme, other evaluation methodologies are being deployed – by way of offering an example of the sort of evaluation work we are conducting; an overview of the full evaluation methodology and underpinning rationale is offered below:

Student Academic Partners (SAP) Scheme Evaluation Overview

Paradigm

The development and implementation of the scheme is prompted by the desire for a culture change in the institution that enables the development of new forms of relationship between students and staff. The evaluation of the SAP scheme will be located within the interpretive paradigm in order to explore and develop understanding of the culture generated by the scheme.

Working within an interpretive paradigm we will seek to investigate individuals (the student partners, academic staff and others stakeholders) experiences of the scheme in order to develop evidence to inform the development of future initiatives (including T-SPARC specific SAP projects).

Research questions

Overarching question:

- What is the impact of the Student Academic Partner Scheme on students, academic staff and the institution? In terms of operation and interaction and outcomes.

Sub-questions:

- How is the SAP scheme experienced by participants?
- What are the factors that support student/staff partnership within the scheme?
- What are the factors that limit student/staff partnership within the scheme?
- Does the scheme impact on the collaborative environment of the University?
- How do student and academic partnerships in the scheme relate to existing models of community/partnership?

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- How do existing theoretical perspectives on partnership, relate to the scheme?
- What are the 'voices' involved in the scheme? Does the scheme develop student voice?

Methodology - Case study research

The methodology of the research will be based on a case study model in order to consider the implications of the scheme in its current format. There are a number of aspects of case study methodology that are a good fit for evaluating this work:

- The collection of empirical data - the use of sound empirical data in this evaluation is important for the credibility of the research internally, for the informed development of the scheme and for external validity.
- The investigation of the phenomenon within its 'real-life' context - one of the intentions of the scheme is to engender a culture change between students and academics at the University. In order to evaluate the extent that this has taken place it will be important to consider the 'lived experience' of those involved in the scheme within their own specific context.
- The use of multiple sources of evidence - in order to develop an authentic evaluation which provides insight into the experience of the scheme in a variety of different institutional contexts it will be important to bring together a number of sources and formats of data to inform the evaluation.

As far as possible, the interpretation of the data will be grounded in the experiences of the individuals involved in the evaluation. In order to develop an evaluation that represents the experience across the University a spread of 14 case studies will be selected including at least two projects from each University faculty. The final evaluation will be shared with all SAP projects to enable the partners involved, and those who are not chosen as case studies, to comment on the conclusions drawn.

Methods

The evaluation of the project will make use of a variety of triangulated evidence including; the original documentation for the scheme, project applications, notes gathered during the series of meetings held with student and staff academic partners and a number of in-depth interviews

Theoretical approaches

There are a number of partnership and co-production theories that may inform the analysis of the data collected. The initial approach to this evaluation will be to collect grounded data potentially using 'realistic evaluation' (What worked? For whom? In what circumstances?). It is thought that this approach may provide a useful lens through which to begin to consider the data.

Timescale for activity

Dates – week beginning	Activity	Evaluation purpose
15 th Feb 2010	Meetings with SAP teams	Brief introduction to the case study design of the evaluation and teams informed that requests for participation will be issued (projects have been previously informed that they will be required to participate

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		in evaluation activity but formal consent will be obtained at this stage).
March 2010	Review of application data	To identify the initial values and intentions of a project
9 th March – April 2010	Initial interview with students/academics – exploration of initial expectations	To establish some initial understanding of how the scheme has been perceived and implemented by students and staff
May 2010	Recruitment of student partners for the evaluation	To support the evaluation
	Follow up interviews (face to face, online or by phone) at the mid way and end points of the projects	To establish the development of the projects and scheme as perceived by the students and staff involved
	Poster presentation of outcomes – template completed by project teams	To establish project outcomes

Interviews

Initial interview will take place during the first few weeks of the project. Where possible staff and student partners will be individually but there may be times when interviews take place in a project team, this will be made clear when the data is reported. Interviews will be recorded on a digital voice recorder and written up as transcripts.

Interview questions for student partners

1. Would you mind introducing yourself for the tape and telling me a little but about your project?
2. What were your motivations for getting involved with the project?
3. How have you been getting on with the project so far?
4. Could you tell me a bit about how you've found working with your staff partner?
5. What have you most enjoyed about the project so far?
6. What has been the most challenging?
7. Do you feel you have gained or lost anything through your involvement in the project so far?
8. Anything else, administration, is there anything we should be thinking about for when we run the scheme again?

Interview questions for staff partners

1. Would you mind introducing yourself for the tape and telling me a little but about your project?
2. What were your motivations for getting involved with the project?
3. How have you been getting on with the project so far?

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4. Could you tell me a bit about how you've found working with your student partner?
5. What have you most enjoyed about the project so far?
6. What has been the most challenging?
7. Do you feel you have gained or lost anything through your involvement in the project so far?
8. Anything else, administration, is there anything we should be thinking about for when we run the scheme again?

Although final output data is not available at the time writing this report, the above account is offered by way of sharing an example of some of the approaches we are taking to collect and share narrative data. Similar techniques will be used, as appropriate, with other facets of the T-SPARC work.

Following a conversation with colleagues at JISC CETIS we have purchased three Voxur units (<http://www.voxur.com/>), we anticipate using these extensively in evaluating the work of T-SPARC.

In addition to structured evaluation activities detailed above, periodic team reflections are posted on the project blog (<http://blogs.test.bcu.ac.uk/tsparc/>), through Twitter at http://twitter.com/TSPARC_BCU and for our own reflective purposes on the daily log of our SharePoint project team site.

Over the next six months we will need to:

- Continue to evaluate the techniques we have used to engage stakeholders in the aims of the project.

and

- Evaluate the use of the technologies we are beginning to make available to staff (the mini pilots).

It is likely that this phase of our work will continue to be evaluated through the collection, collation and analysis of narrative accounts through methods similar to those described above.

Section Six: Outcomes and Lessons Learned

Managing the Project

The T-SPARC project has a particularly broad remit, even taking into account the broad aims of the Institutional Approaches to Curriculum Design programme. As such members of the project team have become embroiled in parallel activity around the institution – these activities include:

- Input into the Working Group tasked with overseeing changes to the programme review and approval mechanisms.
- Input into various University committees.
- The design of new formats for definitive programme documentation.

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These activities enhance the sustainability of the project by ensuring that we articulate our work fully with other University business. Although team participation in these activities has little negative effect on the day-to-day management of the project, it does create challenges for the production of reports (such as this one) since only the Project Manager is involved across all of the parallel initiatives. As mentioned above, the team are exploring ways to share better their knowledge of all aspects of the project and parallel activities so that reporting can become a more distributed process.

Stakeholder engagement:

Stakeholder engagement in curricula design, and in the manifestation of the aims of T-SPARC is a key development area for the project. In relation to the 'Ladder of Engagement' model: the 'consult' level has traditionally been the highest level to which people aspire. We have noted the low aspirations many involved in curriculum design have of the potential of stakeholder engagement.

Catalysing engagement to the levels described on the 'Ladder of Engagement' model as 'involve' and 'collaborate' will require some work to re-frame notions of engagement. Current practice in the University seldom leads to anything above 'consult' - and where 'consultation' takes place it is cited as 'effective practice'.

Through the Learning Community initiative a number of projects are seeking to challenge notions and expectations of stakeholder engagement and we intend to utilise some of these approaches within the T-SPARC project. In particular a re-evaluation of the approach to the facilitation of student engagement in curriculum design has been necessary to ensure that staff consider students as meaningful co-contributors to the design process. Similarly within the baseline evaluation we found that where employers were engaged in curriculum design on a more informal, dialogical level more meaningful contributions and long term relationships were developed as a result.

Overall, the problem space of the project has not changed significantly during the reporting period. It was very broad from its inception.

Section Seven: Communication and Dissemination Activities

We continue to use the following tools for ongoing dissemination of the project:

- A WordPress Blog - <http://blogs.test.bcu.ac.uk/tsparc/>
- Twitter - http://twitter.com/TSPARC_BCU
- Moodle (currently limited to hosting our 'baseline' review)
- Mahara (currently limited to hosting the multimedia content embedded in our 'baseline' review)
- YouTube - <http://www.youtube.com/user/TSPARC>
- Circle - <http://www.circlespace.net/>

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Twitter appears to be particularly effective in catalysing engagement between projects – ‘tweeted’ comments will often include links to more substantial pieces of information and accessing these frequently catalyses further cross-project dialogue.

There is a good deal of useful information on Circle but navigation around the site is not as intuitive as it might be.

Some projects have utilised Netvibes to collate various feeds of information – this is an effective approach to making a lot of information available from a single point.

A session entitled ‘The CAMEL Trail’ at SEDA Spring Conference, took place in May 2010. Our workshop offered an overview of the CAMEL approach and some reflection regarding the benefits and challenges of the format. Participants identified areas where they felt the approach could be utilised in their own institutions and across the HE sector.

At the 2010 JISC conference, a member of the T-SPARC ran a poster / discussion session focussing on engaging stakeholders in curriculum design.

Following the success of last years session at ALT-C ‘Herding Cats? Engaging Stakeholders in Complex Institutional Change Projects’ - September 2009, Cluster B has been accepted to offer a poster at ALT-C 2010, ‘A rich and strange journey of involvement, influence and change across five HEI’s’.

In addition the Cluster have begun to consider writing for publication and will spend a portion of the next Cluster meeting in September working on a number of proposals.

Section Eight: Collaboration and Support

We have been well supported by the programme manager; her continuing support, understanding and flexibility are of great value to the project team. Colleagues from JISC CETIS, JISC Infonet and Inspire Research have also been very helpful. I think this help is particularly apparent in the way in which our chosen approach to evaluation has been accommodated.

Contact with our critical friend has occurred through engagement with our cluster, which communicates often through a variety of methods, both electronically and face to face. It is due to his agency, in no small part, that our cluster has had a number of collaborative outputs and has supported one another on a variety of issues.

The T-SPARC Project Manager was invited to participate in the May Curriculum Delivery meeting – this was highly useful, generating a number of ideas to take back to his institution. Such meetings are a real asset and opening them up to interested parties outside of the respective programmes may add a good deal of value to the sector.

Section Nine: Financial Statement

Total Grant	██████████	Duration of project	45 Months
Reporting Period	November 2009 – May 2010		

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Budget Headings	Total budget allocated	Expenditure this reporting period	Total expenditure to date	Further information
Staff	██████	██████	██████	Funds being rolled forward for employment of students to further project aims
Travel & Subsistence	██████	██████	██████	
Equipment	██████	██████	██████	Further equipment purchases expected in June/July 2010
Dissemination activities	██████	██████	██████	Expected increase in dissemination activity in later part of funding period
Evaluation activities	██████	██	██	Additional costs reflected in staff and equipment costs.
Other (please specify)	██████	██	██	Costs associated with planned Curriculum Design Jamboree will be incurred

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
- 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.