



Project Document Cover Sheet

Project Information

| Project Information | | | |
|--|---|-----------------|-----------|
| Project Acronym | | | |
| Project Title | Viewpoints Project, University of Ulster | | |
| Start Date | October 2009 | End Date | July 2012 |
| Lead Institution | University of Ulster | | |
| Project Director | Dr Alan Masson | | |
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| Partner Institutions | | | |
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| Programme Name (and number) | Institutional approaches to curriculum design (05/08) | | |
| Programme Manager | Sarah Knight | | |

Document Name

| Document Name | | | |
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Interim Report

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Project Name | Viewpoints Project, University of Ulster |
| Report compiled by | Sharon Copeland |
| With contributions from | Dr Alan Masson (Director), James Gheel, Catherine O'Donnell and Karen Virapen |
| Reporting period | November 2009-April 2010 |

Section One: Summary

The overall aim of the Viewpoints tool has always been to provide staff with a series of reflective tools to aid the curriculum design process. However within this reporting period, the emphasis of the toolset has shifted considerably. Whereas previously development has focused on one final end product – namely, the online tool – now, the workshop element of Viewpoints has emerged as an equally important parallel tool. In future, the online tool and the face-to-face workshops will both be available to staff as part of the curriculum reflection process.

The five strands of our initial toolset plan have now become four - Assessment and Feedback, Information Skills, Student Interactions (formerly Communities) and Creativity and Innovation. The content for this new strand will be developed and disseminated in conjunction with the Ulster Centre for Higher Education Practice Creativity Group.

As regards progress, the Assessment and Feedback tool content is almost complete, as is the Assessment and Feedback workshop development. We hope to embed this strand soon formally in key areas around the University, such as in revalidation workshops, staff development seminars, quality management and audit processes, and course reviews. The Information Skills tool is now well into the development phase – card content and a prototype workshop format have been created, and are now ready to be trialled with sample groups of staff throughout the University.

The core content of the Student Profiler pre-tool is being significantly amended now thanks to detailed input and advice from Dr Clare Carter, Ulster's Student Transition Co-ordinator. There may be a key opportunity in the future to liaise with her on a questionnaire trial with first year students that would allow the Viewpoints team to gather key data about new student cohorts.

Course and module workshop materials have been developed and refined thanks to extensive staff feedback, and we will continue to add to these materials as more workshop sessions take place. We hope to eventually develop workshop materials that staff can download from the website, such as downloadable course and module sheets and PDF versions of card prompts that can be used in their own discussion sessions.

One of our core staff, Fiona Doherty, an Instructional Technologist working on Viewpoints, sadly left the project at the end of February to take up other employment. We are currently going through the recruitment process looking for a replacement and hope to recruit a member of staff whose skill set will help us in the programming and eventual build of the online tool. As the design specification and step-by-step walkthrough of the tool is complete, we would aim to bring someone on board with well-developed coding skills who can help take the online tool to the next development stage.

Section Two: Activities and Progress

This section will follow this sequence:

- A. How the toolset has evolved
- B. Workshop Element
- C. Online Element
- D. Student Profiler

- E. Assessment and Feedback
- F. Information Skills
- G. How the Toolset has Evolved

A. HOW THE TOOLSET HAS EVOLVED

There have been significant changes to the toolset and the different strands of the curriculum design tool since the last interim report.

Instead of the five strands that existed before (Assessment and Feedback, Information Skills, Communities, Teaching & Learning, and Options & Pathways), there are now four main strands. These are as follows:

- Assessment and Feedback
- Information Skills
- Creativity and Innovation
- Student Interactions

‘Communities’ eventually became ‘Student Interactions’. This is because most groups we talked to did not understand what the ‘Communities’ category meant to capture. ‘Student Interactions’ was considered more descriptive. ‘Options & Pathways’ then disappeared as it fitted more under the ‘Student Interactions’ category. ‘Teaching and Learning’ was a bit of a catch-all title, and when we talked to the Centre for Higher Education Practice (CHEP) Creativity in the Curriculum group, we realized that the tool fitted well with the work they were doing – hence the new category. The Creativity in the Curriculum group will eventually be helping to develop content for this strand – a potentially very valuable stakeholder group, as they will be able to embed the strand with key staff groups.

The Assessment and Feedback and Information Skills strands have been fleshed out considerably (see relevant sections below for more details). Assessment and Feedback workshops have taken place with a number of different staff and student groups, and Information Skills has developed to the point where we are ready to begin the practical workshop sessions in earnest.

The Student Interactions section will be developed after the other three strands are finished.

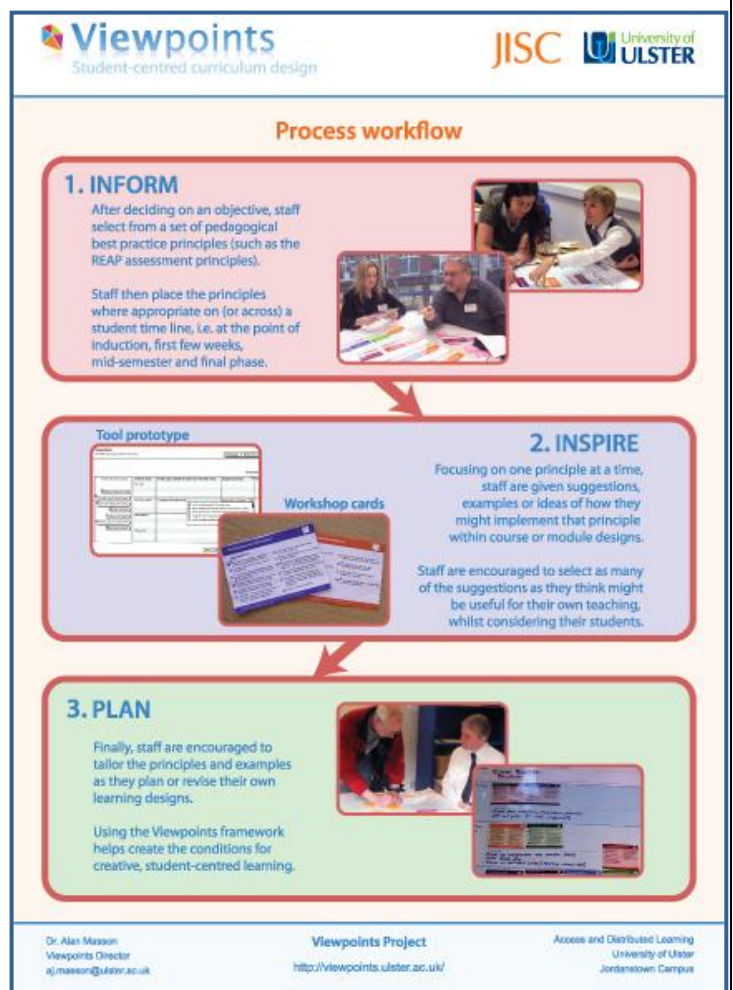


Diagram of process workflow for the Viewpoints project

The fundamental process workflow is still the same as the original. It is a three-step process that occurs as the academics(s) go through the workshop or online tool (the process is the same in both).

However, there is a change in how the tool information is delivered. Previously, the online tool was the main focus of Viewpoints – and the workshop was merely a stage to inform the development of the online tool. Now, however, having delivered workshops, they have proved extremely popular with academics and have generated some useful outcomes, such as clarifying ideas and team building, not originally anticipated in original plans (see the workshop sub-section below for more information on this point). Now, the face-to-face workshop element is equally as important as the online element of the tool, and will be developed in parallel.

B. WORKSHOP ELEMENT

What is it?

The Viewpoints workshop is a face-to-face session that can be held with small groups of academics, with one or two Viewpoints staff facilitating and observing the session.

The objective of the workshop is to get staff thinking about at least one aspect of their curriculum design, from the perspective of one of the four main Viewpoints curriculum design strands. For example, they can use the workshop to consider an aspect of their assessment and feedback practice, students' information skills in a course, student interactions, or creativity and innovation in curriculum design or combination of these.

The workshop is conducted around an A0 laminate worksheet, which represents the student timeline – either from the perspective of one module or from the perspective of a whole course. The first step is to ask staff to consider their objective(s) for the session. Then, they are given several sets of A6 cards, with best practice principles on one side and examples of how these may be achieved on the other. (Staff also have marker pens and post-its if they want to write directly onto the worksheet.)

The next step is to consider which principles on the cards are relevant to their objective(s) at key points over the timeline. They place these principle cards on the timeline, thinking about the student perspective. Then they turn the cards over, and tick any of the suggestions, examples or implementation ideas on the cards that might help them achieve their objective(s), writing notes in the 'Your Plan' area as they plan how they could tailor the ideas to their own cohort.



Image of Information Skills workshop cards – which are then placed on the timeline



Image of staff using cards and worksheet at an Assessment and Feedback workshop

Staff make notes about their overall action points and reflections based on the previous tasks, and consider how these could address the objectives they defined at the start of the workshop.

Finally, staff are given an evaluation questionnaire to get feedback on their experience of the workshop. They are given a series of supporting materials – such as useful links, suggestions, and examples of technologies that would fit with the principles.



Progress

When Viewpoints began, the online tool was the main focus of our work, and workshops were merely a stage along the path of developing the online tool – a prototype, rather than an actual finished product. The Viewpoints face-to-face workshop was mainly seen as a version to use 'in the meantime', until we had a working online version.

However from the very beginning of the workshop process, the feedback from sessions has been extremely positive with academics – the workshop version, although rudimentary at the very beginning, has worked very well. Academics have grasped the concept of the workshops quickly with minimal explanation needed. They easily adapt to using the materials - in a way that an online tool might not exploit (i.e. they might need more explanation to use the online tool functionality, and it does not have the same relative

flexibility of use). Because of all this, the Viewpoints workshop has evolved to become a parallel process, instead of a stage on the path. It provides a good mix of structured and unstructured tasks.

The benefits of the workshop (as opposed to an online tool) are that it works well with groups of staff coming together to discuss ideas. It has proved a good tool for clarifying ideas and encouraging creativity, as well as thinking about different aspects of the curriculum from a student perspective (such as

| | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|--|
|  | |  | |
| Name(s): Role(s): | | Faculty: Course(s): Module(s): | |
| Year: Semester: | | | |
| Objective(s): | | | |
| Induction | Place cards here... | | |
| | Your plan... | | |
| First few weeks | Place cards here... | | |
| | Your plan... | | |
| Mid-semester | Place cards here... | | |
| | Your plan... | | |
| Final phase | Place cards here... | | |
| | Your plan... | | |
| Action points: | | | |
| Reflections: | | | |
| Viewpoints Project, Access and Distributed Learning, University of Ulster http://viewpoints.ulster.ac.uk | | | |

Information Skills, or Assessment and Feedback). It also encourages team building and group communication.

Another benefit is that staff can use the materials the way they want – they are given cards, pens, post-its, and the laminate to use, but these materials are merely as a starting point for reflection. One thing we have discovered about these workshops is that they are less about the final destination and the outputs, and more about the process – encouraging staff to reflect and communicate, which has been very successful in itself.

A generic A0 laminate has been developed for use in the workshop, which can be used for all strands of Viewpoints. The Module View laminate is the one that has been used extensively in workshops to date, but the Course View workshop will also be used extensively in future sessions. Staff can work out curriculum plans for one particular module of their course using this template.

Image of the A0 worksheet – Module View

Another A0 laminate is currently being developed for Course View workshops, where staff can consider curriculum design over the duration of the entire course, should they wish.



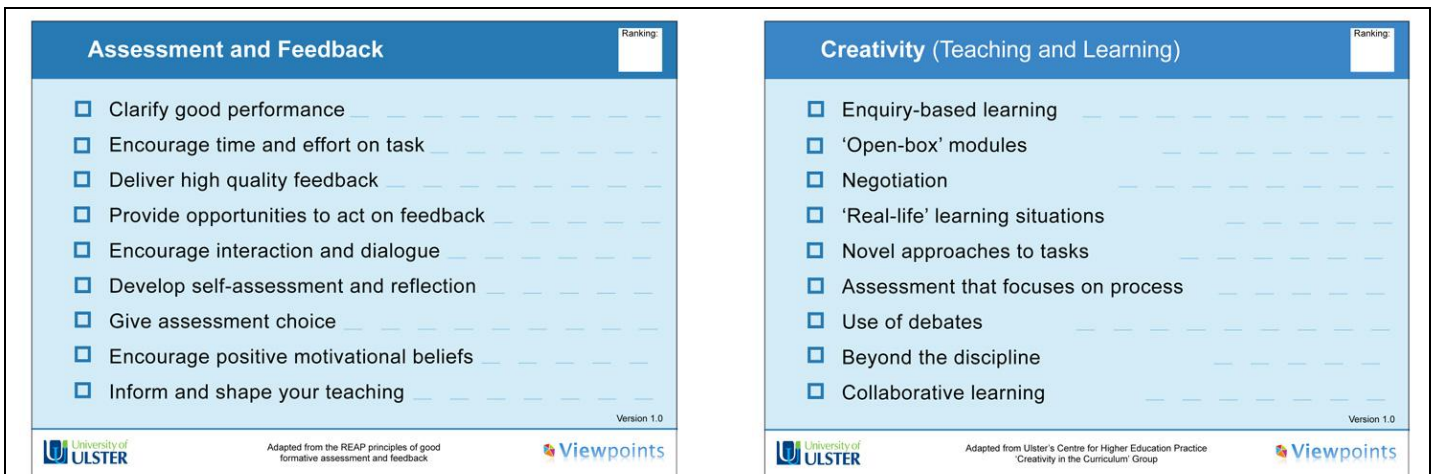
| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|
|  | | <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">COURSE VIEW</div> | |  | |
| Name(s): | | Faculty: | | Course(s): | |
| Role(s): | | | | | |
| Objective(s): | | | | | |
| Year: | | Semester: | | | |
| Module code | Place cards here... | | | | |
| _____ | <div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="width: 20%; height: 40px;"></div> <div style="width: 20%; height: 40px;"></div> <div style="width: 20%; height: 40px;"></div> <div style="width: 20%; height: 40px;"></div> </div> </div> | | | | |
| Credit points | | | | | |
| _____ | Your plan... | | | | |
| Module code | Place cards here... | | | | |
| _____ | | | | | |
| Credit points | | | | | |
| _____ | Your plan... | | | | |
| Module code | Place cards here... | | | | |
| _____ | | | | | |
| Credit points | | | | | |
| _____ | Your plan... | | | | |
| Module code | Place cards here... | | | | |
| _____ | | | | | |
| Credit points | | | | | |
| _____ | Your plan... | | | | |
| Action points: | | | | | |
| Reflections: | | | | | |
| <small>Viewpoints Project, Access and Distributed Learning, University of Ulster http://viewpoints.ulster.ac.uk</small> | | | | | |

Image of the A0 worksheet being developed for Course View

For the Course View workshop, cards are being developed for each strand (Assessment and Feedback, Information Skills, Student Interactions, Creativity and Innovation) that summarise all the good practice principles on one card. These can be placed on the timeline and the relevant principles ticked. See possible examples of what these might look like below:



Images of the Assessment and Feedback card and Creativity card being developed for the Course View workshop

This face-to-face workshop is also good to use with university staff who are resistant to using technology. For those who are not so much 'au fait' with computers and interactive tools, this lo-fi workshop version is ideal, easy to understand and use. It can also be easily adapted for different groups – already, in the short time since its inception, it has been used for Reward and Recognition, revalidation workshops, PhD students, at an e-learning conference, and with the CHEP Creativity in the Curriculum group. Each of these workshops, although very different in their aims, objectives and outcomes, have been very successful and feedback has been almost uniformly positive. The workshop could also be very easily adapted for other users or groups outside the University, such as CCEA (Council for the Curriculum Exams and Assessment), who have expressed an interest in using our materials.

Future developments

Further workshops we would like to do include finalising the Course View laminate and worksheet, and planning out the format and structure of the course-level workshop. Once this is done, we would like to try out a few demonstration workshops with small groups of staff, and then start rolling out the workshop to wider groups.

We would also like to amend the course view card sets, liaising with appropriate Ulster staff to make sure the wording and emphasis are correct.

At some stage, we would like to make workshop materials available for download on the website – so that staff could print out their own PDF versions of cards/resources/worksheets and have their own workshops, as appropriate.

We would also like to have more workshops at module level for different groups, and amend the workshop format accordingly, as per feedback.

Once the Creativity cards and materials have been decided by the CHEP Creativity in the Curriculum group, we would like to plan and run a few workshops in conjunction with them, and find out how the materials work with both Module View and Course view.

All the card sets will need reviewed with staff to make sure that the wording is correct and appropriate, and the cards will need a slight tweak to the design to include University of Ulster, Viewpoints and Creative Commons logos.

C. ONLINE ELEMENT

What is it?

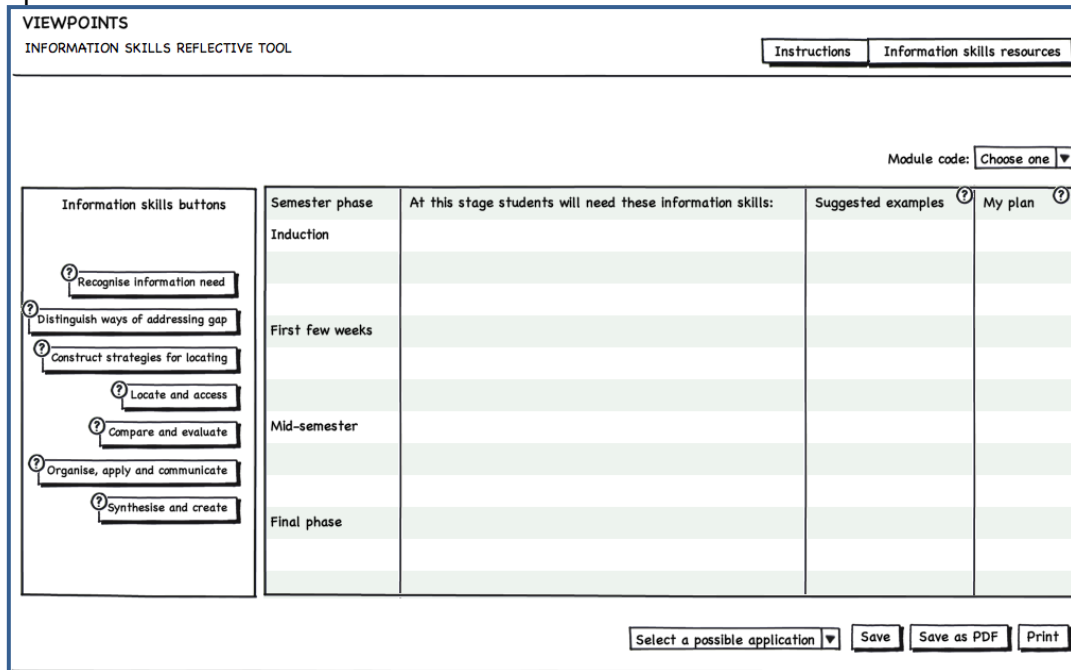
The online Viewpoints tool will run in a web page, and will be built using an interactive technology such as Flash, with a database behind it. The database will allow staff to save and edit their curriculum plans. It will be based around a student timeline, with four aspects, or strands to the tool – Assessment and Feedback, Information Skills, Student Interactions, and Creativity and Innovation. Staff will be able to choose one of these strands, and consider their curriculum plans from the point of view of that strand.

(They can choose to work on one strand only, more than one, or all four strands if they choose, when considering their curriculum design.) A bank of implementation ideas will be available in the database, and these ideas will be able to be used across different strands, if appropriate. Staff will also be able to ‘rank’ implementation ideas in order of importance to them.

How it works

The staff member chooses whether they want to work in Course View (looking at the entire course) or Module View (focusing on one module of a course). Then, they choose the particular strand, or aspect, of curriculum design they want to focus on – whether that be Assessment and Feedback, Information Skills, Student Interactions, Creativity and Innovation or a combination of any of these strands.

If they have chosen (say) Information Skills as the strand they want to work on, they will see a screen made up of elements like this:



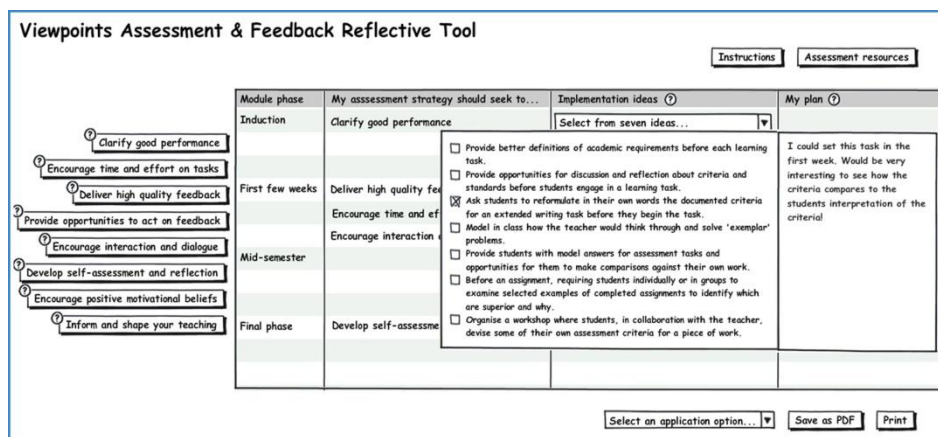
The user will drag and drop the relevant best practice principles on the left into the timeline where appropriate, select relevant examples or implementation ideas from a pop-up, and then add in their own plan by inputting information to a text field. This is then saved to a module database. The user can also print off the information that they have saved as a PDF.

Screenshot of first screen of Information Skills strand of Viewpoints tool

The user will drag and drop the relevant best practice principles on the left into the timeline where appropriate, select relevant examples or implementation ideas from a pop-up, and then add in their own plan by inputting information to a text field. This is then saved to a module database. The user can also print off the information that they have saved as a PDF.

Progress

The tool functionality has been planned out, screen by screen, using a rapid prototyping tool, Balsamiq. Each strand of the tool has similar functionality – best practice principles on the left, which can be dropped into the timeline on the right, and then pop-up examples added.



Screenshot of how the Assessment and Feedback strand of the tool would work – user selects appropriate examples

The design elements of the tool have also been created and designed in Photoshop. Each strand will have a similar look and feel, with a different icon for each strand (and possibly a band for colour coding for the different strands.)

The screenshot shows the 'Viewpoints' tool interface. At the top, there is a header with the logo and text 'ASSESSMENT & FEEDBACK REFLECTIVE TOOL'. Navigation links include 'About Viewpoints' and 'Other Viewpoints tools'. Logos for 'JISC' and 'University of ULSTER' are present. Below the header are buttons for 'Instructions' and 'Assessment resources'. A dropdown menu shows 'Year 1 Semester 1' with '+ Year' and '+ Semester' options.

| Semester phase | My assessment strategy should seek to... | Implementation ideas ⓘ | My plan ⓘ |
|-----------------|--|--------------------------------|--|
| Induction | Clarify good performance ⓘ | One of seven selected... | Could be interesting to see what the students think... |
| | Encourage time and effort on tasks ⓘ | | |
| First few weeks | Deliver high quality feedback ⓘ | Two of seven ideas selected... | Could see this helping the students to understand... |
| | Provide opportunities to act on feedback ⓘ | Select from six ideas... | |
| | Encourage interaction and dialogue ⓘ | One of five ideas selected... | |
| Mid-semester | Develop self-assessment and reflection ⓘ | | |
| | Encourage positive motivational beliefs ⓘ | | |
| Final phase | Inform and shape your teaching ⓘ | One of seven selected... | Could make use of the PDP System for this. |
| | | | |

At the bottom right, there are buttons for 'Revise my assessment strategy', 'Save as PDF', and 'Print'.

Screenshot of the look and feel of a screen of the Assessment and Feedback strand, as it would look partially filled in with information by an academic

















































A software analysis of potential solutions to build the tool has also been completed. The team have analysed the comparative merits of six potential software solutions that could be used to build the tool.

The shortlist of possible software solutions we analysed included the following:

- Flash
- Flex
- Catalyst
- JavaFX
- Silverlight
- PHP/Ajax

The following table compares the technologies, looking at a number of factors, such as cost, skills needed, whether the tools are design-oriented or programmer-oriented, and what functionality they offer.

| Name of package | Flash | Flex | Catalyst | JavaFX | Silverlight | PHP/ Ajax |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| Cost | Already have (£0) | <p>You can use the free open source Flex SDK (which, according to the forums I have read, is command line and hard to use (£0))</p> <p>or use Adobe Flex Builder 3 Standard (£159.85 per license)</p> <p>or Adobe Flex Builder 3 Professional at £454.25 per license.</p> | <p>Adobe Flash Catalyst is in beta 2 so it is currently free to download (it is part of Adobe Labs)</p> <p>However the interactive functionality is limited so if you want to add more functionality you have to use it in conjunction with Adobe Flash Builder 4 which is also free and in beta.</p> | <p>JavaFX 1.2 is free to download and use.</p> <p>JavaFX is released under the GNU General Public License, via the Sun sponsored OpenJFX project.</p> <p>JavaFX Script works with integrated development environments such as NetBeans and Eclipse.</p> | Silverlight + Visual Web Developer are both free to download. | No cost |
| Design-oriented? | Package is design-oriented but using ActionScript3 allows you to utilize a powerful programming platform | Definitely a programming-oriented environment – all code and screen-type idea, no design interface. You can drag and drop components and their actions though but it requires a lot more coding. | Flash Catalyst is definitely aimed at designers – you can import layers directly in from Illustrator or Photoshop and build in simple interactions. But if you want more functionality you have to understand the Flex code and use the Flash Builder coding environment which is a bit like Flex Builder. | Very much programming-oriented. You would have to have an extensive knowledge of JavaFX, a Sun scripting language which works on the Java platform, and how to build things in it. | <p>It is more programmer oriented. It uses XAML and has support for .NET languages and development tools. With Silverlight you can code in a number of supported programming languages. At this time the languages supported are C#, VB, Python and Ruby.</p> <p>So you would have to learn one of these languages. All the animation is done programmatically – no shortcuts.</p> | Programmer oriented |
| Skills/ training needed | Interface is familiar, as are the basics of ActionScript. However, training is needed in ActionScript 3 as it has changed to a more object-oriented programming language | We would have to get familiar with the Flex Builder environment. Does not use timeline, drawing tools or stage as such – it's all source view. Interface elements/components are created using XML-like tags. (very much programming environment) | The Catalyst tool would probably be simple and intuitive enough to learn – but functionality is limited so you'd have to learn a second package, Flash Builder, to add more code, which could be time-consuming. It's meant to be that the 'designer' on the project uses Catalyst and the 'coder' on the project uses Flash Builder. | I checked this out with one of the programmers in TFL who has used Java (but not JavaFX) and he said if you wanted to learn it (it would take at least 3 months to learn and be able to program in – if you learned it full time from 9 to 5 each day and didn't do anything else, so very time-intensive. | An intensive period to learn XAML/one of the supported programming languages and how to create the things you want to program in it – there is no design UI as far as I can see. | You'd have to learn two things: PHP and the group of technologies known as AJAX. |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| Estimated time for training | 1 – 1 and a half months to get up to speed on the programming knowledge necessary to build the tool | 2-3 months to get to grips with the advanced programming environment and how to author in Flex | 3-4 weeks on Catalyst, plus 2 months to understand Flash Builder. | 3 months full time, at least | 3 months | 2-3 months |
| Is it available for Mac/PC | Yes | Yes – Flex Builder is available for Mac and PC | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| FUNCTION-ALITY LIST | | | | | | |
| Drag and drop |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prioritise drag and drop items |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Tailored suggestions (examples) based on drag & drop choices |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Select from checkbox dropdown list |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Editable text field |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Save to database |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Print outputs |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 'Pop-up' help boxes |  |  |  |  |  |  |

After doing some reading, looking at all the options and talking to people who have used all these programs, initial recommendations are that the best option would involve using Flash or a combination of Flash and Flex. Learning any of the other programs would take a long development time. Also, the other programs are very code-heavy and would necessitate a steeper learning curve. It makes more sense to build on the skills we already have within the team. However, this decision is not final yet, and we still have to consider which technology will work best with the systems already in place and with the back-end database. Also, it may depend on the specific skill set of the new Instructional Technologist to be recruited.

Future developments

James Gheel is to advise on back-end integration with the database solution, and given eventual team considerations and skill sets (a new Instructional Technologist is to be appointed to the project soon) the team will make a final decision on the technology used to build the online tool. Once this happens, the tool will be developed and coded, according to the design specification, integrated with the database, and tested with a select group of staff in the University, before being released.

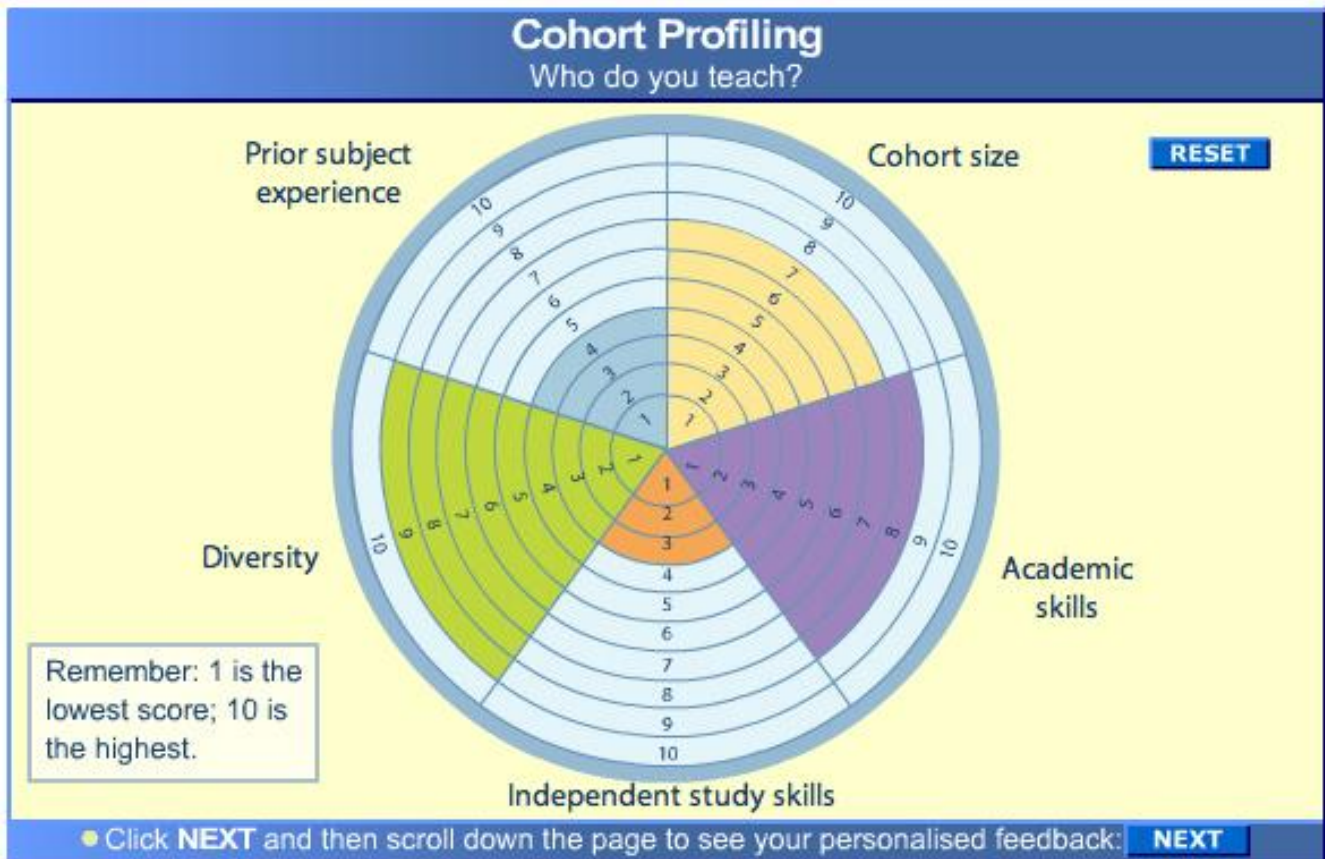
D. STUDENT PROFILER

What is it?

This is an interactive tool designed to help staff think about their potential student classes, and the implications of different groups of students, before they plan a curriculum for them. Using this tool has the benefit of getting academics to focus on what their students' potential needs are, thus (hopefully) leading to a more student-centred course.

Progress

The team had already developed an interactive demo version, with potential cohort categories for staff to consider. (These included categories such as cohort size, range of student abilities, prior subject experience, first choice of course and professional/vocational focus of course.)



Screenshot of Cohort Profile wheel filled out by a lecturer – they have rated their potential cohort according to the categories, on a scale of one to 10. They will get personalized feedback afterwards.

The next stage was to take this to prominent academics working extensively in the area of student recruitment and retention. We met with Dr Clare Carter from the University of Ulster. She is the Student Transition Co-ordinator in the Staff Development Unit, and she has worked extensively in the fields of transition and retention. Below are her recommendations.

Tool categories

We discussed potential tool categories with Dr Carter. She suggested that we include a wider range of categories, so that staff can choose the ones most relevant to them – letting them tailor the tool to their own specific needs and issues.

Additional categories/themes suggested by Dr Carter included the following suggestions:

- Entry qualifications (A-level, vocational A-level, BTEC, Access qualifications)
- Literacy / numeracy categories (whether students rate themselves high or low)
- Whether students work part-time (as this impacts on timetabling)
- Whether students have carer role
- Do students live at home or commute?

She suggested that we should not restrict the tool interface/tool interaction to the circular 'slider screen' originally designed, but instead, cluster or group related categories over several different screens.

What should the tool provide?

Another area of discussion was what sort of information the tool might offer to staff. Dr Carter concluded it would be best to give them feedback and pointers on retention issues, on study skills development and resources, and provide a gateway to useful resources for staff.

Further research

To understand the issues behind retention (and therefore what sort of information to include in the tool) Dr Carter recommended some further research. In particular, she recommended the team read the following:

- How to recruit and retain higher education students (Tony Cook)
- Retention and student success in higher education (M Yorke, B Longden)
- The first- year experience of higher education in the UK (HEA report - M Yorke, B Longden)
- Retention and progression in the University of Ulster (Clare Carter)

Future developments/possible collaboration

Dr Carter mentioned that she has a potential plan in mind for creating a questionnaire (initially for first years in the University) that they would complete at induction. It would ask questions about issues like students' qualifications, their prior knowledge of the subject matter they are going to study and their perceived study skills. Ideally Dr Carter would like this to be rolled out to all students in all courses – online if possible. This would provide very valuable data to Viewpoints from the point of view of the Student Profiler tool, as it would give course staff extremely useful information on their actual course and cohort.

Future developments to this tool would involve reading and using the suggested research to influence and draft tool outputs, amending tool screens as per Dr. Carter's suggestions, meeting more course academics to consult on final tool categories, and possibly in the future working with Clare Carter on a student questionnaire pilot to gather some data about first year students.

E. ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

What is it?

This is a reflective tool for University of Ulster staff to be informed, inspired and to help them plan their assessment and feedback strategy, focusing on the student experience. The tool will help module co-ordinators, course directors and course teams create an assessment and feedback strategy for a new course design (accreditation), revise a course or module or prepare for revalidation.

The tool uses the [REAP \(Re-Engineering Assessment Practices\) Principles of good assessment design \(7 and 1\)](#) from the [REAP Project](#) and REAP implementation techniques from the [QAA enhancement theme –](#)

[the first year experiences – Transition to and during the first year](#) publication.

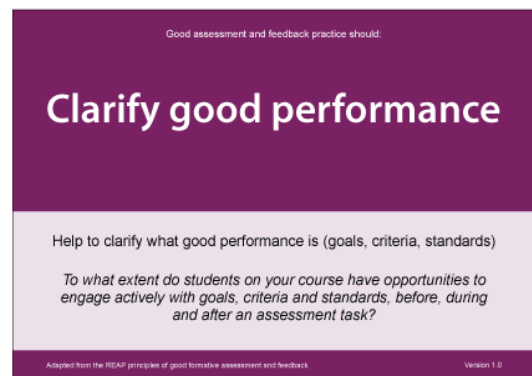
Tool progress

The Viewpoints project team refined and completed the design specification for the online Assessment and Feedback tool. They also designed and delivered a number of face-to-face sessions and workshops that use the tool framework to test the design and get feedback from practitioners.

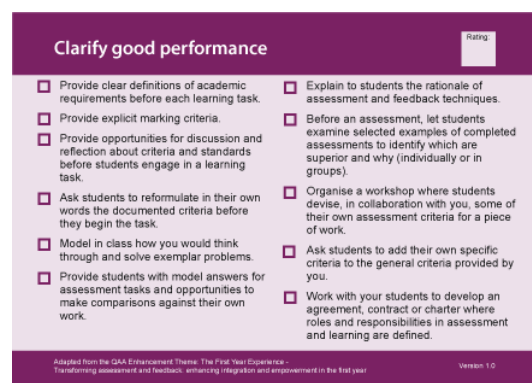
To prepare for the delivery of these sessions and workshops the team produced several worksheet prompts. These included a large laminated worksheet (illustrated below) with a student timeline and nine different coloured [assessment and feedback cards](#) (one illustrated below) along with documentation for facilitators, observers and participants. Documentation included session outlines/plans, observer sheets, guidance for those facilitating, evaluation forms and supporting documentation to give to participants after the sessions. The supporting documentation maps out how the cards align to Ulster documentation such as the [Corporate plan](#), [Teaching & Learning Strategy](#), [Ulster Assessment Handbook](#), Ulster [Programme Approval Management and Review handbook](#), Ulster Aide Memoire, Guidelines for First Year UG Teaching, STAR Guidelines for the Management of Student Transition and other sources such as Chickering & Gamson’s Good Practice in UG Education.

The front of the prompt cards was adapted from the [REAP](#) principles of good formative assessment and feedback and the back card content was adapted from implementation ideas from the [QAA enhancement theme: Transforming assessment and feedback: enhancing integration and empowerment in the first year](#) publication by Professor Nicol.

Laminated worksheet



Front of 'clarify good performance' card



Back of 'clarify good performance' card

Reward and Recognition Sessions

Initially the Viewpoints team delivered seven one-hour Viewpoints [Assessment and Feedback sessions](#) to University of Ulster groups within the [CETL Institutional E-learning Services \(CIES\) Reward and Recognition Programme IV: E-facilitated Assessment and Feedback](#). The purpose of these sessions was to evaluate the process, get feedback from observers and practitioners to inform future development of the workshop/online tool and at the same time help the teams prepare and reflect on their chosen Reward and Recognition programme project.

The session required each group to complete six tasks aimed at encouraging reflection while considering the student experience and provided some creative ideas about how the groups might implement their project objective(s). The groups worked together using the worksheet, cards, post-its and markers to create an output tailored to address their chosen project objective.



These sessions helped the groups to reflect on their project proposals and discuss possible solutions. The group work outputs were photographed, typed up and sent to the teams and external facilitators prior the residential event.

During the residential they were displayed on poster boards and teams were encouraged to use them and make any necessary changes/adjustments as required.

The Viewpoints worksheets proved to be a good starting point and valuable resource for each group whilst developing their projects at the Residential.





The team delivered Assessment and Feedback sessions at the University of Ulster's 8th annual eLearning conference at the Belfast campus on 21st January 2010. The session consisted of an activity-based demo of the Viewpoints Assessment and Feedback workshop and showed how this worked at the recent Reward and Recognition programme, using real-life scenarios from the programme projects. Powerpoint slides from the workshop are available [online](#).

Delegates (including David Boud) at the recent Ulster eLearning Conference 2010 participating in an activity

CCEA meeting

Fiona Doherty met with Dorit Reppert and Emma McAllister from the [Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment \(CCEA\)](#) on the 28th January 2010. They had heard of the Viewpoints project from the feedback of a colleague who had attended the Assessment and Feedback sessions at the Ulster eLearning conference.

The CCEA asked for the meeting to find out more about the Viewpoints project and to gauge if the Viewpoints resources could be adapted for their own educational purposes.

Fiona provided an overview of the Viewpoints project and demonstrated the Viewpoints assessment and feedback workshop format, giving them the opportunity to use the best practice cards and the timeline worksheet.

The consensus was that the Viewpoints materials could conceivably be adapted to be used for their own educational purposes, if the Assessment and Feedback cards were tweaked slightly to make their content more generic/less specifically focused around the perspective of university students.



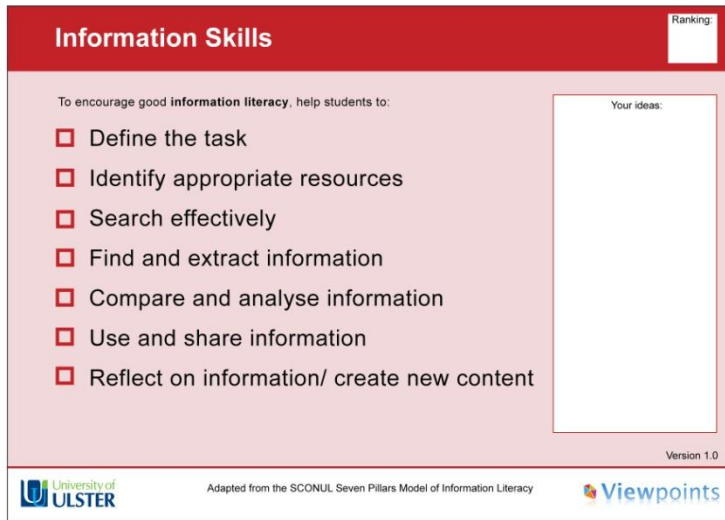
Image of the output from CCEA demonstration workshop

Revalidation workshop

Viewpoints resources were also used at a revalidation workshop in February 2010. Roisin Curran from Staff Development delivered the workshop to course teams from the School of the Built Environment.

During the course discussion activity, each team were asked to consider the ethos of their programme, taking into consideration key topics such as assessment and feedback, curriculum and planning and creativity and innovation.

Viewpoints resources included course-level timeline worksheets, course-level best practice cards, post-its and markers. Groups were given suggestions of how the resources could be used but given the freedom to use them if they thought the resources could be useful.



Example of Viewpoints course-level card for Information Skills

Two of the three teams used Viewpoints resources to aid their programme planning, and they seemed to prove to be a useful resource – although more thought needs to be given to the timing of the use of the resources in the revalidation process.

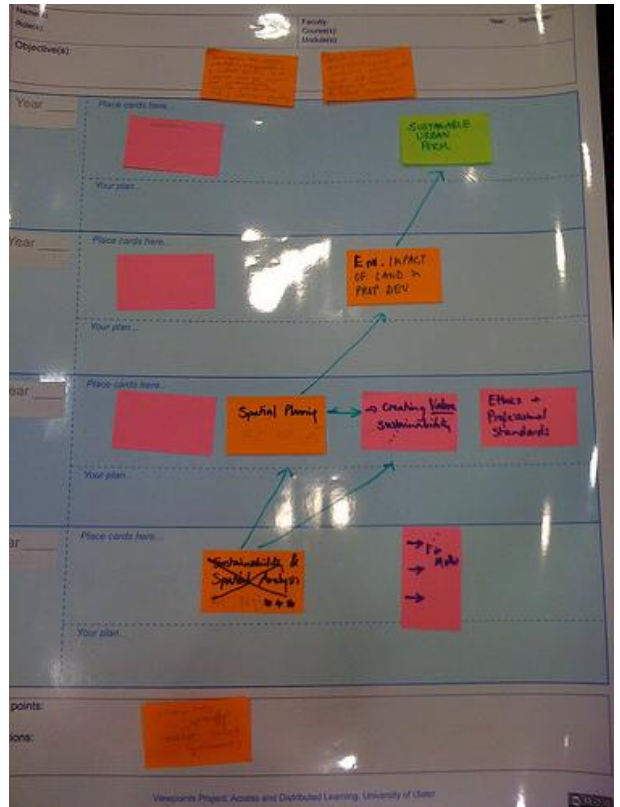


Image of course view laminate as used in Revalidation workshop, Feb 2010

Future developments

The text for the Assessment and Feedback cards has been revised slightly based on suggestions from users at the workshop sessions, and new versions of the cards will soon be made available.

The course-level workshops will be developed and the materials adapted for use at course level (see workshop session for more details).

The revalidation workshop session showed the demand for more scalable resources that practitioners can take away and use by themselves – for example, a paper-based version of the worksheet timeline (in a flip chart paper format) and printable versions of the best practice cards. These might also be available as post-its. The next stage is to create printable or downloadable versions of the resources that could be made available via the Viewpoints website.

F. INFORMATION SKILLS

What is it?

This is a tool strand that will help module co-coordinators, course directors and course teams create an information skills strategy for their course or module. It will help staff visualise how evenly the information skills load is spread throughout the course for students, and aid them when they are creating a new course, revising a course or module, or undergoing revalidation. The tool uses the [SCONUL Seven Pillars Model for Information Literacy](#) as its theoretical framework.

Tool progress

The SCONUL principles have been edited to make them appropriate for use as part of the Viewpoints Information Skills strand. The new Information Skills cards are now more suited to the information skills needs of teaching staff and students. Where appropriate, the information has been brought up to date and made relevant to practices at Ulster.

There are implementation ideas on the reverse of the SCONUL principle cards, which staff can choose to help them plan how they might use the principle(s) with students. These ideas have been adapted from the original paper by Peter Godwin, [Information Skills Benchmarks](#).

The cards have been created as a paper version (version 1.0) and have been trialled with Ulster Subject Librarians for their input and feedback.

Once all the revisions of the cards have been done, version 2.0 will be created and the cards will be professionally printed for use in workshops.

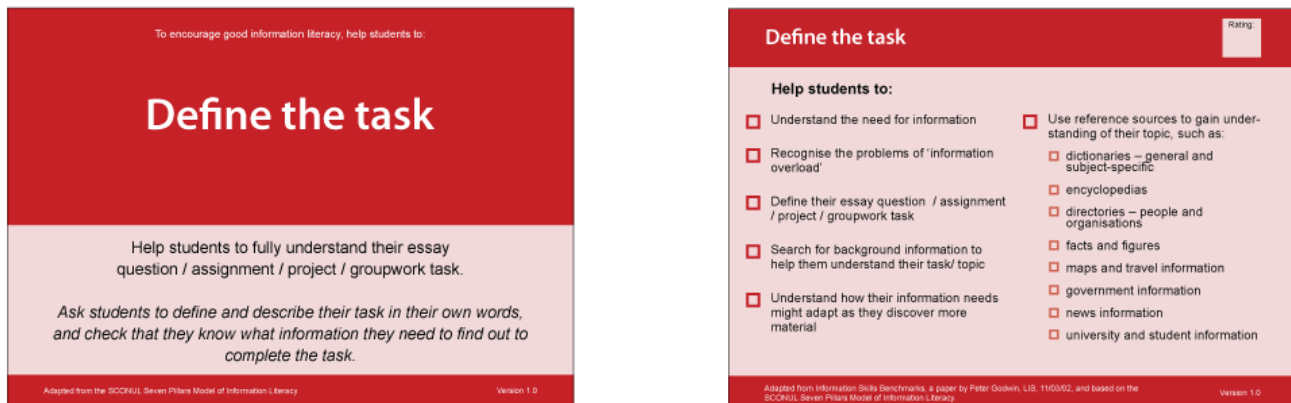


Image of the front and back of one of the Information Skills cards

Workshop – planned structure

A sample workshop has been developed for use in Information Skills sessions. It tells staff why information skills are important to their curriculum design (often, academics are aware of the benefits of good assessment and feedback practice, but less aware of information skills).

The group are asked to choose a module that they want to think about in relation to information skills. They then consider a few of the key activities that students have to do in this module – such as essays, groupwork, seminar preparation etc. These tasks will inform their information skills strategy. They write any student tasks that they want to think about on the timeline in the relevant place. Staff can choose up to four tasks to consider.

Their second step is to look at the good practice pillars (the SCONUL cards) and select the ones that they think are relevant to the student activities that they have selected. These cards are then placed, front side up, on the timeline, adjacent to the student activities.

Staff then turn over the cards on the worksheet, and ask themselves: which of these examples (of information skills) do your students have most issues/problems with? For example, do they know how to search subject databases? They tick and rate these examples in order of importance, using the markers provided. Finally, they discuss how they might address any of students' information skills needs in their teaching practice, in the area marked 'your plan'. They can also consider how library staff can help them achieve these pillars.

This sample workshop has been demonstrated with a few internal staff members, and we hope to start rolling out the workshop with select staff in the next month or two. Revisions will then be made to the materials in light of the workshop feedback.

Annual subject librarian meeting

The team attended the annual Ulster subject librarian meeting in Jordanstown on Friday 5th March 2010. They gave an activity-based presentation to all the subject librarians in Ulster. The library presentation is available on [Slideshare](#).

The purpose of the meeting was to update librarians on the development of the Information Skills strand of the toolset, and also to get their feedback on the card material developed to date. The team demonstrated the SCONUL Information Skills cards developed, along with the module-level worksheet laminates which we plan to use in Information Skills workshops.

There then followed an interactive group activity where groups were each given one of the cards, asked to consider critically both the content wording and ideas, and then think about using the cards for each part of the student timeline.



The librarians then presented their ideas on how they thought the cards could be used or amended. From their detailed feedback and evaluations, further revisions to the cards are now being planned. The material has also been added to the [Information Skills Ning](#) area for consultation.

Future developments

The internal card revisions are currently in progress, based on librarians' feedback. After further consultation with course academics, the card content will be finalized and version 2.0 sent to the printers.

Image of a librarian using the SCONUL cards in a group activity The workshop format will also be reconsidered and revised if necessary after it has been demonstrated with different groups of stakeholders.

Another task is to identify opportunities to give Information Skills workshops with groups of academics who are planning courses. We also need to think through – how will librarians be involved in the Information Skills strand of Viewpoints? They have links with a lot of course teams – can they possibly deliver or promote the workshops? What sort of resources or back-up can they provide? Again, this needs further consultations with a small working group of subject librarians (face-to-face and also via the online Ning area) to develop the material further.

Section Three: Risks, Issues and Opportunities

The risk associated with staff turnover has been accommodated through the reprioritisation and re-profiling of activities on the work plan. The project team has focused on the functional development of the Assessment and Feedback, Information Skills workshops and supporting the CHEP Creativity Working Group in developing the information model for the Creativity strand.

Staff Turnover

The technical development of the online tool has been pushed back to Q2 2010. This has permitted three benefits to be realised:

1. The development and testing of face to face workshops has permitted fully functional specification of the tool workflow to be developed for both module and course perspectives;
2. The re-use of the visual elements from the workshop resources; and
3. The prioritisation of the technical aspects of the Instructional Technologist job specification to recruit the necessary skills to deliver interactive elements of the online tool in a timely and efficient manner.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

In the previous report, the project team proposed to make a reasonable adjustment that will see the tools available for use in a facilitated environment, for example in a workshop where all users and their access needs can be catered for in a flexible manner. The formal development of the workshops as formal project outputs provides such an adjustment.

Course and module perspectives

The project team have trialled a number of course and module perspective representations and have developed methods to prompt users to reflect upon and transition data from one perspective to another. These prompts will be developed in further workshop scenarios and be implemented in the online tool.

Integration with existing curriculum design and planning tools

As noted in the previous report, the project will focus on providing visual and data outputs that can be embedded in existing curriculum documents.

Section Four: Outputs and Deliverables

| Output | Status |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Assessment and Feedback | |
| • Data model | Draft complete |
| • Workshop resources | Complete |
| • Workshop train the trainer | Draft |
| • Online tool | Functional specification complete |
| Information Skills | |
| • Data model | Draft in progress |
| • Workshop resources | Draft |
| • Workshop train the trainer | Draft |
| • Online tool | Draft specification |
| Creativity | |
| • Data model | In development |
| • Workshop resources | In development |
| • Workshop train the trainer | Draft specification |
| • Online tool | Draft specification |
| Learner Interactions | |
| • Data model | Early draft specification |
| • Workshop resources | Not yet initiated |
| • Workshop train the trainer | Not yet initiated |
| • Online tool | Not yet initiated |
| Cohort Profile Tool | |
| • Data model | Draft in progress |
| • Online tool | Draft specification |
| Supporting Resources | |
| Case Studies | In development |
| Digital Stories | In development |
| Practice Guides | Not yet initiated |

The project has also established valuable expertise in the use of wire-framing tools such as Balsamiq to permit:

- rapid functional and user interface development of applications;
- enhanced stakeholder engagement and input into the design process.

The project team will share these valuable experiences with the programme (via the Design Studio) and wider educational technology development communities.

As noted in the previous report, the project will develop a standalone tool with a published data framework. The project will not undertake technical integrations with University curriculum systems as these are currently hosted in a range of formats including Word documents. The published data framework will permit the tool to be developed to interact with future curriculum-related systems as these become available within the University of Ulster.

Section Five: Evaluation

The Technology Facilitated Learning Unit of the University, within which the project is located, has appointed a full time, permanent Research Fellow, Dr Vilinda Ross. Vilinda will provide evaluation support to the work of the project, in particular with regard to the development of research and evaluation tools and the facilitation of focus groups. She will also act as a liaison point with the JISC programme support team regarding programme and project evaluation issues.

The project team will continue to undertake usability and effectiveness studies on project outputs under

development. These studies have used a range of research tools (questionnaire, semi-structured interview and focus groups). The information obtained through these activities has proved invaluable in the development of project outputs to date and has allowed the project to identify and develop a number of added value outputs and use cases. The close engagement with stakeholders has also provided the project with a source of assets (pictures, outputs, narratives) to create rich media dissemination and awareness-raising outputs.

The formal roll-out of the assessment and feedback tool with course teams preparing for validation will provide the project team with access to user groups which it can revisit to evaluate the role and impact of participation in the workshop and any generated outputs.

This work will be complemented with studies with Faculty and Institutional stakeholders (Teaching and Learning Coordinators and Institutional chairs of Validation panels) to review potential uses of project outputs such as visual representations of assessment strategies within the current course documentation templates. It is hoped that this approach will allow the project to storyboard the role and impact of the project across a course's development, and review timelines from a range of stakeholder perspectives.

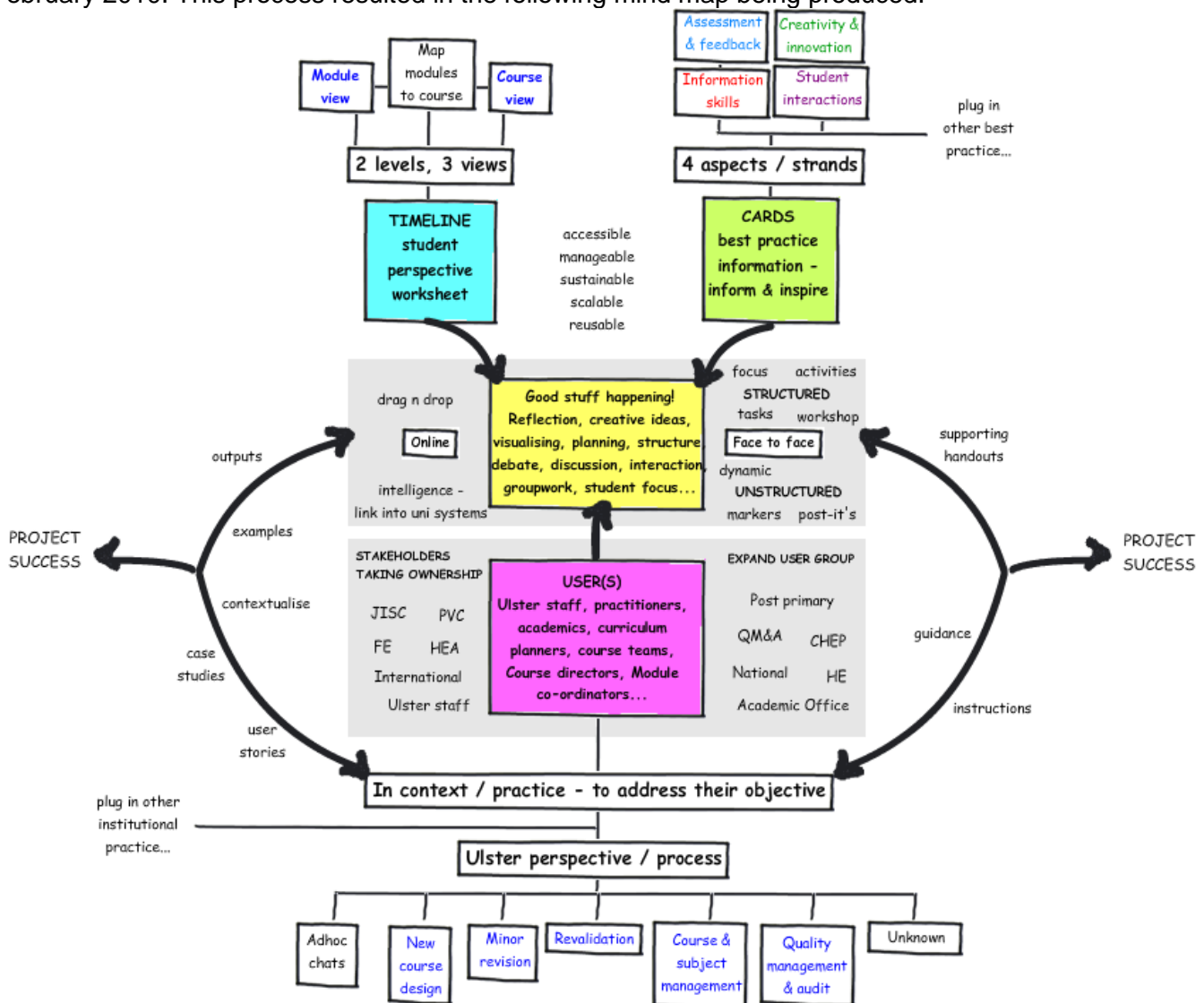
Summary of Evaluation Activities

| Project objective / critical success factor | Issues to address | Methods | Measures of success* |
|--|---|---|--|
| Toolsets in development | | | |
| To identify key principles of best practice to underpin the thematic tools. | Has the project used appropriate educational principles as a basis for the project tools and outputs? | Focus groups Semi structured interviews Questionnaire Peer review of project tools | Peer review of theoretical basis used for project tools. |
| To work with stakeholders to develop effective reflective questions for use within the timeline tools. | Has the project used stakeholder feedback to ensure the tools and services it develops are educationally effective? | Focus groups Semi structured interviews Questionnaire | Evidence of significant stakeholder engagement in quality plan activities |
| To establish an effective user interface that engages users and encourages reflection. | Are project tools and outputs usable by a range of end users? | Focus groups Semi structured interviews Questionnaire Observation | Positive evaluations and feedback from quality plan activities. |
| Toolsets in use | | | |
| To create a range of outputs to assist the repurposing and reuse of captured data for a range of audiences | Do the resources generated by project tools and services address a specific need? | Focus groups Semi structured interviews Questionnaire Peer Review | Evidence of user generated resources: * Exemplar Curriculum related resources * Case studies * Digital stories Positive evaluations and feedback from quality plan activities. Project guidelines and outputs |

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>To capture and evaluate how stakeholders use the project tools to support the introduction of innovative adjustments to the curriculum</p> | <p>Is the use and impact of project tools and outputs monitored and evaluated?</p> | <p>Usage statistics Implementation matrix Focus groups Semi structured interviews Questionnaire Peer review</p> | <p>have been peer reviewed Evidence of extent of usage of project outputs by stakeholders (usage and engagement statistics) Evidence of staff engagement with project tools (portfolio of exemplar curriculum-based resources)</p> |
|---|--|---|--|

Section Six: Outcomes and Lessons Learned

The project team undertook a critical reflection process around the project, its activities and stakeholders in February 2010. This process resulted in the following mind map being produced.



This mind map captures the current status of the project and reflects the real (workshop) and virtual (online) activities of the project and their potential alignment with educational practice in FE and schools.

The project team have identified two key lessons that have been learned during this reporting period:

1. The critical role of human interactions to influence and support reflection and cultural change;
2. The alignment of high level planning activities such as those supported by the Viewpoints project with the establishment phase of new course teams.

These two issues have meant that demand from practitioners and course teams have focused on the workshop offerings of the project. Interest in the online tool has focused on a potential role to assist in the capturing of workshop outcomes. It is expected that the stakeholder interest in the online tool will develop, as the project team develop tool outputs for a range of audiences (validation panels, learners etc.)

Section Seven: Communication and Dissemination Activities

Project specific activities

This section documents relevant project activities from earliest to most recent during the first year of the project. (JISC programme-related activities are documented in a separate section below).

Key communication and dissemination activities are briefly outlined – full details of each can be read online in the project blog at: <http://viewpointsproject.blogspot.com/>.

| Date | Activity | Audience |
|-----------|--|--|
| 30 Nov 09 | CIES Reward & Recognition feedback sessions | Ulster staff and students participating in the CIES Reward and Recognition Programme IV: E-facilitated Assessment and Feedback |
| 15 Dec 09 | Viewpoints workshop support at CIES Reward & Recognition Residential, Rosspark Hotel, Kells | Ulster staff and students participating in the CIES Reward and Recognition Programme IV: E-facilitated Assessment and Feedback |
| 12 Jan 10 | Viewpoints workshop at Ulster eLearning Conference 2010 | Ulster staff, FE / HE staff with an interest in e-learning |
| 28 Jan 10 | Meeting with the CCEA (Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment) to demonstrate Viewpoints Assessment and Feedback workshop | CCEA staff |
| 16 Feb 10 | Revalidation workshop (using Viewpoints Course View materials) | Ulster staff involved in revalidation process |
| 5 Mar 10 | Information Skills presentation at Ulster Subject Librarian Meeting | Ulster subject librarians and subject assistant librarians |
| 9 Mar 10 | Assessment and Feedback workshop session | PhD students |
| 11 Mar 10 | Presentation of Viewpoints resources at Centre for Higher Education Practice Creativity Project Meeting | Ulster staff who are members of the CHEP Creativity in the Curriculum Group |

The project also uses a number of web tools and communities to promote disseminate and share its work. These include:

Project Blog

<http://viewpointsproject.blogspot.com/>

This is the main public information site for both internal and external audiences. It is updated regularly by

team members, so that anyone reading can quickly find out what's happening within the project, or comment online if they want to discuss or feedback on any issues.

Project Wiki

<http://wiki.ulster.ac.uk/display/JVPP/Home> (project team only)

This wiki area is used for internal communication within the project team, to share ideas and collaborate on different aspects of the project, from tool development to project planning, design, development and administration.

Project Ning Communities

<http://viewpointsproject.ning.com/> (by invite only)

<http://viewpointinfoskills.ning.com/> (by invite only)

Some project work in development will be shared via a number of secure Ning social networking sites. Stakeholders and key supporters can use these sites to get an overview of the project progress and to comment on work in progress.

Slideshare

<http://www.slideshare.net/Viewpoints>

This online resource permits project members to share information, presentations and other documents regarding the project, on Slideshare, an online presentation site. By adding relevant descriptor tags, project presentations will be discoverable for online discovery and dissemination.

YouTube

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaqssJ_OBWQ

View the Viewpoints YouTube video, which says more about the project and its aims, with comments by staff. More YouTube videos will subsequently be added to this gallery.

Flickr

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/36265730@N07/show>

Project related photos and images are shared through our Flickr online photo gallery.

Delicious

<http://delicious.com/Viewpoints>

This social bookmarking site allows us to share links, useful articles and research we have found that inform and support the project.

Cloudworks

<http://cloudworks.ac.uk/index.php/cloudscape/view/1485>

This is a 'cloudspace' for the JISC Curriculum Design Cluster C to share ideas, tools and resources that are relevant to their projects. Cloudworks was initially set up by the [Open University Curriculum Design Initiative](#) as a Delicious-type bookmarking/comment site for users to share resources.

Dipity

<http://www.dipity.com/viewpoints>

This sample student timeline in Dipity reflects a typical student lifecycle at the University of Ulster.

Project representation on University working groups

The Viewpoints Project has been asked to provide representation on the following University Working Groups and communities:

- CHEP Practice Creativity in the Curriculum Working Group (Fiona Doherty)
- CHEP Research and Practice in Higher Education Working Group (Alan Masson)
- University Subject Librarian team meetings (Karen Virapen)

These representations have been complemented by the inclusion of Professor Desmond Hunter (Director of Centre for Higher Education Practice) and Miss Colette McKenna (User Services Librarian) to the membership of the Viewpoints Project Steering Group.

JISC Programme related activities

This section documents our key project activities with the JISC programme from earliest to most recent activities.

These activities are briefly outlined below – however the full details of each can be read on our online blog by clicking on each heading to read that story or from the blog home page at:

<http://viewpointsproject.blogspot.com/>.

| Date | Event |
|------------------------|---|
| 12 Nov 09 | CAMEL meeting, Open University, Milton Keynes |
| Upcoming events | |
| 12 April 10 | JISC Curriculum Design Programme Meeting |
| 27/28 April 10 | CAMEL meeting, University of Ulster, Belfast Campus |
| 30 April 10 | Viewpoints Steering Group |
| 12 May 10 | JISC Curriculum Design Programme Meeting |

All project staff are members of CIRCLE, the JISC community networking site. This community provides a forum to share experiences, events and outputs across the programme. The Viewpoints team has provided project information to this community, including an embedded RSS feed of latest news from the Viewpoints blog.

Section Eight: Collaboration and Support

During the current reporting period, the project took part in a number of programme related activities:

- Programme meeting (14/10/09)
 - <http://viewpointsproject.blogspot.com/2009/10/jisc-programme-meeting.html>
- Learning and Teaching Practice Experts meeting (21/10/09)
 - <http://viewpointsproject.blogspot.com/2009/10/jisc-learning-teaching-practice-experts.html>

These events provided the project with an opportunity to share and develop ideas with practitioners and stakeholders and to learn about the work of other project teams.

Members of the project also took part in a number of Wednesday JISC Elluminate sessions and have liaised with Programme support staff to identify resources for inclusion in the Design Studio.

In addition, the project team was part of the second cluster meeting at the Open University (<http://viewpointsproject.blogspot.com/2009/11/camel-meeting-open-university.html>)

The CAMEL meetings have proved to be very useful as a mechanism to discuss and develop key elements of our individual projects within the defined project cluster group. This particular CAMEL meeting focused on a briefing of the OU project activities and discussions around the state of play in learning design, specifically as an institutional approach to curriculum design, and the evaluation of projects. . Project evaluation will be further developed at the next CAMEL meeting in Belfast on 27/28 April 2010.

The project team are happy with the level of support from the Programme and are happy that we can input to the programme level discussions at programme events, through the critical friend and CAMEL meetings and directly with the programme manager.

