

Interim Reporting Template

Project Name	User-oriented pedagogical planner
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With contributions from	Others who have contributed information for the report
Reporting period	First interim report, May to October 2006
Section One: Summary	
<p>The project has so far produced a report on current practice and user requirements for planning for learning design. We have developed and tested several iterations of module planning tools with our participating lecturers.</p>	
Section Two: Activities and Progress	
<p>We have held two workshops with participating lecturers in which we worked with the LAMS environment, and with tools we had developed so far. The project team also holds monthly meetings.</p> <p>LAMS has been used to gather user requirements and current practice, but not, so far, for implementation of the module planner; however it may act as a 'shell' to wrap around the planner, and we expect to use it as one of the potential output formats from the session planner. As explained in the Project Plan, we base our planner on existing cost-benefit modelling tools.</p> <p>We have begun by focussing on the 'Module' level as the context for planning pedagogy at the 'Session' level, and this has led us to recognise the need for elaboration of the theory behind the pedagogic decisions that do have to be made at that level, for example the types of teaching method, and the types of assessment method to be used. Both need to be related to the learning outcomes being defined by the lecturer, and to the learner needs that we are directing lecturers towards considering. In requiring lecturers to think through the distribution of teaching methods, assessment methods, and the time given to them across the weeks of the Module, we are seeing how pedagogic considerations are already important even at this level of planning, and therefore that we need to support lecturers in making the link between learning outcomes and teaching methods and assessment in broad terms.</p> <p>The detailed design and redesign of the Module planning tool has pushed back development of the Pedagogy Planner to some extent, although findings from this iterative process have impacted on its initial design. However, it would be a false economy to spend less time at this level given the importance of meeting lecturers' perceived needs in their preparation for thinking about pedagogy. They are driven by the constraints within which they work on a Module, and we cannot ignore that when we try to support them in pedagogic design.</p> <p>We have added a new member of the team, Darren Pearce of IoE, who is helping us to specify a database design for the planner. This design will become a new project deliverable, and the amended copy of the Project Plan is attached.</p>	
Section Three: Outputs, Outcomes and Deliverables	

There are several outputs to date, all available on our project website (<http://www.wle.org.uk/d4l/>):

1. several iterations of the Module Planning prototypes (six iterations of the Excel version; four iterations of the Powerpoint version; two iterations of the Director version)
2. the current version of the 'learning design storyboard', which shows what we plan to develop and how the different parts of the Module planner and Session planner link together. It also records the findings from working with the users on successive iterations of the prototype.
3. Our 40-page report on user requirements and current practice.
4. The collection of related learning design pattern websites
5. A comprehensive list of learning design resources
6. A forthcoming publication on the benefits-cost model being tested within the project.
7. Links to presentations given at conferences which mention the project and the D4L programme.

Section Four: Dissemination

As mentioned we have a project website (<http://www.wle.org.uk/d4l/>).

The project was publicised at the London Knowledge Lab's open evening in June 2006

'Effective learning technology design: Engaging the professionals', keynote for 4th International Conference on Lifelong Learning: Partners, Pathways, Pedagogies, Queensland, June 2006.

'Working with and Learning from Pedagogical Expertise', keynote for Merlot International Conference, Ottawa, August 2006.

'The next generation of CALL - What are we hoping for?', keynote for EuroCALL, Granada, Sept 2006.

Some of the work on this project is being taken forward by a new project on User support for learning design, funded by the Centre for Distance Education, University of London. The work will extend into new curriculum areas, and will focus on support for lecturers working in a distance learning context.

Outputs from two other projects are being brought into this project on an experimental basis: from the London Met CETL's project on developing reusable learning objects [Tom to elaborate...] and from LSE's Digital Libraries project. In each case a reusable learning object that has already migrated across different learning contexts is being made available for lecturers in our project to adopt or adapt.

6. We have submitted a proposal for a presentation at the CAL 2007 conference, along with other projects in the Programme, specifically the other planner project, and the Models for Learning project.

Section Five: Evaluation

Provide brief details of progress in terms of the development and implementation of the project evaluation plan.

Outline any emerging evaluation issues of interest.

Collaborating lecturers have been very cooperative in working through very early prototypes with less than friendly interface qualities, which has made it possible for us to take a highly iterative approach in the early stages of design.

Observation of a lecturer working through the prototype, using an existing Module they know well as an exemplar, is the best way of challenging and progressing the design. A workshop event for the whole project team was successful as a way of raising issues, elaborating the design model, and building a cohesive approach, but the real test comes when lecturers try to use it for a real course, beyond generating requirements in general terms.

The Evaluation Plan is proceeding as planned, with a consultation with the Pedagogical Experts Group due to take place on 26 October.

Section Six: Issues and Challenges

We have added an element of database design. This has emerged from expertise in our group, which suggests that an online planner would benefit from a database-backed interactive web version. This could also make it more feasible for us to deliver the user requirement that they should be able to start at any point in the planning process and work 'backwards' or 'forwards', from the general to the specific or v.v. The database design could change several times during the iterative process of prototype design, so it is proving very important to have this initial stage.

Section Seven: Support

We are due to have a conference call with CETIS on 23 Oct.

Thus far we have been in contact with other related projects in the Programme directly and as needed, and this has been fruitful.

The Programme and evaluation team visited the project in August and no major issues were identified. No other support problems or issues are identified up until now.