

NTFS Project Progress Report

The purpose and acceptance criteria for NTFS projects submitting a progress report are described as part of the '*NTFS Project Reporting Procedure*' paper.

Please complete the sections below. If you have any queries regarding the completion of the forms please contact the NTFS project strand Project Officer at ntfspjrojects@heacademy.ac.uk or 01904 717500.

Progress Report Project Information

Project lead	Norwich University College of the Arts
Project title	InCurriculum
Lead contact name	Neil Powell
Reporting period	1 August 2009 to 31 December 2009

1. Project Update Summary

Please provide a short update on the project's achievements and current activities, to be disseminated on the Academy's website, maximum 200 words. **(Only this section will be made publicly available)**

A key feature of the period's activity was the outcomes of the project's interim conference, which took place in June at the University of Westminster. The interim conference led to significant content production for the website as well as a vital series of networking opportunities for the project team. Some of these can be seen on the website at: <http://www.incurriculum.org.uk>. It has been gratifying to note that all project co-ordinators reports were submitted on time.

The InCurriculum project has continued to develop during 2009 and significant steps forward have been made in relation to data gathering and the piloting and development of models for the project.

The most recent InCurriculum staff development session was held on 14 December 2009 and key themes were presented for discussion including 'Accessibility Considerations for Project Teams', Dr Simon Ball (Jisc DisTech). Co-ordinator discussions of talking heads research captured on video. Each co-ordinator team gave a spoken presentation accompanied by a 100 word synopsis of key bullet points. Further discussions included: Approaches to integrated practice across institutions; Changes made to practice since the start of the project; How the practice will be evidenced at the end of the project.

The Project Steering Group, which met on 27th November 2009, included key aims for 2009-10. A paper was presented by the project leader that gave a cost analysis of student failure in HE, as a potential lever to promote inclusivity and culture change to failure prevention as the cost-effective alternative to resubmission,

All project staff have been active in development, delivery and evaluation of the sample modules across Year 2, using the work of the *AchieveAbility* project, GLAD, NALN and Art and Design pedagogy to enhance learning, teaching and assessment practices originated for students with SpLD for the wider benefit of all HE students. Evaluation methodology has been reviewed and revised inline with good action research practice. Assistive technology

continues to be incorporated within the project methodology to ensure a multi-sensory approach. MP3/MP4, Audacity, and a range of screen capture tools have been embraced by the project in order to allow maximum access to learners and staff involved in the project. 'Access Apps' as promoted by JISC DisTech has also been deployed for use.

The website continues to develop in terms of its architecture, appearance and more importantly content. Whilst the website is fully live, it is anticipated that the key moment for effective promotion and dissemination will be at the end of the project, and beyond.

www.incurriculum.org.uk

Information on the project was disseminated, by InCurriculum staff, at AchieveAbility House of Commons event for Inclusive Learning in December 2009. Through BECTA, and the Project Leader has been asked to present at the National Learning Network Conference in London in February 2010. InCurriculum continues to be a standing agenda item at the termly AchieveAbility Steering Group meetings.

The project remains on track and is fulfilling its aims and objectives.

2. Activities and progress

2a. With reference to your project plan summarise your achievements during the last reporting period and whether the anticipated objectives, activities or deliverables have been completed.

If there has been any variance from your planned activities please say what the variance is and what its causes were? If applicable, what is being done to get back on track? Will the project plan need to be revised? *(Please list as headings or bullet points)*

The Project Management Group (PMG) continues to refine and develop the project, with advice and guidance from the Steering Group (SG). The evaluation strategy continues to be defined by the action research methodology, and a consistent approach has been assured across the three institutions by the PMG via Staff Development Sessions and literature review. Questionnaires, think tanks and focus groups have elicited both quantitative and qualitative data from the unit samples. An example of the video and audio recordings were made from the various *fora* and transcriptions of these are available on the website as a resource. <http://www.incurriculum.org.uk/main/resources/learning-differences-theory/>

Discussion with Coordinators:

I have explained that the evidence of their practice can be in several ways and in fact it would be excellent that this is not wholly text based. At its most basic level this could be a series of web links. I have talked about a model of engagement that will inform and enable flexibility of assessment practice (particularly when we are thinking about formative assessment)

I have said that they should concentrate on their practice and that this year is for them to consolidate and work much more together through discussion and their own meetings. Richard Chipps has agreed to get this going. I do think it essential that they take much more responsibility for their discussions with regard to links that could happen across the range of practice - as at the end of the day we could end up with three very different institutional models of practice or different practice that can be integrated in a whole institutional approach. The latter would be preferable in terms of strategic planning that can be sold to senior managers in HE.

Actions agreed:

I have suggested that at least one of them do attend NTF Steering group meetings. **Subject to your agreement.**

We have also firmed up the coordinator staff development meetings so that everyone of them will and can attend.-The dates are as follows: 14 December (Westminster)- 13 January

(NUCA)- 19 March (DMU)

Richard to convene coordinator informal discussion
I will continue to meet them on a one to one basis as I think Richard really valued our recent meeting and this provides support and continuity

Way forward:

At the end of the day in terms of this project I would suggest this:

- That in true action research style we enable this practitioner dialogue to happen as much as possible.
- That you and I review on a fairly regular basis with a view to a strategy document that will pull the practice together (along the themes outlined in the attached paper)
- The evidence of research supplied in different formats and providing the essential underpinning for the strategic document.

The website is currently in the process of a technical upgrade that will enable visual 'mind maps' to be produced of relevant research findings. The website is also about to undergo field tests in relation to its accessibility for a range of audiences.

No revision of the project plan has been required, but a significant development during the autumn of 2008 was the drafting and approval (by SG and PMG) of the project Action Plan 2008-09 (Annexe A) in order to more effectively monitor the research and allocate specific roles and responsibilities to the staff involved.

From July 2008, the Project had in place a full team of institutional coordinators at the member of institutions. Good practice was disseminated through a series of Continuing Professional Development events and by the use of case studies from a range of different academic fields. Subject covered range from Textile Design to Management and Law.

In August 2008 an Institutional Coordinator was appointed to NUCA and this ensured that each institution had a coordinator in place. Additionally further academic unit leaders from both DMU and NUCA joined the project research and this strengthened the team in terms of its breadth and expertise.

A record of meetings and their minutes is appended to this report (Annexe D).

Reports have been received from institutional coordinators and module leaders, and as a result some modules have been amended in terms of their content, structure and assessment requirements. Student evaluation is being gathered and collated and revised unit profiles and levels of achievement will be monitored.

2b. Use the template below to report expenditure. Explain the reasons for any significant overspend or underspend. **(Only required for the annual progress report, submitted in July)**

3. Reflection

3a. Please articulate, in a short paragraph, the pedagogic issue, 'problem', or research question, at the heart of your NTFS project, bearing in mind that this central component may have evolved, developed and been refined. This should not simply be a reiteration of the project title.

At the time of writing, the project continues to progress well in accordance with its milestones and objectives and is gaining momentum. There is considerable confidence within the team that the research methodologies and emerging findings are robust with outcomes that will be transferable across the wider HE sector. The findings to date are beginning to shape several key themes for the research and for the InCurriculum Interim Conference to be held at University of Westminster in June 2009.

Key themes arising from research, evaluation and analysis have been summarised in the recent staff development session held on the 28th January, they are as follows and will inform the shape of the interim conference;

1/ Ensuring Robust Evaluation Methodologies for Action Research.

This is a cornerstone of the research and one which underpins the more dialogical aspects of the project.

2/ Inclusive Dialogues in HE Teaching, Learning and Assessment

This aspect examines practical and transferable methods for engaging learners and teachers in HE. Based on unit field trials and case studies from the project.

3/ Cumulative Learning as a Catalyst for Formative and Summative assessment

This element looks at *assemblage* and *bricolage* as a means for students to accrue a body of material during learning that can fulfil overall assessment tasks. E-learning, weblogs and more conventional formats are being trialled to provide an expanded range of research and assessment opportunities for students.

4/ Social and Visual Strategies for Writing

This element examines models of peer assisted learning and text as a visual language

3a. Are you experiencing any problems which are impeding progress? If applicable, what are these? Are there any unresolved problems from the last report?

No significant problems encountered and no unresolved problems from the previous report.

Synopsis of staffing changes: In September 2008, Simon Willmoth, the Project Leader left the project to take up a senior role at UAL, London, and was replaced by Neil Powell, Director of Studies at Norwich University College of the Arts. Powell was involved in the original consultation of the project bid in conjunction with Simon Willmoth and so was familiar with the aims and objectives of *InCurriculum*. Powell is also on the Management Group of the National Arts Learning Network and a member of the Group for Learning and Teaching in Art & Design (GLAD).

Sadly, in December 2008, David Pollak, the Principal Investigator and Project Director was forced to withdraw from the project due to health reasons and a replacement was sought via the partner institutions and HEA. In January 2009, Paula Hixenbaugh, a National Teaching Fellow based at the University of Westminster joined the project and will be bringing appropriate expertise to bear from January 2009.

Katherine Hewlett (originator of project bid) and Kate Byford have continued to ensure the project has stayed on track.

The original institutional Coordinator for NUCA, Mr Peter Martin, was also forced to withdraw from the project in August 2008 for health reasons, but a replacement was rapidly appointed in the form of Felicity Booth, Senior Lecturer in Textiles Critical Studies.

3b. How has the implementation of activities informed your approach? How do you see the project developing? Has progress changed the project or your expectations in any way? What lessons have been learned?

The project is beginning to have a noticeable impact on the development of teaching, learning and assessment in the sample modules, which have all been modified as a result of year 1 findings. It should be noted however that there needs to be an increased introduction of modules/units which are not Art and Design based in line with the original outcomes.

Despite the breadth of subjects involved, many of the curriculum delivery, learning style and assessment issues are emerging as consistent. Module leaders have also been able to share good practice via the Staff Development sessions which have proved invaluable, both as a source of mutual support and as a way of securing a rigorous comparative analysis of TLA and evaluation methods employed.

The Action Research approach has enabled some significant refinements to take place in the gathering of data, including audio and video footage, the development of weblogs as well as written submissions. The project has also adhered to some self imposed parameters such as working within existing educational budgets, anticipating that inclusive practice can be enhanced without major resource implications for HEI's.

4. Future Activities

What activities, objectives or deliverables you expect to achieve during the next reporting period? (*Please list as headings or bullet points*)

- To collate the findings of research in terms of qualitative and quantitative evidence to provide a range of suitable and useable data for dissemination.
- To develop and put into production dissemination materials, both as printed matter and content in a range of digital domains.
- Further staff development activities for academic coordinators and module leaders in advance of the Interim Conference; facilitated by Project Development Director. This will include some less experienced project staff being funded to attend conferences in order to enhance their own conference presentations.
- Confirm final conference details by end February 2010.
- Project team to develop series of academic papers for delivery at the InCurriculum and other conferences and for publication.
- Further expanded functionality of the website including 'mind-maps', web blog links and resources for teachers.

5. Any other comments

I understand that the text provided in section 1a will be made publicly available on the Academy's website and other publications.

Name	Neil Powell
Date	29 January 2009