

SCONUL Task Force on Information Skills

Notes of meeting held on Friday 13th September at the SCONUL Offices

Present: Hilary Johnson, Deborah Bragan Turner, Stephen Town, Martin Jenkins, Helen Hathaway, Jo Parker, Peter Godwin, Wendy White, Janet Peters, Alison Mackenzie (Big Blue) & Helen Workman (SCONUL EB)

Agenda agreed with some AOB items

1. **Notes** of last meeting accepted.
2. **Matters arising**
 - a. Report on activities has been sent to SCONUL Secretary
 - b. IFLA – presentation by ST had been well-attended and received, and contact made with sub-section Chair of IFLA group on Information Literacy. Noted that ACRL in the US was undertaking work on standards and P.I's which was similar to that done on the 'what's important' performance measurement workshops
 - c. Web pages – ST reported discussions under way. It was noted that SCONUL had now agreed with ILRT Bristol for support for web pages (**Action ST** contact ILRT)
 - d. Contributions to the proceedings of the IT&InfoLit conference. **HJ to confirm with Allan Martin**
3. **CILIP/SCONUL discussions.** HJ reported further on message from Suzanne Enright who had attended the meeting. Agreed that a proactive line should be followed – **Action: HJ check** with Toby B about formal outcomes and to invite CILIP to next Task Force meeting. *JaP* mentioned the SCONUL working group 'INSPIRE' and will contact Mary Heaney re. the TF interest (**Action: JaP**). AM had attended a DCMS-sponsored meeting on Empowering the Learning Community. Re:source and schools were also likely interested parties for a wider definition of information literacy.
4. **HESDA Skills Development Group.** HJ reported on genesis of involvement. It was noted that the group's terms of reference said 'all staff' but that union representatives included only UNISON. Meeting later in September **Action: HJ will report back.**
5. **Big Blue project.** AM reported that the project had now formally completed, and the final report was under discussion by JCALT. Recommendations included
 - A forum for further discussion
 - An information literacy portal
 - Issues of communication across HE and FE
 - Work on identifying appropriate timeline for development of skills FE/HE
 - Work on the nature and extent of academic staff input to information skills development
 - Work on where responsibility lies for 'training the trainers'
 - Linking to the curriculum
 - Look at the idea of an 'Immersion' programme
 - Further work on standards and performance indicators
 - Further work on key skills frameworks and qualifications

The 'Immersion' idea generated debate. Is this a re-invention of the 'EDULIB' project? Certainly the case that targeted training in this area is still required, although in some institutions there has been progress in allowing academic support staff to undertake the teaching courses designed for mainstream academic staff. Such course were not necessarily appropriate for all concerned with IS or IT skills development. It is hoped that the recommendation will trigger sectoral debate.

It was noted that discussions were planned between 'Big Blue' and the Open University Key Skills staff, and that at Reading University HH has been involved in useful developments around 'research' or 'academic' skills (which may well be more acceptable as terminology to some parts of the sector).
6. **Report from TLIG.** MJ reported that there was likely to be continued work on the VLE survey as part of JISC study into MLEs. There was a suggestion of a joint event between TLIG and the TF on the topic of use of VLE for delivering information literacy. This was felt to be a good topic, and to be timely. A one-day event could be planned for early-ish 2003. The potential audience is large. The UCISA secretariat can assist with logistics. A couple of

people from the TF will be identified to help with planning. (**ACTION: Volunteer(s) wanted to progress**)

Guides to e-learning. MJ also mentioned that the LTSC Generic Centre will be publishing a series of perspectives on e-learning, and a possible contributor could be from the TF or associates. **Interested parties to contact MJ** to discuss terms, timescales and fee. Approx. 7000 words required.

7. **Discussion over refinement of model.** HJ, ST and WW reported on meeting of 30th August. Discussion ensued and the following points emerged
 - There is a danger of confusing the message again (having started from the point that IL is different from C&IT skills) and this would need to be guarded against
 - Some of what lies within the C&IT remit falls outside the model
 - The 'contextual' elements currently at the 'bottom' of the diagram needed to be articulated, and to be linked to the 'pillars' (the 'ivy' concept)
 - The subject angle might mean different versions of IL for different constituencies to reflect different needs for C&IT
 - The information environment as a metaphor might be helpful in delineating boundaries
 - We are likely to need to be iterative about discussions
 - We need to apply several of the current ways of listing C&IT skills to the model to ensure robustness
 - The 'journey' metaphor is also a useful one (parallels with ECDL *idea*)All members of TF invited to submit comments. (**Action:** all)
8. **MOSAIC and the 'customisable shell'.**

MOSAIC first cohort about to receive results. All bar one person who submitted will pass the module. The one failure was due to not following requirements of the portfolio. Students will also receive a skills profile detailing the degree to which they met the required attributes. A 40% submission rate is the norm for OU short course modules. The course is being evaluated, and the report will be available about the end of September. The evaluation will cast light on e-learning as well as the content of the course. The next cohort is registering now – about 250. Looking at the feedback is important to inform discussion as to the quantity of work involved and the issue of level. How much do people gain from doing the course and how much from completing the assessment? Is it possible to complete the assessment alone? Those people who undertook the course at Newport and at Reading (both staff and students) will also contribute to feedback. It is important to think through the different potential models of how this development might be promoted. Subsequently the SCOUNL Marketing person might assist, but it is probably too early at present.

Actions agreed

 - Gather evaluative information (**JoP**)
 - Pursue discussions with Nottingham (**JoP/DBT**) about technical 'stripping out' to clarify what effort needed on both sides
 - Review question of level – is it right for a first year module? **JoP** to refer to course team
 - **HH** to reflect on the academic model issue in the light of the experience at Reading and teaching staff feedback.

[*HJ additional note* – what we need to distinguish between may be the certification of a level of IL as opposed to a 'curriculum/delivery means' which might lead to a certified level. Presently, the MOSAIC course does both. It may be that the model we need to look at separates out these 2 – the ECDL is both a curriculum delivered in a number of ways by different providers, and a certification of competence, and people can just do the assessment without necessarily undertaking a specific 'ECDL curriculum', as I understand it.]
9. **Action Plan.** Discussion around the issue of 'Task Force' status. HJ had spoken in an initial enquiry to Andrew Green (Chair, SCOUNL), who suggested a proposal to the Executive Board. (**Action: HJ** to draft). The Action Plan needed translation into more specifics, and to include the idea of a joint meeting with UCISA TLIG. (**Action: HJ** to re-draft for next meeting, and in the meantime submit the plan to SCOUNL EB).
10. **Overseas news** was noted. The Assessment debate had been interesting and useful, and assessment as a topic might be worth including in the projected joint meeting with UCISA TLIG. The connection to the US National Forum has been made, although the web information has yet to be updated.

11. **AOB**

Interesting project at Southampton in relation to the New generation project for medical and health-related students which is intending to use the 7 pillars model (**Action: WW** to keep TF informed)

HJ reported on the UC&R Innovation award (more info to be circulated outside the meeting – **Action : HJ**).

JoP reported on an email regarding UNESCO interest – will circulate to rest of TF. **Action: JoP**

12. **Date of next meeting** – 18th November 2002.

Meeting closed at 3.42 pm

HJJ 16/9/02