

Notes of meeting of the SCONUL Task Force on Information Skills, Monday 20th May 2002

(NB For notes of the Pre-meeting about the web pages – please see the end of these notes)

Present: Hilary Johnson (Convenor)
Peter Godwin
Wendy White
Deborah Bragan Turner
Jo Parker
Stephen Town
Helen Hathaway
Martin Jenkins (UCISA)
Alison Mackenzie (Big Blue)
Janet Peters

Item 1. Apologies & Welcome

There were no apologies. Wendy White was welcomed as a new member of the Task Force. HJ apologised for having omitted TLIG from the agenda, and it was agreed to include this in item 3.

Item 2. Notes of the last meeting and matters arising

Notes were agreed with one amendment, that it was Janet Peters who had reported on the ILT Forum (Item 7).

Matters arising

ILT conference – timing had proved problematic. Janet P agreed to write a ‘newsy’ piece for ILT (see also Item 6 below)

Action: JaP

ACHC proposal – no further information, and it appeared to have been dropped. Jo P to keep in touch with the group via Nicky Whitsed.

Action: JoP

HJ reported that the member of the SCONUL Executive who had been nominated to work with the TF on the development of MOSAIC was Helen Workman (Oxford Brookes). HJ to set up contact.

Action: HJ

Item 3. Reports

MOSAIC – Jo P reporting. Course had got underway on 4th May with 205 students enrolled. A number had been active on the ‘chat’ pages and revealed a variety of backgrounds, including librarians, teachers and ‘returners to work’. Students at Reading were involved (HH will evaluate), and Janet P reported 2 members of staff. DBT reported that Nottingham were interested in being a ‘test case’ for development. The first exam board will be held on 2nd Sept.

Big Blue - AM reporting. Final report draft produced, not yet finalised. Dissemination activities have happened and more are planned, some alongside CITSCAPES events. Event at MMU 21st June, and in Glasgow on 1st July, with Allan Martin. A London event was planned at South Bank in September and a possible joint conference with CITSCAPES in the autumn. The ‘toolkit’ will be launched on the web site by 21st

June. Definite recommendations to JISC will include mention of a lack of a national focus for further activity. Discussion followed as to correct focus for activity, given JISC interest now in both FE and HE and with IT aspects. HE involvement should reflect both that HE has to deal with what students come with by way of skills and attributes, and that universities should contribute to the development of competencies in a global information society.

SCONUL Conference at Cambridge. Positive feedback received regarding presentations by TF members.

TLIG – MJ reporting. The VLE survey had received positive feedback and there was a possibility of further funding to continue. Current ideas for projects include an information Officers/Help Desk handbook and a document sharing archive for training materials. UCISA conference had focused on widening participation in UCISA through regional groups.

OU Information Literacy Unit launch – Jo P reporting. Event on 13th May had been well received and generated interest. Attenders included CILIP staff.

OU Key Skills work. Jo P presented an update on work done by the Centre for Outcome-Based Education at the OU. Much good work has been done on defining Information Skills at QCA level 4 (i.e. HE level 2?), and a version for Level 3 was in planning. As a result of work with FE institutions, the Big Blue project has engaged similarly with Levels 1 and 2. Jo P agreed to put OU staff into contact with Big Blue with a view to possible drawing up a 'suite' of skills levels. This could be presented to QCA. Discussion of aspects of 'progression' ensued in relation to connecting with subject specific elements – an important topic which links with subject benchmarks.

Action: Jo P; AM

Item 4 IT&InfoLit Conference, Glasgow, March 2002.

Publication of papers – submitted to Allan M. Check with Allan re time-scale and possibility of TF 'chunk'.

Action: HJ

IT skills and the 7 Pillars model – the conference itself had exemplified the blurring of boundaries/ambiguity. Some elements of the CITSCAPES skills tool very relevant to IS model. Idea of 'IT fluency' has now been expressed. Agreed need to clarify overlap/distinctions – if there is distinction, be clear about what this is. One way could be to 'map' the CITSCAPES skills tool onto the model. Agreed that MJ to take the idea to TLIG of the need between the TF and the TLIG group to refine the model.

Action: MJ

Another outcome from the conference is the issue of stimulating engagement with LIS departments on information skills development. The Big Blue project is likely to include a recommendation on this. CILIP's involvement through accreditation visits is another route. Students of LIS should be involved through dissertation topics etc. The ISNTO could be approached. Ideas to be included in the development of the TF action plan.

Action: HJ

The work done on subject differences could be fed back to the co-operating LTSN centres.

Action: Janet P

Item 5: Progress on Action Plan & Action Plan 2002/3

Discussion on progress against the current Action Plan highlighted areas where it was felt that achievement has been slow. The action on diagnostic tests was one such. A review of the current work (known about at Wolverhampton, DMU and Coventry) could form a useful item for a student dissertation.

Further work on performance measures awaits the publication of the manual. ST to keep in touch with the ACPI.

Subject benchmarks – further subjects had been produced and could be looked at. More could be done on linking the TF work with that done on learning styles and pedagogy. The TF has a role in keeping up awareness on pedagogical issues.

Research could be done on for example, the application of learning styles theory to information skills work. (PhD anyone?)

Contacts with the LTSN subject centres had been good, less so with the generic centre. Keeping up links with LTSN and the ILT was felt to be a priority. There needs to be more work with academic staff – will need to be targeted.

Further ideas for research are the degree to which information skills contributes to ‘graduateness’ – how do we recognise an ‘information literate’ graduate? The ILRT (Bristol) may be worth contacting, (Emma Place) with a view to suggesting work relating to the use/take-up of the Virtual Training suite.

The broader agenda re outreach remains – openings exist for work with CILIP, Re:source. This agenda needs more explicit support from SCONUL, and led to discussion of the place of the Task Force. Is it time to become something more ‘official’? Need to position the topic within the strategic agenda for SCONUL itself.

Make an approach for input from the new SCONUL marketing person?

Potential for TF with regard to a national ‘gateway’ web site?

Develop idea of a strategic statement for endorsement by SCONUL. Need to return to idea of flyer – make a bid to a project fund?

Action: HJ to liaise with Toby and Andrew Green

Item 6 Future activities

IFLA event, Glasgow.

Action: ST/HJ to liaise.

CILIP – liaise with Guy Daines and Kathy Ennis

Action: HJ

ILT - ‘Active Learning’ journal – HH to consider writing article, with input from Big Blue and the OU team

Action: HH, JoP, AM

Item 7 Overseas links

Reports about ANZIIL from JoP and NFIL from HJ were noted. Useful to maintain contact with both.

Action : JoP & HJ

Item 8 Date of next meetings

Friday 13th September, and Monday 18th November were suggested for future meeting dates.

Action: HJ

Meeting finished at 16.03.

HJJ 7/6/02

Notes of pre-meeting held to discuss Task Force's web pages.

Present: HJ, ST, WW, PG

Agreed that a web presence for the TF work was a necessity, that it is embarrassing not having a collected place for TF activities and reports to appear. Also noted that unlike other countries the UK lacked a presence on the web on this subject. The Big Blue Project was establishing a useful site, but the lifespan is limited.

Purposes identified and agreed as

- ◆ Dissemination of TF activities
- ◆ Referral point for people interested in IS and IL
- ◆ To begin to represent a UK 'voice' on IL
- ◆ An intranet for the TF

Decided that last purpose could be secondary, and that 2 and 3 were linked together.

Current SCONUL web site arrangements may be limiting, although conversation was needed to clarify what could be done through the ULCC. ST offered the view that what was needed was content management, which implied a more holistic approach than may be possible through the SCONUL pages. These could provide a starting point and lead off onto other sites/pages if that was useful. Some SCONUL groups are looking at extending use of the web, e.g. for the SCONUL statistics – providing interactive access. The Big Blue site could be linked to or used as a foundation, and the content of this subsequently extended and developed – needs conversation with them when we have a clearer idea of what want to achieve and what the options are.

The organisation mechanism was discussed. The TF needs to understand how far technically the ULCC are prepared to support – needs conversation with them, and ST offered to pursue.

Action: ST to contact ULCC

Funding and sustainability are crucial issues to resolve. Support from SCONUL may be available but may be limited. This needs to be part of overall Action Plan for the TF.

Action: HJ to incorporate into revised Action Plan