"A new delivery mechanism can change a design totally... so new technologies in particular can drive design processes," - T. Inglis, project, Boston University

Over to you

The curriculum design cycle

The case for change

When the Jisc Curriculum Design Programme was launched, design practices were often limited, unstructured and unresponsive to changing circumstances. Through a combined focus on organisational, technical and educational issues, the work of the projects has introduced transformative approaches to curriculum design, sometimes on an institutional-wide scale.

"Without exception, the discussions that take place during panel events demonstrate the presence of better design than is obvious through the documentation."

"The baseline review found that the formal module production process required limited consideration of pedagogy early in the module development process."

"When you are expected to produce a document within a quite short space of time, it often problematic having to go around accessing lots of different people to get the information from a number of different sources."

"A primary driver for the project at the outset was a belief that the university's systems and processes were acting as a constraint to the development of a more flexible curriculum."

"A focus on the products - rather than the process of curriculum design district activity away from rich discourse and innovative solutions to curriculum design challenges."

Outcomes from the programme

"The management of curriculum designs as knowledge assets was considered to support a number of key academic processes and better enable responsive, user-driven curriculum design."

"The successes at more than one of the external pilots have undoubtedly strengthened the informal case for adopting a learning design approach."

"It is possible to achieve success in changing or improving the process, practices and perceptions of curriculum design yet this requires a combination of elements working together."

Over to you

Resources to try

Digital tools and activities to support designing, reviewing and discussing the curriculum

The Open University OULDI-Jisc project

The Learning Design Toolkit offers a suite of usable style design, visual and hands on representations of the curriculum. These include:

- GlobalView: a tool for networking, discussing and designing ideas.
- OULDI-Jisc cloud

- Compendium D: a tool for planning and sharing projects.

Supporting curriculum design workshops


- StaffHorizons University Enabler project

The Enabler project combines a number of simple, readily available technologies to support discussion and technological development.


- University of Bolton Connective project

The Connective project developed an online version of the Viewpoints project.

- Design widget


- Links to follow up

- Jisc Institutional Approaches to Curriculum Design project


- Snakes and ladders tool


- Course planning cards


- Manchester Metropolitan University SRC project

The SRC project offers a suite of cards representing teaching and learning activities, types of assessment and activities. People are invited and sustainable to present discussions around course design purposes.

- Course planning cards


- University of Greenwich GS-FLEX project

The snakes and ladders tool developed by the GS-FLEX project is designed to help academic staff understand the challenges faced by students before, on arrival and during the first year of study. The resource comes with a quick and downloadable version.

- Snake and ladder tool


Other tools to support online design activities

- Cardiff University FLEXIT project

The FLEXIT project set up an online community in Lotus® (now IBM)

- Convections

- Supporting curriculum design workshops


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What we have learned about workshops on curriculum design

Important to know
- Workshops provide much-needed time away from daily routines to focus on curriculum design. Different project groups can be used to ensure curriculum challenges are learned from each other’s perspective and that the knowledge that ensues is shared.
- Workshops enable a shared language to develop, enabling curriculum design as a dynamic, collaborative practice based on educational principles.

Inside story
The University of Northern Virginia’s project has created strong design activity for face-to-face workshops around a core set of cards that can be selected, arranged, animated and used as prompts to decide making. The success of this approach shows that the use of hands-on activities can make a significant difference to the forward thinking of curriculum design.

Most importantly, pedagogic values are placed back at the heart of the design process.

“...the workshops, these tools help participants...identify curriculum design challenges and act on educational principles rather than content focus, allowing focus rather than a teaching focus.”

Valuing

Validating

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