

Imaginative Curriculum Network views on the web site

*Malcolm Shaw,
Academic Registry,
Leeds Metropolitan University*

Introduction

This report summarises the views of ten members of the Imaginative Curriculum network who responded to a questionnaire (Appendix 1) inviting them to comment on the form of a web site to support curriculum development.

Question 1

Who might use web-based information about the curriculum?

A range of possibilities was identified sometimes based on the categories suggested in question 4. Almost all respondents identified '*module designers and teachers*' as the prime users with '*programme designers and coordinators*' and '*people involved in QA processes*' also strongly identified. Other categories mentioned were '*staff and educational developers*', '*supporting skills developers*' and '*administrators*'.

Interestingly several respondents identified students as potential users, but in relation to more specific information about their own curriculum of study.

When would they use it?

Most categories of staff were seen by respondents to be likely to use the web-site during the '*development, review and monitoring of modules/courses/programmes*', and '*development of materials to support learning*'. Other possibilities mentioned were during the '*development of staff training courses*' and '*for information storage and reference*'. Student use was in the context of '*the needs of the student union*' and for access to specific '*student information on the curriculum*'.

Why would they use it?

Among the reasons suggested for the use of such a resource we find:

- access information and ideas about current developments in teaching, learning and the curriculum
- gain ideas on the work of others
- verification of compliance/conformity with developing norms (local, institutional, national)
- quality assurance focus
- to help to ensure effective student support
- to assist in development of web-based materials

Question 2

What do you understand by 'curriculum'?

Responses here ranged across and included the following suggested elements:

- content (knowledge and skills) of a programme
- what is taught
- defined programme followed by students
- knowledge, skills and ideas in a principled structure
- more to do with process than syllabus
- totality of expectations for student learning (content, methods, processes, assessment)
- experience that promotes, supports and achieves learning(organised and managed)
- climate created to motivate students

What conceptions of curriculum are worked with?

The responses here were sparse and the main suggestions were around notions of:

- outcomes approach,
- Hirst (rational planning) coupled with a degree of pragmatism
- using a specific approach to teaching and learning eg constructivist,
- appreciation of the dynamic nature of the curriculum,
- approach that is purposive and principled (Stenhouse?)

Question 3

What academic colleagues understand by 'curriculum'?

Most respondents suggested that perhaps colleagues had a less well-developed sense of curriculum than they had themselves. Colleagues perceptions were associated more with content, syllabus, course and programme notions and much less with the fuller and more comprehensive ideas of curriculum. There was a suggestion that colleagues understanding may be discipline dependent in some way and that different subjects worked with different curriculum paradigms.

Question 4

Types of information group would find useful?

Respondents made many and wide ranging suggestions here. There was also a generally expressed view that most information was useful to all categories of staff and that to differentiate needs was not appropriate. The responses are presented here in order of their importance as judged by the frequency of reference by respondents:

- examples (case studies) of curriculum models/programmes/modules
- pedagogic concerns (learning theories, teaching methods, learning approaches)
- learning outcomes, skills development and assessment
- curriculum coherence and linkages
- curriculum processes, procedures and progression
- considerations of content
- stakeholder views of curriculum applications
- current research findings
- professional body implications

- resource implications of curriculum strategies
- curriculum principle and values
- exemplars form different disciplines

Also briefly mentioned were considerations of market research and marketing, student tracking and feedback (all sources). There was also a strong plea that the resource should avoid any sort of patronising approach and should be sensitive to the realistic enquiries that users might be expected to make of it.



Imaginative curriculum project Network intelligence gathering

1. In your institution who might use web-based information about the curriculum, when would they use it and why?

Who might use web-based information about course/ programme /module design?	When are they most likely to use it?	Why would they use it?

2. What do you understand by the term curriculum and what conceptions of the curriculum do you work with?

3. What do you think that most academic colleagues would understand by the term curriculum?

4. What types of information do you think the groups of people indicated would find most useful?

Functional role	Types of information that would be useful
Programme designers and programme coordinators/directors	
module designers and teachers	
Staff and educational developers	
People involved in supporting skills development	
People involved in QA processes	

Please return to m.shaw@lmu.ac.uk by January 14th Thank you