Developing Reusable Learning Design Resources

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Abstract

An Australian federally funded project, Information and Communications Technologies and their role in Flexible Learning, aims to produce generic/reusable learning design resources to assist academics to create high quality, flexible learning experiences for students. This poster provides a summary of the project activities in order to achieve its purpose.

Project Aim and Deliverables

This project aims to produce generic/reusable learning design resources to assist academics to create high quality, flexible learning experiences for students. This is to be achieved by:

- Identifying high quality learning designs used in higher education;
- Selecting those that are suitable to be redeveloped in the form of reusable software, templates and/or generic guidelines; and
- Developing these reusable resources and making them accessible from a central web site (which will be hosted by DEST).

The term “learning design” refers to a variety of ways of designing student learning experiences, that is, the sequence of types of activities and interactions. The scope of a learning design may be at the level of a subject/unit or subject/unit components. This project is focusing on learning designs implemented with the use of ICT and how flexible learning opportunities for students can be afforded through the use of such technologies. The composition of a learning design, particularly when ICT mediated, has been informed by the work of Oliver (1999) and Oliver and Herrington (2001). Thus, for the scope of this project, a learning design, comprises three key elements: the content or resources learners interact with, the tasks or activities learners are required to perform, and the support mechanisms provided to assist learners to engage with the tasks and resources.

The project began in November 2000 and is structured against four milestones:

- **Milestone One (May 2001):** Development of the Evaluation and Redevelopment Framework
- **Milestone Two (November 2001):** Identification and documentation of learning designs that foster high quality learning experiences and that have the potential for redevelopment in a generic/reusable form.
- **Milestone Three (June 2002):** Design of the final project web site and completion of development plans for the generic products to be produced.
- **Milestone Four (December 2002):** Completion of the development of generic/reusable learning designs in a more generic form and finalisation of the web site that will store these resources.
Major Project Activities

*Development of an Evaluation Instrument - Evaluation and Redevelopment Framework (ERF)*

The purpose of the ERF is to identify ICT-based learning design exemplars that foster high quality learning experiences, and to determine whether these exemplars have potential to be redeveloped in a more generic/reusable form. (The instrumentation is available at www.learningdesigns.uow.edu.au.)

High quality student learning is purported by this project as having potential to be achieved by applying four key principles (Boud & Prosser, 2001) in a learning environment: *engaging* learners, acknowledging *context*, *challenging* learners, and providing opportunities for *practice*.

*Applying the ERF to Learning Design Exemplars*

The project has identified over 50 ICT-based learning design exemplars and 28 were selected for evaluation. An ERF evaluation team comprised international educational technology and/or pedagogy expertise. Two evaluators were allocated to conduct an evaluation for each learning design exemplar.

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To ensure the learning design exemplars evaluated represent a range of learning designs, the project team has developed a Learning Design Categorisation Framework. A number of exemplars have been identified as suitable for redevelopment in a generic/reusable form. The project development process comprises activities such as designing and developing the web site and developing and evaluating the generic learning design resources.

*References*

