

1 Your CiP Project

1.1 Please make a note of an idea for a project here.

1.2 After reading a case study, please make a note of any ideas or questions.

1.3 After discussing in a group, please add further thoughts or plans here.

2 Extra Notes

3 The Five Activities

These are shortened versions of the planned toolkit activities.

3.1 What is a curriculum?

This question can be as large or small as you need it to be: it might focus very much on the course content but it can also deliberately include more subtle aspects about imparting a *culture*: not just ‘what people will know’ but also ‘how will people conduct themselves?’

3.1.1 What counts as ‘curriculum’ and what doesn’t?

There are a lot of possible approaches to this:

- course content
- assessment
- visible results (eg projects)

It’s equally important to identify what you will *not* be considering (for instance, you might decide that student welfare is best handled by the usual university officers.)

3.1.2 How closely can you interweave course content with the learning aims?

Students learn by doing, so how far can you create ‘real-life’ and ‘relevant’ learning activities without just copying what happens in a workplace?

3.1.3 What assessment methods are appropriate for partnership?

Unless the partner(s) need people to sit down and write for three hours to complete reports (often lawyers do work rather like this), assessment by examination is not likely to be appropriate. What kind of assessment activities can be robust, valid and reliable?

3.2 What are the benefits of designing a curriculum in partnership?

It might seem easier *not* to design a curriculum with anyone else: if you are a university, then your staff know a huge amount about a particular subject; if you are a partner, can you not just train your employees to do what you need them to do?

3.2.1 Identify two or three particular things that each organisation has to offer that the other does not.

There will be many things that look similar (but are not) and equally, things that look different (but are similar). It's worth spending some time getting very clear about what each has to offer the other and *focussing on those* as organising principles. They will help you make decisions and do the planning.

3.2.2 What do you need the most, and why?

It can help organisations to inquire into what they need the most because there are times when things are not as they seem. Identifying what you need, and why, will create a powerful set of possibilities that help you be sure that the benefits you think you need are the ones you actually get!

3.2.3 What would you like to change?

Partnerships are a great opportunity to bring in not just things that you *need* but things that would be *good to have*. This might range from travelling, or seeing new environments; having a different kind of perspective on things you always do the same way.

3.3 How do you design a curriculum with partners?

What do you need? What do participants want? Obviously, an introduction course is no use to experts. But these questions are harder to answer than they first appear and do need some proper inquiry. Will participants want a degree or just knowledge? There are many different qualifications, especially within the range of Masters' levels and they all have a different emphasis and set of expectations.

3.3.1 What are principal aims of the partnership?

It is worth spelling these out in some detail. Sometimes sponsorship is the most important thing; at other times it might be that graduates and alumni say that what they learned was not relevant; it could be that both university and partner want to share resources – there are many possible reasons.

3.3.2 What would count as a good result?

Sometimes employers want universities to teach students a particular set of things which is perhaps narrower than the the university would like to teach. If this is not settled, an employer might start disregarding certain marks which the students valued on the course, leading to confusion and disappointment for the students (and all partners).

3.3.3 How will you co-ordinate efforts?

Often university timeframes are slower than businesses; or the partner might have a slower cycle than the university. This can lead to 'simple' things becoming very problematic, such as the university needing to know how many students are coming in the spring (to allocate places and resources) but a company wanting to see how many able graduates they can recruit during the summer, to start in the autumn. Sometimes there are a huge number of people involved in different aspects.

3.4 What are the practical challenges of designing a CiP?

This activity follows on from activity 3 quite naturally and some of these can be the reason a course fails or succeeds in practice. How will the course be organised? Full-time might not fit well, but part-time and modular is fine (but takes longer!) Co-ordinating and designing these aspects can be the most substantial work you have to do to design something in partnership and involves asking of a lot of questions early on. Different workplaces take very different things for granted: will the students be used to working in the evening? Will they be able to plan properly or does their job require that they suddenly go to emergencies abroad, eg an oil-spill?

3.4.1 What is the worst thing that could go wrong?

It can be useful, when you have a decent idea of what you want to do and with who, to imagine going through the process that you have designed. Are there 'small details' that could make the whole thing fail? Can you get a room big enough at the right time? Is it impossible to get everyone together on the same day each week (leading to a lot of possible confusion)?

3.4.2 Can the course design be flexible enough to give people choices?

It might be that you are going to have so many different students from many different walks of life that you need to present the same materials in a range of formats. Will you make all of them available to everyone? Would that always be fair?

3.4.3 Are there non-curricular things that need considering?

You might have a very mixed group who are not accustomed to working together, and it is possible to use the curriculum to work on that. For instance, if assessment is done collaboratively, it will help people learn to work together, but it can also lead to problems that do not appear with individual assessment (like someone not doing their share of the work in a group).

3.5 How do you measure impact? Maintaining and developing provision.

It is tempting to put all your energy into setting things up and getting them started, but ‘steady state’ also requires a certain kind of work. You might design a course that can be changed, to be relevant for other partners.

Much of the future of the course will be dependent on whether you can show it has succeeded in its aims, and disseminating the results. This can affect the whole design of a course – for instance, some kind of identifiable result such as a poster competition open to the public can demonstrate the relevance and interest of a course, but you will have to consider that from an early stage in the teaching!

3.5.1 What are you measuring, and why?

There are a range of reasons that students are assessed. Sometimes you wish to identify the most successful, and will use *norm-referenced* (where most get a C, a few get A and so on). This is common for university entrance or competitive application for jobs. At the other extreme is *criterion-referencing* where in theory all students can get A (or E, or C). Often the two get mixed up which causes a lot of confusion.

3.5.2 Can the assessment, teaching and outcomes be visible products?

If students collaborate, the course can be designed to support that, all culminating in something that all stakeholders can *see*. It might be to build something or to create a workpackage of some kind with individual contributions. Each field will have its own version of this. The advantage here is that it is easy to demonstrate benefits to potential future partners or to maintain connections with existing ones. The course will end up with its own ‘portfolio’ as an integral part rather than just something added at the end.

3.5.3 How much does your design depend on one or two people, who might not always be there?

Very often, it is a matter of individuals having a lot of enthusiasm for something, and if they leave, a project can be in trouble. Curricula in partnership can be complex and if staff cannot be found at a university who are willing to deal with this complexity, the university may find itself having difficulty providing the teaching over a long period. There are many ways to build in incentives.

4 Useful Information

- The IMPLEMENT project aims at embedding the BeFlex+ materials into actual practice : <http://implement.eucen.eu/>
- BeFlex+ produced a great number of case studies and activities to work from: <http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlexPlus/index.html>
- LinkedIn Group: <http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=3903955>
- These slides can be downloaded from <http://db.tt/MVmtJvhk> (white text on blue) or <http://db.tt/OpN9qV9D>
- My email address is j.p.davies@ucl.ac.uk
- This document in full can be downloaded at: <http://db.tt/LZkM46dd>

The toolkits are not open to the public yet but we can open them to anyone interested in offering help in their development – please email me.