



# Embedding Learning Technologies

Number: TLTP3/89

Project: EFFECTS (continuation project)

Website: [www.elt.ac.uk](http://www.elt.ac.uk)

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Completed by: Helen Beetham [h.beetham@btinternet.com](mailto:h.beetham@btinternet.com)

Initials	Surname
S	Timmis
Project Manager	
Institute for Learning and Research Technologies	
University of Bristol	
Institute for Learning and Research Technology University of Bristol 8-10 Berkeley Square Bristol BS8 1HH	
+44 (0)117 928	
sue.timmis@bristol.ac.uk	

describes the key activities and overall progress towards objectives made by the EFECTS continuation project over the period of its funding.

### **and progress**

- Original project plan
- Revised project plan
- Outcomes mapped to objectives
- Deliverables

### **ion**

#### **from activities and progress undertaken**

- Issues encountered
- Unexpected opportunities
- Learning and teaching strategies
- Student diversity, progression and retention

- Evaluation report
- Findings from the final evaluation workshop

## 1.1 Activities and progress made during reporting period

### 1.1.1 Original project plan

Objective/target/outcome/ milestone	Original date to be achieved	Output to demonstrate objective/ target/outcome/milestone achieved	Date achieved	If applicable, reasons for slippage in date achieved	If applicable, reasons for change to original objectives
Project plan and project web site in place  First meeting of project team  Initial meetings with network coordinators	Feb 2002	Completed project plan Web site available via ILRT  Notes from project meeting  Notes from Network Meeting (all presented to SC meeting)	Feb 2002		
First SC meeting  One guidelines document produced	March 2002	Papers and minutes	March 2002		
6 regional network meetings to have taken place  Web resources and consultant packs finalised  Consultants' workshop arranged	April 2002	3 regional meetings held (reports available)  Consultants' pack finalised	April 2002	Slippage on achievement of web resources and consultants' workshop was due to loss of staff from the project. The web site is now complete.	Fewer meetings were held due to the difficulty of finding staff willing to organise these events. Though funding was offered, this could not in practice be used to buy out their time directly.
Interim report from consultancy and evaluation	May 2002	Sue Timmis' report	Dec 2002	Loss of staff as above	

18 institutional consultancy visits completed  Consultation and feasibility plans completed with LTSN Generic Centre, RESULTS, key LTSNs, TLTP3 projects	Sept 2002	Consultancy visits were carried out to a total of 10 institutions  LTSN Generic Centre has invited networks: to bid for funds to collaboratively develop materials; to participate in Supporting Sustainable e-Learning Forum workshops; to contribute to work on the pedagogy of e-learning; and to submit proposals for embedding existing development materials into effective practice.	Nov 2002		However, 7 national workshops attracted a total of around 170 participants and were found by the evaluator to have been effective at reaching and supporting program developers.  The 3 LTSNs originally involved in discussions have decided not to pursue EFFECTS/ELT pathways for their subject area until their networks are more securely established. Other projects have now completed.
Report on feedback from institutions and update frameworks	Sept 2002				See revised project plan below
6 further regional network meetings	Nov 2002	3 further regional meetings held			As above
1 conference presentation	Nov 2002	Practitioner networks to support academic development (Hall, J., Bailey, P., Smith, J. & Yorke, J.), SEDA/SREH Scholarship of Academic & Staff Development Conference, Bristol	April 2003	As above	
Two guidelines documents	Nov 2002				See revised project plan below
Final evaluation reports completed	Nov 2002	Report: Julie Hall  Final evaluation meeting, Dartington, June 2003 (outcomes reported in this document)	May 2003	As above	

### 1.1.2 Revised project plan

In December 2002 Sue Timmis, the new Project Manager, requested changes to the project plan due to the fact that three key members of the Effects team - Helen Beetham, Grainne Conole and Paul Bailey all moved onto new career opportunities and the original plan had not been fully achieved by the end of 2002 as originally envisaged. The new plan extended the project until May 2003, allowing time for the external evaluator to complete her project and produce a report and for a series of dissemination and support activities to be held. Details of these planned activities, as approved by the national coordination team, are provided in the revised project plan below.

<b>Objective/target/outcome/milestone</b>	<b>Original date to be achieved</b>	<b>Output to demonstrate objective/target/outcome/milestone achieved</b>	<b>Date achieved</b>	<b>If applicable, reasons for slippage in date achieved</b>	<b>If applicable, reasons for change to original objectives</b>
Evaluation project/report	May 2003	Report submitted by External Evaluator Julie Hall	May 2003		
M25 Focus Group	March 2003	External Evaluator visited UNL	March 2003		Evaluator felt individual interviews would be more productive
Accreditation workshop	Jan 2003	Workshop held at Coventry with 26 participants	Jan 2003		
Plan further institutional visits/development work	May 2003	8 further visits have been planned under the auspices of SEDA  A further ELT development workshop has been planned, to be held at Oxford Brookes in Oct 2003	May 2003		
3 themed national seminars based around the EFFECTS outcomes	May 2003	Seminars were held on the following themes:  Review/analysis (Feb 2003 – 14 participants)  Design/Implementation (April 2003 – 36 participants)  Evaluation/Dissemination (May 2003 – 34 participants)  Papers to appear in ALT-J special issue and on ELT web site.	May 2003		

Web site updating and hosting	May 2003	<p>Web site materials have been finalised and submitted to the designers</p> <p>University of Plymouth, under the auspices of SEDA, has undertaken to design and host the web site for 2 years including actively maintain current listings</p>	May 2003 (web site due to go live in July 2003)	UoP web design team was unable to schedule the work any earlier due to other commitments.	Web site is now seen as main legacy of development materials, to be administered by SEDA in conjunction with the ongoing ELT award. This will ensure that materials are in active use by developers, and that the resource can be augmented by new materials as new programs come on stream.
EFFECTS Resource Pack (Part 2)	May 2003	Incorporated into web site. Additional resources include staff development materials organised under learning outcomes, and a series of brief 'guidelines for developers' on issues such as assessment methods, timing of programs etc			
Write final report	May 2003	Submitted	June 2003	Grainne Conole unable to take on the task: Helen Beetham commissioned at the end of May.	

### 1.1.3 Outcomes mapped to objectives

The main activities of the project have been to facilitate meetings of the various networks, to undertake institutional consultation visits and to develop materials for use by members of the various networks in staff or organisational development activities. Evaluation and analysis (external evaluator activities and final evaluation meeting) have also been important. Our outcomes in relation to our original objectives are as follows:

Objective	Outcome(s)
1. <b>Collate resources to support learning technology practice.</b>	The ELT web site will provide a lasting legacy of EFFECTS materials, as well as an ongoing repository to support the activities of the SEDA ELT award programme and of the existing practitioner networks.
2. <b>Evaluate and analyse outcomes of the development process.</b>	Network meetings have provided opportunities for collaborative reflection and evaluation, including at least one collaborative bid for development funds. The three themed seminars and resulting papers were an opportunity for project team members to reflect on, analyse and disseminate lessons from the process of supporting staff to meet EFFECTS learning outcomes. The final evaluation meeting also consolidated and updated findings from the project.
3. <b>Develop strategic frameworks for embedding learning technologies:</b>	The expertise developed within EFFECTS has been crucial in the development of an institutional audit tool, guidelines and briefing papers, which were completed and piloted in both HE and FE institutions with funding from JISC. The outcomes are now available via the ELT web site.
4. <b>Develop networks of learning technology specialists:</b>	Three regional networks have proved successful while others have struggled to get off the ground. The presence (or otherwise) of pro-active local representatives with commitment to maintaining the network seems to have been decisive.
5. <b>Support the development of institutional programmes for embedding learning technologies:</b>	Five institutions have been successfully supported through the process of achieving SEDA ELT recognition for their programmes, with a further development workshop planned for October. 9 institutional visits have been carried out with 6 more in the pipeline. Representatives from 29 institutions have taken part in regional meetings aimed at promoting the development of new and existing programmes.

### 1.1.4 Deliverables

#### Regional meetings

UEL Programme Development/Recognition Support, January 2002

Northumbria EFFECTS/ELT workshop, UNN, April 2002 (30 participants, 9 institutions)

Essex/East Anglia EFFECTS/ELT workshop, May 2002 (9 participants, 5 institutions)  
 Southern Learning Technologies Network meeting, Southampton, November 2002 (9 participants, 5 institutions)  
 Coventry ELT workshop, University of Coventry, January 2003 (30 participants)  
 Southern Learning Technologies Network meeting, Reading, March 2003 (11 participants, 6 institutions)  
*London meetings attended by a total of 20 participants from 12 institutions*  
*NE network meeting attended by 30 participants from 9 different institutions*  
*Southern network meetings attended by a total of 20 participants from 8 different institutions*

### National workshops and seminars

Seminar: Evaluation and Dissemination Seminar, UCL, May 2003  
 Seminar: EFFECTS final evaluation meeting, Dartington, Devon, June 2003  
 Workshop: TLTP3 Lessons Learned day, Oxford, March 2002  
 Workshop: SEDA Recognition Event, Birmingham, April 2002  
 Seminar: Needs Analysis/Technology Review Seminar, LSE, February 2003  
 Seminar: Design and Implementation, University of London, April 2003  
 Conference: SEDA/SRHE Scholarship of Academic & Staff Development Conference, Bristol, April 2003  
*The three London workshops attracted 78 participants from 37 different institutions*  
*'Events organised by the project have continued to attract an average of 25 participants' (source: Evaluation Report, Julie Hall)*

### Consultancy visits:

Institution	Visitor	Visitee
Manchester Metropolitan University	HB and PB	Alice Flemming
University of Manchester	HB and PB	Rachel Forsyth/Robert Ready
Salford University	HB and PB	Bernard Lisewski
UMIST	HB and PB	Wendy David
Aston University	PB	Janet Tennant
University of East London	PB and JS	Mike Laycock
University of Northumbria at Newcastle	PB	Liz McDowell
University of Birmingham	PB	Jennifer Harvey
UWIC	ST	Spencer Jordan
Gloucester University	ST	Claire Mann/Martin Jenkins

### Publications:

Oliver, M. & Harvey, J. (2002), What does 'impact' mean in the evaluation of learning technology? *Educational Technology & Society*, 5, (3), 18-26

## Annex B

- Harvey, J., Oliver, M. & Smith, J. (2002), Towards effective practitioner evaluation: an exploration of issues relating to skills, motivation and evidence, *Educational Technology & Society*, 5, (3), 3-10
- Holley, D. (2002), Which room is my virtual seminar in, please? *Education & Training* (full details missing)
- Hall, J., Bailey, P., Smith, J. & Yorke, J. (2003), Practitioner networks to support academic development. Proceedings of SEDA/SREH Scholarship of Academic & Staff Development Conference, Bristol, April 2002
- Conole, G. (ed.) (2003, forthcoming): ALT-J EFFECTS Special Issue. To include 3 seminar papers on aspects of implementing EFFECTS, 1 review paper on networks of practice, 1 longitudinal institutional case study, 1 evaluation report.
- Hall, J. (2003) EFFECTS Transferability Funding Project: Final External Evaluation, May 2003

### **Web resources (www.elt.ac.uk):**

- 7 structured web pages, including links to 8 current ELT programs
- Links to >30 pdf files with substantial content for developers (including Guidelines for Developers pack, Lessons for Developers)
- Links to Embedding Learning Technologies Institutionally files (including Guidelines pack, notes and briefing papers)
- An actively maintained list of current network activities and events
- An active jiscmail list with ?? members

## **1.2 Collaboration**

During the early months of the project several discussions took place with Gill Armstrong of the LTSN Generic Centre, which resulted in regional networks being invited to bid for funds to carry out collaborative development of materials. Unfortunately this proposal came at a time when networks were not yet securely established, and subsequent loss of project staff along with restructuring at the Generic Centre meant that there was a lull in communication. However, four institutions from the Southern regional network bid successfully for an ESCALATE grant later in the year. The project has now resumed contact with the Generic Centre and has received an assurance that the regional networks are still considered an important strand of their learning technology/e-learning activities. Network members have been specifically invited to participate in Supporting Sustainable e-Learning Forum workshops, to contribute to work on the pedagogy of e-learning, and to submit proposals for embedding existing development materials into effective practice.

The project has collaborated extensively with the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), which has taken over administration of the Embedding Learning Technologies award under the umbrella of their Professional Development Framework. This has provided an overarching, and continuing, rationale for institutional visits and for workshops aimed at supporting practitioners through the process of programme development and recognition. SEDA has also undertaken to support an ongoing web-based resource, serving both as a legacy for existing practice-based materials and as a site for further collaboration via shared resources and events.

An ongoing collaboration with BECTA has led to a project to map the EFFECTS/ELT learning outcomes to the FERL practitioner modules, which should be completed in July 2003. The Association for Learning Technologies has maintained its active involvement in the ELT framework and continues to consult with project members on accreditation and professional development for learning technology specialists.

## 1.3 Learning from activities and progress made during the reporting period

### 1.3.1 Issues encountered

The hope at the outset of the project was that the EFFECTS model would cascade to new institutions via a new generation of champions and developers. An initial workshop with network representatives was intended to furnish them with the skills and resources to become regional champions for the framework. However, the evidence suggests that *'they were [still] keen to get someone from the project team to do it for them'* (project manager, quoted in Hall 2003). The project team may have underestimated the complexity of the issues involved, and the level of expertise they had developed as individuals through several years of involvement. Once key personnel from the project had moved on their expertise was very difficult to cascade through new recruits, however good the resources available.

One lesson of the original EFFECTS project was the precarious and mobile status of learning technology staff in the institutions that employ them. It is ironic, then, that the continuation project has been to some extent a victim of this phenomenon, with almost every member of the original project team moving to a different institution, organisation or role. The networks that were identified as a key strength of the EFFECTS project (Harvey 2001) were maintained by pro-active individuals who saw collaboration and communication with other practitioners as a cornerstone of their professional identity. In two networks (London and Southern), the same individuals who had launched the network continued to facilitate and support it, despite moving to different institutions or roles. In other regions, however, no such continuity was possible.

Of course the individuals involved have taken their contacts and networking skills into new areas, and no doubt the benefits of having been involved in the original EFFECTS project continue to be disseminated via new channels. These have been difficult to monitor, however. 'Networks of practice' is a category of social analysis rather than a project that can be realised through organisational effort. It may be that the original bid was somewhat naïve in imagining that such networks could be easily identified and 'developed'. Just because individuals with overlapping interests and concerns can be identified, it does not follow that they will collaborate, let alone organise themselves according to some predesignated idea of how a 'network of practice' should behave.

A related issue is that although money was available to buy out time for individuals to support networking activities, in practice there were often no mechanisms in place for those individuals to actually benefit. People working in unique positions in an institution are difficult to 'buy out', even for short periods of time. They also tend to work in units where such arrangements are an exception rather than the norm. The outcomes from collaborative working are difficult to quantify, and learning technology units are often necessarily outcomes-driven. One issue that the EFFECTS continuation project sought to clarify was how best to evaluate the contribution of network activities to local development agendas, and this issue remains unresolved.

Links between the EFFECTS project and other organisations whose collaboration was seen as essential to the success of the networking enterprise, e.g. the LTSN Generic Centre and the SoURCE continuation project, depended on personal contacts and working relationships that had been developed over a number of years. The loss of key people from the project was particularly damaging in this respect.

### **1.3.2 Unexpected opportunities**

EFFECTS was involved in early discussions with SEDA about the possibility of incorporating a learning technologies award into the existing professional development award, which was at that time a loose association of programmes outwith the other categories of professional development accredited by the organisation. Partly as a result of these discussions, the Professional Development Framework has emerged as a means of integrating SEDA's strategy to support advanced and specialised professional development in further and higher education. With the ILT now accrediting initial teacher training in HE, there is a clear role for SEDA to support professional development among the proliferating specialisms available to academic teaching staff, and among the new professional roles that are emerging to support learning and teaching. ELT has offered a strong existing model for this new breed of program. At the same time SEDA has offered a means of establishing the EFFECTS framework for development as a self-supporting community of practitioners. This is an alliance that has been productive to both EFFECTS and SEDA in a way that could not entirely have been foreseen.

The alliance with BECTA holds out promise of extending EFFECTS/ELT into FE. Mapping ELT outcomes onto FERL practitioner modules will provide an important bridge between the two sectors and will greatly increase the potential number of institutions within the ELT framework. The LTSN Generic Centre has offered ongoing opportunities for networks to become involved in national developments, and the new organisation of this body will hopefully also ensure better coordination for activities and resources.

### **1.3.3 Learning and teaching strategies**

The project has been linked to the professional development strategies of SEDA and the ILT rather than to the learning and teaching strategies of specific institution(s). However, the Guidelines for Developers state explicitly that training needs analysis and planning must take place in the context of the institution's LTS, and provide specific examples of how this can be achieved.

### **1.3.4 Student diversity, progression and retention**

All accredited and recognised programs require participants to demonstrate their commitment to 'working effectively with diversity and promoting inclusivity', as well as to 'the development both of people and education processes and systems'. In practice this means that staff undertake an analysis of students' learning needs in the context of their own institution, and are required to ensure that the embedding of new educational technologies enhances (or at least does not undermine) equality of participation. The EFFECTS/ELT web site has case studies which demonstrate the application of widening participation and universal access principles to learning technology development projects.

Lessons learned about working across institutions

Lessons learned about embedding changes in learning and teaching

Lessons learned about developing networks

See attached 'Lessons Learned', updated from the EFFECTS final report as a result of the Continuation Project evaluation meeting in June 2003.

## 1.4 Evaluation

### 1.4.1 Evaluation report

An evaluation report was commissioned by Julie Hall, Kingston University. The goals of this study were to:

- *Gather practitioner profiles of participants involved in the SEDA ELT programme*
- *Review a sample of the current SEDA Embedding Learning Technologies network members to hear how their courses were set up, how they are linked and how they came to the network*
- *Compare where possible their reasons for developing their programmes in their particular ways*
- *Compare networks set up through EFFECTS with others such as LTSN or FE ILT Champions*
- *Gather profiles from these networks with a view to collecting examples of good practice with regard to setting up and maintaining networks*

The full report is forwarded separately. Its key findings are:

- *The national network has been allowed to evolve from a project rooted in collaboration to become a national focus for professional development work in this area without losing its initial philosophy of learning through shared experience by providing a space for reflection and multiple view points*
- *The network is re energised through events allowing for the sharing of good practice and face to face contact for people at all stages of the development process, tapping into experience and knowledge and emerging experience and knowledge.*
- *Newer programme leaders are brought into the network more actively through encouragement to present on their experiences and mentor others, through a process by which 'soft' knowledge' becomes hard and tacit knowledge is exchanged.*
- *Contact lists are grown through new delegates attending events and being added to the list. People manage the lists with a commitment to the network.*
- *The profile of the network remains fairly high through the range of seminar presentations, publications and through the national SEDA framework.*
- *Network members are contacted at regular intervals*
- *The network provides for a need which is still current , even growing, amongst members*
- *The network is valued by those at the centre and those at its periphery.*

### 1.4.2 Additional findings from the final evaluation workshop

We now recognise that effective networks of practice emerge in response to complex needs and opportunities. They are necessarily contingent and organic entities, in which certain individuals may be key. Rather than trying to 'build' such networks the project might have focused more clearly on how new networks can learn from the experience of EFFECTS.

We believe it is possible for practitioners to learn from one another and for new networks to build on earlier development efforts via resources such as the ELT web site. However, these resources need to be reinterpreted and reinscribed into new contexts. There is little evidence that practitioners will spontaneously adopt ideas from legacy resources into their own developing practice.

## Annex B

One reason for this is the specificity of local conditions. We note that no-one from outside an institution can solve or even fully understand its internal problems, although there is always value in sharing 'stories' about similar situations in other places. Change management issues are often at their sharpest at department level, so subject-specific resources and ideas may be the most valuable. Culturally, practitioners still look to colleagues in their own discipline. Any network concerned with generic issues will need to work closely with the LTSNs to be effective.

There are still many barriers at local level to participation in inter-institutional networks. People based in competitive departments and funded for their research efforts, have no reason to collaborate. People working as change agents in learning technology or learning and teaching units are likely to see more benefits in collaborating with other institutions, but they are unlikely to be specifically funded or allocated time to do so.

There are even more significant barriers to the sharing of resources such as course materials, where competition across institutions is a real factor. There was recognition by participants in the networks that 'someone' needed pro-actively to collate, develop, and initiate collaborative development of new resources, and that there should be formal arrangements and rewards for this work.

Although the evaluation study did not aim to interview a representative sample of network participants, we note from the data collected that participants' reasons for remaining in contact with a network of practice were social, professional and intellectual as well as simply instrumental. Participants were keen to share ideas about common areas of activity, and to make use of resources that had been developed by others but had relevance to their own context of work. However, as noted above, participants rarely expressed themselves willing to contribute materials of their own to a shared resource, or to undertake collaborative development of materials. Unfortunately, we have found that collaborative resource development is one of the few ways in which networks can secure external funding, as funding bodies tend to require 'deliverables' of a concrete and readily evaluable kind.

We acknowledge that internal institutional networks can also be difficult to sustain, but we feel that the EFFECTS institutions were almost all successful at doing so, despite some of the comments reported by the External Evaluator. Collaborations have arisen among program participants, between staff development and IS teams, and across units with responsibility for learning technology implementation, but they have been informal and contingent. Project members have often found their experience more valued at institutions other than their own.

We note that the idea of regional meetings has been successful in some cases, demonstrating that people are prepared to travel limited distances to meet face to face with practitioners in similar roles to their own. The M25 network has worked because people are prepared to travel to workshops within the London area. But there need to be pro-active individuals to develop a sense of community and collective purpose within a group of what may be very different institutions.

There are also limits to the usefulness of regional networks. For program developers it may be more helpful to have contact with cognate institutions than with 'the institution down the road'. Critical variables include learning and teaching culture, the research agenda, the role of the ILT and SEDA, the culture of CPD and reflective practice, the history of involvement in the national learning technologies agenda etc. Learning technology enthusiasts are often very well networked online, but may be less well networked regionally or locally. Practitioners tend to be more interested in the experiences of others in their subject area.

Regional networks in the HE context tend to focus on regional economic issues and widening participation. They do not generally link directly in to learning technology issues, though there is no reason why the connections could not be made.

Across the different regions, uptake of the EFFECTS model seems to depend on the commitment of the regional representative or opinion-former within the network, as well as the strength of the network itself (e.g. frequency of and attendance at meetings).

These evaluation findings (1.4.1 and 1.4.2), along with further analysis of the background, rationale and outcomes of the continuation project, will be reported in the ALT-J special issue.

### **1.4.3 Conclusion**

Reflecting on the outcomes of evaluation, the project team believes there is a need to coordinate the collated resources, the institutional visits, the network activity and the ELT award itself. We recognise that there are proactive roles to be played in each of these areas, and ideally in each of the active networks, and that this will probably require some form of funding. The SEDA ELT award has now begun to constitute itself as a self-funding community, with institutions paying for the process of recognition. There is therefore a funding stream available to support further resource development and collation, for institutional visits, and for development workshops.

At a philosophical level, we remain committed to the idea of networks of practice but we recognise that the ways in which such networks actually support practice are complex. Given appropriate opportunities, incentives and resources, there is still no guarantee that individuals will choose to participate in a network rather than pursue their own local agenda, and nor does participation translate directly into changes in individual practice. It is perhaps more valuable for us to ask how the valuable legacy resources arising from the EFFECTS project can best be deployed to support further development work. It seems likely that the answer will involve active interventions in practice – visits, workshops, mentoring, a pro-active recognition process, and hands-on encounters with resources in use.