Title: **Can online support make a positive difference to curriculum planning? An institutional case study.**

Presenter: **Gunter Saunders, Peter Hartley, Peter Chatterton**
University of Westminster, Edge Hill University

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

Knowledge Based Learning Outcomes:

-Identify the key features of the Viewpoints approach to curriculum planning and/or review
-Analyse the main advantages (and any possible limitations) of the Viewpoints development at Westminster which has translated the main features of physical materials into an online service
-Discuss the implications of this approach for curriculum planning and review across UK HE
-Discuss the potential application and advantages of this approach in their own context

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

-How can we develop and implement a more collaborative and evidence-based approach to curriculum planning/review?
-How far does Viewpoints deliver this approach?
-What have we achieved by translating the present Viewpoints into an online service?
-What has been the impact of online Viewpoints so far in the context of a major institutional transformation project?
-How can this online approach be extended to other institutional contexts?

The Viewpoints approach and resources were developed and produced by the project of that name from the University of Ulster. This was funded by the JISC Curriculum Design Programme which aimed to stimulate new approaches and evaluation in this relatively under-theorised and under-researched area (Toohey, 1999; Beetham, 2012; Barnett, 2012).

Key features of the Viewpoints approach include the structured workshop which uses cue cards based on established evidence-based principles in the curriculum area under discussion (e.g. there is a set of cards covering assessment and feedback). Course teams use the cards to develop a timeline and action plan for their course planning. The follow-up project (Panorama) demonstrated that this approach was valuable in a range of institutions and concluded that the use of physical 'hands-on' resources was an important part of the process.

Learning Futures at Westminster is a major institutional project designed to re-shape the student learning experience by 2020. The Viewpoints approach was adopted as part of this initiative. Early on in the adaptation of Viewpoints cards to the Westminster context, it became clear there was significant support for an online component. This was achieved and piloted in the Spring of 2014 and course teams have since been using the online/blended approach in reviewing their courses.

This session will report on the evaluation of this initiative using data such as the reactions of the course teams involved and independent analysis of the quality of the emerging course proposals. We will also discuss its implications for the process of curriculum design and review.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is a follows;

Presentation (20 minutes) which will:

- explain the key features of the 'traditional' Viewpoints
- demonstrate the Westminster online version
- analyse the impact to date of this online service

Small group discussion using a World Café approach based on critical issues emerging from the evaluation (15 minutes)

Plenary discussion (10 minutes)

Indicative group discussion questions (our final list will reflect the outcomes of the evaluation):

- How innovative is this approach to curriculum planning/review?
- Does it have particular advantages over conventional planning procedures?
- What advantages or limitations has the online translation delivered?
- How far is this approach transferable to other institutions and contexts?
- What could we do to further improve the service?

References

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http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/curriculumdesign.aspx
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Panorama project:
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Toohey, S (1999) Designing Courses for Higher Education. OUP/SRHE.
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