

Portfolio 3

Ultraversity Project Plan Outline

Context

ULTRALAB is a learning technology research centre at Anglia Polytechnic University. Our mission statement is "To research, apply and disseminate the benefits of new technologies, seeking to develop an empowering, creative and delightful learning environment that knows no boundaries."

The Ultraversity project aims to provide access to higher education to people who are committed to their work. The programme will develop researchers' effectiveness in their particular work role and develop their confidence to influence and improve practice within their work setting.

The programme will focus on 'understanding why and knowing how to ' and will develop individuals to become articulate, critically reflective problem solvers within their work context.

Aims

1. create a programme of undergraduate education based on a synthesis of workplace learning, reflective practice, and action research in an online learning community
2. meet the needs of learners who want to study but find it difficult for a range of reasons
3. research new forms of formative and summative assessment utilising online tools
4. research new forms of organisation and work practice for teaching, administration, and support staff to change the practice of undergraduate Higher Education

Objectives

1. Validate and develop a negotiated award pathway at APU
2. Recruit and run 2 cohorts of researchers through the pathway
3. Produce a report to TTA on Impact of researchers in their workplace
4. Publish and report at conferences
5. Engage with new partners to disseminate research findings
6. Develop software to support self directed learning
7. Develop a model of community focused online learning
8. Bring academic and practitioner knowledge into online communities
9. Develop and implement modules
10. Develop and implement workplace advocate scheme
11. Evaluate the degree programme

Success Criteria

1. programme is successfully implemented and has a high degree of researcher satisfaction and standard of work
2. new technology is used to support researchers learning
3. disseminate findings through website, presentations at conferences, research papers in journals and online
4. Ultraversity model is taken on and developed by HE institutions
5. collaboration between Ultraversity project team members and outside agencies

Degree characteristics

1. workplace learning for those in full time employment paid or unpaid
2. practitioner led reflection and action research model of learning
3. support through online learning communities with lecturers, and researchers taking the

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- role of co-learners, experts, and facilitators of learning
4. assessment through assembly of portfolio of learning
 5. bringing together of practitioner knowledge and academic research through the use of 'expert witnesses' in the online community
 6. inclusion of researchers in the development of the degree programmer including online tools

Levels of relationship with other institutions

Level 1 - Ultraversity project team point towards freely available use of website resources and research findings

Level 2 - Ultraversity project team meet with interested parties to discuss learning philosophy, ideas behind the project, and practicalities involved, possibly exploring avenues for further collaboration (expenses to be met by interested party). Ultraversity staff involved in such meetings will inform the project team and steering group prior to the meeting.

Level 3 - partnership with Ultraversity to help develop online degrees using the philosophy underpinning the particular philosophical and pedagogical approach to higher education adopted by Ultraversity. The 'tests for potential partnerships' provide a simple framework for determining the suitability of projects. Ultraversity project team members (and the wider Ultralab community) are required to 'sponsor' a relationship, bringing it to the steering group for assessment of suitability and agreeing of a project plan.

Tests for potential partnerships with other institutions

Does the proposed programme have at its heart?:

reflection and action research as the predominant approach to learning

online learning communities at its heart

a patchwork approach to assessment

Steering group

Remit:

To regularly review project objectives and project management. Support learning facilitators in meeting the project objectives. Support project team members who wish to disseminate findings in line with Levels of relationship with other institutions and Tests for potential partnerships with other institutions.

Meetings scheduled first Monday of the month 9 am - 10am with a membership of:

Pete Bradshaw - pete@ultralab.net

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