

Transferability and Embedding: good practice guide

Disseminating and embedding of the SPAT materials and any 'generic' materials

Detailed below are tips and techniques relating to the successful adoption, use and uptake of generic materials that originate from outside an institution. They are illustrated by reference to SPAT dissemination partner reports (numbers below, subjects listed at end, reports at www.spat.ac.uk). These show how different departments from a wide range of contexts and subject areas attempted in different ways to interpret and use the SPAT materials. Their advice and experiences have also been valuable in understanding generic transferability and usability issues.

Key Issues and Advice

Strategy

- Be clear about what is being transferred and why
- Understand the need and motivation for material use
- Be clear on how the materials fit with institutional or local strategies and/or priorities
- Only give materials to, or target, specific groups with a particular need, whilst simply alerting others to their existence and availability, mature students for example (1, 2)
- Planned and collaborative use of a set of materials across FE / HE boundary is more powerful / effective than selected individual use. Such use needs collaboration which will either create new, or strengthen existing, personal ties (3)
- Consider the level at which customisation should take place, faculty, school, department *et al* (3)
- Build the preparation lead-in time into future material use strategies to take away pressure and anxiety (5)

Selecting Materials

- Don't use everything, be selective (1)
- Use a meeting to discuss which materials to use as a staff development opportunity
- Decide how you will choose materials for trial / dissemination
- When choosing your materials format remember that your choice will be significant in the way the materials are perceived, in the same way body language influences our views of what people say (6)
- Materials need to fit with the organisational ethos and style of working (9)

Customising Materials

- Test that the language / tone of the materials is appropriate for the intended student audience, not the academics that teach them (1)
- Decide on the accessibility standard for your materials at the design stage
- Think about who will customise your materials, what resources they will need
- Remember to keep all the development work and notes for others to use
- Check that material copyright and referencing is clarified before publication – for SPAT materials an acknowledge of the source is sufficient
- Look for, use or incorporate existing materials from other parts of the organisation, for example the International Office (1)
- Involve a range of staff in the review, design and development of materials, both academics and support staff (1)
- Edit down, re-write and customise materials, inserting institution or student group specific information (1, 2, 3, 7)
- Provide a mixed diet of information in materials including academic, personal and social information
- Don't use too much text, include white space
- Break up text with images or graphics (1)
- Use humour and/or include an element of fun (1)
- Use content and examples from students (2, 3)
- Develop a materials template to make the creation of new, or updating of existing, materials straight forward (3)
- Include case studies, for example interviews with progressing students
- Consider radical editing, re-combining or re-formatting of material content to meet your specific needs (4)
- Repetition of key issues or information can give emphasis within a set of materials, but can be easily be over-done (5)
- Customise materials using corporate identity / organisational logo (7)
- Avoid information overload, there must be a balance between comprehensiveness and accessibility of information. The very important may be lost in the volume of important information (7)
- Remember that the categorisation of information within materials says a lot about the priorities of the organisation (9)

Timing

- Make material available early, for example sending out a CD of materials to prospective students (1)
- Think about the most suitable time for the introduction or use of each element within a body of materials, not just when to introduce the whole scheme (2)
- Find a convenient opportunity to introduce materials, for example at a regular session where staff give advice to students on areas where they might be weak or need extra help (4)
- Materials are most useful when they can be found or used when the end user has a need, therefore a just-in-time delivery strategy is needed (4)

- HE staff can take material for use on visits to FE college staff and students (9)
- If staff or students are given materials they must also be given a time and a reason to use them (7)

Context

- Consider the appropriate context or setting for material use or application, for example FE or HE use (1)
- Try to build on existing material and or build new material into existing schemes or sets of material
- Use materials within special or specific events, for example workshops for potential top-up students or special induction sessions for top-up students (2, 3)
- The setting for material use is important, for example when partner college students are brought into the university for a lecture or to use the library (3)
- When introducing new material the user needs to consider how it will fit or sit with other material to be used or given out (4)
- Think about how new materials will fit into the existing information structure and hierarchy (6)
- When sharing materials between institutions, ensure that there is no ambiguity over rules and regulations (6)
- Use new materials to improve, brighten, update and fill in the gaps of an established programme. (9)
- Introduce materials in an appropriate context, for example built into a taster lecture for prospective students

Publicity and Promotion

- Think about your publicity strategy at the design stage and prior to distribution
- Use exemplars of customised adaptation to show take up in a range of contexts (There are many examples of this on the SPAT CD and website)
- Have information for staff and students and make it clear which is which (2)
- Explain the purpose, organisation and origin of materials to end users (2)
- An awareness campaign will be needed for the uptake of any new materials (4)
- Build material use or promotion on the back of bigger or long running initiatives, for example the top-up students 'Hello Pack' (9)

Dissemination and Distribution

- Find a champion for your materials in as many locations as possible
- Place materials on portals and intranets to get to a wider audience and to create a set of permanently published resources
- Involve a number and range of staff in the distribution of the materials
- Use pervasive technology to disseminate materials such as Word or PDF file formats (1)
- Use a variety of media such as paper, CD and web (1, 2)
- Check and re-check any technology used (2)

- Use a range of distribution channels for your materials (7)
- Students make great ambassadors for material uptake with other students, for example as part of a widening participation initiative (9)
- Give out materials with an activity to be done using them (7, 8)
- Remember that a lot of staff want materials that can just be picked up and used (9)

Support Users

- Support your champions with recognition and if possible small amounts of money or support
- Support material users with workshops and events, group working will also motivate and create peer support and learning in the use of materials
- Use materials as one of a number of support mechanisms for staff as well as students (2)
- Use materials in cross institution staff development events
- Include phone numbers and email addresses of support and academic staff that students can approach for help (2)
- Make it easy for users to customise materials quickly (3)
- Help staff to use materials by making it require little or no extra work (3)
- Create material use guides, for example a PowerPoint presentation (3)
- Do not assume it is only students that needed help and guidance but also staff involved with using materials (4)

Evaluation

- Be clear about what you are hoping use of the materials will achieve and evaluate the results against this criteria
- Use the introduction of new material as an opportunity to check or question the timing of events, for example changing the timing of an open day (3)
- Trial materials and adjust over time, do not expect to get it right first time, every time (4, 6)
- Get staff and student feedback on the materials including how and when they are used (7)
- Get multiple staff and students to proof read the materials (7)

SPAT material use contexts referenced by number:

- (1) Department of Communication and Electrical Engineering
- (2) School of Education
- (3) School of Sports Studies
- (4) School of Sport and Leisure
- (5) Department of Engineering
- (6) Creative Multimedia
- (7) Department of Computing
- (8) School of Biological and Environmental Sciences
- (9) Business School