

Interim Reporting Template

Project Name	Re-Engineering Assessment Practices (REAP) University of Strathclyde
Report compiled by	David Nicol and Catherine Owen
With contributions from	Gillian Roberts, Steve Draper
Reporting period	Third interim report January 2007
Section One: Summary	
<p>The REAP project is implementing and evaluating new models of assessment practice supported by technology across three Scottish HE institutions. It is also examining how to embed good assessment practice within institutional strategies and within quality enhancement processes. Assessment in REAP is defined broadly to include tutor, peer and self-assessment and feedback processes, both formal and informal. In practice, professionals not only assess their own learning but they also formulate the criteria against which to evaluate progress. In the REAP project, the goal is to design assessments that develop learner self-regulation and the skills required for lifelong learning.</p> <p><i>Activities</i></p> <p>During this reporting period each of the initial REAP pilot projects (reported last time) have been scaled up to full implementation. Over 2000 students at Strathclyde and 2500 students at Glasgow Caledonian Business School are now participating in fully-redesigned modules with assessment practices based on REAP principles. A number of new pilots have also been established at Strathclyde and at Glasgow University and at the Caledonian Business School a redesign of the remaining non-core modules is underway. In total, 22 modules or classes have been redesigned across three institutions, With the new pilots at Strathclyde and Glasgow a total of 6000 students are participating in new assessment practices.</p> <p><i>Outputs</i></p> <p>Case studies of change have been developed for all the pilot projects and have been published on the REAP website (www.reap.ac.uk). Descriptions of the new pilot projects will be uploaded over the next two weeks. A range of guidelines and resources have been developed, or are under development, including an Assessment Experience Questionnaire, A Guide for Reviewing Assessment, Guides on E-portfolio implementation and Implementation of Electronic Voting systems (EVS) both for students and staff. Video materials have been produced on EVS and on the use of MCQs for low stakes continuous assessment. Papers have been written on the case studies and on transformation processes (see below).</p> <p><i>Strategic transformation</i></p> <p>Progress towards strategic transformation within the three REAP institutions is on-going. The REAP principles have been used to review all undergraduate courses at Glasgow Caledonian Business School (CBS). These principles are also embedded in the CBS Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy and discussions have been held with CBS senior management to develop a continuation strategy for the use of EVS technology. The REAP project has generated interest across GCU. Project team members have made presentations to Academic Policy Committee and to other departments (e.g. Vision Science). The REAP project and the transformational changes implemented will be highlighted in the Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review (ELISR) scheduled for April 2007. At Strathclyde, the REAP project director has been appointed by Academic Committee to convene a cross-institutional Working Group to revise current policy and practice in assessment and to make recommendations. There will also be a consultation process across the university where REAP principles will be discussed in the context of the Academic Strategy, the QAA code of Practice etc. This review will draw on the REAP evaluations and the departmental case studies. The REAP project team have also established partnership links with the Teaching and Learning Centre at the University of Glasgow.</p>	

Section One: Summary (cont./)

Dissemination

A key focus in this reporting period has been dissemination of the REAP project and its outputs. Presentations on the project have been made in Universities in Dublin, Sydney, Nottingham, Glasgow, London, Durham, Edinburgh and Northumbria. The REAP team have collaborated with the QAA Scotland, the SQA, Sheffield-Hallam, Hertfordshire and Napier universities on projects, shared designs, questionnaire development and other joint activities. REAP is also drawing examples of good practice from other universities, nationally and internationally. REAP team members are active in the HEA Scottish e-Benchmarking Club and they are developing methods to benchmark assessment practice.

Over this reporting period, a range of REAP publicity materials (posters, leaflets) have been developed and widely circulated within Strathclyde and Glasgow Caledonian and at external events. The REAP website has also been professionally redesigned and an article mentioning REAP appeared in Times Higher with a link to the website (this led to 300 hits on REAP over two days). A number of scholarly articles have been written about REAP activities, by the team and by staff in the participating departments. A QAA Scotland project on assessment led by the REAP Project Director will prove a useful vehicle for future dissemination of REAP activities. The REAP team have also planned a series of Scottish workshops and an international online conference (30th and 31st May, 2007)

Another feature of this reporting period has been increased collaboration across partner institutions. Staff development, implementation and evaluation of EVS at CBS have been supported by the project team from Strathclyde and by REAP evaluation staff at Glasgow University. The Glasgow University pilots in the departments of Biology and Computing Science projects have been supported by input from Strathclyde REAP team members. In addition, cross-institutional staff development events have been held including regular Brown Bag lunch events and technology demonstrations with attendance by staff from all three partners.

Evaluation

The REAP team have supported evaluations of all the pilots and their scaled up implementations in relation to project goals and to local, departmental drivers for change. In addition, the team are using an evaluation framework to collate findings across the whole project using a consistent set of indicators. The goal is to map changes against REAP principles in order to identify commonalities and differences and lessons learned. The matrix for the framework includes qualitative indicators of workload and efficiency. Two full time project evaluators have joined the team at the University of Glasgow and are contributing to the development of refined metrics and instruments to capture both staff and student experience of assessment and its redesign.

Section Two: Activities and Progress

Progress against work-packages in the project implementation plan:

Work-package 1: Project Initiation

- *REAP project plan and implementation plan*
- *Consortium agreement*
- *Recruitment*

Complete

Work-package 2: Evaluation Planning

- *Baseline data collection/departmental 'position statements'*
- *Develop evaluation strategy*
- *Develop evaluation instruments*
- *Collect baseline data*

Complete

Work-package 3: Prepare for Re-engineering

- *Departmental implementation plans*
- *Refinement of implementation plans*
- *Establish internal funding agreements*
- *Preparation for re-engineering*

Complete

Work-package 4: First Implementation

- *Implement new teaching and assessment practices in participating departments*
- *Provide support technical support to pilot implementations*
- *Provide staff development/pedagogical support to pilots*
- *Produce interim case studies based on first implementation*

Complete

Work-package 5: First evaluation and review

- *Gather evaluation data*
- *Refine evaluation instruments*
- *Produce first interim report on transformational change*

Complete

Work-package 6: Second Implementation

- *Refined re-engineering plans for first pilots and addition of new pilots*
- *Provide technical and pedagogical support to pilot implementations*
- *Produce final case study reports*

On-going

Work-package 7: Internal Dissemination

[See section five: Dissemination for details of internal dissemination activities]

Work-package 8: External Dissemination

[See section five: Dissemination for details of external dissemination activities]

Section Two: Activities and Progress (cont./)

Work-package 9: Second Evaluation and Review

- *Finalise and publicise evaluation instruments*

A number of instruments to collect evaluation data from students and staff have been developed across the project (see section 3).

- *Gather evaluation data on transformational change*

A university-wide consultation exercise, starting with a Strathclyde Learning Enhancement Network (LEN) event in March 2007, will engage staff members across the university in discussion about the implications of implementation of REAP activities across the institution (see section 4). Building on expertise gained at a recent JISC scenario planning workshop, a scenario planning exercise with staff from both academic and support departments will be formed to address the strategic challenges and opportunities suggested by REAP.

- *Develop senior management briefing paper(s)*

Two briefing papers on technology investment and use to support assessment activities (EVS and e-Portfolios) will be published on the REAP website shortly.

- *Develop papers on transformational change at institutional level*

Two papers have been produced on transformational change (see section 5)

- *Produce a book on technology-supported assessment*

The international online conference planned for May 30-31 2007 and the resulting data archive (see section 5) will provide material for an edited publication during the autumn.

Work-package 10: Project Management

- *General project management*
- *Develop and maintain project web-site*
- *Convene periodic Management Team meetings*

Local Management Group established at SU to support project management activities and to facilitate links to relevant institutional initiatives, support services and departments. This group meets monthly and is also a forum for communication from project team leaders at GCU and GU and from participating departments. In CBS, there have been frequent meetings, generally involving all participants in the project (module leaders and e-champions) and monthly opportunities for e-champions and the project team to plan activities.

- *Convene periodic Project Steering Group meetings*
- *Project Steering Group*

This group includes senior representation from consortium partners and from key external bodies including the SFC, QAA, HEA and others. This group will next meet on 16th February 2007.

- *Project Website*

The project website has been re-designed to make it more attractive and to reflect new project dissemination materials. Content development is an on-going process as new project materials are developed and events organised.

Section Two: Activities and Progress (cont./)

Assessment Redesign and Implementation

The following is a list of the assessment redesigns across the three institutions. More detail about these can be found on the REAP website or will be uploaded as the materials are developed.

The University of Strathclyde

Scaling-up of Pilot Implementations

At the University of Strathclyde one department in each of the five faculties piloted new assessment methods with a small cohort of students in the first phase. Within this reporting period all these departments have now scaled up to full implementation. Over 2000 first year students and 240 third year students are now participating in modules redesigned as part of REAP. These are:

- Mechanical Engineering (piloting electronic voting, confidence based marking and intelligent tutoring systems)
- Psychology (regular discussion board tasks in webct)
- Primary Education (e-portfolios and personal development planning)
- Pharmacy: Level 1 (e-portfolios and personal development planning)
- Pharmacy: Level 3. (online prescription simulation)
- Marketing (online feedback and MCQs)

New Implementations at Strathclyde

At Strathclyde, four new departments have been identified and are participating in a new set of pilots, with full implementations planned next academic year after evaluation. These include:

- French (electronic voting and diagnostic testing using WebCT)
- Professional and Educational Studies (e-portfolio and structured tasks)
- Chemistry (online homework systems)
- Hospitality and Tourism Management (electronic voting and podcasts of lectures)

An additional department from engineering is currently being sought with the intention of doubling the original number of pilots to two in each of the five faculties.

Glasgow Caledonian University

At Glasgow Caledonian Business School the following core modules were fully redesigned (i.e. for all students) and implemented in 2005-6:

- Marketing Fundamentals (online MCQs to support summative assessment)
- Managerial Finance (regular low stakes testing using online MCQs)
- Consumer Buyer Behaviour (regular low stakes testing using online MCQs and staged course work)
- Business Research Methods (timely coursework assessment and feedback using e-portfolio software)
- Strategic Management (improved efficiency using databank of electronic feedback comments)
- Management for Opticians (piloting EVS and evaluating alternative EVS products)

Section Two: Activities and Progress (cont./)

Glasgow Caledonian University (cont./)

During this reporting period, further innovations in assessment practice have been piloted in the following modules:

- Marketing Fundamentals (use of EVS)
- Managerial Finance (use of EVS)
- Markets and enterprise (use of EVS)
- Organisations and their environment (discussion boards in blackboard with timed release model answers and use of PLATO and TURNITIN to develop scholarly practice)

The University of Glasgow

New pilot implementations have begun during this reporting period at the University of Glasgow:

- Biological Sciences (MOODLE message-boards technology to support collaborative group tasks and support peer marking of group work)
- Computing Science: Accelerator course (EVS technology to support 'accelerator' group of students requiring additional feedback or at risk)
- Computing Science: Main module (course redesign of level one including EVS)
- Electrical Engineering (contingent teaching mediated by EVS with diagnostic tree of questions)

Section Three: Outputs, Outcomes and Deliverables

Case studies

Interim case studies have been developed for the first 5 pilots at the University of Strathclyde and six projects at Glasgow Caledonian University. Pilots starting this session at GCU and GU are currently being written up. All case studies are available, or will be made available in the near future, on the REAP website at: www.reap.ac.uk.

Guidelines and reusable resources

A number of resources have been developed:

- A Student Assessment Experience Questionnaire has been designed and will shortly be piloted. This questionnaire is intended to help provide information about the extent to which students are self-regulated learners and the extent to which courses encourage the development of strategies and skills for self-regulation.
- Assessment Review Toolkit has been developed and piloted. This toolkit is designed to help teachers evaluate their assessments and to make improvements in practice
- REAP Guide – Implementing an E-portfolio
- REAP Guides – Electronic Voting Systems: Selection and Institutional Implementation
- Staff 'crib sheets' for good practice in EVS use (<http://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/~steve/ilig/gcal/>)
- REAP Guide for Students - Interactive Interwrite PRS-RF Student Tutorial
<http://www.reap.ac.uk/PRS/index.html> (also being used by The University of British Columbia as well as participating REAP institutions)
- A Guide for Reviewing Assessment Strategically is being developed at Strathclyde. This guide will take the principles of REAP and those in the Academic Strategy and will provide a mechanism whereby departments might review assessment practices, for example, for internal QE and the ELIR process.

Video materials

A number of video materials have been produced (to be made available on the REAP website). These include:

- Interviews with University of Strathclyde academic staff members on using WebCT to deliver innovative assessment activities (French, Psychology)
- Videos of Dr Steve Draper, Dr Quintin Cutts (GU) and Professor Jim Boyle (SU) presenting on the use of PRS voting systems (at GCU Business School in October 2006) and on the use of weekly MCQs as low stakes continuous assessment.
- Videos describing the introduction of weekly low stakes continuous assessment using Blackboard VLE (Managerial Finance -Ken Waddell, Consumer Behaviour – Anne Warren)

Papers

A growing number of papers <http://www.reap.ac.uk/resources.html> and presentations <http://tltt.strath.ac.uk/REAP/public/eventsAll.aspx> based on the work undertaken by members of the REAP team are available on the REAP website.

As well as papers analysing the progress of participating departments in the project, two papers on different aspects of institutional transformation have been written and one presented at ALT-C, 2006. There has also been an article on e-assessment in the Times Higher Education Supplement where REAP was mentioned (and comments of REAP Director reported) and with a link to the website (over 300 hits were recorded over the first two days following this article). In addition to the papers and presentations by the REAP project team, participating departments are increasingly involved in writing papers and presentations intended for their own subject communities.

Section Four: Progress towards Strategic Transformation

The University of Strathclyde

Academic Committee Working Group on Assessment

The Academic Committee at the University of Strathclyde has convened a cross-institutional Working Group on Assessment Strategy and Policy led by the REAP Project Director (David Nicol). This group which has met once is reviewing assessment policy in the light of national developments, revisions of the QAA Code of Practice, accessibility legislation and in the light of the principles and findings derived from the REAP project. This will ensure sustainability and embedding of new assessment practices internally and will link local departmental developments to strategic planning.

Scenario planning

The project team intend to use Scenario Planning techniques to model the issues that might arise as REAP assessment models are rolled out across the institution. This exercise is likely to explore issues of scalability, alignment with University strategies, potential bottlenecks (e.g. the expertise of specific individuals) and the long-term sustainability and embedding of changes. The outcomes of the scenario planning exercise will inform institutional strategies and future development of REAP, as well as providing an insight into these issues for other institutions.

Paper on the Transformation process

A paper has been written recording the issues raised in transforming assessment practices using technology. This paper analyses the experience of the Program in Course Redesign led by Carol Twigg in the US with our experiences through the REAP project. It draws out some lessons for teachers, senior managers, project personnel and funding bodies (Nicol and Draper, Understanding the Prospects for Transformation, 2007).

First Year Experience Initiative

The REAP team are working closely with colleagues involved in the University of Strathclyde's First Year Experience Initiative. Joint activities include the identification of first year tutors interested in re-design for courses to reflect REAP principles and plans for dissemination events.

REAP Local Management Group

The Local Management Group at Strathclyde has met regularly thus ensuring that REAP activities are coordinated internally and with other initiatives (notably the VLE developments). Dr Rowena Kochanowska, Head of the University's Academic Office, has joined the Local Management Group to further ensure coordination with relevant academic projects and events.

Learning Enhancement Network

REAP has had a high profile in a number of internal LEN events including one on assessment (Dec 2006) and one on the first year experience (Jan 2007). The LEN events are organised by Academic Office and the Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement (CAPLE), and they are well very well attended (about 70 for a major themed event) with the afternoon sessions used to collate views from staff on important issues. A whole day event is planned for 28th March 2007 on assessment. The event will be used to disseminate REAP and its findings and to collate views for the Working Group on policy and strategy for assessment at the University of Strathclyde. This will feed into the review of assessment required by Academic Committee.

Section Four: Progress towards Strategic Transformation (cont./)

Glasgow Caledonian University

Caledonian Business School Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for Independent Learning

Under the leadership of the Associate Dean Quality (Liz Vaughan) and REAP Co-ordinator (Gillian Roberts) of the Caledonian Business School, the REAP principles have been incorporated into the School's Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (LTAS). The aims of this strategy include the use of e-learning technologies to reduce the burden of assessment on academic staff and to increase opportunities for students to develop self-regulating skills through self, peer and tutor assessment and feedback

Re-approval

The REAP co-ordinator has been working closely with the Associate Deans Undergraduate Programmes and Quality to support academic staff in a two-staged undergraduate programme re-approval process in session 2006-07. All undergraduate modules have been re-designed to incorporate the principles of good assessment practice and to promote self-regulated or independent learning. Re-validation is pending.

REAP principles are being disseminated to the wider group of teaching staff in CBS through formal staff development workshops led by REAP participants, by presentations to CBS senior management and also informally by core module leaders and REAP e-champions to their colleagues.

A continuity strategy for EVS use in CBS

Meetings have been initiated by the REAP project co-ordinator (Gillian Roberts) with CBS senior management and with REAP project participants using EVS to develop a sustainability strategy for this technology in CBS/GCU after the formal end of the project. Future options may include:

- A continuation of the current model re-issuing 'clickers' to each subsequent first year cohort
- CBS investment in the purchase of 'clickers' to roll-out for use by all levels of students.
- The existing investment is 'housed' for use in dedicated lecture rooms
- An arrangement is made with a publisher to bundle a 'clicker' with one or more core text book(s) which students are required to buy

Wider dissemination within Glasgow Caledonian University

The leader of the new Caledonian Academy has plans to extend REAP principles and practices to other schools and departments.

Section Five: Dissemination

Dissemination of REAP: presentations this reporting period

- REAP presentation at the 2007 Annual Teaching & Learning Showcase at Dublin Institute of Technology, January 2007 (Jim Boyle)
- Paper presented at ASCILITE conference and published in refereed proceedings, Sydney, December 2006 (David Nicol)
- Visits to Australian Universities with presentations on REAP at the University of Sydney, the University of Technology, Sydney, the University of New South Wales, Sydney, December 2006.
- Paper presented by Steve Draper at Assessment in Lifelong Learning Conference organised by Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Education (ESCalate), Birmingham, November 27th 2006.
- Heads of E-Learning Forum (HELF) meeting, Nottingham – a one-day event entitled 'Perspectives on e-Assessment'. Presentation and organisation by REAP project director with presentations from Richard Parsons (Dundee) and Nora Mogey (Edinburgh), 2nd November 2006.
- Presentation by REAP project director of seminar on assessment entitled 'Increasing Success in First Year Courses' at Glasgow University Teaching and Learning Centre, 26th October 2006.
- Presentation and workshop (by REAP Project Director) at 'ICT in Higher Education: inaugural senior leaders' and managers event' on e-learning' at Barbican London, October 24th 2006
- REAP PRS showcase event at GCU/CBS, October 2006 (video available shortly from REAP website)
- Presentation on REAP by David Nicol at University of Durham, 26th September
- Keynote given by Professor Jim Boyle at Nottingham University's Teaching and Learning day, September 2006
- Paper on transformation presented (by Dr Steve Draper) at ALT-Conference, Edinburgh
- REAP paper presented by Project Manager, Catherine Owen, at Assessment 2006 conference, University of Northumbria.

Copies of relevant papers <http://www.reap.ac.uk/resources.html> and presentation <http://tltt.strath.ac.uk/REAP/public/eventsAll.aspx> can be downloaded from the REAP project website

Meetings to explore and/or extend collaboration:

- Meeting of REAP team and SQA team to explore opportunities for collaboration, November 2006
- Partnership event: visit to REAP by Professor Peter Bullen, University of Hertfordshire to explore opportunities for joint activities and case study dissemination, November 2006
- Partnership event: visit to REAP by Professor Fred Percival of Napier University and TESEP management group to discuss assessment strategies and REAP/TESEP collaboration, November 2006
- REAP hosted a two day workshop in November 2006 with a member of the FAST (Formative Assessment in Science Teaching) project team to identify issues raised in developing the FAST *Student Experience of Assessment* questionnaire. The REAP project is developing its own assessment experience tool.
- REAP Director is consultant to University of Bristol on Formative Assessment and Benchmarking of E-learning.

Section Five: Dissemination (cont./)

REAP Website and Publicity Materials

The REAP website is a key vehicle for the dissemination of REAP activities. All case studies, publications, presentations and reports are located on the website. The increasing international interest in REAP is represented by a map of hits continually updated on the home page (see Appendix 1).



Section Five: Dissemination (cont./)

Journal Articles on REAP and transformation

- Nicol, D (2007), E-assessment by design: using multiple-choice tests to good effect, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 31(1), 53-64.
- Nicol, D. (in press), Getting from here to there: strategies for change. In J. Boys and P. Ford, *The e-Revolution and Post-Compulsory Education: Using e-Business Models to Deliver Quality Education*, Routledge: London
- Nicol, D (in press). Laying a foundation for lifelong learning: case studies of e-assessment in large first year classes, *British Journal of Educational Technology*.
- Coen, M and Nicol, D (in press), Managing investment in teaching and learning technologies, *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*.
- Nicol, D (2006), Increasing success in first year courses: assessment redesign, self-regulation and learning technologies, Refereed paper in ASCILITE proceedings, Sydney, December 2006.

Papers completed but not submitted

- Draper, S and Nicol (2006) *Transformation in E-learning*. Presented at Association of Learning Technology Conference, September
- Nicol, D and Draper, S (2007) *Understanding the prospects for Transformation*. (to be circulated to SFC and Carol Twigg for comment)

Papers produced by departments engaged in REAP activities

- Ross, M & Welsh, M. Paper for ASEE Research in Education Conference in Honolulu
- Poster presentation at British Pharmaceutical Conference by Pharmacy project team
- Kelly, D & Owen, C (2007) *Empowering students to construct their own knowledge through computer-assisted formative assessment* in the Higher Education Academy Psychology Network newsletter, January 2007

REAP Dissemination Programme 2007

In addition to this on-going schedule of dissemination both internally and externally, the project team are planning a programme of project-led dissemination events in 2007:

Planned Scottish Workshop series:

In collaboration with HEA Scotland and the QAA, three REAP workshops will be held at Scottish universities. Each workshop will feature a different aspect of the REAP work and will provide input to the online international conference.

Planned Online International Conference on Assessment

The REAP international online conference is a two day online event which will take place on 30th and 31st May 2007. The conference has three primary strands focusing on (i) *Great Designs for Assessment* (ii) *Assessment and the First Year Experience* and (iii) *Institutional Strategies for Assessment*. The event will disseminate REAP and be used to collect additional assessment designs and resources. An electronic archive of assessment for learning designs, conference keynotes and debates will be preserved as part of the REAP website for the benefit of the HE community. The archive and papers from keynotes, and other commissioned texts, will be used to produce a snapshot of innovative assessment practice world-wide.

QAA Assessment and the First Year Experience Project

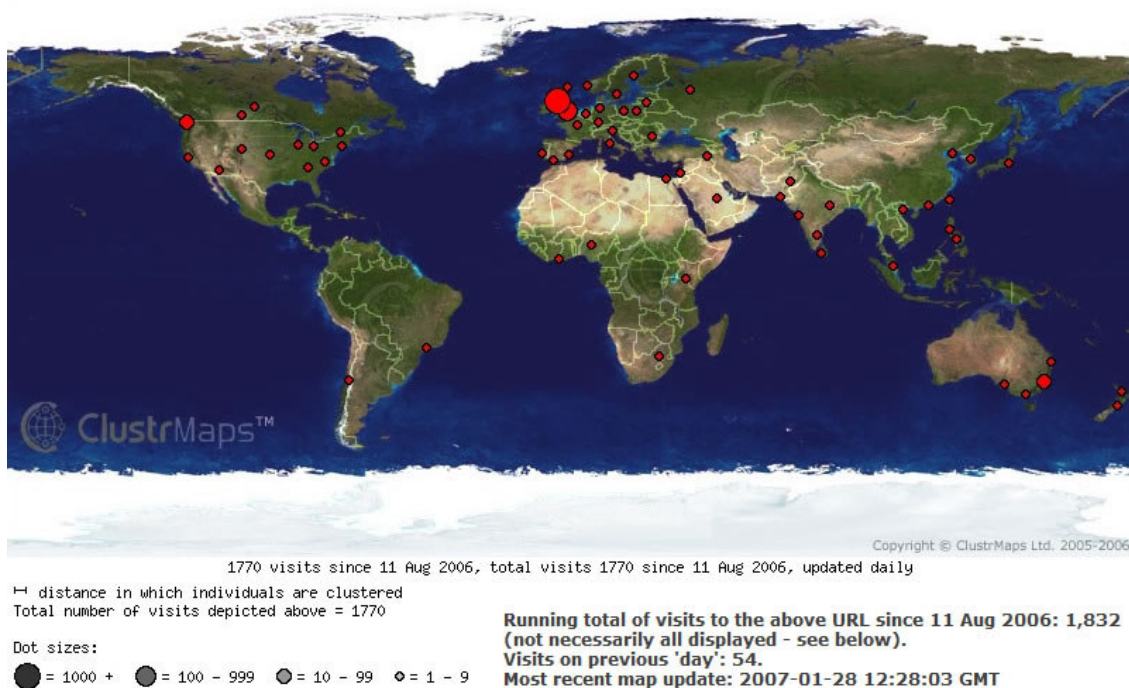
Dr David Nicol, the REAP project director has been awarded funding from the QAA to undertake a literature review of innovative assessment practice and collect relevant case studies. This will ensure that REAP outcomes are widely disseminated and will enable the collation of further exemplary assessment designs supported by technology.

Section Five: Dissemination (cont./)

National/International recognition

The REAP developments are being monitored and are influencing strategy across a range of organisations, nationally and internationally. Many HE institutions are using REAP principles (seven principles of good feedback practice) in revisions of their strategy documents or are seeking consultancy advice from the REAP team with regard to their own assessment review (e.g. University of Bristol, Sheffield-Hallam). In addition national organisations have invited REAP representatives on to their advisory boards for assessment related activities (BECTA, the Computer Assisted Assessment Conference, the HE Academy Education subject centre).

International hits to new REAP website (31st January 2007):



Dissemination materials

The project has designed a series of new posters and leaflets which have been distributed to every department at the University of Strathclyde and widely across the REAP partners as well as at a number of Australian universities and conferences. The REAP website has been re-designed to reflect this new identity.



Section Six: Evaluation

The REAP team have supported the carrying out of extensive evaluations of all pilot and the scaled implementations (ongoing) of assessment redesign in relation to departmental drivers for change.

In addition, the REAP team are carrying out their own process evaluations of these implementations in relation to REAP principles. Most implementations reveal evidence of:

- increased opportunities for students to engage actively with assessment criteria before engaging in assessment activities;
- more opportunities to reflect on and self-evaluate their own learning in an ongoing basis;
- enhanced opportunities for peer dialogue during learning
- more effective, timely and constructive tutor feedback
- active use of feedback information to make improvements
- and more efficient use of staff time in assessment activities (e.g. marking).

A full set of evaluation data is being prepared for the Scottish Funding Council on the overall benefits of these projects. Information on departmental evaluations is available on the reap website (www.reap.ac.uk)

Two full-time evaluators, Pippa Markham and Mel McKendrick joined the REAP team at the University of Glasgow in August 2006. As well as collecting before and after data on the implementation of PRS at GCU and from the other technology pilots at all three participating universities, they are working with the main project team to further develop evaluation instruments. These are intended not only to support project data-gathering activities but also to serve as a re-useable toolkit for other projects working to change assessment practices in different contexts. Evaluation activities include:

Evaluation tools development

Design of staff interview schedule to be implemented across all modules/courses. The aim here is to have a single framework to apply to all courses, allowing a much more uniform and so systematic basis for description, reporting, and comparison within and across the project.

Design of student experience of assessment questionnaire to be implemented across all modules/courses. This is a companion instrument for gathering information from students, again with a view to a single framework allowing comparisons across modules and across original assessment designs and their redesigns.

Computing Science level 1 course redesign

A major open ended formative evaluation is planned, to be executed shortly. This will feed into the second semester's teaching, besides forming part of the overall evaluation.

Computing Science accelerator course

This is a remedial course for students at risk from low performance. It was substantially redesigned this year, and preliminary exam results suggest fewer failures in the at-risk group in the January exams, and no failures among those who attended regularly.

- Design of learning logs to facilitate self-regulation through goal orientation and reflection.
- Report on rationale for design of learning log
- Summary of data from logs, which was fed back into facilitator feedback meetings to provide an opportunity for students to shape the course.
- Output from these meetings was recorded for mid-point evaluation measures.
- Post measures included student and facilitator/staff interviews (qualitative data).
- Summary of student feedback on class tests

Section Seven: Issues and Challenges

NSS (national student survey)

The NSS is gathering systematic data from students in most higher education institutions in the UK (about 85 last year). The survey includes a subscale of questions on assessment and feedback (this project's topic) and it gathers a measure of success in this respect for about 3,200 courses. The data gathered is thus thousands of times greater than even a large project such as REAP, and it is likely that the NSS will continue for the foreseeable future. Consequently (whether we like it or not) all courses touched by the REAP project, and in fact by the SFC's E-learning Transformation Project in general, will be publicly measured by NSS. While the REAP team have reservations about the precise questions and measures used in the NSS, we need to connect to them. One way of doing this would be to administer the NSS questions to the students of the courses/modules/classes we are involved with, thus laying the groundwork for future monitoring of longer-term effects of the (transformational) changes.

Delivering advice and consultancy to course redesigns that result in changes

It has become apparent that delivering expertise to course re-designers during redesign is far more crucial and far harder to delegate (e.g. to project employees) than had been appreciated at the start of the project. While publishing guidelines and papers, and giving public talks, has undoubtedly gained attention, attracting the attention of academics in charge of courses (as opposed to those who like to go to education talks) and then furthermore securing actual changes in course designs is a different matter. By the end of the project we should be able to report some experience of what has and has not led to demonstrable effects, but it is likely that the actions we would then recommend will be rather different from those envisaged at the start of the project and those conventionally done as "dissemination".

New points we have learned about assessment and feedback

Engagement in the REAP project has led to some changes in our thinking about feedback, assessment and learning and the student experience. This has moved us beyond the thinking that underpinned the initial grant application. For example, the seven feedback principles and their relationship to learner self-regulation provided an initial steer for the project. However, subsequent work led us to include another set of ideas related to 'time on task' (and student effort) as a key variable in learning and assessment. More recently open-ended interviews with students have challenged our thinking about assessment and led us to introduce a new concept called 'contingent advice'. In addition, the focus on the first year has led us to pay more attention to the social dynamics surrounding assessment and feedback related activities and the importance of developing communities of learners in the early years.

Section Eight: Support

REAP team members have attended programme-wide events and collaborated in discussions about programme-wide dissemination activities. As well as hosting visits from the programme manager and SFC representatives, the project team have discussed project progress in scheduled interviews with the programme evaluators. Useful advice from both the programme co-ordinator and programme evaluators has led to project participation in other activities, particularly a recent JISC workshop on Scenario Planning in December 2006 which has informed local practice.