DRAFT ALT Research Committee Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the ALT Research Committee held on Thursday 9th May 2013 at 1100 GMT through Blackboard Collaborate.

1. Welcome, participation and apologies.

The meeting was attended by Norbert Pachler (NP, chair), Su White (SW),

John Traxler (JT), Caroline Steel (CS), Rachel Harris (RH), Jane Seale (JS),

Lesley Gourlay (LG), Brenda Bannan (BB), Patrick Carmichael (PC),

and Laura Czerniewicz (LC).

NP welcomed those present to the meeting.

John Slater (jbs) was in attendance.

Apologies were received from Barbara Newland (BN), Maren Deepwell (MD) and Nigel Ecclesfield (NE).

Although the previous problems were fixed, again technology caused some problems. This was initially because of a limit problem on simultaneous talkers but subsequently due to some local difficulties causing members to drop in and out.

2. Introductions, membership and website.

Keeping the details of members on the website is a standing item on all ALT subcommittee agenda. Please see http://www.alt.ac.uk/about-alt/who-we-are/operational-committees/research-committee to review current data and let jbs know if anything requires further updating. Also tell jbs about any email changes.

3. Approval of minutes of last meeting (RC17).

The minutes were approved. RC17 would now become the final minutes of the February meeting (and not draft) on the website.

4. Matters arising not separately on the Agenda.

The committee received Paper RC18 noting that all items covered were on the agenda and that actions had essentially been completed. Specifically:

4.5 Practitioner researchers: NE and jbs had followed through the actions and RC21 was a report on progress (Agendum 9).

4.6 ALTC and Research papers: Action completed:

There were about as many research submissions as in previous years. It was hoped that the resulting special issue will contain 6 papers and all will be presented on Wed 11th September in Nottingham.

Sheila Kearney has been contacted and the programme is being worked on.

There were further discussions about 11th September under Agenda 7 and 10.

4.7 Joint events: Action completed

The policy round table had been held jointly with Intellect and the possibility of collaboration with CAL was covered under Agendum 8. A joint OER event had also been a success.

4.8 Possible Policy Board: Action completed

Thanks to all members who had contributed. Report on activity is covered under Agendum 6.

4.10.3 ocTEL Progress: Action completed

Thanks to all members who had contributed to the initial evaluation.

Report on activity is covered under Agendum 5.

5. Progress on ocTEL:

The committee received RC23 on this topic to which RH spoke and then answered questions. It noted the progress was solid but it was too soon to say whether attrition would be in line with other MOOCs although RH described some measures being taken to improve over that including the work of Martin Hawksey in this area.

In response to a question of medium term reporting, RH outlined plans to contribute to a future special issue although that paper would be wider than ocTEL.

In response to a question on funding it was noted that most of the labour involved in delivery was volunteer effort by ALT members with the funding granted to set up the operation largely spent on management and development.

An open source platform was used and the materials were available for appropriate reuse.

6. Progress on Policy Board and pre meeting (Policy Round Table):

The committee received RC19. The round table meeting for about 20 people was held jointly with Intellect who supplied the venue, refreshments, and some attendees.

NP and jbs reported on the event which addressed a number of key items that would be the basis of the Policy Board in the autumn. A good deal of groupwork had led to about 32 bullets being collected which would be the basis of a "Green Paper". The bullets were currently being discussed by attendees and would be available to RC.

Members might like to see the slides that supported Martin Oliver (MO)'s talk.

Action: jbs to circulate the URL for MO slides

Note It is available at http://www.slideshare.net/MartinOliver

7. Research at ALTC including a proposal for a RC session to introduce the research day on 11th Sept:

See RC 20. jbs reported that the 6 research papers were likely to form the core of the day which would be Wed 11th Sept in Nottingham. LG confirmed that there had been a tightening of the standard and indeed one paper that had been previously submitted to RLT and rejected had again been spotted and rejected as a research paper. A check was underway on the remaining ones.

There was some debate about the purpose of an RC led session proposed to introduce the day. Some felt that it was unfair for RC members to get an un-reviewed slot. However there was support for a "Why do we reject research papers for ALTC/RLT and others" session - as a piece of development work that could be useful to delegates, especially postgraduates and early career researchers. LG volunteered to be involved in the session but other members of RC who would be there on 11th September were required.

Action: Other volunteers to help shape and deliver this session to contact jbs, preferably before end May 2013.

8. RC and CAL 14:

CAL is looking to involve ALT RC in their 2014 conference in Amsterdam in the first half of 2014, probably March. They are rebranding themselves as the European Conference on Computers and Learning (away from a more UK focus) and hoping to attract a lot of European attendance to compensate for falling UK numbers. They have some exciting new ideas such as introducing PechaKuchas, collecting the best papers for a special issue, and reducing the amount of paper and other physical things involved.

They had previously suggested working with ALT and maybe co-locating their conference close to ALTC but were now looking to involve a member of RC on the steering committee as their event was more research focused than ALTC.

In response to questions it was noted that a major publisher actually subsidised and ran the conference and that the best papers went into a special issue of their journal (probably not OA). Some members counselled no ALT involvement but others felt that it would be good for someone to get involved. The matter would now go to CX

Action: Anyone wanting to take on this role please contact jbs to take forward.
Action NP and jbs to lead at CX and get a decision on the way forward for ALT.

Note: There was a volunteer but the publisher support fell through and so there was no need for any decision at CX.

4

9. Practitioner Researchers:

The committee received RC 21 – an interim paper prepared by NE and jbs. Most activities proposed were in hand. The committee looked forward to a fuller report next time.

10. To and from other committees including journal progress (standing item):
- Progress on CMALT (MSC)

The committee received a report RC22 form jbs and looked forward to further reports.
- Journal Progress

The committee received a verbal report from LG. There were four priorities identified when the new editors took up post.
  o Better reviewing/procedures (including getting reviews on time)
  o Dealing with the large backlog of papers
  o Marketing
  o Getting more and better papers submitted.

Good progress had been made on the second which was no longer an issue. The first needed work and potentially help from RC members. The third was in hand. JT suggested that all papers should be checked to ensure that research interventions on which they were reporting had a sound ethical basis.

The last issue remained serious and a special edition deadline had been extended and overall the flow needed to be improved. The publisher was now helping using its wider experience. One problem remained the lack of an ISI ranking and this deterred many, especially some from outside the UK. It took time to get a ranking and it was believed that progress was being made.

11. There was no other business:

12. Dates of next three meetings.

5

October 16th 2013 (face to face, four way all day meeting). Feb 6th 2014 (conference call), May 15th 2014 (if required, conference call).

Conf calls start at 11.00 (UK) and finish) by 13.00 UK time at the latest.

Note that the Oct 16th date is not as previously suggested. This date is now more or less firm and the venue likely to be in Birmingham.