

LEARNING DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OVERVIEW FORM

Project title	The philosophy of thought		Project ID No	CLAD – HIST048
Strategy area/theme	Humanities, philosophy			
Start date	June 2001	Completion date	October 2003	
Project type	Learner enhancement project			
Level	Undergraduate	Programme of study	BA Philosophy (single and joint honours)	
Aims	<p>The principal aim was to construct an online 'Interactive Learning Environment' to facilitate first-year philosophy students' active and collaborative learning of philosophical logic, to accompany a module on the topic (<i>Philosophy of Thought</i>). It was envisaged that the ILE would comprise a network of web pages, of the following kinds: (i) Online versions of the module handouts, enhanced with hyperlinks to other parts of the ILE and to external www resources. (ii) Exercises, games and other activities designed both to stimulate interest in the subject-matter of philosophical logic, and to encourage informal practice of its methods. (iii) Discussion forums, for online collaboration on various exercises and topics arising in the module. (iv) An annotated reading list with hyperlinks to www and online Birmingham IS resources where the reading is available free. (v) An ergonomic glossary of technical terms commonly used in philosophical logic.</p> <p>Two further objectives were included in the original proposal. First, that the system would foster students' general familiarity and competence with IT learning and research resources. And second, that the project leader would improve IT and pedagogical skills.</p>			
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a system which facilitates students' learning of some particularly essential but very difficult material. Philosophical logic is utterly foundational to the subject, yet many students find it especially difficult – it is extremely abstract, and its analysis sometimes involves the use of off-putting semi-formal symbolism. • To develop a system the use of which will foster in first-year philosophy students a familiarity and competence with IT learning/research resources, including specialized search engines, e-journals, online encyclopaedias etc., • To increase the Project Leaders skills, knowledge and experience in the area of the development of IT learning resources, so that they can later assist colleagues involved in similar undertakings both within school, and also further afield. 			
Overview	<p>The project is to develop a web-based Interactive Learning Environment to facilitate first-year philosophy students' active and collaborative learning of philosophical logic. The system's content will roughly match that of the first-year module on this subject offered by the Department of Philosophy. It will comprise, in effect, a network of web-pages. Some of these will feature exercises, games and other activities designed both to stimulate interest in the subject-matter of philosophical logic, and to encourage informal practice of its methods. Others will feature discussion boards: fora for student collaboration on various exercises and topics arising in the module. Others will present interactive versions of the module handouts (constituting, in effect, an on-line version of the module), annotated reading lists (hyper-linked to web-based resources on which the texts are freely available) and glossaries.</p>			

	<p>The Philosophy of Thought Module is crucial in facilitating students' acquisition of philosophical skills such as constructing and analysing arguments. The module covers two related areas of philosophy, 'Informal Logic' and the 'Theory of Linguistic Meaning', which constitute what is often referred to as 'Philosophical Logic'. However, Philosophical Logic is particularly abstract and is often unpopular with students, who find it difficult and unstimulating. This project therefore seeks to develop a web-based Interactive Learning Environment which facilitates students' learning of essential but very difficult material.</p>
Further Information	<p>For further information on this project please contact CLAD at University of Birmingham</p> <p>cladprojects@contacts.bham.ac.uk quoting CLAD projects HIST048</p>