Deliverable D9.1 FaSMEd Project Evaluation Report Month 12

FaSMEd Evaluation Team:

Dr Alf Coles, University of Bristol,

Professor Justin Dillon, University of Bristol,

Professor Ken Ruthven, University of Cambridge.

We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in the launch conference, steering group meetings and a special day set aside to meet with the core project team. We are also grateful for access to all the project websites and resources.

The project is proceeding successfully in a timely manner, where all deliverables have been completed and accepted as scheduled. At the same time, the team have been able to respond flexibly to issues, such as needing to work on developing common meanings to key terms across countries and the commissioning of position papers.

Those steering group meetings we have been able to attend have involved open and frank discussion where the project team have welcomed suggestions and ideas.

The wider team have clearly made good progress with identifying and building on relationships with schools in the different countries.

The project websites are developing well and project newsletters are effective mechanisms for keeping all partners informed about activities.

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Given the local contexts we think the number and balance of case studies is appropriate; those contexts in which it will be possible to conduct case studies both in mathematics and science will be particularly important for the work of the project.

On the basis of discussion held with the project team and our own reviewing of material, both currently available and projected for future deliverables, we have the following suggestions for the steering group to consider:

1) Continue to develop links with other EU projects on aligned topics.

2) There is a need to keep the focus on new technology in ensuring the distinctive contribution of FASMED comes through clearly in deliverables, particularly in the toolkit. There is a need to acknowledge and value the contexts of different project partners in relation to technology, but also in each case a need to innovate from that starting point.

3) We recommend the team review existing reporting on low attainers & low attainment, to identify where gender aspects have already been acknowledged. The team will then be able to consider where future material might make fuller reference to gender aspects; this may have some implications for plans for data collection and analysis.

4) There is a need to clarify the relationship between case study method and the overall design research approach.

5) We strongly endorse the proposal that all case studies make use of student focus groups to gauge student perspectives in their experience; we note this is the one of the few parts of the current research design where it is explicitly proposed to pay attention to gender issues through the use of single-sex focus groups.

6) We have three comments in relation to the toolkit aspect of the project:

- where the toolkit has adapted activities from other projects (which we strongly endorse) it is important to highlight the value added by this project, particularly in relation to the role of technology and tools.

- it is appropriate to consider a range of tools and technologies in the different contexts of the project while at the same time ensuring there is attention paid to new digital resources.

- the role of tools and technologies may need to be emphasised in the work with teachers and the development of the case studies, for example, it could be useful to include a paragraph highlighting this in relation to each activity on the website.

7) In order to inform future writing from project members, we have a comment on the position papers. While most of the examples provided in the various position papers that have been prepared are highly appropriate to the target audience, we felt that those in the position paper on 'The Use of Technology in Mathematics and Science Education' were very much less accessible for low attaining pupils and the language not always accessible.

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