Digitalis

Enterprise Project – Case Study in the Use of Digital Storytelling for Reflection

Module Leader: Dr Anna Upchurch Year: 2011/2012 No. of students: 50

PECI3107: Enterprise Project is an optional level 3 module available for all undergraduate programmes in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries.   The objective of the module is: *To develop, practice and demonstrate skills of creative enterprise in the context of a problem-solving scenario*. The module combines theoretical approaches to entrepreneurial skill and knowledge development with application to a specific individually negotiated situation in which students develop an entrepreneurial solution to an identified problem or opportunity.

The module enables students to develop knowledge of entrepreneurship as it applies within the cultural and creative domains, including, for example notions of intrapreneurship, and its application to possible contexts beyond. The relevant context for this module is normally outside the School and may be outside the University. Working with the tutor, students will identify a context within which they will have the opportunity to practice their entrepreneurial skills and apply their entrepreneurial knowledge. Examples might include managing and marketing creative events, developing creative projects for in community and educational contexts and using creative/performance skills and understanding to meet needs of external partners.

The module is assessed via written project proposal (20%), project report (30%), and oral presentation (50%).

Digital Reflection

During the 2011/2012 presentation of the module, students were invited to use digital reflection as a way of documenting and evidencing their learning from the project. They could use video, audio or stills to capture work-in-progress, which they could reflect upon and narrate over later to produce digital story videos. They could then use these in their assessed group presentations.

Handbook Guidance

Anna has already established the use of blogs on the module, so students already use this as a form of digital reflection. During Semester 2 when students are out delivering their projects, they keep in touch via a VLE blog. For this year's presentation of the module, students were also invited to post digital stories or video diaries onto the blogs. From the module handbook:-

Project reporting blog: From January to the end of March, your team will be required to report **every fortnight** on your project progress to a blog on the VLE. Your reports can be video or images using some of the documentation that you are collecting throughout the implementation process. Or the reports can be text. You can vary, submitting written reports some weeks and images (photos or video) on others if you wish.

In their presentations, students are encouraged to show evidence of their learning, referring to this extract from the module handbook:

Assessment evidence and criteria: You should begin to document your learning and planning process right away, using images (photos and videos), sound recordings, a reflective log, diary, etc.,

as individuals and as teams. You will be required in all assignments to evidence your learning through these techniques of documentation and reflection. You can choose the medium and mix media as you wish

Anna's Objectives for introducing digital reflection

- Students normally prepare their presentations 'after the fact' in a rather ad-hoc fashion, rather than gathering information as they go along. This approach may help them to plan their documentation.
- Documenting and presenting their learning in this way may suit some students' preferences and skill sets, rather than relying solely on writing and stand-up presentation skills.
- Students could create their own webpages etc. that could be linked to from PCI website to show the types of projects that students have delivered.
- Some students want to start up online businesses – this would develop their IT skills to do this.
- Students may also wish to use their digital stories as part of an e-portfolio or online CV.

Support given to students

- From the start, Anna wanted to ensure that students had training in the technology to create a level playing field, so asked for support from the Digitalis project.
- Students received two sessions delivered by the Digitalis Project Assistant, including a presentation on digital reflection (similar to this one - http://www.digitalis.leeds.ac.uk/resources/resources-new-page/digital-storytelling/using-digital-stories-to-reflect-upon-and-present-your-learning/) and the location of training resources and video tutorials.
- Resources on VLE: http://www.digitalis.leeds.ac.uk/resources/bespoke-resources/enterprise-project-video-and-digital-story-resources/
- One group had support from the Digitalis Project Assistant to find the necessary resources to make a PhotoStory and post it onto the blog via LUTube. This group included a reflective PhotoStory and a short video as part of their presentation.
- Equipment was made available to borrow, including PC microphones and flip cameras

Reflections from module leader

What have the videos added to the final presentations?

Overall, the use of digital resources had much better up-take this year by the students, although there is still room to develop this aspect of the module.

The initial intention was for students to gather video and photo evidence throughout their project implementation which they could then reflect upon, edit, and include in their exam presentations. However, some presentations still had the ad hoc, prepared 'after the fact' focus on a single event.

Need to raise the issue of ethics in the use of images and video e.g. when filming children, to discuss the need to directly seek permission and explain how videos will be used.

There were hitches with technology – it's difficult when students are presenting in an unfamiliar space, and they can't check that the PC has all the right software for what they want to do. The

University would need to have a set of 'approved' video applications, but this would work against innovation and developing digital literacy and flexibility.

General observations

VLE blog

As in previous years, the blog was a good way for the module staff to keep in touch with students' progress while they were out in the field working on their projects. Most blog entries contained text and images. There were initially problems with the images being too large, so the Project Assistant posted guidance on the VLE for reducing image size on the VLE blog. One group posted video, but they needed email support to help them do it (which may be why this option was little-used).

Final Presentations

Technical difficulties

Trying to play a video that was uploaded to Facebook – a message popped up to install the latest version of Flash on the PC in the lecture theatre.

Playing the PhotoStory (and some of the videos) – the narration sound quality was fuzzy and therefore difficult to hear when amplified through the lecture theatre sound system.

Presenting iMovie from MAC caused problems loading via the PC. This was resolved by getting a MAC adapter for the projector and presenting directly from the MACbook.

Ways in which video was used in the final presentations:-
- Photostory of stills with narration of their learning, and 'theory' quotes overlaid in text
- Video of pupil feedback which was then referred to in presentation
- Video of pupils dancing in a school as introduction to the presentation
- Video of feedback from an external partner as part of reflection section of presentation
- Montage of films (from Film Festival) used in introduction to presentation
- Video of an external collaborator reflecting on what he'd got out of the collaboration
- Video of panel of judges discussing the value of film festivals
- Photostory used to show stills from the process with music overlaid (but no reflection)
- Slideshow of stills playing, whilst the group spoke over it in their presentation, summing up their project and their learning
- Images shown included screen shots of posters, facebook pages, and photos

One student (James Millington) had developed his entire presentation as a digital story which he'd created using iMovie. James introduced his video by saying that he got really excited about the opportunity to document his progress digitally, and do the whole presentation on video. He said this suited his way of working, as he had digital skills but didn't particularly like standing up and presenting. In terms of accessibility, the digital documentation option gave him a way of delivering on the assessment criteria by playing to his strengths. He said the most important learning for him was during the process of creating the digital story, which gave him an idea for a new venture. When asked how the process of digital reflection contributed to his learning, he said that he noticed things when he watched the footage again, and it helped him to remember things. It also enabled

him to see his events from a different perspective, depending on the point of view he was recording footage from. As evidence of his project development and learning for assessment purposes, it was very effective.

Student work example:

'Submerged Presents' by James Millington

(Music mixed by Laska and Joust http://soundcloud.com/laska-joust)

Some General Observations based on Feedback from Student Evaluation Questionnaire

- The responses indicated a broad range of levels of comfort/familiarity with technology. One student said that the technology lectures were out-of-date and basic based on what the students were already using. Other students said that they couldn't get the technology to work, and wanted more practical workshops to help them use it. There were also students who preferred to use a 'log book' approach.
- Quite a few students used technologies that they were already familiar with rather than the technologies that were introduced to them. Technologies that they mentioned included facebook, GoogleDocs, groupspaces, itunes, ipod, iphone.
- Some specific digital skills that they asked for help with included:
    - Explain basics of how to embed video into a slideshow, or simple design techniques to improve PowerPoint
    - More guidance in how to video blog and/or make a video with a voiceover