# JISC Mobile Reflections: Themes raised by participants in live workshop

## Summary

Key themes around mobile reflection that seem to be repeated are **self-consciousness** and awareness of people in the environment, and this restricts freedom to record reflections.  A strategy employed was to take a photograph as a reminder and prompt to reflect later.  Awareness of a *future* **audience** and of the need to select from the material later put some constraint on perceived freedom to reflect freely and without pre-judgement.   And **the camera itself** caused some feelings of constraint and self-consciousness.  These feelings seemed to recede with **practice**, with the participants becoming **less 'precious'** about their recordings.  The **spontaneity** and 'handiness' of the technology enabled the participants to capture key reflections '**in the moment**' and in the environment, which they could then revisit and remember.  Having their video reflections felt more **tangible**, they could literally look at them and **analyse** their thoughts and process over a period of time.  A process of **layering** went on, with spoken reflections being recorded whilst watching footage of movement, for example.  It enabled them to see a **new impression** of the footage, or see it with '**new eyes**'.  It was also used to **capture thoughts from reading**, as well as practical work.

In terms of the video editing process, it made the participants **look back** at the footage which they wouldn't normally do.  This enabled them to select the most **revealing** moments, and helped to **analyse and structure** ideas for their research.  Again, **consciousness of an audience** played a part, with concerns about the video flowing for a viewer, or about aesthetic quality.   The fragments selected for the video represented **key moments** of emotion, insight or reflections on process.  For this exercise, participants were conscious of **comparing** their videos with each other, and this came out in feelings of vulnerability or concerns for how well the video 'flowed' for a viewer.   However, they also **learned from watching each others**' videos about different ways of using mobile reflection, and about techniques for structuring the video.

## Technical issues

Processing video can be very **slow**, and in one case this forced the participant to be selective about the footage that she chose.  She saw this as something that could have been a positive outcome, but the process was time consuming and frustrating.

Another participant used Final Cut Pro and encountered **file format issues**.  Video on the iPhone is designed for distribution, not editing, so is codexed in a particular way.  When using **professional editing tools** such as Final Cut Pro, the video needs to be **converted** to a different resolution.

**Detailed notes of participant responses during the workshop**

**…about the process of mobile reflections**

- Feeling awkward and self-conscious at first recording self, difficult to start talking/reflecting
- started by taking photos, helped to get started
- conscious about the camera – presence of technology interrupts the intuitive creative process
- sometimes difficult to capture a reflection because of where you are e.g. too public
- being in certain environments helped me reflect (e.g. more private locations)
- being annoyed with people around me when I was trying to record my reflections
- trying not to judge what I was going to say
- being conscious of an audience
- I would sometimes narrate my reflections, conscious of someone else looking
- I tried to be conscious about not thinking about a viewer
- sometimes I talked on and one – other times were quite short
- used phone to take photos as triggers to thoughts and ideas I'd had/remember the environment and reflect back later (particularly when in an environment where feel conscious about talking)
- being conscious of needing to select material later interfered with the recording process
- with practice, became less precious about recording – just 'talking to myself'
- reflections over time helped to facilitate the analysis of data gathered
- it made my ideas more tangible, more physical, kind of objectified
- useful to reflect whilst watching video from studio practice
- enjoyed prompts and targets, reminders to do it, having a reason to make the video, something I had a deadline for
- looking back over the videos what's fascinating is how I switch between two questions – artistic question and research question
- there was a key reflection I had – I was able to capture it and then I forgot about it – then as I was reviewing the material I remembered it again. At the time I was driving but the phone is stuck to the window so it's totally hands free and I was able to capture that moment
- I enjoyed looking again over those landscapes and how vivid that colour was – it's almost more vivid now than it was when I was there – a new impression of that environment

**…about creating an edited reflective (3 minute) video**

- frustrating because computer was slow, took away spontaneity of selecting clips
- slowness meant I had to simplify and distil my idea which might have been a good outcome
- enjoyed the editing process, looking back at my film was revealing
- I wouldn't normally look back at my film, making the film made me look back
- I had to look back and also listen to find moments I felt were the most revealing
- difficult to decide with 3 minute limit what to exclude
- was conscious of it flowing for a viewer
- wanted to include examples of different types of reflections and environments as well as show development of ideas

- (*general theme about making this video for an audience, and also of comparing with each other's*) e.g. being precious thinking it looked rough, embarrassing, trying to make it visually interesting
- useful to make the video – forced me to reflect on my reflections and take a step back
- helped me with my analysis and structuring of ideas
- overlaid the sound of my mobile reflections onto footage of practical work, talking about specific aspects of rehearsal
- included photos because it was important for my process

**…reflections on watching their video again**

- the things I've chosen to put in had something to do with emotional connection/feelings/more of an impact – I've chosen things that have changed my journey
- had I not talked through my feelings watching it back I may not have had that idea
- I wanted to remember that emotion, if I hadn't recorded it I may have forgotten
- it's become a process of analysis – analysing my research through the reflections
- it felt unconscious when I was making the decisions (of what to put in) but actually I think it was more conscious than I thought
- I feel quite vulnerable having exposed myself and my thoughts (*concerns about comparisons with other videos*)
- found it difficult to look back at, felt my voice was quite stiff, nervous, feels vulnerable (*again, comparing with other videos*)
- moments where I felt more comfortable with what I was saying
- the video has helped me to know where I am with my research, what's worth exploring further and what to leave behind
- included an extract from an author read out in the original language – something about me remembering the words in the original language so I can go back and reflect
- something about capturing movement and having the reflection overlaid – I felt I was looking at the movement with different eyes – there was something about hearing myself thinking about the movement that gave me a different perspective
- I decided that silences – moments of looking into the camera not knowing what to say – were just as important to capture in my film.  Looking at the film I realise that I never need to search for movement, but I often search for words – that was important to communicate
- the artist in me tried to create dramaturgy out of the video – but that's not about reflection – caught  between making the video artistic or reflective – maybe it does both
- used text to anchor sections, like a heading
- looking back at the video one clip stands out
- feels like a continuous inner monologue – hard to condense into snippets
- useful process to select key points, but 3 minutes was not long enough, left out interesting material – needs to be a bit longer
- got ideas from watching other participants' videos to help with making mine
- it helped me a lot to watch the other videos and to know other ways of reflecting / seeing other participants was helpful to see other ways of doing mobile reflections

**…about the potential and challenges of mobile reflection**

- having a flip was great – spontaneity to film and talk into it – looks like phone, looks like I'm chatting, could do in public more
- very valuable process, will share with colleagues in terms of the process
- when you're reading in terms of research don't always have computer to hand – some of those reflections were inspired by books and articles – reflecting on academic ideas from reading to capture them impulsively rather than to write
- formulating academic ideas – benefit is in consolidation of ideas when analysing ideas and reading
- if you're on a train you don't have things with you – I've used notes on my iPhone but it's difficult to type –this is a more beneficial way, speaking or photos rather than making notes – useful tool for on-the-go impulsive thoughts you have
- aids thinking process and development of ideas – shaping my ideas
- prompts were useful to help me think of different ways of using a mobile
- helped me to articulate more about the process
- I felt the more I did it the more I felt comfortable – need to make a habit

Carole Kirk, July 2012
School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds