

Vignette: a snapshot of your applied project experience

Name: Robert Hickey

What was your **project title**?

Instructional videocasts: Facilitating Learning in a Mobile World

What is your **discipline**/area of professional practice?

Was Bricklaying and Construction, however now I teach modules in Sustainable Technology, Project Management, Personal Development, Computer Applications and an Introduction to Digital Media.

Why did you need to do this project at the time?

To answer the needs of my students and facilitate their learning, also to make my mode of teaching and my students methods of learning more flexible and mobile. Ultimately it was a way to improve my teaching practice and make it more effective which was beneficial to both my students and me.

What technologies did you use?

Mobile Phones, primarily for taking, storing and distributing instructional videos, also some free software for converting video file formats. This was to allow the videos to be played on different makes of phones.

What were the main challenges in your project? How did you overcome them?

The size of the project (although I would have liked to make it much broader I kept it to a realistic size which was doable for one person within the given timeframe).

Access to students (I tried to schedule it so I had access to the students when I needed to and this was achieved by having a detailed project plan which included dates and times).

Choosing an academic journal and writing the journal paper (I did many drafts of my paper and got continuous feedback from my supervisor and work colleagues and took on board everything that everyone said and this helped me achieve my goal). I chose a journal that could be easily accessed by everyone (suitability and access was the most important thing for me).

What was the outcome of your project?

A positive outcome for both me and my students, I learnt loads, my students learnt loads and it opened up all of our eyes to the potential of using videos on our standard mobile phones for learning. A little bit of technology can go a long way if it's used in an imaginative but straightforward manner.

What is happening now? Has it developed since? How?

My research project still has legs, I presented my findings at three conferences in 2010. In 2011 I was invited to run a CPD day in Tralee IT for their staff which included a 2 hour talk followed by a 2 hour workshop all based on my project. I also ran a similar workshop at the DIT eLearning summer school in 2011. My paper is due

to be published in December 2011 and only yesterday I was asked to run a workshop in ITB for my colleagues.

Unfortunately due to my change in discipline (because of the drop in numbers of apprentice students being taken on by employers due to the recession) I have not been able to expand or extend my research project to where I would have liked to.

Having said that, I believe that the approach to learning that I took in my project will be the way apprentices learn in the future, and I hope to move back to my original discipline when the time is right. At the moment I am still adjusting to my new role as not only a “flexible learner” but also a “flexible teacher” in a variety of new disciplines. Because of this I do not have the time at present to further my research but hopefully I will get an opportunity to use some of my ideas in my new discipline in the future. Everything I learned during my project has helped me to adapt to my new role in today’s flexible working world as a third level educator.

URL/Link to Project: <http://ditportfolios.learnonline.ie/view/view.php?id=665>