



West Midlands Education Innovation and Notable Practice

**DIGITAL STORY TELLING TO ENHANCE OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
STUDENTS EMPLOYABILITY**

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COVENTRY UNIVERSITY

Overview:	This case study presents the use of digital story telling as an innovative assessment technique (SurrIDGE 2007). The assessment provides an opportunity for students to combine their personal career narrative stories with reflection by using technology to enhance their learning and prepare them for future employment
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Within health and social care sector there is a constantly changing landscape in terms of practice and professional employment. As a result we needed to equip students for the future employment market. We believed it was important to not only facilitate student's confidence in themselves as Occupational Therapists but also to provide them with skills to enhance their unique selling points for the competitive employment market.

We combined critical reflection of student's career stories with enhancing their digital literacy skills using digital storytelling software to achieve this (JISC 2007; Morris 2005; Porter 2006). The digital career narrative was embedded in the newly developed 'Employability and Entrepreneurship' level 3 module. The key assessed element was the career narrative.

Stakeholders included: students, the occupational therapy department at Coventry University, the learning technology team and occupational therapy practice partners.

The module was conceived over an year with expertise sought from the Institute of Entrepreneurship, Department of Leadership and Management, IT Services and the faculty based Learning Technology team.

Students commented positively in the end of module confidential evaluation. Examples of those comments were as follows:

'Very creative, perhaps an OT tool for future practice.'

'Interesting topics covered in the module that are useful for the future. The blended learning adds variety to the module and the assessment methods are more interesting.'

'a very interesting module and has encouraged me to think differently about the future: to look for entrepreneurial opportunities.'

'skills gained are practical and can be used when applying for jobs.'

The impact of this blended learning module is that students will have increased confidence in their ability to reflect upon their career and have developed digital literacy skills which they can apply in their future practice. In addition, it has provided an opportunity for an innovative form of

assessment within the department and this practice can be shared across the university. It is envisaged in the long term that this will enhance students' employability, providing them with confidence to explore unknown territories.

There were some obstacles that we overcame in this module. These focussed around the technology used and investigation of assessment parity. IT services and the faculty learning technology team helped us to explore the technology and student and staff support needs with the faculty learning technology team playing a significant role. Assessment parity was reached through team discussion and quality mechanisms within the department. Students initially feared the technology and innovative assessment method; however this was overcome by IT workshops and comprehensive online and face to face support. Students were apprehensive about exploring their own entrepreneurial skills but have recognised the benefits of doing so.

In terms of how others could take this forward the team would recommend effective mechanisms for partnership working, planned well in advance. Digital storytelling should be embedded within blended learning to ensure module staff are fully supported in skills development to best assist and facilitate students learning. The module team should meet regularly for ongoing discussion, problem resolution and support.