

Title of case study:		
Occupational Therapy / Physiotherapy students engagement with the mo blogging pilot		
Institution:		
York St John University		
Contact/main contributor:		
Name:	Tel	Email:
Peter Gray	01904 876796	p.gray@yorks.ac.uk

Context:
<p>The mo blogging pilot was designed to evaluate the utility of mobile devices for students on placement. Students were encouraged to use mobile devices to create reflective accounts and evidence of their learning experiences while they were on placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what was the focus of the activity/intervention? Experimenting with different approaches to recording learning experiences whilst on placement • what led up to it? The pilot was part of a larger project looking at the number of different technologies. We identified that we were interested in the use of mobile phones with a camera capability and commercially available web based systems such as blogs and FLIKR • what options were considered? We looked at a number of different handsets will were restricted by contract costs and availability. Certain key functions such as flight mode and camera facility was thought to be essential. We wanted to make use of the Web CT system that the students were already using so did not consider other VLEs

Objectives:
<p>The objective was to identify ways in which the technology could contribute to the enhanced assessment of student performance on professional practice placements.</p>

Process:
<p>what did you do and why? A group of OT and Physio students who were about to go on their first professional practice placement were asked to volunteer to pilot the technology. It was thought important to ask for volunteers to ensure that there was the best possible chance of a positive outcome. First-year students were selected because were the only students available on placement at the time</p> <p>The equipment was given to students along with basic instructions on how to use it. Students were then given the opportunity to become familiar with equipment over the Easter vacation. It was felt that this was the best approach to training because many the students were already very familiar with the technology and were using it on a day-to-day basis in their own lives.</p>

A training session was given to demonstrate to students how to use the blog and FLIKR sites to record their experience. This was supported by a Web CT site that contained detailed information. The Web CT site was considered to be important to provide ongoing support to students, and offer opportunity for two-way communication with students who would be away from the University during the pilot.

Students then took the devices on placement, their contribution to the blog and FLIKR sites were analysed. Where possible students were visited on placement and views and the views of their placement educators were elicited.

A focus group was held after placement to elicit student evaluations of how the project went.

- **what worked well and why?**

Giving students the opportunity to teach themselves how to use technology worked very well. This was because students were much more familiar with technology than many of their tutors.

The web CT based support also worked well as it gave students the opportunity to access important information at the time they needed it, provided a source provided a source of information for placement educators and ensured ongoing support.

Students developed informal systems of support using mobile technology to text and speak to each other. This was not anticipated and worked well because students were given free unlimited airtime.

Students who had access to Bluetooth keyboards tended to produce much more in-depth reflective work. This was because standard keyboard access on the mobile phones provided was extremely difficult to use for large amounts of text.

- **what worked less well and why?**

It was difficult to ensure acceptance of the technology in the clinical setting. Students reported problems related to carrying out activities with mobile phones because they were associated more with leisure pursuits than with placement learning.

the devices chosen were not ideal for the job and resulted in rather complicated procedures to achieve a student aims

it was impossible to ensure ethical approval for use of photograph

some students abused the free airtime and ran up huge bills.

Time pressures made it very difficult to bring placement educators fully onboard

Critical success factors:

- **what made activity work well in practice?**

Dedicated support from the e learning adviser
Acceptance and commitment from programme staff

Student enthusiasm to embrace new technology
Bluetooth keyboards for the students who had them

Outcomes:

- **what did you achieve?**

Identified Key Technological criteria that informed future work
Started to develop a strategy to introduce new technology to students
Identified occupational therapy and physiotherapy as leaders in mobile learning within the institution.

- **what happened as a result?**

Findings informed future purchasing decisions
Conference presentation at York St John University and in Canada

- **was this what you anticipated?**

Yes but Canada exceeded expectations

- **what has been the impact of the activity on staff, students, practitioners, service users, carers, others?**

Student involved in the pilot project have been motivated and encouraged to develop their reflective skills early in the programme.
Staff involved have benefited from exposure and involvement with others
Placement education staff became more aware of ALPS

Key lessons learnt:

- **What have you learned?**

Phones are not user-friendly for a text and based task
Students enjoy keeping reflective journals online
Students will use opportunities to share their learning with peers on placement
Some placement settings will not be suitable for using mobile phones
Students need time to become familiar with and make use of new technology
More resource needs to be put into educating clinical colleagues who act as placement educators

- **How has this learning been used to inform future developments?**

Informed future direction of Alps technology purchasing
Highlighted the key ethical areas that the to be addressed particularly in relation to use of photographs
Highlighted the need to have a good infrastructure to support clinical colleagues during times of change
Identified the need to ensure that future initiatives are integrated into mainstream activity so that students can see the purpose behind the activity in relation to their learning