Sheffield Hallam University

Capturing reflective learning using digital video

Capturing placement reflections through creating videos in groups, developing skills, creative expression and reusable resources

The aim

The module contains a placement experience which plays a prominent role in student learning. Reflecting on that experience was previously captured as an individual piece of written work.

However the written piece did not always engage the learners effectively in reflection. The team wanted to provide an opportunity for students to work collaboratively in teams to capture and present the essence of their placement experience in a more creative way. This approach opened up new opportunities for engaging learners who had finished their placement, as well as those considering a placement the next year.

Benefits

- Opportunity to engage with digital technology and acquire new employability skills

- Encourages development of oral presentation skills, confidence and reflection

- Intense group work process that relies on working together cohesively

- More interesting and engaging assessment for students and staff

- Results in resources that can be reused with future students

The approach

The module team decided to use an approach where students created a short digital video based on their learning in the placement experience. The videos were created in groups which were based on the placement expertise they had experienced. First students were asked to write a brief case study based on their experience. These case studies were turned into TV scripts and storyboards to help guide the group when finally developing the short digital videos.

The whole student cohort was introduced to media technology and theory during three two-hour blocks. Subsequent sessions were run on a drop-in consultation/ surgery basis to support the creation of the videos.

The jigsaw technique (where members of different groups are matched together) was used to test and share ideas between groups before the final assessment was due.

The finished student work was submitted via an assignment on the module Blackboard site. This offered easy access for students to submit their work in a variety of media formats. Tutors then also had access to the work via the Grade Centre in Blackboard, where they could provide marks and feedback.

The finished videos were also shared with students considering a placement for the next year and potential students interested in the course.

The outcome

Students greeted the project with much enthusiasm, but the use of a new form of assessment led to some feeling threatened. Those groups tended to access support sessions more than other groups of students who were more confident. Overall students appreciated the use of media, making the link between the process of media production and potential future employment skills: presentation, project management and interpersonal skills. To an extent not experienced in any other module, the module felt 'real' to students.

Staff appreciated that students would be challenged therefore support was carefully thought through. Having clear assessment criteria were identified as key to the success of this approach, so staff were careful in crafting them and explaining them to students.

Staff were pleased with the results in terms of student work, and also found the different assessment process more enjoyable.

The completed student work was high quality and helped students who were planning their placement year to be more focused and realistic about gaining a placement.

Profile

Tutor name:
Ian Jones

Faculty:
Development & Society

Size of cohort:
Medium (30-70 students)

Technologies used:
Digital video cameras, Video editing software, Online submission via Blackboard, Grade Centre

If you would like your e-learning practice captured and shared in a similar case study, please contact Brian Irwin within Quality Enhancement and Student Success.

Future development

One possibility for development is asking students to capture media while on placement to add realism and variety to the final projects. However, recently this module has been restructured in such a way that means this teaching approach no longer fits in the curriculum timeframe. It is being considered if this approach can fit in another part of the course instead.

Recommendations

The module leader recommends that those considering this approach ensure that the assessment criteria are aligned with this type of assessment. Planning is essential for ensuring an appropriate amount of time for creating the videos and supporting that process. It is also recommended that you:

• Help students adjust to this new form of assessment

• Ensure teaching staff have access to technical support and equipment

• Encourage student confidence and have trust in their abilities

• Consider the use of a showcase event to celebrate, share and even assess student work