Summary of Proposal
Can community education through the deliverance of a Digital Media Technology ePortfolio, bridge the gap between the transitions of further education to employment, from a tutor and students perspective?

Introduction

My first introduction to community education was ten years ago, under the umbrella of the guided disciplines of the CDETB and FETAC. Providing the learners with the necessary theoretical and practical skills, knowledge and competence, to gain a comprehensive introductory foundation and understanding from FETAC level one to six in computing. Teaching the homeless on a weekly basis through the ICT centre delivering FETAC gave the students an insight of the importance and relevance of how education can change their lives. Working with a cohort of students with intellectual and physical disabilities, young men on probation and students recovering from addictions over the years provided me with the opportunity to see firsthand the discrimination, prejudices and stigma that are associated to the learners not only from members of their own families, but also from society itself (Conway, 2002).

The purpose of this action research proposal is to explore "Can community education through the deliverance of a Digital Media Technology ePortfolio, bridge the gap between the transitions of further education to employment, from a tutor and students perspective?" and will it allow me to make an informed decision based on qualitative data that will be collected at the end of delivering the workshop to the tutor's. In May/June 2012 a new module descriptor for Digital Media Technology 4N1858 FETAC was launched to meet the rapidly changing industry in Digital Media Technology. This year under the umbrella of the Employment Services Office Ballymun (ESOB) and the City of Dublin Education and Training Board (CDETB), they implemented an initiative where eighteen to twenty five year olds will be given an opportunity to study in community education with a progression path to higher education qualifications in areas where more employment opportunities are expected to arise as the economy recovers (Behan J. , *et al.,* 2013). As a tutor I have been employed

through the CDETB, in this initiative in order to indentify the difficulties facing lower skilled persons in securing sustainable employment, develop and implement the Digital Media Technology course to the students in Community Education. This module will be one of three that will be delivered over a ten week intensive training programme. The duration in hours will be one hundred in total and will include both directed and self directed learning. This will be the first time the module has been implemented. However as this is a new module, the tutor's are only provided with a module descriptor, as there are no resources created to date to assist the tutors in the delivery of this module, so the tutor has to create all the course contents by themselves.

Ultimately I will implement a set of standardized templates for the module Digital Media Technology 4N1858 to support the tutor's of the CDETB to which they can work from. I have created all the resources which are hosted on line using Edmodo and they will be freely available to the CDETB tutors who take part in my workshop to assist in action research proposal.

Context & Rationale for Research

Over the duration of the last ten years I have been employed by the CDETB to deliver FETAC accredited courses to students in Community Education. Through this it became apparent that students between the age of eighteen to twenty five year of age where getting stuck amid unemployment and education with no alternative options of progression (Behan, *et al.,* 2013). Some of the key fundamental factors were lack of guidance and support if the students had not completed their Leaving Certificate. Even those who had completed and had not reached the required points were often denied access to further education (Byrne & Smyth, 2010). This lack of access could impact on their skills and qualifications to get on the national frame work of courses and work related skills in the industry areas, also, many of these cohorts would not receive funding whether it is due to personal finances or not in the right criteria bracket of a social welfare payment. All of the above factors play a part in leaving young adults at home on a social welfare payment with no future prospects. Part of the CDETB incentive will be to provide the tuition free to the students attending courses like the Digital Media Technology course. The participants will not be paid for taking part in my action research proposal; their participation will be entirely voluntary.   They will be required to sign the attendance register every morning and afternoon Monday to Friday from 9am to

4pm. To help promote the importance of adult and community education the course will be delivered in the Ballymun CDETB adult education centre. The students' attendance and engagement will be critical to assisting the students in expanding their digital media skills, enable them to enter and or return to employment, which will also include train to work opportunities and to avail of graduate activation programmes. This in turn will also provide the students' with access to third level education through a non-traditional route. On creation of their individual digital media technology ePortfolios' it will allow the students to forward on the links to potential colleges and employers prior to their interviews.

Method for Implementing Online Learning

Digital Media Technology ePortfolios will be created and developed through project work where it is envisaged that on completion of the participant's ePortfolio that this will assist them in forwarding on a link to bridge the gap between the transitions of further education to employment to potential colleges and industry job related areas. The rationale for developing an ePortfolio is to provide an online space where the tutors and students can build and construct a solid base for their new learning combined with their prior knowledge in a subject topic that is relevant to them. Both tutors and students will be directed to collect and preserve their work in creative accumulative projects, reflecting and assessing their learning outcomes as part of the process.

Ethical Considerations

I will be adhering to DIT guidelines on ethics in research.

Tutors will be asked to voluntary in taking part in my workshop to support my action research proposal on Digital Media Technology ePortfolio through the means of surveys and an interview.

Geraldine Mc Cann

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20/10/13 12:54 + 01:00
Signed   I approve the document.