EMUMT (Engineering and Mathematics using Mobile Technology)
Interim project report by FE Sussex on behalf of Plumpton College.

Context:

This project was conceived by Plumpton College and has been delivered in conjunction with the consortium of Sussex Colleges, FE Sussex. The aim of the project continues to be to introduce, promote, broaden and embed the use of mobile technology in teaching and learning across work based and classroom based teaching and learning.

The Base line:

Prior to the project Plumpton college SMT had identified a need for research and development into the use of mobile technology in teaching and learning. In part this was driven by the acknowledgement that land based students were likely to be attending college on a day/block basis this being determined by the demands of their work, its seasonal nature and the willingness of employers to release students. In conjunction with this, the FE Sussex curriculum Quality Improvement Group (QIG) recognised the need to become involved in the development and implementation of digitises mobile learning.

Working with the consortia of Sussex colleges, (FE Sussex) which is based in Plumpton it was decided to research current practice across member colleges and use the results to identify innovative and good practice already taking place. Outstanding practitioners would be used as tutors and mentors to staff across all colleges via a series of development sessions or one to one input.

The project is now into its third month of delivery.

Emerging findings

14 colleges (nine GFEs, one land-based and four SFC) are active participants in the project. To date, findings have shown:

- The willingness of most staff to acknowledge the need to adapt teaching practice and associated methodologies to accommodate mobile technology
- A level of fear and ignorance of technology is an inhibitor in some staff in every college
- It is impossible to separate mobile technology in teaching and learning from 'flipping the classroom' for some teachers.
- Technical staff (eg IT coordinators) will find potential barriers to the use of mobile technology
- Successful practitioners are champions who can easily be used in their own college as initiative leaders
- Learners respond well to the use of mobile technology and report it enhances their college experience, encourages out of college work and promotes motivation
- The use of champions as originally envisaged by the project is not always the best way of encouraging use. An alternative approach is shadowing, one to one briefing and network workshops

- Each college has expressed a strong interest in the project as the use of mobile technology is a growing priority and has made an on-going commitment
- Staff value the peer group support the project has brought

Is your project research-informed, involving collaborative enquiry

The purpose of our project has been influenced by the FELTAG report (Further Education Learning Technology Action Group) and we have contributed to the ETF Strategic Consultation in Technology in Teaching and Learning. Research of the FELTAG report indicates the probable imminent requirement of FE Colleges to use of mobile technology in the curriculum from 2015. FE Sussex attended the ETF Strategic Consultation feedback session on the national collaborative enquiry into the subject.

How your project is involving interaction and mutual development with all partners related to identified practice
Is your project recognising that each partner in the interaction has something to offer and, as such, is based on the assumption of mutually beneficial learning

The project has identified two lead practitioners in the use of mobile technology. They were chosen as their teaching was to disparate types and levels of curriculum. (One A level maths, the other level one vocational engineering students).

At the project workshop they demonstrated to the participants from the other colleges how they use technology and the benefits to their teaching practice and their learners.   The workshop participants were introduced to the concept of 'flipped learning', and had the opportunity to contribute to the group other practices/electronic applications which they are successfully using and where a 'flipped learning' approach could work in their colleges or subject areas.

The workshop provided ample opportunity for attendees to discuss with each other how they use mobile learning. Techniques, tips and suggestions were exchanged across the group.

How your project relates to your, and your partners, organisational improvement strategy/plan and CPD strategy

Digitalisation and the use of mobile technology was identified as a priority theme by Plumpton College and also by the FE Sussex Quality Improvement Group (QIG).   The project links into the pan-Sussex CPD plan and CPD day to be held on July 2nd.

What partners are involved and in what roles; and is there senior management buy-in amongst your partners to ensure sufficient resource is committed to the project

All 14 colleges participating in this project are Members or Associate Members of FE Sussex.   The Principals of the Colleges attend bi-monthly meetings and agreed to the project and to provide on-going support.   Overall project performance is reviewed at the principals' meeting. The pan-Sussex Quality Improvement Group monitors project progress on a six weekly basis and receives an update which is minuted.

Although the project is headed by Plumpton College, the use of FE Sussex for its delivery ensures sufficient resources are committed to the project through the use of its Projects Manager.

How you have applied the principles of joint practice development within your project and across the partners. How your project is progressing in terms of meeting expected timescales, activities, deliverables and outputs

FE Sussex monitors and reviews progress in terms of timescales, activities and outputs on a regular basis and makes notes against the project documents (see below)

How the project is further developing your existing practices to improve outcomes for learners

The demonstrations provided by the Project Leads at the 25 April workshop focused on the benefits to learners of their developed practices and use of technology. They highlighted the benefits of differentiated learning in the case of A-level and level 1 learners, eg the more able given the opportunity to progress more rapidly and the less able provided with resources available on line (egYouTube videos) as often as necessary. In the case of level 1 learners who were perhaps less accomplished at note-taking the use of Google.com and Aurasmas allowed for a different approach.

How you are ensuring that all activity delivered as part of this project embraces equality and diversity

In terms of learners the benefits in terms of differentiated learning means that learners from ethnic minority groups for whom English may be their second language have visual as well as audio or written teaching materials. All Plumpton College and FE Sussex staff have undergone CPD on equality and diversity in the curriculum and have examples of how this is integrated into their course materials.

Are the expected short and long-term outcomes and impacts of the project being realised

Plumpton College and FE Sussex are on track to deliver the specified project outcomes in phase one activity – eg Identification of Project Leads, development workshop delivery etc.

The approach to the interim outcome of identifying and development of college Pathfinder/Champions is being reviewed in the light of experience. The first workshop showed the inability of some participating colleges to identify the most suitable member of staff to send. As an alternative strategy, the Project Manager will visit some tutors to engage in individual discussions and development rather than a second workshop. This will then lead to the pre-scheduled and planned Sussex wide CPD event in July.

The longer-term outcomes of a culture shift towards the wider spread use of technology is due to be recognised in the next academic year during which time the project will be sustained via the virtual network group which has already been established.

Tim Strickland

FE Sussex/Plumpton College

29.5.14

fesussex plumpton college ditchling road nr lewes east sussex bn7 3ae
tel: 01273 892 123 fax: 01273 892 129 info@fesussex.org.uk
www.fesussex.org.uk