# Making Media

Hilary Cunliffe-Charlesworth and Keith Radley (ACES)

Project overview:

The project was designed to embed and evaluate student learner autonomy via the delivery of a new level 4 module "Making Media" in the Communication Portfolio. This formed a framework for students to take ownership of their learning throughout their undergraduate experience.

Elements from the LTI Inspirational Learning initiative were key to establishing and embedding

- learner autonomy
- Inter-professional learning for employment
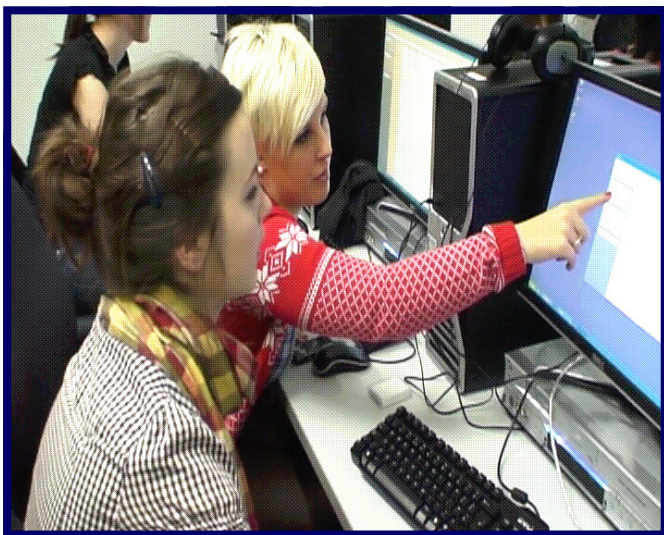
What went well (Evidence from student assessment and reflection)

- Students successfully completed the workshop sessions in theory and practice
- Blog entries provided evidence to indicate that students enjoyed the module.
- Module assessments showed students had minimal prior experience in media theory and production.
- Student work showed creativity and quality by the end of semester 1
- Blog participation has enabled students to develop their reflective thinking.
- In semester 2 students advanced and developed their skills, proving that they could work creatively

Future support needs:

- Flexible technical support
- Funding for new equipment
- Blackboard support for staff and students
- Level 5 student peer support for level 4 students
- Drop in technical support
- More information on reflection and group dynamics for the module guide

Project aims:

- Establish the use of PDP towards career planning, reflexive practice and learner autonomy
- Enable and develop an understanding of the relationships between media theory and media practice
- Ensure confidence in the use of equipment for the production and editing of moving images and sound
- Encourage inter-professional learning and engagement to develop skills related to working for/with a client, group management and learner autonomy
- Engage with problem based learning

Technology is playing an increasingly important role in our lives.
The Making Media module is for the professional communicator of the 21st century:

Digital media features more and more in our daily lives. Today's society has an expectation of instant news updates from multiple sources. For example Twitter has become a key source for breaking news.

For the journalist digital media now features as a main part of news reporting. The skills which are required to manage and handle digital media can be complex. The Making Media module targets level 4 and develops fundamental digital production skills for students who are studying media and Journalism.

What didn't go well:

- Some students did not engage with the group work causing certain team tensions.
- Accessing production equipment from the ACES central stores was problematic.
- The technical infrastructure in the newsroom was inadequate to deliver this module successfully as only half the workstations were operational.
- The "DV" video tape format proved unreliable causing corruption on some student recordings.
- Some students found the video editing process a serious challenge. This was mainly due to weak digital literacy skills in those particular students.

Future Plans - responding to the project outcomes

To align with industry expectations:

- Newsroom is to be re-designed and reconfigured.
- Production equipment housed near to teaching
- New video cameras - more simple to use, hard drive storage eliminating the need for tapes
- Digital fluency skills will be covered in the new curriculum in response to student needs
- Develop additional framework for student reflection
- Build in substantial drop in support mechanism for when technical problems occur

Evaluation findings:

- Digital fluency forms a major part of successful student learning
- As digital media technology develops new opportunities arise for teaching theory, practical skills and in the development of reflective thinking
- Be mindful of expectations:- student knowledge and skills were weaker than anticipated and staff were challenged by ever changing technologies
- Use of digital media in LTA can offer a key to developing learner autonomy and provide an enriched deeper learning experience.