



ICONET

ICONET Approach: Cartoon Planet UK



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Summary of Adaptation of the Validation Tool

ICONET – University of Salford Localized activity

Cartoon Planet Sessions

SYPU 2008

The University of Salford's ICONET approach was based and developed around the understanding the researchers were able to gather around their target group. This particular ICONET target group were young people from less privileged parts of Greater Manchester, who were selected by their schools and teachers to take part in the Salford Young People's University (SYPU) programme. SYPU programmes aims at encouraging young people to consider further and higher education as a possible future learning path way, by introducing them to life and learning on campus.

Taking into account our target audience, their background, and their motivations, the researchers were able to develop a learning case in which a friendly, enduring and fun environment could be established with the active participation of the teenagers taking part in the programme. Was also the researchers aim to provide learners with a 21st century educative approach by adding an interactive, web-based component to the activities previously planned.

In this sense, 2 hour face to face workshops were tailored-made to our audience, and carried our by the researchers/tutors. The workshops were two fold, and organized around activities that were supposed to be fun and stimulate active participation.

The first part of the workshop aimed at guided group reflection about pupils' strengths and skills. Tutors also helped pupils to understand and use specific phrases which described their skills in a more CV orientated language.

The second part of the workshop was ICT based – students were taken to the computer lab where they were asked to (re)create themselves online, as avatars, and describe their skills while using voice and text.

The avatars were later published and presented to the rest of the class at the end of the workshop.

Adapted Validation Tool

ICONET CASE STUDY

Cartoon Planet as part of Salford Young People's University

(micro-reflection through digital cartoons)

1. BACKGROUND

Also see doc from WP1

The Salford Young People's University (SYPU) is a Summer School Programme for 11-16 year olds. SYPU is a free one-week residential and provides a first-hand experience of life at the University, with an opportunity to meet current students and lecturers. SYPU is a community outreach initiative with is aimed at youngsters who would not tend to go to University.

The Year 8 SYPU Summer School is funded by [Aimhigher Greater Manchester](#). A limited number of places are given to specific schools within Greater Manchester who are participating in the Aimhigher scheme. The available courses centre around three areas: World of Sport, Performing Arts and Media, and Art and Design.

The Year 10 SYPU Summer School is funded by the Higher Education Funding Council and the [European Social Fund](#). It offers residential Summer School places to young people across the North West region. The available courses centre around four areas: Science and Engineering, Radio and Journalism, Project Management, and Health and Social Care.

It is proposed that the ICONET be incorporated into both Year 8 and Year 10 Summer Schools. The pupils taking part in this programme are between 11-16 year olds. Classes are usually composed of pupils from different backgrounds. However most of them come from disadvantaged social environments and educational backgrounds, and are considered to be at risk of not pursuing further education as it is not part of the culture of their families, thus making them unconsciously discard Further and Higher Education as a possibility to complement their formal education.

Currently, participants are required to keep a daily journal in order to keep a record of competencies they have gained/developed through their chosen courses. This is currently paper-based, but it is anticipated that the ICONET tool be adapted to a web 2.0 platform where participants use blogs to reflect on their experiences and competences, incorporating multimedia elements and linking to their fellow participants.

The reality being reported in this case study focuses on the use of a web 2.0 application during the last SYPU, which took place in July 2008. This study will help the researchers realize the potential of such approach used in this specific context. This study will also help us develop new strategies which will hopefully help to place the pupils' daily journal in the 21st century.

2. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

2 hour face to face workshops were planned and carried out by the researchers/tutors. The workshops were two fold and were organized around activities that were supposed to be fun and stimulate active participation. The first part of the workshop aimed at guided group reflection about pupils' strengths and skills. Tutors also helped pupils to understand and use specific phrases which described their skills in a more CV orientated language. The second part of the workshop was ICT based – students were taken to the computer lab where they were asked to (re)create themselves online, as avatars, and describe their skills while using voice and text. The avatars were later published and presented to the rest of the class at the end of the workshop. (please see lesson plan in attachment)

3. EVALUATION and RESULTS

ICONET Workshops / Cartoon Planet Sessions during SYPU 2008

The Cartoon Planet sessions took place in July 2008 as part of the SYPU 2008 programme (<http://www.edu.salford.ac.uk/summerschool/year8>). 10-15 students took part in the daily sessions. Classes were mixed, comprising pupils from both genders. The students seemed quite enthusiastic about it as the tutor tried to set up a relaxing environment for them.

The sessions started with a brief introduction about the aims of the session and were followed by an "Introduce Yourself" activity. Students were asked to share aspects of their experience they were proud of and that they would like to share with their peers. This proved relevant and was helpful to move on to the next activities. Above all, it gave pupils the confidence to communicate with one another and also with the tutor in a rather friendly and reassured environment.

Afterwards, the facilitator of the session introduced them to the idea that people have skills and competences which might not be solely related with their formal school learning activity but which are all the same relevant to include in their CV as part of their skills and competences. This was explained in a very simple language and pupils were prompted to reflect about "things" they were good at and proud of (this pilot only focused on one of the items of the ICOVET tool - [Interests, hobbies, sports, socialising](#)). The facilitator explained this would help them later translate the knowledge of their skills into a more academic language, which they could use in their CV

Students were asked to work in pairs and do a role play – playing both the interviewer and interviewee, where they had a chance to ask and answer questions that would lead them to reflect about the topic they were exploring.

This activity was followed by a group activity. The entire class was asked to form a round table. The facilitator introduced students to the formal skills concept,

explaining what the skills that are mentioned in the EUROPASS CV meant. Afterwards, the interviewers were asked to present the finding of their interviews. At this stage all students were prompt to help their colleague verbalize which skills he/she held concerning the topic explored. The entire class participated in this joint reflection.

In the second part of the workshop students were given a card where they were asked to write down a sentence which would summarize their skills concerning [Interests, hobbies, sports, socialising](#). This was their “passport” to the next phase of the workshop. Pupils were then taken to the Computer Lab and asked to create an Avatar (an interactive, digital cartoon) where they could apply what they had learned about themselves. Access to the internet was made secure by limiting students' access on the Internet to the website they were supposed to use. To enable this a special software called NETSUPPORT¹ was used.

The creation of the speaking cartoons aimed at introducing a fun element to the session. It also aimed at analyzing how these tools can motivate learning and learners engagement.

Pupils were very pleased with the fact they could re-create themselves online. They were focused and engaged and didn't attempt to browse other sites [this had been one of the main concerns of the SYPU tutors, moderators and coordinator, when considering the Internet as a learning tool]. This hints that this kind of approach can actually keep pupils' attention and motivate them to be focused.

Another important fact we observed is that the understanding of the use of online learning tools is quite straightforward when working with teenagers. They are not only very keen on it; they are also quite proficient in working with computers. And even the ones who were not, were fast at mastering it.

Still, the facilitator briefly showcased the use of the tool, not making any assumptions about pupils' digital proficiency. Nevertheless, pupils showed no problems whatsoever in using the tool. They were quite quick at understanding the concept, although it had been their first time using that specific application. Another issue that has also triggered our curiosity is that although pupils were quite fast at reflecting about their strengths, they visibly needed help when trying to convert it to an academic/CV language. They also need support and clear guidance to focus on the tasks, and considering their own skills – an exercise they didn't seem to be used to.

We think the creation of speaking cartoons/ avatars explaining which is meant by each skill featured in the ICONET tool might help learners understand the concepts better. It will add a more updated and fun look to the ICOVET tool. Since we conducted the session face to face we didn't feel the need to create avatars explaining the skill concepts, but such idea might be useful when trying to engage learners online.

¹ NetSupport School is a class software solution, providing Teachers with the ability to instruct, monitor and interact with their Students either individually, as a pre-defined group or to the overall class.

To view some of the students' avatars please log in to:
<https://cartoonplanet.pbwiki.com> , using the following username:
sypu08@googlemail.com, and password: salford08

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Above all, this pilot project has given us the knowledge about the young people's reactions when exposed to such activities.

From the spoken feedback we received from the pupils themselves, and the mentors and coordinators who spent more time with the pupils, the Cartoon Planet sessions were successful and they seemed to have pleased the young participants. Comments such as "this is fun"; "now I can use this skills in my CV" are regarded as important feedback.

Pupils reported to have enjoyed the way the topic was presented to them and the way they were asked to explore their skills. The micro activities helped motivate the pupils' involvement in the workshop. It also allowed learners to learn a bit more about themselves which they engaged in this micro-reflection exercise. It is our impression that both parts of the workshop seemed to have played a vital role in the success of the session.

The personalized mentoring and constant support provided by tutor to the small group of young people, as well as the freedom they were granted to collaborate with each other while trying to explore their skills seem to have helped to spark up their motivation and active involvement in the workshop.

The fact pupils were allowed to use computers to freely create their own avatars appealed to their creativity and proved to be a positive exercise which helped reinforce what they had learned on the first part of the session.

In short, we would like to argue that key to the engagement of young people in this kind of area is:

- F2f contact – as a strong (initial) component of the learner activity (young people need guidance);
- The creation of a friendly and interactive learning atmosphere by the tutor ;
- Tutor's constant and personalized support to ease pupils' engagement with the activities, which leads to conclude small groups of pupils are advisable;
- The use of ICT to help keep the pupils' motivation;
- The development of activities based on social learning theories;
- The inclusion of fun component as an integral part of the learning activity.

Another aspect to consider safe internet navigation, when dealing with young people. The learners were all aged between 11-16, and were not registered students at the university. Because of this, and the fact that they were effectively 'minors', we had to take care to ensure that they could not access inappropriate content when using the internet.

In order to ensure that the learners could browse 'safely', NetSupport was used in the labs (on all computers) to restrict access to sites which had been agreed by the tutors i.e. only the sites that were being used in the session.

We believe that this issue needs to be raised within the ICONET partnership as it may be the same for any partner who are rolling-out the tool to minors. ethical/legal issues are to some extent specific to each country/institution, and others may not need to take such a careful approach, but in the UK (and at the University of Salford) this was a concern that was raised by the organisers of SYPU, and which we had to address in order to run the workshops.



Aimhigher...

Salford Young People's University Session Plan

Workshop Title: **Cartoon Planet**

Tutor's Name: **Cristina Costa**

Maximum number of (16 unless otherwise stated)

pupils:

SYPU Programme (Year

8 etc):

Key Learning Objectives:

Skills and Knowledge to be covered in the workshop

(a)	To engage in micro-reflection to discover more about themselves/ their potential (self-appraisal)
(b)	to think about what pupils are good at
(c)	to have FUN!
(d)	to develop their Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Skills
(e)	to enhance communication skills
(f)	

Session Plan:

Please outline in detail the content of your session and include rough timings.

Time	Activity
10 min.	<p>Roll of honour</p> <p>Hold up a roll of toilet paper and tell the group that it will be passed around and each person may take off as many sheets off as they like.</p> <p>After each pupil has taken his/her share, the group will be told that for each sheet they took, they have to share something about themselves. For instance: Someone who takes 4 sheets, can include...."#1. Name: Joe, #2. Favourite Sports, #3. Favourite Food #4. Pet's Name."</p>
15 Min	<p>Interviews</p> <p>Tutor explain activity and also the meaning of new words to pupils.</p> <p>Pupils will be asked to work in pairs and interview each other concerning their skills. (see attachment 2 for questions)</p>
15 Min	<p>Debrief of the activity - talk about what people achieved according to what they are good at and what their dreams are.</p> <p>Each student will receive a card and write down one thing they are good at. (they will discuss their strengths in pairs) That card will be their key to the Cartoon Planet, where they will have a change to voice their "dreams" through a cartoon</p>
20 Min	<p>The computer room will already be ready to be used I will demonstrate on the big screen how to create the cartoon Pupils will have 10 minutes to create their cartoon And 10 minutes to write their messages - about what they are good at.</p>
20 Min	<p>Pupils will present their avatars / cartoon messages</p>
	<p>Participants will be provided with printings of their achievements (colourful paper sheets will be provided. Pupils will be able to glue their cartoons on to it and write the messages they have previously recorded)</p>
	<p>Additional Activity (in case we have spare time)</p>
	<p>Cartoon quiz provided by the Planet Cartoon leader</p>

Attachment 2

What are you good at?

What are your interests, hobbies, or sports you engage in? In Other words: what are you good at?

How important is this in your life?

Do you do this alone or with other people?

Social skills and competences
Living and working with other people
Good at communicating
Able to engage in teamwork

Organisational skills and competences
coordination and administration
managing projects

Technical skills and competences
Good with appliances
Good fixing stuff

Computer skills and competences
Good with computers

Artistic skills and competences
Playing a Musical Instrument
Writing
Drawing
Painting
Etc

Other skills and competences
Good with languages
Etc