



Restart Transfer of Innovation Project

E-learning Report

A report by the Restart TOI Partnership detailing the possibilities for e-learning adaptation of the Restart materials

Work Package 7

September 2012



Introduction

The purpose of this report is to enable further dissemination of the Restart training programme materials and project outcomes by considering their suitability for adaptation to e-learning format. This work was carried out as part of Work Package 7, Valorisation and Dissemination, of the Restart Transfer of Innovation Project.

Why Adapt Restart training materials?

In the class room, trainers are present to guide the learning process. In distance learning, there is a reduced level of interaction between the learner and the tutor. This means that leaning materials used in an e-learning context may need to be added to, for instance to explain to the student what the objectives of the learning exercise is to be. Adapting materials on the other hand, can save time and money. It can also make the course much more widely available on a geographical basis as well as increasing accessibility for learners who face barriers to class room attendance such as people with disabilities and those with caring responsibilities or learners who are in employment during the day.



E-learning format can be used to:

- ◆ Develop new learning materials and courses
- ◆ Adapt existing materials or courses
- ◆ Supplement existing learning materials to provide a supplement to class based learning

Types of materials and activities which can be adapted include:

- ◆ Lecture notes
- ◆ Handouts
- ◆ Student projects
- ◆ Tests

Learning Styles

There are a number of different ways in which people learn and it is important that adaptation to e-learning takes account of this. There is no 'best' way but it is recommended that a mix of styles are used. The main learning styles are:

- ◆ Linguistic – using oral and written words
- ◆ Visual – viewing or creating images
- ◆ Kinaesthetic – physical activities or movement
- ◆ Logic – using patterns and relationships
- ◆ Interpersonal – discussions and co-operation
- ◆ Intrapersonal – working independently



Delivery Modes for e-learning

There are a number of main modes that can be used for the delivery of e-learning. These include:

- ◆ Print – can be used to supplement the course but requires literacy on the part of learners
- ◆ Audiocassettes or downloads – useful for distributing lectures and for learners with visual impairments
- ◆ Video downloads or DVD – suitable for showing processes or physical skills, easily distributed but takes skill and resources to produce to a high standard
- ◆ CD/DVD – easily made and distributed but can take skills and resources to make interactive versions
- ◆ Internet – can store a vast amount of data, share files and offer interactive teaching possibilities – using open source software can be a cost-effective option.
- ◆ Mobile phones/ smart phones – storing and organising information is possible. Relatively affordable, very portable and widely available. Can be cost implications to developing apps.
- ◆ Video or audio conferencing – can replicate some class room activities and reach a wide geographical area but can be time consuming to prepare and will require logistical and/or technical support.



What expertise is required to adapt Restart materials?

Adapting traditional class room materials will require the following expertise:

- ◆ Project Co-ordinator – to provide project management – usually the course developer or designer.
- ◆ Advisory committee – oversees planning and validates the course and evaluates project outcomes, especially if the course is new.
- ◆ Course developer – converts materials, usually familiar with the needs of the learners and the course itself.
- ◆ Designer – assists developer with identifying appropriate delivery methods and checks that course adheres to specified standards or criteria.
- ◆ Course reviewer – verifies content and methodology – could be in-house or someone external who is familiar with the course.
- ◆ Administrative – Helps with formatting
- ◆ Editor – checks spelling and style
- ◆ Evaluator – develops and analyses student and trainer questionnaires and recommends changes needed.



How could you adapt Restart materials?

You need to take into account any constraints within the organisation or institution that is carrying out the adaptation. These could be in relation to time, staffing, resources, equipment of finances. It is essential to define the institutional objectives, learner needs and required materials through surveying the entry characteristics of learners, analysing the learning tasks and identifying the materials that are suitable for adaptation.

A draft should be created containing course objectives, content, learner activities and evaluation methods. It is also important at this stage to identify any concerns with the adaptation process such as resourcing, copyright or issues involved with adapting for a different region or culture.

Objectives should be specific so instead of 'understand' or 'be aware of' they need to say 'list', 'construct', 'organise' etc. They should specify learning outcomes related to knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes, promoting problem solving and creativity.

Content should be directly related to the learners' knowledge, skills and experience. It should be broken down into small steps which follow a logical sequence. It needs to be accurate and current, with examples and case studies which are relevant. Introductions should be included which explain why the content is important, highlighting the key points in each topic, unit, lesson or module.



Activities and resources should be relevant to learners – age, cultural background and experiences. Activities must be engaging. Provide constructive feedback to reinforce the learning process.

You will need to produce:

- ◆ A student manual
- ◆ A course manual
- ◆ A tutor's manual

Important considerations for adaptation:

- ◆ Can you get permission to do this in a reasonable amount of time?
- ◆ Will you need to adapt the language used?
- ◆ Is technology compatible?
- ◆ Will students have access to technology?
- ◆ Can you provide the technological support?
- ◆ What will it cost?



Supporting Restart learners

You will need to put in place:

- ◆ Administrative support systems contact person, options for registration and fees
- ◆ Process for learners to obtain text books, access to computers, software etc
- ◆ Qualified tutors
- ◆ Information for learners on how to study using e-learning

Piloting Restart as an e-learning course

Although Restart has already been piloted as a class room based training, programme, if it were to be adapted for e-learning, a further pilot period would be needed. This will allow for any difficulties to be highlighted and corrected.

Conclusion

Although there are many advantages to adapting Restart for e-learning such as being able to make it more widely available, there are also resourcing implications that would need to be carefully considered. These include having the skills and resources in-house to adapt the materials as well as the ongoing technical support to maintain the programmes in this format. In addition a second pilot phase would be recommended to ensure that the programme continued, in its adapted format, remained of a suitable standard and continued to meet the needs of lone



parents taking part. One important consideration is that lone parents valued the contact with each other as a way of reducing social isolation so providers considering this adaptation would need to consider the use of social media such as Facebook, to ensure that this benefit is maintained for learners taking part.