

GUIDELINES FOR THE CREATION OF ELEARNING COURSES

1. The Topic

Choosing the topic

- All teachers are completely free to choose whatever topic they wish for their course and should not feel restricted.
- The choice should be linked to the personal work the teacher carries out with their students. The best courses are those that are more creative, especially in terms of the topic selected.
- You should not choose the topic of the course with the database classification in mind, it is the responsibility of the project's art experts (Brera University of Fine Arts and Cumbria Institute of the Arts) to then categorise the elearning courses.
- The course developed should reflect how the teacher themselves teaches their chosen topic. For example, there are teachers who prefer classification aspects of art who will create different courses from those who prefer critical aspects of art or from those who actually create art.
- In fact, the project's objective is not to construct an art encyclopaedia (which already exists, although it is spread out on the Internet) but to collate a number of innovative didactic experiences.

Contents

The first thing to do is to think about thematic development of the contents keeping in mind the 4 categories of the database search mechanism:

- Theory
- Typology
- Chronology
- Technique

E.g. if you wish to develop a course on renaissance frescoes, it would be useful to include, alongside the numerous visual examples of frescoes, a brief section on the techniques of mural painting used in that period and maybe some critical historical theory of that period. These sections can be easily resolved using links to already existing external material on the Internet which you consider relevant.

2. The Multimedia Material

Collating Material

- Material can be multimedia: textual; graphical; video-graphical; audio
- These may be in the form of already existing digital materials or they may be original analogic materials which should be converted into digital e.g. articles in books which can be scanned.
- Videos can be those that are already available on the Internet or short movies created with your own video equipment.

3. The Development

Course design

Once you have collated all material and you are clear of the aims of your course, it's necessary to proceed with the design of the course, taking in to consideration both the *qualitative* aspects of

multimedia (which you looked at when evaluating already existing elearning courses) as well as the *potentialities* and technical *limitations* of the tool in use i.e. Powerpoint.

General qualitative aspects:

- Decide on the target group e.g. students of a certain age, precise school group or a specific adult target group or adults in general. Clarify exactly to whom the course is addressed in order to control the register used.
- Think about the graphical “container”. Eg. In the case of Powerpoint, this means the background, the page set up etc; Imagine the interface i.e. the buttons for navigation, scroll bars etc; Decide whether to use exercises or evaluation tools, would they be useful? Plan and create an interactive index and the map for navigation; Create slide layout to incorporate images and video.
- It is a good idea to create a first draft with a basic, logical and consequential structure

Software to be used

As an introduction to elearning course development, the use of the following software is suggested:

- **Powerpoint:** The Powerpoint programme has been chosen for the creation of the elearning courses because it is a very well known and quite simple programme to use. Its application is similar to an “electronic book” but it allows us to insert multimedia content and external links to enrich the product as a whole. Using Powerpoint allows us to explore the electronic potential of teaching resources without moving away from more traditional teaching methods.
- A programme for editing texts e.g. Word
- A programme for editing graphics e.g. Paint shop pro 7
- A programme for editing Videos e.g. MediaStudio Pro
- Other tools which are useful are software which allow us to capture, edit and publish videos of on-screen activity e.g. Camtasia studio and software which allow us to record and edit sound e.g. Total Recorder

Please also refer to the “Tools” section of the ArtNet portal <http://www.elearning-art.net/tools> where a list of tutorials on the above mentioned software is listed.

4. Useful tips and considerations

- Think of the course topic as being divided into a series of nuclear themes which are independent one from the other. This could be the course map. This is very useful because it allows for the hypertextual links. This allows the user themselves to construct the course they wish to follow (i.e they decide whether to follow a link). It is however important to be aware of the risk of fragmentation caused by too many inappropriate hypertextual links.
- If possible it is preferable to consider each of the 4 database categories. Obviously, you do not have to dedicate equal space to each category, e.g you may wish to develop the Theory aspect of the course and just refer briefly to the other 3 categories.
- The use of films (even lots of very short movies on the same page) is recommended. The use of movies really enriches a course and makes it more stimulating. To create these films videocamera equipment could be used together with editing programmes such as U-Lead; Media Studio Pro and Premiere.
- The use of large amounts of text should be kept to a minimum (the majority of individuals who follow the course will not have English as their first language).