

Appendix E: Introduction script, Interview protocol and Consent form

Introduction Script for Learners eLearning Experience Project:

This introduction script was used as a guide by the research team and subject centers to explain to participants the details of the study and their involvement. This script was used to introduce the study to volunteer students and at the interviews.

Note: Students involved in the focus group case studies, need to have a mobile phone. Please ensure they have one before they sign up to be involved.

1. Background to the study

The study we would like you to participate in is a national study, exploring student's uses of eLearning tools in higher education (*ensure students know what you mean by eLearning – ask them and clarify if necessary*).

Specifically we would like to invite you to participate in the focus case studies that will be carried out as part of this research. In particular we would like you to share with us your experiences of using different technologies (email, chat rooms, wiki's, blogs Web CT; mobile phones, iPods, digital recording devices etc) for learning.

2. Explain the role of the student participant

As a participant in this study, your role is to help us to get a better understanding of student's eLearning experiences. There are three stages of involvement in the study.

a. Remind them to fill out the online survey

As part of this research it is necessary that you fill out the online survey. The survey provides an overview of student's general uses of eLearning tools in higher education.

Note: Explain how they can access the survey and that they have to fill it out, if they have not already done so.

b. Leaving voice messages

Specifically we would like you to be involved in the focus groups studies. This involves discussing in further detail your eLearning experiences.

To capture this, we have set up an audio database, which allows you to leave a voice message each time you have used an eLearning tool.

Note: Explain how long they will have to leave the message for e.g. two, three weeks etc. Explain how to leave audio/voice messages (see below)

Your voice messages will be recorded on a digital answering machine service, which can be accessed by dialing the following numbers:

05600 652390 or if this fails on 0844 484 1596

Each time you leave a message, you can speak for about 15 minutes

Your message should include the following:

- Name
- University
- Course
- What device/tool you are using e.g. 'I'm now using email and Web CT'
- What are you using it for - e.g. 'I'm using email it to contact my friend, to check some details of the course and Web CT to look at course material'
- What you got from using the tool e.g. 'I got the information I need from my friend, because the course material was not on the Web'
- What was your experience using the device/tool e.g. 'I like to use email, because it is an efficient and fast way to get the information needed from a friend'.

Note:

Do a test and get students to drop a voice message using their mobile phones.

If students do experience any problems in leaving voice messages they can contact Jonathan Darby on 01865 432195.

c. Recorded interviews

Once we have collected your voice messages, the research team will listen to them. They will then hold individual interviews with you. The interviews are a means of clarifying our understandings of the voice messages and ensure that we properly represent your experiences in the best way possible.

Note: Explain that the interviews will last no longer than 60 minutes and will be recorded.

3. Consent forms and data protection

Finally hand out the consent forms; the forms reiterate the details of the study. Ensure students read the forms and understand what is involved. Students should sign the forms and return them immediately.

Note: Explain that all data is protected, that their identity will be anonymous and that only the core research team will have access to the data. Explain how data is used in research contexts – e.g. for analysis and for presentations at conferences or in academic journals, where the source of the data or their names will never be used.

Thank the students for their involvement and explain that as an expression of our gratitude they will receive a small reward.

NB: *Please ensure all case study participants sign the consent forms.*

4. Student interview protocol and semi-structured questions:

Prior to each interview, reiterate above points (1-3) to the students. Explain the interview should last approximately 45-60 minutes. Note: Fill in below summary box

Student Name	
University	
Time and Date	
Subject Area	
Interviewer	
Others present	

Semi-Structured Questions:

1. What technologies have you been using over the last few weeks?
2. What made you decide to use this particular technology (NAME TECHNOLOGY/IES)?
3. How do these technology/ies support your (GIVEN SUBJECT SPECIFICITY) studies? (Note get them to provide an examples)
4. In using the technology/ies did you always succeed with what you were trying to achieve?
5. What was good about using them?
6. What was bad about using them?

7. Ideally if you had a 'wish' list of learning resources what would they be?
8. And how you they serve your education and learning?

During the interview focus on:

Learning activities students carried out during their studies and how they used various kinds of technologies to support this or reach their goals or even to arrange/coordinate/regulate their own or shared learning.

Find out what is specific about the technologies they use in relation to their subject. difference between generic and specialist software and or websites

Are the technologies you use changing the way (how, where and what) you are learning or think about learning

Do you use technologies other then the teacher recommended / advised.

5. Consent form

11th April 2006

Dear Participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in a research project, which examines student's eLearning experiences at university. This is a national study, which aims to capture your experiences of using eLearning tools (email, Internet, mobile phones, Web CT, chat rooms, blogs and so forth) specifically while studying economics. Your course leader (*insert university contact name*) will be co-coordinating the study with us. (*insert university contact name*) has provided your contact details and notified us of your interest in been involved.

There are three parts to the study; first we would like you to fill out the online survey, which you can access via (*insert link*). It is important that you fill out this survey as it helps us to capture the views of a wide variety of people and their general uses of eLearning tools.

Specifically we would like you to be more involved in the research by providing us with a more detailed account of how you currently use eLearning tools. To capture this information we would like you to leave a voice message every time you use such tools over the next three weeks (*insert period*).

These messages will be recorded on a digital answering machine service, which can be accessed by dialing the following number: **05600 652390 or 0844 484 1596**. Each time you leave a message, you can speak for about 15 minutes.

Your message should include the following:

- Name
- University
- Course
- What device/tool you are using e.g. 'I'm now using email and Web CT'
- What are you using it for - e.g. 'I'm using email it to contact my friend, to check some details of the course and Web CT to look at course material'
- What you got from using the tool e.g. 'I got the information I need from my friend, because the course material was not on the Web'
- What was your experience using the device/tool e.g. 'I like to use email, because it is an efficient and fast way to get the information needed from a friend'.

The third part of the study involves speaking directly with you about your eLearning experiences. This will take the form of an interview, which will be held between the (*insert period*), prior to the interview we will have listened to your voice messages. The aim of the interview is to clarify our interpretations of your voice messages and discuss in more detail your experiences. We will coordinate the exact dates of these interviews with (*insert name of university contact*) and get back to you ASAP with times and details.

It is hoped that you will enjoy taking part in the project and your agreement to participate is very important in ensuring that we better understanding students eLearning experiences in higher education contexts.

Should you have any questions or queries either about the research please feel free to contact me on 0117 9044 872 or at teresa.dillon@polarproduce.org. In the meantime, could you complete the slip below and return it to your course leader (*insert name*). By signing this slip you give us permission to listen to your audio messages and record your interview. The team only use this information for research purposes only. All material used complies with the Data Protection Act, 1998 and will not include your name or source of collection.

As an expression of your appreciation of your involvement in this study we would like to offer you a voucher worth £50.00 for your mobile phone.

Thank you very much for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Teresa Dillon

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I _____

Give / Do not give permission to participate in the research described above
(delete as appropriate).

Signed: _____

Date:
