



EARTHE

Activity 2

Digital toolkit for innovative curriculum and methodological development

Module - Problem solving

Method – Rapid prototyping

Case study

Module 4 – Problem Solving

Case study - Prototype to Policy

Related Method - Rapid Prototyping

Context and Background

A municipal adult learning centre wanted to launch a mobile app to make it easier for people to register for evening classes. However, the IT department was already overwhelmed with other projects, which delayed the app's development.

Problem / Challenge Presented

Learners found the existing paper-based registration process slow and confusing. However, a complete switch to a fully digital system was not immediately feasible, so improvements had to be considered within the existing framework.

Actions Taken / Method Applied

Staff used Rapid Prototyping to create a simple, clickable mock-up of the system using free online tools. During an open day, 10 learners tested the prototype while observers noted usability issues. Namely, people testing the prototype said some menu names were confusing and suggested adding a 'favourites' button so they could save the courses they liked. Based on this input, the prototype was improved and later presented to the city IT department, successfully convincing them to prioritise its development.

Outcomes and Results

The IT team used the prototype as a starting point, which cut the design time by 40%. As a result, the new app was launched within six months, and in its first term, 70% of users registered through mobile devices.

Lessons Learned

A tangible prototype often communicates needs more effectively than a written request, as it allows users to see and interact with the idea directly. Testing early with users can also save time and resources by identifying issues before full development begins.



Key Success Factors

The project's success was driven by several key factors. First, involving actual end-users directly in testing helped ensure the solutions truly met their needs. Second, using free and easily accessible prototyping tools made it simple to develop and experiment with ideas. Finally, close collaboration between educators and IT staff allowed technical and educational perspectives to come together, creating more practical and effective outcomes.

Challenges Encountered and How They Were Addressed

The activity faced a few challenges. Some staff had limited technical skills, which was addressed through short training sessions on the prototyping tool. Another challenge was making sure that feedback was constructive, and this was handled by using structured observation forms to guide the process.

Applicability / Recommendations for Educators

Prototyping is a powerful way to refine ideas and persuade decision-makers before making a major investment. Educators are encouraged to keep prototypes simple, test them early with real users, and carefully document any issues that arise. This approach helps identify potential problems, improve the design, and build confidence in the solution before moving forward.