

The



*Technology Enhanced Learning  
in Research-led Institutions*

Project

## CASE STUDY

# Research Methodologies

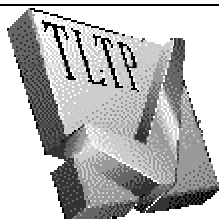
Evaluation from implementation in courses

### **The TELRI Project**

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The TELRI Project is a three year project funded under phase 3 of the Teaching and Learning Technology Programme (TLTP).



**CASE STUDY**

Research Methodologies

<p><b>Title</b> Assignment Submission for Research Methodologies (reme)</p>	
<b>Department</b>	Research and Graduate School of Education
<b>Institution</b>	University of Southampton
<p><b>Description of the course</b> (Aims, objectives, structure, methods etc.)</p> <p>The Research Methodologies unit is one-sixth part of the Masters programme for teachers.</p> <p>It provides experience of a range of research methods and is assessed through the writing of a research brief that focuses upon a methodology that matches the student's own research interest.</p>	<p><b>Course details</b> (e.g. level, core/option, length of course, student numbers, time span, learning hours supported)</p> <p>Postgraduate Masters Core 1 Year full-time/2 Year part-time 15 of 15 1 semester 60 learning hours per student supported</p>
<p><b>Details of the TELRI intervention and how it aimed to enhance the learning and course activities?</b></p> <p>TELRI provided an electronic depository for students' assignments. The assignments are presented for: scrutiny by fellow students and assessment by course tutors.</p> <p>It aimed to enhance the course by, for the first time, enabling students to read other students' assignments.</p>	<p><b>Other teaching methods used to support activity</b> (e.g. tutorials, lectures, oral presentations, lab classes)</p> <p>Lectures on research methodologies Tutorial support Assignment specification Assessment criteria</p> <p><b>Other technologies used to support activity</b> (e.g. CD-ROM, web resources, lecture notes, references, online tests)</p> <p>This unit does not have other technological support other than two sessions on web-based research carried out in a computer suite.</p>
<p><b>How the course was previously run</b> (if applicable)</p> <p>Submission was by paper</p> <p>Sharing of assignments was informal and between 'friends' only.</p> <p>It was not encouraged</p>	<p><b>Problems with previous teaching methods</b></p> <p>Collaboration was not encouraged by the 'system'. Peer assessment was not possible.</p>

<p><b>Intended capabilities to be developed</b></p> <p>The Research Methods assignment is a 4000-word reflection upon a research methodology, a proposed research activity and reflective comments upon that activity's suitability.</p>	<p><b>Methods of assessment</b></p> <p>Although there are formative, diagnostic and discursive evaluations of the work during the sessions the final submission is summatively assessed.</p> <p>The published assignments were graded and comments made that would aid the student when writing future assignments.</p>
<p><b>Problems in setting up the course or technology</b></p> <p>The students were not IT literate although many were well experienced with web based activities.</p> <p>Many students returned after a week saying that they had not succeeded in uploading their work. The only advice given was verbal and illustrated on a computer screen.</p> <p>It was expected that the students should learn for themselves and therefore more likely to be independent users of the system in the future.</p> <p>No curriculum time could be given over to the mechanical process of submission.</p>	<p><b>How these were solved</b></p> <p>The intention is to ensure that all students are computer independent and at every stage they were encouraged to explore.</p> <p>Competent and confident students were encouraged to support others.</p> <p>Plans to create electronic instructions were drawn up.</p>
<p><b>Extent of development of intended outcomes</b></p> <p>This was in general a positive experience. The TELRI system was met the basic requirements of assignment presentation.</p> <p>It enabled sharing of work at a level not experienced before;</p> <p>It changed attitudes to the submission process. People were more concerned with presentation, especially those who found computing less easy.</p> <p><b>TELRI evaluation</b></p> <p>While the TELRI approaches met the needs of this module, it would appear that the students were used to filing multi-files in one submission. The TELRI software, therefore, designed for individual submissions, was not as readily acceptable as the educational approaches.</p>	<p><b>Academic tutor evaluation</b></p> <p>The TELRI solution was good because it provided a worldwide accessible depository for the work that was securely protected.</p> <p>The management tools were sufficient. There were some management issues relating to the removal of misplaced or unwanted items.</p> <p>There were significant problems associated with the management of several TELRI sites from a single computer. Two tutors were managers of two TELRI systems and the computers frequently were prevented from accessing a second system if they had visited the first. We presume this would occur if students too were subscribed to two courses.</p> <p>The major problem was file complexity. Some of the students were used to the notion of submitting work electronically and usually as a collection of inter-related electronic</p>

<p>Students were accepting of the educational approach of document sharing and collaborative reviews. This is in line with the Educational approaches espoused by the TELRI project. Therefore, the project team believes this to be a successful intervention fulfilling the aims of the educational approaches.</p>	<p>resources on a floppy disc. The procedures offered by TELRI did not accommodate multi-file submission.</p> <p><b>Students evaluation</b></p> <p>Major and most frequent criticism was that the process was not 'simple' enough. This was a comparative statement – the idea of electronic submission was well established for most but this was more complex than handing over a single floppy disc.</p> <p>Putting forward an assignment as a single file was too limiting.</p> <p>All other evaluation statements were of the positive – it is a method that works.</p>
<p><b>Unintended benefits or costs</b></p> <p>Inter-university collaboration through the TELRI project has revealed parties with similar interests in our own University</p> <p>The most important unintended but powerful outcome has been a growing awareness of electronic opportunities provided by internet servers that will allow CGI scripts – we have identified the restrictions enforced by a highly secure University internet provision.</p> <p><b>TELRI evaluation</b></p> <p>The methodology used by the instructors will in future include more collaborative work and peer review. The technology will be changed to accomplish this in a more satisfactory manner for this group's needs.</p>	<p><b>Academic tutor evaluation</b> (e.g. leading to changes in teaching practice)</p> <p>As a direct result of the TELRI initiative the processes associated with the electronic submission of Research Methods assignments will be modified to include the public publishing of assignments within the CBL/T site</p> <p><b>Students evaluation</b> (e.g. leading to changes in learning practice)</p> <p>The students did not express dissatisfaction with the process and most accept that this form of assignment submission is in line with the general trend to increase the degree of collaboration and interchange of information.</p>
<p><b>Cost-effectiveness analysis</b> (e.g. factors such as learning quality, staff time, ease of transfer to other courses)</p> <p>There was a time commitment associated with the introduction of a new system but this was not excessive when considering the time allocated to the assessment and discussion of such assignments</p>	<p><b>To what extent can the course design approach support higher student numbers?</b></p> <p>This is not a more time-efficient system. It is a system that offers better assessment and learning opportunities.</p> <p>It therefore does not support higher student numbers.</p>
<p><b>What further developments are planned for this or other courses?</b></p> <p>Use a University based server to provide an area for students to submit assignment work.</p>	

Learning and teaching Development Grant initiative developed as a direct result of TELRI involvement – thank you.	
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