



Website context: ePioneers home → Outcomes

Local history portal group

ePioneer: Sue Clayton

Mentor: Elaine Arici

Quick Gains:

The aim of the project was to set up a portal group so that students studying for the Certificate in Local History could:

- Communicate with each other outside the classroom
- Share relevant resources found outside the classroom, such as websites, books, articles, unusual archive repositories, photographs
- Enable the tutor to send messages and resources to the students.

The project achievements were:

- The tutor learned how to use Powerpoint
- The tutor has more confidence with IT
- Two successful module assignments were set using the portal
- The tutor gave a presentation about the project to an ESCALATE conference.

The non-achievements were:

Despite initial enthusiasm and agreement to take part in the project, the majority of the students never used the portal. Discussions between the tutor and the group found that:

- Students preferred face to face communication with each other and the tutor
- Students met each other, used the phone or their home email address to communicate with each other outside the classroom
- Students were not happy being part of the pilot project as they considered they had enough to do to fulfil all the other parts of their course
- Tutor and students thought the website was difficult to use, especially in the early days when there were technical problems
- The project was too low a priority for both students and tutor, especially as dissertations crept nearer (we kept forgetting about it!)
- Those who had made an effort gave up because the rest of the group did not use it.

Future plans:

Despite the setback, the tutor will aim to use the portal with future groups. This will mean ensuring that:

- The portal is introduced in week one as a module requirement
- It should be incorporated in module literature so that students are aware of the portal before they begin the course
- Time has to be taken from each module to show students how to use the portal
- the tutor has to spend more time thinking through how best to use the portal group and how to introduce it into every session
- The tutor is having problems connecting to Broadband at home which means that anything to do with the internet/web takes such a long time
- To be honest, the tutor needs more conviction about the benefits of the portal so that she can communicate more enthusiastically with students.