

Student Perspective

Claire Fellows

Applied Psychology and Sociology

University of Surrey, UK

PebblePad has been a key part of my life now for 9 months. I am currently on placement and have found it to be an invaluable tool.

I have made a webfolio specifically about my placement and created pages that illustrate my different projects. I regularly update specific blogs about the work I am doing, the things I am learning and how I am developing. Tagging my thoughts has proved extremely helpful! I recently wrote an interim placement report outlining what I have learnt so far; this could not have been easier! All I had to do was skim through the thoughts I had tagged and then had an endless list of skills and abilities but also specific examples I could refer back to! This will be a life-saver when it comes to the next CV or application form I write!

I also use PebblePad to store examples of the work I have actually produced. At the start of my placement I designed a flyer advertising an event the organisation was holding, which I uploaded to have access to at a later stage. I recently compared it to a current design. The difference was quite astounding! A key example of how much I have developed throughout the placement so far, yet without having a resource such as PebblePad, this important realisation would have been lost. I would not have had a record of my past work or skills and so would not be able to make a comparison to my current situation. The things that I now take for granted as common procedures were not originally as obvious to me but this would have been long forgotten!

Having granted my manager access to my webfolio, we use PebblePad as a mentoring tool.

She keeps updated and makes comments to aid deeper reflection. Sometimes it takes others to point things out for you, so this ensures I am not missing anything important!

As I have found PebblePad so useful in my professional life, I have also started to branch out to use it in my personal development, keeping a record of all the activities and experiences I have outside of my placement.

PebblePad has so far been useful mainly as a record of my achievements and as a tool to be able to reflect upon them. However, I am gradually becoming more experimental and am finding new things I can do with it! For example,

making action plans! This is something I want to be able to do but would not know where to start! Having the capacity to make one through the series of stages is a learning resource in itself. I am sure that when I have made a few I will feel confident in making them more frequently and will then have the resources to enhance weaker areas that I want to develop.

“ Overall PebblePad is making me more employable as I am developing both personally and professionally and I am sure there are other ways it can help me which I am yet to discover! ”

1. What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you first started using PebblePad?

I wish that when I first started using PebblePad I knew just how much I could do with it. I was only introduced to making webfolios and blogs but I have since found out about making CVs and

action plans, and the functionality of gateways. Having known about this earlier, I would have been able to make better use of it as a development tool.

2. How would you sell the idea of PebblePad to new students?

If I were to try selling the idea of PebblePad to new students I would focus on the benefits to their personal development and therefore also their long term career progression.

I would discuss how they can keep a record of the experiences they are having, document

their learning and plan for how they can make improvements. They will not only have a record of what they have achieved, but also be more equipped to apply for jobs through the wealth of experiences and skills they can write about on their application forms and their CV.

3. What advice would you offer to lecturers (or course designers) thinking of using PebblePad?

I would advise lecturers (or course designers) who are thinking of using PebblePad to take the time to explain the benefits to their students. For it to be really effective students need to feel the value of using it and have ownership over what they are creating. If lecturers can successfully convince their students of how useful it can be as a personal development tool and aid them in their applications for jobs later on they will be more likely to invest the time in making the most of it, rather than if they are forced to use it as part of their course. In the long term students need to have the motivation to continue using it, which they will not have if they see it as just a part of their course requirement!

Acknowledgements

Case study by Claire Fellows

© 2010 Pebble Learning