

Evaluating the impact of multimedia learning environments: visit to a virtual primary school

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As recent advances in technology enable combinations of media to be delivered rapidly via networks, so more colleges are including online multimedia applications as part of their repertoire of learning resources. Some of these applications have an in-built feedback mechanism for the users, while others may demand a more interpretive approach. One focus of this session is on considering suitable methods for evaluating media-rich applications.

The session will showcase the recently developed prototype of a multimedia application used in teacher training, giving participants the opportunity to engage with the software and discuss the design issues. The application is a virtual primary school, intended as an interactive, immersive, learning environment for trainee ICT coordinators in the final year of an Initial Teacher training course. The prototype includes video interviews with members of staff, virtual classrooms to explore and relevant paper documentation.

This is an ongoing project that we hope will extend beyond the classroom, providing a computer-mediated support facility for professional ICT coordinators. Our initial evaluation is being carried out in April 2001. Results will be presented at this session, which we anticipate to be of interest to teachers, staff developers, researchers and multimedia designers.