Integrating Technology into The Get Hired Intensive Pre-employment Program

Leanne Ovalles

**This is the text for my Screencast** [http://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/coeOqGeLK2](http://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/coeOqGeLK2" \t "_blank)

**Slide 1**

Hi my name is Leanne Ovalles I work at Crossroads Rhode Island where we help homeless or at risk individuals secure stable homes. I work in Education and Employment Services and Today I would like to share my experience with integrating technology into our Get Hired! Pre-employment program. This was done as part of the Technology Integration Project I completed with NELRC.

The Get Hired Program is one of the classes we offer. It’s an 8-week, 20 hour a week pre-employment program that is offered 5 times a year.

We generally have 10-14 students in a class. The groups are usually multi-level in many ways including work experience, comfort with technology and their education levels.

I had 3 main goals in using technology:

1. Make the existing curriculum more engaging

2. Utilize tools that would deepen the learning process (I didn't want to just replicate what we had on paper)

3. Increase my ability to offer differentiated instruction and encourage independent learning

**Slide 2**

Now I would like to give you an overview of my journey with this project and then I’ll go into more specifics for each segment.

1. **For the first part of the project I decide to focus on the job interviewing** since it was an area where I could easily deepen the learning experience by using technology.
2. **I decided to use tool called Blendspace** which easily allows you to collect web resources in one place and then share it with one link. **I choose Blendspace** because it was very accessible for students with low level computer skills.

I decided to add on to the interview lesson I asked students to record a **30 second commercial about themselves** and for this I used a tool **called EYEJOT** because again it was simple to use and students could easily email their recording to me.

Lastly I had students complete a **5-day on-line course called "Reimagine You Career**" to help them identify their unique skills, interests and strengths. This course was on a website called **Life Reimagined (AARP) which offers a number of free on-line courses**. I choose this website because the courses were interactive and easy to use.

**Slide 3**

Now I’m going to give you a little more detail on the Interview lesson I created using blendspace.

This is the screen students would see when they followed the link I sent them and then they could easily click on the link to watch a video or read an article. The goal of this lesson was for students to understand the do’s and don’ts of interviewing and to be able to answer typical interview questions so I have a variety of resources on those topics.

Since I wanted the lesson to be accessible to students with low level computer skills I added text (after most resources) that instructed student to refer to a hard copy handout that went with the lesson rather than using the option of having students take quizzes or answer questions on the computer. So students went back and forth between using an on-line resource and responding in some way on the handout.

**Slide 4**

Of course when students clicked on a tile it would come full screen so that they could watch the video and then they would close that to return to the main screen.

After students completed the first 9 tiles you see here, they would scroll down and see the additional tiles in the lesson**.**

**Slide 5**

This part of the lesson allowed student to choose which interview questions they wanted to focus on. Lastly I asked for some feedback on the lesson – which was very positive.

**Slide 6**

In the next part of the project I asked students to record their 30 second commercials using Eyejot. The tool is very easy to use however some students were hesitant at first, so I asked them to first record their feedback on the technology lesson and that seemed to help them feel more comfortable.

I’d like to share one students’ 30 second commercial here (show video of student).

**Slide 7**

Lastly I had students complete the 5 day course Reimagine Your Career which was on the Life Reimagined website.

I’m not going to go into details for each day but will just share one highlight from the course which is the process used to help students identify their strengths and interests.

1. Not only did students select areas they were interested in
2. Then they were asked to narrowed down their interests and
3. Finally prioritized them

Students found this along with many of the other activities really helped them clarify their goals and identify a career interest and the final activity was to write about their dream job.

**Slide 7**

Throughout these lesson

1. Students were very engaged and I was surprised at how easily students were able to work independently to use the tools.

2. Students really liked being able to go at their own pace and choose what they wanted to spend their time on.

3. Students understood the concepts much better by utilizing these on-line resources.

4. Students were able to access the resources outside of class. Students who were absent were able to complete assignments on their own and students were also able to use the resources for their own interests – for example: one student went on to take a course about Relationships on the Life Reimaged website.

Overall this was a great experience for me and my students and I hope to continue to integrate more technology into our programs in the future. Thank you!