

Key themes identified in FEDS focus groups

1. Don't assume we are digitally literate

Take care not to make assumptions about learners or specific groups e.g. those taking certain subjects. Remember we learn well when we share knowledge, practices and applications with our peers.

Students said:

"They're [the Chromebooks] not that good. They're probably good if you know how to work them properly but I know they're not that difficult but none of us have been told how to use it."

"Just really the basic skill, how a computer works and how to search for things."

"Like we're expected to be able to use all these computer programmes but nobody's been shown how to use them, so even an introductory lesson on how to use the programmes."

"They've changed the Moodle and I still don't have a clue how to work it."

"We learn [from each other] little shortcuts and things like that, which just makes our productivity higher."

But also, from IT students:

"The word processing - like I don't think none of us write at all."

"No, we barely ever use pens or ... we all just type it out."

P1: "Don't use books any more at all." P2: "I do."

2. We need ongoing development

We need induction **and** ongoing assessment of our needs. We might know there are advanced functions of the software you have shown us, but we don't know how to develop these skills or know where more help is available. We are introduced to technology but then don't get help to learn more advanced skills. For example, we'd like to be helped to develop our understanding of ethical issues involved with social media.

Students said:

"Cause there's things on there [Word] that are probably never use and I do use it every time I do an assignment. So it would be good to know what everything does."

"You get the basics e.g. learning to use excel, but you can't really expand on that"

"We get a... library presentation at the beginning of the year, but that's it."

3. We expect the same (or better) services that we had in school

We expect services to be as robust and reliable as they are at home e.g. wireless that always works, Moodle without downtime, up-to-date hardware. These expectations are considered to be so normal as to be barely worth mentioning. We only mention it when it doesn't work.

Students said:

"Avoid those crashes of the internet."

"The internet's just so slow."

"The Chromebook's quite flexible but you're unable to take the other bits out from that room because the room's designed especially for you to use them in there, so you aren't allowed to take them out into other lessons really, so you have to bring in your own."

"We complain about software a lot."

4. We expect college to provide what we need

We'd like free access to a range of digital devices, services and software. We don't expect to have to pay for learning services we expect the College to provide like printing. We want help with using industry standard technology that we'll use at work. We'd like to be confident that the use of technology in College is equipping us well for our future working life.

Students said:

"We do have Moodle but some of the teachers don't always put them on there straight away so like presentations and any notes, they're not always put straight onto Moodle after the lesson."

"I can't access my emails from my phone."

"We think we've got everything but there might be technology out there we don't know about."

"Live Study Bar. We use it, like I use it for the cover overlay for the dyslexia. It reads to you as well."

"We haven't got enough computers and equipment."

"The software that's available on the computers is not available at home obviously, so ... obviously the software that we use we can't afford."

5. We expect modern learning resources that are easy to find and use

We find the resources we need online. We access them from our personal devices and would like to be able to do this from on campus. How about making screencasts or videos and/or audio recordings of our lessons available online in Moodle?

Students said:

"A recorder so we could watch our lessons all over again like on YouTube or something."

"Moodle because we get our presentations on Moodle, so everything we do in the lesson then goes onto Moodle, so that when we're referring back through our work we're... taking notes and stuff. That's definitely good."

"I do [like the YouTube videos], 'cause you do the lesson outside of school and you bring it in and then you actually adapt it when you're here."

"It's [technology] helped us in being able to get on the internet and then we don't have to... instead of going to the library and borrowing books we can sit at home, more comfortable."

6. We want to work with lecturers

We'd like lecturers who are digitally literate, confident and willing to hand over control to us to use familiar technologies in class e.g. mobiles. We'd like to be able to choose which social media we like to use and when. We want to work collaboratively with lecturers, working together to explore the technology.

Students said:

"I think we need a way to communicate directly to the engineers and the technicians who are in charge of all this stuff."

"How about a class where we're discussing those issues."

"I think that they should ask for feedback more often, because we have a course tutorial every week, so it wouldn't be hard to get information from us but it's very rare that we're asked our opinion."

7. Ask us what we need

We don't feel the College genuinely asks for or listens to our views on technology. A couple of questions on a survey doesn't count. We might surprise you. We don't want to be forced to use particular social media against our wishes. (Staff seemed to think they were engaging learners in these conversations but the learners we spoke to didn't agree!).

Students said:

"They don't ask your views."

"I don't even know if they looked at it [survey]."



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