‘Learning Technology is everywhere... Or is it?’ ask post-16 Skills sector learners
Nick Jeans, Ellen Lessner, Emma Barrett and Sarah Davies

#digitalstudent http://digitalstudent.jiscinvolve.org
Phase 1 study reviewed students’ expectations and experiences of the digital environment at university and we spoke to 500 staff and students during our consultation (2013-2014).

We conducted a review of practice in schools to identify likely incoming expectations (2014).

In phase 2 we focused on FE speaking to 220 learners and 300 staff from colleges across the UK (2014-2015).

Phase 3 Skills study speaking to adult & community learners, work based learners including apprentices and offender learners (2015-2016).

Phase 4 Online learners study, speaking to students studying on online or partly online courses (2016).
What makes a successful online learner?

Findings of the Digital Student Online learners’ expectations and experiences of the digital environment

Available from http://ji.sc/onlinesurveyreport
Student digital experience tracker pilot

» Student digital experience tracker offers a short survey for use with learners to gather their expectations and experiences of technology


» Sign up for open pilot from September: https://www.jisc.ac.uk/rd/projects/student-digital-experience-tracker
Skills sector digital student project

» Scope of the ‘Skills Sector’ project covers: adult & community learners, work-based learners, apprentices, offender learners

» What do learners WANT (expectations) in relation to the digital?

» What do learners NEED to succeed (experiences)?

» Literature review | stakeholder interviews | learner focus groups | consultation events

» Guidance for providers on how to gather learners’ views, how to engage learners in an ongoing dialogue about the digital and how to better support learners digital experience

» Identify top challenges in relation to the digital learner experience and identify what support providers need in addressing these challenges
We conducted 12 focus groups:

» Reached 123 learners
» Good geographical spread
» Learners from a range of skills sectors and study levels: apprenticeships, adult and community learning and prison learning
» Dropouts (of providers and learners) has been challenging
» Amazon vouchers resolved this issue!
Tools

» Learner profile
» Focus group process
» Card sort
The basics: Recording the results

» Card sort process

» Technology

» Room arrangement

» Permissions (organisations and individuals)
Experiencing the card sort

- Take the cards out of the envelope and lay them on the table so that all are visible.
- Put the ‘theme heading’ at the top and after a group discussion, put the remaining cards in order of importance underneath the theme card.
- If you want to add something to the existing cards, use the blank card(s).
- If you don’t understand a card or consider it unimportant, put it back in the envelope.
Emma Barrett, Lifetime Instructional Designer

Lifetime Training
Work-based learners - issues

- Problems: access to good laptops, printers and internet connectivity
- Students want experience with software + hardware that’s used in their work places
- VLEs are NOT redundant - maybe yet to reach their potential
- Students’ technology skills vary widely – even amongst same age groups. We can’t take skill levels for granted
- Lack of student voice in the sector
- Students can feel isolated in work placements, so appreciate online forum with peers, Skype with tutors
Adult and community learning - issues
Lack of good equipment + wifi

Difficult transporting equipment to venues, blocks on websites at schools, not getting passwords from venue

Teachers lack training in how to use technologies + no time to prepare materials / backups

Shortage of tutors

No uniform skill levels (applies to all sectors)

No enthusiasm for MOOCs

Learners value face-to-face interaction in class, use of technology during intervening week to maintain skills learnt

Little student voice in the literature.
Prison learning – significant issues
Prison learning – significant issues

» Restricted access to devices, internet, information and support (target security above rehabilitation)

» Access to meaningful learning opportunities often decreases as students near release

» No continuity of learning support between prisons or after release. Prisoners released without skills for employment

» Need for dedicated technology-enabled learning space and supervised Skype to improve family contact

» Virtual Campus has potential but limitations of access, support and quality content
Overall conclusions

- Clear need to assess and cater for different digital literacies across the sector
- More tutor training needed on use of assistive technology to support range of learners and to embrace learners’ own skills
- Need to focus on infrastructure and access above more “charismatic” technologies

Resources from FE and Skills study

Online digital student study -
http://ji.sc/onlinesurveyreport

New online guide Enhancing the digital experience for skills learners with case studies launched early October 2016

Learners’ journeys with technology – October 16
ALT-C sessions of other Jisc projects of interest:

› Wednesday 10:25 am - Arts - Creating online experiences that learners will value

› Wednesday 16:30pm - Tracking students’ digital experience: development and use of a cross sector benchmarking tool
What one thing can you do to better support the gathering of your students’ digital expectations and experiences of technology?

» Send a text to 0207 183 8329 starting with digi

» NOTE - if you don’t start the text with digi, it won’t go to our inbox
Digital Student project

Sarah.knight@jisc.ac.uk

http://digitalstudent.jiscinvolve.org
#digitalstudent

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http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/jisc-digitalstudent-data

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