

## Technology card sort

### What is it?

The card sort is designed to be used as part of an interview process to help learners talk about their use of technology.

You could also use the card sort as a developmental activity with learners, to help them and you to understand more clearly their uses of technology for learning. The cards provide an opportunity for participants to learn about less familiar technologies and to share ideas about using them for learning. In this case you would not record the process and any notes you took would be to help you support those particular learners more effectively, not for research or any other data gathering purpose.

### Strengths

- More interesting to participants than standard interview methodologies.
- Focuses attention on to specific topics during the interview
- Can be used as an ice breaker
- Allows participants to recollect more examples than they would have originally considered.
- Can be analysed both quantitatively in addition to qualitatively
- Learners feel in control
- Allows interviewer to be more focused with questions
- Less time consuming than observation in real time
- Easy to combine with other methodologies
- Can use the student's own voice to create the content

### Weaknesses

- Time required to develop cards and consider content
- Can be time intensive in data analysis
- Additional time required if used in addition to basic interviewing
- Wording on cards may not be consistently understood.

### Process

1. Print off the technology cards on stiff paper or card and cut into individual cards.
2. Set up your recording equipment to record the interview (if relevant)
3. Ask participants to rank the technologies in order of importance to them
4. As they move the cards around, prompt them to tell you what they are thinking and why they are putting cards in that order
5. Use this opening activity to lead into other interview questions such as:
  - Has that picture changed since you came to University?
  - How were you introduced to use the top three/four technologies?
  - What would be the impact on you if you could not use the top three/four technologies?

### Examples from the Learner Experience projects

This activity has been used by the JISC E4L project to help learners talk about their use of technology in an interview. You can view some video clips of interviews built around the card sort activity at <http://www.northampton.ac.uk/e4l/ics>

