

Responding to learners' needs and preferences

Resources for practitioners

Aim

- To encourage practitioners to think about learners' changing needs and preferences in relation to learning with technology
- To support learners making good choices about their learning
- To help practitioners take action in support of learners' needs and preferences, while recognising the role that learners themselves can play, and the need for a supportive institutional context

Set-up

Print out the activity sheet(s) and instructions

You may like to reformat these to allow room for individuals to comment, or you could just them for work in pairs or small groups. If the latter, make sure there are materials available to support discussion, e.g. post-it notes, paper, pens, laptops

Also have materials available for feeding back into a plenary discussion, if appropriate, e.g. flip-chart, pens, laptops, overhead projector

Discussion points

- What can we do next (personal action plan)?
- What can we ask our departments and institutions to do next? What are the barriers and enablers?
- What are the quick wins in terms of the learner experience? What are learners telling us (e.g. through the National Student Survey)?



1. Making a difference

Here are some actions that can really make a difference to how learners experience learning with technology. For each action consider:

- What could I do as a practitioner?
- What could I encourage learners to do for themselves and for each other?
- What should I be asking my department or institution to do?

Action	Practitioner	Learners	Institution
ensure learning programmes develop learners' digital literacies including information skills and media literacies			
introduce students to the technologies they are likely to use for learning during the induction process			
follow through with support for all aspects of technology use, recognising that learners differ widely in their skills and experience			
allow learners to personalise their learning technologies and to use personal technologies in institutional contexts, where this has clear benefits			



ensure consistent use of the VLE, with minimum requirements for course and module information to be provided			
use web 2.0 technologies where they can support active, participative, collaborative learning			
use mobile, wireless, personal and social technologies to help learners fit learning into their lives and stay engaged with their studies			
ensure all learners have access to high quality digital content in a range of media to support their studies			
promote equitable access to digital opportunities for all			
help learners develop safe, ethical and academically appropriate practices in using digital technologies			



2. Supporting good choices

A. Giving learners choices, and helping them to make meaningful choices that are right for them, is a key aspect of developing self-reliance and learning skills.

How are learners helped to make good choices at these key points in their learning journeys? What role can technology play?

- Course selection
- Module selection
- Choice within modules e.g. topic work, project work, different means of achieving learning outcomes
- Personal review points e.g. tutorials, PDP opportunities
- Engaging with the course, e.g. means of accessing and communicating, preferred locations and times of study.
- Choice of content media and other choices over learning content
- Personalisation of learning tasks, e.g. remedial and progression tasks, opportunities to specialise
- Revision, e.g. formative assessment tests, opportunities to revisit earlier tasks or content
- Collaborative tasks, both formal and informal, e.g. choice of who to study with, means of communicating, sharing and co-creating
- Assessment, e.g. timing and manner, evidence submitted, timing and type of feedback, choice of self, peer and group assessment
- Progression, e.g. choice of career, further study, record of achievement

B. Giving learners a role in institutional decision-making both develops them as learners and develops the institution as a learning organisation, responsive to learners' needs.

How is the student perspective taken into account in decisions about:

- Course design and validation?
- Course review?
- Design of learning spaces and environments?
- ICT support and use policies?
- Investments in learning resources?

