

The National Learning Network
It worked here



Sheffield Hallam University



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‘Staff want to use ILT, because they can see its motivational effect.’

ILT co-ordinator

‘Are we working on the website? It’s really cool.’

Student

What’s in it for me?

When any new technology is introduced, there are pioneers. Sometimes they experience teething problems and false starts. But eventually the technology starts to offer real benefits. That’s when the pragmatists take an interest. Pragmatists are people who aren’t interested in novelty for its own sake, but will use new technology as long as it offers them real benefits. They are willing to spend time and effort, if it pays off in the long run.

The following are some questions pragmatists ask about new technology.

- Can I be sure it delivers what it promises?
- What can I learn from other people’s experiences?
- How can I make this work for me?

This publication is for pragmatists. It is for those working in post-16 education. It is for busy professionals, who need to have reliable practical information about how to get the most from the computer resources within their colleges.

This is not about technical details. It is not about theory. It’s about the experiences of working professionals, and what you can learn from them.

In this short booklet you will find:

- real-life examples of how ILT has been used in education for post-16 learners;
- down-to-earth advice about making the most of ILT;
- how to assess the ILT provision in your place of work;
- what help is available to you, and how to get it; and
- practical things that you can do right away to push on with the ILT development in your place of work.

ILT means

Computers and all the other services and features that go with them nowadays, networking, e-mail, the Internet, multimedia and managed learning. All the aspects of new technology. A catch-all term is ‘information and learning technology’, or ILT. This is technology that processes information to benefit learners and to improve learning. This is technology that helps you to support learning.

The sections

We have organised the sections of this booklet like this.

‘Tell me about it’ what research has found out about using ILT.

‘You’re worth it’ the benefits ILT can bring.

‘Make it happen’ how to encourage the best use of ILT.

‘Lifecycle’ the process of developing ILT.

‘There for you’ other sources of support, in particular the National Learning Network.

‘Brilliant ideas’ Some interesting real-life uses of ILT.

Throughout the booklet you will find boxes titled **‘They said it’**. These are real-life quotes from college lecturers, students and independent researchers. They show the important issues raised in the text.

‘Much has been learned from the process of the NLN survey... the ideas and concepts will inform future efforts..’

Senior Manager

National Learning Network research

The National Learning Network (NLN) is a government initiative to expand and support ILT in post-16 education. There is more about the NLN, and what it can offer to you, later in this booklet. An evaluation programme was run alongside the NLN. College staff and students contributed to regular reports from over 40 colleges. Researchers went to some of the colleges, to find out how people in those colleges were using ILT in practice, and help to build up case studies. The reports and the visits provided a lot of information about using ILT successfully. What they found out forms the backbone of this booklet.

Here are some important facts about the NLN research.

- 41 colleges were involved in the case study process.
- Students and staff in each college filled in on-line questionnaires which gave them the chance to report their experiences and opinions about ILT.
- College co-ordinators used the results of these questionnaires to write a summary report.
- There were five rounds of ILT reporting, so the research includes valuable evidence about developing ILT over several years.
- NLN research consultants visited nine of the colleges taking part (one in each Learning and Skills Council (LSC) region) and talked to students, lecturers and other staff about their experiences of ILT.

In this booklet you will find:

- what students and lecturers said about ILT, in their own words;
- what we learned from the research; and
- how you can use the findings of the research to help you use ILT in your working life.

Do it yourself

The NLN is making the research tool that they used into a public resource, which any college can adopt.

As well as passing on the research findings to the whole lifelong learning sector, this booklet offers colleges the opportunity to download and use the NLN on-line questionnaires. That means that you can:

- find out about opinions of staff and students in your own college;
- evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your own ILT provision; and
- track the development of ILT through a complete lifecycle, over several years.

If you want to find out more about this, point your browser to the following URL, and follow the instructions there.

www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk and follow ‘NLN evaluation’.

‘We are in the M25 scenario – the more you provide the more use will increase’

College Lecturer

Tell me about it

When ILT was first used in education, there was a lot of uncertainty about how it could, or should, be used. But simply listening to the experiences of people who have used computers in education has got rid of a lot of that confusion.

This is because, from colleges all over the country and in other countries, researchers are hearing the same messages.

- Every year students know more about ILT, have more experience of ILT, and expect more from ILT. **This trend is not going to reverse.**
- ILT delivers benefits most effectively when it is included in subject teaching. Link every use of ILT to the aims of each course. Those course aims are why students are at college. Use ILT to help them achieve those aims. **You must make ILT relevant to student goals.**

- The most positive experiences arise when you develop ILT across the whole college. When senior management are committed, when there is a college-wide ILT strategy in place, when the lecturer in the classroom is supported in using ILT, then the potential benefits increase even more.

Management has a vital role to play.

- The more ILT is available – the greater the demand. Demands and expectations are constantly outstripping supply. The more you do, the more will be expected. **It's an active process.**

They said it...

Staff and students express these important facts in their own words.

‘Nowadays students simply expect to use computers to collect information, write assignments, etc.’

‘Students are enthusiastic about developing skills as they appreciate the importance of IT in all walks of life, and use IT to support their own learning. More and more, use of IT is seen as the norm.’

‘The most successful IT skills training and use of ILT is where it is subject related and clearly linked to course objectives.’

‘The more we provide – access to the intranet and Internet, equipment ratios of 1:5 for students, 1:1 for staff, user-led software – the greater the demand that remains unsatisfied.’

You're worth it

Students and lecturers take the trouble to use ILT for one reason – it repays the effort. Research has uncovered a number of ways in which ILT has improved the educational process. This section outlines some of the benefits college staff have reported. ILT has been found to have an immediate effect on:

- student learning;
- the effectiveness of teaching;
- student motivation; and
- communication and administration.

And, finally, of course using ILT in colleges gives students the ILT skills which can be important in their own right in future work or higher education.

They said it...

'They are like cars, fridges, washing machines, you just use them... They are an essential tool.'

'PowerPoint presentations were used by all the staff.'

'Staff share files on the network, this enabled collaborative work in putting together study packs for students.'

'Using video feeds to project microscopic experiments for the whole group to see.'

'ILT is just another technique which we are seeking to embed into our curriculum so that it can be used in a seamless manner.'

'Staff are using e-mail to contact students and send them comments on their work, also to distribute work, and send helpful resources.'

Learning

The main ways in which students currently use ILT in colleges is to help with finding out and to help with presentation. ILT has transformed many students' experience of these two vital tasks.

- Students can find things out for themselves, in a more active way. But we must support this use by using teaching strategies that teach them how to find the right information, how to sift through the mass of information they might find, and how to be critical about the reliability of that information and where it comes from. Thinking skills, not technical skills, are crucial.
- Presentation is hugely important to students in helping them develop pride in their own work. However, many students have real anxieties about spelling, handwriting and other presentational issues. ILT offers a way out of this vicious circle.
- Many courses have requirements for specialist uses of ILT, such as accounting, computer-aided design and other practical applications. As a subject specialist, you can help students to understand and use the relevant technology.

Students sometimes don't realise it, but the ability that ILT gives them to work independently, and produce high-quality results, depends on the tactful support and help of teaching staff. The human skills rather than the technical skills of the subject teacher transform ILT into a tool for learning.

'Computers make you learn because often they make you think about what you are doing..'

Student

Teaching

Some people used to think that computers would take over the work of teaching. Research has proved that this is a false idea. Instead ILT can help teachers to do their work more effectively. The key is the teaching task itself – ILT is a way of performing this task. ILT can give you a way to share resources with students, a way to present to the whole class, a way to work with a student who is having difficulties, and so on. But it is up to the teacher to use those means effectively. The key to teaching is open and flexible communication between the teacher and the learner. ILT can be one way to help with this communication. Once again, the human skills and the teaching skills are central to success.

They said it...

'All the students who completed questionnaires indicated that computers helped them to learn. They identified a number of reasons, including ease of research, Internet access, tools (such as spreadsheets) and self-tuition.'

'Tutors reported improved presentation of course work.'

'Students used spreadsheets to manipulate data.'

'I like to use a word processor because my handwriting is so bad.'

'I can rewrite things without starting all over again.'

They said it...

'Even students with extreme literacy problems wanted to write and create the website.'

'100% of the students indicated that they enjoyed using computers.'

'ILT enthuses students, especially when they can see the relevance to their future work.'

'All students are routinely early for IT sessions!'

'Generally there is a high level of student commitment, reflected in a good level of attendance at their classes and a ready willingness to engage in the learning process.'

Want to know more about using ILT to support organisation and administration?

Point your web browser at:

http://www.jisc.ac.uk/cis_focus/about.html

Motivation

Fun, enjoyment, confidence, optimism, enthusiasm – research has proved that when students approach learning in a positive, motivated frame of mind, their learning is much more effective. This is particularly crucial in education after the age of 16, where the problems of dropping out and absenteeism can undermine the learning process. Students enjoy using ILT. It gives them greater control over their work, and lets them produce results that are impressive and exciting. This motivation can pay off immediately in improved attendance, greater effort and better results.

Communication

ILT is used in many colleges for administrative tasks, and to help with communication among lecturers, and between lecturers and administration staff. Most lecturers would welcome less time spent on routine administrative work. Many of the colleges in the NLN evaluation study reported using ILT effectively in this area of college life.

ILT skills

Finally, and briefly, we should not overlook the fact that ILT skills are skills in their own right. They are now an important part of many jobs, and they are increasingly important for full involvement in many aspects of social life. They are useful skills for all students, not just computer specialists. By using ILT in their coursework, students develop these vital transferable skills.

They said it...

'Students' understanding and confidence with IT has grown.'

'Increase in student competency regarding IT.'

'Students are confident in their ability to cope with ILT in their future careers.'

They said it...

'In most colleges in the study, e-mail was the main mode of communication between staff.'

'ILT has led to the integration of systems within the college and improved efficiency.'

'Increasing bandwidth through the Joint Academic Network (JANET) has helped to improve networking, which has led to improved communication.'

'We are using ILT to improve the efficiency of course management.'

Make it happen

The last section looked at some of the benefits of ILT. How can you start to realise some of these benefits in your own working life? This section sets out a few hints, taken from successful experiences in colleges. Of course, you may have more or less room for manoeuvre depending on your own position and the culture in your college. However, there is always something that can be done.

You could consider all of the following strategies.

- Find out what is needed.
- Improve the basic ILT infrastructure in your college.
- Extend skills.
- Make time.
- Use the technology day to day.

Find out what people need, expect and want

You need to consider any recommendations taken from research, from experts, from booklets like this one alongside the most important consideration – the needs and wishes of people in your college, your working group or your classes. The most important first step is to find out where you are, and where you want to go. You might find the section ‘Lifecycle’ (see page 11) is helpful.

If you are responsible for only a small group of people, you can do this informally through discussion. In a larger group, or throughout a whole college, perhaps formal ways of collecting data might be useful, for example a questionnaire.

ILT infrastructure

It is true that developing ILT needs a basic ILT infrastructure – the kit, the software and the connectivity. There are a number of strategies that can help you to make the most of the technology, or to develop the technology that you have into an effective resource.

Here are a few hints.

- Access is central, and this means intelligent decision-making about designing classrooms, staff deployment and sensible behaviour in terms of sharing and helpfulness on the part of both staff and students.
- Never buy equipment without some idea of how you will maintain it, service it and eventually replace it.
- Computers that don't work are worse than no computers at all – make sure you have enough technical support.
- Some tasks don't need fancy equipment, others need the top of the range, once again intelligent decision-making and a co-operative attitude are needed.
- Remember the ‘M25 scenario’ (see page 6) – the more computers there are, the greater the demand will be. Accept that perfection is an unattainable goal.

‘It works best when you’ve got the lot, but a committed member of staff can still have a large impact in any circumstances’

Lecturer

They said it...

‘Since the computers were upgraded and connected to the college network and the Internet there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students and staff using the centre.’

‘Student demand for PCs is ever-increasing.’

‘The demand for access increases exponentially.’

‘The scale of capital spending has meant an increased workload for technical staff.’

‘Rolling programme of replacement is required.’

Developing staff

Staff need ILT training. This can be formal or informal, collective or individual. As with ILT in the classroom, the most effective ways of developing skills is tied very closely to people's immediate needs. Consider specialist training for enthusiasts and pioneers, who can lead the way. Consider general introductory courses that are well targeted to real-life issues for staff with few ILT skills. If you are thinking of developing your own skills, look at what is on offer in your college, and enquire if there is money or time available for you to receive extra ILT skills development.

One strategy that you could consider is the ‘cascade’ approach. This means that each member of staff who has ILT skills takes on the responsibility to help two or three others. They then take on this responsibility in turn when they have developed their skills and so on. This can be a cost-effective and supportive way to extend ILT skills across a college.

They said it...

‘One of the first steps of the ILT mentors was to produce a questionnaire to identify ILT needs within the college.’

‘The ILT Champion had devised a student survey, which highlighted an equal opportunities issue. Many students had no access to a PC at home, which would put them at a disadvantage if allowances were not made.’

‘An extensive cross-college ILT staff development programme has been planned and offered, based on a detailed ILT skills checklist, which formed the basis of our ILT skills audit.’

They said it...

'An example of a staff development activity was a workshop run by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) Regional Support Centre on 'subject hubs'.'

'The college has recently purchased a Virtual Learning Environment. A small group of staff had received training in its use, and they would act as a 'pilot'.'

'When the college purchased seven electronic whiteboards, this highlighted a need for PowerPoint training.'

'A series of in-house IT training sessions has been running for a while now. Covering e-mail, word processing, spreadsheets, PowerPoint, web authoring and intranet design. Uptake has been encouraging among staff and they have all been well attended.'

'Staff on ILT courses are from a variety of ILT persuasions, from keeno to Luddite.'

Time matters

After access to infrastructure, and computer skills, the third factor that gets in the way of using ILT fully is simply lack of time.

Anything that makes it quicker and easier for people to use ILT will expand the number of people using it, and increase the amount of use. College-wide strategies to support lecturers can have a huge effect, if they simplify the time and effort involved in using ILT.

'Exposure and use increase enthusiasm'

Simply using ILT, and seeing others use ILT, has the strongest effect of all. This is why developing ILT usually has a 'snowball' effect. Every person who uses ILT regularly and effectively is unknowingly showing all his or her colleagues the benefits it can have.

The next section, 'Lifecycle', tracks how this snowballing progresses in a typical college.

They said it...

'The involvement of a few staff in the development of materials has inspired enthusiasm and commitment which they are then passing on to colleagues. This is especially important as these staff were not previously ILT literate, and therefore what they are saying is more acceptable to colleagues.'

'Even staff with weak IT skills use it, because they can see its motivational effects.'

They said it...

'The college has an ILT steering group that meets every three weeks, and a users group that meets on an ad-hoc basis.'

'It has to be easy to put things on the intranet, otherwise staff just don't have the time.'

'The college, through its ILT strategy, has created work groups to develop ILT materials in areas where shortages have been identified.'

Lifecycle

This section presents a simple four-stage lifecycle of developing ILT in a typical college or other educational institution. It passes from the earliest stage, when ILT is limited, to a few isolated areas. And it finally ends up with ILT spreading to every aspect of college life.

Read through the descriptions to see where you fit in. This will help you to place yourself in the development lifecycle.

And remember – as the ILT provision in a college develops, so do expectations, so this is not a simple movement towards a goal. The goalposts are always moving.

1. Basic stage

The basic stage is one where ILT has very limited use. Using ILT depends on the enthusiasm of particular course teams, or is even limited to individual members of staff. There are no management or college-wide strategies in place to develop ILT. There is no time or resources set aside to expand ILT. Most students do not use ILT at college, though they will often use computers at home or at work.

At this lowest stage of developing ILT there may be little dissatisfaction with ILT resources, because expectations are so low. At this stage, management needs to start thinking about an ILT strategy, and to put in place systems for developing staff ILT skills, and expanding on the basic infrastructure that is available. Teaching staff should be developing their own skills, and learning from the experiences of the few staff who are using ILT. As more people use ILT, the college moves to the developing stage.

2. Developing stage

At the developing stage, people start to make demands on the system. You can tell that a college has passed to the developing stage, because people start to complain about the ILT resources. Equipment and skills have started to develop, but this has caused expectations to rise. Staff and students can see how ILT can benefit them. At this stage there is a need for organised programmes of skills and to develop an infrastructure. College management should put in place systems for listening to the ideas that staff and students have for developing ILT.

‘We know that this is not an overnight activity. We have been promoting resource-based learning for four years, and only now feel that things are coming to fruition.’

ILT Champion

In developing an infrastructure, college managers should not neglect to expand technical support. If not, frequent breakdowns will cause even more frustration. Teaching staff should be coming up with constructive ideas for making the most of the resources and skills that are available. As the supporting structures improve, the college moves to the acceptance stage.

They said it...

‘Students were encouraged to word process assignments, but it depended on the individual member of staff.’

‘One of our lecturers uses the whiteboard, but nobody else does.’

‘Pockets of good practice have been developed, and enthusiasm has passed to other staff.’

They said it...

‘Staff have seen the impact of ILT and feel much less threatened than before.’

‘Many staff are now actively seeking assistance in the integration of ILT into the curriculum.’

‘There is more acceptance from reluctant tutors because they can see things happening.’

‘Initially resources and training were provided and staff encouraged to use them. Now staff are very much demanding ILT resources, and this has resulted in the need to purchase extra equipment.’

They said it...

'The focus has very much migrated from using IT as a tool to using IT to help students learn...The use of ILT was included in lesson planning for the first time.'

'...need to develop new activities and new modes of delivery... colleges need to change and innovate in order to meet current and emerging education and training needs...'

'...a change to the environment, to the use of equipment, to the design of the curriculum.'

'The new approach is much more focussed on empowering teaching staff and students to enable them to take ownership of ILT and its role within the learning process.'

'There is definitely a growing ILT culture within the college, which bodes well for the future.'

3. Acceptance stage

At the acceptance stage, using ILT has extended across the whole college.

Although simple ratios do not tell the whole story, the acceptance stage is characterised by student and computer ratios approaching 1:5 (one computer for every five students), and staff and computer ratios of 1:1 (every member of staff has a computer for their own use).

At this stage, ILT is an accepted part of every course in the college.

At the acceptance stage, the demands on management and teaching staff are two-fold.

- Firstly staff need to keep equipment, skills and software up to date. There should be a rolling programme of infrastructure replacement, and a continuous programme of developing skills.
- The second demand is to work towards a cultural change in the college, so that practices develop to make the most of the resources that are now available. This needs imagination and flexibility.

As ways of working change because of the effect of ILT, the college moves on to the cultural stage.

4. Cultural stage

At the cultural stage, the work of the college has been transformed by using ILT.

The life of the college relies on computers and connectivity. There has been a cultural change. Not only is ILT used widely (as at the acceptance stage) but the style of delivering a course, and the range of courses on offer, has been changed by using ILT. For example, there may be courses offered by distance learning. Signs that such a cultural change has taken place include time for staff to make this transformation work. For example, staff may be given time to develop on-line materials and revise teaching plans. There is wide-ranging integrated cross-college support for staff who want to extend how they use ILT.

Challenges for management and teaching staff in a college at the cultural stage include the need to maintain or expand levels of provision, which are now vital to how the college functions. At this stage, the ILT should be generating revenue (for example, from new courses or new students) which can be ploughed back into maintaining and replacing resources.

A second challenge is to continue the process of transformation, into ongoing continuous improvement. By its very nature, ILT is constantly offering new opportunities, and new tools for teaching and learning. The process never stands still.

And finally, when a college has reached the stage of cultural change, there may be staff who have not managed to keep up. There may be staff who have not developed their ILT skills, or who feel pressured and uncomfortable about the change. Unless something is done to tackle this problem, these staff will become more and more isolated from the life of the college. For example, if administrative messages are now sent by e-mail, a staff member who won't use e-mail is not involved in the communication. Help must be extended to overcome this problem.

Want to know more about:

- how your college compares to other colleges in ILT development?
- where you are in the ILT lifecycle?

Point your web browser at: www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk and follow 'NLN evaluation'.

They said it...

'There has been a significant increase in ILT activity in the last twelve months.'

'It has moved into the mainstream.'

'Additional laptops have been purchased to ensure all staff have their own PC that they can use wherever they need to work.'

'Students are enthusiastic about developing skills as they appreciate the importance of IT in all walks of life, and use IT to support their own learning. More and more, using IT is seen as the norm.'

'Members of staff are finding the use of IT to be helpful in delivering the programmes by promoting logical development and giving access to opportunities for interesting coursework.'

There for you

In this section we look at some of the sources of help and support that you can draw on, when you are aiming to expand or improve the use of ILT in your working life. The National Learning Network (or NLN) is a national initiative designed to increase the uptake of ILT in post-16 education.

The NLN is a partnership between the DFES, LSC and the leading organisations concerned with ILT in the country – BECTA, JISC, LSDA, NILTA and UKERNA. Each brings its particular expertise to the NLN – the Regional Support Centres, materials development, research, staff development, JANET connections, JISC services, innovative projects, the work of Ferl and the ILT champions. Effective working between the partners has been essential to the success of putting the NLN into practice.

The NLN partnership can offer colleges:

- improved infrastructures;
- guidance and advice;
- learning materials; and
- staff development.

Infrastructure

NLN helps colleges to boost ILT infrastructures by giving colleges:

- a high-speed connection to JANET – the UK education and research network;
- communication services such as e-mail and Internet access, provided by UKERNA (the group that manages JANET); and
- advice and support as colleges connect to JANET, provided by the regional support centres.

Guidance and advice

Senior managers have been given guidance in preparing and using an ILT strategy.

Advice is now available to help college managers understand and use managed learning environments (MLEs) and virtual learning environments (VLEs). Funding has been provided to buy a learning environment against a detailed specification.

Learning materials

New ILT materials have been created by selected commercial suppliers for the NLN to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. These are available free to college lecturers and others working in education for those over 16.

There is also funding to help individual colleges develop their own materials.

Workshops and good-practice guidelines have been and will continue to be provided to support the way you develop materials.

Developing staff skills

The ILT champions programme is designed to support individuals who will develop ILT in their own colleges. We give more details about ILT champions below.

Extra support for developing staff skills is also available.

This includes:

- FENTO-validated training standards; and
- on-line training resources for staff to use to develop their own skills.

‘Things are looking very positive indeed. Staff are getting happier. Students are getting motivated. A positive result.’

Lecturer

They said it...

‘Most colleges reported that the NLN initiative has had a positive effect in moving ILT forward in their college’ (independent researcher)

‘NLN provides updates on national initiatives.’

‘NLN has raised the profile of ILT within the college.’

‘NLN has provided guidance for the purchase of ILT.’

‘NLN funds have tipped the balance in the college, encouraging more spending on ILT.’

‘The ILT champion’s role, and the ILT strategy, have played a large part in progressing the college and raising the profile of ILT to senior managers.’

‘NLN funds have enabled the college to put their plans into action within a much shorter timescale. Digital cameras and whiteboards have been purchased.’

‘I looked at the research available on the Learning Technologies website... highlighted ideas to implement and discuss.’

‘There is much more awareness now of ILT.’

They said it...

'He has undergone the ILT champions training and is disseminating his experiences and good practice to other team members.'

'The ILT champion is now starting to actively support members of the team and is also beginning to have a major influence on the thinking of the ILT strategy group. Certainly some of the ideas given in the training are being made use of in the college.'

'All the materials used for staff development purposes were taken or adapted from the NLN champion big folder, which is invaluable.'

ILT champions

ILT champions are members of staff, usually lecturers, who have been given extra time (paid for by NLN) to develop and encourage ILT in their own college. Among the tasks of an ILT champion are:

- working with ILT committees, technical and strategic staff, to smooth the process of expanding ILT;
- developing staff skills and 'cascading' knowledge and skills;
- developing learning resources; and
- just generally being available for discussion, advice, support and so on.

Learning technologies

The LSDA learning technologies team website provides a wealth of material, ideas and contacts to help you develop and use ILT. Point your web browser at: www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk

Ferl

'Ferl' is a website hosted by Becta. This draws together a wide range of materials relating to using ILT in further education (FE). To connect to Ferl, point your web browser at: <http://ferl.becta.org.uk/>

Want to know more about ILT champions?
Point your web browser at:
<http://ferl.becta.org.uk/display.cfm?page=90>

‘Computers allow you to do and find out about more complex things...’

Student

Some brilliant ideas

How do you start? One way, which ties together some of the ideas in this publication, is to use FENTO Module Q. The FENTO work includes ‘a set of standards relating to those involved in teaching and supporting learning and management in further education (FE) using new and established technologies.

They are designed to put into practice the FENTO standards for teaching and supporting learning and managing learning in further education organisations in the ILT (Information and Learning Technology) context. They provide a framework within which to identify the skills and knowledge needed to perform effectively with the help of new technology.

They can also be used to provide essential diagnostic and planning information in the ILT strategic planning process.’

(<http://www.fento.org/start.html>) Module Q uses an approach of managing a project to help you put together evidence about your professional ILT development. ‘The scale of the project will depend on individuals’ roles in respect to ILT. If you carry out this function, you need to take a project-management approach to putting an ILT-related change into practice. This requires close working with others to plan, co-ordinate, complete and evaluate a project according to quality conditions, time and cost.’ So, think of something you’d like to do with ILT, turn it into a project, and manage the project using Module Q.

In the box are a few ideas, taken from the experiences of colleges in the UK. Some may directly apply to your situation, others might stimulate fresh ideas that fit your circumstances.

They said it...

‘An idea we have implemented on our intranet is ‘Desert Island Website’ – each week a member of staff is asked to identify their three favourite web sites. The maths tutor’s selection was very popular with the students, despite being educational.’

‘Students were able to access course work from home during the recent foot and mouth epidemic, when they were barred from the college site.’

‘A slide library of hairdressing is available on the college intranet.’

‘The whole class were looking at a live website, using an electronic whiteboard.’

‘All students, many with profound learning difficulties and disabilities, used IT in some form. Assistive technologies were widely used.’

‘A successful model is evolving, with two kinds of support roles:

- ILT Learning Advisors based in the Learning Resources Centre liaise with curriculum teams on resources required for specific courses
- Two ILT Instructors manage the intranet, and deliver help and training on ILT to college teams and individuals. One is an ILT champion with a background in learning resources, the other is a graphic designer.’

‘All staff have access to student records on the CMIS (College Management Information System) and they use a radio linked register system which provides instant reporting on student absence.’

‘The college has linked PCs in a variety of community venues to the college network via leased lines.’

‘Two of the three student residential blocks are already connected.’



JISC



department for
education and skills



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Published by the Learning and Skills Council.

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Publication enquiries: 0870 900 6800
Reference LSC/0330/02

