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[Keynote] From digital capability to digital wellbeing: thriving in the network

Student Dissertation

How to cite:

Beetham, Helen (2016). [Keynote] From digital capability to digital wellbeing: thriving in the network. Research Summary for the Open University module H818 The Networked Practitioner

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Version: Version of Record

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From digital capability to digital wellbeing: thriving in the network (Helen Beetham)

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This cloud supports my keynote presentation for the OU H818 conference 'The Networked Practitioner'.

The presentation draws on several years of work for Jisc, but in particular two recent projects. The [Digital Student project](#) has explored the experiences and expectations of 'digital' students, largely in mainstream colleges and universities - though a new study of online learners is starting soon. Over 1000 students have been involved to date, and student bodies such as the NUS have endorsed the outcomes.

The [Digital Capabilities Framework](#) is a high-level description of the capabilities required by educational staff - and also by students and researchers - to thrive in today's digital places of learning. It has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of professional bodies in the UK HE, FE and skills sectors, and with reference to many existing frameworks and descriptors.

Drawing on the findings of both projects, I argue that we should look beyond access and technical skills to ask how digital technologies are shaping new educational and professional identities, and new relationships between learners and teaching staff. 'Digital' students expect their digital environment to be robust and its resources easy to use. But the experiences that transform them are often unexpected and challenging: discussion and collaboration, exploring new ideas in digital media, building a digital portfolio or personal blog, acquiring specialist practices of a subject area. These challenging experiences require that learners feel nurtured, supported and recognised when they participate in educational spaces online.

'Digital wellbeing' is a term I use for this group of issues, encompassing access and inclusion, digital identity work, motivation and self-regulation in digital spaces, and affective issues in the online environment. Educators have an increasing responsibility for learners' overall development and wellbeing. We have only just begun to explore what this means in digital settings.

The key question I ask in my presentation is: how can we help our learners to thrive in a digital society?

In addition to the two projects I have referenced, you might find the following resources useful.

Cloud created by:



[Helen Beetham](#)
13 February 2016

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[Chris Gray](#)

8:47pm 15 February 2016 (Edited 8:48pm 15 February 2016) [Permalink](#)

Helen,

A few questions which you may have touched on in your research:

1. Have you found differences in the way students are motivated to become 'digital' students?
2. If some students were found to be more reluctant than others to engage in the digital environment, especially the social sphere, have you found any techniques which helped them to better engage in it?
3. Whilst educators / tutors may have typically managed the students learning journey, have you found digital students wanting to be more active in managing and controlling their own learning journey?
4. If so, how have educators adapted to this more hands-off approach? Have they found it challenging, yet positive, for example allowing more time for qualitative student feedback, or has time be taken up by more administrative or teaching activities?

Thank you

Chris



[Laila Burton](#)

9:47pm 15 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

Hi Helen

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I'm hoping to be able to join this session on Wednesday, but just in case I can't I just wanted to share a few thoughts.

Firstly, the link to the digital capabilities framework was really useful and I have shared this with colleagues looking at the digital skills learners need to develop.

Secondly, I wondered what the challenges are for educators in an online/ distance learning context, as they may be supporting the digital wellbeing of a very diverse range of learners. How do we support the digital wellbeing of digital natives, digital immigrants and those who are terrified of anything digital? (I dealt with one student once who had never used a computer)

Thanks,

Laila



[Anita Houghton](#)

8:48am 16 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

Hi Helen

Fascinating area.

Can software which is a commercially available align with digital wellbeing?

Below are a list of advertised benefits from an e-portfolio system I am currently using, a range of benefits. Will the future success of the digital literacy be instigated by a commercial need? And how can commercial ventures develop digital wellbeing?

Here's what you can expect...

Cut costs and save money Save 75% on materials and travel costs

Increase assessor caseloads Free up assessor time and increase caseload capacity by 50%

Encourage & motivate learners Motivate learners through technology with live progress dashboards

Timely completions With online access, learners can work independently anytime, anywhere

Better achievement rates Enhance the learning experience and improve retention rates and overall achievement

Improve communication - Feedback and messaging features enable strong and continuous engagement

(source from a large e-portfolio providers website)

Thanks

Anita.



[Dr Susan Morris](#)

10:34am 16 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

I was fascinated to read your use of developmental /socialisation concepts about how students can be supported to thrive in this environment. Nurturing is such a powerful concept particularly in the context of 'shy' and 'passive' students online. I have used the ladder of participation previously to explain student behaviours in Tutor Group Forum but the private/public nature of thriving online and the contrast of "failure to thrive" explained by lack of relevant networking could be an interesting one to explore - in relationship to collaborative online work for assessment.

I'm looking forward to your keynote. Thank you Susan



[Sybil La Cartney](#)

12:43pm 10 February 2017 [Permalink](#)

indeed it was an interesting read..even checked your blogspot blog on the same topic where you provided a great summary of digital wellbeing..besides you pointed out the idea that has been embraced enthusiastically by those involved in Ireland's national project..and as i understand she emphasied the important of how we negotiate the digital world in terms of our selves as well as we interact with others..and wanna say thanks for this incredible piece

looking forward to reading new pieces of yours..best Sybil, a writer at

<http://writemyessay.pro> and <http://upwork.com/>

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