An investigation into students’ expectations and experiences when using technology in an FE college

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Link(s) to article on publisher’s website:
http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.00014095

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Connecting Students with Customized Technology Solutions.

September 2015
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Acknowledgement

This research study was carried out using resources from the Jisc Digital Student project:

- FE Digital Student Focus group protocol
- FE Digital Student Learner profile questionnaire
- Card Sort Items for printing

The resources are available from this reference:

Education is no longer limited to what instructors can tell a student or limited from a textbook, as content is available to everyone. Students are connected outside educational establishments and can gain access to unlimited information, exchange ideas, talk about more things and become more confident. We cannot ignore the potential to create powerful learning experiences that shift education into connected, collaborative, personalised learning environments where students have the digital literacy skills to grow in an ever-changing digital world.

There is an increasing demand for educational institutions to provide for an increasing number of students with a greater diversity than ever before. More children will leave school in the next 30 years than ever in history (OECD, 2012). This will change history faster than anything else. The growth of technology does not mean less teachers. We will need more teachers in the future, but using technology effectively to improve learning for a great number of students. The crux of technology though is that instructors are at the heart of education and always will be, orchestrating the game of learning, providing support, riding the rollercoaster of discovering with students and often learning with them.

Teachers need to learn how to use technology effectively for learning and integrate its use into teaching. What is important is that Educators stop fearing what technology might do, but to take developments seriously and to make more informed decisions about pedagogical design to deliver quality assurance and an enhanced, personalised learner experience.

The focus is no longer on passing on old knowledge, but equipping our future generations with agility and smartness to deal with what none of us can predict the future will hold. The task for teachers of the future is how to use the immense power of technology and transform students into higher performers than earlier generations. Technology enhanced learning is available to support a lifetime opportunity and we cannot fail on the delivery of building a successful future.
Introduction

Technology Solutions for Student Learning

A research study was carried out at PROCAT to investigate students’ expectations and experiences when using technology.

The study was structured around three activities. The first was a questionnaire for students to complete, the second was a card sorting activity and finally a focus group Q&A session.

This study ensured the involvement of students and the development of their student voice. When implementing new digital projects, it is vital to have student representation from the start.

This report details the findings from the study.

The card activity asks four questions based on four different themes (see panel on the right). Each of the items for sorting are presented on individual cards for the students to discuss and rank in their priority of importance.

The use of technology for meta-cognitive
Students want to use technology (the VLE and E-Portfolio) to manage their learning and have the ability to self-plan, self-evaluate and self-monitor.

The use of technology for collaborative learning
Students have a strong desire to use technology to work more collaboratively and be given the opportunity to research and produce their work in a way that suits them.

The use of technology for affective factors
Students want to make use of technology (the VLE) to keep motivated and have visibility of their progress and achievements.

Data has been collected from 14 focus groups with 116 students, aged 16 – 25, from PROCAT (Prospects College of Advanced Technology) and data from questionnaires completed by the 116 students, taking part in the study.

Within each focus group, students were divided into small groups to carry out the card sort activity. Over the 14 focus groups, the 116 students were divided into 37 focus groups. This report summarises the findings on the 37 sets of data from the card sort activity, as well as, data from 116 questionnaires and from the focus group discussion with 116 students.

The data was collected over May – July 2015. Data was collected on students’ technology use and access to technology, as well as, student expectations of the college in helping them gain skills, experiences and attributes in the use of technology.

This report makes recommendations, as a result of the data analysed.

Card Sort Activity:
Access to technology items:
Q. Which of these do you expect your college to provide for you?
• Robust broadband (WIFI) connection
• Access to social media (e.g. skype, Facebook, last.fm)
• Email account
• Access to cloud storage (e.g. Dropbox)
• Access to industry standard vocational technology (Robotics, Computer Aided Design, Google Earth, Data Analysis tools)
• A Virtual Learning Environment with tutor contact, group forum, etc.
• A Virtual Learning Environment with personal space to store college work; portfolio tool for coursework, digital templates e.g. CV etc.
• Device (laptop, tablet, desktop computer etc.) for individual use when required
• Access to a printer when required
• Access to a digital camera when required
• Lecture notes and lecture recordings in electronic format
• Course management aids — electronic diary, timetable, work experience information, rooming information, library catalogue

Useful Skills items
Q. Which of these skills do you expect to acquire at college?
• Basic ICT skills e.g. use of browser (search engines), email, word processing
• Use of technologies to overcome disability or disadvantage
• Use of College systems (e.g. library catalogue, virtual learning environment, submission systems)
• Use of search engines and online search techniques
• Use of social media to build networks and share ideas
• Writing computer code — opportunities and/or training

Experience items
Q. Which of these experiences do you expect to have during your time at college?
• Experience with technologies used in the workplace
• Experience with technologies used by researchers (e.g. for data collection/analysis)
• Experience with presentation software (e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi, animation)
• Experience building/contributing to a public site (e.g. wiki, blog, website)
• Experience creating and editing with digital media (e.g. video, audio, apps)
• Experience working with social media for educational purposes
• Experience participating in online discussions
• Experience collaborating online with others e.g. sharing files

Attributes items
Q. Which of these personal qualities or attributes do you expect to gain from your time at college?
• Ability to choose appropriate technologies for different tasks
• Ability to judge value/credibility of messages in digital media
• Ability to judge value/credibility of online information
• Understanding of safe, ethical use of social media (cyber-bullying, e-safety, the need to protect private information, adopting a clear moral code, etc.)
• Understanding of the latest digital trends (gadgets, media)
• Knowing how to project a positive digital identity / profile
• Ability to enter a workplace and feel confident in the use of technology

Key Themes from the Study

The use of technology for informal and social learning
Students need guidance on how to utilise technology for informal and social learning, for example, teaching students how to network using LinkedIn and using social media to self-organise and collaboratively work together on projects.

Students talked about how they taught each other digital skills. Examples given were using Excel and being taught how to work out calculations from their fellow peers. Some students discussed how they’d been taught how to use Multisim and CAD from other students.

The use of technology for cognitive activities
Students want to be able to make full use of all the technology available at the college. They want to use technology to be challenged and problem solve.
Information about the 116 students taking part in the study

Gender of Apprentices
- Male Apprentices: 97%
- Female Apprentices: 3%

Hours Apprentices Work per Week
- 30+ Hours: 53%
- 10-30 Hours: 19%
- <10 Hours: 30%
- Not Employed: 2%

Highest Previous Educational Qualification
- GCSE / A Level: 75%
- NVQ: 20%
- Undergraduate: 2%
- Other: 3%

Apprentice Level of Study
- Level 5: 88%
- Level 2: 6%
- Level 1: 6%

Number and Age of Apprentices

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Overall, students ranked the college providing them with access to a laptop or facility to use their own device, whilst on campus as their highest priority. Students ranked a laptop as their best device for studying, over a tablet or other device. They like the laptop because they have a keyboard.

The students’ biggest complaint was around laptops: not enough laptops available, they are not powerful enough to run the software they need (e.g. CAD), chargers are always missing, keyboard keys are missing or do not work. Students are frustrated that they have to share laptops because too many are without chargers and they are frustrated by the amount of broken printers.

Students spoke with strong conviction about the block on accessing the WIFI network. They felt extremely insulted that at an adult age, they were being treated like children. They said it was unprofessional of the college to not trust them and that it was very frustrating and restricted their study during college hours (e.g. unable to access engineering forums until they were at home for their assignments). They are also frustrated that they are unable to overcome the issue of poor or unavailable laptops by bringing their own device, because the network is not opened up. They also complained about long-winded workarounds to submit evidence of their work. Photographs taken with their phone had to be emailed to themselves and then emailed to their Instructor to upload to the network.

If the same activity was carried out again next year, the results will be different because access to WIFI will be in place, so students will be able to rank other items higher.

Students recognised other items were important but didn’t feel they could rank anything higher until they had what they considered the basics in place.

* As the college moves to e-portfolios in September 2015, the need for a printer is unlikely to rank high if the activity was repeated.

Students highlighted the importance of the college providing access to laptops for students who did not have their own through a loan service for the duration of their course.

They recommended students would take care of loan kit because it was their responsibility and they would expect to sign an agreement for loss or damage. They felt this would resolve the issue of poor standard of laptops, such as missing keys.
The use of the learning resource centres (LRC) is cause of much annoyance by students. They say they are never allowed to use the LRC because it’s being used for teaching classes. They are not aware of when it is available for their use and they said that when they are in the LRC, the rules are too restrictive, for example, no talking and no use of headphones, which restricts their learning experiences, such as collaborative discussion and watching and listening to audio and videos.

They’d like to be able to sign out a machine / laptop for use in the LRC and have access to quiet zones for studying, in order to, type up assignments, carry out research and read and answer emails.

Students find it difficult to concentrate and work on assignments in the noisy work areas in Basildon. The hand dryers are a cause of annoyance because they are noisy when students are in class. It’s often difficult to hear what is being said and students reported that they frequently miss what the instructor is saying. They’d like all hand dryers to be removed and replaced with paper towels because of the noise in the classrooms opposite the toilets in engineering. Students also reported that the roof of Basildon is very noisy and also makes it difficult to hear, for example, if it is raining or windy.

Overall Results for Access to Technology Items:

Students ranked what they expected the college to provide in priority order:

1. Device (laptop, tablet, desktop computer etc.) for individual use when required
2. Robust broadband (WIFI) connection
3. Access to a printer when required
4. Lecture notes and lecture recordings in electronic format
5. Course management aids – electronic diary, timetable, work experience information, rooming information, library catalogue
6. A Virtual Learning Environment with personal space to store college work; portfolio tool for coursework, digital templates e.g. CV etc.
7. Access to industry standard vocational technology (Robotics, Computer Aided Design, Google Earth, Data Analysis tools)
8. A Virtual Learning Environment with tutor contact, group forum, etc.
9. Email account
10. Access to cloud storage (e.g. Dropbox)
11. Access to a digital camera when required
12. Access to social media (e.g. skype, Facebook, last.fm)

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE AND ACCESS TO QUIET STUDY ZONES

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

The use of the learning resource centres (LRC) is cause of much annoyance by students. They say they are never allowed to use the LRC because it’s being used for teaching classes. They are not aware of when it is available for their use and they said that when they are in the LRC, the rules are too restrictive, for example, no talking and no use of headphones, which restricts their learning experiences, such as collaborative discussion and watching and listening to audio and videos.

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QuiET STUDY ZONES

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Grant students access to the WIFI network. (Go-Live is September 2015).
- Implement Bring Your Own Device (BYOD), (Go-Live is September 2015).
- Complete a full audit on all IT equipment and make necessary repairs.
- Procedures to be reviewed and revised where necessary for the issue of laptop trolleys to classes.
- Procedure to be implemented for students to withdraw a laptop from stores on a daily basis.
- Procedure to be implemented for students to know when the LRC is available for self-study time.
- The current procedure for IT faults to be revised because faults are not being reported. This may involve Stores to better manage.
- A review of noise levels in work areas to be reviewed.
The questionnaire results show BYOD will be of benefit to PROCAT students with 82% of students owning a laptop computer.

SMART PHONES
With 97% of students owning a smartphone, this is a piece of technology teaching staff can make instant use of. Mobile phones are widely used at PROCAT by students taking pictures of their work for evidence-based portfolios. The focus groups also revealed how much students enjoy classes where instructors use online quizzes using their mobile phones. They enjoy this form of learning and testing.

Students are also using their smartphones for their personal use, for social networking, browsing the web and watching video clips. Due to the widespread use of mobile phones, this could be made much more use of in the college, for example, teaching students how to network using LinkedIn, research and using social media to self-organise and collaboratively work together on projects. Padlet.com is already being used across the college for creating and collaborating. It is a virtual wall where images, videos, documents, links and text can be shared.
59% of Students use a computer every day. 41% a few times a week.
94% access the internet every day. 7% a few times a week.

**About PROCAT Students**

3 Ways to embed technology:

1. Allowing students to use digital tools to create their own content. It overcomes boredom and encourages active learning (lots of ideas here http://procatdigital.co.uk).
2. Teachers need to provide some direction for students when sourcing information on the internet, to increase student time and practice, otherwise students can waste too much time watching videos or checking social media. Padlet is a useful digital tool to use for this https://padlet.com and http://tripticoplus.com.
3. Using quizzes like http://www.socrative.com are a brilliant form of assessment and where technology can offer good support to Teachers. PROCAT students love Socrative! They want to use this more to test their learning and understanding.
Students advised that they’d like to make use of the VLE for parts manuals to be stored and all relevant documentation they need for work.

Students said that when they are working in the workplace, there are expectations from employers that they are familiar with the systems parts and industry specific maintenance manuals.

The VLE will allow students to access documents anytime, anywhere and from any device.

Top priorities for students is to have access to lecture notes and lecture recordings in electronic format. Course Management aids such as electronic diary, timetable, room information, reading resources and an e-portfolio & digital templates.

After access to essential kit (WIFI, laptop and printer), students ranked the VLE as the second highest importance. They said this was essential for their learning and vital for them to manage their studies.

Students want a central hub with one login to access everything they need for their studies and have full oversight of what is required for them to complete the course.

Students said they don’t want any surprises and hate being under pressure and rushed at the end of the academic year with several exams to sit. They want clear oversight of what they need to work on week by week and have access to all their course resources.

They rated having an app as a big plus to access the VLE anytime, from any device and from anywhere.

All Students wanted access to lecture notes, lecture recordings, presentations, reading lists and assessment criteria so that if they miss a lecture or misunderstand something whilst in a lesson, they can recap and refer to the notes gain. Students with learning difficulties said this was essential so they could go over material again.

Students want to be able to submit their assignments online. The amount of paper is a cause of frustration for students.

They welcome the introduction of e-portfolios to reduce paperwork. They like being able to provide their own personal work for assessment and demonstrate their own unique skills and competencies.
Virtual Learning Environment

- PROCAT to launch E-Portfolios using OneFile (Implementation September 2015)
- PROCAT to build a VLE (Launch planned October 2015)

All courses to have the following available on the VLE:

Welcome overview which provides a full outline of the course with learning aims and objectives.

A week by week calendar and timetable with outline of study tasks and links to study tasks and resources.

Regular feedback and reviews scheduled.

A range of course resources, for example, lecture notes, lecture recordings, presentations, handouts, audio, video, web links.

A course reading list which also includes all relevant syllabus information and trade manuals.

Assignment and examination schedule

Assessment criteria and assessments available online.

Online quizzes for students to check understand and summarise their learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Students' perceptions of social media is for socialising. They could not perceive its use for learning. Students felt having a second college email account would be a hindrance, having to log into two email accounts, but like the idea of communications through the VLE where they’d already be accessing for their course.

The focus groups revealed that students’ expectations of the college providing cloud storage, a student email account, use of a camera and using social media for learning were rated low because they were already able to provide these things for themselves.

Student Wish List

An overview of course ✓
A clear plan of what needs to be studied week by week ✓
Timetable and Room allocations ✓
Notifications such as room changes ✓
Support for learning difficulties ✓
Access to lecture notes, lecture recordings, presentations and reading lists in order, to check on anything missed and recap on content: ✓
Assessment details and criteria ✓
Study help and resources ✓
A central place for all resources ✓
Online Assignment Submission ✓

The focus groups revealed that students’ expectations of the college providing cloud storage, a student email account, use of a camera and using social media for learning were rated low because they were already able to provide these things for themselves.

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Students expect the college to teach them to be digitally confident:

Digital Skills using College Systems, ICT and Online Research Techniques

Overall Results for Useful Digital Skills:

Students ranked what they expected the college to provide in priority order:

1. Use of College systems (e.g. library catalogue, virtual learning environment, submission systems)
2. Basic ICT skills e.g. use of browser (search engines), email, word processing, excel, powerpoint, researching online.
3. Use of search engines and online search techniques
4. Writing computer code – opportunities and/or training
5. Use of technologies to overcome disability or disadvantage
6. Use of social media to build networks and share ideas

The T-Shaped Employee (Based on Brown, 2010)

At PROCAT, we need to teach digital skills and develop our students to have a T-shaped skillset (Brown, 2010) for employability. This is a metaphor for the depth and breadth that an individual demonstrates attributes valued in the 21st Century workplace. Students need to be able to work across boundaries with transferable, professional skills, technical skills and personal qualities.
Useful Digital Skills

Students expect the college to provide them with the skills and expertise to operate the college systems. All the students wanted more practical, hands-on opportunities to learn technological skills. This is a big frustration by all students. They’d welcome the opportunity to be involved in using all the machinery and technology available in the college. They do not feel that they are able to make best use of all the technology available in college, in order, to be prepared for the workplace.

Students expect the college to teach them ICT Skills and they expect to have a blend of both face-to-face tuition and the use of online tools in class. Students are frustrated at the lack of technology being used. Students want to see the use of technology being used to support their learning preferences. Students said that they wanted more freedom to learn and present their work in a way that suited them.

Students expressed a desire for technology to be used to provide a change of environment to spark interest and keep them engaged. They wanted to make use of technology to do practical work, rather than sitting listening to powerpoint presentations and to make lessons more interactive through the use of technology.

They feel ICT skills are important for the workplace and don’t feel they have enough opportunity to learn and practice ICT skills in preparation for when they start working.

They ask that Instructors do not spend the lesson talking through whole powerpoint presentations, but to rather provide them with the headlines and a framework, so that they have to work in groups and do the research themselves. They want their learning to be interactive and participative.

Students did not expect the college to teach them skills to deal with cyber bullying or online safety. These were skills taught at school. Students do expect the college to teach them skills for online working, such as skills for researching online. They want to use digital technology to work much more collaboratively in project-based and problem-solving assignments. They want to be stretched and challenged. Students lack knowledge of how to evaluate online information for its quality, objectivity, relevance etc. and lack understanding of the importance of referencing. They need to be taught how to navigate the information world.

Embed Digital Skills in Student Learning

Students’ were very clear in the focus groups that they expect the college to teach them the skills they need for the workplace. Their focus is 100% on being prepared individuals for the world of work and they expect the college to have thought this through, so that technology enhances their learning.

They want to be using ICT in college, so that they are competent for the workplace and this includes literacy and numeracy, using Microsoft Office, digital literacy skills such as critical thinking, social engagement and collaborative working, being able to research online and problem-solving skills.

Provide Personal Context

Students value Instructors who share their experiences and personal stories and relate what is being taught to real-life work experiences. Instructors who can share a personal context adds value for students. They want the opportunity for real-life work contexts and for employers to be involved through visits and talks.

Coding Clubs

Students would like the opportunity to learn how to code and learn digital skills beyond their course requirements.

Students expect the college to provide them with the skills and expertise to operate the college systems. All the students wanted more practical, hands-on opportunities to learn technological skills. This is a big frustration by all students. They’d welcome the opportunity to be involved in using all the machinery and technology available in the college. They do not feel that they are able to make best use of all the technology available in college, in order, to be prepared for the workplace.

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The desire for employment is strongly embedded in PROCAT student culture. Students’ priority is for their college education to lead them to a Technical, Professional Career.

Overall Results for Digital Experiences at PROCAT:

Students ranked which digital experiences they expected the college to provide:

1. Experience with technologies used in the workplace
2. Experience with technologies used by researchers (e.g. for data collection/analysis)
3. Experience with presentation software (e.g. PowerPoint, Prezi, animation)
4. Experience creating and editing with digital media (e.g. video, audio, apps)
5. Experience working with social media for educational purposes
6. Experience collaborating online with others e.g. sharing files
7. Experience building/contributing to a public site (e.g. wiki, blog, website)
8. Experience participating in online discussions

Employer Engagement

All students want to know technology that will be used in the workplace and want to understand how technology will help them and how it can be used. All the students wanted more practical, hands-on opportunities to learn. This is a big frustration by all students. They’d welcome the opportunity to be involved in using all the machinery and technology available in the college. They do not feel that they are able to use all the technology available and make best use of it.

They want to be able to visit different companies that are relevant to their course and have employers to visit the college and take part in lessons and provide demonstrations and talks. They want access to the real environment. They’d like the opportunity to attend industry fairs and have access to industry experts.

Presentations and Research

Students do not want the college to provide them with experiences that involve public online discussions, working in forums and collaborating externally with others online.

They do want to work collaboratively internally and work with each other and have the opportunity for employer involvement.

Students recognised the work that instructors did in putting together Powerpoint presentations and providing everything they need for the lesson, but would prefer to be able to work in groups to produce the material themselves. They suggested being given a Powerpoint presentation with just the headlines so that they had a framework but then had to research themselves. They said being given all the information made them bored and they find it very difficult to concentrate for long periods with the instructor simply working through presentations. Students want to work more collaboratively and be given the opportunity to research and present the work in a way that suits them and make use of digital tools, such as video, audio and apps.
Disabilities

Students that have disabilities do not feel supported by the college in terms of helping them overcome learning difficulties with the help of digital technology.

We need all training rooted in accessibility good practices because if we remove barriers for 10%, we improve access for 100%. Inclusion and accessibility are super driving forces behind access for all.

Solutions are very simple, but lack of staff training and awareness of products means that students do not have the benefit of digital tools available. Many of which are free and readily available for all devices and across platforms.

We need to use productivity tools, like text to speech, mind-mapping and have them everywhere. If they are installed on every machine, then they benefit everyone. There are free versions, let’s have them on every work station, everywhere.

The amount of computer customisation across all students is minimal and suggests that all students could benefit from learning more about digital tools available.

(Initial launch of this action is planned for the Digital Learning Community of Practice in October 2015.)
Overall Results for Digital Experiences at PROCAT:

Students ranked which digital attributes they expected the college to provide:

1. Ability to choose appropriate technologies for different tasks
2. Ability to enter a workplace and feel confident in the use of technology
3. Ability to judge value/credibility of online information
4. Knowing how to project a positive digital identity / profile
5. Understanding of the latest digital trends (gadgets, media)
6. Ability to judge value/credibility of messages in digital media
7. Understanding of safe, ethical use of social media (cyber-bullying, e-safety, the need to protect private information, adopting a clear moral code, etc.)

Interactive Smart Boards

The use of interactive whiteboards in the classroom are highly valued by the students. They rated this as one of the most important pieces of technology in college for learning, with instructors using the whiteboards for lecture notes, using the internet, watching videos and making use of digital tools, as part of their lessons. Students value the use of the whiteboards in class because it helps with being able to follow what is being discussed and is more interactive.

OUTSTANDING TEACHING

Students discussed outstanding staff treat them like adults and communicate well. They made good use of the interactive smartboards which made it easier for students to interact and follow along with the material being taught. Outstanding teachers also make good use of digital technology and open up lessons for students to take part and take control.

Students advised that some instructors expect a level of knowledge and if you do not have it then they felt dismissed. Outstanding Teaching staff find other ways to present the information and get the point across in a way they could understand. Students highlighted outstanding teachers did not make them feel rushed, but instead gave them the freedom to study and provided self-study time with support if they needed it.

Students also highlighted how they had structured knowledge questions to work through as groups. Students like being given a framework and structure and then being given the opportunity to work together to complete the tasks. They like being given a choice in how to complete a task.

Students said of outstanding teachers that they "Believe in Us".
Social Clubs

Students were interested in additional digital learning clubs, such as a coding group.

Students would like a football club and PROCAT team.

Communication

The students were very clear that they did not like being communicated to via email. They also do not like being asked to complete online surveys for feedback. They felt that the questions were open to misinterpretation and were not an accurate way to gather their views. They’d like student communication with the college to be all-inclusive.

When asked about how they wanted to continue their student voice following the focus groups, they said that they liked being able to communicate as a group because they can bounce ideas off each other and share discussion and have the ability to contribute more by hearing from what others had to say. They said that they liked having a prompt as a conversation starter to initiate ideas and discussion. They liked the format of the focus groups.

Students would also like a start of the day briefing, similar to being at school with a form tutor, as a means of two-way communication.

They do not like being given one form of communication and expected to have received it, for example, communication by email and assumed they have read the email. They’d like communication to be from several avenues. They’d also like better communication around the college, such as communication boards, but they need to be organised and kept up-to-date.

To communicate with each other they also prefer face-to-face communication. Students use their phones primarily to access the internet. They use their mobile phones for social networking, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and messaging use snapchat and whatsapp. They rarely use their mobile phones for making calls.

Very few students were aware of LinkedIn but were all very interested in using LinkedIn when advised what it was about.

Apprenticeships and University Places

Students would like an information booklet to keep up-to-date with all Apprenticeships available (not just at PROCAT) and to be kept up-to-date with the process. They want to know when their CV has been sent and an update on progress on applications. If there is no news, they want to be able to know this too.

Students expressed a strong desire to have information on their learning journey, what happens in the next year and beyond. They want to know what routes are available to them and be provided with more information. Students would like advice on going to university and to receive help on gaining a place.

Students do not feel they are provided with enough information on apprentices, university places, deadlines, procedures and suggest that the VLE could be utilised for this communication.

The Importance of Self-Study Time

Students placed a lot of importance on self-study time but did not feel that it was given the same priority by Teaching Staff. Students reported frustration at being told to find somewhere else to go because the room allocated for self-study was now needed for something else. They also expressed frustration at not having access to the learning resource centre or access to a laptop and the internet in a quiet place to work during self-study time. Students reported that a lot of self-study time is lost because of not having any where to work and this impacted on their successful completion.

Students would also like self-study time to be structured, where they have knowledge questions to complete and also have support available during this time, if required. They want to be given guidance on how to use their self-study time and be given specific tasks to complete. This was particularly important for level 1 and 2 students.

The scheduling of self-study time needs to be better considered and organised.
STUDENTS ON OUTSTANDING TEACHERS:

“THEY BELIEVE IN US”
Bibliography


Data

All the data from the questionnaires and card story boards was entered and analysed in Microsoft Excel. The focus groups were transcribed and coded into themes. The data can be viewed at the PROCAT Digital website at:

http://procatdigital.co.uk/fellowship-project-outputs
Prospects College for Advanced Technology (PROCAT) is the first UK College of Advanced Technology, with technical apprenticeships at the core of their offer. They specialise in technical training for key sectors such as engineering, aviation, rail, construction and the built environment, and focus on training that delivers highly skilled, competent and professional people for industry.

The college has taken the strategic decision to appoint a Digital Learning Fellow to lead the development and implementation of a digital learning strategy that focuses on vocational, technical training and work-based learning. The findings from this report feed into the digital learning strategy and action plan to address the recommendations.

PROCAT’s Digital Learning Strategy is designed to improve the way that vocational technical education and training is delivered and fulfil the vision of “vocational technical education for the future” and to improve the outcomes for students, providers and employers. The role of Digital Learning Fellow is commissioned and funded by the Education and Training Foundation.

If you have any questions or would like additional information,

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