SAT: Individual Learning Plans: from paper to online (Nicki Berry)

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How many things can you think of, that were once only available in paper form but are now online? Every day, we undertake a variety of tasks using the Internet, which only a decade ago were predominantly paper-based: banking, job applications, travel timetables, sharing photos, to name but a few. There is now a public expectation of being able to input and access key information online.

In education, the primary and secondary sectors have largely kept pace with innovative technologies and online provision, using it to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As well as many proprietary software products being marketed, there has also been a surge of open source material, which has enabled schools to adopt and adapt products for their own needs, without a large financial outlay. Further education may, however, have been left behind in this respect, with less open source products available than in schools, so that what is now the norm for schools could still be considered an innovation within the field of adult education, and certainly within my organisation.

In further education, tutors encourage their learners to set personal goals and short-term targets to direct and focus their learning. It is important to recognise and record progress and achievement, and on government funded courses, this is done through the use of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). Many providers are still using paper forms for this, which tutors and learners tend to regard as tedious and bureaucratic. Could an online interactive e-ILP be more relevant and engaging for 21st century learners?

This multimedia presentation offers H818 conference delegates the opportunity to decide for themselves the extent to which an e-ILP gives learners an innovative and engaging alternative to current paper documents. It will begin by examining some of the shortfalls of the existing paper ILP, and the learner and tutor feedback that led to the desire to create an e-ILP. I will then demonstrate the process of creating such an e-ILP within the open source Moodle virtual learning environment (VLE). I will show how activities within Moodle, such as the database

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activity, can be used to create an e-ILP. Reflections of the lessons learnt along the way will be shared, including learner and tutor feedback through recorded interviews.

Other further education providers have participated in related projects but many of these have focussed more on the e-portfolio than an e-ILP. Gloucestershire Council began to capture evidence of learner progress in the form of video and audio portfolios but stopped short of developing the ILP itself. Similarly, the National Star College has adopted the use of e-portfolios with pictures, podcasts and video to record the achievements of learners with learning difficulties. My project adds to and extends the work of these by attempting to revitalise and modernise the underpinning paperwork - specifically the ILP.

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added by Nicki Berry

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Anita Houghton
9:29am 16 January 2016 (*Edited 9:51am 16 January 2016*) Permalink

Hi Nicki

I really liked your poster with the screenshot of the ILP accredited course which spells out what Rarpa is very clearly and also looks simple.   I far too often see electronic versions of things which look over complicated, your screen shot gives the impression of user friendly.

Just a quick question - how will e-ILP differ from the e-portfolio for accredited provision?

Anita

Anita Houghton
9:52am 16 January 2016 Permalink

Hi Nicki

i have just posted the below in Laila Burton's cloudscape,   I thought it may be of interest

to you.

http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloud/view/9537#comment-10504

Anita.

John Baglow
7:17pm 16 January 2016 Permalink

Nicki, I'm no expert on ILPs as used by my F.E. college for full-time students but the last time I used them they seemed to be the vehicle mainly for monitoring students' progress and the support they were needing and being given. I remember holding tutorials with students and agreeing SMART targets which were recorded in the online ILP. You talk about giving learners an alternative to paper ILPs so do you see ILPs as more of a joint document between teachers and students? What would students actually contribute to it, I wonder?

Would an eILP be more of a formative document while an ePortfolio is more of a summative item used for assessment purposes?

Elaine Dalloway
12:22pm 17 January 2016 Permalink

I'm interested to see how the students and tutors can collaborate on the eILP - I can see it as a very useful tool for the student to use to record achievements and reflections along the way.

Coming into FE from school the students will be very up to date with online technology and from my experience may be in for a shock that in FE we are a bit behind on this.

Paper documents and forms just don't have the same appeal. The college I worked in struggled to pull in returns from a survey questionairre issued in paper format and staff were constantly over a time asked to remind students to complete it. Eventually I converted the paper version into an online version in Moodle and asked my students to please quickly fill it out. They did so, in moments, with lots of feedback in the text areas as they seem to be able to work online and type quicker than they can do anything else!

Anna Orridge
2:53pm 17 January 2016 Permalink

This looks to be coming together really well, Nicki, and I like the way you edited your Abstract.

Something that did not occur to me before was the issue of privacy. Having done paper ILPs in the past, there were pastoral issues which came up that I am sure the student would not want other people looking at. Is there a section in which personal issues affecting the learning process can be kept, with high privacy settings? Ot will this sort of thing simply not be dealt with or recorded via the eILP?

Dave Martin
8:02pm 17 January 2016 Permalink

I think there is an interesting discussion to be had around ILPs and eportfolios. As you envisage the former Nicki it appears to be a place for learner and teacher to both contribute to a discussion that is a teaching and learning discussion.

As such can it have elements of both formative assessment and serve as the location for a summative assessment at any given point?

Nicki Berry
8:43pm 17 January 2016 Permalink

Hi all and thanks for your comments, interest and questions. Several people have asked about the difference between an ILP and a portfolio (or e-versions of these). I'll say more about this in my presentation but here are my brief thoughts.

FIrstly, I think each organisation will have different versions and opinions as to what an ILP should look like. We base ours on the five stages of RARPA. Usually learners fill in their own ILP during or following discussion with their tutor. They document the aims of the course, initial assessment (including prior learning and experience, and any barriers to learning), targets that are set (personal and subject specific), on-course reviews and reflections, and an end of course review. In the organisation I work for, a portfolio is a collection of evidence of what the learner has achieved. This relates to the ILP in that it is often the evidence that targets have been met but it can also be a wider collection of work to submit for assessment for certain courses that don't have exams.

Chris Gray
8:22pm 21 January 2016 Permalink

Nicki

I really like the idea of having a dynamic rather than passive ILP. This will help to really engage learners, as well as tutors. Learners should be able to see exactly where they are, what they are supposed to be doing etc. so they can be better involved in their learning journey and this may also act as an additional catalyst to become more self-directed or even self-determined learners.

I can see benefits in adapting the ILP for informal CPD purposes (this could cross over to some extent with Anita's open platform) and to encourage a more active approach to life-long learning.

I think if the latter then the ILP would need to be owned by the learner, so a platform such as Googledrive or Dropbox which the learner has an account for, would probably be needed. Providing templates and guidance for ILPs in these cases would certainly benefit those learners so maybe consideration to your concept being a hub of ILP practice would attract a diverse audience.

Laila Burton
9:42pm 24 January 2016 Permalink

I wasn't sure what the difference was between an ILP and an e-portfolio, so I found this discussion really interesting. It seems to be the case that ILP is a developmental tool, and e-portfolios are seen as more of the output of personal development planning (PDP), a tool to evidence the development. Much of the literature I read suggested the same, but I've always seen e-portfolios as a PDP tool that supports the development as well as evidences it.

In our Faculty we still rely on paper PDP tools, so I was really interested to learn about your project. Is there any way of seeing the e-ILP you've created in Moodle, perhaps in the presentation or before? I've seen the screenshots, but it would be great to see some video.

As our projects are on the same topic I look forward to following your project as it progresses.

Laila

[Nicki Berry](#)
8:42am 25 January 2016 (*Edited 1:39pm 25 January 2016*) [Permalink](#)

Chris - yes, I like the idea of adapting the ILP for CPD purposes too. The more I think about it, the more I come up with ideas. I'd love to develop a platform to provide this kind of tool. Maybe I can tie that in with a later module.

Laila - I'm part way through creating a video/screencast to show the production and use of the eILP. I'm posting in Open Studio as I go, but the final product will be a Sway presentation and openly available. Hope to have that done in the next week and a half.

Thanks for your continued interest and discussion!

[Laila Burton](#)
8:32pm 26 January 2016 [Permalink](#)

Hi Nicki

I joined a webinar on technology for employability yesterday that covered e-portfolios and when they started talking about e-portfolios in FE and adult education I thought of you! If you're interested in watching the recording of the webinar it's available at the bottom of the page at: https://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/preparing-for-employability-in-a-digital-age-25-jan-2016

I did try and find out at what point Geoff Rebbeck starts talking about FE/ adult education, but it didn't seem to let me skip ahead in the presentation and kept jumping back to the beginning. Still, you may find the whole webinar interesting. Geoff Rebbeck also said he's happy to be contacted with any queries relating to e-portfolios in FE/ adult education, so he may be a useful contact.

I look forward to seeing the screencast!

Laila

tommy ruiz

5:20am 29 January 2016 Permalink

Hi Nicky,

Good job, it looks great.

Anna Mentionned something about privacy and it was a concern of mine in my previous school. How much should be shared? e-ilp are great because they can be accessed anywhere, anytime. However, laptops are connected to interactive white boards this can be an issue! (speaking from past experience here...)

Another aspect which would interest me, is how you try to shift the image of the 'boring' ilp to something useful!

See you soon!

Nicki Berry

9:51am 30 January 2016 Permalink

Thanks for sharing that link Laila. I'm hoping to watch it this evening. I'll let you know what I think.

A couple of people have mentioned privacy, which is obviously a really important issue. The advantage of Moodle is that everything can be assigned access rights. The whole e-ILP has been set up so that the tutor and managers have 'teacher' rights. That means they can see and edit everybody's information. Learners are set up with 'student' rights so they can see their own and nobody else's. It's a bit like on our OU Study Planner page. On the left hand side, we can see our TMA results but we can't see each other's but the tutors can probably see everybody's.

Dr Simon Ball

10:28am 14 February 2016 Permalink

Hi Nicki
Here is a summary of the questions/comments from your presentation - please respond as you wish:

- Progress is key with OFSTED - in HE there has been an increased focus on this but they term it 'learning Gains'. The real issue is with pupil premium students (those from disadvantaged backgrounds). I'm always impressed by schools and FE sector on tracking, HE is trying to deal with this (especially in DL) with learning analytics.
- What exactly makes Moodle inappropriate for e-ILPs? How could it be improved?
- I would be interested to hear more about why Moodle wasn't the ideal tool.

- HOW does the progression link to assessment? formative / summaritve assessment that is.
- Are there OERs which could help guide students to devise SMART targets? (A life skill?)
- Might students be apprehensive about filling in an official-looking online form about their progress?
- is there an oportunity for a disabled student's study skills mentor to see and contribute to the e-ILP?
- Peer feedback - feeding into peer assesment - is difficult here (security) I suspect but can be useful to creating learning environments
- Really important that both students and staff can see this. Are there restrictions on what the student can input?
- Having the eILP available into the future sounds like a great advantage.
- Is the difference between eILP and Portfolio aligned with formative and summative assessment and acehivement?
- VLEs are a blessing and a curse: better communication internally but difficult to share projects externally. Another Elephant in the Room?
- I like the e-CPD idea something that would make a CV more interesting
- I like how the e-ILP ensures SMART targets. Often an overlooked element. Good idea - makes for a very practical artefact.
- It's a shame Infopath never caught on for independent forms processing (too complicated) in XML. Could be used to gather data and merge it.

[Nicki Berry](#)
9:29am 15 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

I'll answer these questions in groups. Firstly regarding Moodle as a platform for an eILP:

- What exactly makes Moodle inappropriate for e-ILPs? How could it be improved?
- I would be interested to hear more about why Moodle wasn't the ideal tool.

I should start by saying that in general, I like Moodle. It's open source, so in theory at least, it's free. Some web hosting platforms offer it as a feature that you can install directly from their servers, which makes it even easier to get started. On the negative side, you really need an expert to set it all up, sort out branding and what features you want to use. We have someone who does this as a full time job, which probably makes it more expensive than buying a proprietary VLE. However, our VLE man also creates resources for us, so we are getting more than just the platform.

In terms of Moodle as an eILP platform, I don't like having the eILP set up as a course in its own right. I would rather have some kind of block that sits over all courses and embeds the ILP into each course. I've searched online and various people have tried to develop one but it's either not worked or there hasn't been sufficient demand and they've been abandoned.

I would love to develop something that is standalone and can be used by anyone alongside whatever VLE (or none) the organisation uses. This way, learners could use it and keep a record of their learning across several organisations. My organisation didn't want this but I think there might be a market for it and it could tie in with an eCPD tool.

Nicki Berry
9:43am 15 February 2016 Permalink

- How does the progression link to assessment? formative / summaritve assessment that is.
- Is the difference between eILP and Portfolio aligned with formative and summative assessment and achievement?

For these questions, I must stress that I can only answer for my own organisation. Different providers will approach assessment in slightly different ways.

We have different types of courses, depending on funding streams and accreditation options:

- accredited (from entry level 1 to level 2) - funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and leading to an award, certificate or diploma, which is assessed by an exam or portfolio submission.
- non-accredited - funded through the Community Learning budget. At the end of the course, learners pass by achieving at least 75% of their ILP targets. At the moment, tutors negotiate what constitutes an achieved target but we are looking at validation of these at the moment.
- full cost - learners pay slightly more for these courses but there is virtually no paperwork, no ILP, no target setting. These courses fall outside of Ofsted's remit and tend to be hobby courses such as pottery.

For most accredited courses, summative assessment happens at the beginning and end of the course. We use BKSB to do initial and diagnostic assessments. These are recorded on the ILP and should be a factor in working out how long the learner has to complete their course. Formative assessment is more ongoing, Tutors give feedback constantly as they are teaching. Of course, some are better at this than others but we tend to focus staff-training on areas of known weakness. E.g. we are currently aiming to improve the quality of open questioning to ensure learner understanding.

For us, portfolios are currently only used when it is the primary assessment method. Some non-accredited courses use a slimmed down version, just to capture evidence of achieved targets and this is something that should improve as the eILP is rolled out.

Dr Susan Morris
11:28am 16 February 2016 Permalink

Nicki, I was pleased that we were both in the Saturday session. Your use of Microsoft Sway inspired me to try it, play with it and become an advocate of it. Your insights on the accessibility checking, the saving/recycling of text and concurring with the need/skiils for digitial storytelling was appreciated. Because much of the digital wall will be rotating - possibly like the adventure journey - the agility of Sway and having a resource library is very important.

Please keep in touch after H818. Best wishes, Susan

tommy ruiz
7:01am 19 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

Hi Nicki.

Not an easy presentation. You answered my questions with a very clear presentation.

Thanks for exploring the Moodle point too.

Dr Simon Ball
9:05am 23 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

Many Congratulations Nicki! Your presentation has been voted by delegates to be one of the most effective of the H818 Online Conference 2016 and you are officially one of our H818 Presentation Star Open Badge Winners! Please see how to Apply for your Badge here: http://cloudworks.ac.uk/badge/view/33

Well done!

Simon

H818 Conference Organiser

Dr Susan Morris
1:52pm 24 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

Quality of explanation

Nicki, Your mastery and committment to the subject matter was clear, You thoroughly made th case for a generalist audience.

Utility of materials designed for presentation

Your presentation materials were comprehensive and easy to understand. Accessibility was at the heart of your presentation. Thank you.

I would encourage you to use video to tell the story of your work online. It would be a great asset and showcase to your work.

Quality of technological interactivity

The presentation audience critiqued the flatness of paper to achieve the aims. Your application of technology and the level of interactivity this offer is both purposeful and directly related to learning. Well done for championing this. Others will follow and imitate.

Opportunities for deeper learning

I am delighted that your presentation was voted as a Presentation Star. It was one of my favourites of the conference. It engaged me to think critically about the area and I learnt from your effective communication.

Assurance of accessibility

Your presentation was fully accessible for ALL delegates.

[Nicki Berry](#)
6:39am 25 February 2016 [Permalink](#)

Thank you for your review Susan. I'm glad you felt that accessibility was at the heart - that is something that I try to get right, though I recognise that it isn't always possible.

When you suggest that I use video to tell the story, do mean in the form of screencasts or video of me talking about it? I've used some screencasts in my project artefact. I've never plucked up the courage to try a 'talking head' type video.

[Kulvir Bahra](#)
11:03am 1 September 2016 [Permalink](#)

Hi Nikki,

Well done on achieving the badge, hope all went well with MA(ODE).

I felt that you answered all the queries with very good responses.

How is your idea progressing now?

All the best,

Kulvir

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