JISC Digital Literacies Materials Pilot

Managing change: organizations, roles and strategies

How can institutions better support the development of learners' digital literacies? What changes are required to roles and strategies? This hand-out offers starting points for managing change, suitable for an institutional initiative or working group.

1. Thinking about digital literacies in an organizational context

1.1 What changes can be noticed in how your college/institution relates to learners?

Examples of how digital technologies are influencing relationships might be found in: recruitment, induction, student contracts, module selection, the learning experience, communication with staff, online information, assessment handling, alumni services...

1.2 What changes can be noticed in how learners relate to their tutors and lecturers?

Examples of how digital technologies are influencing relationships might be found in: learner-owned technologies, learner expectations, access to content, use of peer networks, new modes of communication, new modes of learning (e.g. blended, interactive, simulation-based), new modes of assessment...

1.3 What changes can be noticed in how learners are accessing learning opportunities?

Examples of how digital technologies are influencing access might be found in: work-based learning and placements, mobile and wireless learning, assistive technologies, online and networked learning, learner access to online resources...

1.4 What changes still need to happen to address the needs of learners in a digital age, besides those you can already observe?

1.5 What might be the challenges for learners and for staff? Are there any down-sides of these changes which need to be considered?

1.6 What support do learners and staff need to make these changes? What's in it for them?

2. Digital literacy: roles and responsibilities

In any change management agenda it is vital that staff can rethink their roles, responsibilities and identities in a positive way, i.e. preserving their core values as professionals. This means bringing everyone into the big picture, as well as letting them take the lead in their own area of expertise.

Digital literacies touch on many staff roles and responsibilities, and one of the most important changes will be how these group work together. Just bringing different people together around a common agenda will begin the process of rethinking. Questions to ask first might be:

2.1 What opportunities are there for different staff to work together on relevant issues? What opportunities are there for staff to reflect on their own professional roles and skills?

2.2 What rewards are there for staff to innovate and transform their practice?

2.3 What opportunities are there for staff to articulate their training and development needs? How are these needs then supported?

2.4 How do learners access support? How is their experience of support integrated?

Then specific staff groups can be asked to contribute from their own perspective. What follows are suggestions for discussion, but in practice it can be better to start with a blank canvas.

Staff groups	Might need to:
Learning technology/ e-learning/ILT	Become more specialised as technology is used in more diverse ways Support a wider range of devices, technologies and services Champion the use of technology for learning, and model the skills involved to other staff
Learner support/	Support the use of technologies for learning and study

development, personal tutor	Support the use of ICT to record and showcase achievements Support the development of online personal/professional identity Ensure online access to study support
Librarian/subject librarian/learning resource manager	Support curriculum teams to consider the role of digital content and skills Support access to digital content by learners Promote information and research skills
Community education/ outreach/WP	Use technology to build partnerships and reach out into schools and communities Address digital inclusion and equality
IT/IS manager	Develop integrated environments (real/virtual, personal/institutional) for effective learning Enable access to personal technologies in institutional contexts
Curriculum teams/ managers	Consider role of technologies in learning activities and tasks Consider role of digital content and course information Consider role of digital literacies in planned learning outcomes
Academic staff	Model and support use of subject-specific technologies in the curriculum Model and support use of ICT for research and study Give access to learning resources in different media Support critical engagement with ideas in different media Support discussion and collaboration on learning tasks in different media Support capture and evidencing of learning outcomes in different media
Careers/employability	Support use of ICT to evidence and showcase achievements Support use of ICT to build CVs and make applications Support use of ICT to plan career and learning pathways Advise on management of professional identity/digital CPD
ICT support staff	Understand learners' technologies and practices (support staff may be students' themselves?) Support personal and assistive technologies Support specialised uses of technology (may be subject-based?)
Other staff	Other responsibilities

3. Digital literacy: a strategic approach

From the limited examples we have seen of institutions taking a strategic approach to digital literacy, the following features may be important:

- digital literacies being clearly linked to main institutional drivers and priorities
- actions cascaded through a range of institutional strategies (e.g. quality, ICT, Learning and Teaching) and practices (e.g. course documentation)
- building on previous work, ideally a number of successful pilot projects/initiatives (likely to have had external or strategic funding)
- collaboration between central services and academic staff, principally around...
- course development and review, involving multi-disciplinary development teams (see 2. roles and responsibilities)
- central ownership, ideally senior management with a well-resourced central unit (e.g. e-learning, academic development)
- ongoing evaluation and evidence-gathering about students' experiences with technology and learning
- commitment to enhancing the learning experience, and technology use as an aspect of that experience
- moving people out of their silos, for example by creating hybrid and/or 'roving' roles

3.1 Which of these features are in evidence at your institution?

3.2 What strategic priorities could be supported by a focus on digital literacies?

3.3 What are the first three things your institution needs to do about digital literacies? What is a realistic timescale for achieving them?