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Digital Literacy in Situated Practices

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**Project objectives**

Scope staff and student support services and academics' perceptions and applications of Digital Literacies in Higher Education via a survey. Investigate further potential tensions and identified issues related to use and development via focus groups and interview. Collate and disseminate best/practice examples via online platforms and seminars. Relate findings to literature and sector developments with a view to develop a framework.

**Digital literacy**

"The capabilities which fit someone for living, learning and working in a digital society" (JISC, 2013)

This is the definition adopted by the project team. In the questionnaire participants where asked what this definition means to them.

"A key message for institutions is that policies and processes need to support development across different academic and support roles in a range of ways. Supporting student digital literacies tends to be the focus of support activities but teaching staff need support to help address confidence and capability issues and support staff need to continually develop skills and knowledge." (JISC, 2013)

**Dissemination and outputs**

Online resources in the form of case studies including video that detail best/practice examples across disciplines including library services

Contribution to staff development seminars and conferences

A published framework for interdisciplinary development of digital literacies positioned in relation to literature and sector developments

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**Phase 1 results**

What does digital literacy mean to you?

Beyond an understanding and knowledge of different types of online tools, digital literacy is about the application of those tools to help/solve a problem and knowing how to get the best from those tools.

**Key drivers to use technologies in teaching and learning:**

- Improved learning experience
- Improved learning outcome
- Improved student engagement
- Improved teacher engagement
- Increased student access
- Increased student satisfaction
- Improved teaching methods
- Increased student motivation
- Increased student collaboration
- Increased student feedback
- Increased student independence
- Increased student participation

**Phase 1**

Survey of Academic Staff

Phase 2

Focus groups & interviews with staff

Phase 3

Survey of MSc Students

Phase 4

Focus groups with students

**Methodology**

A qualitative practitioner research methodology informed by principles of action research is adopted. The diagram to the left shows the four project phases.

**Timeline:**

- Project phases: 2014-15
- Data collection:
  - Design and pilot questionnaire: February 2014
  - Online platform and online surveys: October - February
  - Paper and pencil version of questionnaire: March - May
  - Online platform and online surveys: June - July
  - Interview and focus group schedules: August - September
  - Final data collection: September - November
- Data analysis: December
- An interim report and final report: December

**Data analysis**

Some questionnaire items were closed (non-free text responses) and provided good summary data. These were generally followed by an open question.

**Digital literacy elements**

JISC (2013) funded project work led to the identification of seven elements of digital literacy:

- Media literacy - Information literacy - Digital scholarship - Learning skills - ICT literacy - Career and identity management - Communications and collaboration

**What are we and other Universities doing to foster digital literacies?**

This project aims to identify our institutional awareness of these literacies and how we can enhance teaching and learning in this area. Other universities who participated in the Jisc call (Middlesex didn’t) for example, LSE have set up a student group of “Digital Ambassadors.”

**References:**

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**Contact us**

Regardless of discipline we would be happy to hear your comments/thoughts and welcome your contribution. Please email t.zoubir@mdx.ac.uk

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**Web 2.0 characteristics**

- It is best to think of Web 2.0 in terms of its characteristics (Jisc, 2007):
  - Many Web 2.0 tools are used to promote digital literacies are not designed by educationalists or developed specifically for teaching and learning, but there is an increasing demand and call for teachers to use them to share content, support learners and for inter-institution collaboration (Horizon K-12, 2014).
  - The project team
  - A qualitative practitioner research
  - The project team are made up of teaching fellows, Centre for Academic Practice Enhancement (CAPE) staff and informed by Library Development and Support. The interdisciplinary nature of the group emphasises a cross-discipline, multifaceted investigation of the topic.
  - In the questionnaire participants where asked what this definition means to them.
  - Digital literacy tends to be the focus of support activities but teaching staff need support to help address confidence and capability issues and support staff need to continually develop skills and knowledge. (JISC, 2013)
  - A published framework for interdisciplinary development of digital literacies positioned in relation to literature and sector developments
  - Some questionnaire items were closed (non-free text responses) and provided good summary data. These were generally followed by an open question.
  - Beyond an understanding and knowledge of different types of online tools, digital literacy is about the application of those tools to help/solve a problem and knowing how to get the best from those tools.