

Completion Report Template

Each project is expected to submit a completion report ***instead of*** a final project report. It should be written with reference to the project plan, as in effect, the completion report closes a process that started with the project initiation document.

Project Name	E-Learning for Learners (E4L) The University of Northampton
Report compiled by	Rob Howe, Gemma Towle and Paul Brett
Project team members	<p><i>List the key staff members who were involved with the project and briefly summarise their current/future professional roles ('what are they doing when the project finishes?')</i></p> <p>The staff members who were involved in the project are listed below. Unless stated, they will continue in their current roles after the project completes.</p> <p>Project Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rob Howe, E4L Project Manager / Head of Learning Technology and Media Development, The University of Northampton - Gemma Towle, E4L Research Associate, The University of Northampton / Lecturer, Loughborough University <p>Steering Group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caroline Stainton, Director of Learning and Teaching, The University of Northampton - Peter Bush, PVC Learning and Teaching, The University of Northampton - Paul Brett, E4L External assessor and Head of Blended Learning, The University of Wolverhampton. - Eta De Cicco, Development Officer at the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) - Eddie Gulc, Senior advisor, HEA - Alan Chesney, County Adult Learning Manager, Northamptonshire - Tony Jewson / John Bexson, Northampton College - Amanda Jefferies, University Teaching Fellow and Principal lecturer, University of Herfordshire - Rachel Fitzgerald, Learning Technology Manager, The University of Northampton - Matt Dean, Senior Technology and E-learning Officer, AoC NILTA - Kathryn Robinson, JISC RSC Institutional Support Services

	<p>Institutional support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nick Dimmock, E4L ICS developer, web development officer, The University of Northampton
<p>Acknowledgements</p>	<p><i>List the project partners and acknowledge any person or organisation that was helpful during the project or in writing the report.</i></p> <p>The project was part-funded by the JISC under the Learner Experiences of e-Learning Phase 2 theme of the e-Learning Pedagogy Programme and we are grateful for this support.</p> <p>The project would not have been possible without the help, support and participation by a number of people:</p> <p>Firstly we'd like thank all of the learners who participated in the project from The University of Northampton, Northampton College, Moulton College and Northamptonshire Adult and Community Learning.</p> <p>We would like to thank all of the tutors for providing time for us in their busy induction and course schedules.</p> <p>We would like to thank the Programme Manager, Sarah Knight, and also the members of the Support and Synthesis team; Ellen Lessner, Eta De Cicco, Rhona Sharpe, Greg Benfield and Helen Beetham, for their support, advice and encouragement.</p> <p>We would also like to acknowledge the guidance and support that we received from the members of the E4L Steering Group.</p>
<p>Date of report</p>	<p>8th February 2009</p>
<p>Section One: Executive Summary</p>	

Aims and Objectives

The E4L JISC funded project has run for two years from March 2007 – February 2009, with its primary aim:

'To investigate learners' opinions and experiences about e-learning from adult and community learning, further and higher education; particularly three core themes of their transitional periods, use of shadow technologies and light bulb moments.'

From the original project plan. The key objectives were to:

- a) To ascertain which learners are effective e-communicators through the use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) and questionnaire.
- b) To investigate learners opinions and experiences of e-learning through individual interviews particularly of the three core themes.
- c) To ascertain the learners opinions and experiences of e-learning as they have progressed through their module, using a questionnaire.
- d) To analyse the data gathered and produce a series of rich interactive case studies and recommendations and guidance for all stakeholders.
- e) As a result of this research, the project will produce a series of case studies and specific guidance that will benefit the consortium partners and will inform the wider education sector about student expectations for Web 2.0 and learning and the best practice for design and delivery.

Overall Approach

Following early engagement with course tutors to gather their support for the project, presentations were made to potential students to encourage them to participate and complete early project engagements including: the questionnaire containing the required Learner Profile questions and a set of basic online tasks hosted on the University of Northampton's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The results of the task involvement determined the sample, who were subsequently interviewed (and recorded) in greater detail. This project could not represent all learners from all disciplines but provides a snapshot of a mix of learners across the different educational levels and those who were assessed to be proficient e-communicators.

The data from the learners determined the coding framework that informed which recordings would be used to exemplify the themes included in the Interactive Case Study (ICS) platform.

Findings

As elaborated in section 3, the students interviewed on E4L show that there is no one type of learner although there may be general trends. The students experience many types of transitions and may be assisted in these by institutions. They value the use of VLEs and like bite sized chunks of interactive course material. The 'proficient e-communicators' sampled by E4L tend towards being audio visual learners and trust tutor recommendations regarding which technology to use on the course rather than looking elsewhere. They may not understand the term e-learning but see technology in its general sense to aid many ways of learning.

Achievements

The main achievements of this study are the findings, messages and recommendations arising from the learners themselves. These are directly relevant to practitioners, support staff and learners, and will help inform future directions in the provision and use of e-learning to support the needs of different learners. E4L has been extremely active in disseminating from an early point in the project at both national and international level and has reached a large and wide audience.

Conclusions

Stakeholders will be able to use the information to design modules around the student; and provide better support and guidance for the student journey through the many transition points that learners experience.

Section Two: Project Outputs

List the project outputs with reference to the agreed outputs lists at <https://mw.brookes.ac.uk/display/JISCle2/Types> and indicate where they can be accessed.

Account for any variance between this list and the intended outputs listed in the project plan (additional outputs that were not initially foreseen or planned, amendments to the list of intended outputs as the project progressed).

If appropriate, include a statement regarding third party permissions and licences for accessing outputs.

From the outset, E4L has put all possible outputs on the project wiki to make these widely available from a central location.

E4L has produced a number of papers and presentations which are either available in conference proceedings or are available from the project website (<http://www.northampton.ac.uk/e4l>) or the project wiki (<https://mw.brookes.ac.uk/display/e4L/E4L+Home>). The complete list of dissemination outputs may be found at Section Nine - Appendix B

The project has used different methods for data collection: Use of a VLE and modified version of Salmon's 5 step model for sampling, focus groups, interviews, questionnaires, interview plus and product card sorting.

A basic outline of these can be seen at:

<https://mw.brookes.ac.uk/display/e4L/3.+Methodology> and will updated fully in the future expanded E4L project website: <http://www.northampton.ac.uk/e4l>.

As part of the dissemination process, papers and presentations have been produced as to the various methods employed by the project including:

Towle, G & Howe, R, 2009. From a whisper to a shout: eliciting the learners voice. Conference Proceedings, Conference of the International Journal of Arts and Sciences: Research Magic, Orlando, USA, 16-19 February 2009, Vol. 1 (9).

Towle, G & Howe, R., 2008. Pyjama Learning: Learner Transitions. *Paper presented to:* ALT-C 2008: Rethinking the digital divide, Leeds, UK, 9-11 September 2008.

Towle, G., & E. A. Draffan., 2008. Enabling Learner's voices. Post conference proceedings: Learning from the Learners Experience Conference, University of Greenwich, 8 July 2008. (Awaiting publication).

Towle, G. & Howe, R. 2008. E-communicators in an e-learning environment. Conference Proceedings, International Association for Development of the Information Society (IADIS) International Conference e-Society 2008, Algarve, Portugal, 9-12 April 2008.

The coding framework used as the basis for further analysis of the student voice may be found at <https://mw.brookes.ac.uk/display/e4L/4.+Coding+and+results>.

The key output is the Interactive Case Studies (ICS) which are available at <http://www.northampton.ac.uk/e4l/ics>. This provides a categorised collection of short video clips which evidences key themes which arose during analysis of student transcripts and which are then further subdivided where particular categories were identified. The list includes:

- Lightbulb moments

- Darklight moments (including clips on familiarity, loss of data and reliability)
- Transitions(including familiarity, increasing and decreasing use of technology, institutional technology, loss of data, prior knowledge and experience, and tutor recommendations.)
- Design and delivery of e-learning (including hardware, learning materials, software and VLE)
- E-communication (including discussion facilities, email, Instant messaging, mobile phones and social networking)
- Personal Learning Strategies (including audio visual learners, learning environment, and reasons for choosing certain technologies)
- Benefits (including access, communication, functionality, interactivity and portability)
- Challenges (including access, cost, limitations and problems, and validity)

Due to consent and permissions from learners, all project videos or sound clips may only be accessed from the ICS site.

All data gathered from the project is stored digitally on a secure central server to which only the project team has access. This will be reviewed 3 years beyond the end of the project i.e. February 2012. At that point a decision will be taken as to what will be retained and what will be deleted.

Section Three: Project Outcomes

Briefly summarise the main outcomes as a result of the project activities. Specify the contribution the project has made to each of the programme level themes. Refer to the outputs from the previous section as appropriate.

Some key messages have emerged. What must be taken into account is that these learners are proficient e-communicators and the data will reflect this:

- Learners value a VLE as a repository for course material but would welcome more interactivity.
- Learners do not specifically relate to e-learning as a term and attribute it to computer-based activities only. When asking about 'technology they use when they learn' it elicits a wider variety of technologies (e.g. television and phone to supplement their learning environment).
- There is no one type of learner and institutions need to provide flexibility and choice for learners as much as possible.
- The learners who participated are primarily audio-visual and appreciate resources in the same form.
- Many of learners only used technology recommended to them by tutors and trusted that they knew what would be best, few looked elsewhere.
- Learners use technology to fit in with their lifestyle as well as their learning and many appreciated learning in 'bite-sized chunks'.
- There are different types of transitions learners undertake on the educational journey including from institution to institution, course to course (both within a course e.g. modules, and from different courses in the same institution) and year to year within a course. Institutions need to be mindful about these changes and the technology and training needs of the students.

The wide variety of clips contained within the ICS provide valuable data which may be viewed in isolation but also linked to key messages which are being highlighted in the Synthesis and Support briefing sheets.

For example, when working online, learners of all ages show reported short bursts of attention, multi-tasking between different applications and parts of the screen, rather than trying to digest large volumes of information. This is supported by Vampira (<http://wb2.northampton.ac.uk/e4l/video.php?id=29&catid=8&themeid=2>) who indicates that "The disadvantages obviously if you're doing it at home are that you've got the other distractions such as doorbells, children, dogs, the washing machine, cooking dinner, other things like that. They're about the only disadvantages and the fact that your computer can crash and go poorly, which is what has happened to mine at the moment."

In addition to the valuable data gathered and presented through the ICS, E4L has also investigated new methodologies (or variations on old methods) to engage with learners. The detailed description provided at <https://mw.brookes.ac.uk/display/e4L/3.+Methodology> and used within the project demonstrated a number of key points:

- The need for early engagement with tutors to secure their commitment and support
- The value of rewarding and recognising student commitment at all stages of the project. The students must be able to get tangible benefits from engagement which range from low cost (e.g. chocolates) to higher cost (e.g. MP3 players or gift vouchers).
- When looking at transitions, the development of an Personal Education Flowchart which considers both intra and inter transitional moments provided a useful guide for further discussion.

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

- Self rating questionnaires should be used with caution since students are prone to over rate (and more likely with adult learners) under rate their achievements which may mean that they could have been excluded from further study – even though they were suitable. Use active methodologies with real tasks to demonstrate achievement where possible.
- The product card sort methodology provided a useful way to focus learners onto the types of technologies used in their lives and prioritise these if possible. This provided an excellent base for further discussion and highlighted the fact that learners saw technology in a very wide sense beyond what many practitioners consider as tools used for traditional e-learning.

Section Four: Dissemination

List the dissemination that has taken place and is planned, about project findings and outcomes, e.g. workshops, journal articles, conference presentations. Attach or provide URLs for any appropriate dissemination or presentation materials.

List (and reference where appropriate) any publicity the project has received, e.g. press coverage, awards.

E4L has disseminated locally, nationally and internationally. The team are committed to disseminating the key messages arising from the project as widely as possible, and to this end further dissemination activities are planned beyond the funded lifetime of the project.

Dissemination activity has been based around a range of different medium including electronic, paper based, and presentations. Details may be found at Section nine Part B. Some of the key items include:

Electronic

- E4L Website
- Oxford Brookes Wiki
- Interactive Case Studies
- E-newsletters at The University of Northampton

Paper Based

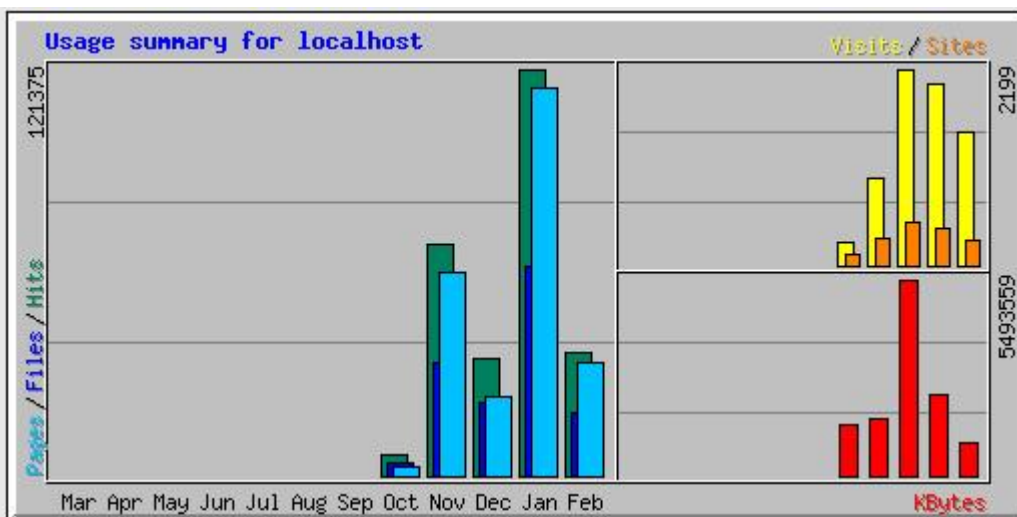
- Staff newsletters
- Paper on sampling theory and methodology used, in the IADIS '08 E-society conference proceedings
- Paper on learner transitions, in the ALT-C '08 conference proceedings
- Article including information about the E4L project and ICS in 'Chips' a newsletter about benefits of e-learning with adults (awaiting publication)
- Paper based on methodology and ICS for the international conference 'Research Magic'
- Contributed to S&S team recommendations and guidance for all stakeholders/ briefing papers.

Presentations

- NIACE e-learning conference
- BECTA student forums
- Presentation on sampling theory and methodology used, at the IADIS '08 E-society conference
- Presentation on HE data at the University of Northampton E-learning conference
- Panel participation at the JISC 2008 conference in Keele
- Presentation at the JISC Regional Support Centre E-fair
- Joint presentation with LexDis on experiences interviewing learners at Learning from the learner's experience conference at the University of Greenwich
- Presentation on learner transitions at ALT-C '08

- Workshop held for the Experiences of E-learning special interest group (ELESIG)
- Presentation about the Interactive Case Studies in the showcase at the JISC online 'Innovating e-learning 2008' and participation in the forums
- Workshop held for the ELESIG group based on the Interactive Case Studies
- JISC S&S team dissemination workshop with one of the project learners
- Workshop at Northampton College's Inset day
- Keynote presentation at The University of Kingston Learning and Teaching day.
- Presentation at The University of Northampton "Lunch in the library" on the ICS.
- Presentation based on methodology and ICS at the international conference 'Research Magic'
- Panel presentation at JISC 2009 conference in Edinburgh (March 2009)
- Presentation and workshop at the University of Northampton Learning and Teaching Conference on the theme of 'Transitions'.

Whilst the number of reflections being left on the ICS is low at present. Analysis of the statistics show a large number of hits from a range of different users. For example during January 2009 there were 121,375 hits on the site.



Summary by Month											
Month	Daily Avg						Monthly Totals				
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits	
Feb 2009	1367	707	1255	55	281	931186	1495	33900	19105	36914	
Jan 2009	3915	2023	3728	65	411	2274822	2023	115598	62725	121375	
Dec 2008	1136	710	769	70	475	5493559	2199	23858	22019	35241	
Nov 2008	2296	1135	2030	32	308	1615395	975	60922	34052	68895	

Figure 1 - Chart showing number of hits on the ICS

Section Five: Key Messages

Briefly outline the key messages from your project which you would like to see inform future work. Be bold and ambitious in making recommendations for:

Policy and practice in further and higher education sectors

The messages that arise from E4L show the importance of listening to learners and the role that their messages should play in informing developments which impact on their experiences. All levels of the institution should appreciate the value of the learners voice and have mechanisms in place to be able to allow this to feed into the decision making process. Future course design would benefit from the developer going 'back to basics' and putting themselves in the learner's position.

Future learner experience research

A key point of E4L is that the students sampled are those identified as proficient e-communicators. Hence all outputs (transitions, light bulb moments and shadow technologies) only come from this specific group of students. We need to better understand the experiences of students who are not proficient – how do they experience these different moments. The methodologies which were refined in E4L provide a useful base for further research in this area and should be considered in future design.

Other JISC projects

Most (if not all) JISC projects will impact at some point on the student experience and should make reference to this within their activity. Projects which are planning to design tangible software products should take note of the learners experience of current software and aim to provide more learner centred outputs which engage the learner rather than just providing the content in a pedagogically sound manner. Learners value peer contact and there should be opportunity to provide easy ways for learners to share ideas and concepts.

Section Six: Synergy & Sustainability

List and briefly describe any links established with other Learner Experience projects, other national programmes, projects or services which contributed to your project or which you feel your project contributed to.

Explain how the outputs and outcomes of the project will be taken forward and how these synergies could be built on in the future.

E4L has made links both locally and nationally which has helped to (and will help) continue disseminate the key messages which have arisen.

Within The University of Northampton (TUON) E4L is now embedded within the Learning and Teaching Strategy and a recent meeting of the committee (M15/09 on January 22nd 2009) had an action on all members "To highlight the value of and disseminate the deliverables from E4L and BITE projects to colleagues in their Schools/Departments and note instances of embedding." There has certainly been a synergy between the JISC funded E4L project and the HEA funded pathfinder BITE project at TUON with the findings from E4L informing some of the BITE content which is being used as part of teaching staff development on both PGCTHE and general teaching sessions. The value of the ICS was also raised by a senior member of staff at the Northampton College Inset Day who fed back that "the project raised many interesting points and that he would be using these to inform a future planning session."

E4L has maintained links with all of the projects within this phase of the Learner Experience Project through the work of the synthesis and support team and has made particular links with the STROLL project as Amanda Jefferies has been a member of the E4L steering group; and with LEXDIS with whom there have been joint presentations and papers.

The wide mix of experience of those staff who have been part of the steering group has been very helpful in terms of maintaining awareness of possible links and future directions. Senior university representation has maintained internal links at the highest level whilst links with Higher Education Academy, JISC RSC, Northamptonshire Adult and Community Learning, partner colleges (Northampton College and Moulton College), NIACE, and AoC NILTA have ensured that the messages from E4L have been taken to many key educational areas.

Particular mention must be made of the work of the external evaluator (Paul Brett) who has worked closely with the project since it was originally conceived, in addition to independently validating the methodology used within the project. His final report (Section nine - Appendix A) provides evidence after interviewing ten staff from a range of backgrounds who had awareness of the project from either viewing the ICS or attending one of the many presentations. The report indicates the value of the ICS output for teaching practitioners, staff development, institutional planners and with the learners themselves.

Particular recommendations to aid synergy included:

- That all the outputs be sent to Martin Oliver at the HE Academy's Observatory, which is at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/elt/elro> for inclusion as a project and to aid further dissemination.
- Producing an overview which would inform how the outcomes from the project would or could be fed into policy making and infrastructure arrangements at University of Northampton and partner institutions.
- Changes to the ICS to provide more functionality and better search facility
- Setting up a national library of video clips from the Learner Experience projects so that all nationally funded learning organisations could have access to high quality, searchable video clips.

Section Seven: Issues and Challenges

Report on issues or problems that impacted on the development and implementation of the project. What advice would you give to others embarking on learner experience projects? What advice would you give to anyone undertaking learner experience research within their institution?

A number of issues and challenges have been identified in the interim project reports. These are summarised below, together with their resolution and comments ("For the future") offering pointers to researchers undertaking similar projects in the future.

The interim reports highlight a number of issues which had to be overcome during the course of the project.

Difficulty recruiting students from the FE sector

Whilst E4L was able to recruit sufficient numbers of students from HE and from the ACL sectors, it had difficulty recruiting from students within the partner institution (Northampton College). Early engagement was made with staff at the institution to secure their commitment to the project and students were offered the same incentives (MP3 player or gift vouchers) as those in the other sectors. Despite this students were reluctant to sign up or showed no commitment if they were 'pressured' to engage by their tutors. As a last resort, the team moved to another partner college (Moulton College) and were able to secure a number of students from this site. The key message for E4L was not to be defeated through lack of engagement and to keep trying different strategies and methods.

Design and implementation of the platform for the Interactive Case Studies (workpackage 7)

The ICS was originally conceived in the project bid as the key dissemination vehicle for the learner videos. It was felt that those viewing the content should have a chance to reflect on it to inform future viewers of ideas for future development. Whilst this concept seemed to favour the style of blog technology, it became apparent through early prototypes that the existing templates did not allow the flexibility which was required by the project. A member of the TUON web team was recruited to design a site from detailed specifications which took longer than originally planned due to the fact that this person had other conflicting demands (NOTE: It may have been easier to use an independent developer who could commit more time to this project). There have subsequently been a range of suggested changes to the ICS which mean that we either have to re-engage with this original developer or spend time sourcing a new developer. Whilst this is an issue for the E4L project, future projects should consider planning an extra few months development time into technical disseminations or use existing platforms which are already suitably developed.

Encouraging those people viewing the ICS to leave reflections has been a difficult task perhaps indicating that it will take time for this group to feel confident with leaving thoughts on the site. The external report does mention the value of the ICS but does not provide any real comments on why people were not inclined to leave their thoughts. Key suggestions for the future could include making it clear at an early stage that those leaving reflections do not have to leave any details about themselves or their institution. It may have also been useful to have pre-populated some of the clips with comments made verbally during presentations – so that new contributors did not feel that they were the first ones.

Section Eight: Support

Please comment on the value to your project of the Support and Synthesis team, workshops, visits and activities. What did you most value? What would you have liked to be different?

The support workshops have been a very useful and valuable source of advice and support. We have received many specific suggestions and ideas, both from members of the Support and Synthesis team and from other projects. In addition, the Support and Synthesis have helped to ensure that the project stayed closely aligned with the aims and objectives of the programme as a whole.

Section Nine: Appendix A

External Evaluator's report for the JISC funded E4L – E-Learning for Learners project

Background to this evaluation

The E4L JISC funded project ran for two years from March 2007 – February 2009, led by a team from the University of Northampton with its primary aim:

To investigate learners' opinions and experiences about e-learning from adult and community learning, further and higher education; particularly three core themes of their transitional periods, use of shadow technologies and light bulb moments.

This brief evaluation report on the E4L project, written a month before the project's close date, has been compiled by Dr Paul Brett, the external evaluator for the project. This is not an evaluation of the project as an enterprise or of the way it has been managed, executed etc., but it is a 'light touch' attempt to tease out the value of the project from those whose practice it may inform.

It has been written using information obtained by telephone interviews conducted with 10 e-Learning professionals who have all had some experience of the project and its main output, the Interactive Case Studies, available from <http://wb2.northampton.ac.uk/e4l/>. The interviewees had a variety of roles in e-Learning, from classroom practitioners, management roles, and nationwide briefs. The evaluation questions focused on the Interactive Case Studies and sought to tease out views in three areas:

- the value of the project's processes and outcomes to their role,
- how the project's outcomes would be useful to their practice;
- how the project's deliverables could and were being used.

Scope of the Evaluation and this report

This evaluation report focuses only on the Interactive Case Studies, as one of the project's initially stated objectives. The full list of objectives were as follows:

- a) To gain a better understanding of the modules the learners are taking and the motivations for including e-learning on the courses by interviewing tutors.
- b) To ascertain which learners are effective e-communicators through the use of a virtual learning environment (VLE) and questionnaire.
- c) To investigate learners opinions and experiences of e-learning through individual

interviews particularly of the three core themes.

- d) To ascertain the learners opinions and experiences of e-learning as they have progressed through their module, using a questionnaire.
- e) To analyse the data gathered and produce a series of rich interactive case studies and recommendations and guidance for all stakeholders.
- f) As a result of this research, the project will produce a series of case studies and specific guidance that will benefit the consortium partners and will inform the wider education sector about student expectations for Web 2.0 and learning and the best practice for design and delivery.

and thus this report focuses mainly on e) and f), as the visible web-based output at the time of interviews and writing. Objectives a) through to d) have been completed en route to the rendering of the Interactive Case Studies.

The sector though will also be further informed by the full completion of these two objectives, namely, the e) *recommendations and guidance for all stakeholders*. and f) *the best practice for design and delivery*. These, in tandem, with the learners' voices captured and thematically arranged in the Interactive Case Studies, will be useful and useable artefacts for those making decisions about e-Learning at all levels. These are being produced at the time of writing. One interviewee was keenly anticipating these and saw these as being the most valuable project output, especially when useable in tandem with the Interactive Case Studies (ICS).

Evaluation of project outcomes

The interviews provided some unexpected information, prompted by the interview questions, as above, and for reader ease this report has distilled these into the categories of benefits and for suggestions for further work. Each of the areas in each category explains why the benefits were considered valuable and where they might be applicable. No attempt was made to verify whether conclusions voiced by the interviewees were actually evidenced in the project's data set, but took these as they were articulated!

It certainly needs to be mentioned that all interviewees who had had contact with E4L team reported high praise for their professionalism, endeavour, understanding of the issues and their commitment to the project, although was not a focus of this report.

Beneficial outcomes

Reappraising and informing of approaches for teaching practioners

The watching of the student's views' video clips in the ICS had informed the ways in which these teachers had decided to use and not use technology as an aspect of a blended learning approach and the video clips had given valuable feedback on approaches. That technology might be a barrier, and not the presumed enabler, and that it certainly was not valued as a replacement for face to face teaching informed a reappraisal of the balance, extent and nature of e-Learning integration into this syllabus. The darklight moments section of the ICS was seen as especially useful as a, spark to reflection on possible overuse of technology. The ICS then is a useful repository of student views for those designing blended learning programmes and making decisions about the nature, types and fit of the 'e' tasks with face to face tasks, as well as what support is needed with these, and would be useful to inform at a syllabus planning stage.

Information about learners' transitions

Many interviewees spoke about the value of the research in the area of students in

transition between institutions, and remarked that this was a specifically under researched area. So great value was put on this part of the project. That decision makers and educational providers need to work in tandem and align their use of institutionally supplied educational technologies, so as to cater for learners' understanding of their uses, and that this seemed to be backed up by the learners' voices was seen as highly informative and useful. That is, not only the technologies but how to use them, and how they were fitted to learning outcomes. So, not only should there be a fit of technology types, but also of how they are being used to facilitate learning. It was felt that the ICS showed the constant re-learning of institutional technology types, and the inconsistent use of technology throughout learners' journeys, was detrimental to learners and that 'joining up' between institutions would be advantageous, though a large and complex task. This also applied to the uses made or not being made of learner owned hardware and software. One interviewee made the point that for them the ICS flagged up the gradual drift away from the need for institutionally owned technologies and more towards integration and use of learner owned ones.

Informed and confirmed the role of e-Learning in the ACL sector

The ICS for this interviewee had backed up views about how best to integrate and exploit the advantages which e-Learning can bring into the Adult and Community Learning sector. This is to provide work which is done away from the class and is used to create a virtual community of learners which extends but does not replace face to face interaction. These learners were seen from the ICS video clips as not wanting whole e-Learning lessons but short focused learning chunks, and video clips especially were seen as being the main utility of e-Learning. The ICSs will enable this perspective to be presented to others working in this sector from the learners' mouth and thus to add credence to this approach of never replacing the tutor and the classroom interaction which is so valued by this group of learners.

Use for staff development

Many of the interviewees saw great potential for the ICS in staff development on the use, potential issues, and learner perspective on integration of e-Learning into a course. They had all used the ICS in staff development as a resource in such sessions. That staff could view and hear student benefits and the problems which they had encountered in e-Learning was thought to be a very useful as both a reality check and as a stimulus for engaging staff to develop and reflect upon this area of their practice. The ICS also illustrated how learners use, adapt and enjoy their own technologies to support their individual approach to learning, and that often staff had no idea that was happening. The ICS had already been used to start discussion and reflection on learners' perspectives and used as a catalyst to motive those staff who were less converted to the benefits of e-approaches to learning tasks

Inform policy on use of learner owned technologies

That the ICS demonstrated that learners were using, adapting, seeking out and experimenting with a range of non-prescribed or mandatory technologies was felt to be a very useful insight into learner behaviour. As well as the use of this for staff development, it was felt that there may well be a higher level strategic point which is going to need consideration in the near future, which relates to the intersection of institutionally supplied and applied technologies, versus those which were commercially available, mostly free, and with which learners were already fluent. So the implication was that with fluent digital users coming into the learning arena, the onus on how and which technologies were used to support a learning activity or approach could soon be an issue which is left to learner choice, and not institutionally driven. The author would however suggest that such a radical approach be tested through an extended learner sample and monitored over time.

Use with learners to inform learners

An interesting and unforeseen use of the ICS already adopted was with learners themselves. It was suggested that they could inform learners about what approaches and uses of technologies had benefits and be used to stimulate such uses from, and by, other learners and to reinforce the value of uses already being made by teachers. The use of ICS in induction was one such time in the learning calendar where it was suggested they could be used with learners.

Card sort as a technique

As a methodology which starts people thinking about technology and the large range of different technologies which are used, not used, and yet could possibly be used for learning, the card sort methodology as applied by the team, has been found to be useful in other arenas. Its use provoked discussion about new technologies, gaps in technology use, the values of technologies and had facilitated rich exchanges between practitioners on their applications in e-Learning.

Suggestions

These suggestions cover issues for the sector and possible further refinements of the project's work.

Recommendations and guidance for all stakeholders for best practice for design and delivery.

As mentioned above, it was suggested that a full set of stakeholder guidance and recommendations as distilled from the learner data collected over the course of the project would enrich and of course complement the ICS. If these were also housed with the ICS it would provide the multimedia-based evidence to support the project's recommendations.

The HEA Observatory

It was suggested that all the outputs be got to Martin Oliver at the HE Academy's Observatory, which is at <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/elt/elro> for inclusion as a project and to aid further dissemination.

ICS website

There were some suggestions to improvements, or added functionality to the ICS web site and materials which were that (i) the subject of what each learner was studying, in the main be an additional piece of information added to the prose at the top of each clip, as some technologies will be discipline specific, and a request to (ii) allow the clips to be categorised or ordered by learner sector as ACL learners were of different orientation and motivation to those if HE, for example.

Care on over-generalisation from ICS

Two of the interviewees mentioned that a degree of caution needs to be exercised over use of the ICS and the findings, given that, as is always the case, the research sample for this qualitative study is small, and from different learning sectors. The ACL sectors and the issue of transition were thought to be significantly under represented in research and ripe for further investigation.

Policy changes in University of Northampton

As a useful addition to the project one interviewee suggested that an overview about how the outcomes from the project would or could be fed into policy making and infrastructure arrangements at University of Northampton and partner institutions would be informative

for others.

A national library of short video clips

One interviewee recommended that a national library of video clips be set up so that all nationally funded learning organisation could have access to high quality, searchable video clips. The interviewer pointed out the JISC Collections site.

Summary

This light touch evaluation of the ICS and its uses and value shows that for those who know of it, it will inform practice and policy. The greater challenge is to get its deliverables more widely known, and of course to further expand the research base of the learner perspective and of under researched sectors.

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

	Dissemination Activity	Quarter	Status	Target Audience	Level	Purpose	Lead Agent	Evaluation of Impact
Electronic	E4L website	Q1 07	Ongoing	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, students, other interested parties	HE, FE, ACL, Sixth form, work-based skills, educational based organisations.	Awareness/ Information	UN	Email link and feedback to project manager, researcher and feedback to external evaluator
	E4L Project wiki	Q1 07	Ongoing	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, students, other interested parties	HE, FE, ACL, Sixth form, work-based skills, educational based organisations.	Awareness/ Information	UN	Email link and feedback to project manager, researcher and feedback to external evaluator
	Project specific page on the JISC main website	Q1 07	Ongoing	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, students, other interested parties	HE, FE, ACL, Sixth form, work-based skills, educational based organisations.	Awareness/ Information	JISC/UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator and JISC
	Series of rich interactive case studies	Q1 08	Available	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, students, other interested parties	HE, FE, ACL, Sixth form, work-based skills, educational based organisations.	Awareness/ Information/Implementation	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

	Project information on the University of Northampton's Learning Technologists web site	Q3 07	Available	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, students, other interested parties	HE, FE, ACL, Sixth form, work-based skills, educational based organisations.	Awareness/ Information	UN	Email link and feedback to project manager, researcher and feedback to external evaluator
	Project information and updates in University of Northampton WALTT (Wiki About Learning Technology and Training)	Q1 08	Available	Internal to University of Northampton staff	Internal to University of Northampton staff	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager and researcher
Paper based	University of Northampton Staff newsletter	Q2 07	Available	Internal to University of Northampton staff	Internal to University of Northampton staff	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager and researcher
	Paper on sampling theory and methodology used, in the IADIS '08 E-society conference proceedings	Q2 08	Available	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator
	Paper on learner transitions, in the ALT-C '08 conference proceedings	Q4 08	Available	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

Journal article regarding the sampling methodology for the <i>International Journal of Web-based communication</i>	Q1 09	Ongoing	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/Information/Feedback	UN	Feedback to project manager and researcher
Article including information about the E4L project and ICS in 'Chips' a newsletter about benefits of e-learning with adults	Q1 09	Available	Practitioners, researchers	ACL	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager and researcher
Paper based on methodology and ICS for the international conference 'Research Magic'	Q1 09	Available	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/Information/Feedback	UN	Feedback to project manager and researcher
Recommendations and guidance for all stakeholders/ Briefing papers	Q1 09	Work in progress	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, other interested parties	HE, FE, ACL, Sixth form, educational based organisations.	Awareness/ Information	UN/JISC	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator and JISC
Final project report	Q1 09	Available	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, other interested parties	HE, FE, ACL, Sixth form, work-based skills, educational based organisations.	Awareness/ Information	UN/JISC	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator and JISC

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

Presentations	NIACE e-learning conference using ACL data	Q1 08	Completed	Practitioners, designers, developers	HE, FE, ACL, Sixth form, work-based skills, educational based organisations.	Awareness/ Information/Feedback	UN/NIACE	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator and NIACE
	BECTA student forums	Q1 08	Completed	Students, practitioners, educational based organisations	FE, ACL, work-based skills, educational based organisations	Awareness/ Information/Feedback	UN/BECTA/JISC	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator and BECTA
	Presentation on sampling theory and methodology used, at the IADIS '08 E-society conference	Q1 08	Completed	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator
	Presentation on HE data at the University of Northampton E-learning conference	Q1 08	Completed	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator
	Panel participation at the JISC conference	Q2 08	Completed	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information/Feedback	UN/JISC	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator, JISC

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

Presentation at the JISC Regional Support Centre E-fair	Q2 08	Completed	Practitioners, designers, developers	FE, Sixth Form, ACL, Work Based Learning providers, HEI providers, Specialist Colleges and educational based organisations	Awareness/ Information	UN/JISC	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator
Joint presentation with LexDis on experiences interviewing learners at Learning from the learner's experience conference at the University of Greenwich	Q2 08	Completed	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher, LexDis and external evaluator
Presentation on learner transitions at ALT-C '08	Q4 08	Completed	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher, external evaluator
Workshop held for the Experiences of E-learning special interest group (ELESIG)	Q2 08	Completed	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, other interested parties	FE, Sixth Form, ACL, Work Based Learning providers, HEI providers, Specialist Colleges and educational based organisations	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher.

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

Presentation about the interactive case studies in the showcase at the JISC online 'Innovating e-learning 2008' and participation in the forums	Q4 08	Completed	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, other interested parties	FE, Sixth Form, ACL, Work Based Learning providers, HEI providers, Specialist Colleges and educational based organisations	Awareness/ Information/Feedback	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher.
Worshop held for the ELESIG group based on the Interactive Case Studies (ICS)	Q4 08	Completed	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, other interested parties	FE, Sixth Form, ACL, Work Based Learning providers, HEI providers, Specialist Colleges and educational based organisations	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher.
Dissemination workshop with one of the project learners	Q4 08	Completed	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, other interested parties	FE, Sixth Form, ACL, Work Based Learning providers, HEI providers, Specialist Colleges and educational based organisations	Awareness/ Information	UN/JISC	Feedback to project manager, researcher, JISC.
Workshop at Northampton College's inset day	Q4 08	Completed	FE staff	FE staff	Awareness/ Information/ Feedback	UN/ Northampton College	Feedback to project manager, researcher, College

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

								partners
	Key note presentation at Kingston University's Learning and Teaching Conference	Q1 09	Completed	Academics, researchers.	HE staff	Awareness/Information	UN	Feedback to project manager and researcher.
	Presentation based on methodology and ICS at the international conference 'Research Magic'	Q1 09	Completion	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/Information/Feedback	UN	Feedback to project manager and researcher
Miscellaneous	Attendance at the Experiences of E-learning Specialist Interest Group (ELESIG) start-up meeting and workshops	Q1 08	Ongoing	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher.
	Collaboration and sharing of materials with BITE project	Q1 08	Ongoing	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, other interested parties	FE, Sixth Form, ACL, Work Based Learning providers, HEI providers, Specialist Colleges and educational based organisations	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project managers, researchers on both projects

Learners Experiences of e-Learning Programme

Collaboration and sharing of materials with LexDis project	Q1 08	Ongoing	Academics, researchers, practitioners, designers, other interested parties	FE, Sixth Form, ACL, Work Based Learning providers, HEI providers, Specialist Colleges and educational based organisations	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project managers, researchers on both projects
Learning and Teaching Practice Experts Group attendance	Q1 08	Ongoing	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher.
Research day held for Leicester University's WOLF project - exchanging of ideas and presentation of E4L project and methodology	Q1 08	Completed	Academics and researchers	HE	Awareness/Information/Feedback	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher.
Short video of the researcher talking about the project and methodology available online via the ELESIG site and the wiki	Q3 08	Completed	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/ Information	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher.
Promotion of the interactive case studies when attending the competent e-tutor two day workshop	Q4 08	Completed	Academics and researchers	HE and other interested parties	Awareness/Information/Feedback	UN	Feedback to project manager, researcher.

Section 9 – Appendix C

Finance Report

Final project figures will not be available till after the end of February. The figures below represent the most accurate data currently available. Amounts have been kept under their original project coding to show where there has been greater variance. The small amount of funding remaining will be used to pay for continuing dissemination work and for server maintenance.

Total Grant	£80,000	Duration of project	24 months
Reporting Period	1/10/08 – 23/2/09 (estimated where possible to end Feb 09)		

Budget Headings	Total budget allocated	Expenditure this reporting period	Total expenditure to date	Further information
Staff				
Travel & Subsistence				
Equipment				
Dissemination activities				
Evaluation activities				
Recruitment				
Other (please specify)				
Totals				

Balance [REDACTED]