

Choosing and using ILT Resources

This activity looks at how to choose and use different resources using ILT. There are some useful web sites and resources you can download.

Other Resources for this module are:

- Make Selective Use of IT
- Using Interactive Whiteboards
- Laptop Presentation Tips
- Making your own worksheets using screen shots

Choosing and Using ILT Resources

In Further Education, ILT refers to the use of information and communication technologies to support the delivery and management of learning.

This publication has been produced to assist academic staff with the task of finding and using ILT resources. This guide will address the following issues:

- Finding resources
- Evaluating resources
- Using and Integrating resources

Finding Resources

The vast growth in the availability and choice of ILT resources to support teaching and learning can make the task of finding good quality resources which are relevant to your subject area, both time consuming and frustrating.

However a number of agencies exist which have put together guides to make the task much simpler for the already overstretched lecturer. A few of the many, with a short description of what they contain, are listed below.

National Learning Network (NLN) http://www.nln.ac.uk	Provides high quality learning chunks for many subject areas which are free to FE colleges
Further Education Resource Library(FERL) http://www.ferl.org.uk/	Contains a range of resources and materials for using ILT in teaching and learning across many subject areas
Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) http://www.learningtechnologies.ac.uk	A national resource repository aimed specifically at the post-16 sector
The Virtual Teacher Centre http://vtc.ngfl.gov.uk	Database of resources and activities designed to help teachers develop and share ideas for good practice

The types of resources available can be divided into 2 categories:

- Resources for use by students for example:
 - Quizzes
 - Learning materials specifically written for courses or subjects
 - “How to” Guides
 - Websites
 - Searchable databases
 - CD ROMs
 - Software
 - Videos

- Resources to assist staff for example:
 - Case studies
 - Articles
 - Schemes of work
 - Lesson plans
 - Projects

Along side the materials, which can be found, it is important to realise that they are useless if there is no access to the equipment needed to support them for example, PCs, laptops, projectors, Interactive Whiteboards, TV and video.

Evaluating Resources

Finding materials on the web is by far the simplest part of using ILT in your teaching. Once you have identified the type of resource you require it is vital that it's quality and usability are checked. Many of the sites containing ILT resources actively encourage evaluation of the materials by practitioners. This is an invaluable time saver and importantly both positive and negative feedback is given. Of course ILT resources are not limited to those found on the internet. CD ROMs and specialist software can also play an important part in your teaching.

Some points to consider when evaluating any material:

- Are they pertinent to your group of students?
- Are they fit for the purpose for which you intend to use them?
- Are the prerequisite knowledge and skills clear?
- Do the materials conform to accepted and current levels of accuracy, coverage and balance in the content area?
- Is the required hardware and software available?

Using and Integrating Resources

ILT now has a very high profile in the delivery of teaching, but there is always the worry that the staff may use technology for technology's sake instead of using it to enhance and support the learning experience. Not only are institutions pushing for a greater use of ILT, but students now have higher expectations of classroom delivery and are demanding more than purely exposition, discussion and the use of an OHT.

In order to meet these expectations careful planning must go into the preparation of lessons. You will need to consider whether the room in which you are delivering has the necessary specialist equipment such as PCs, laptops, projectors, interactive whiteboards, digital cameras, network points or TV and Video to allow you to use your resources. This equipment may not be available in every classroom, so careful planning is required to ensure that access to the technologies is available when necessary. It is essential therefore, that Schemes of Work and Lesson Plans clearly identify when and where the resources are to be used.

With the correct hardware available, ILT resources can be used in a number of ways. When laptops are connected to a digital projector, teachers or students can easily incorporate presentations or multimedia resources into lessons.

Using an Interactive Whiteboard enables educational resources to be used in a highly interactive way and are suitable for use in both large and small group settings. Best use of these whiteboards is made when both the teacher and student use it in a classroom situation. The boards can be used to:

- Show video clips that explain difficult theories
- Demonstrate how a software applications works
- Display Internet resources
- Create handwritten drawings, notes and concept maps during class time, all of which can be saved for future reference by
- Provide an electronic version of the same features as a traditional whiteboard
- Offer an on-screen keyboard that enables you to enter text or data into almost any application
- Enable editing on screen and the recording of any changes or additions
- Enhance presentations by easily integrating video, animation, graphics, text and audio
- Enable whole-class tuition
- Act as an electronic flipchart

Digital cameras and video cameras create exciting learning opportunities for students and can be used to:

- Capture fieldwork
- Take images for inclusion in individual portfolios as evidence for assessment
- Create multimedia presentations
- Record images in areas such as Art, Hairdressing
- Record student role-play

The Internet has opened up exciting learning opportunities for students and is an invaluable tool for use both in the classroom and for directed study. The following list shows some of the ways it can be used to enhance teaching and learning:

- Use e-mail as a medium of communication, for example sending and receiving homework,
- Research both in class and as directed study
- Curriculum resources can be available online

Along with the internet, Intranets are fast becoming increasingly popular as a repository for resources and college information, with the advantage that it's content has been vetted and therefore cuts out the danger of exposure to unsavory content.

An intranet can also be used in an educational context to:

- Post news, notices, students' achievements
- Publish multimedia resources
- Provide links to external resources
- Research and gather information (from the resources made available on the intranet)
- Create discussion groups which can facilitate project work and peer-mentoring

Using ILT resources not only helps engage traditional learners but can assist in supporting a wider range of learning styles such as independent learning and on-line research. This allows you to give more time to supporting learners with varying levels of ability to progress at their own pace and according to their own ability.