



Learn@Work

Minerva Project

Dublin



ICT-based Induction and Support for Worker-Learners and e-Resource Pack for Academic Staff involved in WBL

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Structure of the Presentation

- **Focus and purpose of the [L@W](#) (Dublin) Pilot Package**
- **Design challenges, policy context, design principles**
- **Pilot groups and lessons learned**
- **Why we changed from a focus on worker-learners to resources for academic staff involved in WBL (academics as worker-learners)**
- **New design principles**
- **CONTENTS of both packs**

Focus of the first DIT L@W Package

The particular focus of Learn@Work (Dublin) Pilots was the development of a locally-informed induction and support package for worker-learners with whom we currently work, including [apprentices](#), [adult learners](#) in their community, workers engaged in [continuing professional development](#), and [part-time](#) students generally, which would introduce them to the use of computers, to basic ICT skills, to eLearning, to the use of WebCT and similar platforms, and to the academic study skills required for sustainable participation in formal work-related training and education.

The Local Digital Divide and Worker Exclusion

(Rationale in State of the Art Report)

WHO might benefit?

- **Low-skilled manual workers of any age**
- **Isolated workers with poor internet connectivity**
- **Older workers in traditional industries, including education**
- **Workers with physical disabilities**
- **Apprentices learning on-the-job**
- **Resource poor communities**
- ***as well as CPD participants at any level***

Challenges for Academic ICT/E-learning Designers

- **Assumptions about the identity of the worker-learner as 'student' in the traditional sense**
- **Practice of designing for the 'generic' learner (other than in the adult education tradition)**
- **Preference for a design model which is based on academic levels, learning outcomes, assessment and certification**
- **Preference not to engage with learner support beyond initial induction.**

Policy Context: E-Learning Roadmap (1)

“Design of environment and tools should be participative and learner orientated. Successful learning environments aim at today’s as well as the future needs of learners

- e-Learning products should be easy to use and **enhance the learning experience**. Successful learning environments must implement learning and teaching strategies, and at the same time incorporate **high usability**
- Projects should have a global dimension and include international partners. Successful learning environments take into account the differences and commonalities of cultures and attitudes across the world.
- Products should have a **social good** and have benefits for developing countries, migrant populations and disenfranchised communities
- **All projects should be evaluated thoroughly in practical ways with real students and interested educators”**

E-Roadmap for Ireland (2)

“The depth of learning is related to the depth of engagement with the content, the learning environment, and the community of learners. The challenge is to provide technology that enriches and deepens the learning process with open ended, experiential learning environments. Research vehicles of this type will have the following attributes:

- **A target audience of individual, family, and community**
- **Creative and innovative interaction styles**
- **Unstructured, creative, just-in-time learning**
- **No predefined learning outcomes, the learner will be responsible for their own learning and define their own personal learning goals”**

Design Principles Developed (1)

- ***Principle 1:*** the design of the package should be informed by an understanding of both traditional college-based learning and of emerging paradigms of learning through work
- ***Principle 2:*** the pedagogical approach in delivery of the package should take account of motivation, self-efficacy, affordances and supports in relation to the specific contexts of user worker-learners
- ***Principle 3:*** the design and delivery approach should be open-ended, loosely structured, adaptive, responsive, experiential and authentic
- ***Principle 4:*** the design should be un-inhibited by technologies of modularisation, credit systems, assessment or certification
- ***Principle 5:*** the package should be free from pre-determined learning outcomes pitched at particular levels

Design Principles (2)

- ***Principles 6:*** the language, style, images and general formatting of the package should take account of best practice in literacy practice
- ***Principle 7:*** the package should include paper-based materials, CD material, computer-based and internet-based materials so as to minimise inequities of personal resources and work-place affordances
- ***Principle 8:*** induction support should include face-to-face contact at a level appropriate to the needs of the particular worker-learners
- ***Principle 9:*** activities within the package should be adaptable to the authentic context of the worker-learner.
- ***Principle 10:*** the overall thrust of the package should be towards development of worker-learner capabilities to direct their own sustainable and independent learning and to decide their future learning careers.

Philosophical Challenges & Competing Positionalities

- **1. The remit of HE (a public knowledge institution) in building the capacity of the workforce by means other than providing programmes**
- **2. Can a generic package be designed without the designers knowing the affordances of each workplace?**
- **3. Are workers themselves responsible for acquiring working knowledge?**

Pre-Pilot and Pilot Groups

- **Older academic staff who generally do not use ICTs (fine art lecturers)**
- **City Park workers involved in adult basic education**
- **Adults with disabilities who use ICTs**
- **Professional trainers in the private sector**
- **Network of crèche owners**

Challenges from implementing the Pilots

- **Competing worldviews and values about the role of HE in its interface with the world of work**
- **Competing paradigms of learning assumed in design of learning for the workplace**
- **Differing understandings of nomenclatures: *induction, support, student.***
- **Competing views of the identity of the worker-learner: *student, worker, adult, etc.***
- **Competing views of the levels of support due to learners in the workplace: *who is responsible?***
- **Competing paradigms of teaching: *instructional design, adult education, open learning, programmed learning, etc***
- **Competing traditions of materials design.**

Move to an e-Resource Pack for WBL Lecturers?

- **Developers of the first package did not generally interface with worker-learners beyond a technical introduction to WebCT and have no other responsibility for them**
- **Academic staff involved with WBL students (unlike staff involved with traditional, full-time students) are generally recruited for their subject expertise, and may not have any training in teaching, student support or programme design.**
- **WBL students may not have structured IT sessions, library sessions, or study support sessions as they are generally on block release, day release, on-line or studying in the evenings. So, the onus to succeed is heavily on the learners themselves.**

Shift in focus to support for academic staff who *induct* and *support* worker-learners

- **Any handbook/package would inevitably be provided to worker-learners at programme level even if it were e-based. Therefore it would need to be:**
 - **adaptable and easy to re-design for each programme and group of worker-learners**
 - **written in plain English/free from jargon**
 - **sufficiently 'adult' to be useful at any level from apprenticeship to postgraduate**
 - **both paper-based and e-based**
 - **focus on capacity development for *learning* rather than on curricula or assessment**

'New' Design Principles

- Draw on **adult learning theory** rather than on standard instructional design practice
- Build on familiar practices, models and procedures that work well
- Speak specifically to academic staff teaching on work-related programmes since they interface intimately with worker-learners
- Offer a **theoretical** defence of the materials and pedagogical models with supporting literature and opportunities for staff development at postgraduate level with the possibility of a CPD module/course for teams working on WBL programmes.

Who might promote the e-Resource Pack?

- **Co-ordinators of WBL programmes**
- **Student Retention Office**
- **Corporate Training Unit**
- **Access Office**
- **Industry liaison personnel**
- **Industry-based tutors/mentors**
- **AQA Office**

Contents of the first and second packs

- **Link to WebCT sites for original Pilot package**
- **Materials on PC desktop for e-Resource Pack for WBL Lecturers**

Comments and Questions welcome!