

Consulting with learners at Coleg y Cymoedd

In 2016-17 it was recognised by the Strategic ILT Manager that the Colleges approach to obtaining a learner voice regards the success of educational technologies, and the teaching practices of staff cross College, was somewhat limited in relation to the yearly/termly Learner Surveys. Which only included 'three' general IT, Wifi and access to resource questions.

These three questions gave little opportunity to take forward any meaning full change in the direction of the Colleges IT/ICT strategy and curriculum development. This also corresponded with the Strategic ILT Manger being giving the task of drafting a Digital Vision by the former Principal.

Research showed that very little existed in the Welsh FE sector regards a standard 'tool' by which to benchmark learner satisfaction, and offer any indication as to how the College was performing against others in the sector. Or indeed 'assessing where it was' in relation to defining a new vision.

However Jisc had undertaken a pilot programme across both FE and HE earlier that year, a 'Student digital experience tracker 2016'. The results of which offered the means to model effective lines of questioning.

So, with a proven format, amended somewhat to the FE sector and language of our learners, the first Coleg y Cymoedd Learner Digital Experience Tracker was launched in December 2016.

For the first, time learners were not only asked about College devices and WIFI access, but also what personal devices they used, the availability of online learning resources and course materials. Did they collaborate online with their peers, was the College doing enough to support their digital skills and online safety, and more importantly what should the College, Start, Stop and Keep doing to improve their learning experience?

In its first year over 600 learners responded, and the result were shared with Jisc to enhance the numbers of their own tracker, even though the College hadn't formally taken part in the pilot.

Since 2016 the Learner Digital Experience Tracker has become an annual survey with over 1000 responses in 2017-18, and 700 to date in 2018-19.

In 2017-18 the results were formalised into a visual report and key recommendations based on two years of data, and indicators of distance travelled or not presented to the College Senior Leadership Team. The key areas of which focused on: Learner Inductions, Mobile devices, WIFI, Assignment Submissions, Resources and time tabling, Digital Resources Social Media, and Digital Capability.

Examples of the outcomes of this included the development of online resources and programmes of self-study to enhance the delivery of Digital Skills, and the greater adoption of Office 365 and cloud based technologies by teaching and support staff.

Taking this further in 2018-19, the results of the Tracker will be shared with Learner Representatives to undertake the identification of key themes which will be discussed at their Learner Voice conference in March 2019, and the Learner Tracker Results being presented by Learners to the College Management Team.