EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

THE 2019 LEARNER DIGITAL PERSPECTIVES SURVEY

PREPARED BY OPINIUM FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOUNDATION

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Attitudes to Subjects

- Subject satisfaction for FE students is high on most courses (84%+); with 'Leisure, retail and education' and 'Health, care and agriculture' lower on 76% and 71% respectively.

Technology used

- Both learners and teachers make use of a wide range of technologies available to them, with teachers widely incorporating interactive digital elements in their teaching. However, the type of technology and the extent to which this technology is used to assist learning, differs among learners and teachers.

Satisfaction with technology and support needs

- Most learners are encouraged to use digital technologies to assist their learning and agree that this helps them to learn better.

- The hardware and software available to learners is for the most part described positively, and the majority are satisfied with the technology available to them.

- Learners feel confident using the technology available. They are also confident in their teacher's/trainer's ability to use technology in their teaching/training. However, the majority of learners also agree that there is potential for teachers/trainers to use more technology.

Enablers and Barriers

- Learners believe the classroom design, including access to WIFI/hardware to be the biggest barrier to using technology. Unsurprisingly, learners think a reliable IT infrastructure and WIFI coupled with new hardware would improve the technology at their college/training provider.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

Methodology

The survey was conducted by Opinium Research and took on average 9 minutes to complete. Fieldwork was carried out between 5th of February to 10th of March 2019, via an online methodology.

Sample overview

We surveyed 1,000 learners in FE, comprising of:

LEARNERS	%
Full-time (In person/distance learning)	87%
Part-time	12%
Apprentice	1%
Other	<1%
Under 16-18	70%
19+	30%

LEARNERS BY SUBJECT	%
Science	36%
Mathematics	30%
Arts, media and publishing	20%
Humanities	19%
Social Sciences	18%
English	18%
Business administration and law	13%
Languages, literature and culture	11%
ICT	8%
Health, care and agriculture*	10%
Construction and engineering**	7%
Leisure, retails and education***	7%

Construction and engineering includes Construction, planning and the built environment; Engineering and manufacturing technologies

Leisure, retail, and education includes Education and training; Leisure, travel and tourism; Retail and commercial enterprise

*** Health, care, and agriculture includes Agriculture, horticulture and animal care; Community development; Family learning; Health, public services and care; Preparation for life and work*

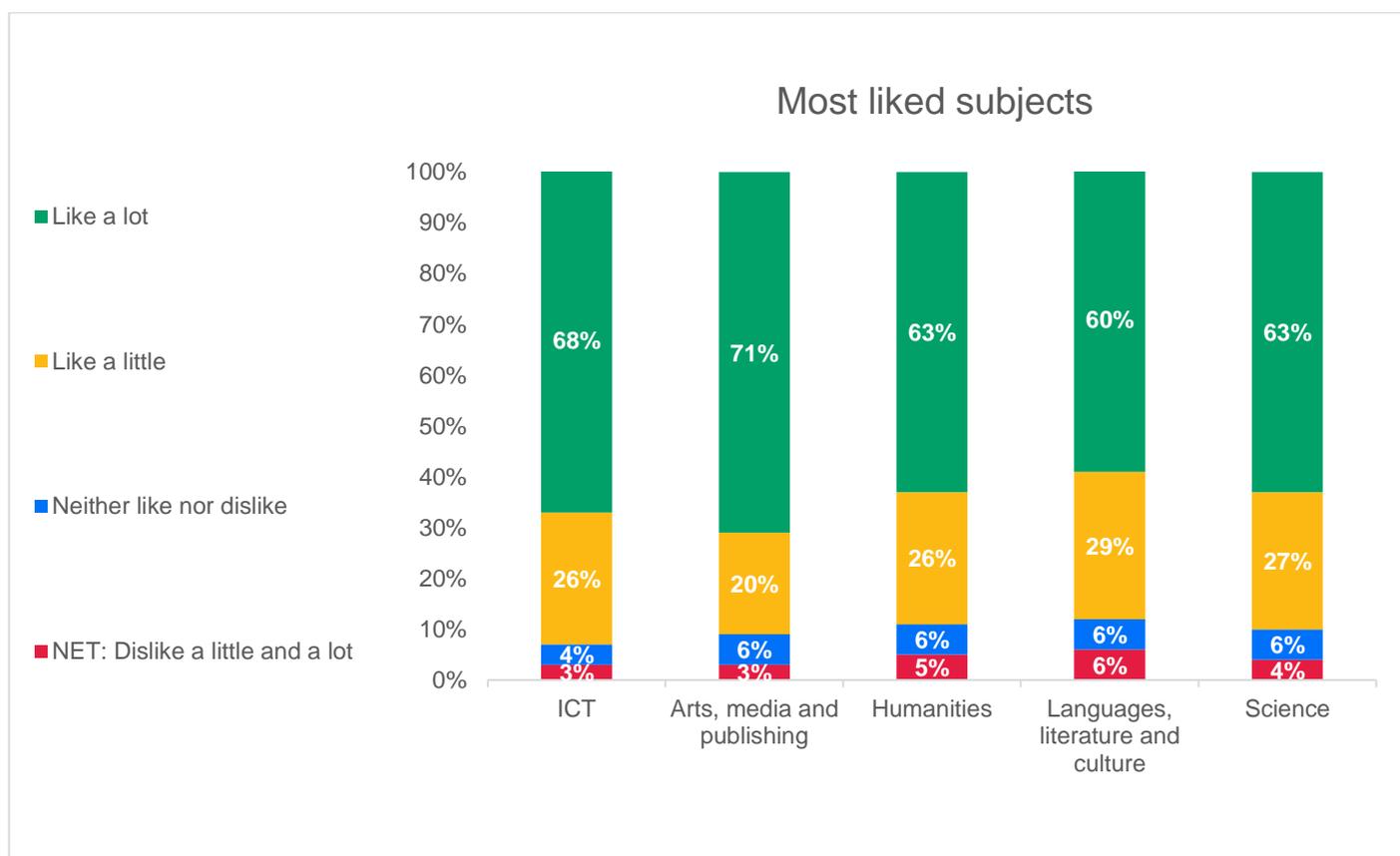| LEARNERS BY PROVIDER	%
Sixth Form College	57%
General Further Education College	21%
Art, Design and Performing Arts College	8%
Adults (19+) education provider	4%
National Specialist College	2%
Specialist Designated College	2%
Independent training provider	2%
Higher Education Institution	2%
Local Authority training provider	1%
Employer provider	1%
Group Training Association	1%
Agriculture and Horticulture College	1%
Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) provider	<0.5%
Third sector/charity training provider	<0.5%

LEVEL OF STUDY	%
Entry level – level 2	11%
Level 3 (e.g. A levels and equivalent)	64%
Level 4 – Level 8	26%

ATTITUDES TO SUBJECTS

Most liked subjects

Information and communication technology (ICT) ranks first for satisfaction among learners followed by Arts, media and publishing. Satisfaction is high for most subjects.

Most students across all subjects say that they like the subject they take either a lot or a little. A lower percentage say they neither like nor dislike the subject they take, and no subject is particularly disliked.

Most liked subjects

	ICT	Arts, media and publishing	Humanities	Languages, literature and culture	Science
Like a lot	68%	71%	63%	60%	63%
Like a little	26%	20%	26%	29%	27%
Neither like nor dislike	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%
NET: Dislike a little and a lot	3%	3%	5%	6%	4%

Least liked subjects

Like a lot	Like a little	Neither like nor dislike	NET: Dislike a little and a lot

Business, administration and law: 57% / 31% / 8% / 4%

Construction and engineering: 59% / 28% / 12% / 1%

English: 49% / 35% / 10% / 6%

Mathematics: 50% / 35% / 8% / 7%

Leisure, retail and education: 53% / 23% / 21% / 3%

Health, care and agriculture: 42% / 29% / 25% / 4%

TECHNOLOGY USED

Technology used by learners and teachers

Learners tend to use computers or tablets more while learning, and teachers are more likely to make use of smartboards or projectors, which is as expected.

TYPE OF TECHNOLOGY USED	LEARNER	TEACHER
Computer	82%	75%
Mobile phone	74%	20%
Printer	51%	51%
Virtual Learning environment	35%	39%
Touch screen	34%	26%
Tablet	33%	19%
Individual Learning Plan	24%	28%
Smartboard	23%	62%
Video/photo camera	22%	13%
Projector	21%	68%
Voice recorder	10%	8%
Voting device	5%	8%

Computers are among the most common type of technology used by both learners and teachers. The use of Computers is highest among Humanities students (89%) followed by Mathematics (88%), ICT (87%), and Arts, media and publishing (85%). These are also subjects which scored well on the overall student satisfaction.

75% of learners say that their teacher uses a computer during learning, and this increases to 83% of level 3 students. This however, is lower for students in entry level to level 2 (61%) as well as for levels 4 to 8 (also 61%).

Technology used to assist learning

Other types of technology learners and their teachers use to assist with learning include:

TYPE OF TECHNOLOGY USED	LEARNER	TEACHER
Typed worksheets	69%	70%
Online communities	55%	54%
Revision tools	52%	33%
Presentation software	47%	66%
File sharing	35%	40%
Digital books	26%	20%
Voting/interactive devices	9%	17%

More than half (55%) of learners make use of online communities such as Google Drive or Moodle to assist their learning and half (52%) use online revision tools such as Flash notes. 66% and 54% of students respectively, state that their teachers make use of presentation software as well as online communities to assist learning.

Three quarters (74%) of students studying at level 3 say that their teacher uses presentation software to assist learning while only half (50%) of entry level to level 2 students say their teacher uses this. Similarly, only 51% of learners at levels 4 and above report that their teachers make use of presentation software. Similarly, 50% of Sixth Form students and 51% of General Further Education College students say that they use presentation software to assist learning.

Technology used for specific tasks

Most learners use technology available to help them with revision and homework.

TASK	% LEARNERS
Revision	72%
Homework	71%
Coursework	64%
Presentations	62%
Accessing resources	52%
Group activity	41%
Creating content	40%
Assessment	38%
Teacher feedback	33%
Exams	27%
Peer feedback	16%

While 82% of students aged 16-18 use technology for revision purposes, the percentage falls to 47% for students aged 19+. Once again, level 3 students prove to be more tech savvy, with 82% using technology for revision compared to 59% for Entry level, level 1 and level 2 students and 50% for level 4 and above students.

A lot more students of academic subjects including Science (88%), Maths (86%) and English (74%) use technology for revision compared with students of vocational studies such as construction and engineering (56%), health, care and agriculture (55%) and leisure, retail and education (44%).

Interactive technology
The majority of learners (95%) agree that their teacher integrates a range of digital interactive elements into teaching, learning and assessment.

All Learners (100%) of specialist organisations (including Agriculture and Horticulture College, National Specialist College, Specialist Designated College, Independent training provider, Local Authority training provider, Employer provider, Group Training Association, Higher Education Institution, Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) provider and Third sector/charity training provider), agree that their teachers integrate a range of digital interactive elements. *

A slightly lower percentage of learners at General Further Education Colleges (95%) and Sixth Form Colleges (94%) believe that their teacher integrates a range of digital interactive elements into teaching.

A large proportion (85%) of learners say they use digital communities as part of their programme.

As part of their programme, 88% of General Further Education College students and 83% of Sixth Form college students are using digital communities.
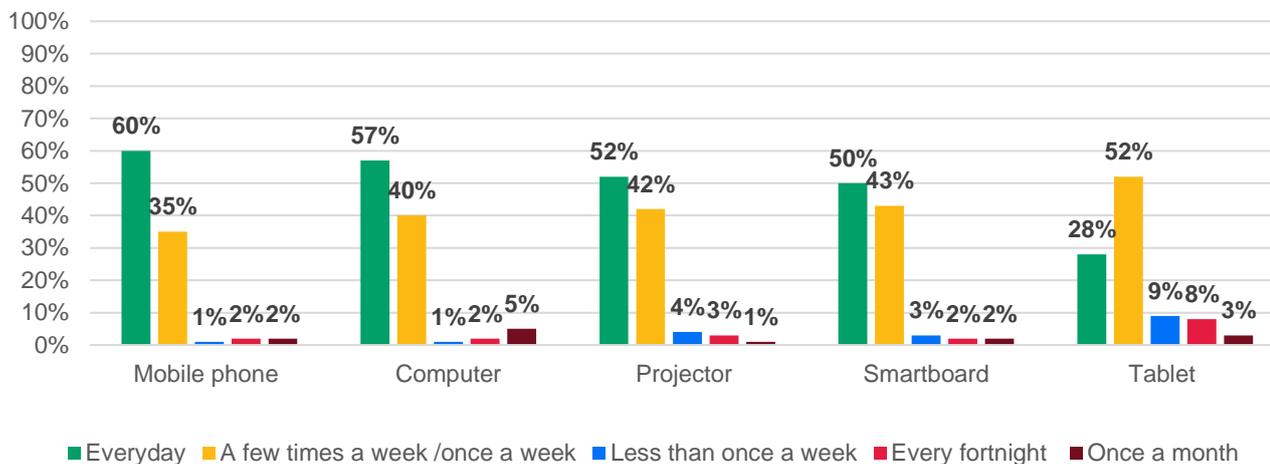
93% of learners are encouraged to collaborate and communicate with their peers and teachers using digital technologies.

Most students at General Further Education Colleges (94%) and Sixth Form Colleges (92%) state that they are encouraged to collaborate and communicate with their peers and teachers using digital technologies.

Frequency of technology use

Among learners (who use technology), mobile phones, computers and projectors are the top three technologies learners use daily.
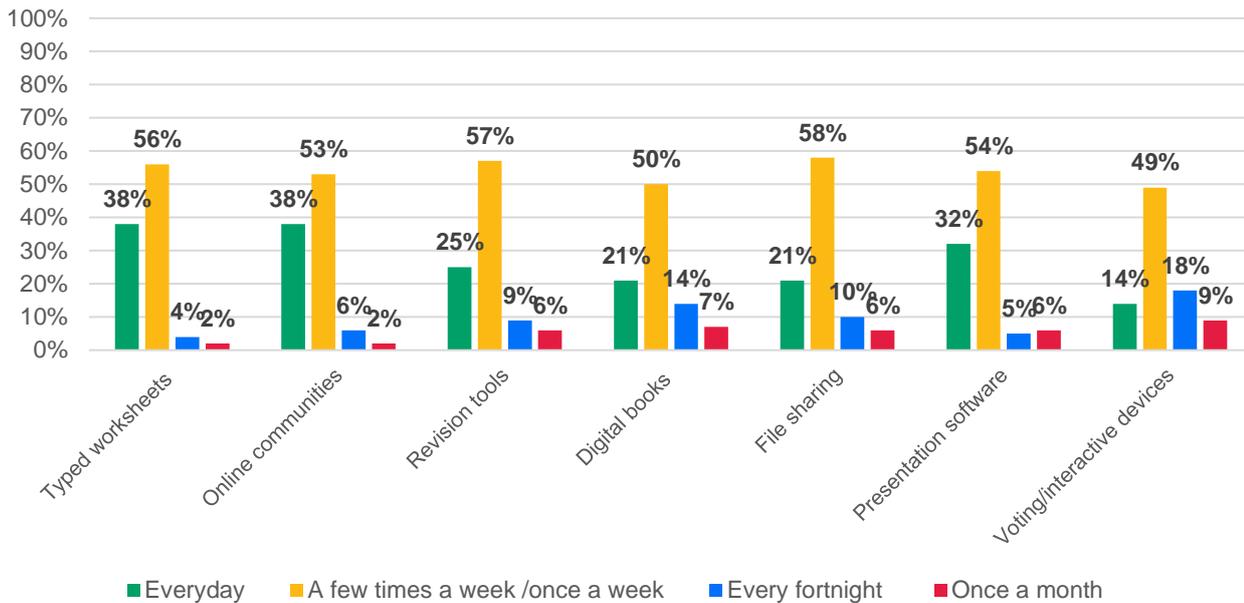
How often are the following used in your learning?

Legend: Everyday | A few times a week /once a week | Less than once a week | Every fortnight | Once a month

Among learners who use these technologies, most use them daily except for the tablet, which is more likely to be used a few times a week (38% weekly vs 28% daily use).

Learners tend to use the below technologies a few times a week to once a week as opposed to daily. File sharing is the most commonly used technology at a frequency of once to a few times a week (58%) followed by revision tools (57%).

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How often are the following used in your learning?

Legend: ■ Everyday ■ A few times a week /once a week ■ Every fortnight ■ Once a month

Category	Everyday	A few times a week /once a week	Every fortnight	Once a month
Typed worksheets	38%	56%	4%	2%
Online communities	38%	53%	6%	2%
Revision tools	25%	57%	9%	6%
Digital books	21%	50%	14%	7%
File sharing	21%	58%	10%	6%
Presentation software	32%	54%	5%	6%
Voting/interactive devices	14%	49%	18%	9%

Nearly a third of learners use a similar amount of technology in each class they take.

71% of learners do not use a similar amount of technology in each class, which may suggest a significant variability among teachers of different subjects and the amount of technology used. However, the type of technology used often differs across subjects. Typed worksheets are used by 85% of humanities students but as low as 53% of leisure, retail and education students. Similarly, as many as 70% of languages students use digital flash notes while only 41% of construction and engineering students use them.

The highest percentage of learners who say that they use technology in one class more than any other, is for those studying science (15%), with the proportion increasing to 20% for level 3 students. Arts, media and publishing is the second subject where learners use technology most (12%). Rising to 17% for level 4 and above students and 16% for entry level, Level 1 and level 2 students.

SUBJECT	% LEARNERS
Use similar amount of technology at each class	29%
Science	15%
Arts, media and publishing	12%
Business, administration and law	6%
ICT	6%
Humanities	5%
Social Sciences	5%
Mathematics	3%

SATISFACTION WITH TECHNOLOGY AND SUPPORT NEEDS

## Encouragement to use digital technologies

The majority of learners are encouraged to use digital technologies. 93% of students say that they are encouraged to collaborate and communicate with peers and teachers using digital technologies.

Learners agree that technology does help them learn better

Both the technology available as well as the use of digital communities specifically, make learning easier for students.

93% of learners agree that the technology available to them helps them learn better, and 81% of learners think that the use of digital communities specifically helps them learn better.
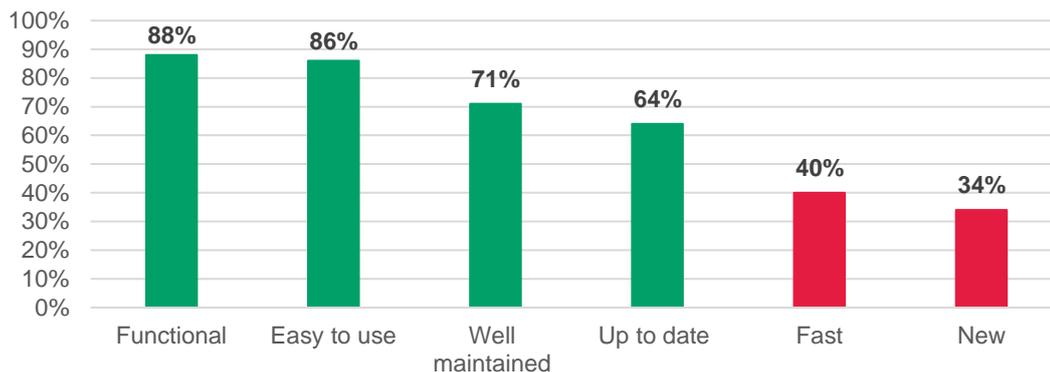
Does technology aid learning?
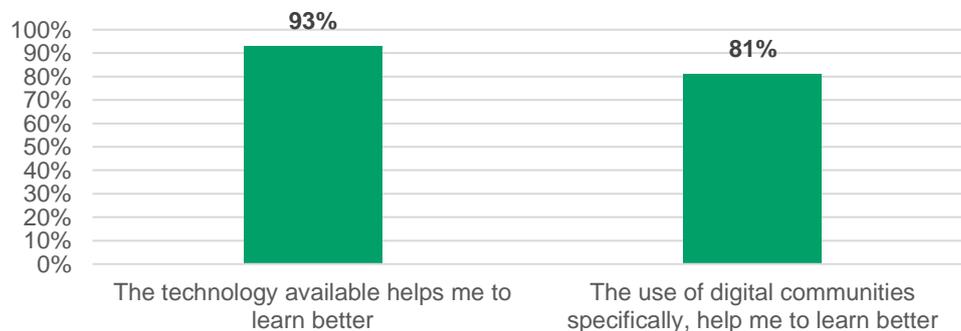
Hardware technology

Learners describe the hardware available at their organisation as functional and easy to use although descriptions of new and fast are much lower.

How would you describe the hardware available at your organisation?

Most learners are positive about the hardware technology available to them. This includes 88% of students who think the hardware is functional and 86% who think it is easy to use. Negative descriptions such as slow or old are on the lower end of the scale with 52% and 34% of learners respectively, describing it as such.

77% of Students at entry level up to level 2 and 82% of students at levels 4 and above describe the hardware as functional, while 92% of students at level 3 describe the hardware available to them as such. A higher proportion of level 4 and above learners (67%) describe the technology available to them as fast and 79% as well maintained compared with 44% and 68% of level 3 learners.

Similarly, 80% of Entry level to level 2 students and 81% of level 4 and above students think that the hardware available at their organisation is easy to use and a higher percentage (88%) of level 3 students describe the hardware as such. Moreover, a higher percentage of level 4-8 learners describe the software available to them as new (74%) and fast (74%) compared with level 3 with 66% and 55% respectively.

Fewer Sixth Form College students describe the software technology as fast (54%) compared with students at General Further Education Colleges (70%). The same applies for the hardware technology among the two providers (44% vs. 59%).

Software technology

How would you describe the software available at your organisation?

	Easy to use	Functional	Compatible	Up to date	Fast	New
	85%	84%	84%	73%	33%	27%
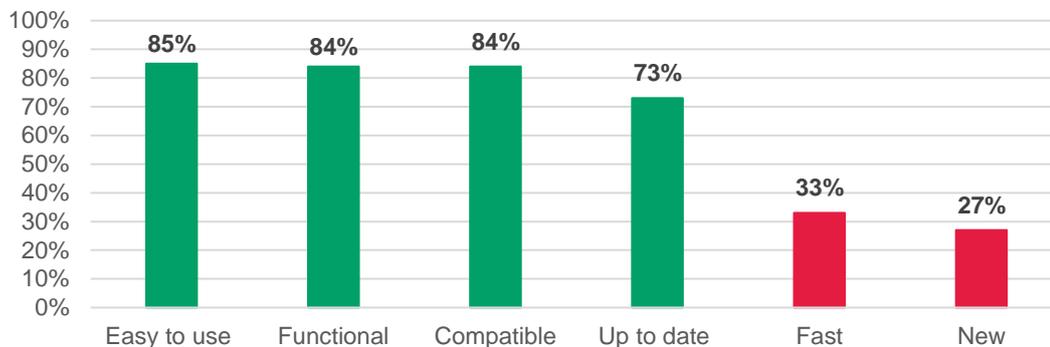
Software technologies score better than hardware among learners, but it is considered slower and older.

The software technology available score well with learners with most describing it as easy to use (85%), functional (84%) and compatible (84%). To a greater degree than with hardware technologies, fast and new are less frequently used to describe software technologies available to learners.

Satisfaction with technology

Most students are satisfied with the technology available to them.

86% of learners are satisfied with the technology available at their college/training provider. Satisfaction levels are highest among level 4 – level 8 students (91%).

Despite the satisfaction with technology being high, over half (54%) would like to use more technology in their studies. 69% of students studying Information and communication technology (ICT) would like to use more technology, followed by Leisure, retail and education students (68%) and Health, care and agriculture (63%).

Support using technology

Satisfaction and use of technology

86%	**54%**
Satisfied with the technology available at their college/training provider	Would like to use more technology in their studies
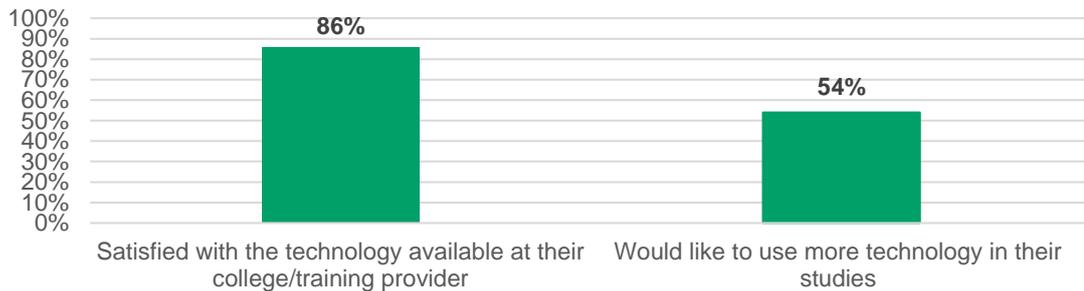
Students are confident using the technology available to them.

Over half of learners (53%) say they do not need any extra support using technology. However, 35% state they need slightly more support and 64% of learners aged 19+ report that they need more support using technology.

Learners are confident in their teacher's/trainer's ability to use technology in their teaching/training.

85% of learners are confident that their teacher/trainer has sufficient ability to use technology in their teaching/training. However, a similar number (80%) of learners think there is potential for their teacher/trainer to use more technology in their teaching/training.

TECHNOLOGY USE	AGREE
Confidence in teacher's/trainer's ability	85%
Potential for teacher/trainer to use more technology	80%
More support for learners	45%

45% of learners report that they need more support using technology, either a lot more or slightly more.

LEVEL	Confidence in teacher's/trainer's ability
Entry level - level 2	82%
Level 3	85%
Level 4 - Level 8	85%

16/20

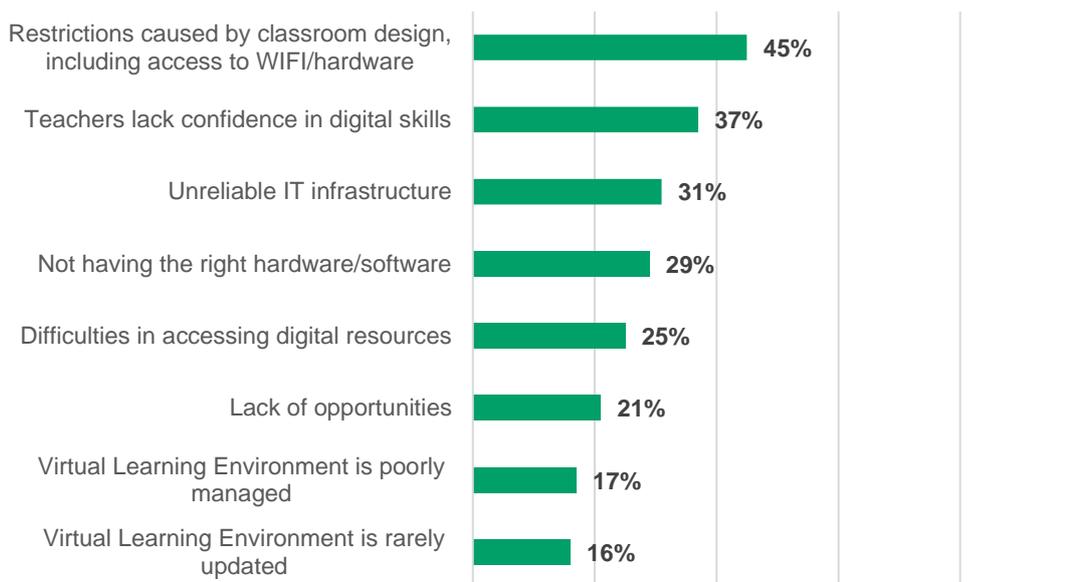| LEVEL	Potential for teacher/trainer to use more technology
Entry level - level 2	74%
Level 3	82%
Level 4 - Level 8	79%

ENABLERS AND BARRIERS

Barriers to technology

According to learners, the biggest barrier to using technology in learning is the physical restrictions caused by classroom design, including access to WIFI/hardware.

Which of the following do you consider as barrier to using technology in learning?

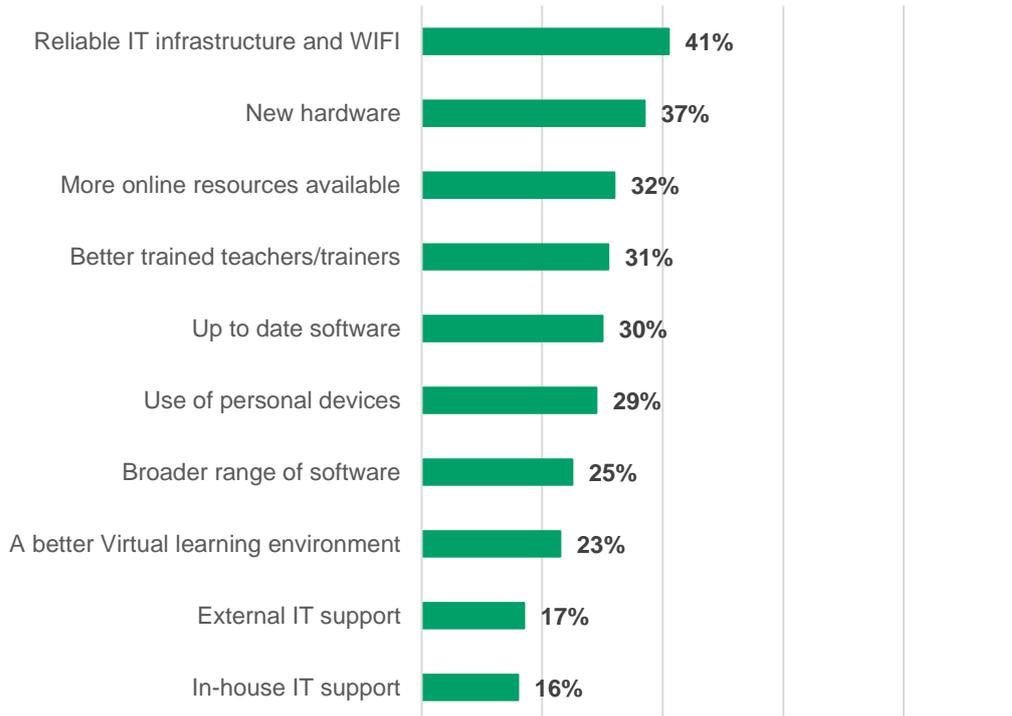| Barrier	%
Restrictions caused by classroom design, including access to WIFI/hardware	45%
Teachers lack confidence in digital skills	37%
Unreliable IT infrastructure	31%
Not having the right hardware/software	29%
Difficulties in accessing digital resources	25%
Lack of opportunities	21%
Virtual Learning Environment is poorly managed	17%
Virtual Learning Environment is rarely updated	16%

According to 45% of learners, the biggest barrier to using technology in their learning is the restrictions caused by classroom design, including access to WIFI/hardware. 37% of learners also think that teachers lack confidence in digital skills and therefore create a barrier to using technology in learning.

Enablers to technology

In-line with the barriers, learners think that a more reliable IT infrastructure and WIFI coupled with new hardware, more online resources and better trained teachers/trainers, would encourage using technology for learning.

In which of the following ways do you think technology at your college/training provider could be improved?

Reliable IT infrastructure and WIFI	**41%**
New hardware	**37%**
More online resources available	**32%**
Better trained teachers/trainers	**31%**
Up to date software	**30%**
Use of personal devices	**29%**
Broader range of software	**25%**
A better Virtual learning environment	**23%**
External IT support	**17%**
In-house IT support	**16%**

41% of learners believe that a more reliable IT infrastructure and WIFI would help overcome the restrictions caused by the current design. 37% also think that a new hardware (e.g. computers/laptops) and more online resources available (32%) would also contribute to improving the technology at their college/training provider.

When it comes to the level of study, 35% of those in entry level – level 2 think IT and WIFI infrastructure could be improved and only 20% of level 4-8 students think the same.

On contrast, half (50%) of level 3 learners say a more reliable IT infrastructure and WIFI could improve the technology.

44% of level 3 learners would like new hardware compared to only 27%

18/20

of entry – level 2 learners and 24% of level 4-8 learners.

The top two challenges faced by subjects are restrictions caused by classroom design (for Science, Maths, Humanities, Social Sciences, English (including literacy), Business, administration and law) and the lack of confidence in teachers' digital skills (ICT, Languages, literature and culture, and Health, care and agriculture)