

E-learning,



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e-Learning, as defined by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) 2010, 'learning facilitated and supported through the use of information and communications technology' (ICT). To begin, I shall explain the reasons and events that have led to my interest in the usage of e-learning and methods of e-teaching as a way to motivate and engage my learner's on the Level two Diploma in Site Carpentry at West Herts College. Early in my teaching practice, I had prepared a power point presentation to assist me in the delivery of a lesson, during the process of setting up the laptop and multi-media projector (MMP), the laptop could not locate the MMP and not knowing how to resolve this problem, I began to panic and a cold sweat enveloped my whole body. After several failed attempts to rectify the problem one of my learners approached me and asked if there was a problem, I informed him as to what had happened and in the blink of an eye the learner rectified the issue and my lesson was saved. The anxiety and feelings of blind panic that occurred that day gave me an innate awareness that I needed to further develop my very limited knowledge of using ICT and the realisation that my learners were completely comfortable using technology as it was second nature to them, this familiarity led me to believe that a greater use of Information and Learning Technology (ILT) could be a great motivational tool for the learners. With the previously mentioned events and emotions impregnated on to my psyche I will endeavour to research and evaluate the usage, benefits and implications for my teaching practice and how this will affect my future professional development. Technology is advancing day by day, as I am sure those of us of a certain age can remember, mobile phones used to be the size of house brick's in the nineteen eighties, equally technology is impacting on education and is prevalent in all aspects of

education. Because of the rapid integration of technologies within learning environments, the Department for Education and Skills (2003) produced a consultation document for educational suppliers, it was intended to highlight the benefits of e-learning and ensure an integrated approach was adopted for embedding e-learning into all curriculum areas. At the time of its publication it was predicted that by the year 2006 the government would invest £1 billion into developing ICT and e-learning across all educational sectors. The document also highlights substantial benefits of ICT usage and its impact of motivating learners by offering an individualised learning experience. This is enforced by the views of Whalley, Welch and Williamson (2006), with their insight into e-learning, learners have a greater participation with the learning experience if it is contextual to aspects of their lives that they are familiar. The youth of today use mobile phones, the internet and other digital media platforms with increasing regularity and therefore, if we as educators do not try to advocate the use of emerging technology in the learning environment, we may alienate learners from education. Other examples of the motivational aspects of e-learning are offered by the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA 2010); 'E-learning provides impetus and stimulates learners and provides contact to global resources and communication. It is a proven way of supplying constructive results for both learners and employers.' (BECTA), as a part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families in the United Kingdom, was set up to support the Further Education (FE) sector in using and creating e-learning technologies with a series of publications for guidance on implementing e-learning for the FE sector, such as; Harnessing Technology Review 2009: The role of technology in further education and <https://assignbuster.com/e-learning/>

skills (2010), Inspiring learners (2010) and A guide to using e-learning for diploma delivery (2009), BECTA believe that the usage of e-learning across the curriculum will provide stimulus and motivation and in the future it will affect the examination system. With the current economic climate the government are making cuts in education and the continued investment in e-learning has ceased, BECTA being a notable casualty. Another agency involved with the development and implementation of e-learning and ICT is JISC (2011), they offer support in the United Kingdom for FE and higher education by carrying out research and providing leadership in the use of ICT to support learning, teaching and administration and a comprehensive e-learning pedagogy programme to fully support practitioners. The impact of the advancement of new technologies and government initiatives to embed the usage of ICT in all lessons will mean I will have to find ways of combining my existing teaching practice with the enhancement of e-learning tools such as Interactive White boards (IWB'S), the college Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and using the internet as an e-teaching tool. Carpentry is a very practical, hands-on subject and cannot be taught by technology alone and therefore a blended approach, combining traditional pedagogy with the usage of modern technology integrated into my teaching practice must be adopted. A great benefit of using e-learning is the same information can be shared in exactly the same way with various classes on the same course, eliminating differences between teachers. Students can also explore models and simulations safely (and cheaply) in virtual worlds without fear of failure, and learners with special needs are able to use the technology to enhance their learning experience, to help them prepare their work and become more independent, but this comes with the caveat, just like a badly taught

classroom-based lesson, poor software or a poor e-learning session can have a negative impact on the quality and quantity of learning. Having mentioned the advantages to e-learning and the potential benefits, I feel I must mention the greatest barrier to e-learning and technologies within the learning environment, teachers and educators, if a teacher has a negative experience whilst using technology in the classroom, as the one experienced by myself, as discussed at the start of this paper, then they will do one of two things, vow to improve and learn from the experience, as I have, or they will be fearful of using it in the future. As Resta mentions in his paper, Policy Issues and Challenges in Planning and Implementing E-learning in Teacher Education (2005)