Opening up Access for Flexible Learners: A Case Study of Going Beyond OERs

James Brunton, Mark Brown, Eamon Costello, & Orna Farrell
National Institute for Digital Learning, Dublin City University
@DrJamesBrunton @mbrownz @eam0 @orna_farrell
The Toolbox

Tool 1: Am I Ready for Study?
Tool 2: Do I Have Enough Time?
Tool 3: Who Can I Ask?
Tool 4: My Computer Skills

Tool 5: My First Assignment
Tool 6: Head Start Online: First Steps To Flexible Study
Tool 7: Study Tips For Me
Tool 8: Online Orientation
Do I have enough time?
The Head Start Online MOOC
The Pilot
## Weekly digital readiness tools feedback

Table 1. Percentage of favourable reaction to the tools (Strongly Agree or Agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Usefulness of the Resource</th>
<th>Preparation for Study</th>
<th>Likelihood to Follow Advice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Am I Ready?</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do I have enough time?</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>78.95</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who can I ask?</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My Computer Skills</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My first assignment</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Tips for Me</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Feedback at conclusion of MOOC

**Table 2. Percentage of favourable reaction (Strongly Agree or Agree) to conclusion of MOOC feedback items (n=25)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel more ready to become a flexible learner after taking this course</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>The course helped me appreciate the computer skills I would need for higher education</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would recommend this course to others</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>I now understand better how I would do an assignment in my first year</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I now feel better able to manage my time</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>The videos of graduates helped me understand the flexible learning experience</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The course developed my awareness of different sources of support</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Helped me interact with flexible learners</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Analysis of Discussion Forums

• Four themes
  • goals;
  • community & support;
  • balance;
  • learning.
Qualitative Analysis of Discussion Forums

Goals

“What I expect from higher education is the opportunity to turn a lifelong fascination into a possible career avenue. I also expect returning to study, especially at [higher education], will be very challenging but well worth the effort.”
Qualitative Analysis of Discussion Forums

Community & Support

“...Now my youngest has started third level, there are no more excuses to hide behind!

Reply by [S1]: Hi [S2] (and everyone!) I'm sure you and your youngest can help to motivate each other as well!”

“The most helpful segments of this preparation module have been hearing from past students and their experiences with distance education, as well as the university support structures themselves”
Qualitative Analysis of Discussion Forums

Balance

“I’ll be studying in my kitchen once my kids have gone to bed and I’ve organised myself for work the next day.”

“... it's actually a really helpful piece of the course. I think a lot of people attempting to complete these degree courses will have to learn a lot about scheduling and time-management in order to get the best out of the course, and themselves”
Qualitative Analysis of Discussion Forums

Learning

“My problem is procrastination, sometimes I get nervous about the activities and I don't do what I need to do. Or I have more activities than I can really manage. The video is important to try to solve those problems”

“I expect the course I have chosen to be hard, but interesting. I expect to come up against some obstacles, but I expect to overcome them”
What now?
A move to FutureLearn
Thank You

Go raibh maith agaibh