Ufi + Training Providers:
Working together to get adults learning

Ufi VocTech Trust calls on all training providers to integrate digital skills and pedagogy into core staff Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

- Vocational Education & Training (VET) practitioners face complex demands on their time and competing pressures. Digital tools and learning technology can help reduce workload and improve outcomes for learners.
- However our research shows that VET professionals are not sufficiently prepared to use new and emerging digital tools and training methods, with a large gap between pioneers and slow adopters.
- Training providers and their staff need to integrate digital skills and pedagogy into core professional development so that everyone has the skills and confidence they need to take advantage of the opportunities that learning technology offers.

The problem

We know that digital technology can transform the delivery of adult learning and skills. However, Ufi research has shown that the biggest barriers to adoption and deployment of digital technology are low levels of confidence in digital skills, and a lack of time to prepare digital resources.[1]

Furthermore, it is unclear to many staff and training providers which solutions work best. The market for digital learning solutions is complex and staff are often not sharing knowledge of the best solutions.[2]

What do you consider to be barriers when using learning technology?

Legend: ■ What do you consider to be barriers to using technology
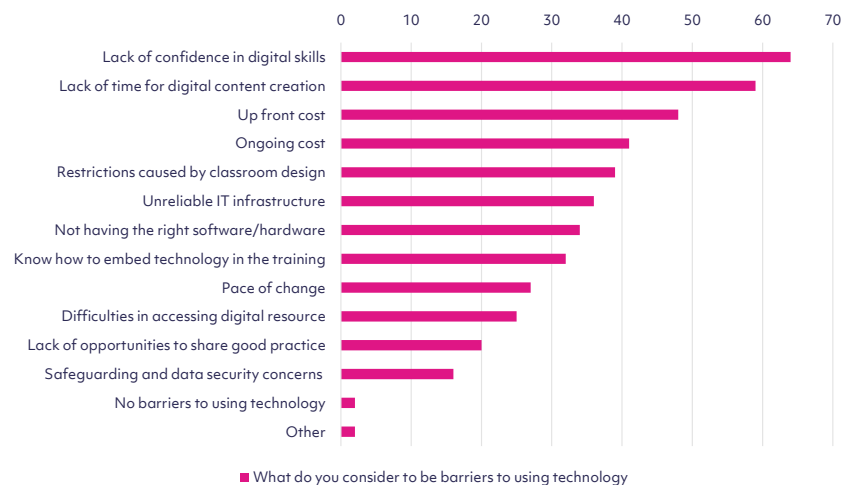
Source: Ufi/AELP, *Future ready vocational education*, 2023

Pioneer vs slow adopter

There is a big gap between the capabilities of staff who are ahead of the digital adoption curve and those who are trailing behind. In part, this is caused by insufficient resources and recognition of the importance of staff's digital CPD. Only 14% of teaching staff feel their digital CPD is rewarded and just 36% of staff think they have adequate time to develop their digital skills.[3]

Unclear what works

As DfE has itself acknowledged, "knowing what technology to buy to address an education provider's needs is often a challenge."[4] The market for education technology is complex with a lot of similar providers providing similar services in the same space. This problem is compounded by the fact that not every user has a deep understanding of the technology itself.

Siloed knowledge

Communities of practice and groups of training staff provide an invaluable forum for the sharing of knowledge and best practice, particularly in emerging and developing sectors like digital training. However, there are close to 100 distinct networks in FE alone, and it is clear that while there is a plethora of activity there is no joined-up community. This makes it hard for professionals and providers to share knowledge efficiently.[5]

[1] Ufi/AELP, *Future ready vocational education*, 2023
[2] Ibid
[3] Jisc, *Digital experience insights survey*, 2019

[4] DfE, *Realising the potential of technology in education*, 2019
[5] ALT, *Communities of Practice Sector Audit*, 2020

What do we want to see?

We want training providers, instructors and Government investing in staff CPD and knowledge sharing to ensure that every learner can benefit from high quality tech-enabled learning.

1. Commit to digital CPD

Technology providers, FE Colleges and individual staff should be encouraged to enhance their digital training skills and pedagogies. Not everyone has to be a digital learning expert, but more work is required to ensure every learner is supported by instructors who are able to enhance teaching and learning outcomes through digital tools and platforms.

2. What Works group

Existing sector bodies should work with the UK Government to create a further education 'What Works' group. Like existing programmes in the school and higher education sectors, this group would form a valuable place for knowledge sharing and create safe spaces for collaboration.

3. Join a network

Networks like #AmplifyFE provide a valuable space for the sharing of trainer knowledge. If you work in Further Education or Vocational Education and want to share news about your work, find experts to collaborate with or learn more about specific subject areas, then the #AmplifyFE network can help.

Ufi's experience and expertise

- **VocTech Challenge Skills for an Economy in Transition:** Our research showed up the flaws in the current skills system and our White Paper has set out a number of ways we will take action.
- **AELP Strategic Partnership:** We are working with AELP to provide support and evidence of what works to independent training providers, encouraging greater adoption and deployment of digital technology.
- **ALT Strategic Partnership:** We are working with ALT to build a long-term community of practice with a lasting legacy of high-quality digital learning, teaching and assessment.

The Ufi-supported platform **SectorShare**, developed in partnership with the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) identifies and collates a range of no-fee resources that providers and employers can use for online delivery.

SectorShare is available as a free to use resource and provides an easy route for staff in the sector to invest in their own CPD.
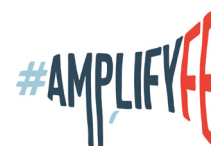
#AmplifyFE is a free network to connect and amplify communities of practice for digital learning, teaching and assessment in vocational education. The network is led by the Association for Learning Technology in partnership with Ufi.

Launched in October 2020, AmplifyFE now connects over 2,700 professionals in further education, providing a strong community that shares, collaborates and learns.

Ufi VocTech Trust is an independent charity that champions the power of technology to improve skills for work and deliver better outcomes for all. We provide funding and expertise to organisations across the UK that are developing digital technologies to support skills for work. Follow #GetAdultsLearning.

Stay in touch - Ufi wants to support organisations that are tackling the challenge of digital CPD. Stay in touch with us by contacting josh.smith@ufi.co.uk

Find out more