

## Background information

### The benefits of delivering a flexible model of delivery

In many cases a flexible model of delivery is based on necessity: it is the only possible solution to learner, employer and provider needs. However there is also evidence that many learners value and benefit from a flexible, blended approach.

At the 2009 Skills for Life [‘Ask the Conference’](#) 56% of respondents identified building independence and confidence as well as literacy, numeracy and language skills, as the main benefit to learners of a blended approach.

The Move On [E-tutor guide](#) cites evidence from an ALP survey where 75% of learners agreed with the statement ‘technology has allowed my programme to be better tailored to my personal needs’ and 67% agreed that ‘I am more likely to finish my programme because I am using technology to help me learn.’

Providers taking part in the Skills for Life Improvement Programme project [‘Developing Models of Flexible Delivery of Skills for Life Provision’](#) reported some significant increases in achievement and success rates using a blended learning approach. [Longden Ltd](#), a private training service provider, developed a flexible numeracy programme which led to greatly increased numbers and an 89% success rate with the first 54 learners to progress through the course.

Other benefits were also identified during the project:

‘It allowed learners who were motivated to work towards a qualification to control their own learning.’

‘It allowed access to literacy/numeracy for learners who otherwise would certainly not have been given time in the workplace.’

‘Learners have commented on their enjoyment and enhanced learning (not prompted, offered freely).’

‘They liked that fact that the flexible resources for Skills for Life also enabled them to produce evidence for their NVQ.’

‘We found it built independence and confidence as well as gaining literacy skills.’

‘It will widen participation and meet learner needs, especially those in the workplace who resent missing their learning opportunities because of shift demands.’

During the pilot the following providers were able to measure the impact and found:

- a 4% increase in achievement in Move On Groups at Northern College;
- an achievement rate of 88% for City and Islington's Train to Gain cohort, compared with 60% on previous programmes;
- at Oxford and Cherwell, there was clear evidence that using the online materials contributed to a higher success rate for learners in the Level 1 Literacy test;
- most providers were confident that the outcomes of the project would lead to an increase in student numbers and improve retention and achievement.

Three of the colleges taking part in the pilot summed up their thoughts:

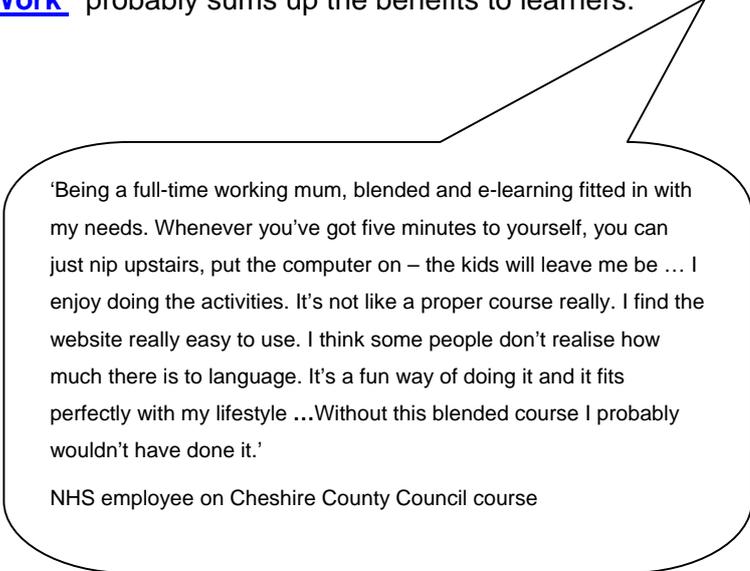
'Our main findings are that learners welcome a flexible approach and are able to work independently, but that regular tutor and peer contact is essential to maintain motivation.'  
(Gloucestershire College)

'I think this approach is effective as the regular contact ensures that learners are kept engaged and feel part of the group, whilst the distance learning encourages learners to develop their independent learning skills.'  
(Macclesfield College)

'Our experience at Wirral Met is that having the capacity to deliver online has stimulated demand from employers for delivery to learners who would not otherwise be able to access Skills for Life and in volumes / locations which would be unfeasible using conventional delivery.'

In June 2007, feedback from 696 users of the Move On Learner Route indicated an achievement rate of 85% for literacy and 81% for numeracy, but 79% of learners surveyed on the Move On Learner Route positively welcomed the idea of extra tutor support.

This quote in [‘Making it Work’](#) probably sums up the benefits to learners:



‘Being a full-time working mum, blended and e-learning fitted in with my needs. Whenever you’ve got five minutes to yourself, you can just nip upstairs, put the computer on – the kids will leave me be ... I enjoy doing the activities. It’s not like a proper course really. I find the website really easy to use. I think some people don’t realise how much there is to language. It’s a fun way of doing it and it fits perfectly with my lifestyle ...Without this blended course I probably wouldn’t have done it.’

NHS employee on Cheshire County Council course