

Digital learning activity

Digital capability



ICT/digital proficiency
and productivity

☐


Information, data
and media literacies

☐


Digital creation,
problem solving
and innovation

☐


Digital communication,
collaboration and
participation

☐


Digital learning
and development

☐


Digital identity
and wellbeing

☐

Activity

Learning outcomes or benefits

Digital learning activity

The details

Who does what?

What do staff, students and others contribute? Is this a solo or group activity? How are interactions shaped?

Where and when?

Spaces may be real or virtual, timings may be synchronous or asynchronous. What resources are needed, where and when?

Which digital tools, applications, apps...?

Personal or institutional, open or locked down, public or private, specialised or generic? What choice do learners have?

How is it assessed?

Self, peer or tutor assessed? System or human feedback? Assessment criteria? How do students improve performance?

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Activity

Visualising data: How many ways can you find of visualising the same data set?
What different perspectives are revealed? How can data be made more persuasive?

Learning outcomes or benefits

Critical thinking, scholarship, research skills. Critical media literacy. Data skills. Visual design skills. Collaboration if run as a group exercise.

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Activity

Online identity audit: Working in pairs, learners research what they can find out about each other online. In fours/eights they share tips for developing a positive online identity. Trust building and ground rules are essential for this activity to be safe.

Other learning outcomes or benefits

Reflection and action planning; employability skills. Data security skills and privacy awareness. Digital safety and responsibility.

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Activity

Wikipedia editing: Select a Wikipedia page relevant to your students' topic or research area, ideally with a rich 'talk' or 'history' page. Point students to Wikipedia's contributing guidelines. Working in groups, students research and agree amendments and make edits or additions to the page.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Academic argumentation; referencing; collaboration; media editing; deep topic understanding; authentic contribution to knowledge of the subject.

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Activity

Writing workshop: Learners share an assignment in progress using a digital format (could be video, presentation, audio, code, spreadsheet...). Other learners provide comments, annotations, links and peer review. You may need to provide guidelines and examples of constructive annotation.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Academic writing; referencing. Collaboration and peer review. Using collaboration/annotation tools. Can be adapted to fit many subject areas and styles of assignment.

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Activity

Data collection app: Design a simple app to collect data eg via survey questions, digital monitoring, video capture. Best done in groups with marks for paper prototype as well as final app. Use a free or low cost platform. Reflect on benefits/disadvantages of using apps to collect data.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Authentic scholarly or professional activity (learners can use the app to gather professional or research data for analysis); data literacy; app development; problem solving and reflection; collaboration if done as a group.

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Activity

Topic-based video or animation: After viewing some examples, students produce their own video, animation or animated presentation to illustrate a topic. Group work or skill-swaps allow skills to be shared. Recommend cheap/free apps and editing software unless media editing is available.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Digital media editing and production. Presenting ideas in different media. Creativity. Collaboration if carried out as a group project.

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collaboration and
participation



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Activity

Revision pin-board: Learners share key points from a topic on a pin-board app such as padlet. Encourage the inclusion of links, references, diagrams, maps, quizzes etc.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Learners begin to see links between note-making, collation/curation and revision. Collaborative sense-making. Opportunity to give collective feedback and fill gaps in knowledge. Can also be made public so students have a sense of contributing to wider understanding of topic.

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and innovation



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Digital learning
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Activity

Follow the things: Inspired by a human geography website (followthethings.com) this activity has students explore the material and/or social history of a digital device. How is it designed, made, marketed, transported and consumed? Findings and reflections can be produced as a blog post or web page.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Original research. Public writing. Critical reflection on digital technology and digital change. Can be adapted for different subject areas (technology, design, social sciences).

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Activity

Tweetfest/Storify: Organise a one-day or one-hour tweetfest on a question of topical interest. Best to gain support from colleagues or a special interest group first. Learners design questions to tweet out, share views in a semi-public forum and hear what others think. Use eg Storify to collate afterwards.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Opportunities to share ideas in a public space, creating a more open classroom; shared responsibility for a public 'event'; curation skills; information design skills; collaboration and communication.

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Activity

Crowd-sourced literature review: Learners use a social referencing platform to collaboratively build and publish a reference list on a particular topic, assignment etc. Once created they can all use it as source material. They can also use social web features to find and follow students/academics with similar interests.

Learning outcomes or benefits

This is a good way to introduce internet research to learners who lack digital confidence, allowing them to support one another. It also promotes good habits of referencing, sharing and review. Skills from personal and social use of technology are used to support academic learning.

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Digital learning
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Activity

Digital making: Learners design and build an original artefact to demonstrate a principle or practice from their course. As available use computer aided design software, graphics software, web or app authoring tool, a games design platform, robotics, a Raspberry Pi or other maker kit, or a 3D printer..

Learning outcomes or benefits

Learners experience the potential of digital making to create real-world outcomes. Design skills are critical in many jobs, professions and careers. This offers opportunities also to develop coding skills, usability/accessibility awareness, user experience design.

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Activity

Interactive lectures: Learners engage with material in a live lecture using polls (clickers or personal devices - these are sophisticated enough now to include short word answers, scales, word clouds etc). Or doing live quizzes or internet 'missions'.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Enhanced concentration and engagement in lecturers. Better understanding through active learning and reinforcement. Opportunities for responsive teaching depending on how feedback from learners.

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Activity

Simulations and scenarios: Use digital simulations, scenarios or case studies to support situated thinking, planning and problem-solving. There are many simulations available, including virtual bodies, weather systems, and buildings. Provide clear questions, tasks and assessment criteria. Reflect on the impact of using digital simulations to explore real-world settings.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Safe, responsive way of experiencing 'real world' situations. Digital simulations can be visited repeatedly to ensure the learning is better retained. In more gamified scenarios, learners can gain in-world feedback, and be motivated by rewards.

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Activity

Serious games: 'Serious' games are used for training in many industries and are increasingly being developed for learning. Similar to simulations, virtual games usually have a rapid feedback cycle with users gaining rewards for solving problems or passing tests.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Learners can return to the same problem/practice and gain experience. Often very motivating. Useful for gaining practice in discrete skills or established methods.

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Activity

Distant debate: Stage a formal debate in an online setting such as a webinar platform or via Skype. Two groups of learners – who could be in different countries – must prepare and argue different sides of a case. Negotiate and reflect on the ground rules first. What difference does it make if you can/can't see your opponent?

Learning outcomes or benefits

Awareness of cultural and other differences in online settings; academic argumentation; managing presence in virtual spaces; safe and responsible behaviour;

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problem solving
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Digital learning
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Activity

DIY learning quiz: Learners produce their own quizzes for each other using a free quizzing tool or learning design app. Grade them on content selection, distractor questions, overall design, learning experience.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Learners have fun turning the tables and trying to make the quiz as difficult as possible. Writing distractor questions requires good subject knowledge (they must be wrong but credible). Use of online survey tools.

Digital learning activity

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Activity

Scavenger hunt: Information scavenges from school can be made tougher for FE and HE students, eg identify the quotation (include enough key words to build a search); link clues from e-journal to e-journal; items that can only be found with advanced search methods; fact checking.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Advanced information literacy skills. Check out library websites for a host of scavenger hunt resources and similar games. You may have to introduce additional challenges for your students. Ensure they have to use a range of information services and tools eg library catalogue, repository, online database, specialist gateway.

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Activity

Maps vs Apps vs Lists: Learners share their preferences for making notes eg using a mind-mapping tool/process, an online curation tool (app), or with written (typed, speech-to-text) notes. During a lecture they try their favoured approach and on a given signal switch to a different one. Be aware of potential disadvantages for some learners.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Note making skills; digital fluency and flexibility; basic learning and revision.

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Activity

Join a real research team: Identify research projects in your subject that are looking for public participation, or researchers/professionals who are willing to have student collaborators. Usually this will only be possible through digital participation. Reflect on how research methods and findings are changing.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Motivation of contributing to real-world knowledge making; digital research skills; digital collaboration; research and data skills.

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Activity

Digital storytelling: Tell a story by linking digital images and other artefacts, usually with voice-over or text. Learners can be prompted to explore their own learning journey or to illustrate a specific theme or event. There are many digital storytelling web sites for examples and ideas.

Learning outcomes or benefits

Developing digital identity materials and practices; learning to use different media; editing and story-boarding; organising materials; creative production.