


LSIS Leadership in Technology (LIT) grant based intervention

Case study template

Provider name & contact details	Accountancy Plus (Training) Limited
LIT Project title	Engaging remote Key Skills learners through Virtual Classrooms
<p>Project summary :</p> <p>- Include the particular area for improvement that has been tackled through the effective deployment of technology</p>	 <p>A Virtual Classroom was used to facilitate remotely delivered Key Skills workshops for those learners who are unable (or unwilling) to attend formal workshops. The key objective was to engage with learners to maintain ‘timely success’ rates and to do so with a reduction in the cost of delivery.</p>
What were the aims of the project?	It has proved difficult to engage mature learners in the Key Skills element of their Apprenticeship framework and this constantly threatens to bring down ‘timely success’ rates. The aim of the project was to address this ‘head on’ by using on-line methods to better improve learner perception and engagement
What did you do and how did you do this?	We trialled the Virtual Classroom ‘Elluminate’ to deliver both ‘Application of number’ and ‘Communications’ Key Skills elements to small groups, mostly made up of learners joining the sessions individually from their own homes. We trained both tutor(s) and learners and developed some operating criteria for setup and delivery of on-line activity
What role did your mentor play on your LIT project?	The mentor, bringing with him good knowledge of using Virtual Classroom software, managed the project on behalf of the APlus project team. He drafted all the reports and initially trained and supported staff, particularly the Virtual Classroom Champion with whom he worked closely throughout the course of the project.
What have been the key benefits from the input of your mentor?	Having the knowledge and experience available gave the project a flying start and thereafter by acting as project manager he was able to keep the project on its time plan and

<p>What was the benefit of the support that you received from your LSIS Associate?</p>	<p>delivering the agreed outputs.</p> <p>The LSIS Associate was able to use her experience to offer advice on the project, its action-planning and contribute to the development of the elements of its delivery. She was the conduit through which LSIS directed activity was passed.</p>
<p>What has been the impact and benefit of the LIT capital grant to your project?</p> <p>What did the project cost, including LSIS funding?</p>	<p>Following the successful development and delivery of Key Skills elements using the Virtual Classroom 'Elluminate' via a third party the capital grant enabled us to purchase a two year licence of our own. It also enabled us to develop some Key Skills supporting materials for a linked VLE portal and to obtain a small stock of webcams and headsets which learners and staff are able to borrow in order to participate.</p> <p>£3000 mentor+ £3000 staff time+ £5000 capital spend</p>
<p>What has been the impact of your LIT project on your organisational improvement strategy?</p> <p>What were the benefits of your LIT project?</p> <p>What were the savings to your organisation?</p> <p>How did you calculate them?</p>	<p>It has supported and contributed towards the maintenance of significant improvements to 'timely success' which had been one of our key priorities following an OFSTED inspection in 2009. It has offered solutions to other learner engagement issues and has made possible participation in ESF Leonardo activity with European partners</p> <p>It enabled us to allocate time and resources to develop one strategic and operational approach to improving learner engagement in Key Skills and to consider its affect on sustaining 'timely success' using 'Apprenticeship' frameworks.</p> <p>The cost of falling 'timely success' rates and the paradoxical increase in the cost of delivery by using peripatetic Key Skills delivery working with individuals or micro groups. Staff and learner travel costs within a large rural area. Travel costs for staff and learners on the basis of one session a month shows a time and mileage saving of some £6000</p> <p>Reduced level of mileage expense claims. Reduction in cost of hosting small training sessions at each venue. The value of Apprenticeship completion payments not lost by non-achievement. The funding has been leveraged to generate an increases return on that funding (a multiplier effect!)</p>

<p>What were the lessons learned?</p> <p>What tips do you have for other providers?</p> <p>How will you disseminate effective practice to others in the sector?</p>	<p>Not to take anything for granted. That Virtual Classroom tutors need a more focused skills-set. Time is needed to develop skills in Virtual Classroom delivery. That tutor and learner induction to on-line methods and its technology is critical</p> <p>Find a champion within your organisation to deliver and find an implementer/finisher to drive the project forward which in our case was the mentor as the project lead was the Managing Director.</p> <p>We have already presented a workshop at an LSIS event and will continue to do so as opportunities arise. We will disseminate through our own range of formal and informal sector networks including our JISC Regional Support Centre. We will seek partner(s) to collaborate in further developments of the technology.</p>
<p>Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS LIT project.</p> <p>Are you happy for us to use this and your contact details for marketing and publications?</p>	<p>“We are great at coming up with ideas the problem is having the funding and discipline to implement them – the funding available within the LIT project and more importantly the methodology enabled us to achieve the project outcomes within the timescale”, Simon Deane (Managing Director)</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Contact details for further information</p>	<p>Martin Thomson, t4Learning, project mentor Martin.thomson@t4Learning.co.uk</p>

Please email all case studies to leadership@lsis.org.uk by 18th March 2011