

LSIS Leadership in Technology (LIT) grant based intervention

Impact study template

Provider name & contact details	Ashton Sixth Form College Darnton Road Ashton under Lyne OL6 9RL
LIT Project title	CALTT - Connecting with Adult Learners – Trainee Teachers
The project	
What problem or issue you were trying to resolve or improve with this project	<p>Our problem had been to retain students on our Teaching Assistant course. The classes were always at the end of their working day and many often found it hard to keep attending traditional lessons. We hoped that by providing other means of accessing the course, they would find it easier to attain the qualification they had signed up for.</p> <p>Furthermore, a mid-2012 eProgress Review carried out on the college by the JISC RSC NW had identified that “technology is not used as much as it could be in this area”. There is also an issue of staff development for HE and Skills staff as many of them are sessional, so cannot attend the training provided for college staff.</p>
Why did you go for a technology-based solution	We knew that webinar technologies could be the answer to our problem and needed to explore one that was available to us.
What did the project cost: LSIS funding + your organisation’s contribution	<p>£6000</p> <p>As well as some staff time, the LiT Grant funding allowed us to purchase the software and to employ a superb mentor for the period of the project. Other staff time was contributed by the college.</p>
Describe what you did and what happened	Following a period of research, we purchased a license for Adobe Connect. This came with a limit of five named users.

These users would be the teachers.

We also purchased sufficient headsets and webcams for those five staff as these would be needed for them to interact with Adobe Connect. None of these staff member had ever used online webinar technologies before.

Anne Lafford, a member of the Teaching Assistants teaching team was selected by her HoD to be trained. This training was provided by the LSIS mentor, Lilian Soon.

Lilian came into college at the beginning of August 2012 to deliver an initial training session. It quickly became apparent that Anne needed a lot of support. The college provided her with a computer for home and the project provided her with a headset and web cam so that she could practice at home.

Lilian then trained Anne in the use of Adobe Connect and online learning techniques. She supported Anne all the way. Anne had not been a formidable user of technology prior to this project and a long settling in period was required before Anne felt confident enough to a) – be seen on camera and b) – present a lesson online.

During the training period, Lilian developed Anne's skills in planning online courses, building them, trialling them and then running them; she became proficient in deciding what was acceptable and understandable online and what wasn't.

In time, Anne became proficient enough to train other HE & Skills staff to use Connect. For support, she did this in conjunction with her mentor. Anne has now successfully run lessons online with the majority of students giving positive feedback about their experience.

As a result of us using Adobe Connect and in addition to the original plan, A-Level teachers ran revision sessions with their students during the Christmas holidays in preparation for the January exams.

	<p>This has helped us to judge whether this webinar technology can be spread across the full range of courses.</p>
<p>The benefits and impact</p>	
<p>What benefits/ impact has the project had on:::</p>	<p>a. the work/ effectiveness of your organisation</p> <p>Using Adobe Connect has allowed part-time HE students, who have many other family and work commitments, to take part in lessons from home or from their workplace.</p> <p>This has improved the achievement of those students who might otherwise have missed the sessions.</p> <p>We now plan to supplement other courses through online webinars as an additional way to engage with the adult community in the local area.</p> <hr/> <p>b. the cost/ efficiency of activities</p> <p>At the time of starting this project Adobe Connect was the best solution available. The cost of the software and the restrictions on who can run sessions (five people in our case) makes it costly to run on a regular basis, particularly if more curriculum teams want to use the technology.</p> <p>However, we still plan to continue providing webinars across the curriculum but we will also be using alternative technologies.</p> <p>The college uses Live@edu for student email, this has now been upgraded to Office 365 and includes Lync which will allow us to run webinars for up to 250 people from the desktop for free.</p> <p>We plan to have this implemented for the next academic year and training will take place during the summer months. This technology allows us the additional advantage of being able to communicate with students in other ways such as instant messaging and will eventually be used for telephony too, but at an additional cost.</p>

	<p>Ann’s work and her training by Lilian has been an essential ingredient in our decision to go forward with Lync as she has proved that Webinars can work and provided our colleagues with the sound grounding that was needed.</p>						
	<p>c. any other aspect of your work</p> <p>The webinar technology has allowed us to engage with our 16-19 students during the long holiday prior to January exams.</p> <p>Whilst this will no longer be an issue because of the change to exams, we will now be able to offer revision sessions in the evenings and at weekends in the build up to the summer exams.</p> <p>This will improve achievement, especially for those students who have missed lessons for various reasons and for those who find it difficult to revise independently.</p>						
<p>What contribution to the success / smooth running of the project was made by:</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="490 999 876 1050">LSIS funding</td> <td data-bbox="876 999 1448 1050">a little / some/ a lot / essential</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="490 1050 876 1100">Your mentor</td> <td data-bbox="876 1050 1448 1100">a little / some/ a lot / essential</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="490 1100 876 1234">LSIS Associate</td> <td data-bbox="876 1100 1448 1234">a little / some/ a lot / essential</td> </tr> </table>	LSIS funding	a little / some/ a lot / essential	Your mentor	a little / some/ a lot / essential	LSIS Associate	a little / some/ a lot / essential
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<p>Do you have any comments on the funding, mentor or LSIS Associate.</p>	<p>We had superb support from our LSIS Associate.</p> <p>If there were any problems contact was available and was freely given.</p> <p>I can’t praise our mentor enough for the help she has given. Anne was technophobic when the project started.</p> <p>Her personal skills and confidence have increased dramatically over the course of the project and that is entirely down to the support from Lilian Soon.</p>						
<p>What lessons did you learn / what tips would you give to other</p>	<p>“Don't be afraid to try something new, however frightening it may seem at first, with the right support which I had from my excellent mentor along with the</p>						

<p>providers</p>	<p>support and help from Sandra my confidence has grown beyond anything I would have thought and I would recommend this baptism by fire (which is how it felt at the initial meeting) to anyone.”</p> <p>This is a quote from Anne Lafford. Anne’s confidence in the use of technology and also her personal confidence has improved tremendously as a result of this project.</p> <p>It’s not always the technology enabled staff who benefit from this type of project as can be seen from Anne’s quote above. When staff are taken out of their comfort zone they can panic, providing support is critical to success in a project like this.</p>
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<p>Telling others</p>	
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<p>What have you done to share /disseminate this project with others in the sector</p>	<p>Unfortunately we were unable to attend the LSIS conference because of an accident on the way to the venue.</p> <p>We will offer a workshop at the forthcoming JISC RSC Northwest Roadshow in the summer to show other colleges what we have been working on and how it has affected our plans for the future.</p>
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<p>Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS LIT project.</p>	<p>“The use of Webinars within my curriculum area has greatly improved my learners’ experience as they detail in their feedback and that is what the job is all about.” Anne Lafford</p> <p>A quote from one of her students was: “Brilliant session I was able to attend without the pressure of arranging childcare tonight which made me more relaxed' this was following the first Webinar session.”</p> <p>From the Project Manager – This has been the easiest project to manage. Support from the Critical Friend and Mentor has been outstanding.</p>
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Are you happy for us to use this and your contact details for marketing and publications?	Yes
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