

Regional Collaboration Fund (RCF) grant based intervention Impact study template

RCF Project title	E - Ambassadors
Name of lead contact	Terrence Thomas
Consortium members	Barnet and Southgate College / Ealing Hammersmith and West London College / Oakland College
Other contributing organisations (if any)	N/A
The project	
What problem or issue you were trying to resolve or improve with this project	OFSTED reports (on FE colleges) frequently highlight the use of ILT to support effective teaching and learning as an area for improvement. The project was aimed at addressing this by engaging learners in the use of technology, giving them the space to demonstrate / develop their skills in the use of modern technology to enhance their learning experience and support their teachers and peers.
What was your solution	The approach taken to address the challenge was to give learners the safe, support and freedom to generate a range of online (e-learning) resources and tools that they could share with their teachers and peers. In the spirit of placing the learner at the centre of the process, the pilot group of E-Ambassadors (the learners participating in the project) were allowed to determine the nature of the e-resources to be developed. By making these resources more personalised it was envisioned that this would encourage greater, more creative use of ILT by learners and their teachers, improve teaching and learning and further develop the colleges Virtual Learning platforms. The learners would also use the project to develop expertise in ICT and therefore acquire skills that are transferable to the workplace. Their teachers would get on the job training in the use of new / emerging classroom technologies through end users.

	<p>The consortium approach was aimed at accessing a wider pool of expertise and at facilitating increased collaboration with other FE institutions at the curriculum level.</p>
<p>Describe what you did and what happened</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. An introductory meeting to clarify project objectives and agree roles and responsibilities of the three partner colleges was held with the support of the LSIS Associate.2. The three partner colleges separately advertised internally for student and staff volunteers to support the project.3. Within each partner college E-Ambassador volunteers were briefed on project objectives.4. Weekly workshops staffed by participating teachers, IT technical staff, E-Learning Managers and, at one of the partners by an external volunteer, were arranged. These workshops were used to provide technical support where that was needed and to ensure E-Ambassadors remained focused and on target to deliver their projects. It also provided an opportunity for E-Ambassadors discuss their projects with each other.5. At all three partners, E-Learning Managers / Co-ordinators were engaged and supported the establishments of internal E-Ambassador online forums via the colleges VLE and an E-Ambassador website hosted by Google. These allowed the learners and staff in the wider E-Ambassador community, participating in the project, to share their experiences, exchange ideas and record milestones.6. Where appropriate, funds from the LSIS grant was used to provided learners with suitable equipment (tablet computers) to enable them to complete their projects.7. Learners across all three partners engaged enthusiastically with the projects and examples of the resources created by the E-ambassadors were exhibited at the LSIS conference in February. These are also available online. Examples can be found at the attached link: http://issuu.com/pauldanielray/docs/e-ambassador_resources?mode=window

	<p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELUF4TgXdzA&list=PL3ffzvit_h2qs2FvwP8cOIEMrjs63qd_Dr</p> <p>https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dEt1MGxyb0kyM2dCZDRiSGp5b3hTYVE6MQ#gid=0</p> <p>8. E-Ambassadors from all three partners were brought together at a conference, to review projects and share their experiences.</p>
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The collaboration	
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<p>How well did the collaboration work and what were the key factors that led to this</p>	<p>There were some difficulties securing the three partners for the collaborative project. Initially, the colleges were meant to be drawn from LCC members. However, one of original group withdrew at short notice citing commitments to other priorities. This could have jeopardised the project. Support from the LSIS Associate, flexibility from LSIS and already existing relationships between key individuals at Barnet and Southgate College, Ealing Hammersmith and West London College and Oaklands College made it possible to get Oaklands to join the project as the third partner.</p> <p>That partnership worked very well especially considering the time lost at the beginning. Face to face meetings were limited to three over the duration. Instead, updates and briefings on the progress of the projects within each college were facilitated by the Google hangout video conferencing tool.</p> <p>The key to the success of the collaboration were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The passion and commitment of the learners across all there partners. This is demonstrated by the feedback from the very successful E-Ambassadors conference held on Friday 8th March. 2. The existing relationships between the project leaders at each college and the support of middle and senior managers. 3. The availability of funds to support the project and the existence
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	<p>suitable expertise within the partner colleges.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The trust developed between the project leaders and the learners participating. 5. The credibility of the staff involved in the partnership as all the key individuals were familiar with the concept of an E-Ambassador. 6. The wide cross-section of the college communities represented –learners, subject specialist, E-learning leads, technical staff and college managers. This reflected organisational buy in and support for the partnership. 7. The shared vision for increasing learner engagement with technology as a tool to improve attainment. 8. The flexibility of the project teams. This was best demonstrated by the option exercised in finding solution to the traditional difficulties of time availability. 9. Availability and use of informal communication routes through Gmail or Google+ to afford frequent communication.
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The benefits and impact of the project	
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<p>What benefits/ impact has the project had on:</p>	<p>a. the work/ effectiveness of the organisations in your consortium.</p> <p>Immediate benefits already realised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Further collaboration between Ealing Hammersmith and West London College and Barnet and Southgate college in the assessment of IELTS candidates has been agreed. 2. Learner voice support for E-ambassadors model is being promoted across all partners. It is expected to result in increased take up of project based learning across all levels. <p>The final impact as regards learner attainment and other learner focused Key Performance measures will not be realised until the end of the academic year (the project will continue) and will be reported then.</p>
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However already the following can be evidenced:

1. Learners assume greater responsibility for their own learning.
2. Learners developed skills as independent learners, showed initiative, became more self-directing and self-confident. This in turn should improve key success measures such as attendance, punctuality and attainment.
3. Reduction in the time and cost of staff development to train teachers to create ILT based teaching and learning tools such as Prezzis, E-books and video revision tools.
4. Learners now have a leading role in the development of the resource base of the VLE pages at Oakland and Barnet and Southgate colleges.
5. It has improved the diversity and nature of resources that are available for all learners via the college's VLE.
6. The development of a revision cards mobile app by one of the E-Ambassadors at Oaklands College has created much excitement and is raising the awareness of staff at all three partners to e-learning and mobile learning tools and the importance of using their learners as a resource.

(Evidence of these can be judged from the learner feedback / comments on the E-Ambassadors website).

b. the cost/ efficiency of activities

1. Reduction in the time and cost of staff development to train teachers to create and use ILT based teaching and learning tools such as Prezzis, E-books and video revision tools.
2. Cost-effective production of a suite of learning resources

	c. any other aspect(s) of your work
<p>What contribution to the success / smooth running of the project was made by:</p>	<p>LSIS funding Essential</p> <p>This facilitated the procurement of equipment to support the project and crucially it covered the staffing cost associated with developing this collaborative project based approach to teaching and learning. The funding also supported the development time for the e-learning survey produced by the project leads and E-Ambassadors, the cost of hosting the surveys online, the training of E-Ambassadors, and the production of materials to promote / recruit ambassadors.</p> <p>LSIS Associate Essential</p> <p>The support, intervention and encouragement of the LSIS Associate were crucial throughout the project. The guidance at the start of the project, particularly after the withdrawal of the one of the original partners was significant.</p>
<p>What did the project cost: LSIS funding + your consortium's contribution</p>	<p>Current cost £30,000</p>
<p>What lessons did you learn / what tips would you give to other providers</p>	<p>1. Tutors involved in the project reported being surprised by the level of skill, maturity and commitment the E-Ambassadors exhibited. These lecturers have started to change their practice from being focused on passing on information to learners to helping them develop thinking skills, problem solving skills and acquiring transferable skills. They have started to embrace the more student centred approach encouraged by the E-</p>

	<p>Ambassadors project.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Longer serving teachers were more concerned about 'teaching' students and were less enthusiastic about the new resources / approach. The E-Ambassadors have been able to demonstrate however, that they can 'teach' the teachers - not only in the ways they prefer to learn / enjoy learning but in showing teachers how to create new e-resources and the new kinds of teaching and learning strategies which could emerge as a result. 3. Other providers considering similar projects should consider building the collaboration from previously established relationships as this facilitates smoother working relationships and trust. A departmental buy-in, good internal promotional activities led by learners, backed by a commitment from senior managers to provide support for legacy activities are important ingredients for success.
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Telling others	
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<p>What have you done to share /disseminate this project with others in the sector</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The work and experiences of the E-Ambassadors project was showcased at the LSIS conference in February. 2. Some of the resources and learner journeys are available online on the E-Ambassadors website; http://www.e-ambassador.co.uk 3. The work of the E-Ambassadors has been shared with college leaders including boards of governors. It is envisaged that senior managers would use their networks to promote the project and that it would become a unique selling point for participating colleges. 4. Summaries of the experiences of the collaboration would be published in FE Sector literature. 5. In one instance, the resource created is being considered for commercial release.
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<p>Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS</p>	<p>"The transformation, confidence and creativity which emerged from E-Ambassadors have revealed an untapped resource within classrooms</p>
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RCF project.	<p>which teachers have been hesitant to exploit. Those adventurous enough to explore this are discovering that their lessons come to life and learners engage with the materials more readily as they own it. This truly puts the learner at the centre of the teaching and learning process”.</p> <p>Terrence Thomas Head of A levels and Sciences – Barnet and Southgate College.</p> <p>“Students are truly reservoirs of hidden talents. These talents need to be first discovered and then given a voice to in order to help make them flourish. This has always been a strong element of the project”.</p> <p>Raj Perera Project lead – Oaklands College</p>				
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