LSIS Leadership in Technology (LIT) grant based intervention Impact study template

Provider name & contact details	Cambridge County Council Adult Learning and Skills
LIT Project title	Establishment of VLE platforms for use of tutors in contracted and direct delivery provision

The project	
What problem or issue you were trying to resolve or improve with this project	The use of technology is as yet underdeveloped in the majority of our courses and this project was intended to inform us about the capability, viability and efficacy of online induction for specific courses (workshop/ practical/ physical activity) as a way of moving paper-based induction and initial assessment out of the classroom and lesson time. We currently have no VLE or other learning platform and we needed to be able to see firstly which would be suitable for our courses and then trial its use with limited scope to see what would work for our learners. Furthermore, this issue was highlighted in our recent Ofsted inspection. Therefore we decided to: • Improve tutors digital/ ILT skills • Improve the learner experience via the use of technology We looked at 2 possible solutions: • Moodle (too costly, difficult to maintain)- rejected by senior management • Edmodo, free social networking style site which we decided to try
Why did you go for a technology-based solution	• The identification of the lack of a VLE by Ofsted was a primary reason for choosing a technology based solution • The use of ILT was also a general concern both for tutors and learners and so this was a neat way to tackle all of this at once • Initial assessment and individual learning planning is problematic for some learners on some courses. Learners do not respond well to form filling in class time (especially with dance, cookery and exercise classes) so we decided that we might be able to find a digital solution to this, at

	least then being able to offer the alternative • Gathering this information is in theory more efficient electronically, similarly storage and retrieval should be easier too Furthermore, culturally the use of ILT is not as widespread as it ought to be in our courses and running a project using technology is a positive step on the way to changing tutors' (and learners') behaviour where technology and the classroom are concerned. We felt that testing a solution that could use learners' existing technology (in particular, mobile phones/ Smart phones) was an easier way to get learners to change their outlook and expectations of their courses and facilitate, for some, better learning experiences. As a bi-product, it soon became clear that there could be significant tutor benefits too which will impact on learners). The project would therefore improve teaching and learning.	

What did the project cost: LSIS funding + your organisation's contribution

	Rates	Cost
Project Manager	24 x 7hrs days@ £38.68	£6498
Quality Manager	2 days x 7hrs@ £58.25	£ 816
Tutor training	10 tutors (10x6 + 5x3 hrs @£25)	£1875
Additional tutor training (development of courses)	28hrs @£25	£700
Mentor		£2100
	Total	£11989

Describe what you did and what happened

The plan was to recruit tutors from the following subject areas, based on the difficulties tutors have with initial assessment and ILPs :

• Cookery
• Health & Fitness/ Dance
• Art & Craft

10 tutors signed up for the pilot with the aim of creating and trialling course specific online induction materials that were audio and video based, ready for trial on courses starting ion January 2013.

We recruited a mentor (Terry Loane) to assist with the training on the Edmodo platform and development of digital resources and a training workshop was held for the 10 tutors in November 2012. A "group" was created for the training on the site which has been subsequently used for peer support and guidance during the development of resources and many difficulties were resolved using the online community support route. Software used was Audacity, Dvolver, Photostory, Go-Animate, MS Word/ PowerPoint.

A progress workshop with a show and tell session was held in December with 5 tutors attending which was an opportunity for those tutors to fine tune their resources in readiness for the start of courses in January.

Of the 10 participating tutors, 4 have trialled Edmodo with their courses (1 tutor has left, 2 tutors not replied, 1 tutor course not running). 1 tutor says it is easier to stick with E mail. 1 tutor has had to deal with a family bereavement and has not introduced it at all yet.

Level of learner engagement is varied but generally poor. Those that have signed up say that:

- it takes a lot longer to fill in trackers than doing it on paper
- It is easy and takes the paperwork out of the classroom

Barriers:

- Confidence with IT was surveyed at the start, tutors were all confident, this was not reflected in the workshop and subsequent creation of resources
- Tutors' IT skills range from excellent (1 tutor) through good, able to cope and helpless- generally not able to use Edmodo independently. Highlights need for skills audit. Learners not willing to join the groups, unwilling to log on at home (keeping learning separate from domestic life) and not keen on using technology
- Trying to get learners on board after start of course seems to be difficult

	• Need more exposure • Signing up information must be sent out prior to course start to be effective • Learners like the idea but don't necessarily like the method • Need a change in behaviour and expectation **Strengths** • Simplicity of use of Edmodo • Very limited scope of Edmodo • Free • Secure and works at a group level independently of organisations • Supports word, embedded video, audio files, photographs, PPt • Mobile App available Potential for tutor induction is far greater and this seems to be the best way forward for Edmodo at this stage although for 2 courses it has been a real success (largely due to the tutor promoting it) 1 with 19 out of 25 learners enrolled (over 3 courses), 1 with 10/11. Confidence levels of tutors was assessed at the start of the project but it was clear that this was not reflected in levels of competence with both familiar and unfamiliar software and as a result, the standard and variety of resources was very varied, from poor to good depending upon tutors' ILT skills. 2x LSIS conferences were attended, first in London, then in Birmingham. The outstanding common denominator there was the networking and seeing what other organisations were doing, in particular the use of Augmented Reality which we have adopted as a further way forward and are currently developing ourselves.
The benefits and impact	
What benefits/ impact has the project had on:::	a. the work/ effectiveness of your organisation We have focussed sharply on use of digital media as improvement tools. Directly, the project has highlighted new ways in which we can approach both learner and tutor induction. This is going to be adopted fully in September as an option for all courses. Improvement may be a slow process but this is definitely a very positive step forward and one that can be adapted to very easily. Indirectly, we have identified, in the use of AR as a significant tool for quality improvement. This will have an immediate impact once

	the content has been fully designed and implemented.
	b. the cost/ efficiency of activities As mentioned above we chose the free option as the best way forward and Edmodo delivers on that. It requires little training to use (tutorials are available online and take a total of 2 hours) so costs there will be as low as possible. The advantage of it being that it too will work with learners' and tutors' existing equipment and all that will be necessary is the download of an app and the change in behaviour to use it.
	c. any other aspect of your work The other major impact will be the ability to reach a much wider audience much more of the time, particularly out of the classroom where both Edmodo and AR are going to work best and we have targeted that as our area for improvement in the project aims. This means that tutors and learners will have constant access, to either course information, should they wish, or quality improvement advice and guidance through AR. Furthermore, the focus on the use of technology has had a general, very positive effect in that possibilities that technology can offer are now fully embedded into our quality improvement planning.
What contribution to the success / smooth running of the project was made by:	LSIS funding a little / some/ a lot / essential Your mentor a little / some/ a lot / essential LSIS Associate a little / some/ a lot / essential
Do you have any comments on the funding, mentor or LSIS Associate.	The project could not have run without funding, that is a fact. Without the technical expertise of our mentor, we would not have been able to run the training, fact. Without the advice and guidance from the Associate, the project would not have had clear, focussed, achievable targets from the start, fact. I fail to see how this project could have been run successfully without all three of the above.
What lessons did you learn / what tips would you give to other providers	Be very clear about what you are trying to address or achieve, then decide in detail about how you are going to measure this.

Telling others	
What have you done to share /disseminate this project with others in the sector	There are a number of forthcoming JISC local events where we will share the project outcomes.
Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS LIT project.	*Don't rely on technology to solve problems or make improvements, get people using it to do that.*
Are you happy for us to use this and your contact details for marketing and publications?	Yes
Contact details for further information	Clive.riggs@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Tel. 01223699971

Please email all case studies to eleadership@lsis.org.uk by 15 March 2012