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

Provider name & contact details	Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service
LIT Project title	The effective use of mind mapping technologies to increase the overall quality of active learning and teaching for all learners and tutors

The project	
What problem or issue you were trying to resolve or improve with this project	Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service is the largest provider of part-time adult learning opportunities in Derbyshire employing approx 400+ tutors, the majority of which are part time, varying from 2-18 hours delivery per week. Courses are offered across 15 Sector Skills Areas. Learning programmes take place mainly in our own 23 main centres plus approximately 100 outreach venues.
	All tutors are commited to undertake CPD despite the challenges of location and number of hours teaching, so supporting individual tutors' CPD is a huge challenge for DACES as an organisation.
	Whilst DACES constantly strive to ensure that a quality service is provided, and that staff are supported in terms of CPD to achieve this, there has to be a balance drawn to counteract working within the current climate of austerity and Derbyshire County Council current agenda – Changing the Way Derbyshire Works (CWDW). The Service had a major restructure in 2012, which impacted on Managers and Tutors alike. It is within this context that we wanted to encourage tutors to review and constantly seek to improve their teaching practice and improve the quality of the provision offered.
	As a service we have been fortunate in being able to participate in a number of LSIS funded projects and having this additional funding has allowed us to continue to look at alternative methods to support our learners and deliver quality provision which in fully inclusive.
	In an earlier project the Service had purchased a number of licences for the Mind Genius Mind mapping software. This proved to be an excellent tool in terms of delivery, organisation and planning. It was used by a wide range of users in both learning and management contexts. However, whilst Mind Genius proved to be an excellent programme for planning and at management level, the software proved too costly to use across the wider service for teachers and learners. The aim of this project therefore was to research and evaluate mind mapping software options that would be more accessible for all. In addition to usability, the products also had to be evaluated in terms of cost, accessibility and use within both learning and management context.
Why did you go for a technology-based solution	Part of our internal observation of learning and teaching looks at the use of technology in the classroom, both in terms of delivery and impact. In some environments use of technology is minimal and tutors are encouraged to find new ways to engage their learners and make learning inclusive. Use of mind mapping technology can be a fun visual way to use technology and research

	shows that learners acquire new skills quickly when visual examples are used. This is then easily transferable to paper based methods for home, planning, learning and further use.
What did the project cost: LSIS funding + your organisation's contribution	In total the project was allocated £10K, (LSIS £4K + £2K for the external Mentor, plus £4K from DACES to support tutors to plan and deliver Supported Experiments/Joint Practice Development projects outside of their established hours/remit). The allocation from LSIS contributed to paying for Project Management time, which included meetings, planning, delivery and collation of evidence and attendance at two conferences linked to the funding. Daces contribution predominantly supported Teaching staff to help provide them with the time and opportunity to try something outside of their normal teaching and preparation commitment. The opportunity to participate in the project was offered to teaching staff under DACES CPD scheme of Supported Experiments or Joint Development Practice. At the time of writing this report some projects were still on-going and so final costs could not be fully calculated. Indicative costing schedule is shown below:

Activity	Cost	
External meetings with LSIS representative – Priscilla Kendall & Mentor – Lynn Lall • PK – July 12 - LL – July, Aug12 & Feb13 • Includes venue, time + travel	570	
Internal planning – setting up Moodle to support project, research, planning and advertising	150	
Attendance at LSIS Project Conferences PM + 1 November 12 - Birmingham (8 hours X £25) + travel)	450	
Funding allocated to individual projects – 10 tutors x 3 days – training, travel + sundries (10 x 24 hrs x £20)	4800	
On-going support to Project Team, meetings, telephone calls, + sundries (10 x 2hrs x £25)	580	
Cascading information across DACES, Curriculum Teams, attendance at Team Meetings x 9 (3x£25 + travel)	700	
Attendance at LSIS Technology for Success Conference PM + 1 February 13 - Birmingham (8 hours X £25) + travel)	450	
Collation of Evidence, meetings, management review and final report	300	
Funds available to DACES (LSIS £4K + DACES £4K)	**8000**	

	Funds available for Mentor support at meetings and background research and advice.	2000	
	*Rate includes on-costs, national insurance, travel & sundries. • PM Rate – based on £25 • Change Agents – based £20 • Tutors non-directed hours based on £16.00	**Total**	**10000**

Describe what you did and what happened	Lyn Lall – Mentor – Loughborough College Priscilla Kendall – LSIS Critical Friend **Priscilla Kendall** – First meeting took place with Priscilla – **20 July 12** at Derby. We discussed the aims of the project, points to include in the action plan and clarified points that could be drawn upon to highlight the impact of the project. **Lyn Lall** – Initial meeting – **22 Aug 12**. The draft Action Plan was discussed at length. Lyn was able to provide information on a range of alternative mind mapping solution types (license/web-based and USB). I then set up a course on our Moodle site specifically for the project and Lyn was able to access and populate the site with information on the various software options and provided video tutorial clips on their use. Moodle was also used as the main collation tool for the project for resources, tracking sheets, timelines for the projects. **Draft Action Plan submitted – 31 Aug 12** **Advertising Flyers circulated Early Sept 12** – Flyers were circulated via Managers and centres and a number of tutors applied to the project. The Tutors were enrolled on to the Moodle course and then signposted to the resources. The initial plan was that the individual projects would have two elements; • Review and evaluate the mind mapping software options • Apply the chosen software within their own teaching areas as part of their individual projects. **Learning & Teaching Improvement Team (LTIG) meeting – 25 Sep 12 – Agenda item -** included an overview of the project and progress to date. There was further discussion on attracting tutors as initial take up has been slow. Copies of the project Action plan were sent to Vikki Trace, Priscilla Kendal, and LSIS. **6 November 12** – **Technology for Impact Conference** – I attended this event with one of my colleagues, Carol Giaquinto. Carol uses mind mapping software on a regular basis in her delivery of languages courses. She played a key part in the overall project and is also a member of the LTIG team. The event provided us the opportunity to meet other grant winners and we shared ideas/issues around the various projects. **Issues Arising and Impact** Following on from the Technology for Impact Conference in November, I reviewed the project with various team members and colleagues involved and discussed various options with DACES Managers & Lyn Lall (project mentor) and Priscilla Kendall (LSIS Critical Friend). Uptake to the project had initially been slow. It was felt that this has been the result of significant changes to staffing and management teams. Substantial changes that have been made in order to work to curriculum changes and funding priorities.

One of the main aims of this project was to encourage tutors who do not normally take part in these projects to get involved. This happened to some extent, however we had not anticipated that ICT in itself may prove to be an issue and expecting part-time tutors from a wide range of curriculums to use Moodle, webinar and discussion forums in addition to reviewing the mind mapping software options as well, was too time consuming within the timeframe of the project whereas 1-1 individual support would be a more viable approach so the action plan needed to be reviewed and the project refocused.

Having had the opportunity to review some of the 3 initial option types myself, I could see that the USB option (X-Mind, My Study Bar' recommended by Lyn Lall) could potentially be an accessible – cost-effective solution that would address the majority of issues that were highlighted with the use of Mind Genius (licence based software that was used in the LSIS research project last year). So this alternative option was proposed to review and implement X-Mind and trial with learners. This method proved to be a more feasible option within the remaining timescale.

Having refocused the direction of the project, participants were encouraged and supported to look at the use of 'My Study Bar' in the classroom in a wide range of contexts. Experiments took place in a range of curriculum areas with learners also participating in 90% of the projects; Curriculum areas included:

- Languages,
- Experiments with learners with dyslexia,
- Skills for Life
- criminology to demonstrate concepts and links
- learner tracking – learner journey
- teacher training to collate group ideas

The fact that the tool is free, downloadable and easily portable was perceived as hugely advantageous for the participants and the learners. Once downloaded the tools would run from a USB pen drive so in addition to being totally portable it meant that IT services were not involved to install software across a range of different sites.

Throughout the duration of the project, regular meetings took place with DACES Learning & Teaching Improvement Team. This was to ensure that the project initially linked in with DACES strategic agenda and to cascade the learning opportunity out to DACES tutors and managers and to also ensure that the team were aware of the overall progress of the project.

1-1 support and guidance was available throughout the duration of the project for the participants and several colleagues also linked to co-work or support on the individual projects. Colleagues were asked to feedback and produce final reports supplemented with learner evidence for the final report. (Reports and supplementary evidence available on request.

5 Feb 13 – Lyn Lall, Carol Giaquinto and I all attended the final Technology for Success Conference in Birmingham. This proved to be an excellent day with the opportunity to attend and participate in other partners workshops. This is an excellent way of sharing good practice and prompting further development, for example the use of QR codes for both publicity and in the production of learning materials. Carol and I were then able to share this within our own organisation the following day.

The benefits and impact

What benefits/ impact has the project had on:::	a. the work/ effectiveness of your organisation In all 10 main Mind mapping projects took place within the timeframe of the project with 90% of these involving learner participation. 4 of the projects were led by tutors working in curriculum areas who would not normally participate in developmental work outside of their established curriculum areas. *(Refer section 'Telling others' for extracts of Tutor/Learner Feedback).*The new skills and ideas from 3 of these projects have since been showcased at several internal team meeting prompting further requests for development time (Supported Experiments/Joint Practice Development) to implement the use of mind mapping techniques within their own classroom environments. Work using this mind mapping software option is still on-going and projects continue to be shared across curriculum areas and teams. Participating in this project has allowed us to continue to: • Increasing the overall quality of active learning and teaching taking place for all learners of DACES and to improve the teaching practice of DACES' tutors - CPD. • Widen provision by providing alternative learning methods for learners • Increase quality learning opportunities for tutors and learners Apart from some initial 'access problems' the software has proved to be robust and feedback has been extremely good with tutors asking for further training, development and involvement in future projects. There were some initial conflict issues with virus software in some cases and the extent as to how the software transfers into other formats, however overall, having the opportunity to further explore and develop skills using this type of software has proved extremely beneficial.
	b. the cost/ efficiency of activities As the Xmind solution on My Study Bar is a free downloadable tool, this obviously has impact in terms of cost/efficiency in comparison to the cost of 1 licence of Mind Genius. £57 per single licence/£500+ per site depending on number of users – http://www.mindgenius.com/Store.aspx - 14Mar13.
	c. any other aspect of your work I and my colleagues have been able to cascade the use of mind mapping software within DACES Change Agent Teams and have used the technology in meetings, and to deliver training and collate feedback from learners in training sessions. We will continue to use this and other technologies in our planned delivery and continue to explore these options further in future Supported Experiments and Joint Practice Development Projects.

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 LSIS funded projects have been absolutely essential for our Service. With the current climate, changes to IfL, teaching qualifications, the focus on moving provision online etc, it is essential that we commit time and funding to support staff with their CPD and ultimately to improve the quality of provision for our learners. Future funding for LSIS projects will be a great loss to our Service. Both the Mentor and Critical Friend provided guidance and support throughout and were invaluable to the smooth running of the project. I would also like to personally thank LSIS and the teams for allowing us the opportunity to participate in this and earlier projects. The funding and support has been a key element in our overall Staff Development Programmes.	
What lessons did you learn / what tips would you give to other providers	It is absolutely essential to have Senior Management support to ensure that the project has successful outcomes. It is essential to have strong communication channels in place so that all participants are kept up to date with developments and support.	
Telling others		
What have you done to share /disseminate this project with others in the sector	Disseminated via local networks - Delivery of internal workshops – signposting tutors to the resources and Change Agents to support their CPD development. Good practice has been shared between teams.	
Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS LIT project.	A selection of quotes from DACES tutors and learners who participated in the project. **Session on Parts of Speech** - 'All learners felt it made an excellent revision tool and made the session easier to understand' 'I felt the learners appreciated being consulted on the new concept…. It gave them ownership of their learning and made them feel valued'. Teacher – 'Mind mapping is an excellent way of plenarising a teaching/learning concept. A copy of the mind-map summarising a section of the scheme of work – such as homophones – can be placed at the front of a series of hand-outs and activities to provide a perfect revision tool'.	

	Session from Criminology class – tutor summary of learner feedback: • all 6 learners said they felt the X-mind tool worked well • all 6 said they felt it helped them understand a difficult topic more easily • 2 said they thought the tool could be used to expand a topic • 2 said they thought the tool was very clear to follow and they liked the visual result • All 6 said they enjoyed the activity **Feedback from Language group** – X-mind is an easy little kit to use to produce simple effective mind maps. It is useful as a teaching aid – eg for on the spot 'brainstorming'. However as a self-learning aid it has proved difficult with older learners and was met with a mixed reception. **Feedback from a tutor working with learners with dyslexia** – As a free download, I think X-mind is an excellent tool that has many of the features of licensed tools such as Mind Genius. Whilst it is not as comprehensive, it is valuable for learners planning and revising work, all the key features are there, including use of colour, use of images and transferring to a word document. – Would definitely like to experiment further with its use in the classroom.
Are you happy for us to use this and your contact details for marketing and publications?	DACES are happy to share any information, case studies, experience related to this and other projects with LSIS and wider community.
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Please email all case studies to eleadership@lsis.org.uk by 15 March 2013