

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

Provider name & contact details	Middlesbrough College Lead. Claire Donlan cv.donlan@mbro.ac.uk (now left the college) James Wells jb.wells@mbro.ac.uk
LIT Project title	The Technology Enhanced Mentoring & Training (TEMT) project
The project	
What problem or issue you were trying to resolve or improve with this project	<p>The issue that the project aimed to focus on was to explore innovative ways to develop and deliver staff training and mentoring.</p> <p>The rationale for the project was to look at ways that the institutional approach to staff training and development could be changed in order to make it more effective which in turn would have a positive impact on teaching and learning across the college.</p> <p>The current system relied on staff being available at the same time and in a central location which for a large organisation is problematic. Duplicate sessions are held in order to reach all staff. This is particularly the case with new staff as they have different start dates and therefore induction training is not necessarily timely.</p> <p>The main factor that influenced the project was the need to engage staff and to develop their skills and knowledge for training and mentoring and in turn use these skills to support other staff and learners.</p> <p>The project was also influenced by the need to address institutional changes such as a greater need for flexible delivery methods and the use of innovative technologies to facilitate blended and online learning.</p>
Why did you go for a technology-based solution	<p>A technology based solution was chosen as it would provide a means of delivering the training sessions to a large number of staff and would provide an effective way of combining resource development with skills development.</p> <p>The use of innovative technologies such as enhanced web conferencing and a virtual classroom environment enabled the upskilling to take place in an online environment in real time and also to be recorded and revisited.</p>

	<p>The technology, the Mizaru Adobe Connect platform, was already available in the college which meant that the resources could be dedicated to delivering and facilitating content rather than concentrating on the technology itself.</p> <p>Other options had been considered which included some technology enabled solutions but it was felt that in order to be innovative a virtual classroom environment was the best option. The fact that sessions can be delivered in real time, thereby providing immediate support and feedback was a crucial factor.</p>
<p>What did the project cost: LSIS funding + your organisation's contribution</p>	<p>The project funding was used for staff time to deliver the online sessions and to develop the resources such as user guides and documentation.</p> <p>The amount of staff time spent on the project is approximately 200 hours of which 150 were paid for the LSIS funding</p>
<p>Describe what you did and what happened</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Questionnaire at start of project completed by 41 participants – used as a benchmark for confidence in using an online collaborative environment e.g. Mizaru 2. Pilot session – 5 participants plus project team – highlighted the need for preparation and a structured approach to sessions. 3. First training session (workforce development day + mop ups) Online session done in a face to face environment – this helped with setting up of audio /headphones / microphones / logging into Mizaru room <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduction and overview of project b. What is online collaboration? c. How to use the system using real examples d. Feedback using poll and chat facilities. 26 participants plus project team 4. Second training session <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Overview of Roles – host, presenter, participants b. Interactive lesson session – JE – showing how an exemplar lesson can be delivered with interactive questioning and participation c. Feedback – CD d. 18 participants + project team + PC (mentor)

	<p>5. User cards / quick help guides have been produced.</p> <p>6. Resources – all other resources are held on the Blackboard site i.e. course documents, wiki etc. and can be developed further in the future</p> <p>7. Third training session –sessions divided into 10 min blocks so that each person can have a turn at being host and sharing screen / documents / applications and using polls etc. 10 participants + project team JE, JW, RL & CD</p> <p>8. Questionnaire – the questionnaire was distributed to those members of staff who had participated in at least 2 of the 3 sessions. The questions were in the main part the same as in the first questionnaire in order to measure the journey in confidence that staff have taken in using an online collaborative environment.</p>
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The benefits and impact

<p>What benefits/ impact has the project had on:::</p>	<p>a. the work/ effectiveness of your organisation</p> <p>The project has impacted on the work practices of the organisation as it has been an opportunity for staff to start the process of moving to digital delivery from more traditional approaches.</p> <p>The number of staff who have completed the sessions is between 16 -20 which is quite a large cohort. The majority of these staff have requested follow up training and support.</p> <p>The project has enabled the college to assess the confidence level of staff in using virtual classroom environments and to look at the learning journey of staff throughout project.</p> <p>The end of project questionnaire was completed by 16 people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was a marked increase in the levels of confidence that people felt about participating in a variety of online activities. • As far as video conferencing is concerned, initially only 19.5% had felt very confident and 34% not confident. At the end of the project 31.3% were very confident and only 18.8% were not confident. • Regarding online collaboration tools, most people had been not confident to start with but had become fairly confident by the end.
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- Regarding application / screen sharing – at the beginning almost half the respondents 43.2% had been not confident but by the end they had become fairly confident or confident.
- Overall the confidence levels for delivering an online session had shifted from not confident to fairly confident.
- As far as the benefits of using an online collaboration environment the main differences in the responses between the beginning and the end were that there was an increase in teaching and learning sessions being engaging for staff and students including interactive assessments.
- There was an increase in the flexibility of time and location for students though not for staff and not particularly seen as a efficiency or time saving alternative.
- Digital literacy and support and mentoring scored highly.
- The contexts that respondents considered its best usage to be were independent learning / study skills support and also mentoring.
- 75% of participants responded that they would be likely or highly likely to adopt an online collaboration tool or virtual classroom tool in their teaching.

Resources have been created to facilitate use of the software and have been informed by the experience of the participants. These particularly include the user cards which have been very successful. Although more comprehensive text based help guides were considered originally, after facilitating the session the format of the cards evolved based on user needs.

The project has provided a stepping stone to more widespread adoption of the platform and working practices across the college. Virtual classrooms are being set up and used by different curriculum departments and staff are engaging in the process.

b. the cost/ efficiency of activities

The impact on efficiency will be seen mainly through a saving in transport / travelling and accommodation.

Teaching staff are participating in training sessions and developing teaching and learning sessions which are not dependent on room space within the college.

	<p>There has been an increase in usage of the facility from staff workrooms rather than teaching staff using a classroom.</p> <p>c. any other aspect of your work The project has been useful as it has enabled the college to test out new ways of working.</p> <p>It has been a valuable learning experience for the elearning department and project team in providing training and offering support through a wholly online method.</p> <p>It has highlighted the need to consider the logistics, technology requirements and pedagogical requirements when introducing new technology enhanced learning.</p> <p>It has also highlighted the need for continuous staff support and development in order to upskill staff over a period of time.</p>						
<p>What contribution to the success / smooth running of the project was made by:</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="490 852 808 919">LSIS funding</td> <td data-bbox="808 852 1446 919">a little / some/ a lot / essential</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="490 919 808 987">Your mentor</td> <td data-bbox="808 919 1446 987">a little / some/ a lot / essential</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="490 987 808 1073">LSIS Associate</td> <td data-bbox="808 987 1446 1073">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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Your mentor	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>The funding was adequate in this instance because the web conferencing / virtual classroom platform was already available in the college. If this had not been the case then funds for software and licences would have been needed.</p> <p>A web conferencing facility would be recommended but the investment would have to be sourced from larger projects or from within the institution. Alternative products may provide a comparable solution.</p> <p>The LSIS Associate and the Mentor have both been excellent and have had a positive impact on the project. In both cases it was useful to have a face to face meeting at the beginning of the project as it was an opportunity to meet within the college and explain the project in context.</p> <p>Online interactions with the Mentor worked well although it is essential to have a collaboration plan for contributions. In our case it worked well with the Mentor but in general the funding could be split 75 : 25 in favour of the institution.</p>						

<p>What lessons did you learn / what tips would you give to other providers</p>	<p>Have a clear and organised plan of action.</p> <p>Allow time and flexibility for teaching staff to be involved in projects. It is often difficult in an FE college to find time for staff development and a large part of the project depended on the organisation of sessions to fit in with availability of participants. Ideally staff would have development time allocated to engage with such projects.</p> <p>When using online collaborative environments allow time for familiarisation and practice.</p> <p>Working collaboratively online worked well for this project and would be recommended for other projects – the project team were all well skilled in using the technology but in situations where staff were not, then more time would be needed to build up skills and knowledge.</p>
<p>Telling others</p>	
<p>What have you done to share /disseminate this project with others in the sector</p>	<p>Dissemination events are planned for Autumn 2012.</p> <p>A blog is also available that can be accessed by others in the FE sector and wider community</p>
<p>Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS LIT project.</p>	<p>“The LSIS LIT project has been a very positive experience for Middlesbrough College as it has enabled us to develop resources to promote and facilitate online collaborative learning. It has provided an opportunity to deliver staff training within a virtual classroom environment which has had an impact on future developments of the learner experience.”</p>
<p>Are you happy for us to use this and your contact details for marketing and publications?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Contact details for further information</p>	<p>James Wells jb.wells@mbro.ac.uk Steve Brady s.brady@mbro.ac.uk Peter Chatterton (mentor) peter.chatterton@daedalus-e-world.com</p>

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