

E-Maturity Transformation Projects

Final Report

Reference No.	E-shift / Learning Platform
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Partner organisations	N/A

Background

Lancashire Adult Learning is part of the lifelong learning division of Lancashire County Councils Adult & Community service directorate. The service provides a range of direct and subcontracted provision through its own colleges, local libraries, further education colleges and in over 600 community venues. There are currently over 700 staff in teaching, management, administrative and support roles.

Project summary and rationale

The Project targeted the deployment of online learning in a range of curriculum areas across the service through use of the service VLE. Whilst emphasis has been on repurposing existing teaching materials for VLE hosting, creation of new content has also been necessary. Tutors have received support in gaining familiarity with the use and features of the VLE, and some learners have received assistance in developing their e-learning skills through its use.

Context

Target audience: LAL tutors working across different curriculum areas. 37 tutors in total took part in the VLE training, across three zones. There has been no filtering of participants, in terms of ICT/e learning ability. The target group included: salaried & casual hourly paid tutors, programme area leaders, including teacher training tutors. A minimum of 10 learner groups have experienced the use of the VLE.

Partner organisations

N/A

Steering group

What was the remit of your steering group?

The LAL ILT Group will have a direct overview of the project and representatives from each of the Zones will report at the monthly meetings on the progress against targets / milestones.

Who was represented on your steering group?

This Group consists of: Assistant Head of Service, Senior Curriculum Development Manager, An Assistant Principal from each of the 3 service zones, ILT Co-ordinator, 2 ILT /ICT Curriculum Leaders and a Finance and Planning Officer.

How often did your steering group meet?

Due to unforeseen circumstances and illness the group has not been convened during this period, and communication has been by email

In what ways did a steering group help in your project?

- *Monitoring of project aims and objectives and adherence to.*
- *Reporting to LAL ILT SMT Group on progress against targets and milestones.*
- *Review and revision brief*
- *Support role for both staff and learners involved in the project.*
- *Responsibility for measuring e-position at start and end of project.*
- *Joint authorship of interim and final reports.*

Support

N/A

Summary of project aims

Aim	To what extent was the aim achieved (fully, partly, not at all)
To promote accessible, blended learning through use of existing technologies.	Fully achieved
To promote integration of e-learning into the curriculum as a natural facet of learning methodology	Partly. There are still pockets of learning where this may not be deemed as appropriate. Limited access to the Internet/VLE for tutors and learners limits the integration of e-learning into the curriculum as a natural facet of learning methodology.
To embed use of the VLE as a teaching aid into further areas of the service curriculum	Fully achieved.

Evaluation of project objectives

Objective 1

How was this evaluated?

This was through:

- registers of attendance at training sessions
- session outlines
- report from VLE tutor

Using the evidence from your evaluation say how far this objective was achieved?

Registers have provided evidence that 37 tutors have attended three training sessions over a period of 4 months. This is against a recruitment target of 50 tutors on to the VLE training. Distance travelled in relation to the creation of learner content on the service VLE, has been reported on by the VLE tutor. Levels of distance travelled include; well developed webct courses with a high level of sophistication, actively being utilised to introduce e learning into the classroom, collaborative sites for teacher trainers, sites utilised as repositories for resources and curriculum staff information. Verbal feedback has demonstrated an enthusiasm and passion for using the VLE as a tool to enhance learning.

Objective 2

How was this evaluated?

Through:

- Introduction of the VLE through a 5 step process
- Learner questionnaires

Using the evidence from your evaluation say how far this objective was achieved?
 The VLE has been introduced to a number of learner groups, to varying degrees. These are the steps as follows: 1.introduced and demonstrated by tutor but not yet accessed; 2.accessed by learners following tutor instruction, 3.learners have accessed and carried out learning as part of the course; 4.independent access to the VLE in and out of class time; 5.fully integrated and an integral T&L strategy. Evidence has been provided through tutor feedback and learner questionnaire that progress has been made up to and including stage 4.

Objective 3

How was this evaluated?

Through:

- Showcase registers
- Presentations at curriculum and other team meetings
- Email and other communications to tutors unable to attend the above.
- Feedback from events

Using the evidence from your evaluation say how far this objective was achieved?
 Dissemination has largely been facilitated through showcasing individual tutors' applications and use of VLE in different subject areas, across all three zones. Best practice has been shared through peer dissemination, with a positive impact on those attending the showcase. Other presentations have been delivered by project co-ordinators to skills for life tutors, community learning organisers and teachers in training, through the showcasing of their own sites and those of other tutors. Further facilitation has been by way of emailing a PowerPoint presentation with links for tutors to the e shift VLE training material. In total 119 tutors have attended dissemination events, meetings or accessed the information via distance learning through the VLE.

Objective 4

How was this evaluated?

Through:

- Staff Attitude Survey
- Feedback from dissemination events

Using the evidence from your evaluation say how far this objective was achieved?
 Analysis of the staff attitude surveys completed at the beginning and end of the project have demonstrated conflicting results. The nature of the questionnaire does not facilitate reliable response due to its anonymity and options for multiple answers. The findings from the Staff Attitude Survey will be fed back to the Steering Group ready for the completion of the next elps tool. Positive feedback has been received from the dissemination events with more tutors now training and access to the VLE.

Project development

How was the ongoing evaluation used to inform and develop your project?
 Ongoing evaluation has meant that changes have been made where possible for example additional training sessions have been arranged. The timescale of the project, which included Christmas and half term, limited the opportunities to introduce the VLE to learners; the impact being low number of learner participation.

Project outputs

Outputs 1-5	Description
	<p>37 tutors have created courses on the VLE and a selection of transformed learning materials have been uploaded to these VLE courses. 37 tutors have practical application of the usage and benefits of the VLE and these benefits have been cascaded to a further 119 tutors raising awareness of the VLE.</p> <p>Evidence includes Courses on the VLE e-shift course planners Learner questionnaires Lesson plans & evaluations from dissemination meetings</p>

Copyright

Copyright can be an issue if materials from external sources are included and all staff need to be aware of the implications. Staff can, for example - endeavour to use free image galleries when including images.

Lessons learned

Learners – learner feedback and tutor feedback has demonstrated that some learners will need additional support to gain essential ICT skills or specific skills related to the access and navigation of the VLE. Whilst providing learners with the necessary skills was identified prior to commencement of the project the focus for the tutors has been on the creation and repurpose of materials for the VLE and more consideration needs to be given to learner training and support material.

Technical – Some learners and tutors have reported difficulties in accessing the VLE via the Internet external to Lancashire Adult Learning facilities. Consideration needs to be given to what technical issues learners and tutors may experience and how to overcome these. ICT services have provided support in setting up the courses on the VLE, however further technical support is needed for individual tutors and learners (for example – the help desk). We also need to consider the impact of the growth of the VLE on ICT services, how will this be sustained. Some connectivity issues in remote community venues. Learners may not have internet access. Consideration needs to be given as to how learners can have equal access to resources if we are to extend the use of the VLE across all Zones.

Staff – This pilot project created the opportunity for staff to be able to plan, deliver and support the training and use of the VLE. However, agreement as to who is responsible for the monitoring and maintenance of the VLE would need further clarification along with challenging HR issues re capacity – time for setting up courses, creating/repurposing resources, general administration. The project was aimed at interested tutors and we undertook no initial assessment of ICT skills/abilities, when we offer future training we would implement an ICT skills screening process.

Internal - Planning difficulties in north zone due to lead co-ordinator being off long term sick affected the overall logistics and planning of project and created additional work load for other zone lead co-ordinators. Better communication through the Zones/Steering Group and identification of a replacement lead co-ordinator might have alleviated this situation.

Funding – No particular financial hurdles, however, we underestimated the time it would take to manage the project, particularly with the lead co-ordinator being off long term sick. Additionally, the number of tutors attending the dissemination events was less than anticipated, impacting slightly on the spend of this budget. Earlier monitoring of financial reporting would have eased the consolidation of the final report.

Staff Attitude

- a. Tell us how many staff completed the survey
- b. Include a summary of the comparative findings from the two surveys.
The survey summary is in the hard copy – see previous notes on results of the survey

ACL eLPS Tool

The Action Plan has been reviewed and additional comments made in the comments and evidence narrative. The information for this narrative has been gathered from the staff attitude survey, tutor and learner feedbacks on the project, consultation with steering group members on the impact of the project.

Input to the ACL eLPs tool review

The information that will be used in the future to update of the eLPs statement review will include information from the staff attitude survey, tutor and learner feedbacks on the project and consultation with steering group members on the impact of the project.

Evidence of impact

Impact on staff		
Type of impact	How did you evaluate this	What information was collected
High levels of satisfaction of participants	Tutor feedback following training sessions and feedback from dissemination events	Feedback forms
Increased confidence in using ILT/VLE	Overview of e shift groups provided by trainer. individual e shift course planners	See reports sent in hard copy from trainer
Improved peer communication and support	Overview of e shift groups provided by trainer.	See reports sent in hard copy from trainer

Impact on learners		
Type of impact	How did you evaluate this	What information was collected?
Enhanced Teaching and learning	VLE learner questionnaires Tutor feedback	VLE learner questionnaires Tutor feedback
Additional access to learning materials	Too soon to evaluate due to limitations re access to the VLE and early stages of learner participation	

Impact on your organisation		
Type of impact	How did you evaluate this	What information was collected
Improved peer communication and support	Overview of e shift groups provided by trainer. Feedback from dissemination events	See reports sent in hard copy from trainer Tutor feedback
Increased use of ILT through access to VLE	E shift course planner	See reports

Impact on the wider learning and teaching community		
Type of impact	How did you evaluate this	What information was collected
N/A		

Online Chat

We would like to know if you found the online chat arrangements useful.

<p>Were the sessions useful in supporting your project? Some technical problems with gaining access to the first session. Useful to chat to colleagues, and draw on information and experiences. Provided food for thought with own project. Second chat – only Gill McBain & Di Dawson for the majority of the time. Some good questions posed by Di, and which enabled Gill to evaluate progress made so far, and areas for further consideration.</p>
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The future of your project

<p>How does your organisation plan to build on this project beyond the lifetime of the funding? Embedded use of the VLE in teacher training. The VLE toolkit will be offered as part of an annual CPD programme - OCNW level 3 CPD award. Using the VLE as the first point of access for tutor information and resources. Continue to embrace and encourage the use of blended learning through the inclusion of the VLE in course outlines.</p>
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