

# LSIS Leadership in Technology (LIT) grant based intervention

## Case study template

Provider name & contact details	Council of the Isles of Scilly, Lifelong Learning
LIT Project title	Qualitative eLearning on Scilly
<p>Project summary :</p> <p>- Include the particular area for improvement that has been tackled through the effective deployment of technology</p>	 <p style="text-align: right;">Courtesy: Wordle.net</p> <p>The unique and remote nature of the Isles of Scilly has meant that mainstream learning opportunities, taken for granted on the UK mainland cannot always be accessed. There has and remains therefore a need to develop alternative, particularly on-line, opportunities to address community needs. Lifelong Learning had also identified fluctuations in the quality of some provision, so using qualitative analysis to evaluate the past and present eLearning provision we wanted to identify what was good and what was poor as well as where further trials might be necessary to ensure the continuation of quality seam-free eLearning. The emphasis has been quite simple - to understand what technology works best for a particular curriculum area as measured by the quality of the learning and the learning experience. This is a critical issue for the Isles of Scilly as the alternative to establishing an effective online delivery solution could be a curriculum constrained by the need to 'import' tutors from the mainland where the associated cost and logistical implications constrain activity</p>
What were the aims of the project?	With our unique programme delivery as our focus we sought to investigate the 'suitability' in terms of quality and learner satisfaction of a range of existing technology solutions through

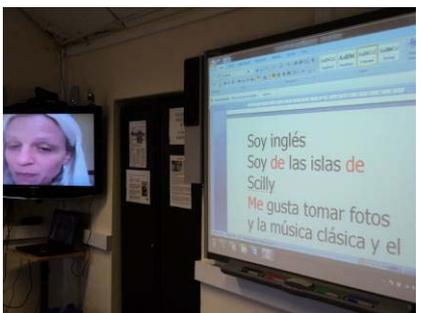
analysis of staff and learner evaluations from courses already delivered. This included a consideration of the curriculum area, the tutor profile (with the obvious skills implications for CPD) and any assumed ICT skills required to enable effective participation. We trialled some new technology and at the same time where gaps in provision existed we delivered pilot programmes to measure the appropriateness of the technology using the same quality standards.

What did you do and how did you do this?

We had trialled video-conferencing delivery with our Cornish colleagues (see Excellence Gateway TV ‘Scilly Spanish’ <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=190850> ) but we were seeking a more effective and sustainable model which we began to develop (again with Cornwall) through an ‘Informal Adult Learning’ (Transformation) BIS funded project. With this as our focus we now sought to review the quality of those courses which were delivered using a number of existing technology solutions.



**The remote tutor in Cornwall**



**The learners, video feed and interactive whiteboard in St Marys**

We did this in two ways - by an analysis of the technology used and through an analysis of staff and learner course evaluations. This analysis had its focus on how appropriate the methodology was to the curriculum area, the nature and skills-set of the tutor (profile) and the ICT skills levels essential

<p>What role did your mentor play on your LIT project?</p> <p>What have been the key benefits from the input of your mentor?</p> <p>What was the benefit of the support that you received from your LSIS Associate?</p>	<p>for effective tutor and learner participation. We also ran further courses using new technology to ensure a comprehensive review. These in particular included a Virtual Classroom where we trialled both ICT courses and short snappy 90 minute 'courses' and open source Desktop sharing software which was used in conjunction with skype to deliver audio, video and content from a remote location..</p> <p>We have also completed all the preparation work for the use of some of this remote online technology to facilitate Session Observation and this will take place in the next month following delivery of improved web camera equipment.</p> <p>He brought to the project 25 years of FE and Skills education expertise with a specific ILT speciality. His skills, knowledge and friendship have been invaluable. His help and guidance has been greatly received. He has delivered some of the courses used for the trials and supported other tutors involved.</p> <p>He helped us to develop our links with mainland partners so that our learning offer can be improved and expanded. His knowledge and experience has enabled this project to move forward much further than anticipated.</p> <p>Her enthusiasm for our project never diminished and her contacts and assistance were very helpful.</p>
<p>What has been the impact and benefit of the LIT capital grant to your project?</p> <p>What did the project cost, including LSIS funding?</p>	<p>It has allowed us to purchase specialist video-conferencing hardware and software to enhance the quality of the learning experience when it is delivered remotely. It has also given us the opportunity to trial remote lesson observation by making available to an external observer a much more comprehensive audio and visual experience.</p> <p>£8850</p>

<p>What has been the impact of your LIT project on your organisational improvement strategy?</p>	<p>It has enabled us to pursue the objectives set out in our eLearning Strategy. It has provided staff with the skills and knowledge necessary and helped us to develop a strong infrastructure for all learning using technology based on a firm perception of its suitability to deliver a quality learning experience</p>
<p>What were the benefits of your LIT project?</p>	<p>It allowed us to make the time to consider and understand our e-Learning successes and failures, to develop further ideas via pilots (remote Lesson Observation &amp; the use of Virtual Classrooms) and from our analysis we have been able to make the way forward in terms of provision and quality more clear – in plain terms it has allowed us to understand what works and what appears not to work. Through the project we are able to develop courses more effectively by being able to apply an appropriate technology to a particular curriculum content, to understand the necessary skills and abilities of the tutor and ensure that learners are screened so that we are able to ensure that they are able to make the most of the online opportunity</p>
<p>What were the savings to your organisation?</p>	<p>Apart from the obvious one of removing the high cost of flying-in tutors to the Isles of Scilly it has been possible to spend time ‘experimenting’ with course delivery technology to establish ‘preferred’ methods which in the long term will increase learner achievement, learner satisfaction and learner participation.</p>
<p>How did you calculate them?</p>	<p>Not possible as yet to identify – e.g. what monetary value does one place on enhancing a curriculum offer or improving learner outcome &amp; satisfaction? Every online course now offered will demonstrate significant savings on their conventional alternatives which under current funding methodologies have historically proven to be completely unsustainable</p>
<p>What were the lessons learned?</p>	<p>To make the time to really understand what learners and tutors tell us and where appropriate inform the organisation strategically. We have a comprehensive QA structure and react to events but we need to properly understand what is being said and apply what we know via our technology strategy. In the past we may have agreed a subject and then found a tutor – in the future we will also make important decisions about the technology being used or the means of course delivery or both.</p>
<p>What tips do you have for other providers?</p>	<p>It has largely been said above but to explore further please telephone Lifelong Learning on: (01720) 424300.</p>

<p>How will you disseminate effective practice to others in the sector?</p>	<p>By presenting at events as opportunities become available, through the LSIS Associate and our own mentor and our formal and informal contacts locally and nationally.</p>
<p>Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS LIT project. Are you happy for us to use this and your contact details for marketing and publications?</p>	<p>“An opportunity to take a leap forward in the quality of learning through both the use and a better understanding of the application of technologies old and new!”  Yes</p>
<p>Contact details for further information</p>	<p>Tom Scott</p>

Please email all case studies to [eleadership@lsis.org.uk](mailto:eleadership@lsis.org.uk) by 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011