

# Digital student exemplars

## Enhancing the digital experience of students

This case study is relevant to the digital student challenge:

### Take a strategic approach to developing the student digital experience

## Opening up opportunities for learning with digital technologies

A combination of activities at **Lewisham Southwark College** is encouraging students and staff to engage with a wide range of technologies to develop their digital confidence and capability:

#### Deliver a relevant digital curriculum

- » iPads are used by students to record their work either as evidence, for reflection or to get feedback from their peers and tutor. Students have access to a wide range of apps such as **Socrative** for assessment, **Popplet** for research, **Dragon Dictate** and **Notability** for note taking and also **Google Drive** for sharing and collaboration.

The use of iPads makes it quick and easy for students to access the internet and those with mobility issues find it easier to use a touch screen instead of a keyboard. They can also be taken on external visits to record observations and experiences. Read more about Lewisham and Southwark College's use of **mobile learning to support assessment, feedback and submission**.

- » Students studying English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) use AppleMac™ machines to develop LeSoCo Radio, an innovative project that enables students to practice reading, keyboarding, speaking and listening skills by adding content to their own radio station.

*"I set up LESOCO Radio as an option for ESOL students. Having taught radio production skills for many years I believe it is a great way to help students to improve their communication skills. They aren't restricted in the subject they choose to talk about and it can be a fun way to research topics, express themselves, learn to use editing software and once they add their favourite music to the mix, I find they are very proud of the work they produce".*

Elma Curran, course tutor at Lesoco College

### Deliver an inclusive digital student experience

The college has been exploring the impact of using iPads in the classroom with learners' who have a range of disabilities including varying levels of communication skills. A mix of apps and websites are used including:

- » **Toy Theatre** website (with area optimised for iPad use) in maths sessions
- » **Grid Player** to help facilitate communication with learners who have difficulty or choose not to speak
- » **The Transport for London** (TFL) website to work out routes to help develop independence in travelling out and about in the community
- » **Popplet** to create a mindmap or diagram showing what students had done and where they had been.

The ease of use and accessibility options in the iPads facilitates student use of digital technologies. Students become more engaged and more focused on achieving tasks and those previously unable or willing to communicate are finding a voice. The iPads make the students feel more 'adult' and part of the modern world.

### Deliver a robust, flexible digital environment

Lewisham and Southwark College have a dedicated location called the blended learning centre (BLC) for students and staff to drop in to use a mix of technologies. Students and staff are able to use Macs, PCs, Chromebooks and iPads. There are also over 100 apps to suit a range of needs.

Students attend 3D workshops where they use various Apps like **Thingiverse** and **PrintShop** as they develop skills in searching databases, edit templates and manipulate 3D objects in a 3D digital environment.

All the workshops are mapped to functional skills English, maths and ICT from entry level to level 2

Additional events delivered in the centre to improve student digital skills include: Coding sessions, Lego robotics and Motion Capture hardware and software.

### Support students and staff to work successfully with digital technologies

'BlendingIn' is an online course designed to help teachers to develop blended learning opportunities for their students. The short course introduces staff to the concept of blended learning and is supported by a staff development programme showing them how to use some of the e-learning tools mentioned and used within the course.

Supporting teachers to use the tools and build knowledge and confidence will help to embed blended learning within the curricula. Staff will also learn how to track, support and monitor student participation online. The accompanying continuous professional development (CPD) programme includes guidance on things such as conditional release of activities, how to motivate students by using gamification techniques and online badges. Initially the 'BlendingIn' course will be piloted across five curriculum areas: creative studies; English; business; construction and IT.

*"This course gave me a real insight in to both blended learning and the flipped classroom. It has given me a lot to think about – not to mention implement in the forthcoming months"*

#### Feedback from teacher

Designated mentors support colleagues to develop their digital skills and to produce blended learning courses. Members of the e-learning and IT Services teams will, in turn, support the mentors.

This project is part of **the learning futures** programme, commissioned and funded by the **Education and Training Foundation**.

## How does this meet the challenge?

- » Students and staff are encouraged to try different modes of learning with support available through the CPD programme and the drop-in centre
- » Students with learning difficulties are supported to develop independence skills in an engaging way that makes them feel more in tune with modern society and in a way that makes learning more accessible to them
- » The 'BlendingIn' course offers staff a model that they can emulate in their own practice with ongoing support from technology mentors to help them create activities and build courses relevant to their students, subject and context
- » The blended learning centre helps to mitigate against any potential access difficulties for those who do not have their own devices

## Contact:

Patricia Forrest, head of e-learning, innovation and learning resources: [Patricia.Forrest@lesoco.ac.uk](mailto:Patricia.Forrest@lesoco.ac.uk)