

Q&A

UKSG Further Education Webinar Series

'Hybrid, Virtual and Designing the Physical Study/Workspace'

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“Q: What is the size of your team who work to create digital skills program?”

- We are a team of 7 in total.

“Q: How many library staff does Milton Keynes have?”

- Only 4 people are on duty at a time across 2 campuses.

“Q: I am really keen to know more about the Digital Skills programme. Is there a link to webpages that can be publicly viewed?”

- No

“Q: Would it possible to pay a visit to your college to see your amazing spaces you have created?”

- Yes - Email us at digitallearning@mkcollege.ac.uk to arrange a date and time with our team

“Q: When did the students do the digital skills sessions?”

- It has been run as a 10 week program for Level 3 students and has also been run for personal development sessions across campus.

“Q: Is there a badging system to integrate with earning certs?”

- Yes, we use 'Badgr' certification but are looking at utilizing our VLE to auto issue.

“Q: Have you had any resistance to the new technology? If so, did opinion change?”

- No resistance from staff or students, people are excited to use it. We have found them to be engaged with the new technology we are introducing to them.

“Q: How many campuses, centres and staff you have working on this?”

- We work across 2 campuses and currently our team of 7 with support from IT.

“Q: And is there anything you wished you hadn't done?”

- No

“Q: Some colleges have found that behaviour in the library/LRC has deteriorated since Covid. How have you succeeded in creating spaces which promotes student behaviour that doesn't detract from learning?”

- On the whole behaviour in the study centres has improved Post Covid. Having self-issue laptop safes outside the study centre has improved behaviour as students wishing to make a noise do not need to come to the study centre to get equipment and can go to more social areas to work. We have had one or two incidents but on the whole our cohorts seem to be calmer and only those who want a study space come to the study centre.

We also have a rule that if a class is sent to the study centre, they need to have teaching staff with them. Having Pods has also meant that students working in groups have noise contained to some extent.

We have a digital booking system in place for students attending the library area to use our group and individual pods and if they are using a PC, this enables us to keep a track on individuals and follow up with their tutors if they have not been behaving appropriately without confrontation as we already have their details within the booking.

“Q: How do you manage expensive items that are not returned?”

- Staff are very dogged at chasing and items are treated like books. But we have found that it is not a major issue, out of 245 laptops issued to students annually that have to be returned every year, currently we have only 6 waiting to be returned.

“Q: Does the issuing of IT equipment take up a lot of staff time? That and getting items back?”

- Some of my team are quite anti the idea on this basis so I'm curious as to your experience.
There are times of the year where this takes up staff time (e.g., start of September – end of year) but we have developed systems for this. We do chase students who have not returned equipment, but the majority do return them. We think the cost in staff time is worth it for the benefit it gives to those who need this service.

“Q: The digital diagnostic MS Form you mentioned sounds interesting. Would you be able to share your criteria for that?”

- The Criteria stemmed from the Jisc digital personas and work we did with Microsoft to map digital skills. We have attached our document for your reference.

“Q: Did you end up having to do hot desks? and did staff get used to it if so?”

- The spaces were designed with the staff affected. The type of spaces they wanted to use were incorporated into the design. Although the space is for hotdesking there are enough desks to accommodate the whole curriculum teams if they were in together. What is unsettling is if other staff come and use the hot desks, but this just needs getting used to.

“Q: In the staff space how does the team feel about noise levels having social spaces next to work stations? Do you still expect this to be a quiet space?”

- The room is split in half so that the quiet desks are on one side and the group spaces on the other. Although the pods are not completely sound proofed, you can't really hear anything.