Gateshead Council Learning & Skills: LA TV

Summary

Gateshead Council Learning and Skills, in collaboration with Izon Audio Visual, set up an online web based TV channel created for and by people with learning difficulties. It has encouraged learners to be independent, self-confident and learn new skills. This project supports the Learner Voice as the learners are involved in every aspect of the project, from script writing to camerawork.

Successful launch of LATV (Learning Abilities TV)

About Gateshead Council Learning & Skills

Gateshead Council Learning and Skills offers a wide variety of courses, including those that are specifically designed to develop skills, encourage teamwork and provide structured learning for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Izon Audio Visual

Izon Audio Visual is a digital media company and has worked with Gateshead Council on various projects. David Hopkins and Paul Thompson from Izon are qualified tutors and have extensive experience working with people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The challenge

Gateshead Council Learning and Skills wanted to create a medium to give a fair and equal voice to people with different degrees of ability, share good working practices.
and bring together organisations working within the learning difficulties sector in the region under one umbrella.

The activity

David and Paul from Izon came up with the idea to create a web based TV channel LATV (Learning Abilities TV) created for and produced by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Melanie Bancroft, Curriculum Manager said:

‘The content of LATV is completely learner-led. The learners were asked what subjects were important to them and came up with many suggestions. They also did all the filming, sound engineering and editing’.

Learners were recruited from various day-care centres in the Gateshead area and the learners worked on the project for 4-6 hours each week for 9 months. David and Paul from Izon led each session by setting the objectives for the day and asked the learners which job roles and responsibilities they would like to take on. At the end of each session the learners were asked if they had accomplished their goals and what they thought they would have to start working on during the next session. The learners were trained on how to use all the equipment while working on the project. They created various videos, including:

- A play looking at the issues of personal safety.
- A dance routine to highlight the importance of fitness.
- A news channel with interviews with the then Mayor of Gateshead Cllr Joe Mitchinson.

A group of new learners is currently working a video called ‘Mission Impossible: The Fish and Chip Assignment’ promoting independent travel.

The outcomes

LATV has been up and running since November 2011 and focuses on issues concerning people with learning difficulties.

LATV can be accessed 24/7 from anywhere and all content is formatted so it can also be viewed on mobile devices. It replicates a terrestrial TV channel and the viewer can choose different categories that cover a vast array of issues regarding health & fitness, education, music dance & arts, tutorials on independent living skills, government initiatives, and more.

The impact

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The project has really enhanced the skills and abilities of those who took part, encouraging learners to make independent and group decisions, building confidence and enabling their voices to be heard. One learner has even saved up his pocket money for months to be able to buy his own video recorder.

Melanie said: ‘Making the videos has given the learners confidence and also the opportunity to show their carers and/or parents what they are capable of, for example with the play on personal safety’.

One of the learners, John commented, “I have loved working on LATV. I have done things I never thought I could do”

- The majority of the learners (around 80%) have gone onto accredited programmes with Gateshead Council Learning & Skills.

- LATV shows carers and/or parents what the learners are capable of and how this project can help their child.

LATV recently won runner up in the Equality and Diversity category at the Learning and Skills award ceremony.

The lessons learned

- To set up a similar project, Melanie recommends working with a digital media company that has experience working with people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

- The logistics of getting the learners from the day-care centres to attend the sessions at the same time was sometimes difficult. In the future part of the funding will be allocated to arrange transport, so learners can be easily picked up and returned to their day-care centre.

- LATV has received funding from Learning and Skills Neighbourhood Learning Deprived Communities Fund. It is now registered as a charity and responsible for its own funding.

Useful links

LAtv

Jisc RSC Northern

Links to related case studies

Maximising the potential of mobile technologies for learners with disabilities

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