Farnborough College of Technology: Creative Codes

Summary

This project involved using QR codes with students who have moderate learning difficulties to improve their independence both in college and the wider community. The activity allowed and encouraged greater use of the whole college and public transport by the learners mainly because they felt less uncomfortable when seeking information or directions. The students continue to use the codes on their coursework and with assisting them to plan travel.

About: Farnborough College of Technology

Established in 1957, Farnborough College of Technology offers exceptional teaching and learning facilities, providing first class courses with a strong vocational orientation. Add to this, two modern style campuses, a warm and friendly atmosphere, and a wide variety of flexible courses for people of all ages; it is easy to understand why it has established such an excellent reputation.

The challenge

The issues facing the provider were how to be more inclusive towards students with moderate Learning Difficulties (LDD) and to assist them to blend in with rest of the colleges students. This project also turned a relatively dull element of a qualification into a more engaging, challenging and modernised one.

The activity

Working with students with moderate learning difficulties (Entry Level 2 through to Level 1) on their Creative Media course work and leisure activities lecturer Michael Cornwall introduced the group to QR codes.

“The class as individuals and as a group progressed through a number of different projects each featuring QR codes. Beginning with a treasure hunt around the college which enabled the new students to familiarise themselves with the layout of the college and get to grips with scanning QR codes, through to a final project with student
producing their own codes for use on a visit within the local community.”

Michael continued “The codes have been used in a range of interesting and innovative ways incorporating text, images and audio. Students have responded positively to being ‘allowed’ to used smart phones in a class setting (Bring your Own device BYOD) and discovering what each code holds. They have quickly developed a new skill set which they have then gone on to use in other areas.”

![Team work poster](image)

**The outcomes**

- Students are able to identify Wi-Fi enabled areas and whether they are open or closed.
- They are using mobile phones with purpose, safely and cost effectively in the classroom.
- The project has widened the inclusion of the students in both the college and the local community through use of mobile technology.
- It has enabled the students to feel more confident both inside and outside the college.

**The impact**

Perhaps the best testaments are from the students themselves

Student quotes “Much cooler than a long web address.” “When you start looking they’re (QR CODES) everywhere!” “I told my mum what they were!” “I think QR codes are good because they can hold lots of data on them and are fun to use.”

ALS quotes: “They are a new way of communicating. It is a more fun way of learning.”

Michael commented “The students can now personalise their work more if they use QR codes and enjoy it as they feel they are up to date with technology.”
The Jisc RSC Southeast Hi5 judges agreed with Michael making this project a Winner in the Widening Participation Category of the 2013 competition.

The judges commented

“Students have responded positively to being ‘allowed’ to used smart phones in a class setting and discovering what each code holds, creating a most engaging and exciting way to learn. Students quickly developed a new skill set which they have been able to apply in other areas of their study and lives. The project: promoted independence of all learners; encouraged and facilitated team work in the group; enabled learners to use technology to support learning; and built on their skill sets - including the importance of checking work and proof reading.

In developing confidence, safely accessing local amenities, and participating in Open Days and College-wide events, the programme has promoted exclusivity and a safe learning environment. This new-found confidence has impacted not only on the students but also on the wider learning community of the College and the local area. This is a fine example of how the use of technology can impact on creating a more inclusive learning organisation.”

The lessons learned

- The enablers are: A smart phone, (most students have them or will have them in the coming years) or webcams and Wi-Fi in accessible areas.
- You must check and double check codes as sometimes they just don’t work.
- Be careful when laminating codes as the reflection of the laminating pouch may make the code hard to read.
- Other than printing there is no cost.

Useful links

- [http://minigr.com/reader.php](http://minigr.com/reader.php) [http://qrcode.kaywa.com/](http://qrcode.kaywa.com/)

Disclaimer

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