Giving the community the tools to succeed

Located in East London, the Adult College of Barking and Dagenham has offered a wide range of adult education courses for personal development, work, and leisure for over 30 years. With more than 1500 registered learners, the college delivers a breadth of educational options ranging from day courses, apprenticeships, and vocational support, promoting lifelong learning and community engagement.

In line with the Barking and Dagenham Together initiative, the 'One Borough, One Community, No-one left behind' philosophy runs through the college's heart, remaining central to how they engage students to be part of local society. Aujla Jagdeep, IT Manager at the college, explains:

"In early 2019, we started a technology refresh project across the college, upgrading our existing hardware solutions as part of a college-wide initiative. The project's aim was to give our teaching faculty the tools to make lesson content and delivery more interactive, ultimately making lessons more engaging for our student community."

With Microsoft O365 rolled out across the college, Jagdeep was keen to deploy interactive solutions that could seamlessly extend the Microsoft experience from personal devices into the learning environments. He

also wanted solutions that offered an open platform to work with legacy applications, in-classroom and remotely as the desire for blended learning options increased across the college.

When the COVID pandemic hit in April 2020 it accelerated the need for remote learning, all courses, moved online due to social distancing guidelines and restrictions.

"When COVID restrictions were enforced, the college was able to switch on remote learning overnight, utilising our Teams platform to continue to deliver teaching. We ensured that no learner was left out, providing those students who might not have access to the internet with wireless dongles and web cameras so teaching staff could still engage visually with students."

The college maintained 90% of all their lessons through the first wave of restrictions, while other local authorities in London had to switch off adult learning programmes completely.

"COVID-19 has, in some ways, resulted in positives for the college; we were able to introduce our digital transformation agenda a lot earlier than originally anticipated. Our Teams platform within an O365 environment has been so popular for students and teachers alike; we have been able to switch off our VLE permanently."

During the summer term, as restrictions eased, the college could implement more blended learning across lessons with in-class sizes reduced to no more than 6 participants. Tutors would deliver content to a limited number of students in person, while the remaining students would participate remotely, either in other classrooms within the college estate or from home.
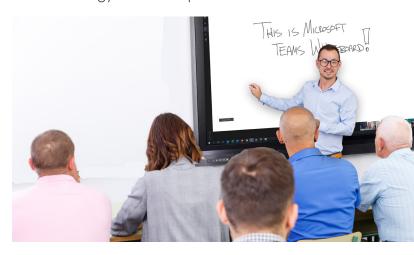
avocor

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"Choosing Avocor displays meant that we had a solution in situ that was completely adaptable to learning requirements. The solutions are incredibly intuitive, meaning all of our teaching staff can see the benefits of delivering learning outcomes. The integration with the Microsoft suite means providing a seamless transition for students and teachers alike. A large percentage of our student community are learning English as a second language, but the useability of the Avocor solutions hasn't been a barrier to adoption; the students see the displays as giant I-pads, and functions like edge-swipe and gestures support the adoption."

Over the last 9 months, lecturers at the college have witnessed little impact in lesson content creation and delivery, delivering high impact, engaging lessons virtually. Simultaneously, students at the college haven't been isolated in terms of their learning goals and continue to develop personally and support the overall community spirit of the college and the Borough.

"I am personally delighted that we chose the Avocor solutions, they have been instrumental in our ability to deliver immersive lessons for our students during this difficult time and continue to be an important part of our digital transformation agenda."

We originally engaged IT service partner Vanquish Technologies to help us select the right technology options for the college. Recommended to us by another supplier, we were immediately impressed by their approach to customer service and support. They understood the project objectives and I felt made a proposal based on our needs as opposed to vendor relationships they may hold.

We weren't able to have an onsite demonstration of the Avocor solution due to enforced restrictions, but the teams at Vanquish Tech and Avocor worked hard to deliver a virtual demonstration to our SLT to outline the technology that could provided.

After a smooth install, our Vanquish Tech account manager went above and beyond to ensure that compatibility issues with legacy equipment were rectified immediately, even ensuring some very old visualisers had the correct connectivity to work with the Avocor displays (something they hadn't done for years). Vanquish Tech also delivered in-house and virtual adoption sessions so all teachers could benefit from the solution, regardless of their technical know-how.

I am delighted with my experience with Vanquish Tech. I will be working with them on technology adoption projects in the future to ensure the college will remain a central and active part of the local community.

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