



KIT – some case studies and an evaluation of its use from
the Great Lever Family Learning Centre – part of Hayward's
Full Service Extended School

K I T

The
Kinaesthetic
Interactive
Teaching
System



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Context

A KIT (Kinaesthetic Interactive Teaching) system is presently being used at the Great Lever Family Learning Centre.

Great Lever Family Learning Centre
(Part of Hayward’s Full Service School)
Block A
The South Campus of Bolton Sixth Form College,
Lever Edge Lane,
Bolton
BL3 3HH

(01204) 332760

www.greatleverfamilylearningcentre.org.uk

The Great Lever Family Learning Centre is a community learning establishment which has been set up by Bolton local education authority with the aim of improving the attainment of pupils in the area and with the intention of aiding regeneration by improving the skills of local community members.

The centre functions under the management of **Bolton Literacy Trust** with guidance from the ‘Extended Campus Full Service School’ lifelong learning sub-group. It is part of the larger project of extended schools – specifically that of Hayward School which is next door.



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In brief

To date, the family learning centre has been operational for eight months and is enjoying early success in many areas.

At the centre, the KIT system has been a great asset – especially in relation to the main premise of the extended school – trying to raise the attainment of pupils attending Hayward secondary school. It is used by pupils at the school nearly every week for a variety of purposes and with excellent feedback both from pupils and teachers.

The KIT system has also been used by adult community members and by other groups such as looked after children. It is currently being looked at by the Bolton Literacy Trust for use in other areas e.g.:

- ~ early learning settings, Sure Start for example
- ~ in other extra-curricular group locations
- ~ for use within ‘Positive Activities for Young People’ settings
- ~ to consolidate topic learning in feeder primary schools

When groups of pupils access KIT for the first time, they are motivated into participating immediately when they see the games console type handsets they will be using. Without exception, cries such as, “*Miss, it’s like play station!*” and “*Cool!*” are instantly heard. The cinematic white screen used and refreshments given out aid this experience at the family learning centre.

Each group thus far, just by nature of their age and games-console generation, has easily picked up how to input names and information into the system and, to the bafflement of adults present, seem to know without prompting the controls required for each game/quiz!

From disaffected youngsters to those experiencing the equipment due to their excellent attendance, the responses to our KIT system have been super.



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Some early case studies

1. KIT being used as a motivational tool to encourage full attendance from pupils across Key Stages 3 & 4

Each half term, three pupils from each year at Hayward school (15 pupils in total) who have achieved good or excellent attendance for that half term have the opportunity to come over to the family learning centre to use our KIT system. The pupils are from a range of ethnic backgrounds and abilities, are of mixed gender and are between the ages of 11 and 16.

The children come across with a member of school staff (teacher or support assistant) but the sessions are administered by a member of Bolton Literacy Trust staff who is trained in, and familiar with, KIT’s use.

Groups are unfamiliar with the system and its functions (unless they have been lucky enough to have achieved the excellent attendance reward on more than one occasion) but, as stated in the ‘In brief’ section of this report, quickly get to grips with how it operates.

During the reward sessions pupils get to experience the National Curriculum side of the system and also the more ‘just for fun’ games such as the ‘Donkey Derby’ and ‘Football5ers’. One group even begged to have a go on the karaoke and a 90 minute session was cheerfully ended with a rendition of a popular Britney Spears number! Pupils at attendance reward sessions have enjoyed all aspects of the system.

From a facilitator’s point of view, it is easy to control a group of teenagers who have never been encountered before as the format of the activities grasp even the most reluctant of learners/participants.

Teachers from the school have reported that the children are motivated to attend well to be in with a chance of coming across to the centre to use the KIT system.

Support teachers who have brought the groups of children over have commented how easily the children are gripped by a learning tool.



2. KIT being used as a means of breaking up cliques and creating harmony amongst gangs of girls

The head of year nine at Hayward school approached staff at the family learning centre with concerns about groups of 13/14 year old girls – some of Asian heritage, others white. The groups of girls were forming worrying cliques, becoming gang-like in their behaviour and were having major disputes in and out of school which were regularly involving extended families. It was not, as a matter of interest, a racial problem.

It was agreed that one proactive strategy to attempt to get the rival groups on better terms would be to hold an afternoon of fun events and to use the KIT system to this end.

Around 15 girls came over to the family learning centre with the resident school police officer who reported that, even on the short two minute walk from the school to the centre base, there were incidents of hostility between the groups: taunting and excluding individuals for example.

Once in the centre, the girls participated in many KIT activities. As they were all from the same year, it was easy to engage them in academic quizzes of a suitable level and it was easy to find topics to cover within the national curriculum side of the system that were applicable to them all – the human body in the KS3 science activity for example.

It was the fun side of the system, however, that really broke some barriers in this instance. The ‘Camel Racer’ game and ‘Tug of Waaaaagh’ for example, provided great opportunity for team work and for the girls to manage their social skills. As there were 15 girls but no more than 10 can access such games, the group had to take turns. It was interesting to watch them go from not wanting to speak to certain other girls at the beginning of the session to having lots of enjoyment together and being happy to give up their controller to another girl so that she could have a go. The constant in and out swapping of seats whilst enjoying the activities also ensured that the girls had to sit beside someone new after each game. They began to talk to each other as they hadn’t before and they began to work as teams to try to triumph over another – but the teams were not made up of the same girls as the cliques.



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The session ended with the girls in high spirits and with a chat about how the afternoon might have helped them with their situation. Some comments received were:

~ “I’ve never *really* spoken to (name) before today and she’s actually okay.”

~ “My friend told me (name) wasn’t speaking to me but we’ve spoken all afternoon today.”

~ “Can we all come back next week to do this please?”

~ “I really enjoyed this afternoon even though I was dreading spending time with (name).”

~ “It was good how you made us keep swapping places ‘cos it meant that I wasn’t sitting next to (name) all the time and could talk to (name) sometimes instead.”

~ “This computer thing is brill!”

KIT encouraged teamwork in this instance and the fun element of the system helped all the girls to laugh and be at ease with each other – more harmony than the teachers had been able to succeed in getting during the normal school setting and during the normal school lessons.



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3. KIT being used to engage disaffected pupils and discourage complete non-attendance at school

To some extent, the Great Lever Family Learning Centre has been used as a halfway house for several disaffected pupils who refuse point-blank to go to school for a variety of reasons. In the past we have seen such pupils here from years 7, 8 and 11. Attending the family learning centre a couple of times a week with a parent and support worker to complete school work and discuss problems is seen as a stepping stone towards getting back into school full-time.

Whilst the pupils are at the learning centre, every effort is made to make them feel comfortable as, in some cases, the children might not have been in a learning establishment for months. This is where KIT has come into play. We have used KIT as a motivation to:

1. Actually attend an establishment where learning will take place
2. Keep up with classmates using an unconventional approach
3. As a reward for good work/behaviour during a stint at the centre or a lesson at school

KIT has improved the learning of said pupils, has aided the actual want for these pupils to leave their own home and has been a way of getting children who might refuse to pick up a pen and paper in the classroom to engage in an educational activity.

4. KIT being used by non-teaching assistants within ‘timeout’ sessions at the family learning centre

Non-teaching assistants have been able to come to the Great Lever Family Learning centre without work for the child/children they are supporting due to the fact that we have KIT. Though we do not encourage KIT to be used to ‘reward’ children who are misbehaving, it has been a saving grace in some instances.



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5. KIT being used as a reward for good behaviour

Similarly to the way the KIT system is used for rewarding the good attendance of pupils at Hayward school, its access is used to reward various pupils for good behaviour.

The pupils in these cases can range from a single pupil who has kept to a target with a support assistant, to a whole group of children who have been particularly well-behaved for a certain period of time.

One study support member of staff commented, on his second visit, that his group had enjoyed their first session so much that their behaviour had, on the whole, remained good in an attempt to get him to bring them back to play on KIT!

6. KIT being used to consolidate learning within specific topics

One science group accessed the KIT system at the Great Lever Family Learning Centre to consolidate their understanding of the human body.

Whilst the KS3 pictorial science activity was employed by the KIT facilitator with the children, the teacher could see at a glance who was getting questions right/wrong. At the same time, the pupils had fun seeing whether...

- a) they could be the first to answer each particular question
- b) they could reach the top of the leader board after every 5 questions and
- c) they could remember what they had learned in the classroom

The flashcard element of the pictorial activities has proved to be a handy tool to be able to use before such quizzes.

7. KIT being used with ESOL (English speakers of other languages) groups

The KIT system is regularly used by a Year 10 ESOL group of approximately 10 pupils with their study support teacher. The pupils hail from a variety of countries and are from a range of races. Most of them have joined the school late and are in this study group to try to improve their English language.

As KIT contains a range of activities that are common to all year 10 pupils such as English, maths and science, it proves an asset to this group for many reasons.

The way the system is utilised encourages the pupils to listen carefully and to understand verbal English language. Before each activity, instructions are read aloud and control commands are shown to them either on screen or by hand. Due to the appealing nature of the learning that is about to take place, the pupils concentrate hard, ask questions and are enthusiastic and eager to understand English.

The pictorial activities, in science for example, are great when used with this group. If, for example, the topic being covered is flowering plants, a picture might show an arrow pointing at a petal of a flower. The facilitator/teacher can then read aloud all the parts of a flower and point to them as he/she does so which encourages pictorial learning – not only of the science element but also of the verbal English language. In addition, when the answer then appears and is reinforced by the teacher/facilitator, *written* English is reinforced for this ESOL group.

Similarly, we have also used activities such as recognising flags with this group. The flashcards are used to show them which flag represents which country (the name of the country is read aloud at this time), then the questions come up and all alternatives are read aloud.

As with most groups accessing KIT, this type of session is combined with the more unscholarly elements of the system such as ‘Football5ers’ and ‘Medieval Mayhem’ - one that goes down terrifically at any age!



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When asked what they thought of KIT, this group managed to write and say, amongst other purely positive comments, that they thought it was ‘*excellent*’, ‘*brilliant*’ and ‘*better than lessons at school*’. They loved the format KIT takes – i.e. the controllers and big white screen and enjoyed improving their English in such a fun way.

The study support teacher and an ESOL worker from the school were equally enthusiastic. Though these pupils all come from vastly different backgrounds and might have general difficulties communicating, they find common-ground with hand-sets and easily mastered controls.



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KIT: immediate future plans

After using KIT for a few months, we have seen a lot of potential for using the system to enhance some of the other projects in which Bolton Literacy Trust is involved:

1. We are presently looking into using the system in early years’ settings – specifically SureStart Bolton, with whom we work in partnership.

The sing-along and counting aspects of the system provide foundation stage learning activities with which SureStart workers have been impressed after a demonstration.

Another reason we may begin to use the system in SureStart setting is because SureStart Bolton are presently trying to recruit more fathers/male carers into the centres. With the appeal of computer games, hand controllers and amusements such as Football and camel racing, KIT will hopefully provide a carrot to entice dads into these mum/female dominated environments.

2. Another future use of our KIT system will be with groups of vulnerable children. We often work in partnership with NCH and run PAYP sessions (Positive Activities for Young People). We have discussed using the system with such groups to improve their social skills, learn in a fun environment and, in some cases, just participate in a group activity. Again, it is the format of the system as a whole and the fun nature the activities take that would draw the children in this kind of environment.

3. As part of our Full Service School project, we also aim to use the KIT system more with feeder primaries to Hayward school. Our aim is to use KIT to help teachers consolidate topic learning, for example The Victorians or The Flowering Plant. We are hoping that the feeder primary schools will like the way the system allows up to 30 children to participate at a time and that, once participating, these children are engrossed and occupied for the duration!



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KIT: conclusion

KIT has been a fascinating and sometimes invaluable resource at the Great Lever Family Learning Centre in the short time we have had use of it. The national curriculum questions on the academic side of the system are of an excellent level for the key stages we have worked with and it is easy to skip down a key stage or to set the quizzes to ‘easy’ for underachieving groups.

Differentiation during group activities comes by way of support whereas for individual tasks setting the system to a suitable level is uncomplicated.

It is great to be able to access all sides of the system and intersperse a learning activity with a more fun one to aid keeping the pupils’ interest.

As a KS1/2 teacher and as a facilitator of groups of KS3/4 children I have witnessed KIT to be a captivating learning tool which engages even the most disaffected of pupils.