



Professional Development Solutions for your Support Staff

A guide for further education
employers in England



Skills for Learning Professionals

Foreword

The Association of Colleges welcomes and supports the research and subsequent report carried out by Lifelong Learning UK on developing support staff in further education.

We are aware that colleges recognise the value of training and development as a means of developing knowledge, skills and experience of all employees to achieve personal and organisational objectives. Colleges are places of learning where a great deal of excellent work in the development of students and staff is carried out.

We are particularly pleased by the pragmatic approach Lifelong Learning UK has taken in this project in concentrating on sharing examples of good practice carried out by colleges. The focus on professional development in specific areas of work carried out by support staff under the umbrella of learner services, learner involvement and employer engagement, demonstrates the importance of fit-for-purpose professional development.

This online resource, Professional Development Solutions for your Support Staff, is a practical tool with examples of professional development, routes of progression, case studies and practical tips. It should be invaluable in assisting those who are responsible for the development of support staff in further education.

Evan Williams

Director of Employment & Professional Services

Association of Colleges

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Introduction

This guide is essentially for employers of support staff and those who lead professional development: principals and chief executives; heads of services; human resources (HR) and professional development managers. However, many others, including support staff themselves, will also find some of the examples of great relevance.

Many of the people we interviewed talked about financial efficiencies. Included in our 'short story' collection are a number of innovative ways to reduce costs, and also improve the quality of professional development. Many employers are now providing a better service for their staff at a lower cost.

Leaders and managers talked not only of financial challenges. They also talked of the pressure to lead their staff through ever-increasing changes and the need to train them to prioritise and work differently. You will find a number of examples of this in the section entitled 'Keep on mission and deliver professional development efficiently' and throughout the guide. Principals and managers are using different language about development such as 'commercial up-skilling days', 'futures days', and 'change teams'. The guide includes examples of how good professional development can really impact positively on the growth of your business.

During the research phase for the guide, we experienced a great deal of honesty and optimism. Heads of organisations and services were very open about the challenges they face. One challenge is the seismic shift required by a person who is promoted internally to a manager role, also known as 'growing your own'. This method saves on the high costs of recruiting externally and provides movement and motivation within their workforce. From our conversations we have learned that in some cases, newly promoted support staff managers have found the switch from operational to strategic management a smoother ride than teacher colleagues.

The section 'Train and develop for learner and client success' showcases solutions for job roles in employer engagement and learner services areas. As well as covering a range of support staff roles throughout the guide, we also wanted to promote some examples of specialist professional development for distinct roles. There are many different roles held by support staff in further education; this section highlights the importance of providing fit-for-purpose professional development for each role. Included in this section are links to Lifelong Learning UK's [National Occupational Standards \(NOS\)](#) for support staff roles. The way NOS are developed is explained and there are examples of how colleagues are using the NOS to plan and assess professional development.

The voices of support staff are made clear in section three, 'Work pro-actively with Unions'. There is a good example of how the culture of a company was transformed by an award winning learning

centre. There is also reference to the need for orientation (referred to as 'para-educational') training for support staff who are new to working in an educational establishment.

In 'Bespoke in-house professional development' you will find the stories of three talented and ambitious people, keen to learn and keen to progress, who committed to accelerated professional development programmes. These individuals benefitted from organisations who were prepared to invest in them but they fully played their part as employees, which included 'learning on the job'. The importance of recruiting the right person in the first place was a recurrent theme.

The section 'Maximise the potential of networks' showcases some fine examples of colleges collaborating for the purpose of review and development. One network of sixth form colleges put on an excellent annual conference for 450 staff across all functions, at £32 per head. This section also includes examples of national and regional networks for staff working in the learner services area.

At the end of each section there are some 'questions to consider'. They are broad and simple. The purpose of the questions is to help you reflect on your own organisation's professional development practice for support staff, and to identify what you do well and what you may do differently.

The benefits of investing in support staff are made very clear in this guide, which includes examples of initiatives that have made a difference to staff, learners and organisations. The concluding section brings together the suggestions and benefits taken from the 52 people we interviewed across 25 providers of adult and community learning, general further education, specialist further education and work based learning.

We know there are many examples of successful, fit-for-purpose professional development for support staff out there in the further education sector, which we have not captured here. We hope among our case studies, you will find one or two which inspire you to do something different, to improve professional development opportunities for your support staff, and in turn enhance the success of your learners and your organisation.

1. Keep on Mission and Deliver Professional Development Efficiently: a range of ways to align professional development to strategic and operational priorities

Introduction

Leaders and managers talked to us about the importance of aligning all professional development to strategic priorities. A common priority is that of student success and a second, increasingly, is related to financial efficiency.

This section showcases some examples of how providers are delivering professional development that is having a growing impact on student success. Other providers demonstrate practical ways of using professional development to reduce operational costs and increase income.

1.1 Aligning professional development to strategic priorities: the golden thread

The principal of a large further education college in South London is very keen on the 'golden thread'. By this she means that she and the college's senior management team are fully committed to ensuring all their activity can be tracked back to the college's strategy and its 10 key priorities.

The head of learning and development has written a professional development strategy. This strategy defines professional development in the wider context, sets out the vision for 2013 and describes clearly the strategic aims and objectives for professional development for 2010-2013. There is a clear and practical guidance section on roles and responsibilities for all staff.

Further reading is available in the appendices of this document:

Appendix A: [Summary of the professional development strategy – aligned with the college strategic plan 2010-13.](#)

1.2 Saving costs in a sixth form college

A sixth form college in Essex has taken a holistic approach to professional development. The college recognises the development needs of all individuals and teams, and plans professional development programmes which will ultimately impact on the success of its students.

The college is part of the Central and Eastern Network for Building and Sustaining Excellence (CENBASE) network which was set up seven years ago by a group of six sixth form colleges in central and eastern England, to support the introduction of greater self-governance, increased accountability and reduced bureaucracy.

Through the network, the colleges' examinations staff have participated in essential professional development to ensure they administer student examinations in the best possible manner. Costs were reduced as the development was delivered 'in-house' across the CENBASE network and all participants from the six colleges shared and developed ideas together.

For example, a number of people in the same role can share thinking about how to manage cuts, and they can re-energise themselves and improve their practice back in their workplace. The college uses other professional development networks such as the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER) for low-cost and effective professional development opportunities.

The principal explained how development has helped the college achieve 'value for money' through the training of the estates manager:

"I aligned professional development to operational priorities, which approved his 17th edition accreditation in electrical work. Now he saves the college money by doing a lot more electrical maintenance in house rather than outsourcing this work. He also feels valued and motivated in his role."

Principal, Sixth form college

1.3 Send staff on a professional development mission with clear commercial objectives

A college in the South East, with 2,500 full-time students and 2,000 part-time students (including informal adult learning), has given all staff equal access to continuing professional development on a pro-rata basis.

Since the Institute for Learning introduced 30 hours of professional development for teachers, the college has rolled this out for support staff too, and the hours are pro-rata for part-time staff. The college organises regular whole-college conference days so teams can come together to share issues and find out how they impact differently in various areas of work.

Recently the college moved from an old to a new building. Staff worked hard to make the move and adjust to the new environment. So in December 2010, the whole college conference had a clear focus on well-being for all staff including how to achieve a healthy work-life balance, reorganise pressure points and speak up when facing a difficulty. Taster sessions for activities such as Indian head massage, yoga and basic car maintenance were provided, and at the end of a busy first term in the new building, the staff valued this kind of conference, with well-qualified speakers making a worthwhile input.

There is a strong focus on updating skills in this college. Every Friday afternoon there are workshops for managers on different topics, for example, funding and planning.

This college has introduced 'commercial up-skilling' for all staff. The purpose of commercial up-skilling is for staff to create links between the college and local employers. This both develops business for the college and explores work placements for students. Benefits of the scheme for staff include updated knowledge and skills, networking opportunities, and career development. Benefits for the college and students include promotion of the college and the introduction of fresh ideas into teaching and learning.

Staff choose from employers on the college's customer relations database or find an employer through their own contacts. They spend one day, or two half-days, with the host organisation, usually during a five week period over the summer.

Each member of staff sets clear objectives for the commercial up-skilling with his or her line manager in advance. After the visit they meet to discuss those objectives, any other benefits of the placement, and what difference the placement will now make to the staff member, the team and the students. Departmental feedback is shared on whole-college conference days for both support and curriculum departments. The professional development team collate information from all the staff placements into an evaluation report.

Impact

The senior team meet regularly to monitor the success of the commercial up-skilling scheme, and the impact on employer links has been successful.

In the academic year 2011-2012 the college will take commercial up-skilling further, using one of the college closure days at the end of term to encourage 100% participation. Past participation has been as high as 97%.

Internal evaluation, Investors in People and Total Quality Standard (TQS) assessments provide strong evidence that this professional development is having an impact on the success of the college and its students.

Further reading is available in the appendices of this document:

Appendix B: [Commercial up-skilling form 2010-2011](#)

1.4 A virtual professional development centre in East Anglia goes commercial

One college expects to generate income from its virtual online professional development centre. The online content has a generic core with specialist professional development for business support and teaching staff.

There is professional development for managers at all levels and 'talent champions' (advanced practitioners). Content is dynamic and supports change management. The centre is affiliated to the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA).

Colleagues support each other with a culture of 'never letting a colleague fail' underpinning staff behaviour.

They are currently raising awareness of the virtual online professional development centre with students. The plan is to launch it to external customers with programmes on topics such as CV writing and working together.

1.5 Investing in governors to do it themselves

Many providers train governors in self-assessment with a senior manager leading the self assessment process. This example is from a sixth form college in the West Midlands that does things differently.

The chair of the Quality and Curriculum Committee has worked closely with the vice-principal in charge of the curriculum to establish a self-assessment model. Five years ago they began to

formulate a strategic approach to governance working in an annual cycle of phases. They took a longitudinal look at governance success criteria and assessed how they were doing. Three years ago an informal change began to happen.

It is significant that the principal trusts the governors to assess themselves and that the chair of the Quality and Curriculum Committee has an educational background. The chair is familiar with, and confident in the self-assessment process. She is familiar with the language and the dialogue.

The governors' professional development includes the usual annual away-day. They also have a host of other professional development opportunities to increase their knowledge and understanding of the college and its local and national context. These include:

- shadowing of students and staff e.g. the chaplain, the youth worker
- briefing and debate on major initiatives
- briefings by students and staff
- mandatory safeguarding training (integrated with staff)
- health and safety training (integrated with staff)
- manager training involvement (integrated with staff); and
- a specific CENBASE regional network for governors of six sixth form colleges.

They also have a diverse wealth of skills and experience from their own fields.

A self-assessment sub-group was formed with a broad membership and the constant participation of the chair of the Quality and Curriculum Committee. The self-assessment sub-group enables the professional development of governors in an organic way, for example through an open review of their roles and committees and how each committee feeds into a more corporate role.

The governors take an open and flexible approach and meet between formal meetings. There is a high level of trust and honesty. The principal keeps the governors well informed through regular briefings. They are informed early of any new initiatives so they can prepare strategic responses to change. The governors welcome all of these opportunities which enable them to 'think outside of the box'.

Impact

The impact of all of this professional development and the impact of feeling thoroughly 'listened to' means the governors have created a robust approach to self-assessment. At the same time the process is simple and clear. Because they self assess their own performance, they own it and are committed to following up the actions identified.

Further reading is available in the appendices of this document:

Appendix C: [Self-assessment questionnaire 2010](#)

1.6 Look to the future

A large city centre college in East Anglia has developed a professional development programme aligned to its strategic priorities. Appraisals are used to identify developmental needs and the expectation is that staff will develop a range of strategic skills, competences and behaviours that will produce 21st century students.

‘Futures Days’

A distinctive characteristic of the professional development programme are the ‘Futures Days’. These days are led by the principal, and first, middle and senior level managers across the college participate. Together they look at future changes and challenges. Then each manager follows up by working with his or her team. They cover what to anticipate, how ready they are for any change or new initiative and what they feel they need to do or develop so they are ready for the future.

Professional development content is clearly signposted from the ‘Futures Days’ and this is facilitated through initiatives such as ‘Change Teams’. Staff at all levels are trained to use problem solving and solution-focused tools. The series of workshops are supported by a steering group, with membership from the senior management team, governors and the president of the Students’ Union. The Change Teams bring their findings to the steering group and discussions focus around, for example, size and scale of a project or a business perspective. One example of a Change Team project is to ‘develop confident students who are prepared for the next stage in their career’.

Questions to consider

What examples do you have which demonstrate the impact of professional development for support staff, on increased student success?

In what innovative ways do you implement professional development for support staff, which result in financial efficiencies?

2. Train and Develop for Learner and Client

Success: examples of professional development solutions in the areas of employer engagement and learner services with standards to match

Introduction

This section showcases some prime examples of providers who invest well in developing their support staff. In turn we see clear evidence of improved services for students and a growth in business with clients.

2.1 Growing employer engagement in the North West

The director of skills and business development in a college in the North West talks proudly of his team and gives examples of the qualifications they have achieved through professional development. Three have achieved qualifications in Customer Relationship Management; four have foundation degrees in Communication at Work; three have obtained Level 3 Initial Advice and Guidance; two have Business and Administration Apprenticeships; and one has gained an information technology qualification.

The team have technical updates on the student records system, as well as fun team events promoting work-life balance and well-being at work. The whole team went through training from an external provider on funding and other more unusual opportunities. There is also a strong ethos of informal training which takes place through members of the team working with other teams on projects.

This investment in a relatively small team's professional development is clearly reaping benefits, for the college and for local people. Along with Job Centre Plus, the college is working in partnership with a big employer who is setting up a leisure theme park which will require several hundred staff in early 2011. This team has undertaken all the recruitment and is delivering employability training such as CV writing, which has saved the company a lot of money. Those who last the course are guaranteed an interview with the company.

The business development team provide in-work development as well as the pre- and post-employment aspects. The college is working with a large company, which has a waste treatment plant and part of the deal is to recruit local people and staff it with formerly unemployed people. The company wanted people with commitment and confidence, so the team developed the programme

with plenty of employability content in order to filter out those who do not fit the company's requirements.

New hotels are signing up for the team's recruitment model. Business for the college is growing as local companies try to reduce risk in the recruitment process; they want the college to do the sifting so that they end up with employees who are more polished.

As well as investing in the skills of those around him, the director clearly has skills to lead his team to success.

"My best professional development was a Masters level degree in Curriculum Design and Workforce Development. I have a passion for 'changing people's life chances'. I love to see immediate impact. I like to break the cycle of third-generation unemployed people, working in a range of community venues to reach them."

Director of Skills and Business Development

He is prepared to try lots of things and see what works and what doesn't. He uses this model with his team too. He likes to share ideas with them and see what they think first. He learns from his own staff and he loves to innovate.

The director employs this open approach externally too. The college has a local forum where work based providers share practice and work cooperatively.

2.2 A work based learning model: investing in support staff has increased business twofold

A large work based learning provider has reaped the benefits of investing in its support staff. The national company has 1,200 staff and 25,000 trainees. There are 100 centres based across the regions. There are two arms of delivery: first apprenticeships, and second training the unemployed. This includes those not ready to work, those hard to reach, and those in redundancy situations.

The company has grown rapidly and in the last year it has almost doubled in size, from 600 to 1,200 staff and from 50 to 100 centres. They have an annual turnover of over £80 million. The manager who leads on training is very clear that it makes good financial sense to invest in all staff.

At each centre, staff are received by a 'host' and given a 'mentor'. A very high number of the company's advisors have completed NVQ Level 3 in Information Advice and Guidance (IAG). The training is already having a very high impact in increasing the number of clients and reducing staff turnover from 25% to 10% in 12 months.

Currently, 11% of advisors/staff are now applying for promoted posts in the company. Staff feel valued and motivated. There is currently a list of 100 advisors waiting to begin their funded Level 3 IAG qualification and others are applying to start Level 4.

As the company grows and they recruit new staff they have developed and put in place an induction package for all new staff accredited by an overarching body. This is entitled 'Award for Professionals in the Welfare to Work Sector'. It includes knowledge and understanding of the different roles – advisor, trainer, manager – and how they work together. Staff who join the company can see opportunities for progression.

People who have worked in the company for some time also have their training needs supported. Centre managers are applying for management qualifications. The company supports Levels 3, 4 and 5 of the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) programme. There is a combined cohort of 35, twice a year.

The company uses a lot of technology. Many classes are delivered virtually, using audio and video conferencing. All classes can be delivered anywhere where there is access to broadband. Visit www.youtube.com/lifelonglearninguk.

Staff train in equality and safeguarding through the Learning and Improvement Service's (LSIS) e-learning packages, and they are supported by an equality and safeguarding representative in each centre, to consider what they have learned and how they are applying this to their work. Visit www.lsis.org.uk/services.

The benefits to this company are very clear. There is sound evidence of:

- an increase in client satisfaction
- an increase in client success
- an increase in client numbers
- a decrease in staff turnover
- a decrease in paperwork errors
- an increase in staff satisfaction; and
- a growing, dynamic and motivated workforce.

The director of staff training is clear that continuing professional development plays a big part in the company's success. She is equally clear the success is supported by strong links between the quality, human resources and staff development teams.

If a member of staff is struggling or there is an issue, a member of the quality team carries out an audit to identify what is happening. A member of the human resources team puts in place any required procedures and the staff development person will provide any training and development required.

The links between these three functions are strong. In this large and successful company they invest time in talking with each other, and work together as a team.

2.3 Fit for purpose verifier training impacts on employer engagement

A large general further education college has found a way of developing staff to improve its employer engagement. The college is based on four sites, two of them more than twenty-five miles apart. It delivers the whole range of subject areas with the exception of land-based learning. It has approximately 850 members of staff.

Cost effective professional development delivery to a scattered workforce

One of its most successful areas of work is employer engagement. Inevitably many of the staff working in this area are not often in college. Therefore, training has to be timely and completely relevant to their role. Training also has to be cost-effective, particularly with a large team of assessors and verifiers.

An example of a course that fits all these criteria is the recent 'Effective Assessing Course' run by the European Network of Training Organisations, which was adapted for the college. Another course, 'Best Practice for Internal Verifiers' focused on recognising and accrediting prior learning.

However, sending all staff on such a course, central to their work though it is, poses challenges. It would be expensive and time consuming. The coordinator for this team has developed two approaches: one is to attend herself and then deliver the essential information, tailored to her team's needs, to smaller groups later; the other approach is to develop training resources that can be accessed online.

Training external assessors

One of the coordinator's main contributions to employer engagement is training assessors based in some of the employer's work places. The assessors are also included in any college professional development update sessions.

These assessors work directly with college students in the workplace. For example, hairdressers will be assessing their own trainees in the workplace, who are also college students.

Similar training has been carried out with large logistics and manufacturing companies, as well as smaller companies such as an adventure group and an 'activities/childcare' company. One of the employers won a national award for the work they did with the college.

Measuring impact

So how does the college, or more specifically the coordinator for this team, know the system is working? There are several checks in the process. Vocational staff are encouraged to say what their training needs are both at the time of annual review and at other times. When training is delivered there is an evaluation form.

In addition, the coordinator places a post-it note on the end of each evaluation form asking for feedback on what other training members of this group would like. These are collected in separately, collated and the results fed back to the staff development team who use this information to base subsequent training provision for this group.

Feedback from the assessors and verifiers is very positive. After an 'Effective Assessors' training day the feedback led to changes in the way the portfolios were built and also the college investing in new equipment such as lap tops and dictaphones. This area of the college was judged to be 'outstanding' at the time of the last self-assessment report.

2.4 Listen to the students: learner voice at a specialist college

The combination of a strong culture and professional development has had a positive impact on a large independent specialist college. Learners come from all over the country and all are resident in the college. When you walk into this college there is a warm welcome from learners on reception, and the cafes and restaurants are run partly by learners and provide a professional and high quality service.

The strong ethos of the college puts the learner at the heart of everything and everyone embraces this culture. Everyone believes students 'can'.

Professional development goes alongside the very positive culture and the personal tutorship professional development programme bears witness to this. Time is set aside for personal tutor training. It is very intensive. The personal tutors are responsive to demands. They have a milestone approach and have been trained to record learner achievements against learner goals and compile a termly report to parents.

The 60 personal tutors participate in a termly briefing session to ensure operational changes are responsive and flexible enough to meet each individual learner's entitlement. Teachers and support staff are personal tutors, as are all of the senior management team. Every learner meets on a one-to-one basis with his or her tutor every three weeks. Activities include checking the timetable to

ensure it works and, where necessary, walking through the physical pathways of the day. Pastoral care is also on offer. At the end of each term the learners' support ratio is audited, along with a report from every department, received by the personal tutor.

The approach is very person centred and there is a big focus on the learner voice. The college has a learner voice coordinator and she speaks passionately about enabling the learners to grow in confidence and independence. Every Friday afternoon the Student Union meets from 4-5pm and once a term they hold a student council where bigger decisions are made. The learner voice coordinator is qualified to use Makaton to assist the students with communication.

The learners arrange a host of activities, such as fundraising for Children In Need. The Student Union also take forward ideas from the student body. When reasonable requests are put forward, they negotiate with the principal of the college. The learners now have an extra television for the social centre, a new karaoke machine and a DVD player. They offered to pay half for the karaoke machine and DVD player and were successful in getting the other half paid for by the college.

The learner voice coordinator takes up every professional development opportunity in order to do her job as well as possible. There is a massive professional development programme every Easter and summer holiday when the students return to their homes. There is a good range of in-house and external delivery. The college is a member of a successful professional development partnership across Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Colleges within the partnership share professional development efficiently and effectively.

Impact

In 2010, the college won the Learning and Skills Improvement Service Learner Voice Representative Organisation award and the current president of the Student Union was shortlisted for an individual award. The president has a strong working relationship with the staff and learners. She is in her second year in the role and she is making a big difference to the college. She is currently planning a national conference with other specialist college student representatives. She was invited to be part of this 'dream-team' to facilitate a conference entitled 'Marching on with my life... supporting me to adulthood'.

Her skills in encouraging other students to assert their own voices and make choices and decisions, are not only the outcomes of the very good professional development of the staff who support her, but they are also the outcomes of the strong ethos that places the learner at the heart of this college.

“I never had confidence to talk to anyone before; now I do it every day. I have respect from the other students. At meetings I sit with the secretary and treasurer on either side. I read the minutes of the last meeting and the three of us are involved in presenting.

I was bullied at school. Here bullying is not tolerated. Students have a more mature approach. I have much more support from students and staff here. I am involved with making big decisions with our Principal.

We (the Student Union) are becoming more professional. We want recognition and we have bought new jackets and badges.

Even if other students have different opinions to me, I listen to them. I like to support students too when they have a problem. The student council works closely with people and we see another side to each other.”

President of Student Union

The learner voice coordinator says the best thing about her job is seeing the transformations in students themselves. They grow from shy, new students to confident, assertive young people.

2.5 Learners raise awareness of equality and diversity for staff

A general further education college has focused on developing staff with skills in equality and diversity. It has 8,500 students and two main campuses in Worcestershire. It is a beacon college and has a number of accolades for quality such as Investors in People and a Customer Service Excellence Award.

Professional development for all staff is seen as very important. There is an annual programme of training events, much of it focused on the summer programme with 150 events offered to staff. As equality and diversity is a key area of Ofsted inspection this college was keen to ensure that staff had high quality training in this area. However, their approach not only delivers good training, it has also formed part of their learner engagement strategy.

Students from the performing arts area worked with staff and scripted 10 sketches on issues relating to equality and diversity which were then performed to staff at each of the campuses.

Another way in which equality and diversity were incorporated into professional development for business support staff was through a staff questionnaire with questions such as ‘have you experienced discrimination?’

In another exercise, learners pretended they were from different colleges and tried to assess the grade that the college might receive from Ofsted. This then provoked a discussion about why colleges need to collect data on equality and diversity and why Ofsted regarded it as so important. They also discussed jokes that were discriminatory and why people told these sorts of jokes. More about this initiative can be found online www.excellencegateway.org.uk.

The college is regarded as a high achieving college for a number of reasons, but it is clear that the high level of learner engagement is a significant contributor, alongside the professional development for business support staff.

2.6 A beacon of success

Staff welfare and training is high on the agenda for a college which is both a beacon college and rated in the Sunday Times 'best places to work' list. The college has 18,000 learners across its provision and 550 staff.

There is mandatory training on topics such as equality and diversity and safeguarding and a lot of training is offered to enable staff to better support more vulnerable students. This training includes mental health awareness, dyslexia and Makaton training.

The impact of this training is reflected in positive comments in Ofsted reports from 2007 on the college's commitment to supporting students: 'Learners' support needs are very well catered for'. Individuals can request training on anything that will enable them to do their job more effectively, and is agreed with their line manager.

Over-time is paid if there is a significant time commitment attached to attend training, again if agreed with their line manager. This demonstrates the college's high degree of commitment to the development of its support staff. It is part of the college's culture that staff are not expected to do something unless they understand what they are doing and how to do it.

Range of training

Training in customer care skills is provided both internally and externally. Mystery shoppers and student surveys both reflect the positive impact of such training. Managers' training has included a college exchange link and for anyone considering a management role there is an 'Aspiring Manager' course that is run in-house.

Staff can elect to join the course so they are, in effect, signalling that they have an interest in progression. The end result of this has been promotion within the college with far fewer external appointments. In turn this reduces advertising and recruitment costs.

2.7 A new personal tutorship initiative raises learner participation

Recent government agendas such as Every Child Matters, safeguarding and personalisation have made the provision of good quality tutorials even more important. A London college has been looking at their tutorial provision to see if there are more effective ways to move forward. The issue is how to have a tutorial system that is consistent in its content and delivery for a wide range of students. Cost is also important because as funding for this area is reduced, innovative ways to deliver high quality tutoring efficiently will be increasingly important.

The student development services manager worked alongside the head of teaching and learning, as part of a partnership with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, to look at ways to improve tutorials. A full survey of tutorials was carried out. The survey asked what tutors did with tutorial time, how they felt about the tutorial system and how confident the tutors were in what they were doing. The research also extended to other colleges to see what other models might be adapted.

The research revealed huge inconsistencies across the college but students stated that they really valued their tutorial time. In response, the college set up a comprehensive intranet site for resources and a tailored toolkit for tutorials was introduced. A tutorial guide was produced which clarified what was expected in a tutorial. This covered the number of hours for tutoring, including a tutorial scheme of work, and what was expected of a tutor. A series of compulsory tutorials on topics such as sexual health and career planning was also outlined. Many group tutorials are now delivered by trained support staff who have wide and up to date knowledge of their specialist areas.

Raising the profile of tutorials

Initially, training focused on those who expressed the most need and strategies were demonstrated to help them to get started. Some support staff were included in the training, so they could deliver tutorials to the standard required by Ofsted. The tutorials run by the trained support staff have undergone peer observations and they are about to undergo a programme of observation by managers. This approach demonstrates a message that this work is of equal value to the main teaching programme.

The college has set up a cross-college tutorial committee with representatives from all faculties of the college, which is chaired by the student development services manager working closely with the head of teaching and learning and involving the student liaison team and learning resource centres.

Impact

The research revealed that time spent on one to one tutorials varied from pastoral conversations to times to deal with assessment. Students wanted group tutorials to be delivered partly by support staff and partly by personal tutors. Feedback with a group of 16-18 year olds undertaking the new tutorial scheme was very positive and there has been a significant increase in participation in the enrichment programme.

2.8 Transforming the tutorial function with academic coaches

A sixth form college in the West Midlands has transformed its tutorial function. It has invested substantially in a programme to replace tutors with academic coaches. This initiative followed a review of the tutorial system. Senior managers realised that the student experience of the tutorial was variable. Some teachers enjoyed delivering tutorials and were happy to take on the subject matter of group tutorials. However, different materials were used and levels of engagement by tutors varied, leaving students with a mixed experience. After the review, a new approach to tutorials was agreed.

Following consultation, the college has begun to implement the new initiative. They have initially engaged eight academic coaches to deliver tutorials to Year 12 students. They come from a variety of backgrounds, for instance one previously worked with Connexions. A second tranche of coaches will be taken on when the present Year 13 leave and a new intake starts in September. Students now have three hours tutorials a week: a one hour group tutorial and two hours spent in one to one meetings. Academic coaches then spend a fourth hour contacting parents and dealing with administrative tasks.

Training

The new coaches spent a week in the summer learning about college procedures and understanding the basics of their role. They have worked as a group designing tutorial materials on topics such as study skills, transition and target setting. Mindful of the fact that the coaches are not trained teachers, they were given a supportive lesson observation early on in their first term. The college is supportive of further professional development if the coaches wish to undertake further teacher-related training. A senior manager meets with the coaches on a weekly basis, both to discuss specific students and to continue their coach training. For example, the session covered the procedure to follow when concerns were expressed about a student's attendance or commitment to keeping up with the work.

Impact

Student feedback demonstrates they are enjoying the new system, especially the group tutorials. The academic coaches report that they are finding their work extremely rewarding. They would like more training in facilitating group work but it is still early in the project and they will be able to access further training in due course. The coaches have been provided with mobiles and 'net-books' so communication with staff and parents is easy and they can create a written record of any conversation at any time.

Parents are kept regularly updated on their child's progress and the electronic individual learning plan (ILP) enables the coach to have a good overview of a student's progress. It is too early to look at impact on retention or achievement, but compared to the group who still have the traditional tutorial system, the level of satisfaction of the Year 12 students is increasing.

2.9 Improved service to customers builds college reputation

A general further education college has improved its customer service by investing in the professional development of its staff. The college is based in a predominantly rural setting and has approximately 2000 full-time students, 3,500 part-time students and 520 members of staff. In addition to A Levels it offers a range of BTECs, some higher education courses, and works in partnership with the Royal Agricultural College.

The college has a number of partnerships with other colleges in the South West. One is the South West Peer Confederation, a group of 20 colleges who meet regularly to share expertise and support each other. This has enabled benchmarking, mutual inspection exercises and the moderation of each other's self-assessment reports. These have all had positive effects on professional development.

The college has focused on progression planning through work shadowing initiatives. For example, one member of staff shadowed the deputy site manager to gain greater insight into the role. These development initiatives have contributed to the high standards and high inspection grades of this college and demonstrated good value for money. Fifty percent of staff are promoted internally, significantly cutting recruitment and training costs. There is also a low turnover of staff, 'staff feel valued, and they stay'.

External support with effective change and development

One of the most outstanding contributions to developing high standards of customer service at the college has been the link with the Institute of Customer Service. They develop, evaluate and accredit a model of reflective practice for people working in the area. The decision to use this approach was made after some previously disparate groups of people were merged into one team using a customer service 'hub' as part of a reorganisation exercise.

The initial aim was to encourage better communication, team cohesion and forward planning. There was also a need to make individual roles more flexible and to develop a perception that everyone is involved in customer service whatever their role. The training involves constructing a portfolio with descriptions of key events, third party involvement and an emphasis on reflective practice. Staff can gain external accreditation for their professional development.

Impact

The effect on staff who have undergone this process has been extremely positive. The impact of this significant investment of time and money is reflected in a range of ways. Staff are now more highly motivated and are proactive rather than reactive. Internal inspections and peer review also indicate that this has been a worthwhile investment and contributed towards the college being graded 'outstanding' by Ofsted. This is reflected in the fact that the college has the Investors in People Award.

Now that a number of staff have been through the Institute's process, morale and communication have improved. One example given was that initially many meetings were scheduled to ensure good communication and shared understanding. After a while the number of meetings went down as there was more informal communication, and meetings were less necessary. Staff now feel that they are professionals with accreditation to prove it. They attend network meetings to gain additional training and share good practice.

The Institute's training has had a very positive impact on the college as a whole. Its reputation within the community has improved. Customer satisfaction surveys and student recruitment have both improved and the number of complaints relating to customer service has gone down dramatically. Compliments from customers have increased four fold since 2005. Internally, customer services get higher ratings in course reviews and the divide that is sometimes evident between academic staff and business support staff has gone. Instead they share the belief that: 'we are all here for the students.'

2.10 Professional development model in adult and community learning that breeds loyalty, flexibility and commitment

A large adult and community learning provider has created the same professional development framework for all its staff. There is an annual personal development and competency review which is a council scheme. Each individual has two reviews a year and objectives and tasks are assessed against competencies. A professional development analysis completes the annual review.

The head of the adult and community learning service has developed a culture of 'growing our own'. A mentoring programme is in place and there are opportunities for job shadowing for those interested in moving up the structure.

Support staff have also been promoted to manager positions, and they have made the shift from operational to managerial functions well. One example is the highly competent data manager, who excels in her field. Through professional development and learning on the job, the data manager is successful in the strategic management of data as opposed to the day to day operational role she had previously.

There are a range of qualifications available to support staff: Information Advice and Guidance Levels 3 and 4 for the guidance teams; and NVQ Levels 2 and 3 in Customer Service as a professional qualification for centre managers. There are apprenticeship programmes in leadership and management too.

The provider has recently recruited three young people from the Department of Work and Pensions scheme 'Future Jobs Fund'. This scheme is for the long-term unemployed. The head of adult and community learning provides volunteering opportunities for the scheme and after three months, if they are successful, they are taken on as employees of the council on a basic wage. The Job Centre Plus places them in employment. The head said the volunteers were so good she would have liked to have kept all of them.

Support staff who engage with employers need the right skills set for communicating with the private rather than the public sector. The wrong language can turn employers off. Professional development also covers the importance of timeliness and responsiveness in engaging with employers.

The learner voice is encouraged and the head of adult and community learning does 10 learner voice meetings on a regular basis in all of the centres and at different times of the day and evening. Consequently, the head engages with a very diverse range of learners from 16 to 80 years old; many are speakers of other languages. The increased engagement with learners has led to a huge drop in complaints, last year to 0.01 percent.

“Investing in staff through professional development creates a loyalty to the organisation and breeds commitment.

The evidence is very obvious in our centres. Staff of all levels share the workload if bad weather hits the centre. There is a huge team spirit, along with being flexible, and committed to the learners. This sort of flexibility in turn boosts confidence in staff when they transfer into different roles.

Professional development helps to ensure the right skill set at appropriate places so we can offer an efficient and effective service.”

Head of Adult and Community Learning

One very large impact of investing in support staff is the seamless quality of service to learners. In the last two years there has been a £2million reduction in income but the majority of the students will not have noticed.

2.11 Understanding why people behave badly really makes a difference

Providers from large adult and community learning provision, to inner city general further education colleges, are customising training in managing challenging behaviour for front line staff. There can be a higher turnover of staff in these roles than in other areas of an organisation. They are also recruited from a range of different types of organisations. Some have not worked in an educational context before.

Further education provides a service for a very diverse range of learners and customers. Some come to further education to develop social and interpersonal skills. Newly appointed frontline staff in particular can require some orientation or ‘para-educational’ training to feel equipped and comfortable working on reception in an educational establishment in the evening, for example, or isolated in a small centre.

One adult and community learning provider delivers specific professional development for frontline staff on the subject of managing customers with challenging behaviour. It is very successful. The objectives are to:

- develop existing skills and practices of appropriate management of customers
- increase confidence in managing challenging behaviours through a greater awareness of causes of some behaviours

- learn and apply appropriate verbal and non verbal communication techniques to enable two way active dialogue
- understand the range of communication styles available to enable effective communication
- use a range of questioning techniques to explore and identify customers' needs and requirements
- increase knowledge of other community resources to enable customers to be advised of other services
- increase confidence in ability to manage difficult and demanding situations.

Impact

A really positive aspect of this training is the staff felt valued and motivated by the level of delivery and the expertise of the specialist facilitator, who is a senior professional from social services and a senior practitioner in the council. There is a lot of kudos attached to this training. The staff particularly enjoyed this training because they were trained in the understanding of difficult behaviours and they felt they were treated intelligently.

A case study example that was used in the safeguarding training was that of a member of the canteen staff noticing that a student with learning disabilities appeared to be treated inappropriately by his carer. She reported to a member of staff who was able to follow safeguarding procedures to have the issue investigated. This example highlighted that everyone in the organisation has a responsibility and can have an impact, no matter what your role or grade.

2.12 National Occupational Standards (NOS)

Some suites of NOS are particularly relevant to support staff roles. These include the NOS for:

- Engaging Employers
- Learning and Development
- Learner Involvement; and
- Learning Support Staff.

All of the above NOS developed by Lifelong Learning UK can be found in the NOS directory at www.ukstandards.org.uk.

NOS are the building blocks for jobs and qualifications, and they define how a skilled and competent worker would carry out each function of their role. NOS describe the knowledge and

competences that a typical role might require for it to be successfully performed, but it is not the expectation that every single standard has to be met in order to carry out that role.

These statements of performance and knowledge are developed and agreed in partnership with the employers, stakeholders, trade or professional bodies within the relevant sector and across the UK and can help employers and individuals to monitor their performance and plan any developmental activity. As such, NOS are the benchmark for competent practice and knowledge required and agreed by the relevant sector.

The most common use of NOS is to underpin programmes of learning and qualifications developed by awarding organisations, professional bodies, private training providers and the further and higher education sectors. This includes accredited vocational and professional qualifications as well as non-accredited private or in-house training courses. They are also used by organisations to support human resource management and organisational development processes. Some sectors will require a demonstration of competence against NOS in order to practice a profession or craft.

Development of NOS is underpinned by occupational and functional mapping. An occupational map provides the context and background to the development of a suite of NOS. It illustrates the main features and characteristics of job roles within an occupational sector, highlighting overlaps with other roles and their boundaries with other sectors.

A functional map identifies the functions that people carry out on a day-to-day basis as part of their job role within the broad work activities that take place across an occupational sector. This information forms the basis of the NOS to be developed.

Organisations can use parts of the NOS appropriate to a given job role, to define job descriptions or professional development associated with that role. NOS are user-friendly tools and can support a range of activity such as defining a job role, identifying development needs, and planning and delivering continuous professional development. One individual job role may not be required to meet the whole suite of NOS.

“The whole process has been very inclusive and has resulted in a clear and manageable set of standards that are not only useful for mapping career paths but they also bring much needed clarity to the areas of learner and learning support.”

Head of Student Services

Some of the people we interviewed have begun to use the NOS to plan professional development programmes. The NOS are also useful in setting learning outcomes. Individual support staff can use them to reflect on their own standards of performance, to assess and clearly identify their training needs.

“The NOS have opened my mind to focussing on professional development for support staff.

We are developing professional development for the centre manager role in adult and community education. As a service we are currently putting together training packages. We need to ensure that we have relevant professional development for every role and we can mix and match the NOS to help us design and plan suitable programmes.

The NOS are a good checklist to use as well, as we prepare for inspection. We work with the Local Education Authorities competency frameworks which include behaviours, experiences and competencies. It is a challenge to write job descriptions and the NOS will help us with this task too.”

Area Manager, Adult and community learning

“We have a continuing professional development day coming up soon. I am going to use the NOS as a starting point for designing some of the professional development sessions for support staff. I will share the NOS we cover with staff as we implement the sessions and they will be very useful for staff to reflect on. They will feel a sense of achievement when they have a formal list of standards they have covered.”

Human Resources Manager, General further education college

Questions to consider

What professional development investment have you made in your learner services team which has resulted in more satisfied and delighted learners?

What professional development investment have you made in your employer engagement team which has resulted in a growth in your business, and delighted clients?

3. Work Pro-actively with Unions: how listening to support staff keeps professional development planning on target and makes a real difference to staff motivation

Introduction

It was easy to find examples of very positive relationships with union representatives and their employers. Some of those whom we interviewed have regional and national roles as well as a local one. They all have a job in the organisation as well as representing their union.

This section outlines a range of ways of working together pro-actively, accurately identifying the professional development needs of support staff, and delivering professional development which makes a real and positive difference within the workforce and at the frontline.

3.1 A bus depot wins an award for setting up a learning centre

A bus company in East Anglia has set up an award winning learning centre at the depot, which has transformed the quality of staff training as well as the quality of service the company delivers.

The following key ingredients contributed to the success of the learning centre:

- the commitment, enthusiasm and values of the company's project worker (also the Union Learning Representative) in leading the initiative
- the liaison of the union learning representative from UNITE with partners
- the commitment of the company to training and development
- strong partnerships with the local college and the post office
- the design and match of relevant qualifications to the employees' training needs.

Essentially this initiative could not have happened without the determination of the lead person who set up the learning centre - a project worker for the whole of East Anglia for UNITE. He has a desire to raise morale in the workforce, to motivate employees and to see a transformation in the company's people. In 2009, the project worker won the Learning and Skills Improvement Service STAR award for workforce development.

The project worker has worked with the company managers to put in place a clear learning agreement with UNITE and the company fully supports the work that has been done. They are clearly reaping the benefits of having a 'learning' workforce.

The project worker (also the NVQ assessor for the company) began with a foundation of a strong partnership with the local college, and together they reviewed the training needs of the employees. They started with an NVQ Level 2 Provisional Certificate in Vehicle Driving and as the learning centre became established, the curriculum broadened to include literacy, numeracy and IT courses at Level 1. They now have funding for Level 2 courses through the local college.

The Post Office were facing challenges setting up a learning centre, so the project worker approached them and they have joined forces to deliver the literacy, numeracy and IT courses.

A key skill in setting up successful partnerships is the project worker's experience of negotiating, so partners could see the benefits of the learning centre being properly designed for the training and development of the employees.

The mode of delivering the learning has two strengths.

- The product can be accessed online, so delivery of the courses can fit with the shift patterns of the drivers. Support is provided at day, evening and lunchtime sessions.
- The learning programme is matched to the employee.

Impact

A success story from the programme concerns a bus driver who was struggling with dyslexia and who now manages the company's cleaning department for all of the bus depots in East Anglia. The NVQ assessor identified his learning needs and through training the driver progressed on to become a duty controller and then a manager for the company. He was nominated for a learner achievement award in 2009.

"It is a joy to see the faces of drivers achieving something they have never achieved before. They grow in confidence and they breed confidence in others. Those with dyslexia who would have shied away from learning are now keen to progress."

Project worker

The bus company and UNITE have set up a website where employees can sit tests up to Level 2 and set up work tasks and assessments towards a recognised qualification.

3.2 Employer relations advisor faces both ways

A UNISON steward has recently been employed as an employee relations advisor at her college. She was formerly a library and information assistant. This new role has really ‘opened her eyes’. She now sees college issues from both the managers’ and the union members’ viewpoint.

Along with another new appointment, the continuing professional development advisor, she is ensuring the professional development of support staff has a much higher profile.

One example of this is that all front line staff can now access training to manage more challenging students. Previously only teachers had access to this training. Now the external training provider has broadened the training to include the front line staff. The training is based on a good understanding of what kind of problems staff have to deal with. The training includes:

- how to prevent fighting
- minimising risk to others
- confidence building exercises
- role plays and practical strategies

The training not only helps staff in college but also in public life.

The college has a sustainability group and People & Planet, a large student network and campaigning organisation, have been in to deliver professional development to the staff relocated to a new building.

This college is another example of how developing softer skills, such as stress management, improves the way that staff manage their workloads, and the staff feel their well-being is valued by the college.

3.3 A union steward recognises training needs in managing difficult behaviour

Another UNISON steward has recognised the importance of training staff in managing difficult behaviour. He works in a large college that has recently merged and a lot of his time has been taken up with case work and meetings about re-structuring.

He recognises the new senior team are doing great things for learners and great things for the college despite facing challenges at the same time.

He sees the college as vital to the local population as unemployment grows in the city. Like the senior team he believes all the staff play a part in making the learners feel the college is their home; they help them feel good and treat them well.

“Some students start college and a lot of socialisation has to happen first: taking turns in queues; turning up for classes on time.

I am looking to the care sector and housing associations for specialist professional development for front line staff to cover meeting and greeting skills; skills to diffuse situations; and managing challenging behaviour.”

Union Steward, General Further Education

He is keen for this college to come out of the recession, having developed more positive models of professional development and working with more collaboration between organisations, leading to better progression for more students and staff.

3.4 A union learning representative recognises the high costs of staff recruitment

A health and safety manager, who is also a union learning representative, has developed a positive and pro-active relationship with the senior management team of his college, so that he can have an understanding of the challenges they face, such as the changes to funding for further education. The relationship has strengthened over a number of years. They have developed together significantly, from the old approach to industrial relations, to an open and transparent way of working based on trust.

A thorough job evaluation has taken place for every single member of staff including the principal and professional development needs have been carefully identified for individuals and teams of staff.

One example is the team of groundsmen at the college. The college has recognised that the team need to feel valued and they need to feel motivated to do their jobs well. They are given responsibility for budgeting for their materials. One of the members, who has learning difficulties, was trained in literacy and numeracy so he can work out everyday things, such as the cost of fertiliser and whether it is value for money.

The senior management team at the college believe a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce is a motivated workforce. Staff feel they are invested in and progressing. Both the college and the staff benefit. The health and safety manager (also union learning representative) has aspirations to progress into environmental management and he has learnt about waste and climate change through professional development.

The senior management team is building a model of staff flexibility. The UNISON branch is working with the human resources team to bring down staff turnover and reduce the costs of recruitment by investing in staff. Where possible the college takes a 'grow your own' approach to developing and promoting staff. If a line manager and a member of staff identify a degree programme, then a business case is made to demonstrate that it will provide value to the students.

Essentially UNISON and the senior management team have adopted a modern approach. They are open and transparent with each other and work co-operatively on planning professional development for their staff. Together they ensure the college is developing the organisation and meeting its learners' needs.

3.5 A Union Learning Representative works closely with a newly appointed HR Director

It is 'all change' at one college in the West Midlands. An established union learning representative is working closely with a newly appointed human resources director to build equality of opportunity for the professional development of all staff.

The union learning representative was invited by his branch to become the education officer. He has negotiated a learning agreement for support staff. This agreement clearly outlines what support staff do, what their generic development needs are, and what needs to happen.

As education officer he has promoted the development of a skills pledge, involving the local MP and public sector organisations. The skills pledge stipulates a commitment by employers who sign up to provide a minimum of Level 2 qualifications for their staff.

The appointment of the new human resources director has helped to develop the existing communication channels between UNISON and the senior management team. Everyone in the college is working towards a review process called a development needs analysis (DNA), which includes three one to one meetings a year with their line manager. The DNA is linked to values and behaviours. All line managers and staff are participating in briefing sessions about the DNA system.

The college is shifting away from a model of sporadic appraisals, rarely linked with strategy and success, and together UNISON and the senior management team are establishing an honest and open approach with the development needs of every individual identified clearly. Line managers are working together to develop together. This focus on successful employee engagement will help to raise the standard of student engagement in the college.

Question to consider

What are you doing to maximise your joint working with recognised trades unions, to impact positively on the quality of professional development for support staff?

How does your joint working with recognised trades unions help to ensure that the professional development programme for support staff is good value for money?

4. Bespoke In-House Professional

Development: new models of in-house professional development to accelerate the impact and increase buy-in

Introduction

A recurring theme in this section is responding positively to change:

- a shift in the way professional development is identified, negotiated, agreed, designed, implemented and assessed;
- a shift in the organisation's culture, its whole way of approaching solutions through professional development; and
- transforming ways of delivering professional development, through e-technology mainly, to improve accessibility and balance costs.

This section also demonstrates that the involvement of the line manager is crucial in ensuring the take-up and benefit of professional development for each individual in the team. The section finishes with three examples of career journeys. Managers spoke to us about the importance of recognising a team member who is ripe for accelerated professional development, and too good to lose to another organisation.

4.1 Fostering a culture of self directed learning through a programme for first level managers

The head of learning and development at a South London college has analysed the strengths and weaknesses of previous leadership and management programmes to establish the principles of a successful programme.

She has designed, with her learning and development team and in consultation with managers across the college, a bespoke in-house programme for middle level managers.

Key characteristics of the programme are:

- half-day sessions to reduce time away from the job
- use of a blend of e-learning materials and face-to-face sessions
- a balance between the time the college gives and the commitment from the participant

- a tight structure
- accreditation that fits with the time that can be invested by the participants and by the college, for example, a Level 5 award may be more appropriate than a certificate or diploma
- a learning agreement for each participant
- non-completion (unless in very exceptional circumstances) requires payback of fee; and
- an attractive programme, relevant to the participant and to the college's strategic priorities.

“By making the expectations clear at the outset and by closely involving participants' line managers, we have seen a reduced drop-out rate. We recognise how busy managers are, and ensure that the assessment tasks and the requirements for Institute of Leadership and Management accreditation are realistic.”

Head of Learning and Development, General further education college

The structure of the programme includes a work-based assignment with templates for detailed and rigorous completion.

The participant's line manager plays an active part in the assessment of this assignment. The award is accredited at Level 5 by the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM).

The head of learning and development maintains good communication with line managers about the progress of their participants so that they can provide their staff with appropriate support. Participants are encouraged to be self-directed in their learning and to take ownership of their professional development. This approach mirrors the culture of self-directed learning that the college promotes for students.

Further information is available in the appendices of this document:

Appendix D: [Summary of quality improvement projects and impact](#)

Appendix E: [Business plan template](#)

Appendix F: [Project initiation document](#)

Appendix G: [Evaluation process for managing for the future](#)

4.2 A business partnership model enables fit for purpose professional development

A large further education college in South London has established a successful business partnership model to design, plan, provide and assess professional development. The learning and development team has developed client relationships with line managers across the college. Each team in the college is treated as a distinct client group. Learning and development staff get to know each team's core business and in turn, their local learning and development needs.

The head of learning and development produces a professional development strategy aligned to the colleges 10 strategic priorities. This enables her to be very clear when line managers negotiate their teams' professional development with her.

One example of how bespoke professional development has been designed through the business partnership model is the programme that was agreed with a large administration team. The administration manager wanted to change the culture in the team in order to achieve the quality improvements that had been identified through the self-assessment review.

The learning and development team worked with the administration management team to identify the changes that they felt were needed in team culture. A team development survey was used to elicit staff views on what needed to change.

A key element in the change agenda was to empower staff to contribute ideas and to take responsibility for improvements. Members of the learning and development team observed a team meeting and gave the managers feedback on how their communication sometimes undermined their aim of creating an empowered team.

Changes were made to how these regular meetings were run. Next steps that will be taken with the help of the learning and development team include a development day - planned, run and evaluated by the management team. In addition, a team charter will be developed with staff and will underpin and support the Quality Improvement Action Plan.

Another example comes from the corporate teams of finance, human resources and new technology. Their development goal was to develop a business effectiveness model. These groups of staff, at all levels within the teams, gained from using online learning resources, and have completed Level 2 literacy and numeracy-based programmes as part of achieving their joint corporate goal.

The learning and development team work closely with the quality improvement team to ensure that professional development is integrated with other improvement processes. For example, the learning and development team participate in internal inspections assessing the management of professional development as part of the overall assessment of leadership and management. Heads of department will call on the learning and development team to work closely with curriculum areas

which have been identified within the self-assessment process as needing support to improve performance.

The rigorous evaluation of professional development includes knowledge checks four weeks after courses end. Work-based projects, 360 degree feedback questionnaires, observations and other approaches are used to evaluate skills development and behavioural change.

4.3 Progression routes for teaching staff and business support staff through in-house Aspiring Leaders programme

This example demonstrates how a small to medium sized general further education college judged to be 'good' (grade 2) by Ofsted in December 2009 and now aiming to be outstanding, has invested in its belief in the value of professional development for all staff.

The college is providing an innovative and successful programme of development entitled 'Aspiring Leaders'. A local consultant has planned and developed this professional development with the college managers. The programme consists of five units which include:

1. working in groups and teams
2. leading a team
3. managing working relationships
4. managing performance of others; and
5. managing your own professional development.

The course has both formative and summative assessment in the form of a reflective journal and an end assignment.

All who take part in the programme must be prepared to fully engage with the programme and to complete the reflective journal and the work-related assignment.

To apply for the Aspiring Leaders programme, staff are required to write a 500 word piece with reference to the unit framework. A successful applicant also requires written support from his or her line manager.

“We have a mixture of support staff and teaching staff on our Aspiring Leaders programme. They feel strongly motivated and are keen to learn and develop. Successful completion of the programme helps us as a college in our succession planning and internal progression routes. Staff, for example the examinations officer, could progress to a more senior role.”

Quality Manager

For further information visit www.aoc.co.uk/en/aoc-create.

4.4 Investing in excellence for managers

This example comes from a large further education college, which is a member of the 157 Group, and is located in one of London's boroughs. The college operates from five centres, including a sixth form college and in a variety of satellite venues. There are twelve thousand students with a high proportion enrolled on preparation for life and work programmes. The college is a Learning and Skills Improvement Service Beacon college, has Investors in People accreditation and at its most recent Ofsted inspection was judged to be 'outstanding' overall, as well as in all individual inspection areas.

Linking with strategic objectives

In the current year the challenge has been to plan training and development with a smaller budget while continuing to meet the needs of the organisation and its learners. Key priorities are to maintain the quality of student delivery and support for which the college is well known. One major issue identified in the past year was that middle managers are often called upon to address problems that first level managers are actually empowered to handle. This meant that workloads for middle managers were increasing as they were asked to undertake tasks that their first level managers should be able to cover. The college is addressing this in a number of ways, for example, through training in such areas as conflict management to raise confidence in managers' ability to manage performance.

Supporting managers to succeed

Newly appointed or promoted managers are required to work through a six-month induction development programme for which the college has recently won a national training award. The programme is seen as instilling the values of the organisation in order to maintain a positive, shared culture. The process involves managers undertaking training modules both off and online in a variety of areas including finance, management information systems, health and safety, equality

and diversity, ICT induction, meetings and visits, self-directed study and background reading. When the twelve modules of the programme are completed new managers have passed their probationary period. To support this induction process the college has a buddy system for each new manager: someone who is not the individual's line manager but who acts as a point of contact for general enquiries or who can signpost to other support. Coaching from both internal and external sources is also used to support managers following their probationary period.

Manager behaviour framework

The cornerstone of this college's management development, is the use of a comprehensive 'management behaviour framework', devised by the college and based on manager competences. This includes assessment of performance using a 360 degree appraisal process. The criteria fall under nine separate behaviours including management of change, leadership and managing conflict. All managers at middle and senior levels are assessed using a computer based package completed by line managers and colleagues, as well as an individual's own self-assessment. The package produces a report outlining strengths and weaknesses as perceived by others and a chart compares this with self-assessment. The results can inform planning for further professional development and tailored to individual training and development needs.

Impact

Manager training has resulted in fewer grievances or disciplinary actions and a reduced level of staff absence. The staff survey 2010 reports that 80 per cent of respondents feel proud to work for the college, 77 per cent of respondents would recommend the college as a great place to work, 87 per cent are proud of the education provided for its learners (15 points above the norm) and 71 per cent say they would rather stay at the college than go for a similarly paid job elsewhere. Staff morale is high.

4.5 A beacon in mentoring

A medium sized general further education college has nearly 10,000 students. Eight-hundred and fifty staff are based on four campuses, all in Lancashire. Each campus has a different student cohort, for example, one focuses on adults and higher education students.

A key feature of professional development and support for all staff is the college's mentoring system. Every member of staff is appointed a mentor on joining the college. This information is recorded electronically.

The mentor is invited to the induction lunch which means they meet their mentee very early on. Induction programmes are scheduled every six weeks throughout the year to ensure all employees

have a college wide induction as near to their start date as possible. They are clearly established as part of the induction process for new staff within the college.

Staff continue to work with their mentors. The mentoring is not just a feature of the probationary period. In addition, teachers have access to professional tutors, a group of highly skilled, outstanding teachers who mentor new and existing employees to help improve their skills.

The college's commitment to developing support staff is evidenced by the way that the continuous improvement team delivers sessions to business support staff based on a needs analysis. In addition, the 'Best in Class' scheme is an innovative way of encouraging new ideas for staff. All staff are asked to identify one external organisation or a department within the college. The purpose of the exercise is to visit that department and work with them to acquire new skills, see examples of good practice and see possible progression opportunities.

Impact

The impact of professional development on individuals is tracked through the annual performance management review. Wider impact is reflected in the level of customer complaints, the fact that the college is oversubscribed and its outstanding performance in the Investors in People assessment. To achieve this accolade, an organisation has to score more than 165 out of 196; the college scored 196 out of 196. The staff's sense of motivation and of being valued is also reflected in staff attendance as staff absence is below the national benchmark. The staff and management culture surveys also demonstrate the positive impact of investing in professional development for support staff.

4.6 Blended learning for professional development accessibility

A South London college has adopted a blended learning approach for four main reasons:

- to enable staff to access a wide range of high quality resources for professional development
- to ensure that learning can take place at times that suit staff
- to encourage staff to invest time in their own professional development in addition to time provided for learning during working hours; and
- to ensure staff experience the learning technologies that are increasingly being used with students.

Blended learning professional development programmes are improved by the technology available in the college which are being made as part of the college's e-learning strategy. The blended

approach means that online learning complements face-to-face sessions with tutors and facilitators. At the same time conversations with tutors and facilitators are maintained.

The blended learning approach includes:

- online welcome packs
- course hand books
- networking sessions
- action learning projects.

E-learning is being embedded in all professional development programmes and is becoming an intrinsic part of the learning and development offer. This has required the learning and development team to invest time in careful design and evaluation as well as in the purchase of learning materials.

4.7 A flexible approach to professional development

A large, general further education college has developed a flexible approach to professional development. The college is spread across three campuses with 13,700 students and 1,300 staff. One campus has an equine centre and this campus is over 20 miles from the other two.

Two consistent threads run through the professional development strategy: value for money and flexibility. One solution to the age old question of how you get more for less has been to collaborate with a local university in a shared programme of professional development. For example, recently there was a shared management programme on topics such as effective e mail communication and time management. A minimum of 15 college places are guaranteed on each shared programme of professional development.

Business support training

All staff are expected to attend sessions such as equality and diversity training during the five staff development days per year. The problem of when and how staff access professional development outside of the allocated days has been resolved for this college by a programme of online learning. This has a broad variety of topics so that it can be tailored to an individual's needs. The college has worked in collaboration with Academy 10 to produce a series of tutorials and tests that can be accessed at the member of staff's time of choice. Although the general consensus is that regular online training requires a high level of motivation, the lure of accreditation and the general culture of the college have achieved a high level of staff buy-in with a take-up of 49 per cent.

Supporting progression

Aspiring staff can use on-line training to develop their management skills and this college also offers an in-house Aspiring Managers programme. In addition to the mainstream manager training staff will be encouraged to look for 360 degree feedback on their skills and competencies. Two examples of staff progressing from this training are a learning support assistant who became head of student support and another who became head of foundation learning.

4.8 The Pacific Institute transforms the culture for learning and development

A medium sized, general further education college in the Midlands is part of a peer review scheme and has a range of partnership agreements with other local colleges. The college has approximately 15,000 students. It employs 280 full-time staff, 340 administrative staff and approximately 400 part time teachers.

The college has achieved a number of awards including the Customer Service Excellence Award and Investors in People. The college has worked with external consultants from the Pacific Institute¹ to profile staff attitudes and develop a range of training for managers and service coordinators. This training challenges conventional approaches to supporting excellence and innovation.

It is a particularly good example of how investing in the development of support staff has led to significant gains in levels of customer service. These high standards have led not only to awards but to improved reputation and recruitment.

Successful externally delivered bespoke professional development

All customer service staff are encouraged to take Level 3 NVQ qualifications in Information, Advice and Guidance or in Customer Services. The college has achieved the Customer Service Excellence award. Customer service improvements have been supported by the use of an internal consultant who shadowed front-line services, undertook a skills audit and from that is devising a bespoke customer service training package.

Impact

External mystery shopper reports and internal evaluation reports revealed that following the review there was a greater awareness in college of the role of the customer service team. There were

¹ Another case study which gives more information about the Pacific Institute can be found in section 5.8.

much improved levels of satisfaction with the work of this team. This is also reflected in the cross college management survey. Within front-line service teams there is a greater sense of being central to the college's core business, which has increased motivation.

One of the points from the research undertaken by Pacific Institute was a perception 'gap' between how managers thought they were managing and how staff felt they were managed. A training package was aimed at managers. It included the objectives for Investment in Excellence and challenged managers to be more open to ideas. It gave them strategies to put forward new ideas. This led to a better and more productive fit between the perceptions of managers and those of their teams.

Progression planning

This college is very keen to develop progression routes for their staff through structured succession planning. Potential supervisors or managers are encouraged to attend management training such as 'Leaders as Coaches' and 'Fierce Conversations'. They are also encouraged to shadow people who are already in the role to which they aspire.

4.9 From a part-time carer to project and maths coordinator in a specialist college

Eight years ago Louise had three O Levels and was studying for an OCN Access to Higher Education qualification. She was interested in the work going on at the local specialist college, and while she was studying, she applied for a part-time job to go on the bank of carers. She supported students in the area of independent living skills. She then made the decision to do a Certificate in Education (post compulsory education and training) and did the required teaching practice hours at the college.

The college recognised her enthusiasm for the work and her high level skills with the students who all have some kind of learning difficulty. She was soon appointed as a permanent teacher.

She qualified at Level 4 on a special education in-house programme, shortly followed by a course in Basic Skills. She continued to add to her qualifications, first of all, Level 3 English and Maths, then Level 5 Maths. Now she is completing a Masters in Educational Leadership (MSc).

The college recognised Louise as someone who fitted with the distinct culture of the college, which puts students at the centre of all they do. They invested in this ambitious and very committed person and have supported her accelerated career route.

In turn she makes a huge contribution to the life of this residential specialist college. She is currently being mentored on her MSc programme by the acting principal.

“Learners from all over the country come here. They are here 24/7. If we can’t make a difference, who can?”

Project and Maths Coordinator

4.10 From administrator to student development services manager

When Jo left university she trained to be a drama teacher in the primary sector. Unfortunately, she quickly began to realise that this wasn't the career for her as little time is spent in teaching drama, which was her first love.

She worked in financial services for a while and gained a Financial Planning Certificate but still wasn't sure of her career direction. Jo joined her college on a temporary contract to update the personnel team's intranet site. While there she was asked to investigate whether there was a need for a work experience advisor. Jo designed the role, put it in place and then did it herself.

This role blossomed out into managing a small work experience team. After more training Jo took over the careers support in the college. She is now the student development services manager.

Professional development

Jo's career journey has been supported by a considerable amount of professional development, almost all of it in-house. The induction process enabled her to understand basic college procedures. She then underwent management development training. This included employment law and related procedures, team building and managing challenging conversations. At each point the training was linked to college procedures.

The future

Jo is keen to progress further and knows she will need to have greater understanding of the wider learning and skills sector. She will also need to think strategically. She is confident that her senior managers will support her.

"I feel very supported by the senior managers in the college. They encourage people to develop and progress."

Student Development Services Manager

From an economic point of view the college has 'grown' an excellent manager without recruitment costs and with low training costs. At the same time they have improved motivation as Jo has demonstrated that no matter what level you enter the college, you can progress.

4.11 From student president to aspiring manager

Lisa returned to college at the age of 21, after dropping out of education at 16. Initially, her main aspiration was to make sure she got her A Levels. However, she became very actively involved in the Student Union and became its president. Upon leaving college she was offered a job supporting the Student Union by developing enrichment.

The journey

Lisa was an able and aspiring member of staff with lots of enthusiasm but few qualifications. Lisa quickly began to realise that while the basic college induction and cross college training were helpful, she would need more to do her job really well. She took a course in Event Management and further training with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service and West Sussex County Council. She also attended the Learner Voice Practitioner Programme delivered by the Learning and Skills Improvement Service and the National Union of Students. Lisa began to realise that she needed to know more about managing. Subsequently she studied a certificate in management and completed a one year NVQ in Management.

She attended the college's Management Development Centre for a two day intensive course. Prior to the beginning of the course an attendee will undergo 360 degree feedback and a personality test. The results then inform an individual management development plan. Similar tests are carried out afterwards to demonstrate the impact of training.

Lisa realised she was delivering a lot of training to others, particularly students. She decided she needed more training to do this effectively, so she followed an internal course similar to Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) to develop her skills. Lisa then trained as a lesson observer.

The Student Union worked with Lisa on turning the college's teaching and learning policy into a short, memorable poster with the key words, 'Has the penny dropped?' which was then displayed in every classroom. This encouraged all students to ask fundamental questions of their lessons such as what was taught, what was explained and whether learning was checked. In addition students are part of the lesson observation process. Lisa then went on to manage the student tutor team and deliver a range of training to them.

More recently Lisa has felt the need for higher level qualifications and the college has supported her in identifying Level 4 and 5 management qualifications. She also shadows more senior staff. What emerges from Lisa's story is that it can be a powerful combination to have both an individual with ambition and commitment and the right support through relevant professional development.

Impact

The college has invested a lot in Lisa. It has been a sound investment. It is one of the country's leading proponents in learner engagement and is regularly cited as an example of good practice. Lisa is addressing an Association of Colleges/Ofsted conference on the subject this year with some of her colleagues.

Questions to consider

How does the culture of your organisation impact on the learning and development of your support staff?

What do you do when you identify strong ambitious members of support staff?

5. Maximise the Potential of Networks:

collaborating for low cost, high impact professional development; information on professional networks for learner services staff

Introduction

We found a number of providers who are working collaboratively with other providers, to plan and deliver joint professional development programmes efficiently and effectively. In this section there are examples of regional and national networks which provide a range of professional development.

Some in particular are related to learner services and customer services. This is intentional, to demonstrate the importance of specialist contacts for particular roles, given the many and varied job roles support staff hold in further education.

5.1 A staff exchange programme in the North West

Two colleges in the North West have set up a successful staff exchange programme. They are different enough from one another and the geographical distance between them is sufficient, to ensure that they are not in competition.

In the first stage of the staff exchange programme the principal, together with senior managers from human resources and finance, student services, marketing, business development, learning resources and personal assistants to the senior team, spent a day shadowing their counterparts at the other college.

The purpose of the exchange and work shadowing was for each individual to find out about different ways of approaching their work. Following the visit, staff were required to identify what they had learned, to reflect on their own practice and to implement any improvements.

The staff found that watching how someone else does similar tasks a very worthwhile process. It helped them think about their role and how they can work differently.

While the colleges ensure that corporate staff keep up with their professional accreditation, they economise on some external professional development by asking one member to attend an update, and then cascade their learning to the wider team. They also minimise travel distances and costs where possible. Each head of department is responsible for managing their team's

development budget, which does not include the costs for mandatory training such as safeguarding.

Impact

The impact on one of the colleges has been significant. It has reduced staff turnover and staff absence and this has continued year on year, as it invests more in the professional development of its staff.

5.2 An established network of six sixth form colleges for collaborative professional review and development

The principals of six geographically diverse sixth form colleges in central and eastern England made the decision to set up a network of their colleges for professional review and development. They established the Central and Eastern Network for Building and Sustaining Excellence (CENBASE) network seven years ago to support the introduction of greater self-governance, increased accountability and reduced bureaucracy.

At the time, providers in the further education sector were gaining more independence in running their organisations and facing some challenges. One of these challenges was the validation of the annual self-assessment report. Consequently, the first objective of CENBASE was to validate the self-assessment report of another college in the network.

Getting started

Each principal took a turn at taking the lead in the network to drive it along. There was modest start up funding as a Beacon Innovation Project with the potential for a small levy from each of the six colleges. With the success of the early phase, and the increasing pressure for scrutiny it became clear to the principals that they needed to appoint a network manager to drive development and organisation. The network manager has now been in place for 19 months.

What does CENBASE provide?

The network provides opportunities to identify needs across the colleges, address the capacity of staff in the colleges to meet those needs, and work in a 'joined up' way that increases efficiency and effectiveness.

The network manager arranges and supervises group meetings for staff, not only for review but also for continuing professional development. There are robust quality assurance processes in place which supports actions and improvement between the staff meetings. The aim is to reach out and include all staff.

Once a staff network is set up and established, the CENBASE manager steps back to allow the network to become more self-managed. The manager continues to assist, however, to quality assure their action plans and their development.

One example of professional development for support staff is for the finance officers in each of the colleges. College finance officers can often work in isolation. The finance officers in the CENBASE colleges have met over the last year and ambitiously pursued a value for money agenda, conducting their own research, exchanging ideas and reviewing their own practice.

The colleges' front-facing staff work with students and other staff on a daily basis. They can work in stressful circumstances. They recently had training on:

- managing a range of different people
- managing difficult customers; and
- voice projection.

These teams can have high turnover rates, so this training is delivered regularly and all staff benefit from the ongoing development of these skills. The colleges are keen to sustain the quality of customer service as staff interface with students, stakeholders and customers.

The professional development managers in the six colleges organise an annual staff conference, the 'Joint Training Day', which usually takes place at two of the central colleges. Four-hundred and fifty staff, including many support staff, participated in the last one, at a cost of £32 per head per day. This is outstanding value and evaluations were very positive.

The CENBASE manager seeks to maintain the circumstances in which the network can thrive, ensuring joint working is of value and encouraging groups to self-manage.

If there is a government initiative or a significant change the principals and vice principals network and, in their meetings, explore different ways of approaching the new challenge. Colleagues from the six colleges behave responsively and honestly with each other. One vice principal can pick up the phone to call another and arrange a visit for some joint working to solve a problem. The service is responsive.

The CENBASE network has received a grant from the Learning and Skills Improvement Service. The funding is fixed-term mainly provided for the setting up of systems and to cover the costs of the CENBASE network manager.

5.3 National Association for Managers of Student Services (NAMSS)

NAMSS provides a supportive network for student service managers. This includes both promoting external opportunities for professional development for managers and members of their teams, delivering professional development at national conferences and mini-conferences, and a lobbying function.

NAMSS aims to provide members with a forum for developing quality services that promote and enhance the learning offered by colleges by:

- providing information to members
- developing and promoting quality standards for student services' practice
- representing the needs of students and student support services.

Members of NAMSS are linked to a regional network through which they are able to get information and help.

Over the years, conferences have covered a wide range of areas relating to student services, some in the form of information-giving talks and others as more active professional development sessions. Topics include: financial support, citizenship, debt management, dealing with difficult customers; motivational interviewing, improving central admissions and safeguarding.

NAMSS are responsive to the needs of their members; both topics and speakers at conferences are based on feedback from members. The current chair believes that although NAMSS is doing an excellent job, more knowledge of what is needed and more regionally based one day conferences will further improve the service they offer. These enable sharing of good practice and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

What do members think about the service?

Feedback from members indicates that between 80 per cent and 90 per cent are very satisfied with what they receive as members. Direct impact is difficult to assess in terms of professional development although NAMSS work with successive governments on policy issues relating to further education has been significant. They are currently working with the Young People's Learning Agency and the Association of Colleges, particularly focusing on learner support forums. They have also recently worked with the Department of Health on 'Healthy FE' and safeguarding.

In the future?

NAMSS are looking at the possibility of a structured peer review system. Across the country such groups already exist but a more consistent national group, whose judgments are linked to the criteria being established by NAMSS' present benchmarking tool, would raise standards across the board.

For further information visit www.namss.ac.uk.

5.4 National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA)

NASMA strives to relieve the poverty of students through the promotion, provision, and support of professional money advice for students, with particular emphasis on student finance, and student debt. NASMA also provides members and others working in the sector access to high quality and affordable training. NASMA is a national organisation with regional coordinators in eight regions. In addition, there are four executive officers, an administrator and, more recently, a financial capability project manager. The latter role has been put in place to further develop training and accreditation, as well as drafting resources and fundraising for NASMA. NASMA has over 500 members.

Professional development access

NASMA's main professional development provision is their annual conference. Fifty workshops are run over the three days of the conference. Apart from the training, this is also an opportunity for networking. The contents of workshops are based on a mixture of responses to the organisation's online mail-base throughout the year, requests from members and national changes or initiatives.

Much of the training is delivered by leading external trainers such as representatives from Child Poverty Action Group, Money Advice Trust or the Financial Ombudsman. There are also regional meetings where training can be delivered on a more local basis.

Training can be offered at any point throughout the year if there is clear demand. The conference is held in the last week in June or the first week in July which tends to be a comparatively light period for those working in student finance.

Professional development specialisms

For many staff, the conference is the only specific professional development they will be able to access throughout the year. Student finance and advice teams are often quite small and this means it is often difficult for managers to give staff the time off to attend external training events. Feedback from training events is very positive so financial advisors clearly do gain considerable benefit from attending such training. This is also demonstrated by a regular increase in training

requests after one event has finished as staff report back favourably to their colleagues on the effectiveness of the training they have just received.

NASMA also receive feedback from managers on the usefulness of training delivered both in terms of increased motivation and specific skills or knowledge development. Two consistent threads run through their training: increasing knowledge and awareness of new developments in student finance and developing NASMA members' wider skills to enable them to do their work better and progress to senior roles.

Demand for professional development

There is a high level of demand for the training that NASMA offers. Feedback from NASMA members indicates that the main things that would improve professional development are more training to be offered and for it to be nationally accredited. Work is now going on to look at offering a series of workshops, completion of each forming part of an accredited qualification.

NASMA also believes that introducing a requirement for accreditation to be regularly updated to remain valid (as with the British Association for Counselling Professionals qualification), would encourage organisations to support their employees attendance at further professional development.

Collaboration and impact

NASMA has collaborated with a number of other organisations such as Student Finance England, the Student Loans Company, the Consumer Financial Education Body and the National Union of Students. This collaboration has offered a number of benefits including: information sharing, the opportunity to exert influence on student related issues and joint working on training packages.

A recent example of collaborative work is a booklet on the Disabled Students' Allowance produced by working with SKILL, the national bureau for students with disabilities, and partly funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. They also work with organisations such as UNIAID Brightside, who deliver training packages for students on financial understanding and money management. This enables student finance advisors to proactively promote their services.

They have links with the Community Legal Service and the Citizens' Advice Bureau, both of which have specific professional standards. NASMA aspires to generate their own performance standards and this is part of the remit of the new post of Financial Capability Project Manager.

For further information visit www.nasma.org.uk.

5.5 United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)

The aim of UKCISA is to promote the interests of international students in the UK. While part of that aim is fulfilled by direct contact with international students, much of the work that UKCISA is involved in revolves around offering advice, training and information for staff in higher and further education who work with international students.

As well as its own programme of training, UKCISA occasionally works with other sector bodies such as Association of Colleges, the Learning and Skills Improvement Service, the National Union of Students and Unipol, to offer joint events.

Training and progression

UKCISA training is available to both members and non-members (membership is organisational, not individual). UKCISA's training programme and professional development provision includes:

- a national programme of one-day training courses covering all aspects of immigration affecting international students, fee status assessment and topics related to international student services and advice (some of these are also available as in-house courses)
- an annual conference
- a further education international network run jointly with the Association of Colleges; and
- a new on-line self study programme, 'New To International', for staff in their first year in post.

This covers recruiting, supporting and advising international students, supporting outward student mobility and managing international partnerships. Modules can be chosen according to what is relevant to a staff member's role. This is an excellent supplement to in-house induction for a new member of the team and takes very little time.

The benefits for an institution are:

- a cost effective way to bring a new member of staff up to speed quickly
- more flexible than scheduled face-to-face training
- time away from the job is minimal; and
- the activities can be done as a group to re-enforce team building.

For further information visit www.ukcisa.org.uk.

5.6 EMFEC

EMFEC is an example of a regional professional development provider. Their staff have extensive experience of working in the post-14 sector. Their offer is delivered through conferences, many of which have training sessions as part of the agenda.

They also have an open programme of pre-devised training modules and bespoke training. The range of training includes customer care, mediation skills, stress management equality and diversity and preparing for inspection.

There are a number of sub-groups, such as a staff development network and a quality network, so conferences and training can either be generic or suited to a particular aspect of work in the post-14 sector. The distinctive characteristic is EMFEC's commitment to working with associate trainers who are recognised as experts in their respective fields.

EMFEC is an established part of the learning and skills sector with a membership encompassing regional further education colleges, sixth form colleges and specialist colleges. EMFEC's board of trustees is drawn from college principals and senior managers.

EMFEC includes the Association of Colleges' regional function with the chief executive also undertaking the Association of Colleges' regional director role. Working so closely with the Association, means EMFEC staff are very aware of current trends and pressures on the further education sector. They are founder members of the Awarding Body Consortium Awards, and they have undertaken project work funded by the European Social Fund. They are committed to delivering training to a very high quality.

With such a wide remit and customer base it is difficult to judge impact but in a recent customer satisfaction survey of recipients of bespoke training 100 per cent confirmed an interest in using the service again.

For further information visit www.emfec.co.uk.

5.7 SkillGate Ltd – Academy 10

SkillGate Ltd is one of a number of companies offering online professional development for staff in further education colleges. They are clear about the advantages of their Academy 10 training method.

The main characteristics of the training method are convenience and relevance. Staff can study when they want to study and for as long as they want. A micro-tutorial is emailed to them on a daily basis. They can choose whether or not to engage with that particular topic. Therefore, as all training modules are chosen by the member of staff there is full engagement with the topic.

Another characteristic is accreditation; each micro-tutorial has a certificate pack that is specific to the topic, for instance, assertiveness. Each micro-tutorial is allocated a test on completion. The number of professional development points is arrived at through the number of results achieved through the tests.

Professional development points are collated and recorded on a 'Skillcard'. This forms an organisationally independent profile or record of all achievements and efforts. This can be taken anywhere so it is good evidence of professional development to show a new employer.

Tutorials are monitored daily and note is taken of where interest has developed and more tutorials can then be written in this area.

There are approximately 35 certificate packages appropriate to all levels of staff. They cover sales and customer services, supervision and management, personal skills and office IT. Certification is at different levels, for instance Level 1 or Level 2. Within those levels achievement can be at pass, merit or distinction level.

The certification has external currency. Some of the certificates can be accredited as part of an Institute of Leadership and Management package.

Work is marked by a tutor and the tutor is also available for limited support. For example, someone who passed assignments in 'Writing Better English' but whose grammar was poor received support so that all outcomes of the assignment were of a high quality.

The level of demand depends on the structure. Most organisations take some of the generic tutorials plus tailor-made material created after discussion with the organisation. Academy 10 record an average of 30 per cent of all those entitled to use the materials are doing so at any point. This is a high level of commitment for online resources. How these resources are used depends on the organisation. Some use the resources as a quick induction package to cover basic issues needed to work in the organisation. Others use it as a fundamental part of their development programme.

Impact

Annual customer feedback, feedback loops within courses and levels of continued use of the resources all indicate that this is an economic and flexible way to deliver professional development. The cost is the same whether one or 50 individuals use the system. A flat annual fee, depending on the size of the organisation is agreed. Feedback from users on impact suggests that training of this nature increases profitability.

Further information is available online at www.skillgate.com and www.academy10.com.

5.8 Pacific Institute

Pacific Institute is an international company working in both the public and private sectors. It aims to generate personal and organisational transformation. Their approach is to encourage individuals to move from the individual level (ME), to the team level (WE), to the organisational level (US) and in doing so create a cultural transformation.

Working with teams and individuals, they go into an organisation and measure where the culture is and where the organisation wants it to be. An on-line survey establishes a benchmark. Their research will define the drivers and influences that cause the culture to be what it is at the start of the process. They will then consider what interventions would be the enablers to effect change.

Team members are encouraged to take responsibility at the 'ME, WE and US' levels for achieving the desired outcomes. While doing this they are embedding Investment in Excellence concepts in teams and they can achieve this quality mark when the process has finished.

There are two distinctive phases:

- phase one is an opportunity for individual leaders to identify, reflect and change individual behaviour; and
- phase two has an emphasis upon collective behaviour. At this point the data from the online survey is woven in so the subsequent training is bespoke.

These two phases have the great advantage of focusing only on what is needed. No one should come away from a training session feeling that the topic was not relevant to their needs.

Who is it for?

Support staff can either work on aspects of cognitive behaviour or positive psychology, or they can undergo the 'STEPS to Excellence' programme. This is a personal development programme which aims to change the way people think and encourages individuals to take ownership for their contribution to change. The STEPS programme is delivered in modules by accredited facilitators.

Investment in Excellence Award

The Investment in Excellence programme is delivered in two two-day segments by Pacific Institute facilitators. For organisations it develops through a cascading system; the first cohorts go through the system and are then trained to deliver to the next cohorts and so on. This means the methods and the message are more fully embedded.

The Investment in Excellence programme has been approved by the Institute of Leadership and Management and is mapped against their Development Award. The STEPS programme is part of the Qualifications and Curriculum Framework and the qualification is awarded by the national

awarding organisation Northern Council for Further Education. The work is externally moderated and verified so academic rigour is attached to the process.

Pacific Institute is currently working with approximately 45 further education colleges. They have worked with the Association of Colleges and their managing director has been a keynote speaker at a previous Association of Colleges conference. The data that is generated by their research also acts as impact data and can be broken down into sub-groups: lecturers or support staff, for instance or by campus.

This can be particularly important when colleges have merged and cultural transformation is needed to successfully create one college. All evaluations are collated so Pacific Institute has a range of feedback to help assess its effectiveness. A recent Ofsted report about a northern college mentioned the impact of Pacific Institute on the organisation.

“So far, 123 of our staff have been through ‘Investment in Excellence’. We are rolling it out to all staff and 60 will go through this year. Staff really value working with people they don’t usually talk to and feel better equipped to use their thinking skills and qualities as individuals and team members. We haven’t reached the tipping point yet but the culture is really beginning to change.”

Continuing Professional Development Manager, general further education college

Further information is available online at www.pacificinstitute.co.uk.

5.9 Institute of Customer Service

The Institute of Customer Service is a national body that has a range of services for its members. They offer an online diagnostic self-assessment tool that can help assess an organisation's commitment to customer service and then benchmark that service commitment against model criteria. The Institute offers some training for front line staff and for managers and has also developed a reflective practice model used by institutions and individuals to develop and accredit their customer service skills. It is available to members of the Institute.

What do they offer?

Professional development is available to individual bronze, silver and gold members of the Institute. It involves individuals taking ownership of their own learning and development and demonstrating that they have maintained high levels of personal effectiveness by consistently delivering good customer service and by continuing to meet the Institute's customer service professional standards. There are professional standards for bronze, silver and gold members which relate to competence in four key areas: how individuals work with customers, with colleagues, how they relate to their own organisation and how they continue their own learning and development. Each level should take approximately ten months to complete.

Professional development is about recording and reflecting on learning at work: at every level an individual would be expected to maintain a reflective log of their learning experiences. They would consider their experiences, what they have done, what they have learnt and how it links to the Institute's professional standards. There is also a self assessment form to help reflect on strengths and development needs this can also be used to gather feedback from colleagues.

Individuals are supported internally by a continuing professional development manager and have the option of engaging an internal/external mentor. When completed the professional development log, together with the feedback form/s and a personal profile, are submitted to the Institute for review. Many individuals who have achieved Level 2 or 3 NVQ in customer service have become individual members of the Institute and achieved professional development.

Organisations or part of organisations can work with the Institute. One way to start this process is to use Servcheck, an on-line customer service diagnostic tool. This helps assess an organisations commitment to customer service and also benchmarks that service. Development will be assessed against model criteria so there is clear indication of progression. Colleges and other organisations who have worked with the Institute report very positively about the impact of the process on their employees.

“Our college is so pleased with what was initially aimed purely at customer services staff, that we are encouraging all staff to go through this training.”

Head of Continuing Professional Development, General further education college

Impact

The impact of this process is measured in a number of ways. Before someone starts they are encouraged to obtain 360 degree feedback from their colleagues about their performance both as members of a team and in the ways they deal with customers. This process is then repeated at the end of the professional development period to evaluate the level of change.

For further information visit www.instituteofcustomerservice.com.

Questions to consider

What can you achieve through networking with other providers to deliver professional development more efficiently and effectively?

When is it worth the cost of paying for external professional development courses?

Conclusion

These points pull together some of the useful ideas in this guide.

Things you might do

- Encourage a problem-solving, solutions based culture where staff talk with each other and listen to each other in order to learn about each others' roles; how they can work together effectively, and how to avoid letting a colleague fail
- Invest time in work-shadowing opportunities so staff understand the roles of colleagues and how they can interact with each other positively, in-house or with a partner provider
- Develop self-awareness in staff so they can distinguish between the times when they are blocking progress, and when there are blockages external to themselves
- Involve the line manager in negotiating, planning, delivering and assessing in-house professional development
- Ensure professional development is job-related, and has clear objectives
- Raise business and financial awareness so all staff own the requirement for efficiency
- Plan for succession, invest in CV writing and interviewing skills for internal promotions or re-deployment
- Recruit the right person to the job – professional development can't solve all problems
- Provide supportive development sometimes for the whole person. For example, one college integrates sessions in well-being and work-life balance on their whole college development days; another college ensures that the whole team has a fun team building session each year
- Model the behaviours you and your managers expect from staff
- Deliver mandatory courses, such as safeguarding or health and safety, to staff in a way that is relevant to them
- Follow up external professional development programmes with opportunities for staff to apply what they have learned

The impact of good professional development

Throughout this guide there are many examples of clear evidence where good economic investment in professional development for support staff has made a very positive difference, and in some cases, quite a dramatic difference. These differences include:

- increasing the take up of enrichment programmes by learners
- improving the way staff work together
- listening to learners carefully, and implementing their choices with very positive outcomes
- transforming staff who lack confidence to managers in senior roles
- raising staff morale generally and significantly
- saving on the high costs of electrical work, by training a manager and not outsourcing
- doubling the amount of business within the space of a year
- improving staff retention significantly; and
- transforming customer satisfaction to delighted customers who enhance the organisation's reputation.

These are just a few examples and the stories speak for themselves. Take time to read them - one may make a significant difference to your staff, your learners and your organisation.

Appendices

The included appendices have been sourced from a variety of organisations as useful reference materials.

Appendix A: Summary of the professional development strategy - aligned with the college strategic plan 2010-13

Introduction

This paper sets out a strategy for the Professional Development of College staff for three years 2010 – 13.

Professional development is defined as:

The knowledge, skills, behaviours and values that will enable staff to perform well in current and future roles within the College and to progress in their careers.

The College Strategic Plan provides the direction and framework for the Professional Development strategy. The Professional Development Strategy is also closely linked to:

- the People Strategy for the College
- the e-College strategy
- the Quality Improvement Strategy (in draft)
- the Teacher Development Strategy (in draft)

Context statement

We are in a fast changing world being propelled by the political, the economic, the technological, the legal, and the environmental (quote from College Strategic Plan). The College is undertaking a comprehensive organisation review to create a more streamlined, cost-effective organisation. Curriculum is changing rapidly to meet learner, employer and economic need. The professional development strategy addresses the changes in culture, leadership and staff skills that will be needed to achieve the College's vision.

The vision for professional development for 2013

The vision for professional development underpins the College's vision to support students in achieving their ambitions and creating successful futures for themselves.

The College will have a workforce that is excellent at designing, delivering and supporting learning including making effective use of the potential of technology to deliver improved outcomes for learners.

The College's reputation for the professional development offered to staff will be a key element in attracting and retaining highly effective professionals at different stages in their careers.

Strategic aims for professional development 2010-13

The strategic aims for professional development underpin all of the College's strategic aims:

- to ensure that relevant professional development opportunities are offered to all College staff to improve performance at individual and organisational levels
- to foster a culture of self-directed and flexible learning to build the capacity of staff to adapt to change and to continuously update their skills
- to create a blended learning model of delivery for professional development that makes appropriate use of technology and utilises the skills of line-managers and other coaches to ensure impact on performance
- to improve the quality of leadership and management in the College so that staff are inspired and enabled to make the best contribution they can to achieving the College's vision and mission; and
- to create partnerships within the area and beyond that will improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of the delivery of professional development programmes and activities.

Strategic objectives

In order to achieve the college's strategic aims that relate to organisational development, the Professional Development Strategy will focus on three areas: developing new approaches to leading and managing the college, ensuring that teaching and learning is outstanding, promoting a culture of excellence with all staff.

Leadership and management

- improve the effectiveness of individual leaders/managers and leadership teams; and
- enhance the ability of staff at all levels to exercise leadership.

Teaching, learning and assessment

- ensure new teachers are equipped to deliver high quality teaching, learning and assessment; and
- provide professional updating to equip teaching staff to deliver new curriculum.

Professional excellence

- support staff to be self-directed in their learning and career development
- improve levels of business writing, business number and digital literacy
- encourage creativity, team-working and self-directed learning through all professional development training
- improve awareness and skills in dealing with internal and external customers; and
- improve self-management and project management skills.

Implementation

New approaches

Changes in the way that professional development is delivered will have an impact on staff learners, professional development teams and line-managers. Some key features are outlined below.

Induction

A streamlined, personalised, systematic induction process delivered through blended learning that establishes a foundation for professional practice for all new staff.

Blended learning

All professional development programmes delivered through blended learning with online learning embedded. Modules that can be accessed singly or as part of a programme. Modules can also be used on a bespoke basis for teams.

Development Centres and Professional Development Plans (PDPs)

Increased emphasis on objective assessment of strengths and needs. Staff taking responsibility for achieving their PDPs. PDPs linked to appraisal.

Involvement of line managers

Work-based projects and assessment will require line-manager participation.

Coaching and mentoring

Coaches and mentors to assist staff to apply their learning to their practice and to progress in their careers.

Collaborative learning

Opportunities for joint practice development, action research, action learning.

Accreditation

Increasingly, staff will have the option of seeking accreditation. This could be on a cost-sharing basis with the College providing the training and individuals contributing towards accreditation.

Strategic support

Professional development activities will have a positive impact on College performance as part of a holistic approach to change. For example, high quality training on conducting appraisals will be effective because managers will be held accountable for conducting appraisals. Management development programmes will result in improved practice when participants are supported to deliver work-based projects. Leadership competency frameworks will come alive when staff see leaders modelling the behaviours.

Investment

Successful organisations invest between 1 and 5% of total payroll costs in non-pay staff development budgets. The College currently invests around 1.3%. To achieve the Professional Development Strategy the level of investment will be maintained at least at current levels. Detailed budgets and plans for professional development will be produced annually.

Roles and responsibilities

The current Staff Development Policy outlining the roles and responsibilities for professional development for: employees, line-managers, professional development teams will be updated and published on ERIC.

Monitoring and evaluation

A strategy for evaluating specific professional development programmes and activities has been established within the Quality Unit and will be disseminated to all other professional developers within the College.

To monitor and review progress with the overall Professional Development Strategy, a review group should be formed which will meet twice a year and report to SMT. A full evaluation will be carried out in year 3 of the strategy.

Appendix B: Commercial up-skilling 2010/11

Please complete all sections fully. Section 1 must be sent to Professional Development once you have booked your placement. Section 2 must be fully completed and sent to Professional Development following your placement.

Section 1 – Employer placement information

Name of Staff Member:

Job Title:

Department/Division:

Line Manager:

Name of Organisation:

Address:

Name of contact in the organisation:

Job title/role of contact:

Email/Phone:

Approx Number of Employees: Up to 10 ☐ 10-50 ☐ 50-250 ☐ 250+ ☐

Date of placement: .../.../.....

Objectives to be achieved through placement, agreed with your line manager in advance of placement:

1.

2.

3.

Signed..... Date

To be completed by Line Manager

I have discussed and agreed objectives for the commercial up-skilling placement

Signed..... Date.....

Section 2 – Evaluation and reflection report

Name of Staff Member:

Job Title:

Department/Division:

Line Manager:

Activities undertaken

Planned Objectives achieved/not achieved

Other benefits of the placement which were not anticipated (if any)

What I will do differently in my job role as a result of my placement

Signed..... Date (Staff member)

Signed..... Date..... (Line Manager)

Please forward this form to Professional Development as soon as possible after completion of your placement.

Appendix C: Self-Assessment Questionnaire for Governors 2010

Grading (Ofsted): 1 outstanding; 2 good; 3 satisfactory; 4 inadequate; DK do not know

Issues		Analysis					Evidence / Comments	S/W/OP	Action
		1	2	3	4	DK			
1	How well do governors set the mission and strategic direction of the College?								
2	How well do governors monitor the quality of outcomes for students?								
3	How well do governors monitor the quality of the experience provided for learners?								
4	How effectively do governors monitor financial management and health, including value for money?								
5	Are governors aware of procedures in place for the Corporate Board to assess and monitor risks?								
6	How aware are governors of the views of key stakeholders/users on the quality of College provision?								
7	How well do governors understand, and are committed to, equality and diversity issues?								
8	Has the Corporate Board demonstrated a strong capacity to improve the College?								
9	How sufficient, appropriate and timely are reports that governors receive from College managers?								

10	How effective and well organised are the clerking arrangements, papers and scheduling of the Corporate Board's business?							
11	How effective has the following been this year: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ contact that governors have had with staff and students ▪ information that governors have received from staff and students 							
12	How do governors ensure the legislative requirements are fulfilled for equality and diversity, including disability; safeguarding; health and safety?							
13	Have governors satisfied themselves that there are procedures in place to ensure the accountability of the Principal and other senior postholders?							
14	How satisfied are governors that they are informed and have a good understanding of the College's strengths and weaknesses?							

Please use this space to add any further comments or suggestions

Appendix D: Summary of quality improvement projects and impact

Addendum for Facilitator's Report – Managing for Success

Summary of quality improvement projects and impact

A part of the programme, delegates were asked to undertake a quality improvement project related to their work which they could then present in a written report reflecting on what they did, how they did and the approaches they took. The intention of this was to ascertain which parts of the programme had been useful to them and to reflect on the learning gain by putting the many theories and toolkits introduced in the programme into professional practice.

Of the 24 delegates that completed the vast majority of the programme, 14 submitted a written report summarising the projects they had undertaken and the outcomes of their learning.

The following table summarises those projects:

Delegate	Role and Department	Project
	Functional Skills Teacher, Drama	Introduction and delivery of functional skills curriculum
	Supervisor, Registry	Introduction of new student record system – writing of processes and procedures to be embedded into the system rollout
	Senior Learning Facilitator Learning Centres	Service point development and improved learning support provided at Deptford Learning Centre
	Assistant Manager Campus Office	Development of an intranet site for the department
	Senior HR Manager	Restructure of the HR Administrative Team
	Senior HR Manager	Tender for and selection of a new health care provider for the college
	Head of School for Sport	Review of student tutorials and embedding of new process
	Assistant Manager Campus Office	Testing and implementation of new student record system
	Accounts Manager Finance	Performance management and development of new finance team
	Business Systems Development Manager	Introduction and management of the development of the ASPIRE system
	Catering Manager School of Hospitality	Securing Hospitality Assured and ISO 9000 re-accreditation
	Programme Area Leader Foundation Skills Academy	Preparation for the embedding of new curricula through better tutoring and target setting
	Co-ordinator	Growth and development of the Career Academy (work placements for business students)
	Executive Assistant	Support and promotion of Race Equality Group

Appendix E: Business plan template

1. Executive summary

150 word (max) summary of business case, including expenditure, income, contribution and strategic fit with college objectives.

2. Context/background

A brief outline of the purpose of the document and the external and internal drivers behind the business case. This should include a clear identification of opportunity for service or product. It should also identify the strategic fit to college priorities.

3. Market analysis

This is a key section. Here, the 'business' need is established, and must be evidence based. For new curriculum areas, it will demonstrate that there is demand from learners and employers, and supported by funding and industry bodies. For other services, the business need might be justified through a single customer willing to pay the service.

- **Primary research** Has demand been established through speaking with employers and learners in a quantifiable way? Also, focus groups, surveys.

If for a single organisation or partner, then detail explicit need as described by the 'buyer'.

- **Desk (secondary) research** This is information culled from key documents – for example BIS/SFA funding priorities (Skills Investment Strategy), local economic strategies (Mayor's Skills and Employment Strategy) and SSC plans. How will project or service meet local/regional strategic aims?

4. Competitive analysis

Assuming that you have established the market or customer demand in Section 3, what does the current supply chain look like? Are there providers already offering this, and can we demonstrate that there is room in the market (e.g., no significant providers in SE London).

5. Product analysis

This section looks at how the product will be developed and delivered. Do we already have the capability and/or capability – or will it need to be sourced or developed internally.

- **Delivery Model** Who is delivering, what is to be delivered, and how is it being delivered?
- **Development needed** How long to design? Collaborating with partners/employers? Staff development needed? Materials, travel, additional costs etc.?

(Section 7 will outline all of the income and expenditure attached to the above)

6. Marketing and promotion

How will this be promoted – marketing requirements, links to TSP etc?

7. Financials

Key financials:

- income and volume projections, including unit pricing
- capital expenditure
- pay expenditure
- non-pay expenditure (including materials, travel, registrations)
- contribution – as a guide, direct costs outlined above should not exceed 50% of income.

8. Benefits and risks

Summarise the benefits and also the risks (and how this risks are being mitigated or reduced)

9. Critical success factors and measures for success

What will be crucial in ensuring that this proposal is successfully implemented? What will success look like and how will it be measured?

10. Milestones

Sometimes delivered as an Appendix, this is the development and delivery plan with timescales (as per Product Development Cycle).

11. Recommendations

Recommendations for next steps – from investigate further to investment. This section may outline more than one option to progress.

Appendix F: Project initiation document

Managing development work-based projects – Template for Project Initiation Document (PID)

Participant's Name:

Line-Manager:

Date:

Project aim

Has to have a SMART goal. Must clarify the purpose and scope. For example:

- to develop an innovative and flexible curriculum in (vocational area) to meet the needs of (target group)...
- to review the current curriculum in (vocational area) to ensure that it is fit for purpose
- to establish a cross-college network of teachers working with School Links in order to...; and
- to increase the usage of system Z by 10%...

Project output and results

What will be the product of this piece of work? What results are you looking for?

Outputs for participants on management development programmes must include:

- a Business Case for the changes being recommended
- a reflective journal showing how learning from the Managing for the Future project has been applied

Participants' line-managers should specify what other results they expect.

Success criteria

What criteria will you use to judge whether this project has been successfully completed? See the Appendix One of this template for the success criteria for the business case and reflective journal.

Project timescale and milestones

Insert the deadline and other milestones and review dates relevant to this project.

Suggested project activities

Give an indication of the kinds of things that will be done to achieve the project.

Appendix One – Success criteria for the business case and reflective journal

Business case

The business case must address the overall project aim, be completed by the deadline and provide:

- a clear rationale for your proposal including the fit with College strategic priorities
- evidence of appropriate research, consultation and analysis
- assessment of financial implications
- outline of benefits and risks
- critical success factors; and
- an outline implementation plan.

Reflective journal

The reflective journal must assess your own leadership capability and performance in carrying out this project. It should also provide evidence of how you have applied learning from the management development programme to your practice in managing this project. Specifically you should address the following in your journal:

- your role as a middle manager in taking forward this project
- your ability to use a repertoire of leadership styles in different situations with different people to fulfil the leadership role
- any barriers to communication and to effective interpersonal relationships in carrying out this project and how you overcame them
- the ways in which you used learning from different MfF modules to help you in managing the project; and
- a critical reflection of your leadership and management strengths and weaknesses and your priorities for further development.

Appendix G: Evaluation process for managing for the future

Purpose of evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to determine what value has been added to the College by this learning programme. An additional aim is to identify ways of improving the programme to enhance learners' experience and to increase impact on College performance.

Key questions to be addressed

To what extent have participants improved their capability to lead and manage?

Has there been any impact on the performance of the services that participants manage or on the College more widely?

Have there been any unplanned or unintended impacts from the programme?

Were participants satisfied with the quality of the programme and with customer service?

Was the programme cost effective in relation to benefits gained and in comparison with management development programmes offered by other providers?

Coaching element additional questions

What was the quality and impact of the coaching conversations? Did the coaching contribute to the improvement of leadership and management practice?

Did we make best use of available technology to support coaching practice?

Success criteria

A key driver for the programme was to ensure that internal managers appointed to new posts through the Organisation Review process should be supported to make the transition to their new roles. Externally appointed managers would be helped to understand the College and to obtain peer support through participation in the programme.

A set of broad programme objectives was agreed with senior management. By the end of the programme participants would demonstrate improved management practice in their ability to:

- lead their team: set vision and direction, ensure buy-in, manage change,
- manage diversity
- manage individuals: identify and nurture talent, hold people to account,
- address underperformance, apply College policies and procedures

- deliver and improve services: plan, project manage, review, improve,
- innovate
- manage resources: use data effectively, manage budgets
- work collaboratively: develop cross-college relationships that benefit the work of their Department and contribute to College wide success
- use technology effectively to support all the other performance objectives
- manage self: be aware of strengths and development areas, manage own career and professional development

The College does not yet have a competency framework for managers that translates the organisation's values into expected leadership behaviours. The behavioural outcomes for the programme were not specified. This left the designers of the programme to interpret the types of behavioural changes needed.

The behaviours that have been promoted throughout the programme are those that demonstrate:

- self-awareness
- resilience
- readiness to learn and change
- responsiveness to others' needs, perspectives, contributions
- responsibility
- collaboration
- creative problem-solving

The evaluation process

The evaluation process will gather data on:

- improvement in leadership and management practices as set out in the Programme Objectives above
- demonstration of leadership and management behaviours critical for success for managers at this level in the organisation (LC 4 - 6).

- impact on College performance
- any unintended outcomes
- the contribution of coaching to improved performance
- customer satisfaction
- cost effectiveness

The baseline

Participants have agreed Professional Development Plans (PDPs) with their line managers. Data from the assessment centres, recent appraisals, results of the Myers Briggs questionnaire and feedback from line manager and other colleagues all fed into the identification of PDP goals. The quality of the PDPs is variable reflecting the difficulties some participants and line-managers have in formulating SMART development goals. Nevertheless it should be possible to track improvement in management practice for all participants.

Evaluation methods

The proposed methods take account of the resource constraints, mainly time, of the participants, line-managers and L&D staff. See the table on the following page.

Evaluation scheme

Success criterion	Evidence	How Measured	Timescale
Improved management practice	Improved capability in some or all of the management practices in the programme objectives	Successful completion of assessment tasks Personal summary of progress and achievement in relation to PDP Results from Focus Group Interim appraisal Follow-up questionnaire to line-managers ILM accreditation	
Critical leadership behaviours demonstrated	Examples where some or all of the leadership behaviours have been exhibited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 360 degree feedback • Personal summary of progress and achievement in relation to PDP • Results from Focus Group • Interim Appraisal • Follow-up questionnaire to line-managers 	
Impact on College performance	Examples of service improvements or innovations	Work-based project signed off by line-manager	
Unplanned outcomes	Examples of additional improvements or issues/problems resulting from participation in the programme	Personal summary of progress and achievement Final online evaluation Check success rates and teaching grades for participating Departments	
Participant satisfaction	Feedback from participants	Online evaluations after each unit Final online evaluation	
Cost effectiveness	Data on costs and comparisons with external programmes	Programme Leader's report	
Contribution of coaching	Examples from participants and coaches	Personal summary of progress and achievement Feedback from the coaches	
Overall relevance of the programme and alignment with College priorities	Feedback from Principal, Director of Quality and Improvement, VPs	Discussions Item at SMT	

Action plan for learning and development

- ask SMT to endorse or amend the critical leadership behaviours
- create format for Personal Summary of Progress and Achievement to support gathering of relevant evidence e.g. ensure questions on coaching included
- final online evaluation questionnaire for participants
- follow-up questionnaire to line-managers post interim appraisal
- questionnaire for coaches
- assemble all the evidence and produce Programme Leader's report

Acknowledgements

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Hilary Stone

Project Leader

This work was guided by Lifelong Learning UK's National Partner Group, a group of national further education membership organisations and stakeholders who work to address workforce issues within the further education sector.

Adult and community learning providers

Birmingham Adult Education Service

Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT)

General further education colleges

Blackpool and the Fylde College

Bournville College

Chichester College

Cirencester College

City and Islington College

City College Norwich

City of Wolverhampton College

East Surrey College

Guildford College

Lewisham College

Northbrook College

North East Worcestershire College

Oxford and Cherwell Valley College

Runshaw College

Solihull College

The Isle of Wight College

The Manchester City College

College of North West London

Sixth form colleges

Palmers Sixth Form College

The Sixth Form College Solihull

Specialist colleges

Derwen College

Work based learning providers

JTL

FirstGroup plc

Other organisations and national partners

Association of Colleges (AOC)

Association of Learning Providers (ALP)

Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

EMFEC

HOLEX

National Association for Managers of Students Services in Colleges (NAMSS)

National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA)

Pacific Institute

SkillGate Ltd - Academy 10

UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)

UNISON



Skills for Learning Professionals

Lifelong Learning UK

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