

Scaling New Mountains: How can Joint Practice Development support the design and delivery of curriculum?



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“I have climbed several higher mountains without guide or path, and have found, as might be expected, that it takes only more time and patience commonly than to travel the smoothest highway” Henry David Thoreau ’

Background

- At least a good team
- A significantly changing landscape (SLNs, RPA, ER, HEFCE, and many more letters)
- Desire to open up 'new markets'
- Declining numbers and potential squeezed resources
- Breast-feeding learning outcomes
- A changing diagnosis of our time

"...It is almost universally believed that college diplomas give Americans and Europeans a competitive advantage in the global knowledge wars...there is now a change though that is driving a high-skill, low-wage workforce"

Ashton, Lauder, Brown 'The Global Auction'

‘How much of what we deliver prepares students for this new world?’

- Discussion about the purposes of education
- Literature review scanning everything from Creative Blueprint, Biesta, Coffield, and Haidt
- A discussion about the relationship between managers and teachers (Sarson)
- The power of JPD and ‘cultures of learning’

‘the central problem of curriculum study is the gap between our ideas and aspirations and our attempts to operationalise them...The gap can be closed only by adopting a research and development approach to one’s own teaching, whether alone or in a group...’ Stenhouse

What we did....

- Took a different route up the mountain
- Established communities of practice
- Paralleled this work with managers
- Clusters to plan the curriculum; the impact of AfL?
- Implementation of mentoring and thinking skills (including HE conference etc)

“Colleagues can engage with, test and adapt stimulating practice of ‘originators’ who, in turn, learn from looking afresh at their attitudes and approaches. This is not top-down ‘transfer’, but ‘joint practice development’. The focus can be on practice originating with more or less confident, more or less experienced colleagues. Sharing is not unilateral.” Fielding

Outcomes

- Collaborative Approaches to curriculum design
- Establishing a Community of Discovery approach
- Teacher-Centred approaches emerged
- Engagement with employers....

Known Unknowns...

- Staff fall into 4 categories (this needs more work)
- Measuring impact takes time
- How managers (including myself) enact their values

The Real Impact

- 11 Members of staff now involved in Communities of Practice
- Additional work using these methods to design induction and mentoring activity
- Discussion about these approaches and their potential impact across the College (Lehman Brothers affects all)
- HE in FE Regional Conference and subsequent development work
- BERA
- Ideas for CPD