

Maximising the impact of CPD

Supported provider: Community Learning Partnership
Improvement partner: Dr Bev Morris, LSIS Associate



Summary

Ensuring that CPD activities have maximum impact is important for all organisations but particularly so when staff are part-time, new to their role or working in challenging situations. This case study examines some of the strategies employed by one community-based provider to ensure high attendance at CPD events and, more importantly, measurable and visible impact following the CPD to ensure improvements in the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment.

Introduction

About Community Learning Partnership (CLP)

Community Learning Partnership (CLP) is a community-based family and adult learning project working in South Oxhey. CLP works in a ward with a high index of social deprivation and delivers family learning and adult learning in school and community settings, from the local pub to a golf course. It is Skills Funding Agency funded through the local authority, Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service (HAFLS) and has been successful in securing project funding from a range of sources.

What we wanted to achieve

We have been part of the Skills for Life, now English, maths and ESOL support programme, for seven years which has helped us to develop a range of strategic and operational expertise. This has enabled CLP to grow and extend the reach of our work. This year, we wanted to build on the successes of our team by sharing good practice and introducing challenging concepts around embedded equality, diversity and safeguarding across all our literacy, language and numeracy provision. At the same time, we wanted to further challenge our delivery team to introduce functional skills into all their courses. With limited time and resources, we needed to maximise the impact of all our work, particularly our CPD.

Implementation

Planning our approach

Using the outcomes of our Action Plan from 2011-2012, we planned our 2012-2013 activity by:

- meeting with our consultant from the Association of Colleges in the Eastern Region (ACER) to review our progress and identify challenging targets;
- discussing the proposed targets with our management team and agreeing the priorities for the year;
- reviewing the impact on teaching and learning of policies introduced during 2011-2012;
- using this review to inform the targets and outcomes for 2012-2013 and beyond;
- using CPD activities to consult with delivery staff as key stakeholders in the process of change;
- one member of the team, Becky Openshaw, led on all the work to ensure a coherent implementation; and
- using a peer exchange group with ASCEND, another community-based organisation nearby, to share expertise and build a partnership to support the delivery of functional skills in the future.

What we did

We reviewed the impact of policies on equality, diversity and safeguarding. We asked staff and learners to evaluate how effective the new policies had been and whether they had resulted in improvement to the learning experience. The policies and associated learner paperwork had been changed following feedback that learners with low literacy levels may not be able to engage with the material effectively. This whole activity raised awareness among delivery staff of the need to embed language, literacy and numeracy throughout the teaching and learning process.

At the same time, we developed sample schemes of work to demonstrate how to embed functional skills into a range of classes. Using the sample schemes of work, together with LSIS resources on the transition to delivering functional skills, we ran a joint peer exchange group with ASCEND. This involved managers, delivery staff and volunteers and was a combination of information giving, ideas sharing and action planning for the future delivery of functional skills

Outcomes and impacts

What we achieved

- We had exceptionally high attendance at CPD events, an average of 90 per cent of our team attended.
- Feedback from CPD events was overwhelmingly positive with 100 per cent of those attending reporting increased confidence and awareness of policy and what practically they needed to do. All also reported enjoying the CPD events for a number of reasons such as getting together as a team, the venue, good food and engaging, practical training.
- We were able to measure improvements in learner satisfaction as a result of the CPD and amended policies and paperwork which showed that 100 per cent of learners reported that they felt safe and respected on courses.
- Our policies were identified by the Hertfordshire Adult and Family Learning Service Contract Manager as examples of good practice and have been shared on the Moodle.

What we learned

- Providing staff with pay, a relaxing venue and supper encouraged people to attend CPD events and to stay afterwards to network.
- Using creative, active learning CPD sessions worked well for our staff because this is the way they like to teach. Lectures and dry delivery would have led to low attendance at the next event. High energy, fun and challenging activities suited our team – and it led to ongoing engagement with the learning as well as including support staff to be involved in all the CPD sessions.
- CPD needs to be planned into a three year review cycle so that the full impact can be measured and recognised.
- What works for our learners works for our staff; they need to be consulted, valued and heard.
- A phased approach helped us to gather evidence of impact and to plan change more effectively.

Key lessons learned

- Make the CPD so informative and engaging that no one wants to miss the next one.
- This should not be an isolated activity, CPD needs to build momentum as part of planned and continuous quality improvement.
- Identify CPD champions who will encourage colleagues to attend.

What we are taking forward

This work is part of our ongoing quality improvement work and we want to:

- revisit it to ensure new staff have the same level of information, skills and confidence as existing staff;
- identify alternative funding sources to support staff attendance; and
- build on the positive experiences of CPD by responding to requests for further training, in particular ‘dealing with challenging learners’ and staff mentoring.

How we are sharing it

As well as being part of the English, maths and ESOL support programme this year, we are part of the LSIS Talent Management Programme and we will be sharing the good practice with other participants on this programme.

Contact information

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