**Outstanding teaching, learning and assessment: case study on operational project led by St. Mungo’s Broadway**

**Introduction**

This project focused on the core theme of English and literacy, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). The lead partner was St Mungo’s Broadway and the project was delivered in collaboration with the homeless hostels supported by St Mungo’s Broadway and Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES), a directly delivered local authority adult education service. St Mungo’s Broadway is a third sector provider delivering provision in homeless hostels across London (Lambeth, Southwark, Lewisham, Hackney, Camden and Islington). The two organisations had worked together previously but the project provided an opportunity to formalise a sustainable, collaborative working relationship post project. During the project London Learning Consortium (LLC) - also delivering a separate outstanding teaching, learning and assessment project - participated in the best practice event on Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) and shared their expertise. St Mungo’s Broadway is a delivery partner for LLC.

Both organisations are actively engaged with learners who are marginalised from the education system and the project allowed time for the development of creative approaches to support tutors to enhance the teaching and learning environment for their learners to achieve success. The target learners at the two partner organisations were:

* Homeless, second chance learners and hard-to-reach adult learners (St Mungo’s Broadway )
* ESOL, second chance and hard to reach learners and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) mandated learners (WAES)

#### The aim of the project was to improve practitioner practice in developing effective resources for the delivery and embedding of English, particularly for engaging hard to reach groups (homeless, ESOL and JCP mandated learners). It was intended that the resources developed would improve teaching, learning, retention and success rates for hard to reach learners. Staff from both partner organisations conducted sharing best practice meetings to share resources and contributed to an online resource bank.

#### The project also developed and piloted a process for tracking learner progress, based on the RARPA method, which is specifically effective for hard to reach learners, learners facing multiple barriers to engagement in learning and learners learning in non-traditional learning environments. The team tracked learners through the project, collected evidence and recorded case studies

The rationale for undertaking the project was informed by a recognition that both organisations identify hard to reach groups as priority groups for their provision and at the same time, these learners often have poor participation, attendance and retention rates and a higher than average level of poor literacy levels. This, together with a learner’s lack of self-confidence, frequently results in low attainment levels.

**Approach**

The project focused on and used the Professional Standards as a framework for the approach through:

* Working creatively to identify teaching strategies and resources to help learners overcome their barriers to learning and enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment.
* Building on previous partnership working to develop a collaborative and sustainable working relationship for both organisations.
* Reflecting and sharing best practice with colleagues and learners and contribute to resource and curriculum development.
* Evaluation of teaching and learning practice with others and assessing its impact on learning.
* Planning and delivering effective learning programmes with embedded English for diverse groups.
* Engagement of learners in the development of resources.

Equality and diversity underpins the work of the two partner organisations. This project also embraced equality and diversity through:

* Widening the participation of the learner group and finding effective ways of addressing and overcoming learners’ perceived and actual barriers to learning.
* The identification and sharing of teaching, learning and assessment strategies, approaches and resources that improve learner outcomes for disadvantaged groups.
* Practitioner self-refection included collaborating with partners to promote cultural diversity and inclusion.
* Learner feedback to ensure practitioners understood what they identify as key features of outstanding teaching and learning and the potential barriers to successful outcomes.
* Identifying strategies that enable learners to take responsibility for their learning and progression to encourage self-motivation.

The findings and impact of the project were evidenced from the following data collection and analysis:

* Teacher evaluation forms from best practice events.
* Project leads’ and managers’ evaluation undertaken at the end of project final meeting.
* Learner feedback ‘How do you know you are improving/learning?’

“*When I go shopping or visit the GP, I can talk. At the GP before I would have to ask for an interpreter. This meant I would have to wait 20 mins or more. Sometimes there was no interpreter so I had to make another appointment for a different day. Now I am happy to try and talk. My speaking is getting better. People understand me now. If I get lost on the tube I can ask for directions and the staff understand me; before I had to write it down”.*

*“My speaking is much better because we practise a lot, now I am free.”*

*“I can use transport, I can buy tickets and ask questions. I listen to people on the bus and I understand them. My friends tell me I am speaking more than before. My keyworker and other staff have said I am improving.”*

*“I am able to do things I couldn’t do before – ask for help in shops, speak to people.”*

*“I can understand better.”*

**Outputs, outcomes and impact**

**Outputs**

* Drawing together staff to underpin future course delivery with strategies and resources for embedding English.
* Promoting reflective practice and appealing to professional values by emphasising continuous professional development through best practice events.
* Sharing good practice: Differentiation and contextualisation where staff shared resources and reported back findings from trailing the resources with learners. Staff evaluation forms on their findings uploaded onto Dropbox.
* Sharing good practice event – RARPA – WAES shared a developed RARPA process with St Mungo’s Broadway which gave them a framework for developing fit for purpose RARPA framework for working with homeless learners.
* Development of a resource bank of materials, focusing on differentiation and contextualisation for use by teachers in both organisations.
* Establishing the response of teaching staff to embedding English in course provision as a routine part of session planning.

**Outcomes**

* Resources developed during the project embedded into ESOL and English teams in September 2015.
* Framework for RARPA developed in St Mungo’s Broadway to include diagnostic assessment, recording individual learning plans and learners’ achievements, and outcomes and a moderation process. Reviewed and further refined to ensure fit for purpose during the year.
* Developed a basic skills awareness training tool to increase awareness among non-teaching staff.

**Impact**

* Anticipated improved learner outcomes in English and ESOL provision across both partners – participation, retention and success data improved 2015-2016.
* Anticipated improved learner outcomes in vocational courses (WAES) as a result of embedding English 2015-2016.
* Anticipated improved learner satisfaction rates in ESOL and English provision 2015-2016.
* The opportunity to develop and formalise a learning pathway for the St Mungo’s Broadway learners to be supported by peer and mentor learners from WAES and access WAES provision and allowing WAES learners (specifically, in the first instance, ESOL and health and social care learners) to gain volunteering experience to improve their employability outcomes.
* Ongoing staff training programme (practitioners, teachers, and hostel staff) in both organisations and including providing opportunities for peer visiting and observation – sharing practice and resources to ensure effective implementation of embedding of English, differentiation and contextualisation practices.
* Deliver ongoing awareness training to hostel staff, volunteers and students at St. Mungo’s.

**Lessons Learned**

The key findings (benefits and challenges) from the project:

* The importance of teacher reflective practice to encourage innovation, exploration and creativity in the teaching environment in order to maximise all learners’ potential. The challenge is where and how that reflection time can be built into working practice so that it is not forgotten or at risk of being marginalised by other day to day and operational pressures.
* Having an understanding of barriers to successful learning that adult learners may experience. Learners involved in this project indicated that barriers to their success can include the restrictions imposed by organisations on how learners can access their learning (e.g. weekly attendance, time restrictions, face to face contact) and that it is often the secondary motivators that retain learners on their courses or encourage them to return to undertake more learning (secondary motivators are customer care, feeling welcomed and valued, a sense of belonging, non-judgemental atmosphere etc.).
* Learner feedback on ‘what makes a good learner*?’*

*“They ask questions, do homework, and are on time, answer questions.”*

*“They do reading and writing, they are able to talk and understand.”*

*“They understand people are different.”*

* Learner feedback on ‘what makes an outstanding tutor?’

*“They are fair, they are understanding.”*

*“They give advice.”*

*“They give good examples.”*

*“They build good relationships with learners. This helps you learn and like the subject.”*

* The short time frame (4 months) for implementation of this project meant that it was not possible to accurately assess the longer term impact of the action research. Many of the anticipated outcomes from the project will not be realised until 12-24 months post end of project.
* The late identification of a partner after the official project start date delayed the start of the project and as a result presented challenges in terms of outputs, outcomes and impact.

**Sustainability and transferability**

The project leads of both organisations have stated:

*“I am confident the partnership will continue, I'm really enjoying it.”*

*St Mungo’s Broadway*

*“It was really valuable and the partnership will, I’m sure, continue to develop.”*

*WAES*

The outcomes from the project will be sustained through the following practices:

* The participation in the second best practice event at the end of the project indicated that teachers and managers from both organisations are committed to the principles of reflective practice, peer observation and sharing of resources as a way of working together in the future.
* The existing partnership will remain in place for English and ESOL tutors across both partners from September 2015 with a commitment to:
* Growing the bank of resources to support differentiation, contextualisation and embedding of English.
* Ongoing staff training programme (practitioners, teachers, and hostel staff) in both organisations – sharing practice and resources to ensure effective implementation of embedding of English, differentiation and contextualisation practices.
* Developing a framework for embedding a learner path for St Mungo’s Broadway learners into WAES provision and for WAES learners to gain volunteering experience and employability skills as peer mentors.
* Volunteering projects between the two organisations planned for July 2015.
* Framework for RARPA developed to be embedded into working practice in St Mungo’s Broadway to include diagnostic assessment, recording individual learning plans and leaners’ achievements and outcomes and a moderation process.

Aspects of the project which could be transferred, developed and made ‘fit for purpose’ across different contexts and organisations include:

* The learning resources can be re-used by any tutors of similar subjects at all partner organisations.
* A framework for RARPA, developed specifically for use with hard to reach and disadvantaged learners, focussing on ‘soft outcomes’ for learners, which could be adapted by any organisation working with these learner groups in the FE and Skills sector.
* Basic skills training programme for key workers in third sector/health/care organisations.

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