**Project title**

Developing communities of learning: Teaching, Learning and Assessment development through a peer based LPD model across two community Learning providers.

**Lead provider**

Southend Adult Community College

**Partner Organisations**

Thurrock Adult Community College

**Project KPI’s**

* The development of tutors who have skills to self evaluate but also have the skills to share thoughts and ideas with colleagues - the development of a community of practice.
* Tutors will have the skills to support their peers in a constructive environment. Conversations about teaching, learning and assessment will become part of the college’s culture-tutors will not wait for the opportunity to address issues but will have the power to identify solutions themselves through their relationships with colleagues.
* Resources/good practice will be identified for sharing with other tutors and relate to the improvement of TLA.
* As a result of their experience tutors are enabled to develop knowledge and skills in relation to the themes identified that they can share with colleagues at team meetings and also a wider audience. Open invitation workshops will available for tutors across both colleges and the wider environment to share that experience.
* The project intends to create a community of learning both within subjects but also across college.

**Slippage**

All the key targets have been met with the exception of the final workshop which is now scheduled for the beginning of September in order that it is as effective as possible.

**Outcomes and process**

Twenty practitioners took part in the project; fourteen from Southend and six from Thurrock. The first part of the project involved practitioners spending time to reflect upon existing practice and to identify aspects of practice to develop. Areas to develop are described as specific themes that remain with the participant through the life cycle of the project. Over 200 learners were involved as part of the project through the buddy visit process.

Participants were organised into small ‘buddy’ groups and they organised reciprocated visits to look more closely at individual themes of practice identified during their self-evaluation. Practitioners recorded their visits on a specific form and shared these with the tutor they visited.

The outcome of the visits were further reflected upon during an action learning set in a group of six and seven. Three project practitioners facilitated the sets and were provided with relevant support to undertake this role.

Finally, an evaluation meeting enabled the group to reflect upon the project and to identify key aspects of impact upon perceptions of professionalism, collaboration, and subsequent notions self-concept. Each practitioner produced an end report to outline the impact of participation**.**

The project plan envisaged all tutors having buddy visit and making a buddy visit together with producing an evaluation of their experience. In addition there were three action learning sets facilitated by practitioners. A final evaluation meeting took place.

Three key identified outcomes were :

• Having an understanding of learners’ primary and secondary motivations will inform teaching methodologies, (measured by tutor evaluation/feedback)

• Practitioners taking the opportunity to take individual ownership and accountability for their professional development needs (measured by the impact of the buddy visits and action learning sets)

• Recognising the value of professional learning communities for professional discussion debate and dialogue (measured by group evaluation at the end of the programme)

These are related to the KPIs identified earlier in the document.

Through the process of the individual and joint evaluation it was clear that participants welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the project and saw their practice develop as a result. All outcomes were achieved although the impact would depend upon the circumstances of the individual.

**Benefits**

Participants expressed a number of benefits in the review meeting. Comments are included below :

Appreciated the social aspect – getting to know colleagues

Good to be free to talk rather than having set agendas like meetings

Like the Action Learning Sets they, worked well

Getting involved with other colleagues, meeting those from another college

I have started doing informal peer observation

Feel more confident to approach colleagues

Good to be given a platform to discuss our teaching

Happy to ask for advice/help – following JPD

Not facing things alone

Doesn’t matter if you work with someone from a different subject area

Adds so much to your own teaching

Motivational

**Wishes**

*Would like to have regular chance to undertake peer obs./JPD*

*Tutors should have more opportunity to share practice and resources*

*Encouraged to do more peer observations*

**Next steps**

This is the second year of a successful joint development programme.

The evaluation of the project meant that a new subject area was included, Arts and Crafts and this is planned to continue.

A dissemination activity planned for both colleges in September will be facilitated by practitioners, following this it is envisaged that the project will continue, in addition the college is looking at ways that tutors can meet to talk about learning teaching and assessment.

The prezi link below illustrates the process; copy and paste this link into your internet browser to see the full presentation.

http://prezi.com/taa9evt8tomr/?utm\_campaign=share&utm\_medium=copy.