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Education
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Foundation

Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment **in London**

April 2016

FORE**WORD**

Further education (FE) is going through a period of change. Some have called it the perfect storm, others have emphasised that change is the only constant in FE. What is not being contested is that the sheer number of significant initiatives – be they area reviews, devolution of the adult education budget, apprenticeship standards and levy, English and maths conditions or curriculum reform – will leave no one working in the sector unaffected.

There is a risk that in the midst of all the turbulence and despite best intentions, we may lose our focus on the essence of the whole sector: the teaching, learning and assessment of FE students. Particularly in London, where pre-16 achievement is above national average but outcomes at post-16 remain comparatively low, it is crucial to focus on quality improvement in the sector. To that end, commissioned and funded by the Education and Training Foundation, we have been working on a project on Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) for the past two years.

Based on early consultation with providers of all types in London, it was clear to us that the best outcomes, innovation and engagement can be achieved only through collaboration. There is much that colleges can learn from adult and community learning providers, independent training providers and third sector providers, and vice versa. We have worked closely with our project partners, HOLEX, Learning and Work Institute, London Voluntary Service Council and London Work Based Learning Alliance, to design and manage this project and have required similar collaboration from the

providers that were involved in delivering the operational projects.

We have been encouraged by what we have seen this project achieve. It has had a truly sector-wide reach, enabled sustainable collaborative arrangements to be developed, delivered practitioner-led professional development and engaged students in genuinely meaningful ways. There are indications of improved outcomes for students and we expect to see more of these as the academic year draws to an end.

This brochure provides an overview of the activities and outcomes of the OTLA project in London. More detailed information, including resources, is available on the project website: www.teachlearnassess.london

There is much more to do and we hope that this project provides a platform to further accelerate quality improvement in the FE sector.

Mary Vine-Morris
AoC London Regional Director

Project **Model**

YEAR	STRUCTURE	OUTCOMES
2013/14 Preliminary study for a proposed FE Excellence Challenge	**Partnership*:** AoC London, AELP, HOLEX, LVSC, LWBLA, RCU, UCL IOE	Report on the preliminary study with a proposed model for an FE Excellence Challenge
2014/15 OTLA	**Steering group:** AELP, NUS, Ofsted, Pearson, UCL IOE and partners **Partners:** AoC London, HOLEX, L&W, LVSC, LWBLA Two excellence advisors 10 peer advisors 20 operational projects led by providers working in collaboration with over 40 other providers	300+ teachers engaged 100+ managers engaged 2,500+ students impacted Set of resources Communities of practice
2015/16 OTLA phase II	**Advisory group:** AoC London, HOLEX, L&W, LVSC, LWBLA Two excellence advisors Five operational projects led by providers working in collaboration with 10 other providers	75 teachers engaged 18 managers engaged 850+ students impacted Set of resources Communities of practice

* Partner acronyms: AELP – Association of Employment and Learning Providers, HOLEX – national network of local adult learning providers, L&W – Learning and Work Institute, formerly known as NIACE, LVSC – London Voluntary Service Council, LWBLA – London Work Based Learning Alliance, NUS – National Union of Students, RCU – a company providing market intelligence and market research for FE, UCL IOE – University College London Institute of Education.

Overviews of OTLA Operational Projects

Projects with a focus on teaching, learning and assessment of English, literacy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

English, ESOL and wellbeing in vocational programmes – joint practice development

WINNER of ETF OTLA Award

The project used a teacher-led, joint practice development approach to embedding literacy and ESOL into vocational programmes. This included consultations with employers and students on English needs. The project resulted in improved observation grades for teachers, increased confidence in embedding English and improved progression for these adult students.

The project continued in phase II where, to improve students' readiness and ability to learn, raising awareness of wellbeing was also embedded into vocational programmes. New partners were brought in to the project. The project resulted in the development of strategies to embed wellbeing into vocational projects, improved observation grades for teachers and improved progression for students.

Delivered by Lambeth Adult Learning Services, with Morley College Phase II with Morley College, High Trees Trust, Family Learning (Lambeth), St Mungo's

www.teachlearnassess.london/lambeth-adult-learning-services

Pan-London network on English in study programmes

SHORTLISTED for ETF OTLA Award

The project brought together a pan-London network of college staff, facilitated by City and Islington College and UCL Institute of Education, to identify and share resources on English and literacy in study programmes. The network provided training and networking opportunities for staff and resulted in strengthened collaboration between the colleges involved. This was expected to support student retention and achievement as the staff members continued to work towards a shared understanding of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.

Delivered by City and Islington College, with Barking & Dagenham College, Barnet and Southgate College, Bromley College, Capel Manor College, Carshalton College, College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London, Hackney Community College, Kensington and Chelsea College, Lambeth College, Lewisham Southwark College, Newham Sixth Form College, Richmond upon Thames College, Sir George Monoux College, Westminster Kingsway College, Waltham Forest College, John Ruskin College, UCL Institute of Education

www.teachlearnassess.london/city-and-islington-college

English and ESOL in vocational programmes – whole-organisation approach

The project focused on developing a whole-organisation approach to embedding English and ESOL into vocational programmes. It included the organisation of joint planning sessions for English and vocational teachers, provision of an in-house Level 3 teaching course and ungraded, developmental observations. The project resulted in an organisation-wide shift towards a more positive focus on the teaching and learning of English, improved skills and confidence among vocational staff and improved attendance and achievement by vocational students.

Delivered by Hackney Community College, with Hackney Learning Trust, View Training

www.teachlearnassess.london/hackney-community-college

Literacy in performance courses

The project supported collaborative working between literacy and performance tutors with a view to embedding literacy in performance courses and vice versa. The project also included the introduction of IT into literacy courses to increase students' motivation and skills. This was particularly significant as the students at Clean Break are women with experience of the criminal justice system or at risk of offending. The project resulted in improvements in classroom teaching. The introduction of IT was appreciated by the students who reported that it helped make the learning experience better linked with 'the real world'.

Delivered by Clean Break, with City and Islington College

www.teachlearnassess.london/clean-break

Information, advice and guidance in support of learning English

The project aimed to increase students' motivation to learn English through the improvement of Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) and teachers' English skills. The project provided training for IAG staff, supported by observations and feedback; supported closer collaboration between teachers and IAG staff; and enabled teachers to work together to overcome students' barriers to learning English. The project resulted in an improved understanding by the students of their strengths and weaknesses with regard to English and increased motivation to study and improve their English skills.

Delivered by London Learning Consortium, with Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership, Grenfell Housing Association, NCC

www.teachlearnassess.london/london-learning-consortium

Resources for teaching and learning English

The project undertook an assessment of students' and teachers' perceptions of English and literacy learning with a view to improving English and functional skills outcomes. This resulted in designing specific resources to support the teaching and learning of English and increased the confidence of some of the teachers in embedding English in their teaching.

Delivered by Stanmore College, with Let Me Play

www.teachlearnassess.london/stanmore-college

Effective resources for teaching English and ESOL to hard-to-reach groups

The project supported teachers to develop effective resources for teaching English and ESOL to hard-to-reach groups, such as the homeless and clients mandated by Jobcentre Plus. The teachers involved in the project reported on the benefits of having time for reflective practice and of sharing with peers to encourage innovation, exploration and creativity in the teaching environment.

Delivered by St Mungo's, with Westminster Adult Education Service

www.teachlearnassess.london/st-mungos

Projects with a focus on teaching, learning and assessment through observations and continuing professional development

Virtual and face-to-face peer observations

WINNER of ETF OTLA Award

The project brought together adult learning and study programme teachers from the partner organisations for ungraded, developmental peer observations, undertaken either face-to-face or through the use of video. The project enabled teachers to share methods and tools, re-examine what constitutes excellent practice and use more student-centred approaches. The students involved reported increased ownership of their learning.

The project continued in phase II where it involved teachers from new areas of provision, including apprenticeships and 24+ loans, and from new organisations. The second phase focused increasingly on virtual, recorded peer observations rather than traditional observations, of sufficient quality so as to enable informed judgements to be made about effective teaching and learning. Formal reflective practice sessions were held. Participant feedback of the project was excellent with 100% of teachers reporting an increased understanding of what constitutes outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. The project created an online platform for sharing virtual peer observations, with additional support materials. These will continue to be used beyond the lifetime of the OTLA project.

Delivered by ELATT, with City and Islington College; MI ComputSolutions, Mary Ward Centre
Phase II with Bromley-by-Bow Centre, Paddington Development Trust, Jobwise Training

www.teachlearnassess.london/elatt-connected-learning

Observation of outstanding teaching and learning

SHORTLISTED for ETF OTLA Award

The project focused on identifying key elements of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment, cross-referenced with the Professional Standards and Ofsted criteria, and on developing a software on the 'Observation of outstanding teaching and learning' (Ootl). The project resulted in the development of a culture of debate and systematic review on key elements of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment and improvements in teaching and learning practices.

The project continued in phase II where the Ootl software was further developed, tested and implemented across new partner organisations. The project resulted in four new organisations adopting Ootl and the further development of the review meetings on the observed judgements. Staff and students reported an increased understanding of what constitutes outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. The project also started the development of an Ootl for managers, which has potential to support the development of management skills.

Delivered by Jobwise Training, with Alloyfish, 2nd Chance
Phase II with ELATT, 2nd Chance, East London College, JGA Training

www.teachlearnassess.london/jobwise-training

Ungraded peer observations - cross-organisation approach

The project used ungraded paired peer observations across five organisations to accelerate a cultural change in terms of the continuing professional development (CPD) of English and ESOL teachers. Building on a partnership that was originally established in 2001, the teachers were encouraged to take ownership of their professional development, share practice with others and develop CPD e-portfolios. The project resulted in changes in the observation practices across the five organisations, improved understanding of the Professional Standards and improved student attendance.

The project continued in phase II where a new cohort of Learner Ambassadors was trained and was more closely engaged in the project. The training of new English, ESOL and maths teachers as Tutor Ambassadors was revised to reflect new Ofsted expectations of personal development and behaviour. At the end of the project, the overall teacher self-assessments, using the Education and Training Foundation's online self-assessment tool for Professional Standards, had improved across the board.

Delivered by Redbridge Institute with Adult College of Barking and Dagenham, City Lit, Lifelong learning (Idea Store), Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service

www.teachlearnassess.london/redbridge-institute

Performance management supporting outstanding teaching, learning and assessment

The project developed a performance management framework 'Pathway to Excellence' with the aim of increasing coherence between the two organisations that had merged to form Skills for Growth. The end result was an effective performance management framework, which supported a move towards outstanding teaching and learning, and a culture shift in how CPD is managed from generic and reactive to a more proactive approach driven by individuals to meet their needs.

Delivered by Skills for Growth

www.teachlearnassess.london/skills-for-growth

SHORTLISTED for ETF OTLA Award

Projects with a focus on teaching, learning and assessment with digital technologies

Screencasting in teaching, learning and assessment

WINNER of ETF OTLA Award

The project tested whether the use of freely available screencasting tools to provide feedback had a positive impact on student experience, compared to written feedback. These tools clearly improved student satisfaction. Students felt that the feedback was more easily accessible, understandable and personalised than feedback provided through traditional methods.

The project continued in phase II where the use of screencasting was extended to other parts of teaching and learning and trialled with new groups of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Technical support was provided by Level 3 IT students ("Digital Learning Ambassadors") as part of their own programmes. Formal lesson observations were used to assess improvements in teaching, learning and assessment. Initial project outcomes demonstrated that the student experience had been enhanced through the use of screencasting; it was reported to have increased accessibility and personalisation of learning. Staff reported improved teaching practice and confidence.

The project partnership exemplified the benefits of equal collaboration between multiple providers and will continue beyond the lifetime of the OTLA project.

Delivered by Bromley College, with Bexley College and Kingston College. Phase II with Bexley College, Kingston College and Carshalton College

www.teachlearnassess.london/bromley-college

Using freely available online tools in teaching, learning and assessment

The project tested the impact of using freely available online tools in teaching, learning and assessment on student engagement and achievement. A model previously developed by the learning difficulties and disabilities department for flexible use of technology was replicated across new curriculum areas as part of the project. The project resulted in improved student attendance, retention, punctuality and progression. Teachers reported that the project had improved their teaching practice and supported collaborative relationships with colleagues.

Delivered by Barking & Dagenham College, with Redbridge College

www.teachlearnassess.london/barking--dagenham-college

Digital resources to embed English into vocational programmes

The project identified strategies for the effective embedding of English into vocational areas with the support of digital resources. The teachers involved worked together to develop resources, which were tested and revised following student feedback. A number of the teachers undertook a Level 3 award in digital learning design. The project resulted in improvements in the use of information and learning technologies fit for purpose and in improvements in the embedding of English into vocational courses.

Delivered by Richmond Adult Community College, with Hillcroft College, SCOLA

www.teachlearnassess.london/richmond-adult-community-college

Projects with a focus on teaching, learning and assessment in apprenticeships

Soft skills profile tool in apprenticeships

SHORTLISTED for ETF OTLA Award

The project refined and tested a soft skills profile tool, originally developed for classroom learning, in apprenticeship provision. The tool measures the development of pre-defined soft skills during the period of training. The employers consulted as part of the project reported that the tool helped them engage with the apprentices in new ways and assess the development of their soft skills to improve readiness for work roles.

Delivered by City Gateway, with ManGroup, Pulse Recruitment

www.teachlearnassess.london/city-gateway-apprenticeships

Outstanding apprenticeships in digital marketing

The project explored innovative ways to deliver outstanding apprenticeships in digital marketing. As a result of the project, existing provision was enhanced to include 'work in the media' education site used as part of a 'flipped classroom' approach and new schemes of work. Both of these aimed to support the development of employability skills among apprentices, reported as an area that requires development by both the employers and apprentices.

Delivered by Creative Process, with JustIT Training

www.teachlearnassess.london/creative-process

Projects with a focus on equality and diversity in teaching, learning and assessment

Peer mentoring in support of disadvantaged female students

The project developed a peer mentor model to support diverse groups of disadvantaged female students on ESOL courses. As a result, the peer mentors improved their English skills and confidence and all students took greater responsibility for their learning. Student retention and progression was improved across the board. Tutors reported improvements in teaching practice.

Delivered by Capacity London, with Daymer, Eritrean Community in the UK, Islington Bangladesh Association, Unlimited Art Café CIC

www.teachlearnassess.london/capacity-london

Personal and social development on equality and diversity

The project centred on two areas: developing the awareness of students of equality and diversity issues, and training the classroom support and delivery skills of retention workers in charge of personal and social development. The project achieved clear assessable improvements in both areas. It also developed and trialled personal and social development provision, which will be rolled out across City Gateway's provision.

Delivered by City Gateway, with Hackney Community College, LOOP (SHM Foundation)

www.teachlearnassess.london/city-gateway-study-programmes

Projects with a focus on student ambassadors to support teaching, learning and assessment

Increasing value added through stretch and challenge

The project focused on the specific issue of increasing the value added of learning outcomes by introducing greater stretch and challenge. This included increasing the amount of outstanding teaching and the introduction of peer-to-peer learning for students. The 'Leaders of Learning' element was highly successful, helping both the mentors and mentees achieve a sense of common purpose, co-learning and improved understanding of outstanding practice.

Delivered by St Dominic's Sixth Form College, with Woodhouse Sixth Form College, Association of Catholic Sixth Form Colleges

www.teachlearnassess.london/st-dominics-sixth-form-college

Supporting students in literacy learning

The project explored ways to support students with challenges in literacy learning by enhancing the blended learning self-study offer and by introducing 'Literacy Legends' student volunteers to act as literacy ambassadors. The project developed new ways to deliver English and literacy skills and the partnership between staff and the Literacy Legends brought additional value to the outcomes of the project.

Delivered by West Thames College

www.teachlearnassess.london/west-thames-college.html

How to develop Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment?

Practical hints and tips from OTLA

- One of the aspects that the teachers most appreciated in the OTLA operational projects was having dedicated time and space to reflect on teaching, learning and assessment practice with their peers and to consider what outstanding means within their own context. Being clear about what separated outstanding practice from the good or routine was a regular challenge to teachers and leaders. Once this time and space had been established, it did not necessarily require funding or a structure to maintain. This applied whether it took place within an organisation or cross-organisations.

- The Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers developed by the Education and Training Foundation can be very helpful in supporting self-reflection. The online self-assessment tool enabled teachers to score themselves against the standards, assess their progress over time and consider how to work towards outstanding practice.

- High quality resources were produced as part of the projects but it was evident that when it comes to outstanding teaching, learning and assessment, the value of an individual resource depends on how and why it is being used. When sharing resources with peers, the process of the professional debates that took place was as important as the final products.

- Developing an effective collaborative relationship with another provider takes time and truly equal partnership is difficult to achieve. It requires support, or at least, permission from leadership, honest and open communications, a clear focus and the identification of a lead liaison person in an organisation. The OTLA operational projects where this was successful, demonstrated that collaboration is highly effective in supporting innovative and effective improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. This effectiveness is most notable in joint approaches to: understanding what constitutes outstanding practice; the development and testing of new materials; and sharing techniques and approaches.

- Engaging students in quality improvement can be very helpful in supporting the development of their knowledge and skills and particularly their confidence. It is also of value to teachers and managers. However, to be effective, students' involvement must be genuine and not tokenistic. Evidence of this may be the inclusion of all material contributions made by students in their own progress records and in course reviews.

- In any quality improvement project relating to teaching, learning and assessment it is difficult to disentangle cause and effect. For that reason, it is important to agree from the outset what is being sought in terms of changes in practice; how the improvement will be measured; and the extent to which there is evidence to confirm that the change has been achieved primarily as a result of the project rather than other factors.

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For more information visit www.teachlearnassess.london or contact aoclondon@aoc.co.uk

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