The Journey towards Outstanding

**Impact Assessment for  
Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment Projects**

**Final Report**

**March 2016**

**A Report Commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation**



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**Acknowledgement**

The impact assessment team would like to thank the practitioners, leaders, and other OTLA initiative participants, and the Foundation, for their time and support in providing the documentary, interview and other evidence upon which this impact assessment is based.

**Contents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Executive summary | **5** |
| **1.0 Introduction** | **10** |
| **2.0 The OTLA initiative** | **10** |
| 2.1 Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA): The  three regional initiatives | **12** |
| **3.0 The impact assessment** | **13** |
| 3.1 The scope of the assessment | **13** |
| 3.2 Research approach and evidence base | **13** |
| 3.3 The report | **13** |
| **4.0 Findings: scale, reach and impact** | **14** |
| 4.1 Characteristics of the initiative | **14** |
| 4.2 Partnerships | **14** |
| 4.3 Scale and reach | **15** |
| 4.4 Equality and diversity | **16** |
| 4.5 Indicative examples of impact | **16** |
| **5.0 Examples of potential links between OTLA interventions and inspection findings** | **26** |
| **6.0 Emerging findings: overall and specific impacts** | **36** |
| 6.1 Overall impact | **36** |
| 6.2 Specific impacts and their contribution to supporting OTLA | **36** |
| 6.3 Staff | **36** |
| 6.3.1 Impact survey findings: staff | **38** |
| 6.3.2 Specific impacts on staff: qualitative examples from specific projects | **39** |
| 6.3.3 Commentary | **39** |
| 6.4 Learner experience and outcomes | **41** |
| 6.4.1 Impact survey findings: learners | **42** |
| 6.4.2 Specific impacts on learners: qualitative examples from specific projects | **43** |
| 6.4.3 Commentary | **44** |
| 6.5 Collaborative working and sustainability | **45** |
| 6.5.1 Impact survey findings: providers | **46** |
| 6.5.2 Commentary | **47** |
| 6.6 Adding to the body of knowledge about outstanding TLA | **49** |
| 6.7 The role of research in the initiative | **51** |
| 6.8 Transferability | **52** |
| 6.8.1 Impact survey findings | **53** |
| 6.8.2 Feedback from phase two projects | **53** |
| 6.8.3 Dissemination conferences feedback | **54** |
| **7.0 Case studies** | **55** |
| 7.1 Case study 1 – Who owns improvement? | **55** |
| 7.2 Case study 2 – The context for improvement | **55** |
| 7.3 Case study A – Jobwise Training | **56** |
| 7.4 Case study B – Lincoln College | **56** |
| **8.0 Impact over time** | **57** |
| **9.0 Conclusions and the longer term** | **59** |
| 9.1 Conclusions: impact to date | **59** |
| 9.2 The longer term | **60** |
| **10.0 Lessons learned** | **61** |
| Appendix 1 Specific impacts: staff – table of qualitative examples | **66** |
| Appendix 2 Specific impacts: learners – table of qualitative examples | **72** |
| Appendix 3 Case study A – Jobwise training | **75** |
| Appendix 4 Case study B – Lincoln College Partnership | **78** |
| Appendix 5 Professional Standards | **82** |

**Note about text colours**

**The text in sections 6 and 7 inclusive is presented in two colours:**

**Text in burnt orange: findings presented in the interim report, autumn 2015**

**Text in black: new material for the final report, March 2016**

**Executive summary**

**Introduction**

This report summarises the findings of the external impact assessment of The Education and Training Foundation’s Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) initiative. The OTLA initiative was commissioned to begin in autumn 2014, and to run in the first instance until summer 2015, during which period the major phase of activities took place. The aim of the OTLA initiative has been to develop and implement, within three defined regions, a sector-led support programme to promote and achieve outstanding teaching, learning and assessment, for all provider types.

The initiative is informed by the Education and Training Foundation (the Foundation) Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers 2014 (the Professional Standards).

Each regional initiative has involved multiple partnerships, and has included elements of: joint practice development (JPD) approaches; provider-with-provider working; development of provider networks; collaboration and shared Continuous Professional Development (CPD) models supported by research, peer working, coaching, mentoring and senior leadership support.

The impact assessment was designed to take place from August 2015 to early March 2016, so as to capture impact that has occurred during and following the main activities, and over the period of follow up activity; and as data has become available. The research approach has involved interviews with leaders of the regional initiatives, and with project leaders and participants; secondary analysis of documentary data; and a follow-up January/February 2016 impact survey sent to project leads in all three regions.

**Key findings**

The OTLA initiative has had an extensive reach, involving over 100 working partnerships, engaging more than 1,200 practitioners/leaders; and impacting on nearly 5,000 learners.

Reported findings are drawn from quantifiable and qualitative data which provide evidence of improvement. Key reported improvements include:

* **Improvements in Ofsted inspection grades:** Improvements from grade 3 (requires improvement) to grade 2 (good provision) in four participating providers, two of which have implemented a new whole organisation approach to embedding and raising the standard of English/literacy skills. Of the other providers, one has used coaching and mentoring to support teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) and the other has taken the approach of using technology to improve TLA.
* **Improvements in teaching, learning and assessment internal observation grades:** Improvements by one or two grades of internal observations of teachers participating in OTLA initiative professional development projects at a number of providers.
* **Improvements in learner achievements:** There are many instances of improvement in learner achievements. For example, improvements in pass rates of 12-15% in Functional Skills English, and in English tests taken by teaching assistants, in inner city providers; 11% increase in first-time achievement rate in practical studio tests; improved pass rates in childcare qualifications, and higher progression rates.
* **Improvements in learner retention and attendance:** There are many instances of improvement in learner retention and attendance. For example, improvements in attendance of 27% and in retention of between 5% and 15% in suburban and inner city providers for groups of learners engaged with OTLA initiative interventions, including multi-level teaching, and flexible use of portable device technology; 15% improvement in retention in a mentoring project.
* **Indications of improvement from inspection reports:** Indications of the impact of the OTLA initiative in inspection reports for 12 participating providers, where inspection has taken place during the lifetime of the OTLA initiative or more recently.
* **Indications of ongoing improvement in teaching and learning:** In many contexts where graded lesson observations no longer occur, other indications of improvement in TLA are demonstrated, for example in creative and effective use of technology, in the increased role of learner feedback, and in staff and learner satisfaction surveys.
* **Ongoing collaborative working:** An extensive range of examples of ongoing collaborative working and improvement in the months following the OTLA initiative and to date. Examples include high levels of participation and collaboration through ongoing network and dissemination events; continuing research networks developing teaching and learning research to a new level and examples of staff in third sector organisations working together to improve learner access and outcomes for ‘hard-to-reach’ learners.
* **Embedding of Professional Standards:** Embedding of the Professional Standards developed by the Foundation has contributed well to sustainable improvement in a number of providers.
* **Ownership of CPD:** Increased ownership of CPD has increased the confidence and engagement of practitioners in many projects, and this is reported to have contributed to learner motivation, engagement and achievement.
* **Continued engagement and improvement:** Findings from a January/February 2016 impact survey sent to projects in all participating regions have provided evidence of continued engagement and medium term impact on learner experience and achievement.

The available evidence highlights the importance of practitioner-led, research-based approaches; and suggests good potential for sustainable improvement with the capacity to impact ultimately on learner outcomes.

**Conclusions**

**Impact to date**

The impact assessment reached the following conclusions:

1. The initiative has effected a substantial and very diverse range of improvement activity in the regions in which it has taken place.
2. There is a diverse range of evidence of specific improvements with positive impacts on the quality of teaching, and on learner experience and achievement.
3. There is evidence of systemic improvement at curriculum area and provider levels.
4. There is substantial evidence of collaborative working between peers both within and across providers.
5. There are indications of the potential for ongoing and sustained improvement and for transferability of effective practice between providers.
6. There is substantial evidence of a wide range of professional development activity contributing to quality improvement in the further education and training workforce.
7. There is good evidence of the Professional Standards developed by the Foundation contributing systematically to the sustainability of staff improvement.
8. Research-based approaches have contributed to the potential of OTLA initiative projects to contribute sustainably and in the longer term to the body of knowledge about TLA.
9. The different approaches used in the three different regions have all contributed to improvement. Evidence of impact on learner achievement is easier to identify within the project timescale for the regions in which learners have been more directly involved in specific projects. Provider level improvements achieved by initiatives focussing on the participation of senior provider staff are more likely to need a longer timescale to demonstrate impact on outcomes for learners.
10. The wide range of evidence suggests a number of critical success factors which can increase the potential of OTLA initiatives to achieve positive impact over time:

* Ownership and involvement of those participating.
* Real understanding of the need to focus on difference made **to learning and outcomes for learners**.
* Involving learners in the initiative.
* Move away from accountability to freedom to experiment, take risks and develop own approach.
* Time for specific focus on particular aspects to develop a depth of understanding about what works and why in TLA in particular contexts.
* Support, involvement and leadership of senior staff.
* Positive organisational culture.
* Complementary and mutually reinforcing approaches at all levels and areas of activity.
* Understanding of the need to take account of context and fitness for purpose, including appropriate timing of new initiatives.
* Effective and well resourced collaborative working with positive and inclusive peer relationships.

**Impact over time and the longer term**

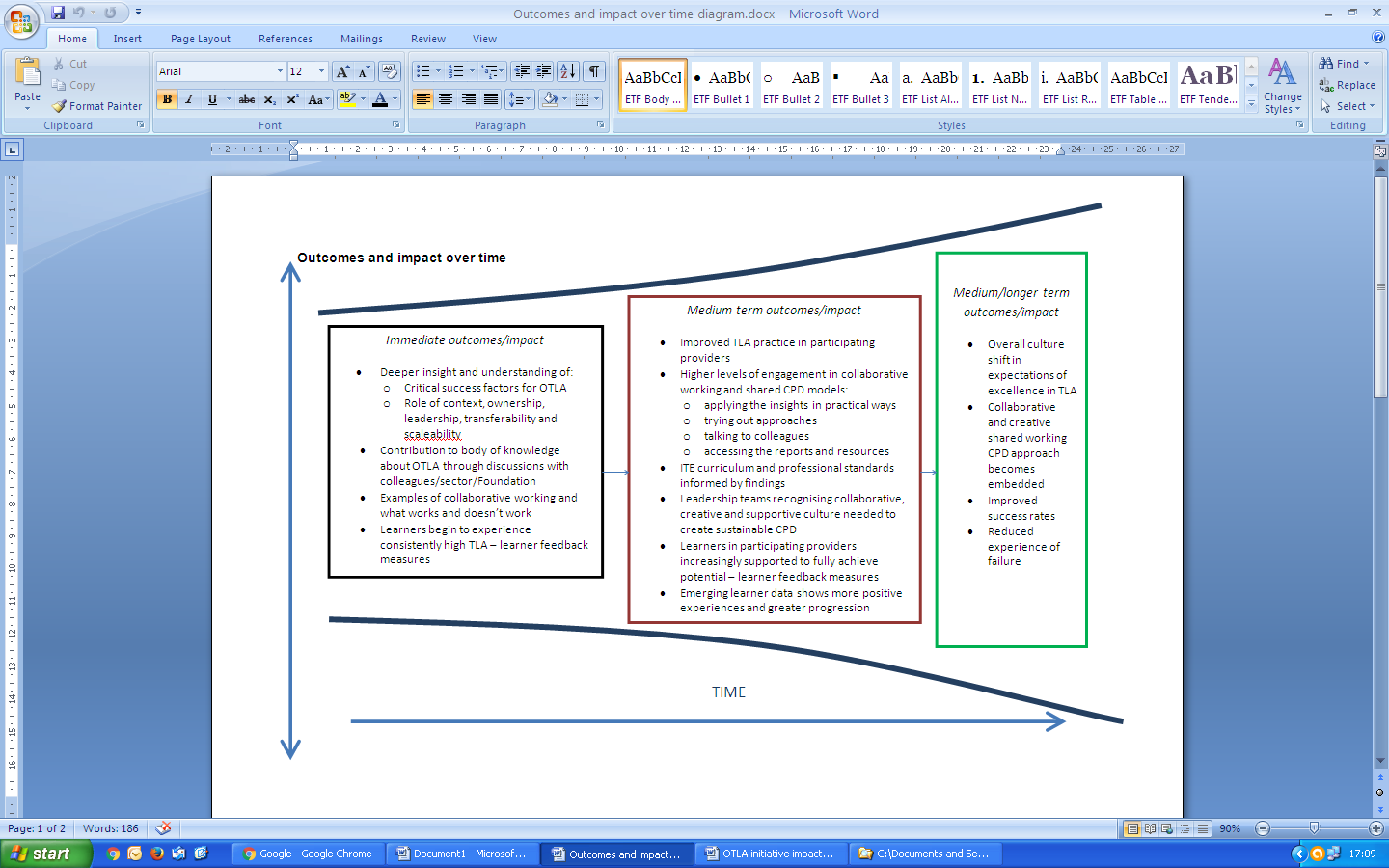
The impact assessment considers the impact of the OTLA initiative interventions over time. The figure below indicates some of the intended impacts of the OTLA initiative over time. In considering impact by February 2016 of interventions which began in early 2015, it is possible to identify examples of data which provide some relevant evidence that most of the impacts have occurred to some extent.

The Foundation Invitation to Tender (ITT) for the OTLA initiative identifies the following longer term impact:

*More learners achieving relevant qualifications with higher grades, which enhance their life, higher learning and work opportunities. It is accepted that this impact information gathering would be gathered over a longer period using year on year success and student progression data for comparison.*

[Source: Foundation ITT for OTLA initiative]

This impact assessment has drawn on evidence provided by participating projects, so as to be able to assess medium/longer term progress towards outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. The evidence reported to date suggests that there is a positive direction of travel in a journey of improvement towards OTLA. There is a good range of evidence of reported impact on staff and improvements in learner outcomes. However, more substantial evidence of the impact on learner outcomes in the longer term would need to take account of the key characteristic ‘outstanding’ being ‘making an outstanding difference to learning’. The provision of this evidence would be contingent upon OTLA initiative contract holders being in a position to identify and report on relevant impact measures in the longer term.

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**1.0 Introduction**

This report provides the findings of the overall external impact assessment of The Education and Training Foundation’s Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) initiative. The initiative was commissioned to begin in autumn 2014 and run in the first instance until summer 2015, during which period the major phase of activities took place. The impact assessment was designed to take place from August 2015 to early March 2016, so as to capture impact that has occurred during and following the main activities and over the period of follow up activity; and as data has become available.

**2.0 The OTLA initiative**

The aim of the OTLA initiative has been to develop and implement, within three defined regions, a sector-led support programme to promote and achieve outstanding teaching, learning and assessment, for all provider types. For the purposes of this report, ‘outstanding’ is understood to refer to ‘making an outstanding difference to learning’. However, the initiative focuses in the first instance on workforce development as a key factor in improving teaching, learning and assessment.

The initiative is informed by the Education and Training Foundation (the Foundation) Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers 2014 (the Professional Standards).

Each initiative has involved multiple partnerships, and has included elements of: joint practice development (JPD) approaches; provider-with-provider working; development of provider networks; collaboration and shared Continuous Professional Development (CPD) models supported by research, peer working, coaching, mentoring and senior leadership support.

The Foundation’s descriptions of the purpose of the initiative include the following:

* *to secure overall quality improvement of teaching, learning and assessment – to develop sector capacity to self-improve through provider to provider working; sharing effective practice; joint practice development and systematic application of proven methodologies such as mentoring and coaching;*
* *to make a positive impact on teaching, learning and assessment, resulting in raised standards of practice and improved models of CPD that engage staff successfully and can demonstrate improved practices;*
* *to include systematic application of proven methodologies (e.g. peer coaching, mentoring, peer observation and co-teaching), with a creative, collaborative, networked approach to achieve the move to outstanding teaching, learning and assessment (TLA);*
* *to build on the progress made so far and maintain momentum in the application of research-based shared endeavour models, adding to the body of knowledge and understanding of effective models of improvement and professional development;*
* *to build in encouragement for practitioners to take responsibility for their own CPD, through developing their own judgement of what works and does not work in their teaching; developing their expertise and skills to ensure the best outcomes for learners and developing a deeper understanding of theory and practice;*
* *to develop and implement within a defined region or urban area a sector-led support programme focused on achieving outstanding delivery and facilitation of teaching, learning and assessment, raising standards for all provider types.*

[Source: extracts from invitation to tender for OTLA initiative]

Some of the intended characteristics of the OTLA initiative are summarised in Figure 1 below.

Joint Practice Development

All Provider Types

Collaborative and Networked

Defined Geographical area

Responsibility for own CPD

Adding to the body of knowledge and understanding

Professional Development

Proven methodologies

Research-based

Figure 1: The OTLA Initiative

**2.1 Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA): The three regional initiatives**

The overall OTLA initiative has three regional suites of activities. Each regional initiative has been led by sector organisations, with three different approaches to tackling regional issues, and has focused on the improvement of TLA. The regional initiatives were led by the Association of Colleges (AoC) London Region, EMFEC, and South Essex College / The Learning Consortium.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**The AoC London Region** (referred to in this report as ‘the AoC initiative’)has had 20 collaborative sharing and/or JPD projects covering further education (FE) colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), adult and community learning (ACL) and third sector providers. The 20 operational projects were commissioned under 3 themes: 16-19 study programmes; English and literacy, including English for Speakers of Other Languages; and apprenticeships, including higher apprenticeships. The model allowed for support and challenge to be provided by a team of excellence advisors and peer advisors. The model also included the possibility of building sector capacity for further improvement support by developing a team of provider-based associate peer advisors.

**The EMFEC** initiative had up to 10 large scale collaborative and JPD projects built on an action-centred research approach and taking place across a region of substantial size and variation: from dense urban to rural and then coastal communities. The research aspect of the projects has been supported by Nottingham Trent University who have delivered training and provided support for participating providers. The projects have addressed four central themes: blended learning and ICT; learner skills development; peer evaluation and support; and practitioner professional development.

**The South Essex College/The Learning Consortium** initiative has had as its basis an improvement model: ‘The Learning Framework’, informed by the ‘Learning Cycle’. This model promotes a whole-organisation approach, and is intended to generate tangible improvement of TLA via training and development modules for practitioners, managers, senior leaders and governors. The major elements of the programme have been: leading learning certificate; leading learning stand-alone modules; support and challenge partnerships; TLA support and challenge networks; regional strategic intelligence for teaching and learning; and resources development. The region covers Essex, Kent, East Sussex and parts of South and East London.

**Phase 2**

Some projects in the AoC and EMFEC regions are carrying out some additional resourced follow-up activities as part of the OTLA initiative. The phase 2 work has contributed to impact survey findings and provided some evidence of sustainability and dissemination of effective practice.

**3.0 The impact assessment**

**3.1 The scope of the assessment**

The focus of this impact assessment is on identifying and considering reported impacts. As such, it draws on the evaluations, project reports and other data provided by the OTLA initiative regional leaders, projects, and evaluators. **The impact assessment is not in itself a full evaluation.**

**Impact measures:** The OTLA initiative invitation to tender includes the following statement:

*The impact measures that the Foundation seeks should demonstrate a positive impact on teaching, learning and assessment, resulting in raised standards of practice and improved models of CPD that engage staff successfully and can demonstrate improved practices.*

[Source: Foundation tender specification document – Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment – September 2014.]

In addition, for the purposes of this impact assessment, learner outcomes and behaviour are also considered where relevant, and are understood to be included within the concept of impact.

**3.2 Research approach and evidence base**

The research approach for the impact assessment has involved interviews with leaders of the regional initiatives, and with project leaders and participants; and secondary analysis of documentary data; and a follow-up Jan/Feb 2016 impact survey sent to project leads in all three regions.

The secondary analysis draws on the following evidence, provided by the contract holders and/or the Foundation: individual project reports; regional final reports to the Foundation; regional evaluations of the overall regional initiatives and/or specific aspects of them; invitations to tender and contract documents at regional and project level; case studies provided by the projects and/or regions; participation data; review of OTLA Initiative phase two data; review of inspection data; and dissemination conference and network event reports.

**3.3 The report**

The report begins with a summary description of the 2014/15 OTLA initiative. Tables are then provided summarising the indicative reach and scale of the activities and giving quantifiable examples of impact (section 4). Section 5 gives examples of potential links between OTLA interventions and inspection findings. Section 6 provides an overview of the direction of travel of the impact of the initiative, followed by consideration of specific areas of impact. Section 7 introduces project case studies (detailed in appendices) and section 8 considers impact over time. The report concludes with a section giving overall conclusions, and a brief consideration of the longer term (section 9), followed by a section on lessons learned (section 10).

Where relevant, the report identifies findings at the interim stage of the impact assessment (autumn 2015), and then gives overall findings established by February 2016. Interim findings are in burnt orange text.

**4.0 Findings: scale, reach and impact**

**4.1 Characteristics of the initiative**

As described above, the OTLA initiative was intended to be sector-led and to support providers in taking the lead in developing practice to support improvement in TLA. A genuine sector-led approach is inevitably diffuse and varied. Improvements are developed, implemented and rooted in everyday practice. They are therefore more likely to be realistic and owned by staff and learners, rather than imposed and constrained by a rigid experimental design. The assessment has found that the substantial reported impact of this type of initiative is rich, diverse, varied and diffuse. Reported indicative emerging findings about three aspects of the overall initiative’s partnerships, scale and reach, and impact are summarised in tables 1, 2 and 3 below.

**4.2 Partnerships**

Table 1 provides an indicative summary of reported partnerships. The project leads were drawn from a range of sub-sectors:- adult and community learning (ACL), independent training providers (ITP), third/voluntary sector, and colleges. A total of at least 151 partnerships were developed, and analysis of these is shown in table 1 below.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 1: OTLA Initiative – Indicative summary of partnerships** | | | | | | | |
|  |  | ***Partnered with*** | | | | | |
|  |  | **ACL** | **ITP** | **College** | **3rd sector** | **HE** | **Employer** |
| ***Led by*** | **ACL** | 13 | 2 | 1 | 1 |  |  |
| **ITP** |  | 28 | 2 | 1 |  |  |
| **College** | 3 | 18 | 48 | 7 | 1 | 2 |
| **Third sector** | 8 | 6 | 2 | 8 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total partnerships** | | | | | | | 151 |

**4.3 Scale and reach**

Table 2 provides a summary of the reported scale and reach of the initiative across the three regions. The data is indicative and is intended to illustrate the extent and diversity of the participants, rather than provide definitive figures.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Table 2: OTLA Initiative – Indicative summary of scale and reach of activity** | | | | | |
| **Context of activity** | **Lead provider  – type and numbers** | **Provider numbers including partners** | **Individuals – senior management** | **Individuals – practitioners (rounded)** | **Individuals – learners**  **(rounded)** |
| **16 – 19 study programmes** | College – 5  3rd sector – 1  ITP – 2 | 39 | 37 | 110 | 1,200 |
| **English/ literacy** | College – 3  3rd sector – 4  ACL – 2 | 29 | 65 | 150 | 1,170 |
| **Apprentice-ships** | ITP – 3 | 6 | 6 | 50 | 140 |
| **CPD** | College – 4  ITP – 1 | 14 | 32 | 170 | 770 |
| **Blended learning** | College – 5  ACL – 1 | 22 | 40 | 290 | 1,520 |
| **Additional JPD and CPD activities** | College – 20  3rd sector – 2  ITP – 27  ACL – 2  HE – 1 | 52 | 52 | 240 | 200 |
| **Totals** |  | **162** providers (all types) | **232** | **1,010** | **5,000** |

**4.4 Equality and diversity**

In keeping with Foundation principles, there was an expectation that projects should promote equality and diversity (E&D) in their approaches. The wide range of provider types that were engaged in the projects is convincing and there are many examples of relevant contextual information which have steered approaches for improving equality and diversity practice.

In some of the projects contextual information is included on the ethnic profile of learners. A similar approach is taken in reporting proportions of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in some of the projects. All of the projects with third sector involvement highlight the vulnerable nature of their client group.

There are several strands, and sub-projects within strands, where there has been either a particular focus on matters of equality and diversity, or where an associated ‘benefit’ has emerged. The E&D concept has been generally applied in the broadest sense (encompassing, for example, inherent personalisation and inclusivity). In addition, specific addressing of gender, race, faith, disability, and other protected characteristics was central to some activities. Examples include case-studies of female football coaches; internships for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD); and embedding of E&D generally in ACL provision.

**4.5 Indicative examples of impact**

Table 3 provides indicative examples of reported evidence of quantifiable impact on TLA observation grades, and on learner achievement and retention.

| **Table 3: OTLA Initiative – Indicative impact examples** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Intervention** | **Impact** | **Evidence provided** | **Context** |
| **Impact on Ofsted inspection grade** | | | |
| Effective use of embedding of English/literacy skills within vocational provision | Improved teaching and learning | Inspection in Sept/Oct 2015  graded 2 – improvement on previous grade (3). | Inner City Community College |
| Effective use of embedding of English/literacy skills within Art and Design provision | Improved teaching and learning | Inspection in May 2015 graded 2 – improvement on previous grade (3). OTLA initiative cited by inspectors as contributing to improved grade. | Suburban Adult Community College |
| Coaching and mentoring to support outstanding TLA | Improved teaching and learning | Inspection in December 2015  graded 2 –  improvement on previous grade (3) | Network of providers in the East Midlands |
| Using technology for outstanding TLA | Improved teaching and learning | Inspection in December 2015  graded 2 –  improvement on previous grade (3) | FE College in Outer London |

| **Table 3: OTLA Initiative – Indicative impact examples** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Intervention** | | **Impact** | **Evidence provided** | **Context** |
| **Impact on TLA internal observations and grades** | | | | |
| Appointment and training of Teaching and Learning coaches to support lecturers who ask for help, or who are graded 3 or 4 by internal observation team | | Improved Teaching and Learning.  Greater teacher awareness of improvement needs and identification of their own improvement goals. | 76% of 17 teachers improved their observation grade.  2 teachers moved from grade 4 to 3,  3 teachers moved from grade 4 to 2,  1 teacher stayed at grade 4,  8 teachers moved from grade 3 to 2,  3 teachers stayed at grade 3. | FE College in urban area |
| Mentoring to create an agreed action plan, using peer mentors who were outstanding practitioners.  Team teaching. | | Improved Teaching and Learning | 4 out of 5 teachers moved from observation grade 3 to grade 2.  One did not show any improvement. | County-wide local authority adult and community education service |
| **Impact on TLA internal observations and grades (continued)** | | | | |
| Developing practice of embedding English, literacy and ESOL in vocational and enterprise courses. Identifying learners’ needs through surveys and initial assessments | | More effective embedding of English. Increased awareness of importance of literacy skills as well as vocational input | Lesson observation grades improved:   * 2 teachers moved from grade 3 to 2, * 2 teachers moved from grade 2 to 1, * A fifth teacher remained grade 1, and now wants to gain level 5 certificate in supporting adult literacy | Inner city local authority adult learning provider |
| Further sessions on outstanding teaching and learning, within existing CPD programme for tutors | | * “Improvement in TLA identified during formal observations” * Quantifiable impact measures are specifically planned to cover the whole of the 2015-16 academic year. | * 50% of the tutors observed moved from grade 3 to grade 2. | Adult Community Learning provider |
| **Impact on observation performance** | | | | |
| A JPD project to produce an Equality & Diversity (E&D) portal for sharing approaches amongst staff. | More effective embedding of E&D concepts and inclusive approach. | | Out of 174 observations undertaken by the 6th of March 2015, 170 reports made specific positive reference to embedded E&D. | 2 general FE colleges and one employer/ITP, in a range of settings. |
| **Impact on TLA observation grades and on learner attendance** | | | | |
| Creation of online system to capture and differentiate best practice and outstanding teaching learning and assessment – observing delivery from three points of view – peer observer, student observer, self-reflection of tutor | | Learners taking more responsibility for progress.  More effective linkage between sessions.  More motivated and engaged learners. | * 3 teachers moved from grade 3 to grade 2 * 3 teachers stayed at grade 2 * 1 teacher stayed at grade 2 but without elements of grade 3.   Student attendance March – July 2015 up by 27% to 97% over same period in previous year. | 16-19 study programmes in inner city-based independent training provider |
| **Impact on TLA observation grades and learner achievement** | | | | |
| Embedding of English/literacy in Construction and Trade provision | | Improved teaching and learning | Increase from 66% to 83% of internal observations being graded good or outstanding.  Achievement of Functional Skills English increased by 12% | Inner city Community College |
| **Impact on learner achievement** | | | | |
| New revision aids provided in VLE for level 3 music technology learners | | Learners able to engage more effectively with resources which focus on priority skills | Improved first-time achievement rate in practical studio tests by 11.3% to 90.7% between 2014 and 2015 | Specialist college / training centre in town |
| Provision of additional English | | Improved literacy skills  Improved quality of teaching and learning within community based ESOL provision | 30 teaching assistants who have completed an initial English course have achieved a 100% qualification pass rate, compared with 85% pass rate where there was no initial English course | Third sector partnership in inner city |
| Using screencasting to improve learner independence.  Screencasts (using ‘Jing’) were used to record what the tutor or student are saying alongside what is displayed on a computer screen. | | This allowed the learner to later replay to support their understanding of assignment briefs, assessment points etc. | It is reported that the quality of submissions improved significantly with improved pass rates. The original proposal was to examine the effect of improved level 3 value added scores. It is reported that the student outcomes will be monitored to test the impact of the intervention. | Outer London FE College, partnered with two other colleges; all three are ‘good with outstanding features’. |
| **Impact on learner achievement (continued)** | | | | |
| The project focused on embedding the use of a training Skills Profile tool in apprenticeship delivery in order to improve the assessment of learners to support their progression into employment or further training. | | Improved learner achievement. | The project reports that – ‘of the initial pilot group of six apprentices, two learners achieved scores of 9 in the final scores in at least one soft skill and one learner scored the very highest score of 10 in three soft skills in the initial assessment. | Third sector inner city provider |
| Centred on Joint Practice Development with an emphasis being on cross-vocational / literacy/ESOL sharing of practice, along with collaborating with Lambeth Adult Learning Services to develop links with local employers to feed into the literacy for employability focus. | | Improving success rates and progression including employability | * NCFE childcare 95% * NCFE employability (office and reception skills, confidence for work) 100% * NCFE enterprise (sewing and enterprise) 100%   Additionally, the majority of students who passed level 1 childcare are progressing to level 2 and/or GCSE English. Four students from office and reception skills applied for voluntary placements at Guy’s Hospital and two are working as volunteers at a local college. Students from the sewing and enterprise course are preparing crafts for a summer fair stall in Brixton and one of the students has progressed to a dressmaking course at the College. Three students on the confidence for work course have started to apply for jobs and one has had a successful interview. Others are enrolling on ESOL, English and pay roll courses to improve their chances of employment in the future. | Inner city local authority education provider |
| **Impact on learner retention** | | | | |
| Flexible use of technology through portable devices – Painting and Decorating entry level and Media level 2 | | Increased engagement and motivation of learners | Learner retention increased from 92% to 97% | Suburban FE College |
| Exploring techniques to facilitate multi-level teaching / differentiated learning within one class, responding to individual needs of mixed ability group | | Improved quality of teaching and learning | 15% increase in learner retention | Third sector partnership in inner city |
| Building and implementing the ‘Pathway to Excellence’, a high quality performance management framework that would drive the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all apprenticeships to ‘outstanding’. | | Improved TLA reported to contribute to improved learner attendance. | The data on the data dashboards linked to the Performance Management Framework show a strong correlation between the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by tutor-assessor and learners’ attendance, retention and achievement rates. | Registered charity and independent learning provider based in South East London. |

| **Table 3: OTLA Initiative – Indicative impact examples** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Intervention** | **Impact** | **Evidence provided** | **Context** |
| **Impact on learner retention and achievement** | | | |
| The development of reflective practice amongst the teachers engaged with the project with an emphasis on the features of Outstanding Teaching Learning and Assessment | Increased sharing of good practice for teachers, especially strategies for improving TLA for disadvantaged learners.  A wider understanding of barriers to learning for disadvantaged learners.  The introduction of a new approach to course delivery including the involvement of staff outside the teaching workforce – e.g hostel staff and volunteers | Participation, attendance, and retention reported to have improved with anticipated increases in learner outcomes. Collateral improvements too in vocational courses with embedded English. | Led by third sector provider in conjunction with an inner city adult literacy service focussed on the literacy theme including ESOL and JCP learners. Working with learners in homeless hostels across London. The target learners were classified as ‘hard to reach’. |
| The extension of excellent practice in English; this was coupled with broader approaches to support progression to wider society through a mentoring approach. | Increased confidence and independence amongst learners. This led to better feedback to tutors on what was working well in learning situations. Tutors had higher expectations of what their learners could achieve. | Retention was reported to increase 15% during the initiative. | Inner city third sector provider focussed on EIF funded ESOL provision for BAME women who are citizens of non EU countries. These have been defined within the project case study as disadvantaged learners. The lead organisation was working with four other partners. |

| **Table 3: OTLA Initiative – Indicative impact examples** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Intervention** | **Impact** | **Evidence provided** | **Context** |
| **Impact on staff satisfaction with learner progress** | | | |
| Using screencasting to improve learner independence.  Screencasts (using ‘Jing’) were used to record what the tutor or student are saying alongside what is displayed on a computer screen.  This allowed the learner to later replay to support their understanding of assignment briefs, assessment points etc. | Increased staff satisfaction on learner progress, opportunities for feedback and level of detail of feedback | Staff satisfied or very satisfied:   * That the **methods** they are using to give feedback to their learners help the learners to make as much progress as possible – increased from 81% to 92% * With having enough opportunities to **repeat** the feedback to learners as required – increased from 76% to 91% * That the **time** they have available for feedback enables them to give a sufficient level of detail to all learners – increased from 31% to 44% | Outer London FE College partnered with two other colleges. |

**5.0 Examples of potential links between OTLA interventions and inspection findings**

Section 5 provides examples in which an inspection of a participating provider has taken place during the lifetime of the OTLA initiative or more recently. However, the likelihood of project activity being internally embedded by the time of any inspection does vary. It should also be noted that the extent to which OTLA initiative activities have contributed to inspection findings at provider level will vary, and will not be possible to establish definitively. Inspection findings are of course impacted on by many factors.

A brief summary is given of the name of the provider (hyperlinked to the inspection report), the date of the inspection and the grades for Overall Effectiveness, Outcomes, Teaching, Learning and Assessment and Leadership and Management. The previous inspection grades are also given for comparison purposes. The inspection methodology changed in September 2016 when short inspections were introduced alongside full inspections. The information refers to the latter unless noted otherwise.

**AoC London**

[Richmond Adult Community College](file:///C:\Users\colin\Dropbox\Our%20team%20documents\Learning%20and%20skills%20inspection%20report)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [Richmond Adult Community College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/2490305/urn/131095.pdf) | May 2015 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Previous Inspection | Feb 14 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

A key action from Richmond Adult Community College’s (RACC) February 2014 Ofsted inspection was to improve the embedding of English within other subjects. In addition, RACC staff are working on improving the quality of resources within its English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and foundation English programmes. The project trained ESOL and foundation English staff members from RACC, Hillcroft and SCOLA in digital learning design.

The inspectorate noted at the 2015 inspection that:

*“Effective teaching, learning and assessment and very good support for learners have led to improvements in outcomes for learners. Tutors’ planning is careful and takes good account of learners’ personal circumstances and starting points, so that the majority of learners make good progress in their lessons. Learners receive constructive and informative feedback from tutors that encourages them to improve their work.”*

And

“*Training for tutors is regular, effective, and leads to improvements to teaching, learning and assessment”*

And

*“tutors and learners use ILT and other technologies very effectively to enhance learning and assessment”*

[Hackney Community College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130407)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [Hackney Community College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130407) | October 2015 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Previous inspection | March 2014 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Hackney Community College was the lead organisation in a project focussing on English and literacy. This project developed a whole organisational approach to make the development of English central to the organisation and created opportunities for staff to build positive and collaborative relationships.

The inspectorate noted that:

*“Teaching and learning very strongly promote skills development; for example, self-confidence and self-esteem, understanding of the work environment and the importance of English and mathematics skills”.*

And

*“Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have successfully focused on precise improvement actions and outcomes for learners and teaching, learning and assessment are now good”.*

*“Leaders and managers have responded well to the priorities for improvement set out at the previous inspection. They have continued to develop strong, quality improvement arrangements and have successfully improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers’ accurate judgements on the quality of lessons, from the college’s own observation scheme, have contributed to improvement. Rigorous tackling of poor performance, accompanied by very effective professional development, is helping less effective teachers improve*”

[Redbridge College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130453)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [Redbridge College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130453) | December  2015 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Previous Inspection | June 14 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Redbridge College was a partner in the project with Barking and Dagenham College looking at using Google for outstanding teaching, learning & assessment. The OTLA intervention was located in hospitality and catering at Redbridge.

The inspectorate drew attention to this initiative specifically in the report:

*Leaders have ensured that they support teachers to experiment with new and innovative teaching techniques and also provide well-targeted professional development. Together, these strategies have helped to bring about improvements in teaching and learning, including some innovative use of e-learning. For example, in catering, learners routinely photograph their practical work on smart phones and upload the results to the college virtual learning environment (VLE), where teachers provide immediate feedback on their presentation. Learners enjoy being able to receive instant responses from their teachers and using their smart phones in this way.*

[Richmond Upon Thames College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130454)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [Richmond Upon Thames College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130454) | January 16 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Previous Inspection | May 14 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

Richmond on Thames College was a participant in the City and Islington College project focussing on study programmes. The college was graded as ‘requires improvement’ overall and for study programmes. However the section on study programmes in the inspection report does contain these comments:

*“Teaching learning and assessment are well planned, much more effectively than at the previous inspection.*

*Teachers often make good reference to employability skills such as team working and communications and include activities to develop these in their lessons.*

*Study programmes are now well planned and based on both employers’ and learners’ needs. Work placements to help learners get ready for employment are designed specifically to meet the needs of each subject. For example, in construction a collaborative project with the awarding organisation and a major employer successfully produced an activity that resulted in carpentry and joinery students learning new skills to meet industry needs and helping them to progress to apprenticeships”.*

[Barnet and Southgate](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130425)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [Barnet and Southgate](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/2530021/urn/130425.pdf) | December 2015 | 2 | Short inspection | | |
| Previous Inspection | November 2009 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Barnet and Southgate College was a partner in the City and Islington led pan-London community of good practice around study programmes with a particular emphasis on successful outcomes in English and literacy that lead to progression and work.

Reporting on the short inspection, inspectors noted that:

*“Teachers increasingly include the development of learners’ literacy and numeracy skills in their lessons, so that learners are developing good language skills, for example through making presentations, as well as confidence in using mathematics. Inspectors saw learners’ mathematics skills being developed well in an English lesson and their English skills being developed well in a mathematics lesson. A few learners are unclear about why they are working on English exercises in their other lessons, and what they are required to do to complete them”*

And

*“There is some good practice in the setting of well-focused targets but many targets are too general, so that while learners know what they have to do to succeed they are not always clear about the smaller steps they need to take on the way to success. This is particularly problematic in mathematics and English lessons, or where these topics are incorporated in lessons on other subjects. It is too early to be sure of the impact of this new emphasis on target setting and monitoring, but staff are very enthusiastic about the new systems and the information they are receiving about their learners’ progress”.*

**EMFEC**

[The Derbyshire Network](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/58159)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [The Derbyshire Network](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/58159) | December  2015 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Previous Inspection | November 13 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

The Derbyshire Network was a partner in the project to develop coaching and mentoring to support Outstanding, Teaching, Learning and Assessment. The inspection report notes that

*“Teaching, learning and assessment have improved as a result of extensive staff training that is valued by all staff. The large majority of staff now have at least an introductory or higher teaching qualification. This training has sharpened the confidence and competence of the large majority of trainers. As a result they are more clearly focused on learning, and plan sessions by considering the impact on the learners. Teaching, learning and assessment have much improved since the previous inspection”*

[Derby City Council](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/50216)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [Derby City Council](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/50216) | February 2016 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Previous inspection | February 2011 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Derby City Council’s project was to encourage Teaching and Learning practitioners to explore, experiment and improve their confidence and skills in effectively using e-technologies to enhance and develop their Teaching, Learning and Assessment practice. The inspectorate noted that:

*“Learners make extensive use of widely available information learning technology and the internet to enhance their learning experience within and beyond the classrooms”.*

and

*“Tutors and assessors use the extensive learning technology facilities well to support and enhance learning. For example, in one lesson, learners thoroughly enjoyed using the interactive whiteboard to build complex sentences from simple phrases. An excellent online learning resource supports independent learning very well; learners are able to view learning material prepared for a specific class as well as access a comprehensive range of additional learning materials. The many learners who use this resource find it supports their learning very well”.*

[Nottinghamshire Training Network](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/58161)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [Nottinghamshire Training Network](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/58161) | November 2016 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Previous inspection | April 2014 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

The Nottingham Training Network project’s expected outcomes included improved learner satisfaction within work based learning across the partners and the network, with an eventual increase in achievement and retention on apprenticeship programmes and other provisions as a direct result of outstanding teaching and assessment and a well established peer group, with links across a range of post-compulsory training providers.

Although the inspectorate commented that *“teaching and learning are not consistently effective”,* it was apparent that

*“Observers of training, learning and assessment accurately identify key strengths and provide trainers with detailed help for improving weaknesses. This results in improved learning and training”*

And

*“Managers provide plentiful, good-quality professional development to their subcontractors on how to improve teaching, learning and assessment. However, leaders and managers do not ensure that subcontractors rigorously monitor how well all their assessors apply these improved strategies and as a result not all apprentices benefit”.*

[Grantham College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130759)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [Grantham College](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130759) | January 2016 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Previous Inspection | January 2010 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

Grantham College’s project looked at identifying and sharing practices that are effective in embedding mathematics within a vocational context. The inspectorate noted that:

*“Teachers show good awareness of the need to use vocational lessons to improve learners’ English and mathematics skills, and this is having a positive impact in preparing learners for work. Learners’ achievements in these subjects are improving, except in GCSE English”.*

However at the time of the inspection other impacts appear to have been limited and variable, for example:

*“Senior leaders have prioritised English and mathematics. However, the increased emphasis on developing learners’ English and mathematical skills across the curriculum is not yet resulting in improvements for all learners and apprentices”.*

*“The quality of lessons in English and mathematics is very mixed. In the best instances, teachers focus effectively on helping learners to reinforce their underpinning knowledge and practise skills and techniques until they can replicate these securely. However, in weaker lessons the slow pace, combined with both teachers’ and learners’ lack of confidence, results in learners not making much progress. Attendance in English and mathematics lessons is consistently lower than in other lessons, but is improving”*

[New College Stamford](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/2475027/urn/130760.pdf)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [New College Stamford](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/2475027/urn/130760.pdf) | March 2015 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Previous Inspection | January 2010 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

New College Stamford was a partner in the Buxton and South Derbyshire led project: to investigate the impact of the coaching and mentoring staff development model. The inspection, early in the implementation of the OTLA initiative, identified staff development as an area for improvement:

*“Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by ensuring that the training for teachers and assessors supports them to extend the range of techniques they use, so that they help all students and apprentices make swift progress and enable them to excel”.*

The report also notes that:

*“Leaders have recently appointed teaching and learning coaches to support and challenge teachers whose practice has been identified as raising concerns. The contribution made by these staff is positive; they are enabling the large majority of teachers receiving support to demonstrate measurable improvements in their performance*.”

**Learning Consortium**

[South Essex College of Further and Higher Education](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130672)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Inspection date | Overall Effectiveness | Outcomes | T&L | L&M |
| [South Essex College of Further and Higher Education](http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report/provider/ELS/130672) | May 2015 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Previous inspection | December 2013 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

The inspectorate observed that:

*‘too much teaching, learning and assessment still requires improvement; not enough teachers plan learning that meets the needs of all their learners nor provide enough challenge to enable all learners, particularly the more able, to make the progress of which they are capable’*

However under Leadership and Management there is a reference to the impact of the teaching and learning strategy:

*‘Leadership and management have improved significantly since the previous inspection and they are now good. The Principal and recently restructured management team provide strong leadership; they manage change well and have implemented skilfully a clear strategy to improve teaching, learning and assessment that focuses on raising standards for learners. The majority of staff are highly motivated and understand this strategy well, and are committed to the continued growth and development of the college’.*

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, while evidence of impact on inspection grades may appear to be limited, there is stronger indicative evidence of impact in the contribution of the OTLA initiative to improvement in a variety of different areas. This suggests a positive travel towards outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.

**6.0 Emerging findings: overall and specific impacts**

**6.1 Overall impact**

The initiative as a whole, and individual projects, report evidence of a positive direction of travel towards impacts that might in the longer term be reflected in improved inspection grades. These include, for example: increased provider and practitioner reach; increased appreciation of the characteristics of outstanding teaching learning and assessment; OTLA project activities; increased adoption of the Professional Standards (see Appendix 5) and good evidence of their contribution to improvement; and the establishment of explicit links between OTLA project activities and measures relating to, for example, learner attendance, retention rates, punctuality and learner outcomes. The projects are reported to be diverse and wide-ranging, and to demonstrate an inclusive approach – see Appendix 2.

A significant number of projects report a substantial level of co-ownership of learning and leadership by learners and other end-users. These projects have provided evidence of how the concept of 'learner voice' can be embedded in improvement towards outstanding TLA.

**6.2 Specific impacts and their contribution to supporting OTLA**

There is evidence provided of a wide range of types of impact resulting from the interventions developed through this initiative. Immediate impact can occur at different levels, depending on the focus of the intervention. These levels include whole-organisation, partnership, senior leadership, practitioners and learners. Wherever the immediate impact occurs, the intention is to support improvements in TLA so as to contribute to outstanding experiences and, critically, outcomes for learners.

This report summarises the ways in which specific impacts are reported to be being achieved by the OTLA contract interventions, and how these have the potential to support the journey towards OTLA and improved learner outcomes. This section describes specific impact on staff (6.3) and learner experience and outcomes (6.4). It is followed by consideration of: collaborative working and sustainability; adding to the body of knowledge about OTLA; the role of research in the initiative; and transferability.

The findings at autumn 2015 were drawn substantially from evaluation reports, reach data, and interviews with regional initiative leaders, project leaders and participants. The February 2016 analysis included data from Ofsted inspection reports, from the January/February impact survey and from specific projects.

**6.3 Staff**

Change can occur through a bottom-up approach, for example with practitioners developing projects to change practice. It can also occur through participating in CPD with senior organisational leadership – a more top-down approach.

This change initiative includes both approaches. In the South Essex/Learning Consortium initiative, a major intervention has been the delivery of professional development programmes focussed on developing TLA through the application of a learning framework informed by a learning-cycle model. Engagement with the support and challenge partnership element has required participation and commitment from a senior leader from each provider involved, so as to support a whole-organisation approach and a senior focus on TLA as an organisational priority.

The EMFEC initiative is informed by an action research approach and involves practitioners working with university support to develop and implement improvement projects, using an action research methodology.

The AOC London initiative engages staff in working with ‘peer advisers’ and with each other in practitioner-led partnerships working closely with learners in many of the projects.

***Interim report stage: autumn 2015***

Considerable evidence throughout the materials points to staff involvement in a wide range of activities. The reported impact on staff comes from internal observations; feedback discussions; written evaluation feedback; and other reports on practice.

In all regions impact is reported to be demonstrated through evidence of changes in behaviour/practice, including:

* engagement in TLA dialogue with other practitioners
* dialogue with learners about TLA
* development of reflective practice, drawing on the Professional Standards
* implementation of improved practice following observation and feedback
* and, new use of information technology (IT) resources for TLA.

Many of the staff involved in the projects are reported to recognise an increase in their confidence, enthusiasm, understanding, skills and attitude. The opportunity for the projects to create 'safe spaces' to deal with real-life problems has been welcomed, and in many instances teachers have been encouraged to reflect on their changing practice in a positive and supportive environment. This has broken some of the fear barriers, such as those surrounding the use of new technologies, for example by older teachers.

Increased engagement of staff with virtual technology in several projects has been reported to have a significant impact. This has included greatly improved ownership of assessment and feedback by students, blended learning, virtual observations of lessons and using free online tools to enhance learning.

Staff impacts are often linked in projects to improving the learner experience*.* This may be through an increased appreciation of barriers to learning as well as improved involvement of support staff. This has been reported to lead to better retention rates, attendance and punctuality that may, in time, be translated into improved student outcomes.

***Final report stage: February 2016***

By this stage, there was further evidence of positive impact on staff; from Ofsted inspection data (section 5 above); from the January 2016 impact survey data; and from specific projects.

**6.3.1 Impact survey findings: staff**

Survey responses to the question as to how staff improvement is demonstrated are shown in Figure 2 below.

Staff improvement is identified as being demonstrated in a wide range of ways, including those in Table 4 below.

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 4: Ways in which staff improvement is demonstrated: January 2016 impact survey findings** |
| National Learner Views Survey 14-15 |
| Number of staff attending training, growth of the online content and growth of student and tutor engagement, staff attitude to online learning. |
| Appraisals and supervision with manager |
| Understanding of the difference between Outstanding TLA and very good practice |
| Staff satisfaction surveys |
| Staff surveys |
| Increase in sharing and professional dialogue (every half term), more resource sharing on Yammer platform, participation in regional and national level events, 2 network events hosted by a provider partnership to share knowledge with sector and employers. |
| Staff confidence, self awareness, range of resources/approaches used in delivery and understanding of the elements of outstanding teaching and learning. |
| Greater use of ICT in classroom |
| There is evidence that teaching/training staff attitudes have changed since the project/training was undertaken |

Some examples of staff improvement demonstrated by the data are summarised in Table 5 below

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 5: Examples of staff improvement: January 2016 impact survey findings** |
| Score for learner satisfaction for teaching has risen from 9.3 2013-14 to 9.4 2014-15. |
| More confidence differentiating. |
| We have experienced a 26% rise in Outstanding elements of teaching and learning. |
| Staff satisfaction survey results: 81% (Before) 92% (After) - methods you are using to give feedback to your learners help them to make as much progress as possible 76% (Before) 91% (After) - enough opportunities to repeat the feedback to learners as required 31% (Before) 44% (After) - the time you have available for feedback enables you to give a sufficient level of detail to all learners. |
| Improved outcomes data: Success rates up 3% year on year, Job outcomes up 5% year on year, Community engagement 65% . |
| A slight increase in observation grades was shown. |
| Literacy tutor observation Oct 2015 grade improved from 'good' to 'outstanding'. |
| 93% of staff who received coaching or mentoring improved their observation grade following re-observation. |
| Teaching and learning practitioners stated that they had learnt new skills and now felt confident enough to use their new skills to develop online resources to trial with their learners – one tutor stated that – “I learnt loads of things I didn't know before and this workshop has given me a good shove forward!” |
| Improved observation grades. |
| Observation grade profile for grade 2 or better has improved from 34% to 78%. |
| Improved professional practice and greater confidence in teaching staff |
| Staff morale and enthusiasm for teaching has improved, we believe this is down to them feeling their opinions and experiences to date are what matter most. |

**6.3.2 Specific impacts on staff: qualitative examples from specific projects**

There is now a wide range of examples of the contribution of OTLA initiatives in making a positive impact on staff practice. Indicative examples are provided in Appendix 1.

**6.3.3 Commentary**

It is clear that there is now evidence of a substantial number and range of examples of staff improvement. There are examples of very diverse CPD interventions, including structured training, both accredited and non-accredited; observation of teaching and learning; mentoring; coaching; joint practice development initiatives; and developing and applying software for teaching, learning, assessment and feedback.

The project reports provide many examples of specific initiatives, and many resources have been developed. In this impact assessment, it is relevant to consider some examples of staff improvement, with a particular focus on ***how*** impact has been achieved.

For example, in the **South Essex / Learning Consortium** contract, there was a strong emphasis on the development of staff through structured courses, workshops and follow-up, with less direct involvement of learners. Participating staff from provider organisations include teaching and training practitioners, but also, importantly, those who manage and lead.

Some of this impact was conceived and presented in terms of knowledge, some was about skills, and some was about systems – in particular, there was some stress on the organisational approaches to accountability/audit/monitoring structures and methods, within their quality-cycles. These were of course often closely-linked to the demands of external inspection, through Ofsted.

Although quantifiable impact on actual inspection grading was not often actually possible (because of timing issues between the project and Ofsted visits), the numerical data in terms of observation gradings was positive.

In a different approach to professional development, one of the impacts in the EMFEC region, a Midlands Adult Community Education Service, developed a coaching and mentoring system to support staff in improving their pedagogy, decoupling observation and coaching strategies from formal grading and accountability. Teachers who took part in a coaching-based observation invested more time in changing and improving their pedagogy. This was particularly true for disaffected staff, increasing their confidence and skills in the classroom. The outcomes included improved classroom management, better use of in-class support, improvements in Entry-level learners’ confidence and ability to express themselves, and the use of Moodle. It also gave staff a thirst for innovation, change and the embracing of both the positive and negative aspects of their learning experience.

Another project led by the same Adult Community Education service was to encourage teachers to explore, experiment and improve their confidence and skills in using information learning technologies (ILT). As with their observation work, the team felt it was essential to create the same learning environment for the teachers as they do for their learners: one in which there are no negative repercussions if new experiments fail. This allowed the team to explore new techniques in an environment in which it was safe to take risks and innovate, enabling staff to break through their fear of using new technologies. The pre- and post-training analysis of staff skills and attitudes shows a very good level of development in confidence, enthusiasm, understanding, skills and attitude. The new teaching approach also enthused learners and increased learning between lessons. This creation of a climate in which staff feel able to take risks and explore new pedagogy is an essential requirement of the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework[[2]](#footnote-2).

In yet another approach, impact has been achieved through significantly enhanced collaboration between tutors both within and between organisations and, on occasions, with learners too. A strong project in this respect was led by an inner London FE college. The key impact reported was the willingness to share ideas and resources and to ask for support from tutors from across the group. This was viewed as particularly important in what was seen as the fragmented context for the delivery of study programmes. The project reported that the increasing ability in tutors and colleagues to identify learners’ needs and enable them to develop strategies to overcome barriers to developing English skills, would improve learner retention and achievement. This will continue to improve across all partner colleges as staff involved continue working towards a shared understanding of outstanding teaching and learning.

Another project, led by a London partnership, used a peer based approach to impact on practitioners delivering ESOL and literacy within the study skills programme.

Staff improvement and positive impact has occurred using all of the approaches just exemplified: accounting and monitoring in a more top-down approach; coaching and mentoring; reducing accounting and encouraging experimentation and innovation; and peer sharing of ideas in joint practice development projects. Further examples of how staff impacts are often linked to improving learner experience and achievement are given in appendices 1 and 2.

This evidence suggests that, unsurprisingly, there is no one right way to improvement. There are some indications of the critical success factors which can contribute to the effectiveness of improvement initiatives. These are considered in Section 9, Conclusions and the Longer Term.

**6.4 Learner experience and outcomes**

Evidence of the emerging impact about learner experience comes from learner voice/feedback data (focus groups, satisfaction surveys, evaluation sheets, etc); retention rates; and observation data.

***Autumn 2015***

There is evidence of learner involvement in discussions about TLA; in using IT-based approaches, for learning and testing; receiving and acting on specific individual feedback; and in giving feedback to teachers.

Examples of activities included some in which there was reported to be greater learner co-ownership of improving teaching, learning and assessment. For example in one project, learners were heavily involved in defining 'OTLA' criteria and in giving feedback to teachers. In another project, the redesign of generic online literacy material created a bespoke resource that was reported to have enhanced the learner experience. This evolved into the creation of student 'literacy legends' who provided ongoing support and advice for their peers, and also contributed to the regular updating of the college's virtual learning environment (VLE). This project is reported to have the potential to achieve considerable momentum and create sustainability.

***February 2016***

Providers have now identified further examples of improvement and progress for learners, in January 2016 impact survey data; and from specific project examples.

**6.4.1 Impact survey findings: learners**

Survey responses about how learner improvement is demonstrated are summarised in Figure 3 below.

**Figure 3 Ways in which learner improvement is demonstrated**

Learner improvement is demonstrated in a wide range of evidence/ways/activity, including:

|  |
| --- |
| **Table 6: Ways in which learner improvement is demonstrated: January 2016 impact survey findings** |
| National Learner Views Survey 2014-15. |
| Learners have a greater understanding of what outstanding teaching and learning is and how hard a teacher role is. |
| Learner confidence improved greatly. |
| Learners reported feeling empowered to achieve high grades and there has been a notable increase in the speed in which learners hand in work for a re-submission after receiving feedback on their first submission. Learners took far more responsibility for getting feedback promptly and acting on it, and this has been demonstrated by the increased number of learners handing work in before the deadline. Via student feedback forums learners expressed their appreciation of being able to access feedback at any time, on any device, and at a time that suits them. Students engaged with the assessment criteria and had greater ownership of their own progress and attainment. |
| Improved Community Engagement. |
| Improved training and use of ICT. |
| Learner data was collected via the tutor JPD reports and related to the learning activity used in the sessions. |
| There is evidence that learners are more confident/engaged because of the project/training. |

Some examples of learner improvement demonstrated by the data are summarised in Table 7 below.

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| --- |
| **Table 7: Examples of learner improvement: January 2016 impact survey findings** |
| Attendance: English/ESOL 2014-15 87% Autumn Term 2015 90% High retention, achievement & success rates for ESOL provision maintained at 96%, 95% & 91% respectively in 2014-15 with same results of 96% retention, achievement 95% and success 91%.in 2013-14 which was up from 2012-13 when retention was 91%, achievement 92% and success rate 84%. |
| Learner access to anytime any place online learning. |
| Learners attended more sessions, more people found employment, more move on to other courses. |
| Attendance records. Learner surveys. |
| Learner Satisfaction Survey Results: 79 % (Before) 90 % (After) - are able to go over and understand feedback to improve your work 36 % (Before) 78 % (After) - feel that feedback is personalised to them 76 % (Before) 94 % (After) - the amount and detail of feedback 74 % (Before) 100 % (After) - able to access feedback in a way they want 66 % (Before) 85 % (After) - able to receive feedback quickly enough. |
| Success rates up 3% year on year, job outcomes up 5% year on year. |
| Data across the sub-contractor network is aggregated for the network as a whole; improvements within apprenticeship delivery are slow and it would be difficult to apportion all improvements to this small project as it forms part of a wider improvement strategy. However, overall data shows improvement. |
| 10 laptops are available for use in the classroom. 3 learners attend extra training on use of ICT on fortnightly basis. |
| Retention improvements (tutor was mentored) 14/15 90.8% 15/16 97.5% to date. |
| There is no comparable data, learners commented on the effectiveness of the digital learning compared to previous, more traditional delivery. |
| Learner feedback includes: The computer classes help immensely. |
| It is hard to qualify achievement/success data at this stage in the year as many of our learners are still on programme. Teaching and learning has been adapted over the course of the year against new qualification standards. All sessions have been adapted to take on board the Learning Cycle, we have a good pass rate for mandatory units of Business and Customer Service qualifications. However as these standards are new there is nothing to compare to previously although the qualifications themselves are far more demanding. |
| Impact on personal development of learners involved in project The experience of being a Learning Ambassador has been highly rated by participants. Ambassadors have valued the opportunity and they have told us that they had:  • Gained valuable training which has been recognised by an award which will enhance their CVs.  • Learnt to be professional, worked as a member of a team and developed skills which will help in the job market.  • Reflected on their own learning.  • Grown in confidence as they help shape the professional practice of their tutors. |

**6.4.2 Specific impacts on learners: qualitative examples from specific projects**

In addition to the examples given above, there are many more specific examples of the positive impact of the OTLA initiative on learner experience and achievement. Indicative examples from individual projects are provided in Appendix 2.

**6.4.3 Commentary**

Impact on learner experience and outcomes is being identified in a wide variety of ways. These include the improvement in staff performance, the effective use of technology, and co-ownership of the process of teaching and learning.

For example, staff impacts are often linked in projects to improving the learner experience. This may be through an increased appreciation of barriers to learning as well as improved involvement of support staff. This has been reported to lead to better retention, attendance and punctuality that may, in time, be translated into improved student outcomes. There was a high degree of confidence in one project that 'data showed a strong correlation between the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by tutor-assessor, and learners’ attendance, retention and achievement rates'. One London partnership project reported direct impacts on learners including: readiness to learn, better cooperation, becoming more active learners, better motivation and better employability skills.

Increased engagement of staff with virtual technology in several projects was reported to have a significant impact. This included greatly improved ownership of assessment and feedback by students, blended learning, virtual observations of lessons and using free on line tools to enhance learning. A recent Ofsted inspection of a London adult education institute reflected the impact of the initiative in the inspection report.

Learner co-ownership of improving teaching, learning and assessment was reported to be enhanced in several projects. Learners were heavily involved in defining 'OTL' criteria and in giving feedback to teachers. The redesign of generic on-line literacy resources created a bespoke resource that was reported to have enhanced the learner experience at a west London college. This evolved into the creation of student 'literacy legends' who provided ongoing support and advice for their peers, and staff, and also contributed to the regular updating of the college's VLE. This has achieved considerable momentum and created significant potential for sustainability.

An inner London adult education project attributes improved learner outcomes, progression and employability to the impact that Joint Practice Development has had on the quality of teaching. A London based third sector provider constructed a high quality performance management framework to drive the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all apprenticeships to ‘outstanding’. The project reported that as teaching, learning and assessment improved, so did learner attendance, with a subsequent impact on retention and achievement rates.

Overall, the ongoing evidence of impact on learners over time is particularly clear where projects have involved learners more directly – see for example the Jobwise case study (Appendix 3).For interventions where the focus is on structured CPD, especially working with senior staff, impact on learner experience and achievements would be longer term. For example, some survey responses from the South Essex / Learning Consortium region have given summer 2016 as a timescale for being able to identify impact on learner achievement. Interestingly, an evaluation by Caroline Walker-Gleaves[[3]](#footnote-3) of the Learning Framework central to a significant strand of the South Essex / Learning Consortium initiative shows the complexity of the interactions that influence the creation of Outstanding Teaching Learning and Assessment and provides an insight into the sophisticated relationship between teaching and learning.

**6.5 Collaborative working and sustainability**

***Autumn 2015***

There is substantial evidence of collaborative working reported in all regions, achieved through joint CPD and joint JPD projects. Collaborative working has contributed to the potential for transferability, sustainability and adding to the body of knowledge. Specific aspects of the collaborative working approach are reported to include the following:

* reinforcing and extending existing partnerships and sometimes establishing new partnerships, mostly within providers’ own sector but also across sectors to some extent (see Table 1)
* refocussing of networks to prioritise TLA
* diverse partnerships varying in: sector, maturity of practice, Ofsted grades, power relationships
* increased capacity for action research.

Several individual projects have reported significantly enhanced collaboration between tutors both within and between organisations and, on occasions, collaborations also involving learners. Dimensions in the *Professional Standards* relating to collaboration have been highlighted, thus enhancing the potential for these standards to be embedded, therefore increasing the potential for sustainability. Collaboration is reported to have been particularly powerful for staff in the voluntary and third sector organisations – those more likely to engage with 'hard-to-reach learners'; and thus to have an impact on supporting equality, diversity and inclusion.

Many of the approaches to improvement have the potential to reinforce collaborative working. Examples include review and development style work on observation, self-assessment reporting (SARs), CPD planning, peer-working on the ‘Learning Cycle’ initiative, and virtual forums.

Sustainability can be potentially achieved through improvements in practice becoming embedded in ways of working. All the OTLA regional contracts have features with the potential to support sustainability. These include:

* senior leaders and advanced practitioners working in combination
* associate peer advisers who are provider-based
* strong networks

The evidence suggests that these mechanisms can all support the transfer to sustainable embedded practice, although all are potentially vulnerable to practical pressures on providers in the sector. These mechanisms are more effective in combination – but sustainability cannot be imposed, and takes time to establish.

So, although impact assessment and other summative reports suggest that there will be a high level of sustainability for the initiatives developed, this outcome is largely dependent on internal or external networks continuing, as well as there being sufficient access to what they offer. In some cases, staff interest in evaluating the causality of their work shows a strong sense of sustainable investment in improvement. Emerging evidence of sustainable activity includes themed network events; a new network group focused on research; and the extension of improvement initiatives to new curriculum areas.

Sustainability of collaboration therefore seems potentially good, but will be critically dependent on practical aspects of sustainability in general – such as enabling and resourcing of physical, virtual and/or calendar space.

***February 2016***

Further evidence of ongoing collaborative working, together with its potential for ongoing and sustainable improvement, is now available from the January 2016 impact survey findings and specific project examples.

**6.5.1 Impact survey findings: providers**

Evidence of potential sustainability comes from examples of systemic provider level improvement. The January 2016 impact survey responses on how improvement is demonstrated at provider level are summarised in figure 4 below.

**Figure 4 Ways in which provider level improvement is demonstrated**

**6.5.2 Commentary**

By February 2016 evidence had become available of ongoing collaborative working and indications of potential sustainability.

For example one Midlands training network clearly has a well-established membership, which has been emboldened by the opportunity to carry out the OTLA project. While the compressed timescale of the project appears to have given the team insufficient time to work through all the improvement issues, the network does appear to have the potential and aspiration to continue to work together for mutual improvement.

Another rich example was a London partnership in which dimensions of the Professional Standards have been highlighted in relation to collaboration; thus enhancing the potential for this aspect to be embedded and therefore enhancing sustainability.

One project reported increased collaboration in planning for literacy and performance tutors.

In yet a further project links were made with another project led by a third sector provider and focussing on Recognition and Recording of Progress and Achievement (RARPA). Elements of this therefore came into play.

The impacts of collaborative working were particularly powerful for staff in the voluntary and third sector organisations: those more likely to engage with 'hard to reach learners'. At the former, resources were developed to link more closely to a newly developed RARPA framework. This project anticipated that learner outcomes will improve in English and ESOL and vocational provision across both. In some examples teachers took more ownership of CPD with a corresponding impact on learner success.

Examples of potentially sustainable systemic improvement include a project developing a comprehensive approach to the diversification of the uses of screencasting in teaching, learning and assessment. Another project cites change in systems of assessments and new ways of communication.

The role of the Education and Training Foundation Professional Standards is identified as contributing well to systemic improvement, as described in an example in which CPD provided to staff within the project would not have been accessed otherwise. Tutor enthusiasm was infectious, spreading organically between areas. Tutors sought to demonstrate their commitment to the Professional Standards values of reflecting on what works best in their teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners, focussing on the skills of applying appropriate and fair methods of assessment, and providing constructive and timely feedback to support progression and achievement.

In a further example, an independent training provider established a mixed group of managers, teachers and learners to achieve agreement on criteria that characterise outstanding teaching and learning. These criteria were based on the Common Inspection Framework and the Professional Standards.Software was then designed to complement other ways of gathering evidence against these criteria allowing a specific focus on 'outstanding' to develop. This project produced a full suite of descriptors for different elements of outstanding practice to identify, capture and share best practice.

Some projects reported that the potential for improvement to be sustainable is indicated by evidence that senior management attitudes have changed since the project/training was undertaken.

The relationship between collaborative working and sustainability is well illustrated by the following impact survey response:

*Extended and sustained collaborative partnerships between the colleges, has led to continued working partnerships for phase II. Anticipated savings in staff time had been underestimated and staff reported a significant reduction in the time spent supporting students by repeating and explaining feedback, checking through various drafts of student work and encouraging independent learning. In general, teachers spent less time recording feedback which allowed for much greater personalisation to stretch and challenge learners to achieve the higher grades.*

Source: January 2016 impact survey

A further comment about sustainability, from a financial perspective, was that:

*By improving teaching and learning, more learners complete their course on time and therefore the provider is more financially stable.*

Source: January 2016 impact survey

Feedback from the phase 2 projects provides indications of sustainability, as illustrated by the following comment from a progress report:

*Students and practitioners have been identified within each partner college and have agreed to continued involvement within the project*

Source: OTLA project progress report

The role of research-based projects in contributing to sustainability is exemplified by a provider example which suggests that, for research to be sustained beyond the life of a seed-funding period, the project team need to demonstrate incisive self-reflection skills. This should enable all contributors to understand the value which the quality improvement investment has added to learners’ learning, and any issues that need to be resolved in order to increase this learning impact. For example, at a technology institute, the team was very clear about the outcomes of their research into how 16-18 year old learners prefer to learn. The hypothesis was that a blend of online, technology-enhanced and traditional delivery would best meet their learners’ needs and learning styles. Through repetitive trials, the team is beginning to perfect its approach to ‘flipping’ learning – the technique of using guided learning hours to choreograph learners’ learning between lessons. This emphasis on continual trial and evaluation strongly suggests a high degree of sustainability of their work.

**6.6 Adding to the body of knowledge about outstanding TLA**

What does ‘adding to the body of knowledge’ mean, and what is its value? It can mean creating new knowledge through complete innovation and/or synthesis of existing knowledge. It can also mean adding to the body of knowledge available in particular contexts – and therein lies some of the value and the impact with respect to this particular initiative.

The potential for adding to the body of knowledge is rooted in the design of the OTLA initiative. In particular, the multi-partner approach has provided a space and acted as a catalyst for the bringing together of different approaches and practices; and for applying new thinking to the understanding and addressing of specific challenges to achieve improvement.

***Autumn 2015***

Practitioners working in different contexts are reported to have been able to think through the challenge of improving TLA, to draw on their respective experiences to develop new approaches; and to adapt and apply, in their own contexts, approaches which their partner practitioners have found effective.

***February 2016***

A summary of the body of knowledge relating to Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment was published by Ofsted, as the OTLA initiative was launched. By February 2016 it had become possible to identify a range of characteristics of OTLA project initiatives which map well on to the inspectorate paper. Although not referred to by individual projects or at dissemination events, the links between this document and OTLA initiative findings illustrate how the initiative evidence is consolidating, reinforcing, and helping to embed, knowledge about OTLA. Indicative examples of links are shown in table 8 below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table 8: Indicative examples of links between Ofsted recommendations and OTLA initiative findings** | |
| **Ofsted recommendation** | **Complementary OTLA initiative finding.  The impact assessment identifies:** |
| Use the Professional Standards for teachers and trainers as a basis for promoting consistently good or better practice across the sector. | The importance of the Foundation’s Professional Standards in providing a structure for the development of OTLA and a framework for reflective practice and development. |
| Work collaboratively, where possible, with other providers to share good practice and learn from each other. | The value of joint practice development in maximising potential for developing and sharing new thinking and practice. |
| Be prepared to take calculated risks and be innovative in their practice. | The importance of ‘safe spaces’ and time that allow for innovation and experimentation to take place. These are protected from tools designed to secure the accountability of teachers. |
| Teachers undertake peer-observation and use an ‘open-door’ policy to promote a culture of learning from each other. | The significance of peer-peer working for the sustainability of OTLA interventions. |
| Managers provide strong support for teachers’ research projects and experiments to explore new ways of working. | The value of research in a supportive culture in providing a resource for ongoing cumulative improvement. |
| Teachers understand the purpose, and are very flexible in their use, of a particularly wide range of teaching strategies and approaches that very successfully enhance all learners’ development, regardless of their ability levels. | The sheer diversity of approaches that have been successful or have shown potential to be successful in achieving OTLA. There is no one model but there are a plethora of ways in which success can be achieved. |
| Develop further the use of ILT so that it complements and enhances learning as well as giving learners wider access to learning resources and teachers’ support. | The use of digital technologies is becoming much more significant in supporting the development of OTLA. |
| Draw fully on learners’ views about the teaching, learning and assessment that they receive to inform self-assessment and improvement actions. | The powerful motivational and improvement impact of involving learners in observation of teaching and learning. |

In the longer term, sections 6.5, ‘Collaborative working and sustainability’ and 6.7, ‘The role of research’, provide some indication of the potential for the OTLA initiative to add further to the body of knowledge.

**6.7 The role of research in the initiative**

***Autumn 2015***

The regions have worked in various ways to take particular research-based approaches. In one case, the key agent of change was a CPD programme based on a learning framework informed by the learning cycle. This programme was delivered nationally to providers in 2013/14 with Foundation support. Lessons learned from the 2013/14 initiative informed improvements to the programme. These improvements were incorporated into the refocused programme which in 2014/15 formed the core strand of the South Essex/Learning Consortium regional initiative. The consortium worked with experienced trainers to deliver the programme together with a range of licences to practise and a small number of JPD projects. The EMFEC initiative took a different approach, working with Nottingham Trent University to support practitioners in applying JPD[[4]](#footnote-4) methodology. In London there was a more practitioner-led approach, combined with an adviser model, JPD and some use of action research.

In all three regions, research was reported in a number of sources (for example final reports, participant feedback, and interviews with regional and project leaders) to be valued as having potential to contribute to improvement.

Staff commitment to the research was reported to be high – analysis of project reports suggests that many felt their confidence and skills improved as a result of the research element of project activities.

A common strength was reported in interviews with leaders to be the determination to challenge and sometimes change the teaching paradigm at provider level. The evidence base suggests that a majority of participating staff valued the opportunity to take part in action research. It is clear from a number of final reports that project leaders took time and care to read and cross-reference the literature on research to underpin and justify their chosen methodologies. The collaborative working approach has developed participants’ and participating organisations’ capacity for action research, and could therefore contribute to enhancing wider sector capacity.

***February 2016***

With respect to the role of research, findings suggest that a longer timescale may be needed to address some more substantial research questions. Although research-based projects did not necessarily add any significant new learning to the sector’s knowledge base, some did successfully identify the conditions needed for further research and development to take place. For instance, a Midlands college project set out to identify what constituted ‘outstanding use of social media’. While it did not go on to do so, its researchers did establish the three fundamentals required for the successful integration of social media into further education. These fundamentals, which include the need to evaluate impact beyond learner enjoyment – for instance, on the development of attendance, learning skills, progress, attitude, culture and success – will form the basis of the team’s phase 2 research project. This is an encouraging further example of an ongoing improvement initiative.

Staff buy in was essential.  [One](http://www.teachlearnassess.london/stanmore-college.html) London college, had developed a whole college approach which engaged staff across the curriculum, using an action research model supported by peer-sharing and observation to focus directly on the quality of teaching learning and assessment across key themes, including the cross curricular embedding of English. The OTLA project built on this work with the aim of supporting and developing the teaching of literacy across the project partnership. The buy in and engagement of staff enabled them as project participants to use peer sharing and observation to identify areas of practice for development and generate evidence of improvement.

**6.8 Transferability**

Transferability will be interpreted as the transfer of approaches, learning and practice to providers directly involved in the initiative, including those with significantly different contexts, for example with respect to site, sub-sector, provision, scale and so on.

***Autumn 2015***

There is evidence of awareness-raising through participation in a number of dissemination events. Transferability to other sector staff seems potentially high; the evidence suggests that some has already begun.

For example the flowchart developed in one JPD project was shared with providers which were not otherwise involved, and which are much more widespread in their provision as ITPs than the immediate partners of this particular JPD project. There has also been attendance at dissemination events from outside the immediate partner organisations of the regional initiatives; and some training events have had attendance from other than immediate project partner organisations, and sometimes from beyond the regional initiative. One project suggested that a framework could be used for peer visiting and developed within departments, within one organisation or across organisations. The project made the point that, whatever model is adopted, it needs to be adapted and made fit for purpose and cost effective for the organisation and its staff.

***February 2016***

There are examples of the transferability of effective practice identified in responses to the January 2016 impact survey.

**6.8.1 Impact survey findings**

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| **Table 9: Examples of transferability: January 2016 impact survey findings** |
| The outcomes of the project have been disseminated throughout the partner colleges and further CPD opportunities have been provided within other curriculum areas at all campuses; and the use of screencasting in this way has also been developed at federated colleges. Other providers have reported improved CPD developments using the same JPD process. |
| Learning Ambassador qualitative feedback on impact collected in focus groups. |
| The approach is being used with new sub-contractors which should allow a better assessment of impact for 2015-16. |
| Have a sense of achievement in acting as an agent for change. |

**6.8.2 Feedback from phase two projects**

Further indications of the transfer of effective practice come from regional networking events and project reports from phase 2 projects. For example two network events held in December 2015 and February 2016 were attended by over 60 participants from a range of providers. The data provided shows that all respondents were very satisfied (the majority) or satisfied with the events, and that all respondents stated that they were very likely (nearly 75%) or likely to apply the experience from the event in their professional role. Specific feedback included the following:

*Useful networking opportunities to develop ideas within own centre*

*Always good to explore ideas further and gain an understanding of how things could be used at different FECs.*

*The excellence projects have a number of transferable lessons to colleges*

*Very helpful exchange of views with colleagues/new networks. Different types of providers in the room*

(Source: Summary of feedback – regional networking event – 9 February 2016)

Phase 2 project progress reports also provide evidence of transfer of practice, as exemplified by the following statements:

*Cross-provision type observations lead to professional discussions (e.g. issues such as those experienced in work-based learning and advanced learning loans are able to be shared between different provider types, leading to new ideas and strategies to try).*

*Practitioner evaluations to date identify outstanding elements of practice from their peer visits and indicate an intention to adopt (next term it will be a priority to follow up and evaluate this how this has changed practice).*

*For other practitioners there is evidence from their reflections that they are asking “ am I teaching this way because I have always done so?” and resolutions to incorporate different practice in their own delivery.*

(Source: OTLA project progress reports from providers)

**6.8.3 Dissemination conferences feedback**

In addition, the high level of participation in the June and December 2015 OTLA initiative conferences, and network events, provide indications of potential transferability through the dissemination of findings about effective practice.

**7.0 Case studies**

***Autumn 2015***

In autumn 2015 two short case studies identified the importance of ownership and context in contributing to effective improvement.

**7.1 Case study 1 – Who owns improvement?**

Extract from a project report:

*Surprisingly, the first developmental observation showed very little progress, with still significant areas for improvement highlighted. At the feedback session the strengths and areas for improvement were discussed and a further set of actions set’. After a second observation, the observer reported that: ‘There was still a slight reluctance in using and implementing some of the strategies suggested by the mentor’. The teacher only improved to a ‘very good’ level when the strategy was changed and he was allowed to peer observe a colleague from the same discipline and set his own agenda for improvement.*

*In his post-project discussion, the teacher noted that the eventual ownership of his own quality improvement journey was essential: ‘It’s getting comfortable with that mind-set and being the one in charge of your own development. I’ve been observed lots under the graded process, which has led to some quite ambiguous action points: “I want you to ble ble ble bleh”. So having this process and being asked: “Okay so what is the most important thing to you? And how are you going to do that?” And me owning it, without a doubt has been the most successful.’*

**7.2 Case study 2 – The context for improvement**

There are many routes to re-focus and achieve improvement in TLA. When these combine to complement and reinforce each other, a momentum can build up so that a real shift is achieved in expectations which leaders, practitioners and learners have of themselves and each other.

The following comments are all about the same one provider in the OTLA initiative:

*It is clear from the evidence base, that the removal of any element of ‘accountability’ (i.e. grading and feedback) enabled staff to genuinely focus on their own learning without fear of failure.*

*While it is too early to judge the longer term impact of this initiative, the evidence base suggests a paradigm shift in staff’s attitude to technology-enhanced learning, which should go on to increase the individualised nature of their learning programmes, together with the development of their learning independence.*

*The final project evaluation gives a strong sense of sustainable investment in improvement as staff have attempted to evaluate the causality of their work. In particular, they have considered how improvement actions planned as a result of this phase-1 research will impact on learners’ learning, or ability to learn.*

*The post-research evaluation of staff shows that their confidence, attitude and understanding have improved as a result of the projects.*

*The provider details well how all ‘mini-projects’ case studies will be published, as well as staff’s detailed dissemination of games-based learning training, and further commitment to disseminating their final findings and ideas.*

***February 2016***

By February 2016 the critical role of ownership and context, and other factors, can be seen clearly in the two fuller case studies provided in appendices 3 and 4.

**7.3 Case study A – Jobwise Training**

The Jobwise project demonstrates the value of involving practitioners and learners in an open and transparent approach to teaching and learning, observation and feedback.

**7.4 Case study B – Lincoln College**

The Lincoln College project really demonstrates the value of freeing staff to experiment with technology in a risk free atmosphere.

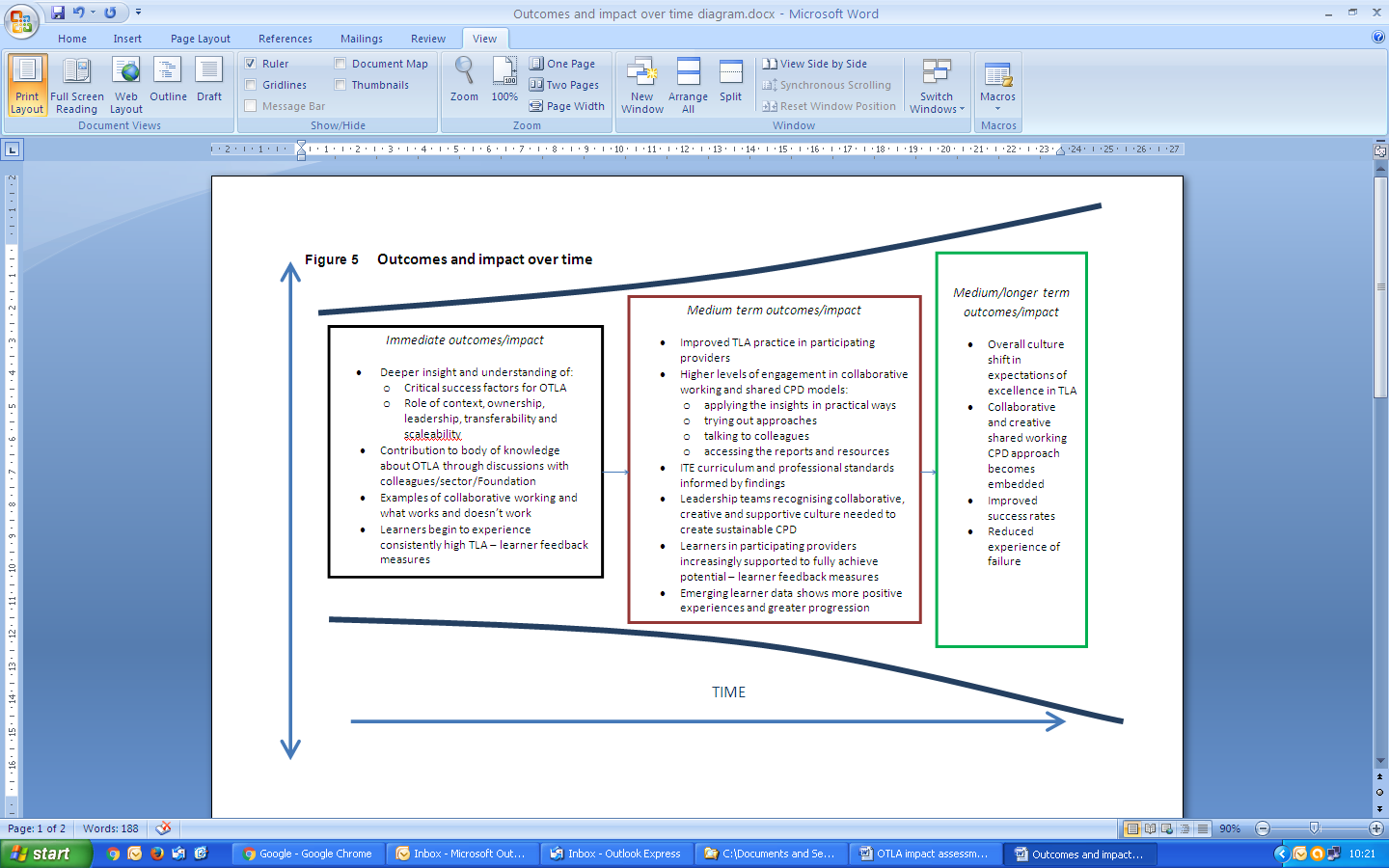
Drawing on these case studies and other data it is possible to identify a number of critical success factors for achieving positive impact on outcomes for learners. These are given in section 9, ‘Conclusions and the longer term’.

**8.0 Impact over time**

This impact assessment considers the impact of the OTLA initiative interventions over time. Figure 5 below indicates some of the intended impacts of the OTLA initiative over time. In considering impact by February 2016 of interventions which began in early 2015, it is possible to identify examples of data which provide some relevant evidence that most of the impacts have occurred to some extent.

As indicated above, those projects which involve learners more directly have a more immediate impact on learner experience and achievement. Table 3 provides evidence of staff improvement in autumn 2015 and later evidence in February 2016 of improved learner achievement. For example, one adult education provider with a collaborative JPD project initially reported an improvement in internal TLA observation grades, and later reported improving success rates and progression towards employability for learners. Other important future predictors (lead indicators) of later qualification success rates (lag indicators) which have been evidenced by OTLA projects include learner retention and attendance data, and unit/module test results. In a number of projects, there is positive evidence provided by these indicators of more immediate and medium term impact, which is encouraging in terms of likely positive impact in the longer term.

The evidence of sustainability (section 6.5 above) in the case of some projects provides encouraging indications that improved practice is becoming embedded. In addition, the dissemination of effective practice (see section 6.8 above), and the evidence of ongoing research (see section 6.7 above) both have the potential to contribute to cumulative improvement, and therefore to the longer term outcome of an overall culture shift in expectations of excellence in TLA at regional level.

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**9.0 Conclusions and the longer term**

**9.1 Conclusions: impact to date**

The impact assessment evidence suggests the following conclusions:

1. The initiative has effected a substantial and very diverse range of improvement activity in the regions in which it has taken place.
2. There is a diverse range of evidence of specific improvements with positive impacts on the quality of teaching, and on learner experience and achievement.
3. There is evidence of systemic improvement at curriculum area and provider levels.
4. There is substantial evidence of collaborative working between peers both within and across providers.
5. There are indications of the potential for ongoing and sustained improvement and for transferability of effective practice between providers.
6. There is substantial evidence of a wide range of professional development activity contributing to quality improvement in the further education and training workforce.
7. There is good evidence of the Professional Standards developed by the Foundation contributing systematically to the sustainability of staff improvement.
8. Research-based approaches have contributed to the potential of OTLA initiative projects to contribute sustainably and in the longer term to the body of knowledge about TLA.
9. The different approaches used in the three different regions have all contributed to improvement. Evidence of impact on learner achievement is easier to identify within the project timescale for the regions in which learners have been more directly involved in specific projects. Provider level improvements achieved by initiatives focussing on the participation of senior provider staff are more likely to need a longer timescale to demonstrate impact on outcomes for learners.
10. The wide range of evidence suggests a number of critical success factors which can increase the potential of OTLA initiatives to achieve positive impact over time:

* Ownership and involvement of those participating.
* Real understanding of the need to focus on difference made **to learning and outcomes for learners**.
* Involving learners in the initiative.
* Move away from accountability to freedom to experiment, take risks and develop own approach.
* Time for specific focus on particular aspects to develop a depth of understanding about what works and why in TLA in particular contexts.
* Support, involvement and leadership of senior staff.
* Positive organisational culture.
* Complementary and mutually reinforcing approaches at all levels and areas of activity.
* Understanding of the need to take account of context and fitness for purpose, including appropriate timing of new initiatives.
* Effective and well resourced collaborative working with positive and inclusive peer relationships.

**9.2 The longer term**

The Foundation ITT for the OTLA initiative identifies the following longer term impact:

*More learners achieving relevant qualifications with higher grades, which enhance their life, higher learning and work opportunities. It is accepted that this impact information gathering would be gathered over a longer period using year on year success and student progression data for comparison.*

[Source: Foundation ITT for OTLA initiative]

This impact assessment has drawn on evidence provided by participating projects, so as to be able to assess medium/longer term progress towards outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. The evidence reported to date suggests that there is a positive direction of travel in a journey of improvement towards OTLA. There is a good range of evidence of reported impact on staff and improvements in learner outcomes. However, more substantial evidence of the impact on learner outcomes in the longer term would need to take account of the key characteristic ‘outstanding’ being ‘making an outstanding difference to learning’. The provision of this evidence would be contingent upon OTLA initiative contract holders being in a position to identify and report on relevant impact measures in the longer term.

**10.0 Lessons learned**

This section considers lessons learned from the OTLA initiative, and their implications for future improvement initiatives.

It has been possible to establish that there have been many positive impacts achieved by the OTLA initiative. However, it is also the case that, given the substantial nature of the initiative, there has been relatively little evidence available of impact in terms of the difference made to the quality of TLA, learner experience, achievement and outcomes, or Ofsted grades. Overall, there appears to have been very little focus on, or understanding of, the need to report on the difference made to practice and, ultimately, to learner achievement; rather the reporting has focussed on describing activities and sometimes providing some feedback about immediate satisfaction with them. Evaluation has often been taken to mean description.

Some of the reasons for this situation are now considered.

**Clarity about purpose of the initiative and the intended impact**

It is a truism that it is much more difficult to arrive at your destination if you do not know where it is – it’s also much more difficult to know whether or not you have arrived.

With respect to the OTLA initiative, the overall purpose as expressed in the ITT was reasonably clear, and included:

*Overall quality improvement of teaching, learning and assessment – to develop sector capacity to self-improve through provider to provider working; sharing effective practice; joint practice development and systematic application of proven methodologies such as mentoring and coaching.*

Source : OTLA initiative ITT

The ITT makes explicit reference to impact measures:

*The impact measures that the Foundation seeks should demonstrate a positive impact on teaching, learning and assessment, resulting in raised standards of practice and improved models of CPD that engage staff successfully and can demonstrate improved practices.*

Source : OTLA initiative ITT;

and the deliverables and key performance indicators (KPIs) include:

* *A presentation of data showing impact on learner outcomes and organisational Return on Investment (ROI)*
  + *Details of impact measures used throughout the project.*
  + *A report on what comparative data shows with regard to improvements and distance travelled towards outstanding in teaching, learning and assessment practice resulting in improved outcomes for students.*
* *A comparative analysis of the impact achieved from shared endeavour models compared with traditional CPD activities eg conferences, using external experts, etc.*
* *An evaluation of the reach and impact of the project on practitioners and learners* 
  + *A mid project progress report produced by the lead organization.*
  + *A final reflective report completed by an external evaluator, but including contributions from providers. The report should inform planning for future delivery phases, identifying impact on individuals, groups and organisations and including robust self-critique by practitioners on the distance travelled towards outstanding TLA.*

Source : OTLA initiative ITT.

However the relative clarity about the need for specific and appropriate impact measures does not appear to have been carried through to the overall regional initiatives, nor clearly enough specified in individual project contracts. The OTLA initiative ITT could perhaps have referred more specifically to the notion of *‘outstanding’* as *‘making an outstanding difference to learning’.*

**Evidence of improvement**

The lack of reporting on impact measures is contributed to by lack of clarity about what constitutes valid evidence of improvement. In many cases, reporting and evaluation of impact was considered in terms of activities carried out, rather than any difference they may have made. This applied in all 3 regions.

In the London region, the convention and expectation that the impact of the suite of projects would be directly expressed through improved success rates and/or inspection grades was problematic. Few projects established effective proxies for these measures and it might have been helpful if the Foundation had defined some examples of what these might be. This would have given ‘permission’ for participants to look for a broader range of impact measures which could be realised within the timescale of the project.

In the EMFEC region, which used a research-based approach, a majority of the projects misinterpreted the meaning of ‘outstanding’, focusing on what teachers do, rather than their impact on learning.

Too few of the research teams determined, at the outset, how they intended to measure the impact on learning of their investment in improved teaching skills. This is something that the Foundation might wish to emphasise in future improvement activity and monitor at an early stage to ensure that the measures are clear, realistic and attainable. Where it is intended that the impact will be evident beyond the scope of the project, it might be helpful to ask participants to indicate how and when they will measure, record and report the longer term impact of their work.

The evidence base strongly suggests that this is primarily because research teams did not establish these impact data before beginning the research. The majority of learner impact assessment there has been, has tended to establish the extent to which learners enjoyed the individual lessons that were observed or materials used. While this is clearly important, it does not indicate the extent to which learners learnt, for instance, new skills, understanding, confidence or attitude. In addition, too many projects seemed to feel that to judge an effective teacher, you could judge what teachers do rather than the difference they make.

There appear also to be some built-in assumptions that project reach/engagement, plain ‘activity’ and participant/recipient satisfaction with activities necessarily produce impact on actual teaching, learning and assessment – and crucially, can achieve a degree of impact that could be characterised as ‘outstanding’. Inextricably bound up with this is tacit acceptance of the assumption that observation of TLA, the resulting grade-profile across a provider, and inspection grades (emanating from Ofsted visit or ‘mock’ occasions) is *ipso facto* the same as improved learner experience and learner outcomes.

In some ways it is understandable that contracts have a degree of focus on specifying activities. Bids and contracts are largely costed in terms of activities, because they are seen as having resource implications. If the focus of deliverables moves from impact measures required by the ITT to activities and immediate satisfaction with them, this may lead to substantial evaluation reports with little evidence of impact in terms of the contribution of the activities to TLA improvement or learner achievement.

**Contract management**

This issue (essentially ‘what gets measured/paid for gets done’)could be partly addressed through drawing up and managing contracts in such a way as to ensure that they specify relevant and valid impact measures and timescales, with corresponding payment schedules.

Effective contract management also needs a positive and transparent relationship with contracts, and real clarity about specific expectations, which are focussed on impact for learners as well as staff, and realistic, resourced plans for how and when to measure the intended impact.

This is particularly important given that the sector and provider owned and led nature of many Foundation initiatives can lead to a structure of multiple levels for bidding and contracting, resulting in delays, different interpretations and ultimately diluted and/or diverted impact.

**Timescale**

Some impacts are very long-term and/or difficult to establish; others can be more immediate and observable. Project design should consider both types, and how to track them, appropriately. With respect to the OTLA initiative, there was, in some cases, a delay of several months from the inception of the programme to the individual projects starting up. This meant that the time for delivery was compressed into 2 to 4 months or less. In practice many of the projects were built on pre-existing partnerships and relationships which enhanced their ability to 'hit the ground running'.

However the potential for new relationships to be established was constrained by the compressed timescale with a corresponding dampening of risk taking and innovative approaches. In London there were delays in establishing the network of peer advisors which meant that this crucial relationship was not always in place at the start of the projects.

**Different stakeholder expectations**

One of the difficulties associated with providing very robust impact data is that to do so can be very difficult or impossible with the timescales and resources allocated. There can be conflicts between the data which will realistically be available, and the data required and/or promised to key stakeholders including relevant government departments.

For the OTLA initiative, a longer-term goal is to have a positive impact on the quality of TLA and on learner outcomes; and one of the indicators of this which is in the public domain, and in which government departments are interested, is Ofsted provider inspection grades. These are only available when inspection takes place, and are provider level outcomes, affected by many factors. Given this, the OTLA impact assessment ITT (summer 2015) suggests that ‘direct causality may be hard to quantify’, and that, as well any changes in Ofsted outcomes, key indicators of improvement impact should have been reported by projects in terms of ‘comparable internal indicator self-assessment grading’, and that, ‘any further improvements, for example in learner outcomes, retention, employability or other indicators would be positive and welcome, but with a focus on what would be considered ‘visible’ improvement in the context of the inspection regime as well as wider holistic development’.

At project level, there is often acknowledgement that outcomes relating to learner retention and achievement are crucial; but sometimes these can only be conceived of as being available largely or even solely through end-of-course data – thus, reporting is delayed and deferred. Opportunities to gauge impact on learners and their learning, as opposed to staff and their work (and/or their managers and processes such as observation, feedback and TLA improvement-planning), are not always considered.

Nevertheless the initiative as a whole and individual projects do reveal a raft of indicators and measures that reflect a positive direction of travel towards impacts that might be reflected in improved inspection grades. These include increased provider and practitioner reach, increased appreciation of the characteristics of Outstanding Teaching Learning and Assessment, increased adoption of the Professional Standards and good evidence of their contribution to improvement; the establishment of explicit links between measures relating to, for example, learner attendance, retention, punctuality and learner outcomes. These might be useful reference points for the Foundation to consider in future.

**Recommendations to address issues arising from the lessons learned**

It is recommended that the Foundation consider the following in the context of the activities it funds:

1. the need for more clarity about the specific intended impact(s) for each activity and how and when they will be measured
2. the need for a robust yet realistic approach at every project stage, including procurement, contract management, reporting and evaluation
3. close relationships and realistic dialogue with contractors
4. realistic timescales and expectations
5. the need to address and resolve differing stakeholder expectations
6. detailed consideration of valid measures of intended impact and clear agreement between contracting parties – this can usefully include a realistic discussion about proxy measures, and lead and lag indicators
7. a realistic approach to resourcing, including consideration of how to resource provision of longer term impact data after main project activity has ended

| **Appendix 1 Specific impacts: staff – table of qualitative examples** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Intervention** | **Impact on staff** | **Evidence provided** | **Context** |
| Inter-organisation peer observation | One of the clearest impacts of this project was how the change from an accountability observation system (graded) to one based on learning through peer observation and discussion enabled teachers to develop their reflective practice and honesty in their evaluation of learning impact. | I ‘will now think differently as a result of the mind switch from focussing on what they (teachers) are doing to focussing on the learners’. The new process enabled observers to: ‘Focus on the learner rather than the teacher and therefore comment on what they perceived the impact of the Functional Skills project to be on the learners’. | An FE college in the Midlands |
| Development of the Observation of Outstanding Teaching and Learning (Ootl) Process | • making features of outstanding teaching and learning more visible  • discussions between managers and tutors that focussed on the difference between outstanding teaching and learning and good practice.  • the development of a shared ownership between managers, tutors and students for delivering outstanding teaching and learning.  • Regular student feedback has helped to identify an understanding of what students see as outstanding. | * all teachers show examples of outstanding practice * Once students realised that tutors valued their feedback, they produced more critical and constructive feedback | London based independent learning provider, working with other provider partners and a software company.  The project aimed to create a user friendly (tutors and students) online system that would capture and differentiate ‘Best Practice’ and ‘Outstanding’ teaching, learning and assessment. In practice it focussed only on teaching and learning. The online system could be used from three points of view (peer observer, student observer and self reflection of the tutor). |
| Adult Education Institute was working with four other organisations to create an opportunity for organisational culture change in all five organisations, with regard to continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers in ESOL and English. The project used the catalyst of undertaking collaborative, ungraded paired peer observations across the five partner organisations. | This provided opportunities for the teachers to undertake self-reflection and take responsibility for identifying their own CPD needs and requirements, as well as empowering them to develop their own judgements on excellence in teaching, learning and assessment and to identify excellent practice which inspires and challenges ESOL and English learners. | A raft of evidence was provided including:   * improved staff morale and motivation. * Stronger links to the professional standards * Embedded cross partnership working focussing on improving literacy outcomes * Stronger learner engagement | A well-established partnership led by Adult Education Institute in the London area, focussing on ACL provision. |
| Developing coaching and mentoring to support OTLA, and decoupling observation and coaching strategies from formal grading and accountability. | Teachers who take part in coaching ahead of an observation invest more of their time into changing and improving their pedagogy. This is particularly true for disaffected staff, increasing their confidence and skills. | The outcomes included improved classroom management, better use of in-class support, and improvements in the Entry-level learners’ confidence and ability to express themselves, implementation of Moodle, and a thirst of innovation, change and the embracing of both the positive and negative aspects of the learning experience. | Local authority Adult Community Education Service in the Midlands |
| To encourage teaching and learning practitioners to explore, experiment and improve their confidence and skills in using e-technologies effectively to enhance and develop their practice, enthuse learners and increase learning between lessons. | The lack of any sense of accountability in this project allowed the team to explore new techniques in an environment in which it was safe to take risks and fail. This enabled staff to break through their fear of using new technologies. | The pre- and post-training analysis of staff’s skills and attitudes shows a very good level of development in confidence, enthusiasm, understanding, skills and attitude. | Local authority Adult Community Education Service in the Midlands |
| Changing the teaching and learning paradigm by writing, funding and implementing an ILT strategy. | Improved teaching staff confidence with technology. | Three months after the low starting point of 10% of teachers being ‘confidence to build on’ or having ‘a good level of confidence’ when using learning technologies and cloud-based software, the figure rose to 76% when asked again. | An FE college in the Midlands |
| Leading Learning Certificates | Improvement in professional practice. | Final overall project report suggests: “In sum, it seems reasonable to conclude that the training had a direct impact on the vast majority of participants, who agreed that their professional practice was going to change as a result of the training.” | A number of cross-provider training events were held, with a total of 79 participants. |
| ‘License to Observe’ and Governor Training | Improvement in professional practice. | One of the recipient organisations who has implemented change as a result of this training has advised that their “Support and Challenge” Ofsted Inspector indicated that these changes are very likely to impact positively on their grades when they are re-inspected some time in 2015/16.” | The ‘License to’ element is a college-devised programme. |
| Changing the teaching and learning paradigm by writing, funding and implementing an ILT strategy. | Improved teaching staff confidence with technology. The project has a strong emphasis on creating a climate in which staff feel able to take risks and explore new pedagogy. It also focused on, and developed, learners’ ability to learn between lessons independent of their teachers. | Three months after the low starting point of 10% of teachers being ‘confidence to build on’ or having ‘a good level of confidence’ when using learning technologies and cloud-based software, the figure rose to 76% when asked again. | An FE college in the Midlands, construction and engineering departments. |
| The production of SOLA, online learning, packs. | The research project provided staff with a thorough learning experience which challenged their ideas of traditional face-to-face pedagogy. | Staff’s self assessment of the effect of the SOLA packs is honest and self critical, forming a strong basis for further experiments with blended learning. | An FE college in the Midlands |
| Resource development: in particular, other case studies identified by and co-developed by the ‘field force of TLA champions’ | Capturing excellent practice... (ranging from a detailed write up, videos, downloads, and useful additional information such as relevant websites and links). | The report states that: “The combination of vignettes, case studies and downloadable resources thereby allow a great degree of replicability” | Range of providers. |
| Employability Toolkit: created and disseminated | Increasing focus on effective approaches to employability. | * new employability strategy to be in place next year * new work experience / employer feedback * bringing in employability practitioners to deliver tutorials * employability included in SAR process, at course/college levels * employability within student voice process; clearer plan on how the information will be used * business development team departmental QIP, focused on employability. | ‘Support and Challenge Partnerships’. Intended to ‘improve study programmes’. |
| To research into how 16-18 year old learners prefer to learn, using online delivery and a blend of traditional and technology-enhanced learning. | A strong desire to continue with the research and perfect strategies for ‘flipping’ learning – choreographing learning between lessons. | Incisive analysis of early experiments with a clear understanding of how strategies need to change to produce demonstrable impact on learning. | Specialist FE college – part of a larger college network in the Midlands. |
| Research into the conditions required for social media to be used as part of an effective learner communication and collaborative learning tool. An intention to modernise traditional pedagogy and use strategies with which current learners are extremely familiar. | While there was no direct impact on staff of phase 1 of this project, it has enabled the team to clarify its phase 2 strategy: the development of an on-line learning course on how to use social media in FE. | The literature study found three conditions that all needed to be addressed in order for social media to become a sustainable element of modern pedagogy: awareness of impact; positive organisational culture towards new technologies; strong and realistic approach to risk assessment. | An FE college in the Midlands |

| **Appendix 2 Specific impacts: learners – table of qualitative examples** | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Intervention** | **Impact on learners** | **Evidence provided** | **Context** |
| An ‘at-risk’ profiling system for learners | Earlier identification and support for vulnerable learners. | The project developed a flowchart for identification of risk, and interventions to address those. It produced guidance on funding and audit requirements arising, as well. The report indicates:  “Benefits for Learners:  • Improved IAG to reduce learners ‘at risk’.  • Timely support for learners identified as being ‘at risk’.  • Identification of appropriate support for learners identified as being ‘at risk’.  • Improved retention and achievement of learners  • Improved relevance of individual learning plans to learners.” | Profile Development sub-project |
| Tutor CPD | Improved TLA performance with increased focus on individualisation of learning, effective assessment and achievement of measureable outcomes. | The initial case studies suggest that learners are benefitting from higher quality TLA, indicated by improved  achievement and greater individualisation of delivery. | Local authority county council JPD project. The project focused on development planning linked to observation of teaching in three areas of the service. |
| Embedding E&D within practice.  An E&D portal was created with resources such as a glossary and a practice-sharing Moodle. | Increased learner understanding of diversity.  More inclusive approach. | Report states that there are benefits to learners because diversity is promoted as part of learning experiences, with strategies and examples specifically targeting and relating to subject specialisms. | An FE college in the Essex region |
| Encouraging ESOL ‘Conversation Clubs’, via college staff support and volunteers from the ESOL community | Has engaged hard to reach learners through flexible provision. | Report states that learners become more accountable for their learning, become independent, less reliant on other family members. | Essex based Adult & Community College JPD project. |
| Focus on resource development for the delivery and embedding of English, particularly for engaging hard to reach groups (homeless, ESOL and JCP mandated learners).  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 resources improved 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. | Because of better match between the resources and RARPA it is anticipated learner outcomes will improve in English and ESOL provision across both partners – participation, retention and success data improved 2015-2016.  Anticipated improved learner outcomes in vocational courses as a result of embedding English 2015-2016.  Anticipated improved learner satisfaction rates in ESOL and English provision 2015-2016. | Third sector provider in London  The basic skills team delivers English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), English, maths and ICT sessions to homeless adults. The tutors work across London in hostels, vocational training projects and at their employment centre. They deliver one to one and in small groups of up to ten learners. The learning is non-accredited. Learners often have complex support needs such as substance use or mental health problems and social isolation. They find it difficult to access mainstream education provision. |
| Teachers create posters to represent visually the elements of a unit of study. QR codes are positioned at strategic points on the illustration which when scanned take learners to a Blendspace sequence of on-line learning. | This strategy has increased learners’ ability to learn between lessons and to continually reinforce learning from past lessons. | Well over three quarters of learners surveyed say they enjoy using Blendspace. One learner, additionally, made a video for YouTube about his enjoyment of this style of learning. | An FE college in the Midlands, construction and engineering departments. |
| Fun and engaging activities teachers designed, which due to their technology basis, provided learners with the immediate feedback needed to fuel their motivation and enthusiasm. | Learners able to learn effectively between lessons. | Learner feedback includes the following:   * ‘Work is easily accessible… I can do this on the move’ * The technology: ‘helps to ease the time pressures of the course’ * ‘Better focuses learning outside of the classroom’. | Local authority Adult Community Education Service in the Midlands. |

**Appendix 3 Case study A – Jobwise Training**

**Title:** Observing outstanding teaching and learning

**Context**

Jobwise Training Ltd. (Jobwise) is an independent learning provider and operates from training premises in the City of London. It holds government-funded contracts for apprenticeships as well as traineeships and the study programme. Jobwise also delivers a private recruitment and training service. Jobwise has had approximately 904 students this contract year, 165 16 to 18-year-olds and 739 19+ students. Approximately 12.4% have a disability, 55% are categorised as white British, 21% as black African and 20% as Asian.

**Activity**

For James Pearson, Operations Director at Jobwise Training, there were two main reasons he and his team set out to reinvent their observation system: 'One was that Ofsted stopped grading. We were involved in the pilot inspections, and all our staff asked for their grades after they'd been observed, but Ofsted didn't have any to give – just feedback. So we felt it was only a matter of time before teachers began to ask why they were still being graded by us'.

The second reason is a ubiquitous issue in our sector; James again: 'Our teachers are terrified of observation. We wanted a system that that didn’t have this effect, but still gave us the data we needed to show that we were improving our provision. And what if our observation grades are wrong?'

So James and his team set out to design an observation system that created the intrinsic desire in staff to research new pedagogy and to take a few risks when trying things out in class. To achieve this, they had to create a learning environment for teachers that matched the one they create for their learners: one in which it is safe to make and learn from mistakes and risk-taking. In a nice twist, this was also what was needed for managers...

'We didn't get the model right straight away,' says James, 'In fact we constantly keep it under review to make sure it continues to make the difference we want it to make.'

Their new system was built around peer observation. Until then, the majority of observations had been carried out by just one or two observers – with all of the inherent problems of reliability that might bring. The idea that all teachers would become observers meant that a whole organisation conversation could begin around teaching practice, and the impact different approaches can have on learning. And to underscore this learning impact, each peer observer would be accompanied by a student observer.

'When we first came up with the idea,' says James, 'Our observers looked at everything in every lesson. But all evaluations of all aspects came back as outstanding. Tutors just found it too hard to be neutral and objective with each other, so this didn't create the learning discussions we were after.'  Because of this, it was decided to focus on just a handful of hot themes that would be reviewed and changed every few months. This really started to make a difference. The teachers and two observers would meet within 24 hours of an observation and debate the impact of the lesson. As a result of this evaluative conversation, the teacher would then capture two research topics to work on over the next few months. As this was about intrinsically motivated research, the action plan did not say what the teacher should now 'do', but set out what new 'impact they wanted to achieve'. This is at the heart of the move away from traditional accountability systems with their reliance on extrinsic motivation, to a transformational learning conversation.

The new system has supported teachers so well that they no longer fear observations. Staff are now even asking for additional observations to help evaluate the impact of their research and new ideas.

**Impact on staff**

A key concern for James and his team is to judge the extent to which all of this effort and commitment actually makes any difference. Theirs is an increasingly rare problem. With a 97% completion rate and 85% of graduates gaining employment at the outset, they don't have endemic issues with performance. However, with the dramatic impact of recent changes to Ofsted's evaluation framework, the team feel the only way to future-proof their previous inspection grade 1 for outcomes and improve their grade 2s for leadership and management and teaching, learning and assessment, is to create a solid culture of continuous quality improvement. So previous observation judgements such as 100% attendance, learners are well dressed, prepared and ready to learn' have now been 'downgraded' to norms, rather than be considered outstanding. 'This has been a bit of a wake-up call,' says James. 'Everyone now gets that it's not about teachers – just the difference they make to learners.'

Recent discussions are now very precise and lead to immediate research and trialling of new ideas. For instance, a recent meeting focused on developing learners' ability to reflect objectively on the quality of their own work. Following the discussion, every teacher set out to research one new strategy for improving this skill. These are then tested live, evaluated and reported back to the next monthly discussion group for evaluation in the wider context. Anything considered outstanding is then cascaded back to the front line for more testing and embedding.

And the difference this all makes? Teachers are more motivated and so staff retention has increased, with a corresponding drop in recruitment costs. The need for, and so cost of, external staff development has significantly reduced as staff have now become researchers. Teachers now feel confident that they know the difference between good and outstanding, simply because they are so focused on the outcome of their experiments rather than the techniques they are using. 'And,' says James, 'We've had a 35% increase in the number of lesson elements that we've robustly judged to have an outstanding impact, and a 50% increase in those whose impact is good'.

## **Impact on learners**

It's arguably the inclusion of student observers, however, that gives this new observation system a unique edge. Every peer observation includes a learner, but not just any learner. Staff carry out an assessment of learners to identify those who are experiencing learning issues; these may be related to such things as: attendance, behaviour, motivation, and/or learning focus. 'We've found that giving learners the opportunity to be genuinely listened to, raises their game. We train them in how to observer, and they rise to the challenge of coming up with constructive feedback. But this is often as much about commenting on the personal investment in lessons of their learner peers as it is about the teaching strategies used.' Just as with staff, then, the system is rightly focused on arguably the only really effective change-management strategy there is if you want sustainable change: the creation of the intrinsic desire to learn and do things differently.

'It just keeps getting better, though,' says James. 'We now give every student observer the opportunity to run their own workshop sessions for other learners and staff. After they've observed, they all seem to get the bug for teaching. We've had courses such as ‘Dress to Impress’ and ‘Interview Techniques’ for their fellow learners, and even one called 'Swagger' aimed at staff: how to dress like a cool student!'

The increase in learner confidence is clear to see, but with completion rates already at 97%, James' focus is on maintaining this excellence, though he is also keen to see if this long game of aspiration management and the increased advocacy of learners will begin to impact positively on learner recruitment.

## **Impact at provider level**

The latest addition to the new observation system has been to move from simply the paired learning that comes from the post-observation conversation, to whole-organisation learning. To achieve this, all teachers meet once a month to discuss just one or two of the target themes. 'Having just one or two means that our discussions are really focused and we're getting better and better at deciding on whether practice is really outstanding, by constantly probing the extent to which it is changing learning'.

**Appendix 4 Case study B – Lincoln College Partnership**

**Title:** Technology enhanced independent learning

**Context**

The lead partner for this project was Lincoln College – a medium-sized general further education college situated in Lincoln. The project was centred on the School of Construction and Engineering, though staff from across the college were encouraged to take part.

The main partner is Linkage College, a small specialist further education college situation in Grimsby. Linkage provides development opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and autism, aged 16 to 25.

Teachers were lacking in confidence in their technology skills. They were identified as having neither the technology skills nor confidence to let go of the old ways in order to meet the new challenges associated with the use of technology to enable learners to learn effectively both in and in between formal lessons, becoming expert, independent learners whose qualification success rates are outstanding.

**Activity**

### *Embracing the new*

As with all good research projects, the staff journey began with an initial survey to assess their pre-existing skills and confidence. The results weren’t great – though very much expected. Just 10% of teachers had ‘confidence to build on’ or ‘a good level of confidence’ when using learning technologies and cloud-based software possibly partly because of ‘fear of the unknown’. The first challenge, then, was to showcase the technologies available and demonstrate leadership’s commitment to the journey by giving an iPad to each team leader so that they could explore and develop their personal skills.

Next, the teams looked at some of the education software available, balancing their ultimate aim for independent learning, ease of use, flexibility and sustainability.

Loughborough College also demonstrated a ‘homemade’ Moodle plugin very similar to Blendspace, but with more control by the college authors.

### *Building the skills of teachers to understand and take advantage of the new opportunities*

Lincoln College invested in a training centre for staff called the Professional Development Centre (PDC) along with a team of Advanced Practitioners (APs). An online booking system was created for the development team’s bespoke training and timetables were rearranged to allow staff to attend development sessions every Friday morning for two hours. Within weeks, the teams had taken up the challenge of learning new software packages, talked to learners for their ideas, and started experimenting with different ways of using the materials.

### *Establishing the network required to support teacher development*

The partners used a scaffolded quality-circle approach, providing each pilot curriculum area with a team leader, access to a specialist IT professional (employed for two days per week), and regular structured meetings for the sharing of emerging practice and ideas. Leaders and managers also, crucially, demonstrated their continued interest through personal visits to the curriculum areas for updates on developments.

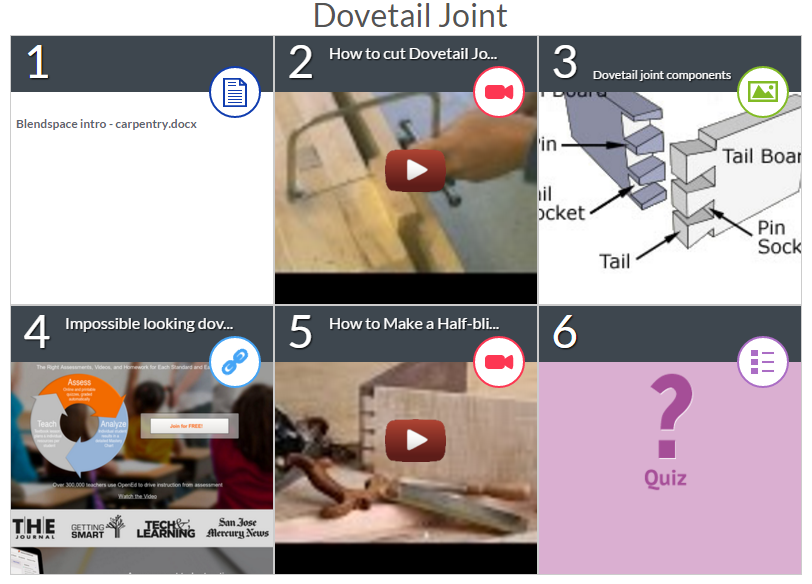
A further vital support strategy for some teachers was the learners themselves. Their own IT confidence and positive feedback on the emerging new learning experiences served to fuel the on-going developments of the new resources.

### *What they did*

The learning experience begins with a poster. The images used represent well the subject to be studied, and act as strong visual and relational ‘anchors’ for the learning. Ahead of each new topic of study, a QR (Quick Reference) code is added to the poster. This makes learners curious to know what lies at the end of the link.

Using a QR code scanner app (freely available from any App Store) and holding their phone/scanner over the image takes learners directly to the Blendspace pages created to teach the target element.

These pages are set out as ‘storyboards’, showing a logical flow through the learning materials. Typically, these will include: an overview; ‘how to’ videos; illustrations; ‘curiosity’ videos to promote further thinking, ideas and motivation; sound files; an assessment tool to check learning.

Teachers can assemble their own material into storyboards, curate appropriate work published online by others, or do a blend of the two. Stakeholders and employers and trade partners are encouraged to contribute to the development of the storyboards and both they and the learners can comment on the materials after use, helping the development team hone their skills and the effectiveness of the learning resources.

New QR codes can be added *before* formal lessons so that learners can pre-learn the content, or at the very least become curious and want to know more. Codes can also be added during or after lessons, to help reinforce learning through practice and repetition.

The QR codes are also published within the course Moodle pages and on the OneFile electronic portfolio alongside traditional URLs. (Here’s the one for the example above: https://www.Blendspace.com/lessons/hkZTu6c3G9Kefg/edit), allowing access to the same material from anywhere at any time.

### Impact

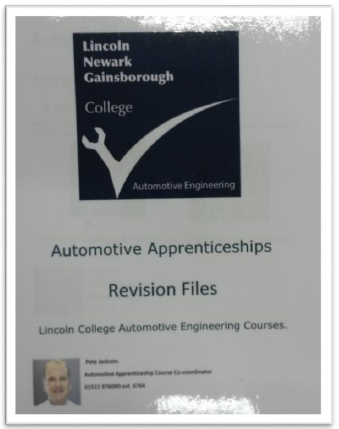


### *The difference that it made*

For change to be sustainable, it has to be intrinsically driven. Just three months after the low starting point of 10% of teachers being ‘confidence to build on’ or having ‘a good level of confidence’ when using learning technologies and cloud-based software, the figure rose to 76% when asked again.

Large learning posters are strategically sited in corridors near each target subject area and, with the weekly addition of QR codes, build into full on-line learning suites of resources by the end of the academic year. These also allow prospective learners and their parents to sample the material during College open events.

Using Blendspace has also allowed teachers to quickly build an online library of materials that can be shared across subject areas. For example, sharing material on ‘first fix’ between different construction trades has given all learners a broader understanding of how their trade fits into the wider picture.



Towards the end of a unit of study, all resources are collated into revision guides and published in full to help learners prepare effectively for their final assessments.

 Survey data shows that well over three quarters of learners enjoyed using and learning from the new resources. Of those who did not, all sited the reliability and speed of the internet connection and college devices as the reason for their poorer experience.

Some learners enjoyed the new learning process so much that they began making their own training videos.

**Lessons learned**

The team are quite clear about their hindsight advice for others:

* ‘IT infrastructure must be a number one priority and must provide a stable, usable platform that actively encourages classroom innovation as well as completion of course administration. This will help save time and motivate staff to try new ideas. This includes wifi systems.
* The IT system should be in place to support teaching, learning and assessment for both teachers and learners alike.
* Learners must continue to have the opportunity to freely use their own devices and where possible, provide, improve and review the provision of supplying devices for teachers and opportunities for learners to purchase technology to assist with learning.’

Despite the great progress made during the lifetime of the OTLA project, the development team still feel that they are only just beginning and are looking ahead to better evaluation of learning impact, leading to improved resources and methodologies, ahead of a wider roll out across their partnership and broadcast to the wider sector. The future’s bright.

**Appendix 5 Professional Standards**

The OTLA initiative ITT includes the following objective:

‘To ensure there is a consistent link to the Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training throughout, building in encouragement for practitioners to take responsibility for their own Continuing Professional Development.’ (Source Foundation ITT OTLA initiative)

The Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training - England were developed by the Education and Training Foundation in 2014 in consultation with practitioners across the education and training sector. The Standards set out clear expectations of effective practice in education and training; enable teachers and trainers to identify areas for their own professional development; support initial teacher education; and, provide a national reference point that organisations can use to support the development of their staff. The standards can be found at:

<http://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/professional-standard>

The evidence suggests that OTLA projects have been systematically informed by, and cross-referenced to, the Professional Standards in a number of ways; and that this has contributed positively to the improvement of practice in teaching, learning and assessment. Reported evidence includes the following:

*The practitioner development was supported by the use of the Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training throughout the project, and was reported on via externally coordinated feedback.*

*The excellence advisors played a crucial role in ensuring that the peer advisors, and through them the operational projects, were aware of the importance of linking the work of the operational projects with the Professional Standards. This included dedicated discussion sessions on the Professional Standards in both peer advisor training days and in the associate peer advisor training day. In addition, linking the professional development activities with the Professional Standards was one of the contractual requirements for the operational projects.*

*All of the operational projects used the Professional Standards to some extent. Examples include using the Professional Standards to cross-reference a list of 10 themes with statements on key features of outstanding teaching and learning in an Independent Training Provider led project; having practitioners develop their personal CPD e-portfolios that were mapped against nine of the Professional Standards in an Adult Education Institute led project; and framing learner surveys using the Professional Standards in another Independent Training Provider led project. There has been a clear focus on self-directed professional development across the operational projects, supported by the Professional Standards.*

*Overall, the feedback on the Professional Standards from the practitioners and peer advisors was very positive. The Professional Standards were seen as a useful way to frame the CPD taking place in the operational projects and supported the practitioners to take responsibility and ownership of their own professional development.*

1. Further information about the regional initiatives can be found at

   <http://www.teachlearnassess.london/>

   <http://www.emfec.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/OTLA-Booklet_FINAL_Jun16_v4.pdf>

   <http://www.seevic-college.ac.uk/media/1254150/Excellence-Report-digital-sml-.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ofsted Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook, 2015, illustration of outstanding Leadership and management, page 39: ‘Staff reflect on and debate the way they teach. They feel deeply involved in their own professional development. Leaders have created a climate in which staff are motivated and trusted to take risks and innovate in ways that are right for their learners.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Caroline Walker-Gleaves (undated) *The Learning Framework: Analysis of the theoretical basis of the framework* Durham University [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The four guiding principles of JPD set out by Gregson, Nixon, Spedding and Kearney (2013) are: make space for trust, openness and honesty; establish a shared understanding of the educational problem and how it makes educational sense for it to be addressed; share the experience of trying out innovative practices; critically review overall progress together. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)