CASE STUDY: online learning to modify attitudes towards GCSE

English language

What was the purpose of the project?

The ‘Online learning to modify attitudes towards GCSE English language’ Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment project was delivered between 2016 and 2017. It a collaboration between Kingston Maurward College (KMC) with Bournemouth and Poole College (BPC).

The partners felt that many learners retaking exams did not see GCSE English language topics as having real world value and did not fully appreciate the opportunities a good grade could offer to career development. They decided to explore the extent to which online learning could positively modify students’ attitudes to retaking GCSE English Language, thereby improving motivation, attendance and, ultimately, grades.

What did the project do?

The project created an online learning course for those achieving a Grade 4 or above, covering: ‘Learning is Earning’, ‘Developing Communication Skills’, ‘English Skills for Progression’, ‘Avoiding Common Errors’, ‘Writing a CV’ and Applying for Jobs’, ‘Why English Matters’, ‘English for Studying’, and ‘Course Summary’. Lessons were packaged using Padlet and uploaded onto each College’s Virtual Learning Environment for students to use during their curriculum area tutorials over a six-week period.

What helped the project succeed?

Effective collaborative working between the Colleges was very important, especially in its contribution to the design and development for the online learning material. Pre- and post-course surveys were also crucial to the success of the project.

what challenges did the project face?

Course leaders’ limited time to devote to the project was an (expected) issue.

Not all vocational areas contributed the same number of resources or dedicated as much time to the project. This reduced the number of learner participants.

what difference did the project make?

100% of participating students found the online course easy to access and straightforward to use, with 96% finding it interesting and useful.

96% (from 89%) of respondents now say that improving their English language is an important personal goal for them.

92% (from 78%) now have a good understanding of why having good English language skills is important for their future career.

Although retention and attendance did not improve between the two years, achievement rose in both KMC and BPC by 12% and 7%, respectively.

The pass rate increased by 5% for KMC but there was no major difference from BPC students (see table below).

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Criteria | Institution | 15/16 | 16/17 |
| Retention | KMC | 89% | 87% |
| BPC | 93% | 93% |
| Attendance | KMC | 79% | 76% |
| BPC | 77% | 76% |
| Achievement | KMC | 14% | 26% |
| BPC | 31% | 38% |
| Pass Rate | KMC | 93% | 98% |
| BPC | 91% | 90% |

where can i find more information?

Further information is available from Christine Robertson, Deputy Principal (Curriculum and Quality), Kingston Maurward College: Christine.robertson@kmc.ac.uk