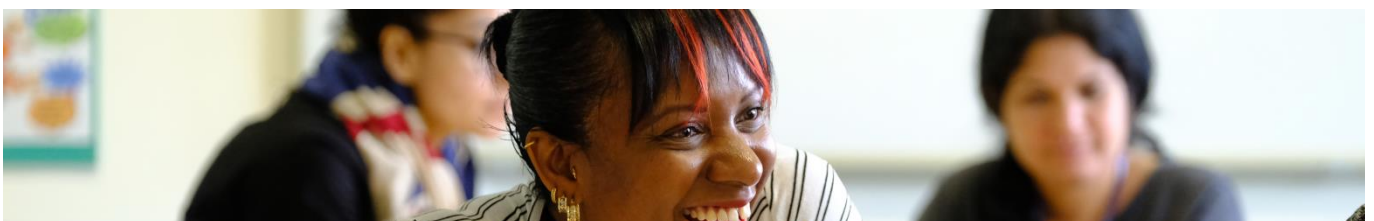*'I feel more empowered by the endless possibilities for collaboration and sharing good practice.'*
Participant, Greater Brighton Metropolitan College

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT 3: SOUTH CENTRAL

FINAL REPORT

PART 1: ACTIVITY
DETAILING THE KEY OUTPUTS OF THE PROJECT

Project Summary

In January 2017 we were selected by the Education and Training Foundation (the Foundation) to deliver a new round of OTLA projects in a region of England defined as 'South Central'. This roughly corresponds to the AoC South East region, filling gaps in previous OTLA provision.

The counties covered under 'South Central' were as follows: Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey and Sussex.

The original proposal was to recruit 12 projects with a bursary amount of £14,000. During contracting an extra two projects were added – one for the secure estate and one for Functional Skills maths and English – for project bursaries of £20,000.

OTLA Projects focus on provider and practitioner defined problems, often linked to a current theme important to the sector. They centre on developing evidence-based solutions to improve teaching, learning and assessment to outstanding.

There is no fixed idea of what the project can or should be – it was encouraged that they take different forms, explore different ideas. What was critical is that the projects encourage and facilitate joint practice development and/or action research. For the purposes of OTLA projects joint practice development (JPD) is defined as having three key characteristics:

- it involves interaction and mutual development related to practice.

- it recognises that each partner in the interaction has something to offer and, as such, is based on the assumption of mutually beneficial learning.

- it is research-informed, often involving collaborative enquiry.

The task for CE was to deliver a project that would support participants to identify partners, identify common problems or challenges and work together to solve them.

Objectives and Deliverables

Our objectives were:

- To fund 12 partnership projects with at least 2 partners with a bursary amount of £14,000.

- To fund a further two projects – one for the secure estate and one for Functional Skills maths and English – for project bursaries of £20,000 each.

- To ensure that these projects worked collaboratively to explore a common issue.

- To ensure that projects completed on time.

- To ensure that projects track and accurately record reach figures

- To ensure projects spend their bursary only for the purposes of the research project.

To achieve these objectives we appointed Partnership Mentors (Mary Conway and Tim Strickland) and a Research Mentor (Andy Armitage). Partnership Mentors were the first point of contact and engagement with providers. They supported the initial promotion of the opportunity, assisted providers as they made their applications, and provided support and challenge right through the project delivery. The Research Mentor provided specific input and support on developing and implementing research-based approaches.

Additionally, throughout the project we arranged sessions for the projects and the partners on developing evidence base practice.

Promotion and selection

From our work in OTLA2 we knew that promotion would be a challenge, and so it proved to be. Partnership mentors and the Creative Education central team spent a significant amount of time engaging with specific providers and trying to gain their interest in the programme.

We created a promotional flyer, register of interest, application form and a process to manage those providers wishing to take part.

We produced a screencast, uploaded to YouTube, to provide potential participants with all the information they needed to make an application to the programme.

There were a number of headwinds against participation:

- Promotion of a national OTLA strand with a larger bursary pot available at the same time
- Lack of pre-existing networks in the area, particularly in the northern home counties
- Addition of two extra projects to be secured post the initial proposal, with different bursary values

In the end we received 15 applications for projects.

The selection panel was held at Creative Education on 16th March 2017. It comprised Mary Conway, Tim Strickland, Andy Armitage, Tom Hesmondhalgh and representing the Foundation Vic Dejean and Linda Simpson.

Applications themselves were surprisingly variable. Overall applications often failed to consider the evidence base for their projects in any meaningful way, and some – despite the guidance given – failed to truly understand the collaborative ethos of the programme.

14 projects were awarded but one – Newbury College – subsequently dropped out as they were unwilling to change their approach in order to meet the demands of the programme. For the majority, changes were suggested and incorporated to bring project delivery in line with expectations.

Commencement

After a short window between informing the providers of their successful application, all lead providers and the majority of partners attended the inception training, which was held on 29th March 2017 in Bracknell.

The inception training itself was very successful. 24 people in total attended, and were led through:

- The ethos of the programme
- Key elements of research methods
- The professional standards
- Reporting and programme structure

Beyond this meeting we also required individual projects to hold their own inception meetings, where they were joined in-person or virtually by their partnership mentors. This was to ensure that all participants had received an effective and accurate briefing. The research mentor provided additional help to some projects on constructing their initial benchmark measures.

Monitoring

We established a monthly reporting template to ensure that projects were delivering to plan. This was supplemented by visits, emails and phone calls from our Partnership Mentors to check progress. Partnership mentors performed monthly risk assessments on individual projects, and prioritised support for those projects most at risk of failing to achieve their objectives.

We supplemented this approach with four network meetings. These provided an opportunity for participants to get together to look at common key issues affecting projects and work together to develop solutions.

Projects were divided into two groups for the purposes of the network meetings, and they were held:

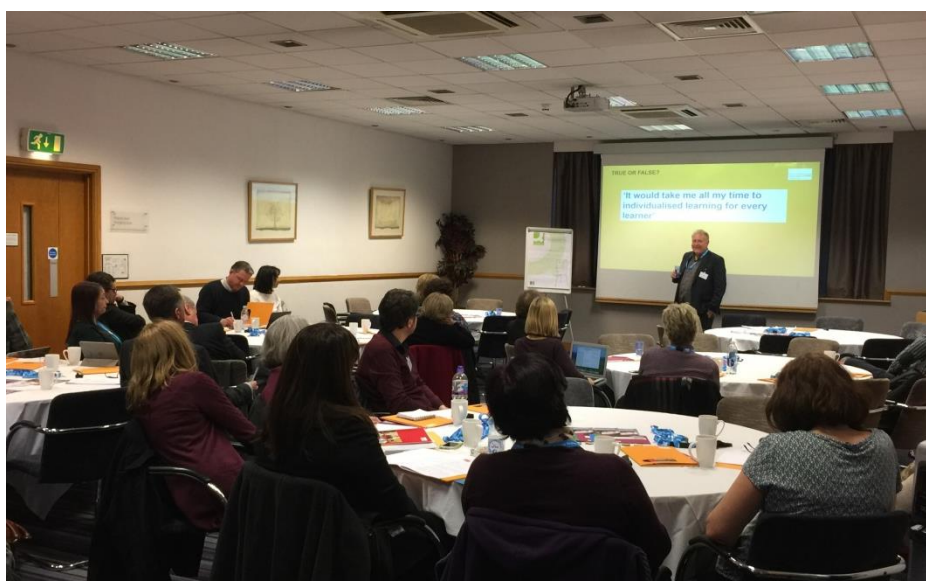| Northern Region	Southern Region
Reading on 21st June 2017	Chichester on 19th June 2017
Reading on 10th October 2017	Worthing on 12th October 2017

Project 14

As described above, the 14th project dropped out early in delivery as they were not able to meet the requirements of the programme. This meant a further project needed to be commissioned.

We partnered with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) for the delivery and to focus it around how behavioural sciences could support teaching, learning and assessment; how a small, simple intervention could have significant impact. Alongside this we were keen, given the issues we had encountered with provider understanding of evidenced based practice, that BIT would provide some insights on building an evidence-base through robust testing.

BIT started delivery with a series of interviews with practitioners in the FE sector, to identify key challenges and restrictions. We then held a development workshop on 19th October in Wokingham where potential project participants were invited to attend. At this, they discovered more about the approaches used and advocated by the Behavioural Insights Team including the use of fair tests and RCTs. They were supported on the day by Creative Education as they wrote up their project ideas.

Subsequently, three consortia of partners submitted proposals. The proposal on exploring improved transition from Level 2 to Level 3 from Havant and South Downs College and Eastleigh College was selected.

Dissemination

All of the projects completed their final reports by the end of November, with a few further amendments taking place in the first week of December – with the exception of the 14th project which completed at the end of March.

On December 11th in Croydon, we held our dissemination event – an opportunity for all the projects to deliver a 25-minute presentation on what they had accomplished, plus answer some questions on their approach.

We were also joined by representatives from Exeter College and New College Swindon and Plymouth College of Art who disseminated outcomes from their projects on Functional Skills maths and English from the South West region.

Within each project proposal we had requested that participating providers leveraged their internal networks to disseminate outcomes from the project as widely as possible. This took a variety of forms. Some such as Havant and South Downs and Greater Brighton Metropolitan College used websites that promoted the outputs of their projects, others such as West Berkshire ACL organised their own dissemination opportunities, and others such as Bedford disseminated through existing networks.

The number broadcasted to above shows the success of this activity, and we have been impressed by the number of articles written and conferences presented at by the projects. Havant and South Downs have also entered their project for a TES Award.

To supplement this, we have created a series of short case studies for upload to the Excellence Gateway and to feature in future Improving Teaching newsletters which are contained later within this report.

Project Reach

Project Title	Lead Partner	Direct	Indirect	Broadcast
Meaningful Maths: Piloting a Co-Created Curriculum	Activate Learning	17	16	675
Paving the way to Level 6	Bedford College	4	4	180
Raising standards in post-16 English	GBMET	19	29	25
Connecting and upskilling teaching and learning communities on Google Apps	GBMET	20	246	670
Moving Forward by Feeding Back	Chichester College	11	45	106
Improving the quantity and quality of dialogue and learning of teachers through a peer-coaching model	NESCOT	28	0	4
Blended Learning Project	Plumpton College	16	60	55
Innovative Assessment Practice to Inspire Learners' Progress and Future Destinations	Havant & South Downs College (HSDC)	20	25	0
Increasing progression from level 2 to 3	HSDC	6	0	0
Raising Aspirations – Inspiring students, and staff, to fulfil their potential	Sparsholt College	22	0	146
ACL Outcome Tool	West Berkshire Council ACL	19	3	4174
Why doesn't the sharing of good practice have more impact? How technology can improve its efficacy	Worthing College	16	21	647
Digital Recording of English and Maths (DREAM)	Eastleigh College	18	10	338
Can 'Talk for Writing' work in prison education?	Milton Keynes College	22	0	88
TOTAL		**238**	**459**	**7108**

PART 2: CASE STUDIES
INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS' PERSPECTIVES ON PARTICIPATION

CASE STUDY: COLLABORATIVE ENQUIRY USING COACHING SKILLS

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Much professional development can be characterised as facilitators telling teachers what to do, usually in one-off, one-day support workshops with no follow up. Often, it also assumes that what teachers lack is knowledge and does not assess the impact of changes to teacher practice and student learning. NESCOT, with Brooklands, Guildford and East Surrey colleges wanted to advance professional development that is collaborative, that results in continuous innovation and improvement to teaching and learning, is owned by teachers and is embedded in practice.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The project set out to pilot a 'collaborative enquiry' professional development model. It did this by:

- Establishing a baseline in terms of the experience of professional development and accountability to see if there was joint understanding between the colleges.
- Designing and agreeing the collaborative enquiry framework and the suitability of 'collaborative peers' for the pilot
- Establishing the resources and training needed for the project. The resources and handbook for the overall process were hosted on a collaborative IT platform that all participants could access remotely from the different colleges
- Reflecting in coaching pairs on the successes and challenges of current teaching and learning practice, collaborating to develop a teaching and learning focus, innovating practice through coaching conversations and engagement with evidence

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

A key feature of the project has been the commitment and enthusiasm of the participants and the impact of the collaborative training and working on the staff and managers alike. As a result, despite challenges, the project remained on course and produced significant data to inform future development.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

A challenge faced throughout the project was the management of significant change. During the project period, the colleges saw two changes of Principal, three Ofsted inspections, three college structural reviews, and the redundancy of a project lead.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Feedback, using self-report Likert scales and semi-structured interviews, indicated that participants were more engaged in reflecting on a relevant focus of teaching and learning, thinking through how it might work in the context of their classroom, and then testing out a development of this practice. There was strong agreement that collaborative enquiry provides effective feedback that is relevant to teacher professional development needs. Participants from three colleges strongly agreed that collaborative enquiry is a supportive professional development process. In addition, participants also believed that collaborative enquiry increased motivation to want to improve their teaching.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Lance Finn - Sports Lecturer and Sports Therapy Lecturer, NESCOT

"I got a lot out of the process in the short period, such as learning how to question better…I have noticed I started to use coaching questions in a conversation with a peer, whereas I would have told them what to do before."

"I really enjoyed the process, I found it really interesting and learned so much. I learned about the importance of body language and building effective relationships."

Project participant comments

CASE STUDY: DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL CAPITAL

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Havant and South Downs College (with Fareham and Eastleigh colleges) was keen to look at teaching and learning in the round with a view to creating a more innovative approach via collaborative continuing professional development. They wanted to take a joint practice development approach where teachers are able to take ownership of their own development via the creation and fostering of links between practising professionals. They wanted to do this so that teachers' 'professional capital' could be enhanced through a combination of theoretical understanding, robust empirical evidence, and collaborative peer review to ultimately improve teaching and learning.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The Developing Professional Capital: From Pedagogic Solitude to the Teachers Takeaway project was developed by Havant and South Downs, Fareham and Eastleigh. Before merging with Havant Sixth Form College, South Downs College had identified a key strategic objective to develop the workforce to be more digitally competent in order to enable learners to develop essential digital skills to support their education and future employability. The three colleges were keen to pursue this by taking a joint practice approach to;

- Building an open source online sharing platform (Teachers Takeaway) that can be accessed by practitioners around the world
- Filming, editing and uploading videos to the platform that can be viewed by all
- Launching the website in college staff development days in all three colleges
- Embedding the website into the quality procedures of the colleges

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Success was aided significantly through research, investment and taking advice – for example, from the Further Education Learning Technology Action Group (FELTAG). This enabled the founding of a 'Digital Creation Suite' and the appointment of a 'Digital Learning Designer' which meant that all the videos could be filmed and edited professionally. The technology used and generated in the project was grounded in

education theory, which helped to improve participant engagement with professional development.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Google analytics for the website showed that for the first six weeks that Teachers Takeaway was in operation, there were over 380 users in over 60 locations, around 3,500 page views and a low 'bounce rate'. Havant and South Downs College saw some significant increases in their pass rate data for GCSE English (24%) and GCSE maths (15%) results which they attribute, in part, to the project. To further measure the quality and impact of this site, two staff from the Teaching and Learning team have been awarded a bursary through the Sunderland Centre for Teaching Excellence (SUNCETT) to complete an MPhil to research the pedagogical impact of Teachers Takeaway.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

https://www.teacherstakeaway.co.uk/

'It has been an amazing experience being part of a programme…that has… [created]…a professional, engaging platform that individuals…can use to further enhance their teaching, learning and assessment.'
Dominic Thompson, Havant and South Downs College

CASE STUDY: DREAM – DIGITAL RECORDING OF ENGLISH AND MATHS

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Eastleigh College wanted to improve learner motivation, achievement and employability by recording progress and achievement towards Functional Skills and GCSE qualifications in maths and English. They decided to achieve this by introducing and piloting the use of a system of digital badging for apprentices, work-based and classroom learners. Digital badges offer a way of accrediting skills often unrecognised by formal qualifications; skills that are essential to succeed at college and beyond.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The DREAM project sought to determine the potential use of digital badging as an educational outcomes enhancer. Eastleigh College drew upon Sussex Downs College's 'Digital Badges Employability Passport' that captures sixteen employer-identified skills. The College also worked with the City & Guilds/DigitalMe team to discuss how digital badges could be implemented in the teaching and learning of Functional Skills and GCSE Maths and English. The project aimed to improve motivation achievement and employability by;

- Devising a suite of digital badges that captures transferable and industry specific skills
- Creating the associated tasks and assessment criteria for each badge, including a bespoke set of badges for supported learners
- Allowing learners to upload evidence of their learning in order to achieve badges
- Encouraging learners to link badge portfolios to their CVs and to share these badges online via social media and professional networking sites

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Strong collaboration between South Downs College and Eastleigh College that built upon areas of existing strengths was crucial in ensuring the success of the DREAM project. This collaboration was strengthened and shaped by the use of existing frameworks (DigitalMe and the Open Badge Academy) that allowed for customisable content developed with input from local employers. In addition, the project linked well to an existing employability agenda at Eastleigh that, in turn, supported delivery.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

A challenge for the future of the project is for Eastleigh College to continue to grow its engagement with local employers in order to create bespoke badges for specific curriculum areas that link to employer-based qualifications. In addition, it is planned to expand digital badging to apprenticeship provision.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Surveys indicated high levels of satisfaction with the project from staff and learners alike. All staff members involved said that their learners had benefited from digital badging and that they were likely, or very likely, to recommend digital badging to their colleagues. Some curriculum areas have made it a compulsory part of their approach. At last count, almost 400 learners were enrolled with the Open Badge Academy (c.230 at Eastleigh College and c.170 at Sussex Downs College). Over 60 badges have been awarded to learners at Eastleigh College, with over 160 badges awarded at Sussex Downs College. A 1-2% rise in overall English and Maths results is expected, both at GCSE Level and Functional Skills. Eastleigh College is now looking to create bespoke badges for subject specific qualifications in association with local employers.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Bob Tipping, International/Projects Consultant, FE Sussex

Alice Copp, Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Eastleigh College

Harriet Hadley-King, Learning Technologist, Sussex Downs College

'Digital badging is a good way to show skills I would not normally be able to show.'

'I hope they will increase the chance of me being chosen for future jobs.'

'[A] great independent learning activity.'

'Learners have engaged well in the employability activities and we are using it as a stretch opportunity throughout core units.'

Some comments from learners and staff at Eastleigh College

CASE STUDY: MEANINGFUL ENGLISH AND MATHS

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Activate Learning's City of Oxford, Reading and Banbury and Bicester colleges wanted to improve student success rates in GCSE maths and English resits in order to address the widespread perception of a national skills gap and to reduce the NEET risk. They were keen to ensure that students experienced positive employer encounters during their time at college in order to help them see the relevance of their learning and to make the necessary progress in their education and future employment.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The Meaningful English and Maths project used research evidence to bridge the skills gap in English and maths through greater student engagement with local employers, including Beard Construction, BMW MINI, Peter Brett Associates, RES and a local painting and decorating firm. It did so by;

- Co-creation and delivery of employer projects in maths and English
- Engagement of a large number of teachers in employer projects
- Delivery of projects across a range of vocational areas
- Running projects on more than one college campus

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Initially, the focus was very much on English and maths. In the course of developing the project elements, however, it became clear that the project had the potential for much more widespread cross-curricular collaboration. This enabled project elements to be carefully tailored to the vocational qualifications that students were undertaking and to the careers upon which they were embarking. This encouraged buy-in from staff and facilitated embedding the project in teaching staff practice.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

By far the biggest hurdle was persuading some members of the teaching team to become involved in the development and delivery of employer-led projects. Teachers reported concerns about workload, a lack of confidence in stepping beyond the syllabus and established teaching methods as well as the suitability of the projects for

Level 1 learners. As this way of working becomes embedded, it is anticipated that more members of staff will become involved.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Activate Learning now has five embedded employer projects fully mapped to English and maths GCSE assessment objectives and to tasks that students are likely to encounter in employment. More staff members across the colleges are now engaged with these employers and report greater confidence in doing so. There is increased collaboration between English and maths teachers and those teaching in vocational areas which has led to greater numbers of students (350+) being taught in a way that makes connections explicit between maths and English, their vocational courses, and their future employment.

Planned areas for development include: a greater focus on equality of opportunity and inclusion in the formulation of projects, more integration of technology, further opportunities for students to develop their own goals within the projects and to identify their own opportunities for stretch and challenge and a more structured programme of formative assessment and feedback. Activate Learning have planned a post-project debrief with staff and students, to include GCSE and programme outcomes, that will enable them to reflect on the strengths and limitations of their approach. This will shape the way the colleges develop and deliver these projects in the future and how they make use of and refine the materials produced so far.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Alice Eardley, English Teacher, City of Oxford College

Alex Warner, Director of Technology Faculty, Activate Learning

'The real value of the projects undertaken by the students can be found in the opportunities they create for contact with local employers and the evidence they provide of the specific and localised relevance of the skills they are developing in English and maths' **Alex Warner, Director of Technology Faculty at Activate Learning**

CASE STUDY: RAISING STANDARDS IN POST-16 ENGLISH

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

The 9-1 English Language GCSE requires students to read longer, more complex texts and to provide more perceptive analysis in their answers. FE colleges need to adapt their teaching to meet the demands of the new qualification. English lecturers also need to work more closely with colleagues in curriculum teams to ensure that the development of English skills is a shared responsibility. Greater Brighton Metropolitan College wanted to improve the reading, research, planning and assignment writing skills of their GCSE English students and for this to have a wider curriculum impact. They wanted to develop and embed different approaches to teaching reading that focused more on improving close reading skills and less on exam-style comprehension questions.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Greater Brighton Metropolitan College is the result of a merger between Brighton Metropolitan College and Northbrook Metropolitan College. The Raising Standards in Post-16 English project aimed to make a core group of staff more confident about supporting the development of these skills in their learners so that the quality of GCSE English and curriculum assignments improved by;

- Recruiting volunteer staff from other curriculum areas to participate in the project
- Researching available literature and completing a Level 5 English training course offered by the Education and Training Foundation
- Producing a range of resources for students and staff including; videos designed by a dyslexia specialist that could be used by students to facilitate memory of specialist words, presentations and videos on how to make effective notes and use them as revision tools, memory tools for writing instructions for end unit assessments, as well as sentence stems and posters

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Focus groups have highlighted improved communication between English and curriculum teams since the start of the project. This was crucial to successful outcomes. Members of staff within the English team worked particularly closely with

those in Construction, Sport, Public Services, Motor Vehicle, Beauty and Care. 88% of staff in these curriculum areas chose to attend a follow-up session where they showcased existing resources and uploaded new material on a shared drive. This session facilitated sharing of practice between different curriculum areas and different site teams, resulting in a wide range of resources and differentiated materials. The project has also helped to improve communication and knowledge sharing between the two merged colleges, including holding shared CPD sessions.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

100% of GCSE English learning walks carried out in the project period highlighted increased student engagement and motivation in comparison with the previous academic year. Focus groups with GCSE learners have supported this, with one learner reporting that the work this term "has changed the way I read." Initial internal assessment data in the colleges indicate that the results of the project cohort's reading assessments will be improved from the previous academic year.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Transforming Teaching Learning and Assessment Brighton MET;

https://sites.google.com/ccb.ac.uk/ttla

'[The Project] has changed the way I read.'

Learner at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College

CASE STUDY: GOOGLE G SUITE FOR EDUCATION

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Greater Brighton Metropolitan College was aware that a number of groups, platforms and mechanisms exist to share the experience of using Google G Suite for Education in secondary and primary schools. However, they felt that such opportunities were not in place in the FE community or, at the very least, were undeveloped. With Northbrook Metropolitan College, they wanted to create better awareness of the tools available and share good practice across partner colleges and community stakeholders.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Greater Brighton Metropolitan College is the result of a merger between Brighton Metropolitan College and Northbrook Metropolitan College. The Connecting and Upskilling Teaching and Learning Communities project aimed to use digital technology to improve teaching and learning by generating greater awareness of the use of Google tools for education and of digital technologies. The project aimed to do this by;

- Enrolling teachers and IT support staff on a Google Bootcamp, the object of which was to train staff within the partner colleges using a 'train the trainer' approach. All participants were provided with a Google Chromebook.
- Training students to be digital leaders in order to help staff and students to develop their own digital confidence – the Student Digital Leader Programme.
- Hosting a livestreamed FE Google-focused Brighton Digital Festival Event on Technology & the Future of Education in order to exchange good practice.
- Running a livestreamed staff development session in which a Digital Innovation Specialist from Basingstoke College of Technology talked to staff at Brighton & Northbrook about how technology is being used at Basingstoke.

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Starting small and building up by training a few people well and then cascading knowledge, building up ever larger collaboration circles helped to embed knowledge and created impetus for the project. When running events to share good practice, the colleges ensured an easy to access follow-up system to capture & facilitate collaboration. Financial investment was important - giving people explicit jobs, for which they were remunerated, and securing marketing buy-in early on in order to sell recruitment and project advantages.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

As a result of the Google Bootcamp, around 250 additional staff members – beyond the original participants - have been trained in the use of Google tools. In addition, a

whole range of resources/services have been created, including instructional videos, a study skills site and drop-in sessions for students, as well as staff templates and face-to-face training and the creation of a G+ Community. Some of the key outputs of the Student Digital Leader Programme have been; the creation by students of a booking system for their support, the development of a tracking system to record the jobs they have done and the feedback they have received, publicity campaigns for the service. In addition, a number of learners have had their employability skills endorsed on LinkedIn by any teachers they have helped.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Project Overview:

https://sites.google.com/ccb.ac.uk/otla-project

Student Digital Leaders Programme:

https://sites.google.com/ccb.ac.uk/gbmetdigitalleaders/home

'Imparting the right knowledge to staff so they can be effective in the classroom.'

Project member at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College

CASE STUDY: MOVING FORWARD BY FEEDING BACK

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Chichester, Basingstoke and Brockenhurst colleges were aware that a number of learners, arriving in FE for the first time, faced the prospect of re-engaging with maths and English. It was not uncommon for these learners to lack confidence and have low expectations of success. The colleges had also identified that learner experience during the first few weeks of term often shapes approach and attitude to the year ahead. They wanted learners to see the relevance of English and maths to their newly-chosen vocational programmes in order to improve outcomes for these learners across the board.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The Moving Forward by Feeding Back project grew out of a successful earlier project at Chichester College that focused on early motivation and engagement with maths and English. Moving Forward by Feeding Back aimed to disseminate and develop lessons learned from this initial project in all vocational areas across the three separate colleges. It aimed to improve attendance, engagement and achievement by;

- Encouraging students to access a mindfulness website resource, called Change your Mind, Change your Life, developed in-house by the colleges
- Expecting staff to use more coaching feedback to students in lessons
- Creating a toolkit of mindfulness, growth mindset and coaching resources to be shared collaboratively within and between colleges.

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

The project has forged the beginning of a productive and collaborative partnership between the colleges. Crucial to the success of the project was the shared view held by Chichester, Basingstoke and Brockenhurst that resources linked to mindfulness, growth mindset and coaching could benefit both staff and students. The colleges also stressed the importance of planning and communication when working in collaboration with other institutions.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

As with all collaborative projects of this nature, there were considerable time pressures to contend with, particularly when arranging meetings. Project members

did meet face-to-face and were in frequent contact using technology when this was not possible.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

A key indicator of the success of the project was increasing lesson attendance to GCSE and Functional Skills maths and English lessons. During the evaluation period, the colleges saw improved attendance from the previous academic year of up to 3%. Analytics from early in the course showed 19% of students using the mindfulness website in their own time with 34% of these being repeat users. Observations also indicated greater evidence of coaching and more probing use of questioning in lessons. Qualitative feedback was positive. One member of staff stated that the resource "helped my learners to reflect on how well they used different strategies and what they could do in the future to become more accepting of challenges." One learner in a GCSE English class said that they were "really interested in growth mindset because I get disheartened so easily". Part of the sustainability of this project will see a Licence to Coach course for staff run at Chichester College for colleagues at Basingstoke and Brockenhurst Colleges.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

James Morton-Thomas, Teaching, Coaching and Development Manager at Chichester College

'This project has seen the beginning of a productive and collaborative partnership between Chichester, Basingstoke and Brockenhurst Colleges. Its success can be linked to a shared view … that resources linked to mindfulness, growth mindset and coaching could benefit both staff and students. There has been measurable quantitative and qualitative evidence that this has been the case.' **James Morton-Thomas, Teaching, Coaching and Development Manager at Chichester College**

CASE STUDY: PAVING THE WAY TO LEVEL 6

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Bedford College and Central Bedfordshire College wanted to better prepare learners for Higher Education courses at local universities and colleges. They wished to facilitate progression onto Level 6 courses more successfully. The colleges were keen to find out what these providers considered to be the key requirements for Level 6 so that they could incorporate the required skills into their teaching at Access and Foundation Degree level.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Those involved in the Paving the Way to Level 6 project:

- Carried out semi-structured interviews with staff in local universities in order to find out what approaches would be most beneficial to adopt at Level 5
- Developed and evaluated common rubrics of teaching and learning strategies to use across both colleges
- Assessed the development of keys skills in learner work
- Observed and evaluated Level 5 seminar sessions delivered by university staff

The teaching and learning approaches adopted for the project intervention were flipped learning and seminar study. This choice was driven by a clear preference expressed by university lecturers for Socratic questioning, dialogical co-construction and collaboration over more didactic approaches to teaching.

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Project leaders at the colleges worked in a truly collaborative manner. Central to the success of the project was the sharing of the findings within the participating colleges and with others in the sector. This enabled the project leaders to adapt and refine approaches and methodologies. Early on, the project was shared at the Association of Colleges' College HE Research and Scholarship Conference. Towards the end of the data collection period, project findings were shared at a Learning and Skills Research Network branch event and with the Bedford College Research Network.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

The biggest challenge faced by the project was ensuring that all stakeholders across all institutions and subjects were fully engaged in order to ensure that the project interventions were effective and that the conclusions were well supported. This extended to adopting agreed methodologies for data collection and evaluation.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Observations, samples of learner work and rubric data pointed to the effectiveness of employing flipped learning and seminar strategies. Improvements were evident in critical thought, argument structure, use of English, analysis and discussion and reading and identification. Learners at both colleges generally showed around an average of one grade improvement in each of these areas before and during the project period. Qualitative data supported this - one lecturer noted that grades awarded '…were higher than their average grades last year which was great to see.'

Benefits of the project were shared by all participating learners at both colleges, with greatest progress seen by the lowest performing students. The next step for the colleges will be to implement a plan to sharpen their practice in order to challenge higher performing learners to improve their grades at the same rate.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Samantha Jones, Advanced Practioner, Teacher Development and Scholarship at Bedford College

Natalie Morris, Lecturer, Advanced Practioner and Course Manager at Bedford College

'[This] has been a truly collaborative project between Bedford College and Central Bedfordshire College…undertaken in the context of both colleges experiencing an increase in HE student numbers, and an emerging issue of preparing an increasing number of…students…for the challenges they face when they progress to university…' **Eamonn Egan, Vice Principal at Central Bedfordshire College**

CASE STUDY: SOFT SKILLS

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

The development of soft skills is widely accepted as an important part of the learning process especially for vulnerable learners. However, how progress is measured and impact demonstrated is more challenging. This project aimed to develop a common measurement tool to be used across the five Berkshire local authority community learning services focusing on both non-accredited and accredited courses. In the past only hard outcomes such as qualifications or progression into employment or further learning were measured, which did not reflect the role community learning plays in developing a wider range of skills.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The Placing Soft Skills at the Heart of Community Learning project was devised by the Community Learning Managers for five of the unitary Berkshire authorities; West Berkshire, Reading, Bracknell, Wokingham and Slough (including Windsor and Maidenhead. The project sought to demonstrate the wider impact of community learning programmes in developing the soft skills of their students and use this information to influence the future curriculum offer in each authority. It did this by:

- Developing a more needs-led approach to curriculum planning and delivery by involving learners in their soft skills targets
- Developing and piloting a common impact tool to be used within adult learning at the start, mid-point and end of courses. There were two versions of this tool – one was 'visual' and the other 'linear' – to meet the needs of different learners
- Developing the skills and confidence of Adult Community Learning Tutors to address the needs of vulnerable learners by establishing a working group facilitated by social media
- Sharing and building on existing planning and impact measurement practice

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Teachers felt they benefitted from time away from their institutions and a collaborative approach to think about their teaching practice with teachers. Many felt that they had become more reflective and that they were more aware of soft skills and the impact they had.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

The community-based nature of the provision posed challenges for teacher collaboration, even with the existence of a project Facebook group and a dedicated Google Community.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Adult learners were given a short questionnaire with results compiled separately for those using the linear and visual tools. Learners recognised the importance of measuring soft skills (visual 100%, linear 83%), felt the layout was clear (visual 93%, linear 94%) and returning students preferred this tool to previous individual learning plans (visual 75%, linear 78%). In addition, a network of teachers has been established and this has developed a culture of collaboration and support that will promote future joint working across curriculum areas and local authorities.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

http://info.westberks.gov.uk/learningandtraining

'*The project made us try something new that the students liked and benefitted from*'

Adult Community Learning Tutor

CASE STUDY: PRACTICAL BLENDED LEARNING

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

The project's overall objective was to pilot paperless multimedia learning experiences that could be applied to practical further education environments. It aimed to explore how the learning environments of the classroom, workplace and home could be integrated through new teaching approaches. The ultimate aim was to improve attainment, engagement and student satisfaction, secure more rapid progress and improved preparation for the workplace.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Plumpton College, with Sussex Coast and Worthing College set up the Practical Blended Learning: Evaluating the use of Technology in Vocational Teaching project, to introduce blended learning approaches to their vocational staff and learners.   They did this by:

- Evaluating models of blended learning based on the research and frameworks of Blended Learning Universe, but modified to suit further education environments
- Experimenting with hardware, app-based resources and video for blended learning. The learning technology team attended conferences and network meetings, including attending and presenting at Brighton University's eLearning Conference.
- Holding user workshops, evaluating and disseminating frameworks. The project decided to develop a 'Three E's Framework' for further education based on research led by Keith Smyth at Edinburgh Napier University and launched the project at the colleges in a Blended Learning Month

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

Throughout the project, two major factors affected the ability of teachers to plan and implement blended learning in their lessons. Firstly, teachers must have a certain level of digital literacy in order to choose the most appropriate models and resources for their lessons. A certain level of training is required before teachers can begin to understand how technology could be applied within their specialist area. Conversely, learning technologists do not always have enough knowledge of subject area to support teaching staff throughout the process. Teachers must themselves be confident in scaffolding and demonstrating new technology to students in their lessons.

Secondly, a digital infrastructure must be in place that gives teachers the opportunity to scaffold activities in the classroom in the first place. The infrastructure must include

access to appropriate computer hardware, software and reliable connectivity to the internet.

Furthermore, the sustainability of technology within real practical lessons is more important than the potential impact in an ideal classroom. Lesson evaluations during the project suggest that simpler activities and technologies that are applied consistently have a greater impact on teaching and learning.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Frameworks and training packages produced as a result of this pilot project have been published on the Plumpton College's Virtual Learning Environment, Plumpton Online.

User workshops have also been run with other colleges. This has helped to further evaluate the project ideas and disseminate the frameworks more widely.

The framework produced for models of blended learning can be used as the starting point for any teacher wishing to evaluate how they use technology within their classroom.

Student voice surveys have indicated high levels of engagement by students with blended learning (around 70%) and high levels of satisfaction with technology for learning (around 80%).

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

James Michael Maltby, Learning Technology Manager, Plumpton College

"Technology has become ubiquitous in the classroom and in the modern workplace, but how can further education colleges integrate technology and digital literacy effectively into their teaching programmes?"
James Michael Maltby, Learning Technology Manager, Plumpton College

CASE STUDY: RAISING ASPIRATIONS

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Sparsholt College and Isle of Wight College wanted to embed a sustainable and aspirational culture which improved teaching practice and the motivation of current and future staff. In addition, they wanted to sustain a culture of high expectations that improves life chances for learners. They wanted this aspirational culture to extend beyond the colleges by producing an excellence toolkit to support learners, teaching & learning coaches and staff across the sector.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The Raising Aspirations – Inspiring Students and Staff to fulfil their Potential project sought the views of teachers and learners to design, trial and assess a number of interventions aimed at helping participants take a different view of their potential. This was guided by the work of Carol Dweck, but also sought to provide a small, 'grass roots' study which could be used to inspire staff to further develop the anticipated positive outcomes. The project did this by;

- Delivering a pilot intervention aimed at trying to raise motivation amongst GCSE English students in the weeks immediately prior to their examination by supporting learners to: identify their aspirations and barriers, take forward a personal belief that these barriers could be overcome and supply them with accessible strategies to do this.
- Enhancing students' emotional resilience. This project phase covered approximately 175 students, 8 teachers, and the 3 staff in the Teaching Excellence team at Sparsholt and approximately 150 students at Isle of Wight, alongside further support for the 8 teachers and 1 teacher educators linked with the project.
- Observing practice, sharing strategies for learner development and building relationships to increase capacity and expertise within college staff, such that post-project delivery can be sustainable. Teaching Excellence teams have developed professional development activities to be rolled out to teachers across both organisations

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Involving an external partner to help develop the initial phase gave the project impetus across both colleges.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

The biggest challenge faced by the project was managing change within project staffing as a result of restructuring within both colleges.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

The Sparsholt students who received motivational input and support prior to their GCSE English examination achieved results that were significantly better than those learners who were not part of the trial group. In addition, these students received 9-4 grades that were almost 28% higher than the college average for all GCSEs.

What was particularly striking was the progress that learners made between their mock examination in March and the final examination in June. Initial quantitative and qualitative data for the students in the emotional resilience programme indicates similar impact.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Stuart Barlow, Vice Principal Curriculum Sparsholt College

'The project has demonstrated that, for learners in both Colleges, activities which focus upon changing learners' beliefs about their ability to succeed will have a positive benefit upon their actual achievement'.

Stuart Barlow, Vice Principal Curriculum Sparsholt College

CASE STUDY: SHARING GOOD PRACTICE WITH TECHNOLOGY

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Colleges and training providers agree that good practice sharing is desirable and potentially impactful. The 'Why Doesn't the Sharing of Good Practice have more Impact? How technology can Improve its Efficacy' project looked at barriers to practice sharing and explored the use of innovative technological solutions to effective sharing within and across institutions.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Worthing College, with Abingdon and Whitney College wanted to: identify the barriers to the sharing of good practice between teachers within and across institutions, to reduce those barriers through the innovative use of technology, develop ways to share good practice and to build up a reservoir of good practice examples for dissemination in the medium to long term within and across institutions.

They did this by:

- Surveying staff about current methods and drawbacks sharing of good practice
- Compiling college-specific websites of resources for on-demand sharing - the Worthing Development Directory and Abingdon and Whitney's Project ICE
- Encouraging small scale good practice sharing projects within the colleges to evolve – for example, an analysis of independent study in GCSE maths, research on metacognition in A level Psychology and work in Media to promote research skills amongst students. Eight different strands were chosen at Worthing and three at Abingdon and Whitney.

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Allowing strands to organically emerge and contribute to the project encouraged staff engagement and a spirit of exploration and enquiry. Many of the platforms and resources available on the college websites have been transformational and widely shared whereas they were previously unknown to the vast majority of staff

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

The most significant problem has been the logistics of liaising between two colleges over a distance. Whilst the majority of the eight strands at Worthing yielded positive and impactful outcomes, some did not and at Abingdon and Witney College found some of the technology more difficult to implement across platforms than first thought.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Staff have been able to upskill and learn a new technology resource that can be included in the planning and delivery of lessons. This training has been available to staff online so they can access it when they want to, where they want to and revisit it as many times as they need or want. Ultimately it has provided flexibility to staff and to the delivery and sharing of training.

More staff are engaging with the sharing of good practice because it is easily available and accessible to them. Another key finding is the time efficiency factor. The sessions are kept short, easy to understand and follow; promoting a greater uptake of the use of the sharing of good practice and implementation of good practice in sessions with students.

The project has also changed the approach to training and staff development. As a result of the success of using different platforms to communicate new learning technologies, the colleges have started to create a series of online training materials using Nearpod, Sway, Office Mix and Edpuzzle.

The use of Yammer is also proving successful as a means of sharing inspiring, challenging and engaging examples of teaching practice and encouraging a community of staff to contribute and interact with it.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Steven Foden, Vice Principal, Worthing College

'[The project has]…*created in each institution an appetite and a methodology for practitioner-led, institution-based professional research and development.*'

Steven Foden, Vice Principal, Worthing College

CASE STUDY: TALK FOR WRITING IN PRISONS

WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

Mandatory English assessments carried out in prisons indicate that 57% of prisoners have Entry level literacy skills, compared with just 15% of the general population. In addition, locally-held data for the prisons in the project showed relatively low success rates at Level 1 and Level 2.

Success at these levels enables prisoners to access further educational opportunities and a wider range of prison jobs. Pass rates were also lower in Reading and Writing assessments in these qualifications than in Speaking & Listening assessments. All of this, coupled with a lack of IT access in prisons, meant that there was a need for an approach that developed learners' writing skills that was both innovative and did not need heavy use of IT.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Milton Keynes College (with HMP Winchester, HMP Gartree, HMP Sudbury, HMYOI Aylesbury, HMP Birmingham, HMP Foston Hall, HMP Oakwood, HMP Stocken and HMP Bullingdon) launched the Can 'Talk for Writing' Work in Prison Education? project in order to develop prisoners' writing skills by exploring whether an innovative method used in schools could be used effectively in the prison education setting. It did so by:

- Introducing project staff to the Talk for Writing approach developed by Julia Strong
- Holding three training sessions at Milton Keynes College for a total of nine prisons as well as regional teams
- Adapting the approach to the individual settings and experimenting with materials
- Visiting prisons to gather information and speak to learners engaged in the project

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

The approach provided an excellent opportunity for staff to collaborate across prisons. Prison regimes can make it difficult for staff to attend training opportunities and the distances between many prisons also make this training difficult to arrange. Through this project, prison educators were able to work together to share their experiences and to support each another to develop their teaching practice.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

Restricted regime issues at some prisons meant that progress was hampered as some learners could attend classes only sporadically.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

There is a range of quantitative data across participating prisons that points to the success of the project. Success rates in the various qualifications across all institutions have improved between 5% and 55% after the implementation of the Talk for Writing project.

The project also tracked the individual progress of a number of learners. For example, one young offender went from being unable to spell to attempting a Level 2 qualification, whilst another progressed from Entry 2 to Level 2 in six months.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Saul Pope, Deputy Director – Quality, Offender Learning and Skills Service, Milton Keynes College

"I found the actions really helpful and they are good as a group activity."

"Before I was struggling with conjunctions, but after Talk for Writing I now know most of the conjunction words."

"I can now remember the conjunctions 'furthermore', 'moreover', 'where' and 'but'."

Learner comments from HMP Foston Hall

PART 3: EVALUATION
UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

Impact on Organisations

Project Based Evaluation

The range of aims, themes, topics, approaches, methods and participants which the 14 projects included was diverse. Applicants had been encouraged to identify themes and topics which were relevant to and chosen by them and they responded well to this challenge.

Within this a range of qualitative and participative research methods were selected and utilised. All 14 projects used surveys in some form, supplementing this with a range of techniques including interviews, focus groups, and lesson observation.

There was also considerable variety in the levels of experience of planning and carrying out research, ranging from those new to joint practice development to those with significant experience in both taking part in research and managing projects.

This open and flexible opportunity to take on and run a small project was enthusiastically grasped by all participants and the results include a wide range of outputs, outcomes and impacts.

Due to the diversity and variety of projects and the different approaches and evaluation strategies used, we will have provided case studies of each project and their outputs, outcomes and impact as this is the best way to represent the results accurately.

Ofsted Inspection

The nature of Ofsted inspections means it is highly unlikely that all providers will be inspected within the project period. However, three lead partners have been inspected since they completed their projects:

- Activate Learning received a full inspection in January 2018
- Plumpton College received a full inspection in February 2018
- Sparsholt College received a short inspection in March 2018

In January 2018 Ofsted did an inspection of Activate Learning where they retained their grade 2. Whilst

they did not mention the OTLA project specifically (which focussed on co-construction of a maths and English curriculum with employers) the impact of the project itself is clear in a selection of their comments below.

> *Employers' strong involvement with learning programmes helps prepare learners well for work.*

Ofsted report, Activate Learning, January 2018

> *Practical enterprise projects develop learners' understanding of the world of work exceptionally well, and the quality of goods produced and sold by learners is very good.*

Ibid.

> *Employer engagement is strong. Employers are members of faculty advisory boards. They shape the curriculum by providing master classes and business challenges, providing realistic settings and scenarios for learning activities, co-delivering sessions and providing the location for work experience. For example, staff at BMW provide inspirational talks and 200 work placements; Siemens employees have developed a 'making maths work' booklet; Royal Berkshire hospital staff deliver to level 3 health and social care learners at the hospital. Learners are clear about the relevance of their learning to employment and are more motivated as a result.*

Ibid.

Plumpton College was inspected on 20th February 2018 and their overall effectiveness grade increased from Requires Improvement to Good.

> *Leaders' and managers' well-considered actions have resulted in improvements in teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection.*

Ofsted report, Plumpton College, February 2018

Plumpton College's project specifically focussed on the use of virtual reality to improve teaching and learning. The effectiveness of this strategy was highlighted in the Ofsted report:

> *Staff use appropriate technology well to enhance learning in practical and theory lessons. Learners gain a good understanding of relevant technology and how it is used commercially in their sector. For example, agricultural learners use virtual reality technology to practise reversing large and expensive farm machinery and to attach additional implements and trailers safely.*

Ibid.

Sparsholt received a short inspection, and whilst the content of their project was not directly referenced in their inspection letter the inspector did comment on the attitude to professional development that participation in OTLA projects encourages.

> *The focus on professional development across the college is leading to improvements in teaching and learning. Staff value highly the training that they receive as a result of the lesson observation*

and performance management process. New teachers benefit greatly from mentoring when they join the college. Teachers are now more willing to experiment with their practice and, as a consequence, student satisfaction and achievement have improved.

Ofsted Inspection Report, Sparsholt College, March 2018

Impact on Participants

At the start of the programme participants were asked to identify the 3 areas of the professional standard that they wanted to improve, and their current level of ability. At the programme participants were asked to consider anew their level against their self-identified area of improvement.

Whist we would treat these figures with an element of caution given the sample size, and that there is the inherent risk of respondents inaccurately completing the survey, the general trend is that participation in the programme has led to increased confidence and ability of participants to deliver teaching.

This trend in confirmed by the participants' confidence in relation to the professional standards. We asked all participants how they rated themselves on a confidence scale of 1-5 prior to the programme beginning, and after completion. One of the interesting factors in this data was participants' high level of confidence when coming into the programme. Frequently 2% or less of participants responded with confidence at 1-2. Therefore for this analysis we looked at the percentage increase in the highest grade of confidence (5).

With all confidence surveys there is an issue around areas where participants 'don't know what they don't know' and rate themselves highly because they are unaware of the expected standards. Participation in a programme like this naturally clarifies some of these expectations and can lead to a decrease in confidence across the programme itself.

We can, however, see positive effects from programme participation as a whole. It is surely relevant that of the three four professional standards, two of them were in areas directly addressed by the method of participation in OTLA3.

Indeed, potentially this shines a light on how to increase the level of 'research readiness' and understanding of the sector. There is clearly an issue about underlying levels of training, but practitioners seemed to gain significantly just for having the opportunity to practice these skills in a concrete way.

Standard	Pre	Post	Increase
To maintain and update your knowledge of educational research to develop evidence-based practice	11%	24%	130%
Maintaining and updating your teaching and training expertise and vocational skills through collaboration with employers	11%	21%	89%
Applying theoretical understanding of effective practice in teaching, learning and assessment drawing on research and other evidence	10%	18%	86%
To enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and assessment, setting goals that stretch and challenge	19%	30%	60%
To value and promote social and cultural diversity, equality of the opportunity and inclusion	30%	46%	53%
Evaluating and challenging your practice, values and beliefs	24%	30%	27%
Contributing to organisational development and quality improvement through collaboration with others	29%	36%	24%
Evaluating your practice with others and assess its impact on learning	18%	21%	16%
To be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help learners to learn	32%	36%	13%
Promoting the benefits of technology and support learners in its use	27%	30%	11%
Building positive and collaborative relationships with colleagues and learners	44%	49%	10%
Reflecting on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the diverse needs of learners	31%	33%	8%

Percentage Increase in Participants Showing Highest Levels of Confidence

Category	
Contributing to organisational development and quality improvement through…	
Maintaining and updating your teaching and training expertise and vocational…	
Applying appropriate and fair methods of assessment and provide…	
To enable learners to share responsibility for their own learning and…	
Addressing the mathematics and English needs of learners and work…	
Promoting the benefits of technology and support learners in its use	
Planning and delivering effective learning programmes for diverse groups of…	
To motivate and inspire learners to promote achievement and develop their…	
Understanding the teaching and professional role and your responsibilities	
Manage and promote positive learner behaviour	
Evaluating your practice with others and assess its impact on learning	
Applying theoretical understanding of effective practice in teaching, learning…	
To maintain and update your knowledge of educational research to develop…	
To maintain and update knowledge of your subject and/or vocational area	
Building positive and collaborative relationships with colleagues and learners	
To value and promote social and cultural diversity, equality of the opportunity…	
To be creative and innovative in selecting and adapting strategies to help…	
To inspire, motivate and raise aspirations of learners through your enthusiasm…	
Evaluating and challenging your practice, values and beliefs	
Reflecting on what works best in your teaching and learning to meet the…	

Axis: -40% -20% 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100% 120% 140%

Sustainability and Ongoing Impact

There is evidence of hopes and intentions for continuation of the work of the projects, or collaboration on other projects present in all project final reports.

Active plans of proposed actions of varying scale and reach, which demonstrate genuine potential for sustainability feature in all the project final reports, and this is complemented by what other projects have said about further implementing the approach from their projects into more of their existing practices.

We can be confident that items created for the projects will continue to be used and improved informally by those who created them and others.

All projects were asked about their plans for sustainability in their final report, and their actions generally fell into three categories

- **Extending the approach** to other curriculum areas or sites. For example, Activate Learning plan to expand their approach to English and to other employers in the coming year, and to roll the approach out over all Activate Learning colleges
- **Deepening the intervention**. For example, Milton Keynes College plans to have additional input from Talk for Writing consultant Julia Strong to identify ways they can build on the strengths of their approach
- **Disseminating the practice**. For example, Plumpton College's frameworks and training packages will be published as a free online course on the College's Virtual Learning Environment

During the Spring term further funding was provided for six of the projects to extend their work in the ways described above.

PART 4: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY
ACTION TO ENSURE THE WHOLE SECTOR BENEFITS

A strong conception of equality and diversity was built into the project from the outset:

- We worked hard to ensure we received equal participation from across the sector
- We made equality and diversity considerations a ranking factor in our project selections
- We ensured that equality and diversity data was gathered

Cross sector representation

We found cross sector representation harder than we had for OTLA2. Mainly this was due to specific issues around the South East region. AOSEC provided some limited promotional support and FE Sussex were an invaluable partner, but beyond that there were few local networks of providers we could tap into as we were able to do successfully in the South West – particularly in the home counties from Berkshire to Hertfordshire.

We did however have strong participation from the ACL sector, with one of the projects being made up entirely of ACL participants.

The split, from respondents to the equality and diversity survey, was as follows:

- 71% were from general FE providers
- 7% were from land based colleges
- 13% were from adult and community learning providers
- 2% were from independent training providers

Equality within projects

Our application form ensured that every project considered the impact of their project on equality and diversity, with it being a ranking factor to decide funding. Individual projects took a range of approaches here, including:

- Supporting progression to Level 6 for disadvantaged students (Bedford College)
- Raising learner aspirations (Sparsholt College)
- Supporting literacy skills for learners in the secure estate (Milton Keynes OLASS)

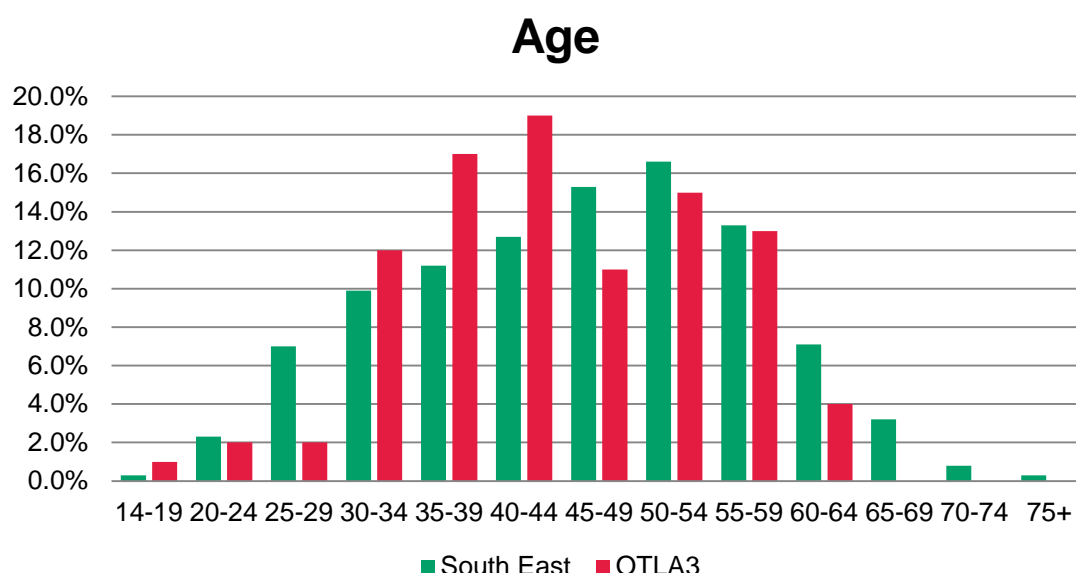## Diversity of Project Participants

We put significant effort into, and had significant success with, ensuring completion of the Foundation's

Equality and Diversity survey collecting 91 responses. Although responses were anonymous, we were able to track numbers of completions against individual projects and follow up with project leads accordingly.

We have analysed our success with recruiting a diverse group of participants against gender, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation and age. Our project data is compared with FE data for teachers in the South East from analysis of the Foundation's Staff Individualised Record dataset.[1]
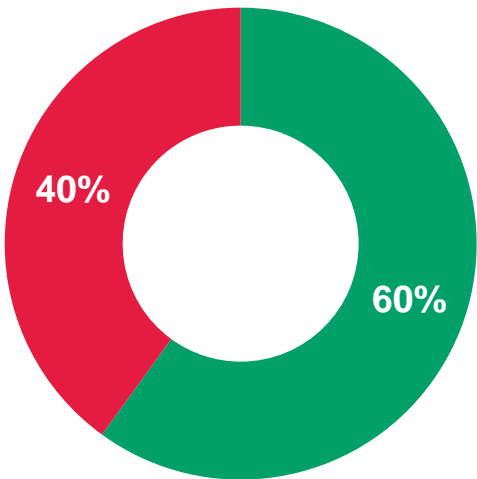
Care should be taken in reviewing the analysis below. The lack of diversity in the South East FE sector as a whole, and the relatively small number of surveys, means that statistical validity in the results is weak with one respondent able to make a difference of a percentage point in a category.

Still, it is clear that the programme has been accessible to a diverse range of teachers with participation largely mirroring the makeup of the sector in the South East as a whole.
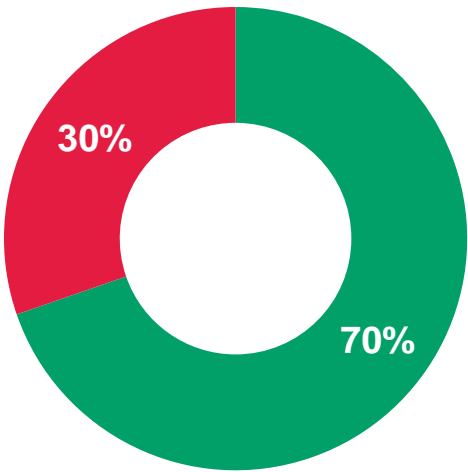

Age

Gender: South East

40%
60%

■ Female ■ Male

Gender: OTLA3

30%
70%

■ Female ■ Male

Disability

	South East	OTLA3
■ Yes – rather not say	2.1%	1.1%
■ Yes – physical impairment	1.9%	6.6%
■ Yes – mental ill heath	0.2%	2.2%
■ Yes – learning difficulty	0.7%	0.0%
■ No	95.1%	91.2%

Ethnicity

	South East	OTLA3
■ Other ethnic group	0.6%	0.0%
■ Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	1.6%	1.0%
■ Asian/Asian British	3.1%	1.0%
■ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	1.1%	1.0%
■ White	93.8%	95.0%

Sexual Orientation

	South East	OTLA3
■ Lesbian	1.0%	2.0%
■ Gay	1.1%	0.0%
■ Bisexual	0.6%	3.0%
■ Prefer not to say	12.6%	4.0%
■ Heterosexual	84.7%	89.0%

PART 5: CONCLUSIONS
LESSONS FROM PROJECT DELIVERY AND NEXT STEPS

Creative Education and the entire team feel very privileged to have been given the opportunity to help deliver this exciting project and have greatly valued the input from and support of the Foundation through the process.

Through our experience in project delivery we have come to a number of conclusions, both lessons learned and suggestions for future Foundation activity.

1. The value of this approach, and the benefits of collaboration

Above everything we think that delivery of this project has validated the value of these kinds of approaches to developing practice in the sector. Compared with a training model, the JPD approach brings with it a number of challenges: pinning down clear outputs and outcomes, the long term nature of activity, and the reliance on providers for successful delivery.

But where practitioners sometimes fail to really grasp the relevance of training that is done *to* them and apply it in their own organisation this approach completely inverts that paradigm. Many providers took on the challenge of project delivery and delivered projects far exceeding the initial outcomes set out, cementing a range of powerful new partnerships in the process.

Where there have been issues and difficulties, we believe these can be overcome by regular, persistent opportunity for providers to engage with this kind of project.

The more funded JPD is available for practitioners in the sector, the more they will get to understand the approach, and the more individual delivery partners will be able to improve the process and outcomes for the Foundation.

2. The importance of ethos in project delivery

We found that the ethos of providers was the main determining factor in their success of engaging with projects. Those who engaged with it strongly produced strong outcomes, whereas others had to be

constantly reminded not to fall into a 'training mindset' where figures of authority instructed others on how to improve.

Questions were raised in project delivery about what nature of collaboration is acceptable. Should campus-level partnerships be permitted, for example, for large providers such as Activate Learning? How should newly merged or merging providers such as GBMet be treated?

Clearly, some flexibility is required when considering the diversity of the sector and the tendency for providers to converge into larger groups, but equally the concept of 'collaboration' is central to programme to delivery and cannot be compromised.

Our suggestion for future programme delivery, would be to score the quality of collaboration in the grant funding application process – rather than have it as a simple binary yes/no. Greater points could be awarded to providers that included varied multi-partner partnerships and clear proposals for how this would work in practice.

3. The lack of a firm understanding of the JPD approach and evidence-based practice

One issue that became identified during the application process was the low level of understanding – even within bid writers at large FE colleges – about the JPD approach, the available evidence to support the core idea of their project, how to structure an effective trial and how to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching approaches.

We tried to counteract this with the commissioning of the 14th project with our 'development day' format. The development day gave us the opportunity to showcase a variety of evidence-based approaches to providers to stimulate their thinking, to enable them to form new partnerships, and to advise them as they developed their model.

This new approach had an immediate impact, with much better researched and detailed applications being received for project 14 than in the first round.

Overall, we feel providers need more support and better scaffolding to make the most of the OTLA approach. Moving forward, we would want to take this further, with four key stages in project delivery. Each stage would be a gateway consortia would have to pass, with clear success criteria, in order to progress their project.

- **Issues** – groups of providers find out about the programme and coalesce around a key challenge they face
- **Approaches** – groups of providers become aware of current research in this area, and collaborate to identify a promising approach
- **Development** – consortia develop an intervention ready for trial
- **Trial** – consortia roll out the intervention and gather and present data on effectiveness

4. The impact of timescales and funding

A key concern from providers was the timescale of project delivery. Even at a year's duration, the way OTLA3 fell was unfortunate.

- Spring term was required for commencement, promotion of the opportunity and selection
- Summer term was largely required for the development of the intervention
- Leaving autumn term to implement the intervention and assess impact

Autumn term is a challenging period to deliver interventions with significant disruption around enrolment, and a lack of assessment data against which to gauge improvement.

We appreciate though, that constraints around funding periods can sometimes make certain timescales unavoidable.

Funding windows also affected the distribution of money, with us required to provide money to providers ahead of them delivering outputs. Providers received £13,000 up front for OTLA3, and the lack of a more measured release of funding had clear impacts on provider motivation through the programme.

Final thoughts

We believe that this project has been genuinely transformational for the South East, involving a large number of providers in collaboration with a range of partners. For many practitioners, this was their first exposure to collaborative working across provider boundaries and we hope that some of the teaching approaches piloted, and some of the partnerships formed will stand the test of time and create a lasting legacy for the sector in the South East.