Case study: Raising standards in post-16 English

# Outstanding teaching, learning and assessment (OTLA 3), South Central programme

## Which organisations were involved?

Greater Brighton Metropolitan College (GBMET) was formed recently by the merger of Brighton Metropolitan and Northbrook Metropolitan colleges.

## What was the purpose?

GBMET 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. The new 9-1 grade English Language GCSE requires students to read longer, more complex texts and to provide more perceptive analysis in their answers, which means 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 other curriculum teams to ensure that the development of English skills is a shared responsibility.

GBMET 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?

This project aimed to make a core group of staff more confident about supporting the development of these skills in 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 highlighted improved communication between English and curriculum teams since the start of the project. This was crucial to successful outcomes. The English team worked particularly closely with Construction, Sport, Public Services, Motor Vehicle, Beauty and Care. The majority of staff (88%) in these curriculum areas attended a follow-up session where they showcased existing resources and uploaded new material on a shared drive. This sharing of practice between different curriculum areas and different site teams, resulted in a wide range of resources and differentiated materials. The project also helped improve communication and knowledge sharing between the two recently merged colleges, including holding shared CPD sessions.

### What difference did the project make?

All GCSE English learning walks carried out in the project period highlighted increased student engagement and motivation when compared with the previous academic year. Focus groups with GCSE learners supported this assessment. One learner reported that the work this term “has changed the way I read.” Initial internal assessment data indicates that the results of the project cohort’s reading assessments will be an improvement on the previous academic year.

### Where can I find more information?

Find out more:

* In the ETF [Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment 3: South Central. Final Report](https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/etf3023) (undated).
* From Transforming Teaching Learning and Assessment Brighton MET at <https://sites.google.com/ccb.ac.uk/ttla>. This site includes useful practical resources and slides to which you can request access.