



## INTRODUCTION

This case study is from one of 15 collaborative projects, across a range of cross-sector partnerships, that were commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation to support Phase 4 of the Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) programme.

This phase was delivered by touchconsulting and CETTAcademy to evaluate the role of Advanced Practitioners (AP), as defined by [Tyler et al \(2017\)](#)<sup>1</sup>. The projects were intended to explore the [functions](#) and [values](#) of the AP role within the partnership's quality improvement priorities.

## WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

The basis for this project was to evaluate the extent to which APs could secure improvements in Assessment for Learning (AfL), across both colleges, through a process of Joint Practice Development (JPD). AfL was the first cross-college focus for quality improvement, led by the APs due to its identification as a priority development need across the collaboration.

The project took its lead in defining JPD from Fielding et.al. (2005)<sup>2</sup> as "learning new ways of working through mutual engagement that opens up and shares practices with others".

## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

In addition to the training received by two Project Leads, who shared attendance on the AP professional development programme, the wider AP team received initial training in JPD (together with all staff). They subsequently attended cross-college AP Forums on a monthly basis facilitated by the Project Leads together with either, or both, Heads of Quality from the two colleges. The 'hands-on' involvement of senior managers ensured that the project was seen as having prestige from all staff viewpoints.

The AP Forums focused on improving AfL, with [resources](#) developed by one of the Heads of Quality and the APs working with their teams. This in turn enabled APs to facilitate on-going JPD with their allocated teaching teams during a pre-existing 'Golden Hour' allocated each week for staff development.

*'We've had the opportunity to be innovative and consider new ways of assessing learning.'*

*'I feel like I have more planned assessment activities to use on a regular basis.'*

*'Making learning more visible and asking, 'What if...?' questions.'*

*'Increased e-technology usage. E.g. Padlet to share work.'*

Teaching Staff, Bedford and Tresham Colleges



Padlet used to store Assessment for Learning resources utilised in the project.

<sup>1</sup> Tyler, E., Marvell, R., Green, M., Martin, A., Williams, J. and Huxley, C. (2017) Institute for Employment Studies (2017). Understanding the role of Advanced Practitioners, (Education and Training Foundation)

<sup>2</sup> Fielding, M. Bragg, S. Craig, J. Cunningham, I. Eraut, M. Gillinson, S. Horne, M. Robinson, C. & Thorp, J. (2005), Factors Influencing the Transfer of Good Practice, Nottingham, DFES Publications

## WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED

By far, the most successful and impactful factor in this project was the collaboration. The two colleges were in constant communication and met regularly to discuss and review the project. Importantly, the senior leadership at the two colleges were part of this communication and took on a lead role in the organisation, implementation and evaluation of the project. This helped to ensure a more standardised roll-out of the project, across the two colleges, and a higher rate of participation.

Secondly, at the outset, all staff were informed of the relevance of the project to the achievement of cross college priorities and the initial training they received included information about the benefits of both JPD and AfL for staff and students. APs were also enabled to engage with the role to variable extents, thereby providing a valuable and differentiated development opportunity.

*'Where the buy in has been best, it has been driven at the Director level.'*

Head of Quality, Tresham College

## WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

Bringing APs and senior managers together across the two colleges has created challenges in terms of time and travel, and the nature of collaboration inevitably means it takes longer to make decisions, with communications spanning sites as well as organisational structures. This was however helped by keeping the 'planning team' very small and also the acknowledgement that the effort to bring the two colleges together clearly proved successful and therefore worth the effort.

*'The utilisation of the 'Golden Hour' was another factor in the success of this project; APs and staff members in their departments did not have to do anything extra, just different.'*

Project Lead, Bedford College

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

All of the APs contributed to an electronic survey which was distributed at the end of the project. 100% of APs reported an improvement in AfL in their departments as a result of the JPD approach. Also, following the completion of the project, APs demonstrated a greater awareness of assessment for learning.

Staff reported, via interview after the initial phase of JPD, that they found the time useful and were able to discuss ways in which they were planning on changing teaching as a result, such as: 'Making learning more, visible and asking 'What if...? Questions' and increasing 'E-technology usage. E.g. Padlet to share work.'

Leaders at both colleges feel more aware of the importance of effective AfL and have emphasised its use with policy and planning documentation. Heads of Quality have also been asked to roll-out AP-supported JPD as the main means of CPD across both colleges.

*'The AP Forums have been intrinsic to the success of the project – even though this was costly in terms of time.'*

Project Lead, Bedford College

There is also a growing consensus regarding movement away from a 'deficit model' of professional development and towards a more 'universal model' in which every member of staff is expected, and supported, to critically evaluate and improve their own practice.

## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

For further information please visit the Advanced Practitioner OTLA Projects

Padlet page here: <https://en-gb.padlet.com/joss1/collabprojects>

Or contact:

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## RESOURCES SUPPORTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS (OTLA 4) – 2018/2019

CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO ACCESS THE RESOURCE

- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Professional Development Cards

**DEVELOPING ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS**  
**THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CARDS**

This resource has been produced to support the work of Advanced Practitioners. It builds on an original set of cards used to develop the skills of teaching and learning coaches who, using a peer-to-peer coaching model, work with staff to improve specific aspects of their delivery.

Advanced Practitioners can use these cards in a variety of ways, for example, to stimulate their own understanding and development, support their practice when working with others and to drive quality improvements in teaching, learning and assessment across the organisation.

The cards are colour coded to provide an initial focus for their use and application.

It should be noted that a number of the cards can be used in different contexts. For example, a card that helps support self-development could also be used to help support the coaching and development of others.

**BLUE CARDS**  
PRIMARY FOCUS: DEVELOPING SELF

**GREEN CARDS**  
PRIMARY FOCUS: DEVELOPING OTHERS

**MAGENTA CARDS**  
PRIMARY FOCUS: DEVELOPING ORGANISATIONS

**EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION**

- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Practical AP Guides



- Advanced Practitioner Monthly Communications



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