

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL SKILLS NATIONAL PROGRAMME

Case study **by: South Devon College**

Created by: **Rachael Johnstone**

Date: **February 2019**

Managed by:



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUTSTANDING TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT 1

BEYOND THE KNOWLEDGE 2

Project overview and aims	2
Partners	2
Methods	3
Action research	4
	5
Outcomes	5
Closing the gap	7
Impact	7
Sustainability	8
Lessons Learnt	8
Take away message	9



BEYOND THE KNOWLEDGE



Project overview and aims

Beyond the knowledge is a project designed to develop curriculum, resources and teaching learning and assessment models that will help to develop individual's professional behaviours, attitudes, and approaches required for competency within the Accounting Sector.

Research conducted with employers within the Accounting Sector has identified that new recruits need to develop a range of professional skills to effectively contribute towards the culture and ethos of the sector. These transferable skills include;

- An ability to communicate both in writing and orally at all levels
- Strong interpersonal skills and cultural awareness when dealing with internal and external customers
- Dealing with conflict and influencing skills
- Flexibility to maintain high standards in a changing environment
- Proactively takes responsibility for completing tasks and meeting expectations
- Prioritises to achieve timely outcomes
- Supports colleagues and collaborates to achieve results
- Aware of their role within the team and their impact on others
- Ethics and integrity
- Professional Scepticism

The project will enhance the Accounting curriculum to develop these skills, building upon the core theoretical knowledge gained through completion of their professional accounting qualifications. By building these professional and softer skills into the curriculum, the project will develop a more holistic teaching learning and assessment model that directly addresses the needs of the employers and dramatically improves the workplace skills of the learners creating more rounded, effective and employable learners.



'The aim of the project is to create resources to develop individuals' professional behaviours, attitudes and approaches required for competency and success within the Accounting Sector'

TIM GODFREY
PARTNER
BISHOP FLEMING

Partners

- South Devon College
- Cornwall College
- Bridgwater College




Methods

The initial stage of the project was to raise the lecturer's awareness of the importance of embedding the professional skills identified by the Accounting Sector into the Accounting curriculum. We produced a survey for all the education partners to complete requiring Accounting Lecturers to reflect on their teaching, learning and assessment practice. This was based on the ETF Professional Teaching Standards survey. This was used to support CPD sessions for the Lecturers involved in the project along with employer input to ensure all lecturers could identify with the current culture and ethos of working in the accounting sector.

The next stage was to develop teaching learning and assessment resources moving towards outstanding. It was important that we could measure the impact of these sessions and gather feedback from the students before and after each session.

We felt that we needed to create a forum where lecturers would feel confident to experiment and be prepared to fail to enable us to move towards outstanding TLA. Kate Murrie, the Peer Advisor supporting this project understood how important this element was and acting as a critical friend, we decided to host an Accounting Student Conference whereby the students were fully aware that the conference was an action research project with the content designed to support their career progression.








**Beyond the Knowledge
Student Accounting Conference**

Thursday 25th October 2018, 9.30am – 3.30pm
Professional Centre, Heathfield
Entry to this event is free

The Beyond the Knowledge Student Accounting Conference has been designed to develop your professional behaviours, attitudes and approaches within the Accounting Sector. The eight Masterclasses that are available on the day have been designed to focus on enhancing the following skills:

- ☐ Communication, both written and oral
- ☐ Interpersonal skills and cultural awareness when dealing with internal and external customers
- ☐ Conflict and influencing skills
- ☐ Flexibility to maintain high standards in a changing environment
- ☐ Ability to take responsibility for completing tasks and meeting expectations
- ☐ Prioritising in order to achieve timely outcomes
- ☐ Supporting colleagues and collaborating to achieve results
- ☐ Team awareness and your impact on others
- ☐ Ethics and integrity
- ☐ Professional scepticism

To book please search 'Beyond the Knowledge' on eventbrite.co.uk

South Devon College @ProfessionalSDC
01803 540600 | business@southdevon.ac.uk



'The Level of experts from industry we had access to at the Beyond the Knowledge Student Conference was the best thing'

GEMMA HAINES
ACCOUNTING STUDENT



'A representative of AAT making the effort to not only visit but chat to students on a personal level, offering advice and genuinely taking an interest in future accountants'

KELLY POPE
ACCOUNTING STUDENT

Action research

A variety of stakeholders were involved in this project and included:

Stakeholders	Direct	Indirect
Managers and senior leaders	7	10
Practitioners (teachers, trainers, tutors...)	14	88
Learners	165	32
Providers	3	1
Employers	12	0

Eight masterclasses were developed for delivery during the Accounting Student Conference of which 38% were delivered by employers. The event was also supported by the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT). Students who attended were asked to complete a survey before participating in the masterclasses as a measurement of their understanding of the professional skills essential to the sector. They were then asked to complete a survey after the conference to measure impact.



Following the conference, the lecturers reflected on their own practice and took on board the feedback from the students and further developed the content which was then delivered to all accounting students across the three partner colleges.

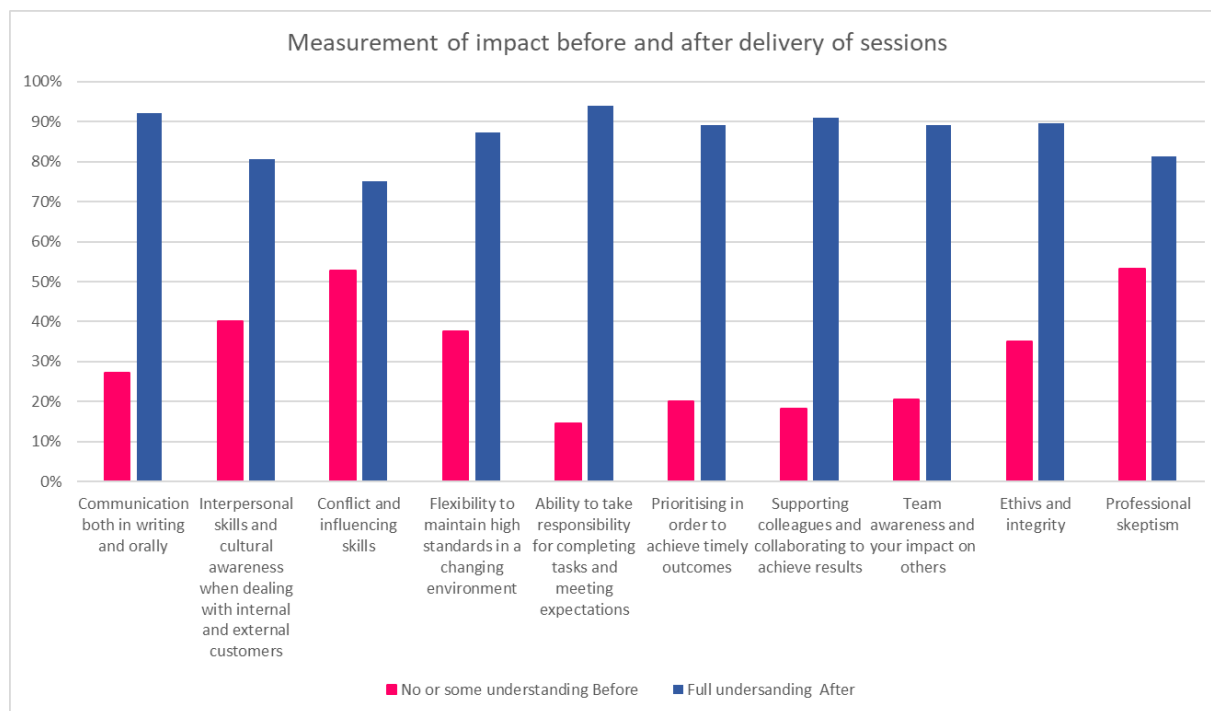


“

'Explained in detail the requirements and expectations of an accounting professional and how they should present themselves'

**JOHN HODDER
ACCOUNTING STUDENT**

165 direct learners and 32 indirect learners were involved within this project. Through the use of surveys, before and after delivery of resources, a measurable improvement of on average 55% was recorded throughout the duration of the project. The graph below provides a breakdown of the improvement in understanding of the individual professional skills:



Furthermore, comparison year on year of unit exam results were undertaken, where two of the professional skills of the project could be assessed. This showed across all three training providers an increase in higher grades of between 1.33% and 1.52%. The measurable outcome of this is limited by the duration of the project as these are midcourse units rather than synoptic assessments, however this is a positive outcome should these trends continue.

Closing the gap

Through the analysis of data, it was identified that students who funded their accountancy training through the advanced learner loan achieved less than those who were funded by all other methods. Investigation into their economic and social background did not reveal any links to achievement therefore these students were interviewed which identified barriers to retention and achievement being:

- confidence
- poor organization
- anxiety
- low self-esteem
- motivation
- time management
- work life balance

South Devon College has put coaches in place to support these learners to overcome the barriers identified and expanded this to Teacher Training and Electrical Installation part-time adult courses.

Impact

Lecturers involved in the delivery of this project have critically reflected on their own practice of delivering accountancy training, analysing the changing environment within the accounting sector and developing their skills as practitioners to provide teaching, learning and assessment beyond the knowledge of accountancy. This now includes the skills and behaviours as identified by employers as crucial to the accounting sector.

Lecturers have also worked in collaboration with employers and improved their own understanding of the current culture and ethos of the accounting sector.

The predominant professional standards used within this project are:

- Motivate and inspire learners to promote achievement and develop their skills to enable progression by identification of barriers to learners funding their studies through the advanced learner loan to ensure improved retention, achievement and progression. In addition, the measurable improvement in student's achievement in the individual unit examinations.
- Maintain and update your teaching and training expertise and vocational skills through collaboration with employers from the initial consultations with employers to identify the professional skills within this project. Furthermore, the opportunity to work collaboratively with employers to develop key sessions for delivery as part of the student conference as well as staff CPD opportunities.



'We now deliver not just what they need to know but how they need to do it'

MAGGIE BRETON
ACCOUNTING LECTURER

- Contribute to organisational development and quality improvement through collaboration with others by involving practitioners beyond the scope of the project through indirect delivery and dissemination of outcome of advanced learner loan student work to adult students studying Teacher training and electrical installation part-time courses.
- Maintain and update knowledge of your vocational area through collaboration with partner colleges and employers.
- Value and promote social and cultural diversity, equality of opportunity and inclusion by identification of achievement gaps in learners and identifying actions recorded in the quality improvement plans to close this gap. Also, the extension of the project to include 16-18-year study programmes.

Sustainability

The professional skills that were identified in collaboration with employers will continue to be embedded within the schemes of learning for accounting curriculums from Levels 2 to 4 across all partners.

Continuation of the research and support to close the achievement gap of learners who fund their courses through the advanced learning loan will continue at South Devon College and the sharing of the outcomes to the partner colleges of this project.

Inclusion of the wider professional skills identified within this project within the 16-18-year study programme for preparation of industry placements required for the roll out of T levels.

Lessons Learnt

With the use of a student conference as the first point, lecturers delivered skills rather than knowledge and provided a 'safe space' to gather feedback from students and peers in the development of outstanding teaching learning and assessment. The students were fully briefed on the action research project and completed surveys therefore the feedback gained was specific and direct. This approach supported by specific CPD activities enabled the project to have a rapid impact on moving towards outstanding teaching learning and assessment.

Time passes rapidly and the pressures of the educational environment continue through the duration of the project. Monitoring and communication across the partnership is essential to facilitate completion of the project.

Take away message

The greatest benefit of this project was the ability to collaborate with other colleges to add value to a curriculum that was based around a highly desirable qualification but lacked the professional skills essential to effectively contribute towards the culture and ethos of the sector.

Through this project we had the opportunity to further explore common problems, one of which was the achievement gaps linked to equality and diversity. This was not the original aim of the project; however it enabled the identification of barriers to retention and achievement of a similar group of learners with similarities across geographical and subject areas.

In conclusion, the takeaway message is to explore the unexpected!