

# CASE STUDY: EVALUATING THE AP ROLE – CAN COACHING-IN-ACTION ACCELERATE THE PROGRESS TEACHERS MAKE IN THE CLASSROOM?

THE LTE GROUP WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
MANCHESTER COLLEGE WITH NOVUS

**‘THE UNWAVERING POSITIVITY, ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM OF THE ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS WAS A HUGE CONTRIBUTING FACTOR IN THE SUCCESS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT.’**

April 2019



Graphic facilitation by [www.penmendonca.com](http://www.penmendonca.com) @MendoncaPen at Advanced Practitioner's National Conference - March 2019

OTLA 4 OUTSTANDING TEACHING LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT,  
SUPPORTED AND DELIVERED BY  
touchconsulting AND CETTAcademy

## 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?

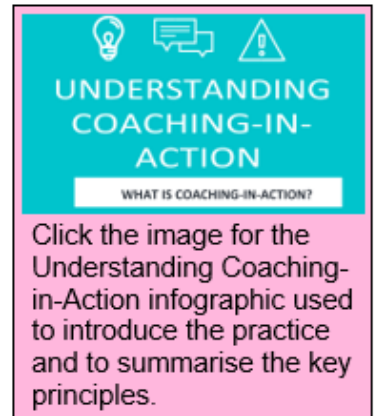
In 2017, The Manchester College was judged by Ofsted as 'requires improvement' whilst noting that the AP role was effective but limited by an overly narrow focus on 'under-performance'. Subsequently, APs were reassigned from curriculum departments to campus sites, reducing time lost to travel and reinforcing working relationships with the teachers. Non-graded Evaluations of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (ETLAs) were implemented and all teachers were allocated a named AP to support their development.

Building on these foundations, this project implemented a new strategy for its APs to accelerate changes/refinements to teaching, learning and assessment, at the time of delivery, through *coaching-in-action (CiA)*, or 'live' coaching, which is synchronous and experienced first-hand by teachers during lesson delivery. CiA was developed and coined by the Manchester College AP team and refers to the process of (unobtrusively) coaching a teacher during a session and/or immediately following it. This ensures immediacy and relevance and establishes a 'real-time', 'critical friend' relationship. It *situates* development within practice rather than after it.

The project sought to define the key features and parameters of coaching-in-action so that APs could communicate them to teachers, in a clear and succinct way using an [infographic](#) to introduce the practice and to summarise key principles.

## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Working collaboratively with Quality Managers at each campus site, APs supported two groups of teachers; one group within an identified Novus establishment (HMP Liverpool) and a second group within the College. Support entailed the delivery of monthly CPD workshops to enable the organisation, departments, teachers and SMT to recognise the value of the AP role and support for innovations such as CiA.



*'A number of tutors are engaging with [the APs] and the pilot is working really well. We've received positive feedback from the tutors and coaches.*

*We are appreciative of all the support and we value the CPD workshops.'*

Education Team, HMP Liverpool

<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)

Two face-to-face meetings were held with the Education Team at HMP Liverpool prior to the project launch. The first meeting was held between the Education Team and the Project Lead to introduce the principles of coaching-in-action with managers and to establish key project parameters such as timeframe, logistics of travel and project expectations. The second meeting was held between the Education Team and two APs. The APs also met with the teaching team at HMP Liverpool.

At the Manchester College APs provided coaching support to teachers from a designated campus site(s) and coachee caseloads were monitored alongside teaching hours to ensure practice is standardised and that APs received equitable workloads and duties.

As part of the APs wider role, CPD workshops and associated materials developed at the Manchester College were also employed with teachers at HMP Liverpool. APs also devised a document to provide an overview of the project, the principles of CiA and the intended outcomes.

## WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

The LTE Group structure was particularly helpful in identifying a partner provider to collaborate with. Prior to the start of the project, the project team established an effective collaboration with the Novus team and their Director of Quality, and regular contact and meetings ensured a good understanding of the project and a high level of support for the work of the AP team. This resulted in the identification of HMP Liverpool as a suitable place to pilot the AP role and CiA.

The time devoted to face-to-face pre-project meetings ensured all parties shared expectations, an awareness of parameters and ensured potential issues were addressed prior to the launch of the project. Regular feedback and feed-forward meetings together with reviews of a comprehensive action plan were also key to the success of the project, as all parties were aware of actions and any deviation from target dates was addressed swiftly.

CiA was well received within HMP and is subsequently being rolled-out across all Manchester College departments. CiA enabled APs to identify individual teacher development needs in real-time, make helpful suggestions about different approaches to try and organise CPD around common issues. This meant it was viewed as relevant in the development of current teaching practice.

## WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

The Manchester College Advanced Practitioner Team was a case study participant within the original Tyler et al (2017) research and this confirmed that the college was operating a *universal model* of AP deployment. As the research by Tyler et al suggests, some tensions are evident as the model is still linked, in part, to mandatory support structures.

*'I have found the APs experience and learning different techniques of teaching practical skills useful. It has taught me that it's important to plan individually for each learner.'*

*'I can be more creative and interactive in the classroom. I am now more confident to try out new things and get the learners to be more hands on. No negatives at all.'*

Teaching Staff, LTE and Manchester College

*'It is surprising how positively teachers have reacted to coaching-in-action. It was expected that some teachers may be resistant to having an AP in their lessons as they may have felt undermined, but this has not been reported by the teachers involved. Feedback has been extremely positive.'*

Collaborative Project Lead

With regards to CiA, both colleges encountered minor challenges initially due to anxiety relating to the introduction of another person in the classroom. However, this did not prove to be a significant issue as APs quickly evidenced that the process differed greatly from formal observations as the feedback was developmental and the process was entirely none judgemental.

## WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

For teachers at HMP Liverpool, they benefitted from receiving support from a 'neutral' source, outside of directives connected to teacher performance and performance monitoring or graded observations. Teachers' reflective accounts included reasons for their involvement such as, "To improve my teaching/resources – better classroom experience [for] me [and for our] learners". Teachers at The Manchester College were better prepared for an impending inspection and gained success of initiatives such as coaching-for-all (a whole-college initiative to enable all staff to access coaching support as per the Universal Model) and familiarity with the Advanced Practitioner team.

In February 2019 The Manchester College was re-inspected and achieved 'good' in all areas. This reinforced the success of key initiatives introduced since the previous inspection and the efforts made leading up to inspection may have also contributed to the success of the project as management teams and teaching teams welcomed the support provided by the team of APs.

Collaborating with a partner organisation where APs were unknown to staff confirmed that coaching-in-action can bring about positive change even without the influence of prior coach-coachee relationships. It also confirmed that the approach employed by CiA is transferable to other educational contexts. APs directly involved with the project have already delivered additional CPD to teachers at HMP Liverpool of their own volition and are keen to return there to further support teachers. The Director of Quality for Novus has requested coaching-in-action and Advanced Practitioner support for two other prisons.

The wider AP team have adopted CiA as a coaching technique and all APs have the use of CiA with coachees as an objective in their performance reviews (appraisals) for the academic year 2018-19.

## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

APs directly involved in the project have produced a [comic strip](#) to provide an overview of Coaching in Action in practice.

For further information please visit the Advanced Practitioner OTLA Projects Padlet page here: <https://en-gb.padlet.com/joss1/collabprojects>

Or contact: Zoe Ibbotson, The Manchester College: [Zlbbotson@ltegroup.co.uk](mailto:Zlbbotson@ltegroup.co.uk)

*'The project has illustrated the value and benefits of 'live' coaching. Teachers appreciate the opportunity to have the support of an AP sharing, modelling and shaping practice in real-time.'*

Collaborative Project Lead

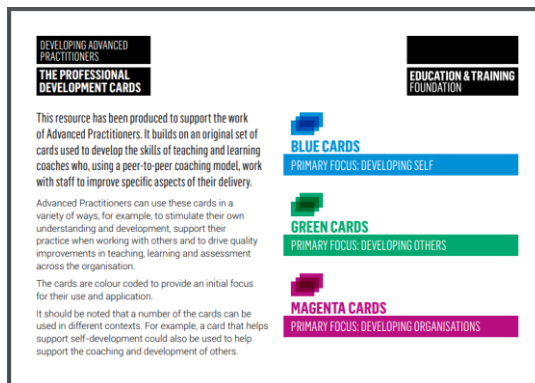


Click the image for the Coaching-in-Action Comic Strip, a full summary of the CiA journey at Manchester College.

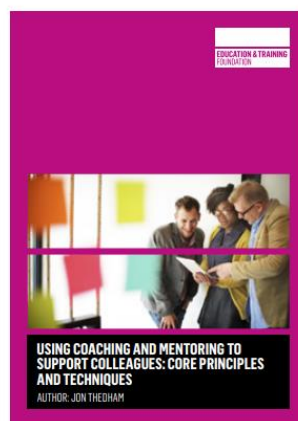
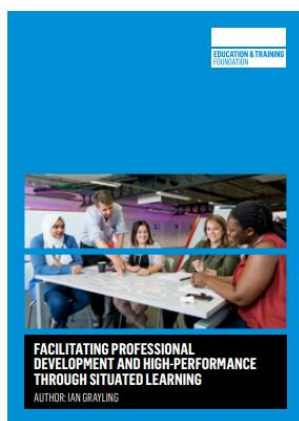
## RESOURCES SUPPORTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS (OTLA 4) – 2018/2019

CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO ACCESS THE RESOURCE

- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Professional Development Cards



- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Practical AP Guides



- Advanced Practitioner Monthly Communications



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