

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 \(2017\)](#)¹. 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 vision for the project was to create a Developmental AP Model where practices, vision and workforce were tasked to embody positive developmental coaching, growth mindset and for all staff to engage in non-judgemental peer to peer collaboration.

The approach was underpinned by 'Postcard Peeps' which aimed to promote thought and reflection within staff and play a key role in staff ownership and creating a culture of support and development.

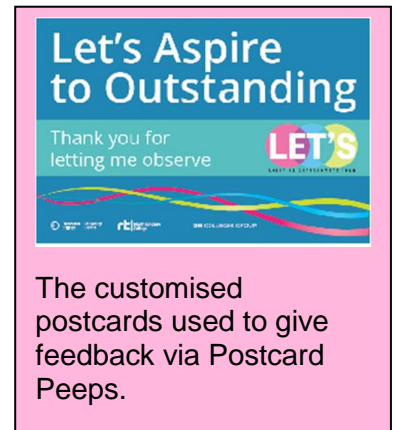
The APs participating in the project were recruited to ensure that they had the experience, interpersonal skills, understanding of the sector and self efficacy to be effective within the support process. They made up the 'Learning Enhancement Team' undertaking non-judgmental observations.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

An extensive professional development programme was put in place for the APs which related to the Developmental Model. This included APs developing skills in coaching, such as the 'GROW' model, which created a culture of support and allowed staff to recognise developmental needs on any agreed topic. The AP team developed shared expectations on how to interact with staff, the choice of words used in communication and a focus on positive growth.

Teaching and Support areas were allocated a specific AP. All new staff worked with an AP during their induction programme and were given the opportunity to participate in the excellence and expectations actions aiming to improve TLA strategies and methods.

In supporting the move to non-judgemental observations and feedback APs were trained on how to use the 'Postcard Peeps'. The postcard is an observation tool used to provoke thought and reflection based on a



The customised postcards used to give feedback via Postcard Peeps.

"Leaders have trusted APs to work with their Head of Area to deliver the appropriate TLA support for each area."

Head of Teaching and Learning, Shipley College

"Post-Card peeps have been brilliant and have been used as a supportive tool rather than feeling critical."

"Post-card peeps provide a snapshot, I feel more at ease with these than with a formal observation."

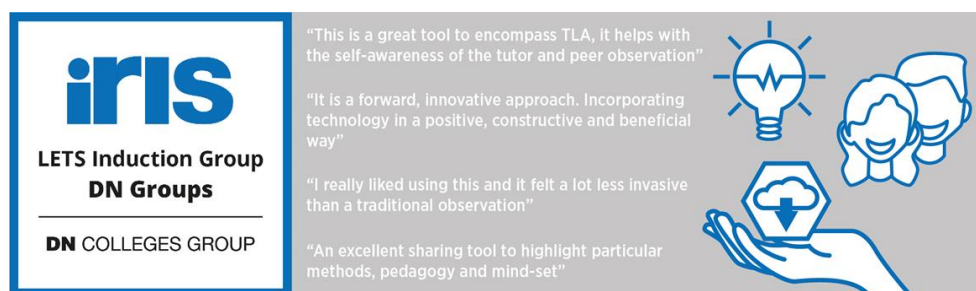
Teaching Staff, North Lindsey College and Doncaster College

¹ 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)

practitioner’s session. It would be used to highlight potential discussion points between the AP and tutors for a future coaching session. The tool has been invaluable at providing support to staff in a non-judgemental way and it has increased the opportunities to engage with staff and their sessions.

The APs used QR codes to invite staff to reflect on the feedback they had been given through the ‘Postcard Peep’. The QR codes led to a feedback form which included questions relating to the effectiveness of the tool as well as inviting the participant to reflect on their practice following their feedback.

[iRIS Connect](#), a virtual platform used by the college to support their CPD, was also used to maximise the impact of the APs, enabling tutors to reflect on, analyse and share teaching and learning practices with their colleagues.



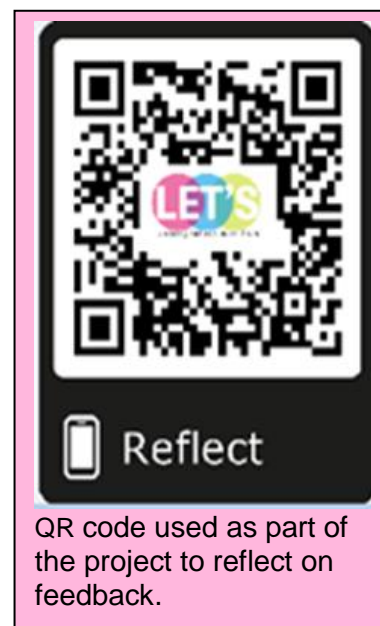
iRIS
LETS Induction Group
DN Groups
DN COLLEGES GROUP

“This is a great tool to encompass TLA, it helps with the self-awareness of the tutor and peer observation”

“It is a forward, innovative approach. Incorporating technology in a positive, constructive and beneficial way”

“I really liked using this and it felt a lot less invasive than a traditional observation”

“An excellent sharing tool to highlight particular methods, pedagogy and mind-set”



QR code used as part of the project to reflect on feedback.

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

It was crucial to bring in APs who demonstrated care for the development of others. The process was effective at recruiting empathic staff with effective emotional intelligence.

Throughout the project and development of the AP skillset a mentoring and buddy system was utilised. APs acting as mentors to one another improved the quality of service provided, supported the development of the AP teams’ skill set and helped with individual AP confidence in situations such as developing staff delivery skills.

The buddy system linked two APs at each site which improved communication and collaborative work. It also supported each individual AP through feedback and development discussions.

Another contributing factor to the success of the project and the development of trust between the AP team and curriculum staff has been the visibility and accessibility of the team. Before the project started the Group Director of Teaching and Learning visited every curriculum team to discuss and showcase the Teaching Learning and Assessment plans. The approach was then further reinforced through an expectation for the AP to have a collaboration and introduction meeting with their specific area of support.

The ‘rebranding’ of the observation team as the Lesson Enhancement Team added to the success of the project as it highlighted and strengthened the message of change and development.

“APs working in areas really work to build positive relationships.”

“A change in attitudes from tutors shows a building up of trust with the AP.”

“APs have made me feel relaxed and positive in session.”

“I feel part of a team since the APs collaborated with us.”

Teaching Staff, North Lindsey College and Doncaster College

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

There were changes to the project leadership, which meant that the project was slow at the start, but gained momentum once the responsibility of leadership was reassigned.

One college in the partnership was using graded observations for performance monitoring and the other a more developmental approach, which meant that the culture across the two sites was, in some ways, very different.

The number of APs in each team was also variable. Proportional AP members of staff expressed the difficulty in supporting staff due to conflict between available times of the AP and the staff member. This also created difficulty in communicating effectively and attending TLA meetings as proportional staff also. In some cases, proportional APs were also drawn into covering sessions and supporting curriculum rather than the AP role.

"The communication from the AP team has been brilliant, the 'you' and 'them' culture barriers have been broken."

"APs have helped me get better at SMART targets."

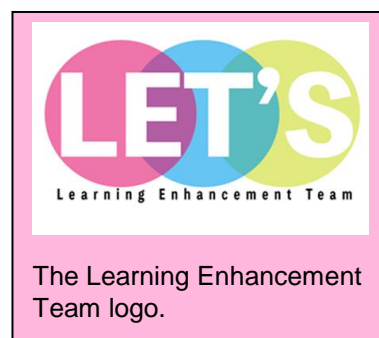
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WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Impacts on Teaching, Learning and Assessment were supported by the improvements to teaching strategies utilised by staff due to interactions with the AP and through a carousel of staff development activities.

At the leadership level the new AP role was seen as important in ensuring that support for new lecturers is being enhanced as they are working collaboratively with the Quality team. They can make contact with the new member of staff, as required, in a timely manner to provide the skills and knowledge to ensure the students experience quality teaching, learning and assessment in the classroom. The increased number of APs enabled all new staff to participate and collaborate with a designated AP through the induction programme.

The feedback from staff showed that the project actions that the AP role provided developed a culture of collaboration and positive interactions. Some examples of feedback included: 96% of staff voted that they were happy with the 'Postcard Peep' process and 100% of the APs who were interviewed about the project said that they have improved their own practice and capabilities within TLA.



The Learning Enhancement Team logo.

"We feel that we have the freedom to trial new strategies, reflect, share ideas and identify how to develop."

"Collaboration with the AP and observations are seen as tools to grow and develop rather than being negative."

Teaching Staff, North Lindsey College and Doncaster College



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:

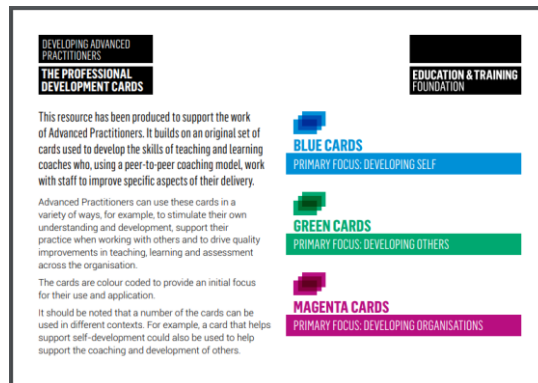
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RESOURCES SUPPORTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS (OTLA 4) – 2018/2019

CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO ACCESS THE RESOURCE

- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Professional Development Cards



- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Practical AP Guides



- Advanced Practitioner Monthly Communications



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