

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?

A key part of the project was to raise the profile of APs with Heads of Faculty (HOF) as well as Curriculum Area Managers (CAMs). HOFs and CAMs were encouraged to promote this project with their individual staff identified as needing support. APs were encouraged, after the initial contact was made by the Head of Quality, to directly contact individuals to engage with.

The seven Advanced Teaching and Learning Coaches (the equivalent of the AP role) worked together to facilitate a range of coaching interventions to support teachers. The focus of these interventions was to support colleagues in developing questioning and answering (Q&A) techniques. Questioning was selected as a key focus due to the feedback from the 2017-2018 observation cycle which highlighted a range of development needs in this area. Examples included:

- Limited directed questioning
- Not enough range of questioning
- Too many open questions which did not involve all students
- Lack of differentiated questioning

This link with the college's Internal Quality Review process as a priority to support the continuing development of high-quality teaching learning and assessment meant that the project was initially located within Tyler et.al.'s Deficit Model of using APs, however, the APs aimed to move from this model to a Developmental Model.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The APs worked together with the staff identified by the Head of Quality to enhance planning for the use of questioning as a key assessment for learning. This use of action planning was key in moving the AP role and discussions away from the Deficit Model to more developmental approaches. A wide range of coaching approaches, were used from the AP toolkits, which included the GROW model, supported experiments and action research.

'The APs are a well-established team and work together very effectively, supporting one another and ensuring that staff who are referred to them are picked up.'

Project Lead: Kirklees College

'We were following a 'deficit model' but through this project we were able to work towards moving from this to a 'developmental model''

AP, Kirklees 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)

In addition, APs were involved in staff development sessions at staff training days and visited specific departments to deliver training as needed. APs were matched to areas of specialism, for example those who have a working knowledge and understanding of BTEC qualifications were allocated departments which deliver these qualifications.

As well as developing relationships with individuals the APs also worked closely together. This allowed for collective discussions about approaches and sharing emerging findings from their own contributions. APs were also encouraged to teach on the teacher training courses as part of their own development

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

The shift in focus where APs supported members of staff in creating their own action plans to improve the use of questioning techniques was key to success. The coaching by the APs therefore took place in shared spaces that were characterised by development rather than performance management.

The projects APs proved to be highly skilled at dealing with tensions between Tyler et al's deficit and developmental models. They communicated effectively, not just with the staff member but also with CAMs, Programme Quality Leads and one another. The APs also supported new staff through the 'Classroom Essentials' provision and this included conducting walkthroughs and observations to check on progress. This played a pivotal part of any further development areas needed by individuals.

The coaching and mentoring approaches used by APs were highly personalised and allowed them to engage with colleagues with a wide range of experience. Therefore, for some staff discussions went well beyond the scope of the project in exploring pedagogical approaches.

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

Initially, the project was delivered in partnership with another local college, however, due to staffing constraints, the majority of the AP took place at Kirklees College. During the lifetime of the project colleagues from Kirklees have visited other colleges to see the different models that are used for the role of the AP.

The project was built on AP roles that were centred on a peer to peer approach. It became apparent, however, that the different approaches to lesson observations meant that many aspects of the Deficit Model were still in place. As a result, considerable energy was put into resolving different expectations and priorities for the AP team. It became clear that APs operate in all three models and that needs to be clarified as part of the review.

Challenges exist around the availability of the APs. Logistically, they are not always available when someone needs support in one of their allocated areas. In order to rectify this, the APs will need to work more collaboratively, upskilling one another and signposting to their colleagues in order to create more opportunities for staff to work with APs.



APs at the AP training event in Birmingham.

"I have found ways to a better Advanced Practitioner (AP), responding to and contributing to cross-college initiatives to support teachers in engaging in professional learning activity."

Advanced Practitioner.
Kirklees College

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Assessment for learning through, for example, the use of quizzes e.g. Kahoot and ClassFlow created positive responses from tutor and students with increased engagement from a group who were at times de-motivated.

Coaching and mentoring records, and re-observations showed improvements: in one instance an AP observed a member of staff using the cooperative answers technique, the model worked very well and provided focus for the students and the member of staff who used the feedback to develop discussion beyond the initial questions presented.

Walk-throughs also revealed how different AP models can work. These models included not only those identified by Tyler et.al. but also tailored approaches that may be specific to curriculum areas. Examples included assessment on BTEC qualifications and, with Foundation students with high needs as well as those with additional needs.

The grow model was very effective when used by APs with two members of staff but slower with a third where more mentoring rather than coaching was appropriate. This encompassed an approach broader than the use of questioning that was the focus of the project and explored broader professional development issues

Colleagues working with the APs demonstrated a growth in confidence in using different techniques for Q&A in planning and classroom practice. A particularly powerful example was developing questioning approaches with an almost silent student and strategies that can be used for inclusivity.

Leaders have greater insights into the role of APs and the different models which have involved the college's review of the Teaching Learning and Assessment process including the role of the APs and the observations.

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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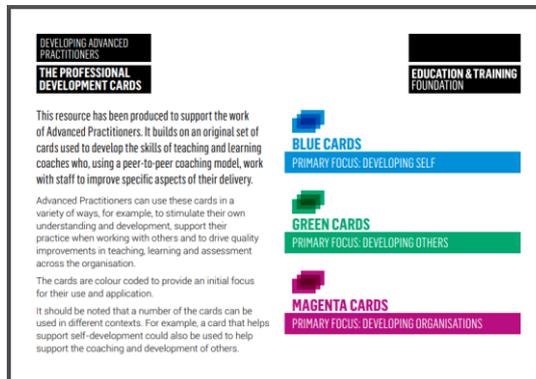
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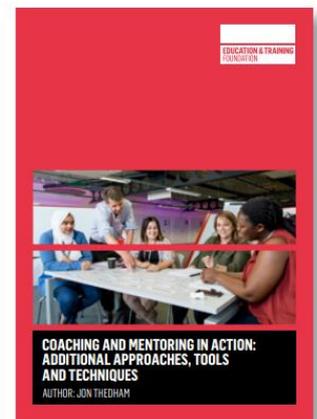
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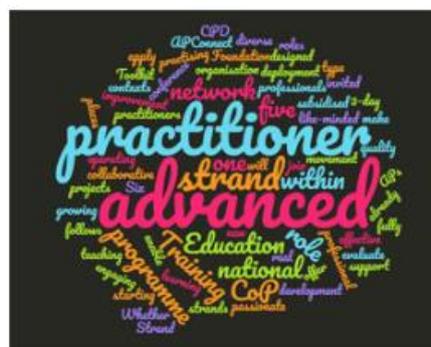
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- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Practical AP Guides



- Advanced Practitioner Monthly Communications



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