

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?

This project sought to test the effectiveness of the AP role in improving teaching, learning and assessment through an iterative programme of short CPD sessions. The aim of these sessions was to create a regular and accessible space for teachers to explore, share and reflect on different approaches to teaching, learning and assessment relevant to the strategic objectives of the two colleges. The sessions offered a degree of choice in what or when topics were addressed and facilitated an ethos of collaborative development collegiality and openness.

The project also sought to draw on evidence-based practice to inform the CPD programme and the Foundation's professional standards to evaluate the development of teachers and APs.

WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

Each partner designed their CPD programme differently to suit their respective operating contexts, whilst maintaining a common aim and approach in relation to the role of the AP.

Stanmore College (SC): Following a short pilot at the end of the previous academic year involving just 14 teachers, the college programme of 18 CPD sessions,. These sessions were 30 minutes per week and divided in to three sets of 6 weeks. The sessions were called 'Teachers in Conversation'. At the start of each session/set, the APs introduced a topic, as the weeks progressed, within the framework set by the AP, the teachers were encouraged to bring their own ideas and materials to the session.

Westminster Kingsway College (WKC): Two APs facilitated each project and ran these over four sessions, once per month, to foster a more iterative form of CPD. This involved collating relevant research and producing a set of four workshops to facilitate reflection, experimentation, sharing of practice and lessons learned from trying out new ideas.

'The main purpose was to try out different forms of AP-led action learning sets/communities of practice and to evaluate the impact on teachers, APs, students, partners and progress towards the college's respective strategic objectives.'

Project Lead, Stanmore College

'It was good to work with new people, to see how things work in another organisation and provide us with a wider range of experience and expertise to help us to think outside of the box.'

Project Lead, Westminster Kingsway College

'Collaboration with Stanmore, to reflect on what has worked well and discuss how to overcome challenges, has worked well.'

Project Lead, Stanmore 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)

Teachers chose from the following 4 topics:

- growth mindset
- unconscious-bias
- using cloud-based technology
- cultivating curiosity/creativity

The APs facilitated the discussions and summarised each meeting to capture new practice, identify any challenges and highlight strategies to overcome these challenges. Both colleges used the Foundation's Professional Standards framework to calibrate and measure improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.

'This has helped improve motivation and self-esteem – helped learners respond better to challenges and mistakes.' (Prof Std 2)
Teacher, Westminster Kingsway College

WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

Both colleges found that SMT support, via the Project Leads, was helpful in ensuring the project had both support and a high profile.

Additional success factors are listed below:

Stanmore College

- A reduction in demand for new staff inductions coupled with decreasing need for remedial support for colleagues experiencing challenges in their practice has meant APs have more time for leading professional development and quality improvement.
- APs' attendance on the 3-day CPD programme provided conceptual support and tools for the AP role.
- APs believed in the positive impact the training sessions could have on teaching, learning and assessment and so 'sold' the training well to colleagues.
- CPD sessions were short, focused and informal.

'Advanced Practitioners have great credibility with the teaching staff.'
Project Lead, Stanmore College

Westminster Kingsway College

- The staff had prior positive experiences of the AP role and CPD through action learning/research.
- The Approach to CPD was reliably underpinned by evidence-based practice
- SMT continuing interest through presentations and up-dates meant that the project didn't lose momentum.
- Sharing of progress and resources in all team meetings had a positive impact on teaching, learning and assessment in wider circles
- Travel expenses were provided, reflection time was given as well as some remission from teaching for APs to support their role development.

'[Teachers valued] 'the exchange of ideas and the camaraderie and openness with which all contributed to the session.'
'As well as 'the different points of view on what is meant by embedding equality and diversity in to teaching and learning.'
Teachers, Stanmore College

WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

Both colleges agree that finding time to meet face-to-face, as a cross-college collaboration, is difficult to achieve. On the other hand, collaboration was clearly valued for its ability to widen the range of experience available to the respective teams and to encourage colleagues to think outside of the box.

WKC managers also noted that whilst some teachers had become great advocates of this form of CPD and want to continue, more time would be needed to really see an impact on the students. The assumption being that more motivated teachers committed to reflection, experimentation and learning from each other should show positive impact in student surveys and outcomes in the longer term.

WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Feedback from APs

APs at SC felt that the project had positively impacted on them as practitioners as much as it had on the staff that were beneficiaries.

At WKC, 100% of APs thought this was one of the richest and most useful forms of CPD they and the teachers they had worked with had ever been involved in.

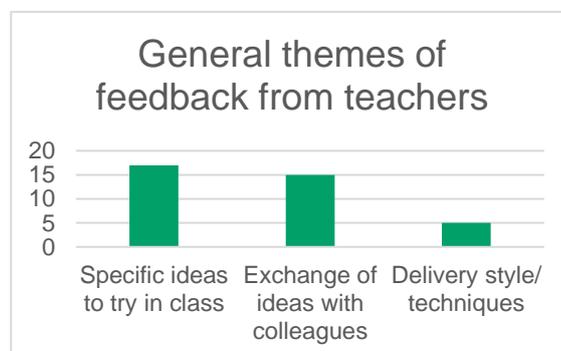
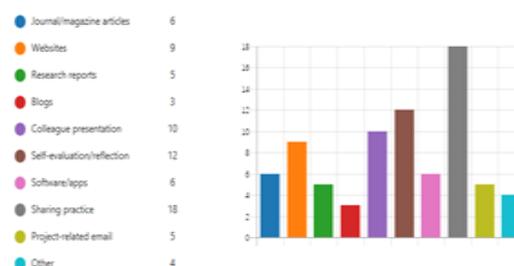
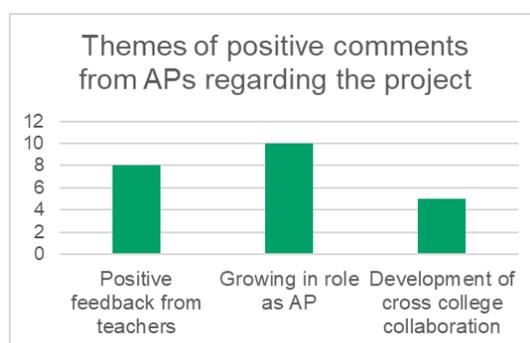
Impact on Teaching Colleagues

At WKC, 90% of teachers reported that the project had helped them to meet the diverse needs of their learners and were able to articulate their development, resulting from the sessions, in terms of a broad range of Professional Standards.

A survey of these teachers gave some insight into preferred sources of guidance for evidence-based practice, highlighting sharing practice, critical reflection, presentations by colleagues and web-searches as particularly well-rated. Video reflections from a sample of WKC teachers can be found [here](#).

At SC, the CPD sessions sought to engage 16 teachers during the project, 31 actually attended. 55% of those attending reported being motivated to share knowledge and resources (Prof. Std. 20), 23% said they wanted to engage with other colleagues (Prof. Std. 6), 14% said they wanted to improve techniques (Prof. Stds. 4, 20), and 9% said they wanted to reflect on teaching strategies (Prof. Std.1).

A number of the staff who took part have completed a [reflective account](#) of how they used the topics of the CPD back in their own classrooms.



Other Impacts:

Managers at SC commented on the positive impacts of establishing the AP role and reinforcing a universal model of support for all staff. They recognised the value of APs in sharing good practice and the benefits and efficacy of short 'chunks' of CPD that minimised impact on teaching hours. It was also noted that these observations reflect the 'values of the AP role (1,2,4 & 5).

At WKC, managers reported that the project had helped to build CPD into a cycle more aligned to the Professional Development and Review, and complementing the new ungraded observation process. They also reported that pockets of staff were now more motivated and willing to experiment and change their practice the classroom.

'It helped me reflect as a manager about how we evidence the impact of all the work the APs do with staff.'

Project Lead, Stanmore College

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

A number of resources are available from this project and can be used by other colleges embarking on action research projects and help them get the most out of their APs.

Stanmore College

- The role of the AP in leading action learning sets.
- 10 top tips for APs - sheet of top tips for Advanced Practitioners to successfully run action research projects.
- Presentation material to showcase at the national AP conference

Westminster Kingsway College

- Talking head videos of teacher experiences
- A booklet determining all the roles of an AP in this type of CPD to support other organisations around what kind of training APs need to be able to facilitate these effectively
- A 'top tips' document produced from our lessons learned
- Presentation material to showcase at the national AP conference.

For further information please visit the Advanced Practitioner OTLA Projects

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

Or contact:

Nicola Conibear, Stanmore College: n.conibear@stanmore.ac.uk

Julie Sinclair, Westminster Kingsway College: Julie.Sinclair@westking.ac.uk

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

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

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

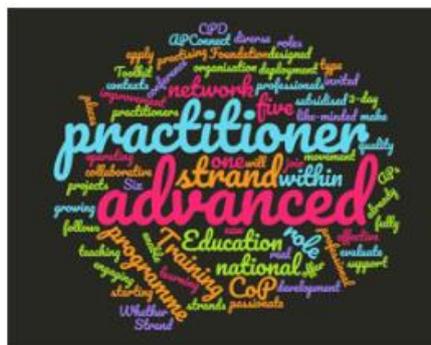
MAGENTA CARDS

PRIMARY FOCUS: DEVELOPING ORGANISATIONS

- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Practical AP Guides



- Advanced Practitioner Monthly Communications



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