

Project Name: Enhancing the mutual understanding of FE and HE practice and curricula through learning observation and peer dialogue: A Pilot project

Amendment History:

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Project Manager

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Document Distribution

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>	<i>Action/Information</i>
Debbie Lambert	LLN	Manager of the LLN	For information
Geoffrey Elliott	UW	Members of the Steering Group	To approve the proposal
Chris Morecroft	WCT		
Ian Peake	HCT		
Mike Rookes	OU		
Gail Rothnie	UoB		
Donna Obrey	LLN	Project Officer for the LLN	To track and monitor project

Background

Progression into a Higher Education (HE) environment from a Further Education (FE) or School 6th form setting can be a difficult transition for students to make. Indeed research into student success and retention suggests that this transition period is a 'high' risk period in terms of potential 'drop-out' and that the engagement of students with HE (and visa versa) is vital if students are to achieve their potential (see Tinto 1997 Yorke 2004)..

For most subject areas and sectors of FE and HE there has always been a 'natural gap' in the mutual understanding of each other's practices. This gap emerges through the intervention of time and the rapid change that tends to occur in both FE and HE sectors. Thus, as time progresses, unless mutual exchange takes place there is a tendency for practitioners to increasingly lose sight of other's practices, pedagogies and curricula. This issue becomes even more acute at times of rapid transformational change such as with the introduction of the new 14-19 curriculum. The aim of this project is to pilot a system that facilitates mutual beneficial exchanges between HE and FE practitioners through providing opportunities for inter-sector job shadowing for HE/FE lecturers. The project will include an evaluation of the costs/benefits to institutions and individuals and include an estimation of ongoing financial cost in relation to sustaining such exchanges. .

Objectives of the Project

To determine potential benefits/costs to lecturing staff of participation in HE/FE exchange based job shadowing experiences.

To determine potential benefits/costs to institutions staff of participation in HE/FE exchange based job shadowing experiences.

To provide a better understanding within institutions of differing sectors' approach to pedagogy and curricula design.

To provide a better understanding for staff of differing sectors' approach to pedagogy and curricula design.

To provide guidance on ensuring that the first year experience in HE recognises changes that have occurred in the 14-19 curricula.

Project Approach

The project will be based on an analysis and evaluation of the experiences and lecturing staff that undertake a period of job shadowing. The lecturing staff will be drawn from the University of Worcester and a selection of FE providers within the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

The project would support staff to undertake a shadowing experience of up to 5 days duration. The experience will be offered to up to 10 lecturing staff. During the experience observation and discourse based job shadowing will take place. Session delivery by the shadowee is not precluded, but it is not mandatory. The shadowees would be asked to complete a pre-experience questionnaire detailing their preconceptions of practice in the host institution, they will be asked to keep a diary during the experience and complete a short (min 250 word) post experience reflection and take part in an interview. Questionnaires diary, reflections and interviews would be analyzed as part of the project evaluation.

For each day of shadowing the project will pay 4 hours of backfill (approx £33/per hour). Any additional replacement staffing cost will be met by the shadowees institution. The assumption behind this decision being that as well as develop the individual the activity will yield significant institutional benefit.

Dissemination

Once all experiences had been completed, the participants would be invited to take part in a dissemination event based on the principles of appreciative inquiry. The wider outcomes of the project will be disseminated through a project report distributed throughout the LLN and to the wider network of LLNs. If the outcomes are positive a proposal will be made to FE and HE managers in relation to how this aspect of staff development could be sustained.

Scope:

A Key Products from the project

Staff with greater understanding of each other's sector and the challenges that students face when they move between sectors.

A report on the experiences of those involved in exchanges the cost and benefits associated with such exchanges and conditions required to allow sustainability.

B Out of Scope

Funding arrangement for continuation of system beyond project
Impact of project on students

Constraints

Availability of staff

Willingness of line managers to release staff

Ability of managers to find suitable staff to cover any absence due to exchanges

Extent of funding for backfill

Initial Project Case

The case for this project is that in order to help students make the transition from further to higher education a high degree of understanding of the different pedagogic cultures of the two sectors is required. This is particularly the case given the introduction of the new Diploma and associated changes to the 14-19 curricula.

This project evaluates an approach to helping institutions that are concerned with widen participation to achieve such understanding.

Benefits of the Project

Greater understanding for individuals of differing institutional pedagogic and curricula design practice.

Better understanding of the impacts of the 14-19 curriculum for practice within HE.

Through staff exchange; increased institutional understanding and co-operation

Understanding of the benefits, in this context, of staff exchanges and the costs associated with the sustaining of such a scheme.

Key Assumptions

That staff will be willing to engage in such exchanges

That exchanges will be beneficial

That staff will be willing to discuss their gains

Exchanges will lead to reflection and changes in practice

Timescale

Time Period	Sept 08	Oct 08	Nov 08	Dec 09	Jan 09	Feb 09	Mars 09	April 09	May 09	June 09	July 09	Aug 09	Sept 09
Activity													
Prepare recruitment material	■												
Recruit participants	■	■											
Prepare initial questionnaire	■												
Initial briefing meeting of participants			■										
Shadowing				■	■	■							
Post shadowing interviews					■	■	■						
Organise transcriber					■								
Transcription						■	■	■					
Analysis of transcriptions /questionnaires				■			■	■	■				
Analysis of reflections							■	■	■				
Dissemination event													■
Production of report – sustainability briefing.										■	■		
Analysis of costs										■	■		
Completion of cost benefit analysis										■	■		

Costs

Buy-out (200 hours)	£6,600
Transcription	£ 500
Travel (16 days)	£ 350
Interviewer time	£3,700
Total	£11,150

Other cost will be carried by University of Worcester's Academic development and practice Unit. Dissemination event, production of report.

How will the project be evaluated?

Evaluation is integral to the project, that is evaluation of the impact of the project is one of the projects aims.

How will the project be sustained?

As part of the project an evaluation will be made of the costs, systems and barriers of implemented and embedding such an activity. The sustainability will depend on the outcomes of the evaluation and on whether or not HE/FE managers and leaders consider this activity to be of value in relation to other potential activities.

Initial Risk Log

The following table summarises the risks that have been identified that may prevent the project being completed to the required quality, budget and timescale. The probability and impact of each risk has been graded as low, medium or high to indicate the relative importance attached to each element of risk.

Risks	Probability	Impact	Containment Plan
Unable to recruit lecturing staff	low	high	Contained by good marketing activity
Unable to recruit interviewer	low	high	Have contacts with an number of freelancers
Lack of manager support for release	low	high	Generous back fill allowance and flexibility in timing of activity

Project Team

Dr Ian Scott