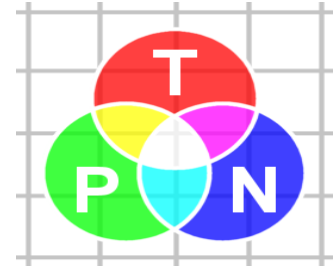


Training Provider News



DCTPN

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• Craig Marshall is the Managing Director of the Training Provider Network

• Jacqui Locock is working on Train to Gain for the LSC's Regional Team

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QTLS Delivery for the wider F.E. Sector

As all providers of training are aware the new QTLS teaching / training qualifications are now being delivered and all new entrants to the training world who will be delivering LSC contracted work will be having to undertake one of the new qualifications. Staff already delivering training will already have or be about to register with the Institute for Learning (IfL) and hopefully should have had meetings with their managers to ascertain how the new changes relating to staff qualifications affects them. If they do have a need, which is by no means to be expected it will require that a development plan is drawn up which will enable their individual needs to be met. There have been concerns expressed over who needs to do what, and what can be APL'd, but awareness raising sessions have been delivered and the LLUK's website does carry all the necessary information. Hopefully there will not be cases of providers putting all their staff through qualifications en masse but rather a planned organised approach will be adopted putting individuals onto the programmes they require.

While we have been working to ensure that the providers correctly match staff to the most appropriate programmes it has been evident that there are some concerns about the sectors ability to deliver the programmes to these staff. Cut backs in funding has seen a reduction in the number of private providers able to deliver this level of training, as well as a marked fall in the Adult & Community delivery. One result has been to concentrate delivery on the Colleges of Further Education, where in some cases they have concerns as to their ability to

deliver to significantly increased numbers, as well as being flexible enough to be able to deliver in ways that will meet their learners needs. A recent research paper in Devon & Cornwall identified some very real worries as to how the increased demand created by the changes would be met.

Partly in response to this the Devon and Cornwall Training Provider Network has become the lead partner in a consortium which has been formed to undertake a project 'to promote and support the contextualisation of Initial teacher training programmes to make them more accessible and relevant to trainees working in non- FE college contexts' which has been commissioned by the SWitch Centre of Excellence run by Learning South West. This CETT has already adopted a very pro active approach to the researching of both the needs and the capacity to deliver of the new teaching/training qualifications for the whole F.E sector in the region, the follow training days delivered by Hilary Read were a great success and now the CETT is focusing on ensuring that training delivered is relevant to all parts of the sector.

The project team includes groupings from both the Devon & Cornwall and the West of England Training Provider Networks, several Adult and Community groups, representatives from Offender Learning and Socially Exclusion practitioners, representatives from the Voluntary Sector and specialists in e learning delivery.

The consortium aims to work with these sectors to develop and then help deliver support programmes specifically for teachers within these sectors based on existing good practice.

This will involve working with each sectors to identify their key needs, both generic and sector specific, in relation to any ITT programmes attended by their staff. It will working with partners who already deliver non-traditional programmes to identify best practice and existing materials, approaches and resources with a view to developing these into programmes that meet the requirements of the ITT reforms. The aim is then to develop a programme for the established FE delivery colleges and HEI's to send their own identified wbl/ acl mentor champions to help them to promote those specialist dimensions within their institutions.

Two partner colleges will pilot the programme to ensure fitness for purpose of the new programmes based on a non-traditional route.

There will also be work to help to develop support materials aiming to assist identified staff who are facing difficulties progressing from PTLs to CTLLs or DTLLs. This is seen as being particularly relevant to vocational trainers who for whom the requirement to produce something like a 5,000 word essay may be enough to make them leave the sector.

If you would like to know more please contact craig@trainingprovider.com

BKSB Basic & Key Skillbuilder

Is this the 'dream solution' we have all been seeking?

Pauline Paley explains why her eyes are firmly fixed on providing 21st Century solutions for training provider delivery of basic/key and functional skills.

Fifteen years ago, Pauline (a self-confessed obsessive and workaholic) had the vision to innovate and develop bksb, basic & key SKILLBUILDER, an assessment and teaching tool that was hailed as ground-breaking and adopted by the majority of FE colleges and many training organisations. In recent years, as bksb Director at West Notts College, she recognised the unique issues faced by training providers and their trainees and felt that they were being largely ignored by solution developers. Since her retirement from WNC last year, she has been focusing her efforts on the needs and problems of training providers in her new role as ForSkills Education Director.

Pauline says 'Learners, from primary schools upwards, are forcing teachers and trainers into increased use of technology because of their confident use and expectations of computers. Don't misunderstand me; I am not suggesting that technology takes the place of trainers. What I am urging is **letting technology take the strain** of much of the marking, mapping, tracking, planning, resource allocation, data handling and so on. Then trainers and teachers can use their time to do what they do best – nurture, inspire, and motivate their trainees. However, as a stimulus to motivation, some learning needs to be facilitated through the use of computers and internet - **the tools that today's learners understand and value.**'

During her much-travelled career, Pauline spent many hours talking to very frustrated training providers all struggling with the same issues regarding the provision of literacy and numeracy. She maintains that whatever the year or whether the skills are called core, key, basic, essential or functional, the issues remain the same. Providers are still wrestling with learners who: resent the emphasis on maths and English improvement within their training programmes; are frustrated by repeated use of different initial/diagnostic assessments if they move to another provider; have no wish to address their needs (often because of fear of failure); do not attend basic/key skills sessions;

will not do skills homework and fail to achieve full framework requirements.

The above are problems also experienced in colleges/schools offering vocational programmes. However, training providers/departments have additional issues to cope with. These include: trainee movement between providers; lack of support from many employers; vocational trainers' lack of self-confidence regarding maths/English abilities; funding issues; irregular contact due to distance between learners; lack of time to assess or deliver in the work-place; marking, monitoring and tracking progress; audit trails for Train2Gain and other LSC funding. The list goes on!

Pauline explains that 'After repeatedly listening to the same problems I spent many hours mulling over the issues and designing the *dream tool*. I decided that initial/diagnostic assessment and skills learning/teaching, plus those responsible for delivery, had to be dragged into the 21st Century, even if this meant dragging them kicking and screaming! We had to employ online technology. When I had first begun to develop bksb, I had the vision of it being the answer to a teacher's prayer. However, time had moved on and expectations had changed. The new online vision was not a 'eureka moment' but the result of years of serious consideration of practitioners' needs. The proof that we have got it right is its uptake which has been remarkable since its launch in 2007.'

What is ForSkills bksbOnline?

When asked what the ForSkills' bksbOnline offers, Pauline explained that the process follows the best practice route for skill development; however, it delivers a seamless journey for the learners of screening/initial/diagnostic assessment of their literacy/numeracy skills. No trainer/tutor input is necessary in the early stages as the program automatically moves the learner from one step to the next (although trainer intervention can be made). Results of a diagnostic assessment automatically produce an individual learning plan and this is populated with the appropriate learning resources for the learner. The learners have their own unique password and can access assessments and their allocated learning resources wherever and whenever they have internet facilities. Self-marking interactive learning exercises and quizzes comprise a deal of the resources along with others to be submit-

ted online. Self marking summative questions are completed by the learner to achieve a sign-off status for each particular skill they have been developing and to indicate readiness for external testing. Everything done by the learner is monitored and tracked for the trainer and the training organisation.

Pauline maintains that the benefits to learners, trainers and TP organisations are amazing and fulfil the needs they have identified. For example: learner motivation improves because: their learning programme uses technology and meets their expectations of modern delivery; they are only asked to learn what they need to learn; they get instant feedback as there is no waiting for returned work; they can work and practise when and where is appropriate to them and this facility gives time for slow study learners; it fosters ownership of learning and it can promote competitiveness and even HOMEWORK!

Everything done by the learner is automatically monitored and tracked for the trainer. At any time a trainer can view the current status of one or all their learners as data can be viewed per individual, group or groups. The benefits for trainers are almost too numerous to list! Precious time is saved by the removal of tedious: marking; tracking of progress – individual and group; searching for, and duplication of, resources and worksheets for individuals; transportation of masses of paperwork (all materials can be printed off if/when required). Records can be automatically transferred between providers to remove costly and needless assessments when learners move on.

Additionally, provider anxiety is reduced because: all learners have a working ILP immediately after diagnostic assessment; the 'online live ILP' familiarises learners with their objectives and allows constant review of progress; all resources allocated are at the appropriate level, referenced to the Adult Core Curriculum and suitable for basic/key and functional skills; tutor guides, notes, answers, marking schemes, suggested activities and resources are always up to date and available (no worry about lost CD or change of computer); marking is always up to date; tracking and monitoring means readiness for audit/inspection any time; tools to evidence distance travelled; summative assessments verify competence prior to external test. Also, trainers can use the system for their own professional development by identifying their own skill gaps (which we all have) and using the self-

BKSB Basic & Key Skillbuilder cont'd

marking learning resources.

Producing a scheme of work becomes easy when catering for group inputs because 'at a glance' information is provided showing skills gaps across a whole group, thus facilitating the planning of group sessions and identification of relevant resources. Another useful facility is one which signposts the learner to free and appropriate online learning resource for extra practice and the system also enables providers to add their own learning materials.

Still an obsessive enthusiast, Pauline says 'One exciting factor of working with online products/services is the speed at which changes can be made.

I am working with a highly skilled and truly positive technology team that can respond immediately to client needs and product updates/amendments. This is a far cry from working with paper or CD products. It has freed organisations from the problems of old or wrong versions being used and/or

having to upload amendments. Everything is done automatically and centrally at the touch of a button for them. Magic!

This will be particularly advantageous for the introduction of functional skills and the amendments they will go through in their early years.

I just hope that we will all have time to implement these successfully before I need another vision!

Learning Agreements

The Learning Agreement (LA) project run by Connexions has built on the statutory right to time off for 16-17 year olds without a Level 2 qualification has now been running for 27 months. During that time

1. 5,000 young people have been contacted
2. 3,000 employers have been approached
3. 1,238 youngsters have been signed up for the programme
4. To date 636 have left the project with a 69% success rate
5. It is intended to sign up a further 1,076 learners before the end of the programme.

The priority groups of young people within the LA project are:

- Young people who are not already qualified to NVQ Level 2.
- Young people who are in employment of 16 hours per week or more.

This pilot supports learning provision that leads to the achievement of a recognised accredited qualification, listed on the Learning Aims Database, and which also complies with the LSC's current policies for funding within WBL and FE

In the trial area of Cornwall and Devon, young people and employers receive bonus payments of £250 each on achievement of the qualifications within a Learning Agreement. Other variants of financial support are being tested across England. The deliverers of the training are paid at the standard F.E. rate for their qualification they deliver. To date Devon & Cornwall is the top achieving trial area in the country.

Key Sectors

A breakdown by sector of those currently still on programme indicates that two sectors dominate

- a. Retail (20.7% of total)
- b. Hospitality. Reception, Food and Drink (18.8% of total)

A further 24 sectors are listed with numbers being spread across them

Destinations post LA

The breakdown of destinations on leaving

4.2% left to go to full time education, 20% left for a job with training other than wbl, 12.3% left for wbl, 47.6% left for a job without training, with 15.9% doing 'other' things

A survey of providers to see whether employers who were engaged through Learning Agreements have subsequently put other staff on training programmes has provided anecdotal information but is not large enough to provide significant data. Only one of the eight largest deliverers of the scheme had had a significant number of employers beginning to engage on other programmes.

As one of the largest providers of Learning Agreements fed back:

'our biggest problem is with youngsters who are in dead end jobs and after being given support and confidence they want to move into proper careers, but invariably through another employer. Great care and diplomacy have to be used'

Framework for Excellence

Chris Hodges

Framework for Excellence's purpose is set out as follows:

- to provide clear, unambiguous information to learners and employers
- to set out the levels of performance and progression required to deliver the highest quality provision to learners and employers
- to be a management tool to help providers to improve quality
- to enable moves towards self regulation
- to provide a transparent mechanism for Ofsted, LSC and QIA to support (or challenge) providers

It is anticipated that the Framework for Excellence will be used to:

- inform learner and employer choice
- lead providers' quality improvement
- simplify performance assessment across the FE system
- the foundation for the self-regulation of the system
- inform purchase decisions (not just the LSC, but other 'buying' organisations)

The principles of the Framework for Excellence build on Measures for Success, Common Inspection Framework and the LSC's financial audit requirements. It is an open and transparent development process with performance assessment based on well defined criteria which takes account of the views of learners and employers.

Version 1, which includes Work Based Learning Providers (except local authorities), Train to Gain providers, General FE, Tertiary and Specialist Colleges and Sixth Form Colleges, starts in September 2008.

Once a provider is in scope for the Framework for Excellence **all** provision within that provider or college is in scope. Version 2 and Version 3 will be rolled out in 2009 and 2010 to include all other LSC funded learning providers.

The structure of the Framework for Excellence is in three dimensions:

Responsiveness:

Responsiveness to employers
Employers views
Amount of employer training (fees and volumes)
Training Quality Standard accreditation
Responsiveness to learners
Learner views
Learner destinations

Effectiveness:

Quality of outcomes
Success rates
Quality of provision
Ofsted inspection rating

Finance:

Financial health
Based on 3 ratios – solvency, sustainability and status
Financial control
Based on assessment of financial management and control
Use of resources
Revenue (4 indicators)
Capital

Each of the performance areas will be 'scored' to give

the dimension score and these in turn contribute to the overall performance rating.

All ratings are the same as the Ofsted reports:

- o 1 Outstanding
- o 2 Good
- o 3 Satisfactory
- o 4 Inadequate

Development and modelling work has been completed over the past year with 100 pilot providers (9 in the South West Region including 2 from Devon & Cornwall) in order to ensure that most of the problems are worked through and solved and that grading structures are tried and tested.

The recent Provider Briefings will have helped you to understand the steps you need to take over the next few months to incorporate Framework for Excellence into your organisation and processes. A lot of the information to inform the Framework for Excellence is already held within the system, so the impact of the Framework on your organisation's workload has been kept as light as possible.

There is some ongoing work taking place with LSC and Ofsted to develop the incorporation of Framework for Excellence into the Self Assessment process and publish new guidance about Self Assessment and eventually to 'bring together' the Common Inspection Framework and Framework for Excellence.

Version 1 policy and guidance documentation will be available at the end of June / early July.

Further information is on the LSC internet:

<http://ffe.lsc.gov.uk/>

Have you visited our website?

www.training-provider.com

DCTPN Meetings
10.00 – 2.00

4th July
Bicton

3rd October
A+ Plymouth

9th January
Cornwall

DCTPN Training Event

Vocational Qualification Reform Programme

Friday 18th July
9.30—1.00 p.m.

A+
Details

Craig @
trainingprovider.com

SWLLN

IAG Hub

IAG

Champions Programmes

One day course dates

11th Sept, 14th Oct, 21st Oct, 27th Nov

Productive Skills for Devon

Productive Skills for Devon (PSfD)

The Productive Skills for Devon partnership was established in 2005 to provide a lead on the Local Area Agreement (LAA) productivity and skills priority area.

It's membership has representatives from Business Link, Community Council of Devon, Connexions, DCC (Adult and Community Learning and the Economy Unit), DCTPN, Devon and Cornwall Business Council (DCBC), Devon Education Business Partnership, Devon Renaissance, the District Councils, Enterprise Plymouth, Exeter City Council, Jobcentre plus, LSC, RDA, Torbay Council and the University of Exeter.

It is chaired by Tim Jones (DCBC) and reports to the Devon Strategic Partnership. Within each part of Devon there is a sub-group with a specific focus on Workforce Development which reports to the PSfD strategic group.

South Devon and Torbay Workforce Development Group

This WFD covers the South Hams, Teignbridge and Torbay area. It has a membership of local Providers and Stakeholders who meet 3 or 4 times a year in order to provide a more coherent approach to skills issues. Its members have a history of collaboration on ESF programmes (locally generated) and a commitment to promote quality delivery across the area. Recent meetings have focused on the following:

- Women and Micro Enterprise (WAM) Project: Groups in Totnes and Ivybridge, as well as in North Devon, are working with different Host organisations to help women develop their self-confidence and business skills. The evaluation has shown

this to be a very successful project.

Beneficiaries are very appreciative of the training and it has enabled people to be more confident in taking the first steps in setting up new businesses.

The programme is managed by CCD and it has recently been granted additional Devon Renaissance funding to extend the work across the non-Objective 2 area as well as PSfD monies to enable core support to continue with the original groups until June 2009.

Contact: Jan Spencer on 01392 381256 or jan@devonrcc.org.uk

- New Entrepreneur Scholarships in Torbay (NEST): This is an 'intensive business start up training' programme led by Enterprise Plymouth.

For the period 2007/08 there are 180 places for the whole region, with 15 places for Torbay. This is aimed at disadvantaged people, lone parents, young offenders etc. and so far they have 13 engaged.

The targets are 12 to complete business training and put a business plan together, with 8 Business starts and 6 to achieve NVQ level 2/3.

Participants are given 5 days intensive training with tutorials and one to one support.

Funds available are £500 to £750 to start trading or buy equipment, or have extra training.

This is a pilot programme which is likely to become national from July 2008. People on benefits are able to continue on benefits and start the programme for

one day a week. Contact Denise on 01752 211211

- Train to Gain (T2G) Employer Guide to Training Website: This T2G Pilot in South West has been successful and shows that most Employers have been satisfied with the training providers that they have used. This is a good tool for Business Link and Employers and providers are encouraged to get information of their courses onto the website. The South Devon area has been very good at getting its employers to respond to this Contact: www.traintogain.gov.uk
- PSfD Employer engagement workshops: Devon and Cornwall Business Council are being supported by PSfD to provide 5 events across Devon to engage with employers and provide them with an update on training opportunities and funding, including the Skills Pledge. The South Devon and Torbay event is being hosted by South Devon College in September (Date tbc).

Contact Stephane Kolinsky: stephane.kolinsky@gmail.com

The next meeting of the Workforce Development Group (South) will be held on 9th October 2008 from 9.30 – 11.30, at Follaton House, Totnes.

For further information or to join the group mailing list please contact Sue Holland

(South Devon Work Force Development Support) sue@14-19.eclipse.co.uk

SKILLS FOR CO-OPERATIVE ENTERPRISE

Andrew Lightfoot

There are many examples to challenge the conventional wisdom that there is a 'brain drain' from Britain. One of the most inspirational is the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. Founded in the mid '70s, not long after the formation of the new country when it was especially impoverished, this Bank introduced the novel concept of focusing its lending on the poorest people on the planet.

A young Professor couldn't square his grand economic theories with the appalling deprivation which surrounded the University. His research identified that women weaving baskets couldn't afford the raw materials so had to rely on middle men who then controlled the price of the finished articles: hence the women were trapped in poverty. By loaning small amounts of money, suddenly the women could buy the materials and sell the baskets direct and so keep all the profit for themselves, and their families. But who in their right minds would lend money to the poorest of the poor and expect to get anything back? Well, Muhammad Yunus managed to persuade some government officials and a Bank to try the idea. Twenty years later, \$2.4 billion had been lent to 2.3 million people; this had become the model for micro-credit in 60 countries; and in 2006, Muhammad was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. For the full story, read his book, 'Banker to the Poor'.

The most telling statistic is the recovery rate of over 99% of the loans. In contrast, the best any remotely comparable scheme in this country can record is 90%, with many community finance initiatives nearer 60%.

So, why such a difference? Most significantly, individuals cannot borrow from the Grameen Bank on their own: they have to form themselves into a small group of five or six who each borrow and are mutually responsible for paying back the loans. Immediately, therefore, the group takes on the role not only of support for one another but also a check to ensure that each enterprise is sufficiently robust to repay the loan. In this way, the apparent tensions between competition and co-operation can be squared.

Britain offers quite a contrast since the tradition of co-operation has remained relatively peripheral. Rather, independence and self-sufficiency tend to be the qualities associated with enterprise.

Consequently, partnerships such as Productive Skills for Devon have an uphill task. Nevertheless, there are positive signs that more bodies are being attracted by the efficiencies, effectiveness

and economy of working together to undertake some activities.

Addressing the fractures caused by the ways government separates out functions which should be managed holistically, compounded by the contractual arrangements of funding streams such as ESF, is one place to start. PS4D attempts to do so by creating closer dialogue between agencies, training providers and employers at both strategic and local levels.

Locally, this is achieved through three Workforce Development Groups across the county which relate well to a range of other local partnerships and provide a conduit between thematic, strategic drivers and practical delivery of training. The evolving 'skills brokering' initiative in north Devon is an especially relevant illustration. Furthermore, there are many small scale projects which are producing welcome outputs but, equally importantly, are stretching boundaries and testing different approaches with new groups of partners. So while the total spend might be modest (less than a £million over 3 years), the eventual impact on mainstream action could be proportionally much greater.

A current innovation which will reshape some thinking is establishment of Employment and Skills Boards. In Devon, these are likely to be based on 'functional economic zones' or travel-to-work areas (north Devon, Exeter and the Heart of Devon, Torbay and South Devon, Plymouth and its hinterland). So not only will these Boards be employer led but also they will cross administrative boundaries and be more responsive to patterns of employee movements. Through PS4D, there will be improved communication with the Devon Economic Partnership and the Regional Skills Partnership.

While such partnerships and networking help to set the tone, they are meaningless without a strong commitment to greater impact on attainment. The focus selected through the Local Area Agreement process is on Level 3 skills. This choice was made in the light of Leitch and the need in Devon to move aspirations beyond Level 2. The target of a 4% improvement over 3 years is a stretch beyond recent trends, particularly given the worsening economic cli-

mate.

Without deviating from the focus on Level 3, it is recognised that a wider range of activity is essential to move the 'skills agenda' up a gear in Devon. To help create a framework for such en-

agement, SLIM and Step Ahead Research were commissioned to identify the main themes and related targets around which partners would coalesce. These are:-

- ∅ reducing worklessness
- ∅ employer engagement in upskilling the workforce
- ∅ learner engagement in skills development
- ∅ attainment of Level 2 + 3 qualifications
- ∅ attainment of higher level skills
- ∅ skills levels and gaps across sectors
- ∅ leadership and management skills

A delivery plan is being formulated to guide actions and resource allocation over the next 3 years.

This brief account of examples of partnership activity designed to address adult skills needs in Devon might suggest that there is a willingness to co-operate. But does that translate into greater collective action amongst enterprises? Well, 'slowly' is probably the honest answer. Through the central involvement of the Devon and Cornwall Business Council and Federation of Small Businesses, there is greater understanding of the vocabulary and mechanisms of the 'training industry', as well as more practical examples of collaboration. However, there is still a very long journey ahead to permeate the culture of enterprise with a desire to co-operate. No doubt most rapid progress is being made amongst young people, in schools and universities, through the good works of the Devon Education Business Partnership and graduate training schemes. Ironically, as for the agencies, it might well be that a period of austerity is effective in stimulating more co-operation than competition. Hopefully the economic hard times will not be on a scale to match those experienced in Bangladesh but we would do well to reflect on how the lessons of the Grameen Bank could be applied here to the acquisition of co-operative skills for enterprise.

Andrew Lightfoot
Devon Economic Partnership

Aim Higher An Update



"We are just helping (our learners) **to aspire to fulfil their potential**"
Staff member at Truro College.

That sentence in a nutshell summarises what Workhigher has strived to achieve this year and plans to achieve in partnership with FE colleges and Training providers across the peninsula over the next 3 years.

2007/8

As the year draws to a close it is clear that our work with Advanced Apprentices has produced some fantastic results:-

14-19 ENGINEERING MASTER CLASSES FALMOUTH MARINE SCHOOL

10 Advanced apprentices took part in a series of 3 inspirational master classes and as a result – 3 definitely want to go on to higher education, 3 indicated that they would like more information on higher level progression and most have said that the classes have had a direct and positive impact on their work particularly the importance of calculations

SOUTH DEVON COLLEGE

Hosted two master class

1. Hotel and catering

21 AAs and level 3 catering students attended with 12 out of 21 attendees interested in HE study as a direct result.

2. Motor vehicle

15 attendees made up of 11 level 3 students and 4 external attendees. 8 students now applying for a level 4 course.

Kate Poole

2008- 11

The good news is that HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council) have confirmed funding for Aimhigher for the next three years. Our focus will be on progression of post 16 vocational and work based students who have the potential but not the current aspiration to progress onto higher learning. We will be looking to fund work with groups of learners who would benefit from more advice and guidance about progression and would relish the opportunity to expand and extend their skills and experience through master classes and subject days. If you would like more information please contact Kate Poole on 01209 617753.

Kate Poole

- Young people who are interested in the apprenticeship route have an entitlement of clear and consistent information and advice about progression throughout their Apprentice framework.

- A well documented and widely used range of role models and case studies highlighting progress on an individual level and success at an employer level – if you have a good story that will encourage and help others please get in touch on

advance@cornwall.ac.uk

- Evidence of an increasingly flexible HE provision (particularly with the final year top up) to enable people to work and learn at the same time. SWLLN are very interested in this project and hope to take our findings further

How we going to get there?
Watch this space!

www.learnandwork.org
advance@cornwall.ac.uk

AdvAnce

AA = Able and Ambitious –

The AdvAnce project is highlighting what many of you have known all along – Advanced Apprentices are able and ambitious and several more are progressing onto higher learning than previously thought. For example City College Plymouth tracked current HE students onto past Advanced Apprentices and found 4 HE students had progressed directly from work based learning. TPN celebration event showed a staggering % of AA had progressed onto higher learning(...over to you Craig)

Where are we now?

1. Update on progression intentions of AA graduates

The pilot phase is now complete and DCTPN and Workhigher met up with contacts at Cornwall College, City College Plymouth CP, Acacia, Accountancy plus, ETS, ULTRA, PSC, Somerset care, SCAT and Truro college.

All have agreed, along with the Pilot institutions, to adapt the paper based questionnaire which will be introduced to graduating AAs during their pre exit interview.

Data to be send quarterly to DCTPN and results will be available in September 2008. Several training providers have already said adding progression questions has aided them with their OFSTED inspection and several other providers have been prompted to ask for more information about Foundation degree courses.

2. Update on Focus groups HE students

The second round of focus groups, concentrating on final year FD students have thrown up some interesting findings including the perception that for many a top up to final honours is now an achievable goal and that employer support and locally run, flexible provision are instrumental in both taking up a FD course and completing it

Where do we want to be by October 2009?

- Have an accurate picture of the level of intention to progress to higher learning of graduating AA;

- An increase in the number of MIS systems in colleges that are sensitive to the AA framework particularly in relation to bite size and part time HE and level 4 provision

Higher Level Skills Pathfinder Project Deborah Winwood

Since Spring 2007, when the SW HLSP (Higher Level Skills Pathfinder Project) commenced, the Higher Skills Intermediaries have been successfully working with regional employers, ranging from sole traders to multi-nationals and the public sector, to facilitate university level skills training. Driven by the Government's high level skills strategy the SW HLSP, one of three national pilots, is seen as key to the success of the Higher Education at Work policies. Eleven Intermediaries are working across all sectors in the South West to develop business focused higher level skills training. The service is funded by HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council) and is managed by HERDA-SW (Higher Education Regional Development Association). It is working closely with both the Train 2 Gain brokers and with the SW Lifelong Learning Network.

The Intermediary Service is aimed at those businesses who recognise the rapid pace of change in industry and respond by investing in the development of their workforce. Intermediaries understand regional HE provision and can source cost effective and viable higher-level training solutions from local Universities and Colleges that focus on bottom-line impacts. To date more than 250 SW businesses have engaged with the Intermediaries to have organisational training needs analysis carried out.

How it works

The Intermediary carries out a free review with the company

of its business goals and objectives, organisational structure and existing training plans, any known skills gaps and what types of provision and delivery best aligns with business priorities and expectations of training.

Having translated these into higher level training needs the Intermediary liaises and negotiates with appropriate HE providers to source provision that addresses company requirements and current business issues. Intermediaries work for the region's universities and as such are independent of any one institution.

Proposals are presented to the company for consideration and further action. So far approx 200 learners have undertaken HE learning as a result of their employers engaging with the project.

Examples of employer led higher skills programmes to date

- NPS, an Exeter based service provider has accessed a bespoke management development programme for its whole management team – delivered at times to suit them.

Duchy College is responding to the technical management needs of several food and drink manufacturers with a 60 credit "Mini Award" comprising 3 bite-sized blended learning modules capable of company specific flexible delivery.

A bespoke leadership short course has been delivered "in house" over a 2 month period by the University of Plymouth

for a local engineering company. Algram's Managing Director quotes "The Intermediary service was introduced to us at a crucial time. To remain in a highly competitive market place we knew we needed to equip our managers with the leadership skills necessary to drive the business forward. The Intermediary service helped to signpost us to a provider that is developing a programme tailored to our needs and we are now keen to see how this will impact positively on our competitive advantage"

University accredited 3 day Project Management courses have been delivered "in house" at two different levels of complexity.

Bite-sized HE short courses, such as marketing and operations management are available at local colleges.

Intermediaries are constantly engaged with local and regional businesses and are well placed to link with other business facing activities and training providers with a view to collaborative working. This service, funded until December 2009, also offers a means to access progression advice for employed adult learners completing intermediate level qualifications.

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Open Source Software

The work of an RSC e-learning adviser includes visiting work based learning providers to look at ways in which they can enhance their use of e-learning. One of the surprising things for some organisations is the wide availability of Open Source software i.e. software that is free to download and use.

Arguably the best known open source software is VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) package **Moodle** that is the buzz word of e-learning. There is also a vast range of free software; sometimes these are cut down versions of commercial products designed to interest you in buying the commercial version. One such example is the screen capture software **Camstudio** which is the free version of **Camtasia**; this allows you to capture and annotate what is happening on your computer screen, store this file on your VLE and you have, for example, a computer training exercise that learners can re-run as often as necessary.

Perhaps the best example of free software is **Photostory 3**. This produces slide shows which can be given voice over's, music and text and configured through the use of transitions etc, to make the still images look like video etc. Photostory 3 has a huge number of potential uses, as those providers already using it will know.

Another often overlooked example is **Interactive Word**, which is already on your computer if you use Microsoft Word, this can be used to make drop down boxes and introduce quite high levels of interactivity within Word documents.

Free software can be used for a wide range of purposes; however, in this article we are aiming to address equality of access for all learners including those with problems like Dyslexia. I am in no way an expert on Dyslexia so I will leave how this can be combated for a later article but the use of the examples below may help both staff and learners

The examples below are from a document assembled from information supplied by the JISC service TechDis. The full document can be downloaded from www.rsc-south-west.ac.uk or e-mailed on request.

Word Talk – www.wordtalk.org.uk
A free plug-in developed for use with all versions of Microsoft Word (from Word 97 upwards), helps those with reading difficulties use Microsoft Word more effectively. It speaks the text of the document highlighting it as it goes. It contains a talking dictionary to help decide which word spelling is most appropriate. It sits neatly in the toolbar and is highly configurable, allowing the learner/tutor to adjust the highlight colours, the voice and the speed of the speech. The voice is a perhaps little American robot but you soon get used to it.

SayPad – <http://inspiredcode.net/4VisImp.htm>
Enables text to speech conversion for large volumes of text, splitting the text into manageable chunks. It will also convert the speech to MP3 format. This has all kinds of potential uses, mobile learning where the learner is given an MP3 player with the text as a sound file, for study. The use of mobile devices also allows learners to catch up/revise; if the file is on your VLE the learner can download the file and study at leisure.

Gabcast – <http://www.gabcast.com>
Not only a brilliant name but a free phone or VOIP to MP3 service. Using a BT number to phone a normal geographical number (at the standard rate) the message left turns into an MP3 file on a free Gabcast website, the file is either automatically uploaded to your website or it can be downloaded later. Useful for gathering verbal NVQ evidence especially if used as a three way call between learner, employer and assessor.

Aspire - www.aspirestrategies.co.uk
Generated by dyslexic assessors. It is a study website aimed at

people with dyslexia – it avoids text based resources by providing approximately 30 video clips of areas where dyslexic learners usually struggle e.g. Proof reading – note taking, time management etc, The video clips are in Windows media file format with voice over. The content is arranged to take the learner through areas related to study and accessibility. There are some blank tabs but this is a free version that is linked into a commercial site but the free tabs are well worth looking at.

Prediction software like **LetMeType** - <http://www.clasohm.com/lmt/en/> is useful because it can make typing/reading easier, quicker and more accurate. It can also be used to develop and enhance literacy skills by increasing confidence in reading and writing. It can also help to change text and background colour and to magnify the screen using Windows Accessibility Options.

Because the 'symptoms of dyslexia' can vary widely it is useful to 'see' what a dyslexic sees when looking at text. **SimDis** gives you some insight into what they experience; also available from the TechDis website. <http://www.techdis.ac.uk/resources/sites/2/simdis/Dyslexia/dylexiahome.htm>
Because it is such a diverse condition, Dyslexics' can benefit from a range of computer software/hardware such as time-management, mind-mapping, and alternative printouts, full details in the next article, or visit: <http://www.techdis.ac.uk/index.php>
For a full list of accessibility resources and feedback on their uses, the JISC service TechDis www.techdis.ac.uk has an exhaustive list of resources aimed at accessibility and inclusion issues.

I hope the above is of some help, if you need any more information you can contact me via rsc-advice@rsc-south-west.ac.uk. For detailed guidance on accessibility issues please contact my colleague Julia Taylor via the same e-mail address.

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Teacher Training Qualifications with Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service

After a successful year of delivering the Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning sector qualification (PTLS), Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service will be expanding their provision in the forth coming academic year 08/09.

The courses are run through Stoke Damerel Adult and Community Learning, one of nine centres across the city that make up Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service.

Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector courses are planned across the City at the following venues, days and times:

Tuesday Stoke Damerel Community College 23/09/08 or 24/02/09 6.30 – 9 pm

Wednesday John Kitto Community College 24/09/08 or 25/02/09 5-7.30 pm

Thursday Plym Adult Learning 25/09/08 2.30-5 pm

Tuesday Tothill Community Centre 24/02/09 2-4.30 pm

All For 16 weeks

This qualification is for pre-service or in-service teachers/tutors or associate teachers/tutors and is aimed at candidate/learners who:-

- Would like or require an introduction to teaching in the lifelong learning sector or
- Are seeking career progression within their area of work or
- Will be/are seeking to progress towards ATLS/QTLS status and/or
- Teach on a one to one and/or group basis or
- Teach non publicly funded courses or
- Are trainers in Industry.

We are also planning to deliver the Certificate to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLs) on the following day and time.

Monday Stoke Damerel Community College 22/09/08 For 35 weeks 5-9 pm

This is the required qualification for learners who wish to teach on Public Funded or Further Education courses within an Associate Teacher Role. It is the next step from the Award in Preparing to teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (7303).

An Associate Teacher/Tutor is a person who is carrying out fewer responsibilities than a person in the full teaching role. Their role and responsibilities are to teach in at least one of the following ways

From a defined and prescribed programme with fewer responsibilities in the design of learning materials and the course programme than the Full Teacher.

- On a one to one rather than a group basis
- Delivers a programme confined to one particular level or subject type of learner.
- Delivers short courses of less than three months which lead to non-accredited awards in the area of adult and community learning or that provide on successful completion less than three credits on accredited programmes.

As a service we also offer Assessor and Internal Verifier Awards dates, times and venues as follows:-

From a defined and prescribed programme with fewer responsibilities in the design of learning materials and the course programme than the Full Teacher.

- On a one to one rather than a group basis
- Delivers a programme confined to one particular level or subject type of learner.
- Delivers short courses of less than three months which lead to non-accredited awards in the area of adult and community learning or that provide on successful completion less than three credits on accredited programmes.

As a service we also offer Assessor and Internal Verifier Awards dates, times and venues as follows:-

Assessor award on Wednesday at Sir John Hunt Community College 24/09/08 6-8 pm for 5 weeks.

Internal Verifiers Award on Wednesday at Sir John Hunt Community College 24/09/08 6-8 pm for 5 weeks.

Whilst doing these awards you will be observed for a total of 3 hours.

We can offer bespoke programmes and further courses can be planned due to demand. These can be organised to fit days and times that are suitable for employers and trainers.

For further information please contact

Lorraine Steer

Learning Development Manager

Stoke Damerel & John Kitto Adult and Community Learning
Tel 01752 609128 or 01752 208380

Peer Review and Development –adding value to quality assurance Michael Gray

Since 2006 an increasing number of providers have benefited from peer review and development – PRD for short - taking part in projects and initiatives in the South West, sponsored by the Learning and Skills Council and the Quality Improvement Agency. Consultants for Excellence have helped make PRD happen in a number of these projects. In this short article, we'll explain what happens in a peer review, what we've all learnt from it, and where it might go in the future. And we'll invite you to express an interest in joining or forming a PRD group.

The history and the South West

In 2006/2007 there were about a dozen national pilot projects. Providers, largely but not exclusively colleges, formed groups and carried out peer reviews of aspects of one another's provision, usually focusing on an issue of significant impact such as leadership and management in the self-assessment report. These pilots, many of which we supported, gave us valuable experience to apply in 2007/2008.

In the last twelve months, the QIA has funded PRD groups in the South West, including groups which comprise providers from different parts of the sector. The SW LSC also funded Consultants for Excellence to set up, support and report on a group of non-college providers. The majority of these were from workbased learning. Six providers took part, reviewing different aspects of their provision. A seventh provider took up an offer of consultancy support instead of PRD.

PRD in practice

Imagine this: two or more like-minded managers from another provider come to your organisation. They have prepared by reading information which you sent them, and which you had agreed with them in advance. You and they have worked on protocols for the review and have built trust before the visit.

You have participated in a briefing, working on these protocols and choosing the area for review – an area such as equality and diversity, your self-assessment process, what makes learning outstanding for learners, or improving employer engagement and moving towards the Training Quality Standard. As a group, you have considered what is best practice in that

chosen area.

On the day (or two days) of the review, the reviewers talk to your staff, learners, look at documents, and talk to you. They work together, and they work with you, on your side. They are rigorous, and at the end of the review, they discuss their conclusions with you, in a direct and supportive way. They may write a report – confidential to you and them – or they may agree that you write the report. You decide what changes and improvements to put in your quality improvement plan. In many cases work-based learning providers, being action-orientated, have made some of these changes straight away.

The reviewers and you meet a week after the review; you discuss how it went, you discuss and agree how you can help one another with the changes. And you plan the next reviews.

That's how it works

Messages for PRD in the future, in particular for the South West

PRD has been well received – “surprisingly useful” is a typical quote, and these comments from provider managers involved in the SW LSC pilot speak for themselves:

“Definitely worth repeating”

“We welcomed the training day as reassuring. We came along without knowing a lot about it, but found the process not as daunting as we'd expected”

“Looking at another organisation helped us to view our own organisation more critically”

“Reviewing another organisation proved genuinely interesting. Learning more about provision in different areas/sectors”

“It has made me more confident about the things that we do well”

“Now comfortable with the process and the skills acquired and could (and would) do it again”

“It has been very good working in a team, we have learned a lot from each other”

“There is a difference between being criticised for not doing something well, and identifying areas for improvement – I think the review process does the second of these”.

As a result of the projects, we have all recognised the need for preparation

for clear protocols, for openness and rigour, and for development after the reviews. We have taken account of concerns about travel distances and competition. We have grouped providers to minimise travel, and to ensure that competitive advantage is not lost. Groups have welcomed light consultant support; we see our role as enabling. The most successful groups are able to get on with it themselves after the first round of reviews.

Why bother with PRD?

Comments speak volumes, and the first results of the research we have been doing nationally on PRD are very positive indeed. Some providers have reported that it has helped with very specific challenges such as preparation for re-inspection or retaining staff. All those involved, as reviewers and as 'hosts' (that is, the provider being reviewed) report that they have learnt a great deal, picked up useful ideas, and enhanced their skills as managers.

PRD is also a key part of self-regulation. We've noted that the practice of self-regulation is still unclear, but that this is one thing providers can do which is both ahead of the self-regulation game, and has great benefits in its own right.

Plans for 2008/2009

Just how many funded PRD groups there will be nationally is undecided, but we are talking to your networks about encouraging, supporting and assisting individual or groups of providers to continue or start their involvement in peer review and development.

How to express interest or find out more

As the director of Consultants for Excellence, I'd be pleased to hear from you – contact me on mgrayassociates@btopenworld.com, or ring 07887 658851.

The team and I are looking forward to working with you on another round of PRD!

We're also happy to tell you about the full range of consultancy, training and project management services we can offer.

DCTPN membership

Acacia Training	Hazel Lessiter	Hazel.lessiter@acaciatrning.co.uk
Academy for Training & Dev	Dave Badcock	dave@academy4u.co.uk
Academy of Training	Chris Jeffrey	chris.jeffery@academyoftraining.co.uk
Accountancy +	Simon Deane	simon@aplustraining.co.uk
Access Training	Gerald Banks	Gerald.banks@accesstraining.co.uk
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GHQ Training	Jean Rogers	jean@glenbeigh.co.uk
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