

We are the Champions! Transforming TLA at Trafford College Group

Teams Champions at Trafford College Group have clearly valued their supported experiments, otherwise known as our Action Research Projects. Although 'time' has been an issue, some have realised they did not have to invest 'extra' work and time to take part in the project and that they could incorporate and try new approaches to build and improve what they are doing already.

Some took the opportunity to conduct a research-based project, whilst others took the opportunity to 'try out' tools and approaches that they might not have otherwise had time to do. They have through their evaluation, reflection and learner feedback realised where these tools have or have not worked to enhance practice and have reflected on why this might be. Consequently, many have made interesting discoveries along the way and many have been both surprised and delighted at some of their project outcomes. Where impact and improvement has been effectively evidenced, others may see possible solutions to their own challenges, with the risk of a wrong approach being minimised or eliminated altogether.

As a Teams Champions Group, everyone has learned and been inspired by one another's projects, experiences, peers' insights, reflections, learner feedback shared, and the impact and outcomes. Initial project aims and objectives have been shared in a Padlet (see appendices 1).

[Online assessment with forms and quizzes – Apprenticeship Early Years tutor: Samantha Armitage](#)

Samantha explained their department is 'trying to use digital devices more'. They have used OneFile for assessment in the past but have been looking at ways to do quizzes and assessment using Microsoft forms and the feedback and results so far are 'positive'. Learners have said they found the online quizzes of immediate benefit as they could access results of their performance straightaway without having to wait for work to be marked. The analytical overview is proving helpful to trainers and assessors as it identifies for them what aspects of the training needs to be revisited and which learners need individual support and what with. Tutors are saving the individual learner results and adding them to their OneFile as this effectively evidences their knowledge and understanding. Feedback has been 'really good' for one test on Safeguarding with Children and analytics has been very helpful to trainers. They have already gone on to produce two end point assessment exams. They have considered the reliability of the data and are putting strategies in place to ensure an effective comparison, year on year, to measure the impact of their training and support (see appendices 2).

[Teams Assignment and Rubrics – HE Engineering Programme Leader: Oliver Shaw and Lecturer: Bertin Speaks.](#)

FE and HE Engineering Teams looked at Teams Assignments and Rubrics to standardise consistent ways of marking work and feeding back.

Oliver fed back over the move to online assignments in Teams that FE learners found this very useful but there were some concerns highlighted by HE learners related to GDPR for Project and Design units, over the sharing of company information. Lecturers across FE and HE have realised that the functions built into Teams Assignments means they are more easily able to monitor and track work submission and capture correspondence and feedback. The online assignment process is proving effective in saving time duplicating information over learner performance. The impact of this project has resulted in lecturers deciding it is advantageous to move to online assignments in Teams, except for the Design unit where conventional assignment submission will be continued (see appendices 11).

Bertin's initial GMCG presentation outlined Introducing Marking with Rubrics for L2 through to L5 Learners with the aim to address a current challenge faced by their department. The volume of apprenticeship learners recruited onto courses has more than doubled (almost tripled) and the lecturers need to find a more timely and effective way to mark assignment work and consistently feedback to learners. Their key aim was to 'use creative assessments to maximise progress'. They have implemented rubrics in Teams Assignments as a potential solution to this (see appendices 11). This project is ongoing, the outcomes will be shared later.

Interactive Apps experimentation and impact on learners – Cheadle College Sport Teacher: Alan Taylor

Alan took the opportunity to try out a variety of apps with learners to see which, or if any, had impact on learner interest and engagement. His aim, in line with personal and organisational aims, to inspire his learners to achieve the most that they can and be the best that they can be with the focus on challenging his learners with different digital technologies. He planned to find new teaching strategies within lessons to challenge, develop and engage learners. Learners found the new approach effective for their learning and experience particularly for units where there is a large amount of theory and information to digest. Alan found implementation impacted positively on his learner engagement and on his own professional development. He has enjoyed this new approach as it has worked to enhance his technology skills for learning and his teaching strategies as well as being an opportunity to find and share new ways to pass onto other members of the sports faculty (see appendices 3).

Deepening learning through exploring questioning techniques – ESOL Lecturer and Teaching Learning and Innovation Practitioner: Julie Milner

Julie shared many discoveries along her journey. She explored many apps and different approaches. She was looking for spontaneity in her lessons, this was important to her as she did not want the implementation of a technology to interrupt the natural flow of the lesson as this would negatively impact on learning. At her initial presentation (December 2021) she expressed she was struggling to find a suitable 'technology-based' solution and, at that time, considered a traditional mini whiteboard to be the best classroom resource. With continued exploration, however, she discovered a new tool 'Quizlet' that her learners loved. She also revisited 'Triptico' and the updated web-based version is now the perfect addition to her tutor toolkit! 'I started using Triptico more in my lessons, particularly the Connections activity. I find it's great for teaching, reinforcing and revising vocab and concepts. I can add more probing questions as well as the questions, meaning students can answer at different levels'. Julie has shared her initial presentation and a recent interactive Triptico lesson, with examples throughout, that effectively captures the outcomes and impact of her project, her own reflection and learner feedback. She says, 'Students are involved in the whole lesson and it brings an aspect of competition. I've seen students more keen to take part in lessons and handing in homework more regularly.' She has also shared some additional classroom lesson resources that have been effective for learner engagement. In an online Champions Teams meeting Janet Clare, Teaching Learning and Innovation Practitioner, shared that she has supported a newly qualified teacher to improve her lessons by introducing her to Triptico and that in no time at all the tutor had embraced the technology and the difference it made and the impact on her lesson and learner engagement was 'amazing' (see appendices 5).

Using Microsoft Forms as a form of initial interview during enrolment and induction – Progression Curriculum lecturer: Gillian Piercy

Gillian's project was to improve work efficiency and gain a greater understanding of learners so that they can be better supported on their programme of study by tutors and mentors. A Microsoft form is used to capture any information disclosed during an early conversation with the learner, for example, 'Did you enjoy school?'. During the enrolment process learners are often not comfortable to share this information in fear of any negative impact. The data 'export to excel' function enables the easy search of information and is having a positive impact, saving time, and speeding up intervention, as there is 'less paperwork, less filing and less searching needed'. Tutors and mentors can now easily access this information 'digitally' in a 'central' location so interventions can be quickly put in place to meet learners needs more effectively. This was already in place in this department, but the supported experiment has given the opportunity to further build on the process. Branching questions have now been added to the form to collect further information. The questions enable the tutor and learner to start talking and break down initial barriers. Gillian has explained questions are focused on gaining a better understanding of individuals, such as their personal circumstances, hobbies and interests, independence and are working to help the learners feel more supported. 'It does have an impact on how we do things early on to enable students to feel like they can achieve settling into college'. This is helping improve retention. (see appendices 8).

Developing learner contextualising skills and relating theory to practice – Business Lecturer and Teaching Learning and Innovation Practitioner: Janet Clare

Janet implemented the use of learner Padlet boards for collaborative learning to help them address challenges around identifying issues in real Business case studies and they then took action to resolve this. Janet explained ‘a lot of learners were struggling; they knew the theory but couldn’t piece it together’. With Padlet collaboration ‘they worked together and produced some amazing stuff... magic appeared on the boards as they all contributed and shared their ideas’. ‘Learners were able to go on and complete their homework as they had lots of ideas and it developed their confidence as individual learners and in their own independent learning abilities as well’. Janet’s reflection: ‘Using this strategy helped learners to not only develop higher-level thinking skills, but boost their confidence and self-esteem as well... It facilitated a lot of creativity... The resources created are useful to the whole group for revision.’ She has shared ‘I will be adding Padlet to my teacher toolkit in terms of developing collaboration skills’ (see appendices 4).

Creative approaches to raising standards in the digital age – Hair and Beauty Programme Leaders: Lorraine Chaisty + Angela Crook

Programme Leaders have created activities that embed English and Maths ‘soft skills’ directly inside their Class Team. This is eliminating need for a separate ‘Team’ for Maths and English. Using Blended Learning Consortium (BLC) off-the-shelf interactive modules contextualised for Hair and Beauty and sourcing and creating their own resources through TCG Online Library Live is proving to be effective for learners. The resources have, so far, been trialled with a limited number of learners. The activities signposted online library resources specific for course programme areas, embedded and easily accessible in Teams Channels. Lorraine Chaisty remarked ‘we are trying to make the maths and English feel alive’ just with short 10 minute tasks exploring vocabulary. Feedback captured, even though just short snips are looked at with learners in lessons it is adding value as some learners are revisiting the chapters, interested to learn more about this aspect of their industry and in preparation for exams.

Embedding the contextualised BLC modules is also proving very effective particularly as they are short interactive activities with quiz assessment built in. Angela explained that her L1 and L2 learners are much more interested and actively engaged when the Maths and English is ‘relatable to the service learners are in’. They are independent learning tasks useful to consolidate learning and easily accessible from within Teams. The resources also link out to other websites and BBC bitesize with opportunities to further deepen learning and understanding (see appendices 10).

Improve the visual look of the Moving Image Channel on the Teams Page to improve the student experience and engagement - L2 Creative Media Lecturer: Kirsty Wilkinson

Kirsty has recently joined the Teams Champion Group and so has only just implemented her project. It has been advantageous to her two-fold, as she wished to develop her skills for the use of Teams and, at the same time, improve learner interest and engagement in her subject. Kirsty explained in an online meeting that creating more visual posts is working to draw attention to work tasks and information. Kirsty now adds explanation around the tasks in posts and she is finding this is beneficial for absent learners as well as learners that are in class. She has started to add images and links that give more help and guidance from professionals in the industry prior to tasks being completed, for example, professional examples from real films for storyboarding and she says this is helping, ‘it gives them a visual idea for what they are expected to create for their own storyboards’. Initial verbal feedback was that ‘learners do much prefer it’. She has since surveyed learners to better capture the impact of this new approach (see appendices 9).

Digital Ink to support learning – Science Lecturer: Michael Woods

There has been a delay to this project due to technical issues with the classroom whiteboard. This is now resolved. This project is ongoing and findings will be shared later in the year. Michael shared his PPT Presentation (see Appendices 1) and a Lesson ink online whiteboard example (see appendices 6).

Online assessment with forms and quizzes – Motor Vehicle Programme Leader: David Spedding

The initial project presentation is shared (see appendices 1). This project is ongoing so findings will be shared later in the year.

Using Microsoft Forms for Homework tasks – GCSE English Lecturer: Oliver Graham

This project is ongoing, but Oliver did share some initial thoughts and findings, he reported '*It has been a success so far, almost doubling participation*' (see appendices 7).

Using digital resources to assist ESOL students to extend their vocabulary - Academic Studies GCSE and A Level: Lecturer: Tracy Edwards (A Levels)

Due to current department challenges this project is ongoing and will be developed over the summer (see appendices 12).

Recorded Video based Tutor formative feedback on Student Practical Production Work- L3 Creative Media Programme Leader: Joe Evans

This is ongoing. Outcomes will be shared later in the year (see appendices 12).

So far, there have been some fantastic project outcomes. The biggest challenge is still 'time' and there have been other challenges, due to a variety of reasons, including our recent merger and the ongoing pandemic which has resulted in staff not always available to meet as planned. For some, their projects have not developed or progressed as they would have liked. Outcomes for these projects will be shared in the future.

We learned that small changes can make a real difference, have positive impact, and bring recognised improvement. As outlined above, in very recent weeks one tutor in Media has implemented a new approach with more visually engaging Teams Posts and the feedback from learners for this has been overwhelmingly positive as they have said it is helping their learning. Tutors have seen and experienced for themselves that transformational change does not necessarily need to be a timely add on, or an 'extra' thing to do and quick and simple methods and approaches to gather learner feedback has proved to be very informative and effective, such as using short Microsoft Forms.

Practitioners clearly value time to experiment and explore and try out new approaches. To add value impact needs to be gathered and shared; this is something individuals do not always have time to do. Projects like this provide a structure and despite very limited time available, most have found their projects and experiments useful. Many have already taken much from the outcomes and will take their work forward to continue to improve their own practice and that of their department.

Our Teams Champion Community is invaluable going forward for a safe space for like-minded individuals to come together, share ideas and inspire one another, and to identify, highlight and share the important work they are doing. This will enable them to further develop their own practice, address challenges in their curriculum areas, and to drive improvement in TLA through the experimentation and implementation of digital technologies. Many practitioners who have attended the online Teams meetings have said that they very much value this time for their own professional development and to share and discuss ideas with peers.

Importantly, there is so much to gain from projects such as this one and to be inspired by emerging practice at other colleges. We need to further build on relationships we have developed. It is in everyone's interest to continue to collaborate and learn from colleagues across the wider sector.