

Action Research on PTLLS

Appendix 4: Provider's final report

Funder: LSIS

Fund amount: £5000

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Name of provider: University of Greenwich

Project: Designing and piloting PTLLS ESOL

1. Background

Description of the organisation and its point of departure for the project
(approximately 250 words)

Evaluation of the last PTLLS ESOL course by trainees and tutors revealed that trainees did not find the micro teaching sessions very useful. This process of evaluation is central to our action, research and development approach towards improving our provision. Many felt that these sessions did not provide the opportunity for them to fruitfully engage with some of the issues they had been introduced to in teaching and learning theories. As this was an assessment requirement, the course team decided that there was the need to explore an alternative approach which will not only meet our assessment requirement, but will also enhance the learning of our trainees. We were, therefore, clear that we needed a tool that will:

- Promote learning through reflection
- Focus our learners on specific aspects of teaching and learning
- Provide opportunities for our trainees to observe theory in action.

We, therefore, decided to replace the existing micro-teaching sessions as a component of our assessment with:

1. One targeted observation of a teaching session focusing on one of the areas listed below. Following their observations, trainees are required to prepare a short reflective report to feedback to the group. The expectation is that these reports will serve as a basis for re-visiting theoretical issues relating to teaching and learning already discussed during lectures:

- relevant approaches to teaching in subject specialist area
- lesson planning & evaluation
- delivering inclusive sessions
- use of different assessment methods
- use of resources

2. What we did and how we did it (500 words)

In order to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the new approach, we decided that it would be useful to identify a cohort amongst which significant variables are constant. For example, because the focus was on Train to Gain providers, we felt that it was important to design and deliver the course in the context of the practice of a specific Train to Gain provider. Based on this, we identified a Train to Gain provider, UKE-learning. We opted for this organisation for two reasons. First, they are a relatively large provider in this context, and we felt that they would be able to provide sufficient number of employees for the cohort. Second, they come with a strong reputation for quality as they were the Train to Gain provider of the year for 2009. There were a number of significant features of this arrangement. (1) We had to cater for two groups of 7 each because the

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organisation was not willing to release all 16 employees at the same time. (2) We had to be flexible enough to accommodate their request for delivering the programme to the two groups in alternate weeks. This is significant in terms of engaging with private providers. Having negotiated with them, we now faced the crucial issue of identifying and securing agreement for our targeted observation component of the programme. To implement this component, trainees were required to identify courses taught within their organisation and which relate to their own specialism. This was followed by a tripartite negotiation of date and time involving trainees, their tutor and the experienced tutor who is to deliver the observed lesson. Prior to the observation visit, the course tutor discussed the focus of observation in the context of theory thus preparing the grounds for trainees to follow up with their observation. This meant that observations did not start until the third week of delivery. Following the commencement of the observation sessions, we dedicated some time to discussing the report of observation session by each trainee leading them to reflect on what they had observed and helping them to further locate theory in learning.

3. What we produced /created (a description of the outcomes of the project.)

Outcomes/ final products could be e.g. a scheme of work, a course outline, a description of a process such as marketing; a financial analysis of a delivery model, a professional development module. (Any attachments, please list in box 7.)

(250 words)

The agreed outcome for this project is a report reflecting on the effectiveness of the targeted observation approach. The report will draw on evaluation from trainees and tutor. It will explore the benefits arising from the use of this approach from the trainees' perspectives and the professional views of the tutor on trainees' development when compared to the previous cohort who used the micro-teaching approach. (The report is not ready at the moment as the programme has two sessions to run)

4. What the impact was on learners, employers, teachers, the organisation

Please include text for quoting from interviews with some of the above.

Please include any quantitative data as per table below, or in other format, as appropriate.

(250 words)

What is presented here is not conclusive as the programme has two sessions to run. However, there are emerging indications of impact on trainees and their employers. Generally, trainees are indicating that they are already using some of what they have learned. For example, one trainee reported 'the thrill of carrying out diagnostic assessment instead of just doing a test' with her learners.

In terms of the targeted observation sessions, trainees' preliminary feedback suggests that they have found it useful although there were problems with arranging the observation sessions. One trainee said, 'I believe that you can learn more from watching different styles of delivery. You can learn from them, adapt their methods, and see the downfalls sometimes too'. Another said, 'I said I have recently sat observing training with someone and been very impressed with her delivery methods, so I really wanted to go to another venue and observe another delivery within Health and Social Care, I believe that this can only enhance and enrich my methods of delivery'. A third trainee said, 'Theory is very good, but practical gives you a wider viewpoint'. All of the above

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suggest that trainees have found the targeted observation component very useful in terms of developing their practice.

We have developed an instrument for collating the impact of the programme on employers and the organisations within which trainees work. These by their very nature can only be administered after the programme. However, discussions between the tutor and these organisations indicate that the employers have a positive perception of the programme. For example, UK-E-learning has already contacted the university about the possibility of providing the training to two members of staff who have been off sick when they return to work. A comprehensive report on the impact on trainees and employers will be provided when the programme has been fully delivered.

5. What we learnt that is of use to others (dos and don'ts) (250 words)

- (1) Need for flexibility when dealing with private providers: At the beginning of our collaborative process with UK E-learning, we had a named person who we contacted regularly. Mid way through the process, we stopped receiving responses to our email. This persisted for a period of 4 weeks when we then searched their website to identify another name. It then transpired that our named contact had left the employ of UK-E-learning and her replacement had no idea what was in the process of being agreed before she was employed. It became obvious that staff turnover rate in this type of organisation is rather high. The main lesson for us is the need to identify more than one contact to enable us to accommodate potential problems of contact that might arise because of staff departure.
- (2) The second learning point also relates to the need for flexibility. In this case, the focus is on the design / delivery of the programme. We had started out on the assumption that we will be delivering the programme to one group at UK E-learning. However, because of the nature of their work, it was impossible to have all 16 trainees available at the same time. They, therefore, requested that we deliver the programme on alternate weeks to two different cohorts. This request came after we had already agreed time and resources within the university. Thankfully we were able to negotiate additional time and resources. The lesson for us is that it is important to reach a concrete agreement before making request for resource allocation

6. Next steps (how the organisation intends to carry the work forward) (200 words)

For introductory TT courses, this approach could be used more generally in place of micro-teaching sessions. It might require trainees to identify opportunities for observation as a condition for admission. The university intends to explore the possibility of forging a firm relationship with providers who will be providing opportunities for targeted observations. This should provide an opportunity for fuller reflection and knowledge sharing, as well as the opportunity for reflecting on common issues. This means that the next course will be structured in such a way that targeted observations will be arranged by the university with the collaboration of the providers and each observed session will have a sizable number of the cohort. Observations from these sessions can then be compared in the process of discussion and should further enrich the value of this experience.

7. Quotes (from learners, employers, teachers)

8. List of attachments (including an overview of how the grant was used, actual resources developed, product(s) for dissemination, learner feedback, staff and learner quotes, to the sector (including the outcomes, appendices, photographs etc.)

Learner feedback:
 Lerner feedback on the programme focused on seven areas: Pre-training organisation, venue, resources used, overall content, level of delivery, relevance to context and use of targeted observation. An analysis of feedback indicates that all trainees felt that all aspects with the exception of the first two were either good or excellent. In respect of areas one and two, 2 trainees felt these were only satisfactory. Overall, therefore, learners’ feedback indicated a perception that the programme was good/excellent. An evaluation of responses in respect of the use of the targeted observation approach produced the following: All trainees agreed that it was a valuable way of becoming familiar with good practice. One trainee, however, felt that she would have preferred a micro-teach session, as she spends most of her time as a TA observing other teachers.
 One issue with the use of the targeted observation approach was the difficulty of arranging it. Issues around time, location and willingness to collaborate tended to make this a bit difficult. This is one area that we would want to explore in terms of finding ways in which this arrangement can be better facilitated.

Some quotes from learners:
 ‘Overall, good course, great teacher’ (Trainee 1 PTLLS for UK-Elearning)
 ‘Thank you for an enjoyable course’ (Trainee 4 PTLLS for UK-Elearning)
 ‘I did enjoy the observation, it was nice to see how other teachers teach in different settings and the resources used and the benefits to these’ (Trainee 7 PTLLS for UK-Elearning)
 ‘Enjoyed completing observation, however hard to organise’(Trainee 12 PTLLS for UK-Elearning)

Resources:
 A course handbook for the PTLLS programme
 A report evaluating the use of the targeted observation approach

Participants and outcomes

Participant	Outcome
Tina Cavill	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Tom Culliman	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Sally Chapman	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Gary Punt	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Emelia Empson	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Avril Sedman	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Sandra Evans	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Sue McCabe	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Maxine Parks	Passed / achieved PTLLS

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Liz Verlander	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Julia Thoma	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Barbara Daniel	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Jade Esaw	Passed / achieved PTLLS
Beverley Neave	Passed / achieved PTLLS