

CASE STUDY: CARLISLE COLLEGE

CHIARA MANZONI – OCTOBER 2017





Background

Carlisle College is a small general Further Education (FE) college located in the North West of England, rated 'good' (2) by Ofsted in 2016. It has around 1,150 full-time students and in addition to academic provision the college offers apprenticeships. Last April the college merged and is now part of the Newcastle College Group which comprises six colleges: Carlisle College, Kidderminster College, Lewisham Southwark College, Newcastle College, Newcastle Sixth Form College and West Lancashire College, and two training providers: Intraining and Rathbone Training.

Understanding the role of advanced practitioners

At Carlisle College, advanced practitioner-type staff are called Advanced Teacher Practitioners (ATPs). The focus of the role is to help people to improve, to learn from experience, to share good practice and to ultimately succeed.



An Advanced Teacher Practitioner is an extremely effective teacher who facilitates learning effectively. They are able to share with other people and are able to inspire other teachers and support them in their development to improve. It is very much about enabling people and there is a certain amount of coaching involved.

Senior Manager

Carlisle College introduced ATPs in 2010, however, in 2015 the role changed slightly. Prior to 2015, ATPs worked with staff that were undergoing performance management processes. Now all members of staff are allocated an ATP to work with on a regular basis.



Everybody has someone they can have contact with at least once or twice in the year and they can use that contact much more regularly if they want to.

Senior Manager

The role has also helped to empower and motivate staff because if you are good in a specific area or task they ask you to share your skills. It's not about the subject, it's about how you deliver your subject and how you engage with students.

Tutor

Operating in the ATP role is considered to be career progression. To apply, practitioners need to be able to evidence that they are an outstanding teacher. Although ATPs were originally appointed on a permanent basis, the role is now run as a one-year fixed-term contract. This change was introduced to motivate and keep opportunities available for staff hoping to progress. ATPs receive an average timetable remittance of five hours a week and they receive a salary uplift.



It is a way to keep opportunities open for staff. In a small college progression opportunities are quite limited and the ATP role gives them an opportunity.

Senior Manager

When you are a teacher the natural progression is to become a manager and a lot of teachers don't want to because it is a completely different role. This gives them an alternative, you can be a teacher and still progress.

Senior Manager

Carlisle College has five ATPs and each ATP has 23-24 members of staff that they are responsible for. Three ATPs have a permanent contract (two work part-time and one works full-time), in line with the previous contractual arrangement, and two ATPs have a fixed-term contract in line with the current arrangement (both work full-time). Advanced Teacher Practitioners remain within their departments when they teach, but work cross-college when they undertake their ATP role. Currently, two of the five ATPs work in the beauty department, two work in the English and maths department, and one works in the sports department. As a result, there are departments within the college that do not have an ATP based in their staff room.



You can't predict who is going to apply and you can't control the area they come from.

Advanced Teacher Practitioner

The only areas where we do have a little bit of tension are the departments where they do not have an ATP as they do not have the support based in their staffrooms.

Senior Manager

However, ATPs have their own staff room when undertaking the ATP role and a timetable of availability. Staff are encouraged to meet with their allocated ATP informally to discuss any issues or new pedagogical techniques they wish to develop their use of. Additionally, if practitioners are struggling to meet the standard expected by the college, ATPs become part of a formal arrangement which is put in place to support staff to improve and meet their goals. In this instance, ATPs will work with teachers on a one-to-one basis.

Activities

ATPs deliver a range of different activities, these include:

- planning and facilitating Continuing Professional Development sessions (CPD)
- facilitating peer observations
- one-to-one advice, guidance and support
- supporting staff who are undergoing performance management.

ATPs identify the needs of staff and plan and deliver CPD sessions accordingly. Depending on the typology of the session, they also invite and support other teaching staff to deliver sessions, for example, on questioning techniques or flipped learning activities. They have also supported other staff and co-ordinated the delivery of 'look after yourself' sessions which involve activities such as yoga and healthy eating. Another critical role of ATPs is to facilitate teaching squares and peer

observations. Every square member visits the other members' classes at least once and participates in a non-evaluative process of reciprocal classroom observation. The aim is to observe and discuss different strategies and teaching techniques. The ATP facilitates this process and the resulting discussion.



It was not a judgemental observation, we have got Ofsted and inspections but this is something different. You get back enthusiasm. It helps because you can see things from a different angle.

Tutor

Capability

The first cohort of ATPs were supported to undertake a coaching qualification. Currently, ATPs proactively seek out their own development opportunities. ATPs have a formal weekly meeting where they share best practice, learn from each other's experiences, and organise and plan delivery. Every year ATPs attend a conference which is thought to be extremely useful to keep ATPs motivated and up-to-date with recent developments and best practice

Outcomes

In the past five years the quality of teaching across the college has increased. For example, this year only five per cent of observations raised a cause for concern regarding teaching practice. This is the lowest percentage the college has ever had. Whilst there is a general perception that having ATPs has improved teaching and learning practice, staff recognise that it is difficult to attribute this improvement directly to the introduction of the ATP roles.

Prior to 2015, the college quantified the outcomes and impact of the ATP role by measuring how many teachers had one-to-one meetings, and whether their observation profiles improved following ATP support. However, the present model does not allow for measurement of impact, as it is extremely difficult to quantify and establish direct impacts when ATPs are working with every member of staff across the college.

The college believe that the introduction of the ATP role has helped to change the attitudes of staff. They are confident to ask questions, to challenge themselves, and to try out different activities.



We are not frightened to try different activities or different methods. You have the confidence to explore. This is the biggest change.

Tutor

Shared learning



Top tips for other providers

- Don't reduce the advanced practitioner role to an intervention model.



The ATP role should be about excellence in teaching and learning and inspiring everybody in the institution to become as good as they can. Not about moving poorly performing teachers to become ok teachers.

Senior Manager



- Create a specific area/room where teachers can meet informally with those in advanced practitioner roles.
- Ensure that training and development is bespoke and tailored to effectively support the needs of individual teachers and different departments.
- Promote non-evaluative observations amongst teachers of different departments.