

# CASE STUDY: EVALUATING THE ADVANCED PRACTITIONER ROLE - USING APS INCLUSIVELY TO DEVELOP TEAMS AND INDIVIDUALS

BOURNEMOUTH AND POOLE COLLEGE WORKING IN  
PARTNERSHIP WITH KINGSTON MAURWARD COLLEGE

**“THE PROJECT HAS HIGHLIGHTED TO OUR SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM THE REAL POTENTIAL OF THE AP ROLE TO DRIVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT ACROSS THE ORGANISATION.”**

April 2019



Graphic facilitation by [www.penmendonca.com](http://www.penmendonca.com) @MendoncaPen at Advanced Practitioner's National Conference - March 2019

**OTLA 4 OUTSTANDING TEACHING LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT,  
SUPPORTED AND DELIVERED BY  
touchconsulting AND CETTAcademy**

## INTRODUCTION

This case study is from one of 15 collaborative projects, across a range of cross-sector partnerships, that were commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation to support Phase 4 of the Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) programme.

This phase was delivered by touchconsulting and CETTAcademy to evaluate the role of Advanced Practitioners (APs), as defined by [Tyler et al \(2017\)](#)<sup>1</sup>. The projects were intended to explore the [functions](#) and [values](#) of the AP role within the partnership's quality improvement priorities.

## WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT?

The partners, Bournemouth and Poole College working with Kingston Maurward College, wanted to raise the profile and accessibility of their APs to staff as a means of driving quality improvements in teaching, learning and assessment across their organisations. They aimed to champion a new, more 'inclusive' AP role focused on developing all staff, not just those identified via the learning observation process as requiring improvement.

In particular the partnership wanted to:

- alleviate any historical stigma associated by staff accessing AP support
- develop a strong coaching ethos that would support APs and tutors to work collaboratively together, forming positive working relationships based on mutual trust and respect
- showcase what good and outstanding practice looks like.

In addition, Kingston Maurward College sought to explore how they could facilitate staff to engage in peer to peer observations as a means of exchanging and disseminating effective practice across teams and departments.

## WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

The partners worked together to raise the visibility of their APs by co-designing a 'Meet your APs' page which they each uploaded to their virtual learning environments (VLEs). The page contained pictures of each of the APs, their particular areas of expertise as well as something more unique and humorous about each of them that was aimed at engaging staff and breaking down barriers.

APs from both colleges, plus their quality managers, also came together to complete a Level 3 ILM Coaching qualification. This process not only enhanced the coaching skills of those concerned but facilitated a rich exchange of ideas about how the AP role could be further developed. One outcome was the creation of positive, celebratory postcards given to staff by APs when they conducted Learning Walks. The cards focussed on two aspects, 'great examples of...' and 'the students benefited from...' and have

*'Our challenge was that staff perceived Advanced Practitioners as someone you were 'sent to' if you had issues with your teaching. They were therefore largely avoided, if at all possible!'*

Project Lead,  
Bournemouth and Poole  
College



Positive, celebratory cards used to give feedback from Learning Walks at Bournemouth and Poole College.

<sup>1</sup> Tyler, E., Marvell, R., Green, M., Martin, A., Williams, J. and Huxley, C. (2017) Institute for Employment Studies (2017). Understanding the role of Advanced Practitioners, (Education and Training Foundation)

transformed the way that staff now perceive and value the Learning Walk process.

In addition, the project delivery team at Bournemouth and Poole College:

- redesigned their 'Teacher Preparation Programme' for all new staff and ensured that it was delivered by the APs to reinforce the vision that APs provide holistic support for all
- experimented with an AP coaching the Public Services team who wanted to improve the number of students achieving merit and distinction across their level 2 and level 3 unit grades
- used their APs to develop and seed an online teaching and learning zone for staff to access and contribute to. The resources covered topics such as maths, English, starter activities and energisers, stretch and challenge and managing behaviour.

At Kingston Maurward College the APs experimented with designing and delivering an Open Door week. The team of five APs, plus some additional volunteer tutors, agreed to showcase a series of sessions across the week that focused on priority areas for development as outlined in the college's self-assessment report (SAR). This included topics such as differentiation, stretch and challenge, progression and embedding maths and English.

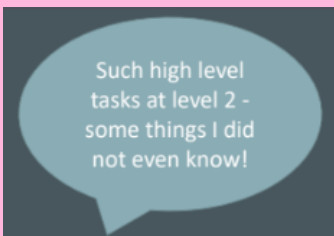
Sessions were broken down into 20 minute slots and staff were expected to sign up for a minimum of three sessions. Guidance was produced that outlined what staff were to focus on and do during each session, which included engaging with learners. Resources used in the sessions were posted up to the VLE for staff to refer to and contextualise to their own practice.

At the end of each slot staff gave written feedback on a postcard to the AP/tutor delivering the session. This included comments on what they had found particularly useful, together with a strategy they were going to 'steal' to use in their teaching. Implementation of these strategies was then reviewed post Open Door Week by APs who conducted a series of Learning Walks and 1:1 interviews with a selection of the staff involved.

### WHAT HELPED THE PROJECT SUCCEED?

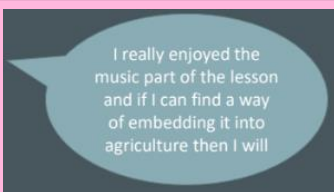
The project was supported by the Senior Leadership Team in each organisation which helped to drive momentum and raise the visibility of the AP role. APs were also given remitted time to undertake their work and were given the freedom to drop into lessons/conduct Learning Walks as part of the new developmental lesson observation process that both organisations were developing.

Designated project leads coordinated key activities, ensured that milestones were met and acted as a vital conduit between senior leaders, APs and tutors. They were proactive in broadcasting nuggets of success at the point they emerged.



Such high level tasks at level 2 - some things I did not even know!

Peer feedback from one tutor to another during the Open Door week at Kingstone Maurward College.



I really enjoyed the music part of the lesson and if I can find a way of embedding it into agriculture then I will

Good practice shared between tutors during the Open Door week at Kingston Maurward College.

Although the Open Door week was supported by senior leaders, it was led by teachers for teachers which secured buy-in of staff. APs, not curriculum managers, delivered an all staff CPD session that took place prior to the launch of the week. They outlined the rationale for the Open Door process, the research based evidence underpinning the impact of peer to peer observation and linked this to their new developmental role supporting all staff to enhance their practice.

### WHAT CHALLENGES DID THE PROJECT FACE?

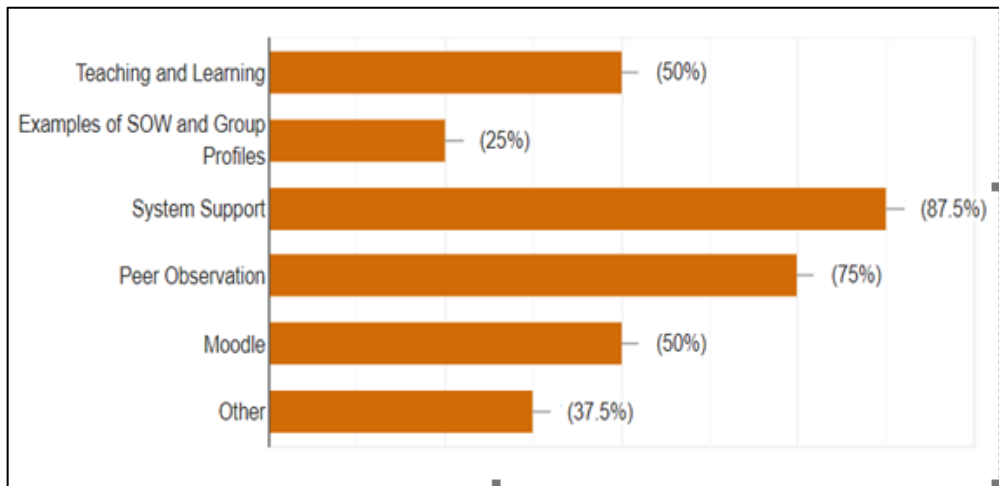
The logistics behind planning the drop-in sessions for the Open Door week at times when staff were available to observe were far more challenging and time-consuming to co-ordinate than had been originally foreseen. The APs are going to use the expertise of the college's timetabler to assist with the scheduling of the next Open Door week. In addition, some staff chose sessions based on who they wanted to observe rather than the strategy that was being modelled and others turned up to observe unannounced which meant that in some sessions rooms became overcrowded.

Initially the partnership was strong between the two colleges. They worked collaboratively to create a joint vision for the project that was underpinned by a detailed joint delivery plan. However, changes of key personnel in the last quarter of the project impacted on the frequency of communication between the partners which caused the collaborative element to lose momentum. This did not affect what was achieved by each individual organisation but meant that some planned evaluative activities, such as reciprocal Learning Walks between the two teams of APs, did not take place.

### WHAT DIFFERENCE DID THE PROJECT MAKE?

Both partners have noted a cultural shift in the way that APs are now perceived in their organisations. APs are welcome to walk into classrooms to see teaching in action.

At Bournemouth and Poole College 21 staff self-referred to receive AP support. Whereas in the previous year none had done so. 90% of the staff who received such support found it beneficial. AP support was broadly provided as outlined below:



*'Managers wanted to get involved because they saw how the project would help them to affect a cultural change around the lesson observation process. They also valued the opportunity to develop their own coaching skills for supporting staff.'*

Project Lead,  
Bournemouth and Poole College

*'We found that we needed to overcome challenges regarding timetabling, so next time we plan to draw on the expertise of our college timetabler to help us to plan the Open Door week more effectively.'*

Advanced Practitioner,  
Kinston Maurward College

The stretch and challenge strategies used by the AP to support the Public Services team have contributed to a 21% increase in students achieving merit and distinction in their Level 2 unit grades when compared to a similar cohort of students last year. This upward trend has also continued with Level 3 students with a 12% increase of Year 1 students on a Level 3 Ext Dip, achieving merit and distinction unit grades, when compared to a similar cohort last year. Other factors, such as more stable staffing, have undoubtedly served to support this upward trend, however, it is clear that the interventions the team have been experimenting with, supported by their AP, have made a positive impact on high grade achievement.

At Kingston Maurward College the Open Door week served to support staff to self-reflect about their practice and their training needs in an informed way. For example, in a survey prior to the launch of the week 90% felt able to include differentiation effectively into their lessons; this was subsequently reduced to 43% after staff had seen various differentiation strategies in action. The same impact was felt in other areas, such as progression, and served to enthuse staff to seek AP support and to value peer to peer observations as part of their CPD. 100% of staff asked for the Open Door week to be repeated, 55% agreed it was highly beneficial, 78% greatly appreciated observing a peer in action and 78% stated they were likely to use one or more of the teaching strategies they had observed.

### **WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?**

For further information please visit the Advanced Practitioner OTLA Projects

Padlet page here: <https://en-gb.padlet.com/joss1/collabprojects>

Or contact:

Alice Copp, Bournemouth and Poole College: [coppa2@bpc.ac.uk](mailto:coppa2@bpc.ac.uk)

Simon Burnham-Slipper, Kingston Maurward College:

[Simon.BurnhamSlipper@kmc.ac.uk](mailto:Simon.BurnhamSlipper@kmc.ac.uk)

*'It's good to know that I now have an encouraging and supportive colleague that I can turn to.'*

*'I have so enjoyed discussing ideas and sharing tips in such a collaborative way – what a resource APs are!'*

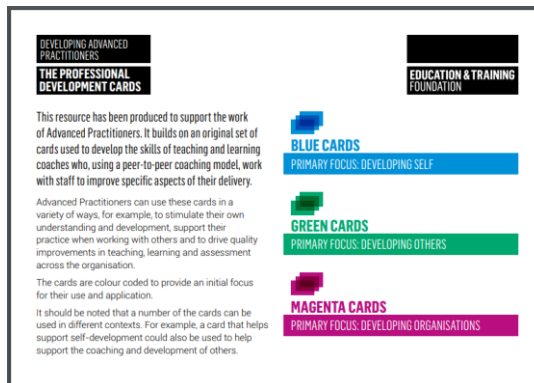
Tutors, Bournemouth and Poole College

*'The process has encouraged staff to think more proactively about what constitutes an 'outstanding' lesson and to seek support from APs to achieve this.'*

Advanced Practitioner,  
Kingston Maurward  
College

**RESOURCES SUPPORTING THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS (OTLA 4) – 2018/2019** [CLICK ON THE IMAGE TO ACCESS THE RESOURCE](#)

- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Professional Development Cards



- Advanced Practitioner Toolkit – Practical AP Guides



- Advanced Practitioner Monthly Communications



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