



An Excellence Gateway case study

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Redbridge Institute of Adult Education: Reaching Adults in Crisis

Outline the aim

In this project we aimed to address the inequalities around access to education and training for this group of adults providing information and advice on learning and employment opportunities which will help break the cycle of poverty. We used a group of learning ambassadors who have improved their own life circumstances through education and training to record their journey and to build the confidence of these adults in crisis. We also aimed to research the needs of a hard to reach adult client group supported by the third sector and train the growing staff and volunteers that work with them. Due to challenges we changed our link to adults in crisis and worked with the Welcome Centre, which specialises in working with the local homeless community and offers training and other social support to help them secure their own accommodation and employment.

The project has achieved the following:

- Learning ambassadors drawn from each curriculum department who will promote their own experience of the benefits of learning and inspire others
- Multi-media learning resource featuring the learning journey and advice from five learning ambassadors
- Redbridge Institute is facilitating access to information and advice for clients of the Welcome Centre by offering classes and information and advice to the staff and users of the service.
- Increase the numbers of adults in crisis accessing information and advice and progressing to training programmes

The challenge

To inspire adults in difficult situations to see learning as a way to begin a journey out of crisis, and to use adult education and information and advice as a mechanism to self improvement.

Partnership organisations

- Redbridge Institute – project management, identification of learning ambassadors, identifying 3rd sector partner (Welcome Centre)
- Inthepicture.com – a multimedia company who conducted the filming and post-production to produce DVDs and an on-line film
- The Welcome Centre – to supply a filmed case study of how learning and support can move adults from a crisis situation to engage in learning, successfully accessing a place to live, improve their health, and obtain employment and independent living.

The outputs

- One complete multimedia resource, a short film of approximately 13-15 minutes.
- Using an Adult Learners Week launch event to disseminate the DVD and place on our website
- To deliver advice and guidance on local learning opportunities to adults in crisis situations
- To support the take up of adult education access by adults in crisis situations

The impacts and outcomes

- To raise the profile of adult education in the local community, particularly in centres that offer advice for local users. For example, local Citizen's Advice, voluntary sector organisations, adult community learning providers and local council offices. We will also have the film linked to key websites.
- We plan to use the experience to develop further short films as a process for highlighting the service that adult community learning providers offer, such as: the nature of our courses; what provision can be offered by providers in the local community and what other services are available at Redbridge Institute. This could support development of teaching and learning, marketing and Information and Advice as well as testimonials from partners and learners about the impact that community learning makes on people's lives.
- For 30 adults to progress into learning directly from seeing our new film – it is too early to see if this has an impact

The film is near completion, with the first cut submitted late March, and a second cut due Wednesday 3rd April. It is expected that the film will be complete by the 14th April, and we will screen at the local Adult Learners Week awards event on 11th May as its premiere. We will hope to distribute the first tranche of DVDs at this event, and will post it on the web shortly afterwards

Direct impact was on the following individuals:-

- 7 learning ambassadors who participated in the project, both helping film the project and agreeing to be interviewed and telling their story
- 1 voluntary sector partner, for whom two staff were interviewed to explain the impact their service offers local individuals in crisis situations, and from whom they will receive information and Advice from Redbridge Institute about different programmes that they can offer their service users in the local community.
- 2 users of the Welcome centre who agreed to be interviewed on camera about the support the Welcome Centre offers them

Working relationship with LSIS

LSIS did contact us to help monitor the project offer support

Good value for money

I believe that the project offered excellent value for money as we have been able to create a short film for a modest expense that will have an effective shelf life, and that will help motivate adult learners in difficult personal circumstances to consider using learning as a way to move out of a crisis situation. It also helped us further develop links with a local 3rd sector provider for whom we are running a course.

Senior managers involvement

The project was managed by a member of the Institute's Senior Team, supported by another Senior Team Member when the project lead was absent as was summoned to jury service. A feedback process kept the senior team up to date with the project's progress, as well as keeping the Governing Body informed through a project update

Stakeholder involvement

We had an outreach manager and an assistant curriculum manager support the project team with helping collate the applications for the learning ambassadors. They collected short biographical summaries, working with the learners, to help answer specific questions to help inform the interviewers of the direction of their questions when filming. We also used these meetings to confirm student availability so as to agree dates they all could attend.

The Welcome Centre also asked to participate in the film and their centre manager and training manager participated in this project.

Learner involvement

The 7 learning ambassadors were part of the project in the following ways:

- They assisted in the completion of personal biographies to help inform the filmmakers of the appropriate questions to ask at interview
- They helped us inform the days of filming to allow us to maximise the number of individuals who could attend
- They participated in the filming of additional footage to be intercut into their interviews
- They gave us feedback on the completed film

Raising awareness

We will be disseminating the findings initially through our Adult Learners Week celebration on 11th May 2012, and will then be distributing the completed film through local partnership groups. As a result of feedback from the film production company, we are looking to have a proportion of the DVDs subtitled to widen access to the film, and will meet this cost by reducing the spend on the projector. We plan to contact LSIS with the appropriate vimeo hyperlink when ready

Continuity of project, after LSIS funding

After discussions with colleagues, we will be using the experience gained on this project to develop similar films about particular aspects of community learning. We will consider whether it is appropriate to re-align more traditional resourcing of student information, e.g. booklets and whether information can be made more accessible through more audio-visual approaches.

Did you experience any difficulties in implementing the project and how did you overcome these?

- The main difficulty was additional time was required as there was an initial reluctance of learners to come forward. However this did then happen but had an impact on the filming dates. The change of 3rd sector partner also led to some delay, and this was compounded with the project manager being summoned on jury service for two weeks in February. Currently the film is scheduled to be finished for the 14th April.
- It was also decided that there were some difficulties in getting key stakeholders to celebrate the project so it was now decided to tie this film to our adult learners' week celebration event on the 11th May, where the film will be premiered and dignitaries invited. We are currently planning a feedback mechanism from the project participants over this period, which can be shared on the June 19th event.

The lessons learned

Our timeline was very ambitious, and with hindsight we would need to build in more time for learners to become aware and come forward, and choosing a voluntary sector organisation that was comfortable with being filmed. However, with one film now made, we can use this as a marketing tool, and when awareness did filter out, interest from learners was significant. We should have also built in more time for the unexpected, such as jury service summons and an OFSTED visit into the schedule.

Sustainability – lasting legacy

The multimedia aspect of the production means that we can consider different 'cuts' of the film, as to create a 15 minute film over 7 hours of footage was shot. We will consider reviewing the unused footage to produce other films from this resource, as well as reviewing our marketing resources to see if expenditure should be moved more towards audio visual resources as the technology to make films becomes, over the long term, more affordable.

Demonstrating impact – evidence of short and long term impact

It is too early to ascertain the long term impact on the project, though we will be looking to add extra information to our enrolment form to see if anyone enrolls on courses due to the film

Short term is still being collated in terms of formal feedback. Informal feedback has shown that all participants were very positive about the experience and that they felt pleased that their experience could be used to help inform other adults of the benefits of further education.

Additional comments

Project planning spreadsheet included.

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