

# Teaching, Learning and Assessment- Measuring performance

Laurie Brown and City of Bath College



## Summary

This is a progress review of City of Bath College's ambitions to dynamically measure performance within the key aspect judgement of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

The approach uses a balanced scorecard method to create a monitoring and reporting dashboard tool run by Heads of Department and accessed by Senior Managers that accurately grades this key aspect and also ensures highly accurate 2-day readiness for inspection.

## Key lessons learned

- Dynamic evaluation of the quality of teaching learning and assessment
- 2-day ready preparedness for inspection
- Enhanced confidence by governors and SMT
- Holistic, all year round tool used by Heads of Department to drive change
- Symbiotic link to Self Assessment Report

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### Provider name

City of Bath College  
LSIS Improvement Development Service

### Sector coverage

This case study is relevant to all providers in the Post 16 sector that use the Common Inspection Framework to evaluate quality of provision including GFE, ACL, WBL, prisons and the Third sector.

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## About City of Bath College

City of Bath College is a medium-sized general further education college.

Located in the heart of the City centre, it also serves the surrounding rural area of Bath and North East Somerset. Although Bath generally is an area of relative affluence, there are also significant pockets of deprivation. The local unemployment rate is low. Around 80% of local jobs are in the service sector. The proportion of school students achieving five plus GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and Mathematics is well above the national average. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds, at 13%, is much higher than in the local population of 3%.

City of Bath College offers courses in all 15 subject areas with Arts, Media and Publishing having the largest numbers. Courses range from pre-entry to degree level with most learners studying at an advanced level.

## What we wanted to achieve

Like many providers, City of Bath College has experienced significant change in recent years. The College is led by a dynamic Principal and supported by a determined Senior Management Team. Together, they lead committed teaching staff, that are determined to raise the quality of the learning experienced by all students. The Principal's ambition is well documented in the strategic plan appropriately titled "*Entitled to excellence*" which frames the mission to climb towards outstanding provision.

Over the past 2 years, working with the LSIS Improvement Development Service, the College has redesigned and upgraded its entire quality framework. The initial stages revisited the quality strategy, quality cycle, assessment policy, behavioural management strategies and an innovative risk-based approach to the Observation of Teaching and Learning which itself became the focus of an LSIS sharing best practice event.

Teaching teams have welcomed their development strand titled “*The City of Bath College Way*” which road maps a teachers journey to outstanding. Teams have developed a helpful exemplar of lesson plans and other relevant planning documentation. Active learning is an expected feature of lessons and show-case events are well used to celebrate and promote excellence in learning.

This current phase progresses further to transform a static self-assessment annual snap-shot, into a dynamic, 2-day inspection ready tool used by managers daily to drive performance. The challenge was to develop an interactive tool, covering teaching, learning and assessment, which accurately blends both qualitative and quantitative indicators, into an intuitive balanced score card. The LSIS Consultant worked with the Director of Performance and Standards, the Curriculum Quality Assurance Officer and Heads of Department to convert the evaluative qualitative and quantitative information into meaningful succinct data that shows distance travelled over time.

## Implementation

### Planning our approach

The importance of ensuring a whole organisation approach (WOA) was built in from the foundation of the vision. Key stakeholders engaged include:

- Governors
- Principal and SMT members
- Director of Performance and Standards
- Curriculum Quality Assurance Officer
- Heads of Departments
- LSIS Improvement Development Service consultant

Constructing the balanced score card would involve short term and longer term planning. In the short term the key ingredients could be quickly assembled and a pilot phase commenced in 2013. In the longer term messages from the pilot will be integrated into a trial phase in 2013/14 and fine-tuned as a finished tool for 2014/15 in parallel with internal targets within the Quality Strategy to achieve outstanding status.

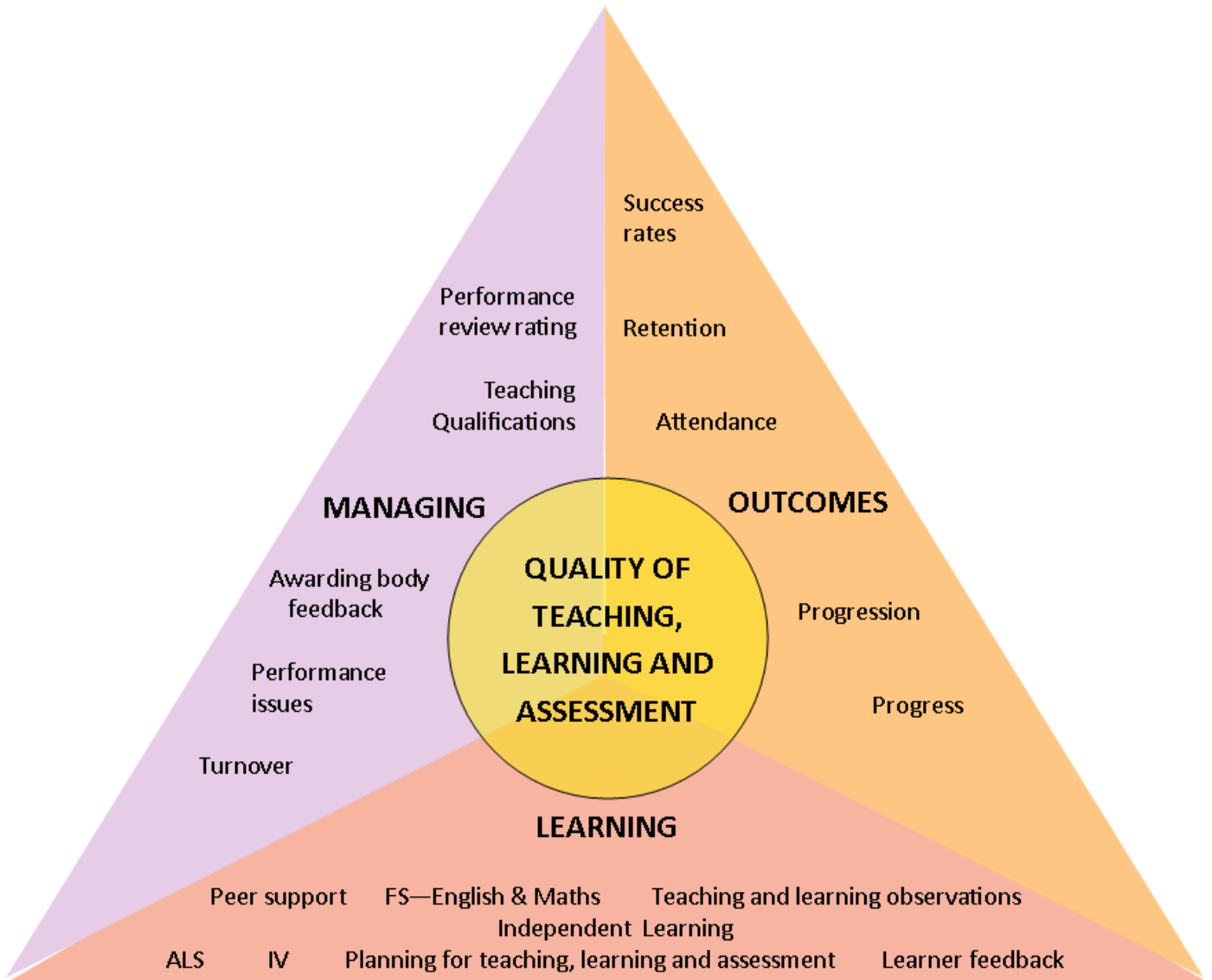
### What we did

#### Stage 1

The Director of Performance and Standards met with the LSIS consultant on an initial exploratory stage to share emerging thoughts on measuring performance of teaching, learning and assessment. From the outset an understanding of the need to go beyond the mere 7 criterion found within the Common Inspection Framework was recognised, if the tool was to become a daily working document used by Heads of Department to drive performance.

Three segment aspects were identified as contributing to Teaching, Learning and Assessment. These are: Managing, Outcomes and Learning. Within each segment a full suite of criterion contribute to the score card.

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**Stage two**

An operational framework was developed working with the Curriculum Quality Assurance Officer, to extend the segment aspects to ensure a full and sufficient suite of performance indicators were included. These were then mapped to the Common Inspection Framework.

For example, the Learning segment includes performance indicators including: peer support, English, Maths and Functional Skills, lesson observations, planning, schemes of work, internal verification/internal quality assurance, additional learning support, learner voice feedback.

On each of the indicators used to measure performance grade criteria were agreed building upon the Common Inspection Framework example grade characteristics. Additionally a red amber or green (RAG) rating were allocated to every indicator as follows:

Grade	RAG rating
1 & 2	

3	
4	

The visual link between the grade and the RAG rating provides for rapid assimilation of key messages. The score-card is built on a spreadsheet rather than a database. Conditional formatting of cells is used to automatically generate grades and RAG ratings.

For example for *English, Maths and Functional Skills* indicators, the following evaluations apply to the percentage of embedding explicitly recorded within class Schemes of Work:

1	2	3	4
100%	90%	70%	57%

Similarly to focus improvement within learning, one performance indicator is based around the percentage of *improved observation grades* as follows:

1	2	3	4
80%	60%	50%	<50%

Each of the 23 performance indicators was given a weighting relative to the importance attached to it. For example, within the Learning segment aspect, the highest rating is given to observation grades. Other high weightings include planning, internal verification, acquisition of teaching qualifications and learner in-year progress.

Examples of lower weightings include exit surveys, schemes of work, employer views and in house CPD. Of course it is not that these areas are not important, they are. However one must pragmatically come to a judgement on how to balance the relative importance of the 24 performance indicators in arriving at one overall judgement for the area within the score card.

Additionally, the current approach reflects the strategic priorities and the college's ambitions such as the need to improve internal verification /quality assurance and to help focus curriculum leadership time into these areas appropriately. As priorities change in the ever moving landscape of FE then the relative weightings will change to reflect this.

Two example indicators are below:

Department	Planning for teaching learning and assessment
DAAD	
DATL	
DECC	
DHBF	
DSBH	
DSTB	
DTMP	
ACL	
Overall	

Department	Awarding body feedback
DAAD	

DATL	Orange
DECC	Red
DHBF	Green
DSBH	Red
DSTB	Orange
DTMP	Orange
ACL	Red
Overall	Orange

Ultimately, higher tiers of analysis distil down into a single table reporting the departments name and corresponding RAG rating performance.

Department	Overall
DAAD	4.795
DATL	4.855
DECC	5.66
DHBF	5.1
DSBH	4.825
DSTB	5.25
DTMP	2.795
ACL	1.59

*(Please note that the above RAGs against departments are for the purposes of demonstration only and do not reflect live data provided by the supplier. The overall judgements show indicators in a test environment.)*

Governors applauded the model as an extremely useful method to enable them to provide sufficient support and challenge to senior post holders.

### Stage Three

The management group of Heads of Department fully embraced the proposed model. This was followed by one to one meetings with the LSIS consultant to review the use of these quality indicators and additional reports. These are linked with key deadlines on the Quality Calendar. Useful feedback led to some changes in the suite of apprenticeship indicators.

## Outcomes and impacts

### What we achieved

The Balanced score card approach is very helpful in its focus on college priorities. Governors like the simplified presentational approach which communicates messages at a glance, without having to wade through acres of paperwork. This frees them and the SMT to focus on governance and strategic management. Curriculum leaders have developed a clear understanding and prioritisation of how to implement changes to drive improvements. Curriculum leaders have a useful vehicle to drive their workloads for which they are increasingly held accountable. The college is 2-day ready for inspection and on the successful gradual implementation of the tool the department self-assessment reports will be effectively dynamically current.

## What we are taking forward

Development of the balanced score card approach to measuring performance of teaching, learning and assessment is ongoing. The Curriculum Quality Assurance Officer continues to refine the spreadsheet conditional formatting to create seamless integration. Steps to overcome the burden of populating the spreadsheet are in-hand and shared between Heads of Department, the Curriculum Quality Assurance Officer and other relevant departments. Links between existing information are being consolidated to ensure it feeds into the spreadsheet to ensure the college works smarter, not harder. The pilot phase will be completed by Heads of Department in the Summer term, with amendments then implemented for the trial phase starting in the autumn of 2013.

The College had a positive inspection experience in February 2013. And although we cannot share the grading until the report is published, it is clear that the tool will continue to enable the College to chart progress towards outstanding practice.

The initial thoughts to confine the tool to operate in Excel were quickly overtaken by exploiting opportunities to build Access based queries and reports. This enables us to use data already held by the College in an intelligent way to work smarter, not harder and potentially develop to more advanced systems in the future (such as via SQL server, using data cubes introducing the time dimension).

## Further reading

*City of Bath College lesson Pathway* City of Bath College  
*Entitled to Excellence- strategic intensions 2011-2014* City of Bath College  
*Teaching and Learning Development Strands* City of Bath College  
*Celebrating and Promoting Excellence in Learning* City of Bath College  
*Handbook for the inspection of further education and Skills 2012* Ofsted