Enhancement of Learning Support

Involving learners in shaping their own support
South West Regional Report

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Contents

An overview of the Enhancement of Learning Support (ELS) Programme

In January 2010 LSIS commissioned Natspec (the Association of Specialist Colleges) to explore the training and development needs of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and those who manage them across the lifelong learning sector. The first phase of the project, the Enhancement of Learning Support, involved talking to practitioners and learners and scoping existing work and expertise in order to make recommendations for future training and development activities. Drawing on all the initial research findings, the final report identified a series of recommendations, which were accepted by LSIS and used to form the basis of a national development programme.

The 2nd phase of the project has been jointly undertaken by Natspec and the Association of Colleges (AOC), between September 2010 and March 2011. 20 lead colleges, both General Further Education Colleges and Independent Specialist Colleges, were supported by nine specialist advisers. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learning support staff have continued to be heavily involved in the latest project. It aims to improve the quality of learning support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities across the learning and skills sector and to promote and enhance the important work of learning support staff.

The development programme, which finished in April 2011, has produced a series of reports and resources. This report is one of those. The remaining materials can be accessed via the ELS Section of the Excellence Gateway.

Introduction and background

Learners know their own support needs better than anyone, even though they may find it difficult to describe or articulate them. During an initial Enhancement of Learning Support project, National Star College undertook some innovative work to enable learners to inform the findings and describe their own experiences of learning support. The results indicated that learners have clear and strong views which should be taken into account in the planning and delivery of support.

Learners said that[1] support works best when support staff:

- help us to work by ourselves;

- know when to help and when to stand back;

- communicate in a way that I can understand;

- give us space to learn independence; explain the task and stand back; and

- treat me as an individual!

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[1] Extracted comments from learner responses from 2010 Enhancement of Learner Support report

Learners reported that support staff should learn:

- the impact on learning of different disabilities but remember that 'Everyone is an individual even if they do have the same disability';

- the importance of knowing about the support history of the learners they are supporting;

- how to involve learners in their assessment - to agree the type and level of support they need;

- how to ask learners their views and act on them; and

- how to change support according to the teacher's style – particularly when working with deaf learners.

'*My ideal support worker exercise*' - Learners from Exeter Deaf Academy give their views 2010

This project developed a number of approaches to engage learners in identifying, planning and managing, where appropriate, their own support. From these approaches a number of resources were developed and trialled in order to support learners and organisations in the enhancement of learner support.

Approach/Methodology

For the pilot project in 2010, fifty-four learners aged from 16-50+ with learning difficulties, physical disabilities, hearing and visual impairment from a range of learning contexts, Specialist FE, General FE, adult learning and work based learning were interviewed and asked about their perceptions of learning support and how it could be improved. Video diaries of learners were captured and learners' views were used to drive the current project. This was achieved by undertaking a number of activity based feedback exercises (see annex 1), creating a video diary room and learners filming each other's responses to set questions using flip video cameras. Learners from the following organisations contributed to this pilot study.

- Artshape, Gloucester.

- Exeter Deaf Academy, Exeter.

- Gloucestershire College, Gloucester.

- Gloucestershire County Council (Supernova adult learning class), Gloucester.

- National Star College, Cheltenham.

- New College, Worcester.

- Royal National College for the Blind, Hereford.

Following the pilot study National Star College and Weston College established a steering committee with senior staff from each college and a specialist advisor to set out the remit of the study. A learner reference group was recruited in order to drive the methodology and ensure it was fit for purpose.

Learner Reference Group	
Course	**Disability**
Level 1 Hospitality	ASC
Level 2 Computing	ASC
Fsc Computing	ASC
BTEC National Music Technology	ASC
Level 2 Sport	ADHD
Prep for Work and Life	MLD/MH
Prep for Work and Life	ASC
Prep for Work and Life	MLD
Level 1 ICT	VI

ASC- Autistic spectrum condition   MLD- Moderate Learning difficulties

VI- Visual impairment   MH- Mental health

ADHD- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

The learner reference group met on in early November 2010 and discussed the outline of the project and what approaches they would like the project to focus on. They asked a series of questions about how they were involved in making decisions about their own support. Five key questions were established and became the basis for the approaches used.

Two regional network meetings were planned, the first at National Star College on 15 November 2010. The network meeting invited learning support managers and assistants from the SW region to bring resources already being used in their organisation to engage learners in enhancing their own support and share these with colleagues (see annex 2). The meeting also used five approaches developed

through the learner reference group in which organisations were invited to trial and subsequently develop resources as outcomes (see annex 3).

52 delegates signed up to attend the network meeting with 42 attending on the day. Of these, 22 were managers, 14 were learning support assistants, two tutors and four learners. The agenda for the day can be found at annex 4 and feedback from the event was good (see annex 5).

Delegates were asked to select an approach to trial (annex 6), and following the network meeting, the colleges below agreed to trial an approach with learners and report back findings and resources at a follow up network meeting held at Weston College on 17 February 2011. Colleges were asked to capture learner data and summarise their findings (see annex 7).

How can I comment on the support I receive?	Weston College
How can I review my Support?	National Star College William Morris House
How can I tell my support worker what's working and what isn't?	Hartpury College
How do I access and contribute to the information on MIS?	Truro College Plymouth College of Art City of Bristol College
How do I ensure my support arrangements meet my future needs?	Gloucestershire College Foxes Academy

A second regional network event was held at Weston College on 17 February 2011 in order to showcase findings from the approach trials and illustrate the resources that had been developed by using these approaches. The agenda for the day can be found at annex 8. 49 learners took part in the trials.

Enhancement of Learner Support – Approaches trial data							
No.of Learners	49	16-18	22	19+		Disability	Mixed Group – 4 Physical Dis – 1 Visual Imp -1

Male	32	Female	17	Full time	48	Part time	1

Ethnicity									
White	47	Mixed	1	Asian, British Asian	1	Black, Black British		Chinese, Other ethnicity	

Disability									
Physical	13	Learning	29	Hearing Impaired	1	Visual Impaired	6	ASD Aspergers	
Other				Please state	Downs Syndrome – 2 Ulcerative Colitis – 1 Autism – 1				

40 delegates attended the event of which12 were managers, 15 were learning support assistants, five were learners and eight were others. Feedback from the event was very good, 35 returns all indicating satisfied or above (see annex 9).

Findings and Outputs

Approach 1 - How can I comment on the support I receive?

The brief for this approach was to develop and trial a resource that enables learners to comment on the support they are receiving (session by session or week by week) in order to enable the future planning and delivery of that support. This may be setting up an online blog for students to comment or creating a suggestion feedback scheme.

This resource approach was trialled by the learner reference group at Weston College. The group wanted to trial an on-line forum as an on-going method of commenting on the support they receive. The group were particularly keen to trial a resource that they could use to record comments at times that suited them. Staff would also have access to the forum to monitor how comments were posted and to action and feedback on improved provision. An on-line forum was chosen as a medium to promote discussion, whereas blogs can be more individualistic as they are less interactive. The key difference is that a forum is an online discussion where all contributors are equal, usually posting comments about a set theme or topic. In this case, particular questions about learning support. A blog is usually controlled by one person (the blogger) and the contributors are asked to comment or question on the discussions that the blogger posts. This can be very controlling; hence the preferred option was a forum to ensure equity of opportunity for contributors.

Seven learners trialled the resource, three of whom were 16-18 yrs. Three have learning disability, three on the autistic spectrum and one with a visual impairment. All were white British.

- Learners were asked if they were happy to participate in the trial and were made aware of their rights to withdraw.

- Learners want to continue to meet and further develop the forum in order to improve and implement their ideas.

- They felt that people who do not use computers may struggle with this forum and alternatives need to be offered.

- Learners felt the forum could be used by staff to see if staff and learner experiences match; e.g., if one party enjoyed/struggled with a session activity, do the other parties' comments reflect this?

- Learners also discussed developing an easy access toolbar.

- Learners were clear they did not want other learners to abuse the use of the forum and suggested a monitoring system should be available.

- Learners thought that having access to the forum in class would enable them to add comments when they wanted to, which means that their ideas would not be forgotten.

- Learners would like to add a journal of events and links to the forum.

- Learners noted that access to a computer and internet may not be available at home so this needs to be met in college.

8

Feedback from the trial

Feedback included some learners not having time during lessons to access the forum. Also, learners found the forum harder to access initially and the reference group discussed providing online guidance to support access to the forum.

Learners suggested developing a template with questions or quick use sections. This would be easier to use than writing a paragraph, for example, on the subject of emotions and feelings. Learners suggested that the template should be designed in such a way to include those who wish to provide quick comment via a rating scale and also those who wish to have room to write their own comment.

Learners who accessed the forum independently spoke of enjoying writing things where and when they wanted; not necessarily in lesson time. Learners discussed the importance of this control and independence as to be able to influence the support they receive, e.g., how often they comment, how much or little they comment and when they comment.

Resource use and recommendations

- Learners are creating a template for the forum with set questions, more visual symbols and multiple choices.

- Provide online support through a pre-recorded video or audio file or step by step written guidance.

- Use student mentors to support others to use the forum.

- Provide paper based alternatives.

- Link the forum to initial assessment – enabling automatic access to the forum for learners receiving Additional Learning Support (ALS).

- The forum is held on the college virtual learning environment and it is easier to restrict access to the forum than it is to a blog. This was an important consideration in the pilot.

- A forum is easier to monitor for appropriate/inappropriate use than a blog. In the forum, respondents are commenting on a particular theme or question posted by the forum. Here, comments are about this theme, and not about comments made by the contributors. A blog is more difficult to manage as one person is setting and controlling the chain, with respondents posting replies to individual posts.

- Involve IT support team in setting this up.

Approach 2 - How can I review my support?

The brief for this approach was to develop and trial an on-going review process between tutor, support facilitator and learner.

This approach was trialled by two specialist colleges; National Star College and William Morris House. At National Star College five learners with physical disabilities, four of which are male, trialled the resource. Four are white British and one is of mixed race. At William Morris House, six learners with learning difficulties of which three were male trialled a similar resource. They were asked about ways in which they would like to review the support they received. Learners indicated that they wanted to comment on the support they received during each teaching session and have this fed into a review between the tutor, learner and the support staff, two reviews taking place each half term. This would enable learner feedback to be reviewed and make changes to support if required. The review would be based on three actions:

1) How is support currently delivered?

2) What feedback could indicate improvement or confirm what is working?

3) An action plan put together with a review date.

Emma Strong

My Support

What support do you get?	Is it good or bad?	What would you change?	Next steps
I get help on the computer, pointing to where the things are.	Good because I got the right help.	It would be better if the touch screen could be bigger.	• Ask IT Access team for help • Request support from Learner Advocate • Change support records

Tutor: Stuart

Education Facilitator: Kim

Scribe ....   Date ....

Learners wanted both symbol and as well as text prompts and also wanted the support worker to prompt them for suggestions. They wanted photographs of key staff on the form to remind them. This was used in reviews in order to facilitate the learners' involvement.

Feedback from the trial

Three learners found the activity useful as it provided them with the forum to speak up about the support they receive and voice the changes they would like to have put in place. Two learners stated that they did not require any changes but noted that they were happy with the support they received. Two learners reported that if they needed a change in how they were supported during a session, they would find it hard to speak up unless they were asked by the tutor.

The tutor led the review discussion with one learner and learning support staff. The learners felt comfortable to share their views on their support and the support given to them by the staff in the session. The learning support staff took the feedback well and have started to implement the changes agreed by both the learner and tutor. The learners felt it important to say how they wanted to be supported and although some wanted to have 1:1 support throughout the session, they were able to compromise and agreed on the changes to be put in place. As we use tracking sheets for learners to feedback learning at the end of a session, it may be of benefit for the students to refer and reflect back on these to identify the areas where changes needed to be made.

The original worksheet was designed for the tutor to use. The modified version above enables learners to work through or look at it independently (or with support from the learning support staff). The worksheet supports those with limited reading ability with the use of signs, symbols and pictures.

Recommendations for other providers

- Adapt the worksheet to the needs of your learners and the support process within your college.

- Ensure that learners are involved in the development and that learners using the form are facilitated in order to represent their views at the review meetings.

Approach 3 - How can I tell my support worker what's working and what isn't?

The brief for this approach was to develop and trial a method for learners to be able to directly feed back to support staff on the effectiveness of their support during a learning session.

At Hartpury College five learners aged 16-18 trialled a learning support questionnaire. All were male, white British and had a learning difficulty. Learners worked to establish a recording method whereby they were able to comment on and evaluate the support they received. Specially formulated questions were constructed to allow learners to confirm what is working and what is not. A grading system also judged the perception of effectiveness of support during the session. A set of draft questions were developed and trialled using the activities of the learning support assistant (see example below).

All learners were able to complete the questionnaire, although some learners needed further explanation. Learning support staff pointed out that they were not able to comment on the questionnaire and this was amended in light of their feedback. The majority of learners in the trial were able to identify areas where they would like support. Learners indicated the most valuable types of support were: providing help sheets, scribing, help with labelling diagrams, explaining tutors' verbal instructions, organising files and notes and providing reassurance.

Learners said of the resource; *'It helps me catch up', 'Sometimes I don't understand the question' 'it gives extra information' 'I can worry about talking in the class'*
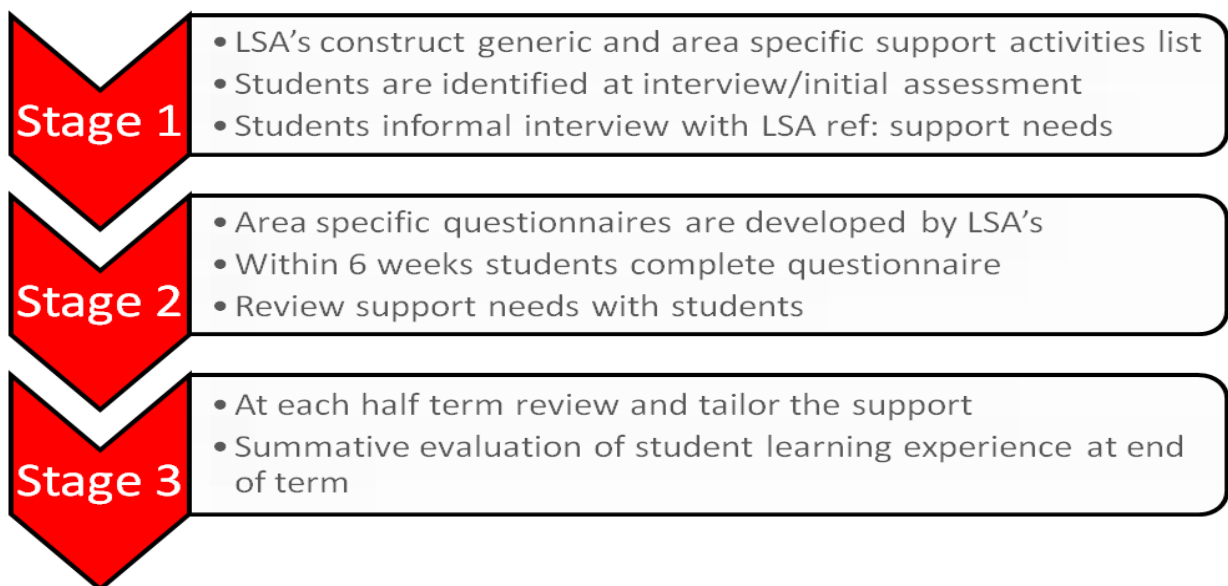
11

Challenges of using the resource

- Finding time to engage learners in the study without interrupting lessons.

- Overcoming learners' literacy levels and specific learning difficulties.

- Learners finding it difficult to articulate the support they were given.

- Learners' willingness to engage with the process over time.

- Complacency with the process if it is not realistic.

Recommendations

- Develop the resource as part of a whole college quality initiative.

- Embed the approach and the development and use of the learning support questionnaire into the curriculum.

- Involve learners and learning support assistants from the outset.

Application in Practice

Stage 1
- LSA's construct generic and area specific support activities list
- Students are identified at interview/initial assessment
- Students informal interview with LSA ref: support needs

Stage 2
- Area specific questionnaires are developed by LSA's
- Within 6 weeks students complete questionnaire
- Review support needs with students

Stage 3
- At each half term review and tailor the support
- Summative evaluation of student learning experience at end of term

My Learning Support

This form is for you to tell us how useful you find these 'in class' learning support activities.

ID

Learning Support	Helpful	Why IS this helpful?	Not helpful	Why is this NOT helpful?	Learning Support Assistant Comments
Write up notes in class when I get behind					
Help me to label diagrams etc. e.g. in anatomy					
Explain in words I can understand what the tutor would like me to do					
Provide me with equipment such as pens/colouring pencils etc. when I do not have them					
Supporting me to do calculations (maths)					
Help me to organise my file and notes					
Remind me of important dates e.g. when assignments are due					
Provide 'help sheets' which helps me better understand my notes or assignment					
Help me with my spelling or punctuation					
Reassuring me in a group setting or when I feel nervous or anxious					

Please tell us about any other activities your learning support worker does in class that you find useful

Please tell us about anything else you would like your learning support worker to help you with in class?

☺

Approach 4 - How do I access and contribute to the information the college hold about me and my support?

Truro & Penwith College, City of Bristol College and Plymouth College of Art worked together to explore how management information systems (MIS) could be extended to provide optimum levels of learner access. This approach was not trialled in the same manner as the others, but was seen as vital to learners in the manner in which they share information about themselves and shape their support. Each college examined each other's MI system in order to share good practice and develop their own systems to increase learner access. Therefore, a sample of learners was not sought, but it is important to note that each college had made changes to their systems in response to the learner voice that included:

- Course Reviews;

- Tutorials;

- Student Surveys;

- Learner Voice Review; and

- Specific Evaluations in Learning Support, Functional Skills and Exam Concession Assessment.

It was therefore felt that other colleges could learn from the development of their own management information systems to include learner feedback regarding the information the college holds about them. The examples cited are specific to the colleges involved but the formats can be modified to suit individual approaches to engaging learners' views.

The research identified that all three Colleges had developed effective systems that were suitable for their particular needs in terms of size, demographic spread, staffing and range of student support needs. For example, City of Bristol College had an effective paper based system that worked well for learners. Plymouth College of Art, Truro and Penwith College have developed online systems which enable learners to access their Additional Learning Support (ALS) records. This allows learners to request changes to their support and/or support records confidentially and comment on their ALS records. In Truro & Penwith College learners are able to access their records by request to the learning support team. However, Plymouth College of Art enable learners to directly access their support records. Both Colleges have developed an innovative approach to facilitating effective communication with learners online and both promote the role that they play in shaping their own support. For example, learners at the Plymouth College of Art have developed a system where learners can chat to an online learning support adviser throughout the day.

Each College felt that they benefitted greatly from the project and it identified the many challenges and opportunities faced by institutions as they explore the possibilites and implications of extending their ALS/MI systems. However, due to the nature of this research it is not possible to present findings that other providers can just pick up and trial as each provider has their own unique system. Nevertheless, the colleges involved are happy to be contacted and to offer guidance to other

organisations who may be looking to introduce or extend their ALS/MIS provision accordingly.

An Example of the Plymouth College of Art online learning communication/support system

Approach 5 - How do I ensure my support arrangements meet my future needs?

The brief for this approach was to develop and trial a resource that enables learners to contribute and shape the support they will receive during transition. This may be between courses, between living or learning environments or between institutions. This resource will enable students to plan their transition requirements with their support facilitator and/or tutors and agree a support strategy.

Foxes Academy, an independent specialist college in Somerset, adapted and trialled a transition booklet originally devised at Weston College for learners on the autistic spectrum. Four male and four female learners trialled the resource. Six had learning difficulties: one had a physical disability, one a hearing impairment and all were white British. The booklet contains all of the learners' key information that enables them to begin to shape their own support whether they are starting a new course, are in higher education, or are progressing into employment and/or independent living.

Learners were directly involved in designing the transition booklet. They said individually and collectively through the learner reference groups that having ownership of the information gave them greater autonomy and independence.

The booklet design is differentiated depending on the preference of the learner and many learners liked to use images and simple to read text. These booklets can be updated and adapted as the learner progresses and different media can be used. They are also helpful to encourage learners to better understand their individual needs and be willing to share this information with others in order to maximise their independence and increase their choices.

Learners throughout the trial enjoyed the ownership of information, having to input details that are personal to them. All learners involved in the trial were able to add information to the booklet and inform staff of their needs and how they would like to be supported. As the booklets were devised by the learners, ongoing amendments were made in response to learner views and their needs.

The key recommendations following this trial were:

- Involve learners right from the idea stage and allow the resource to be shaped by this involvement; and

- The use of images is key as for many learners it enables equitable access.

Examples of pages within the learner transition booklet

Staff should be aware the........

Things that upset me

Things that cheer me up

Page 24

Personal Information about me

My disability is:-

My medical needs are:-

My cultural/religious needs are:-

My dietary needs:-

Page 25

I need help with............

I need help with

HELP!

Page 26

Summary

Evaluation of regional network events

The target for the network events, 50 delegates, was exceeded on registrations, but was not met on attendance, with 42 attendees at the first event and 40 delegates at the second. The first network event advertised through the LSIS website was slow to engage colleges with only 25 registered a week before the event. After many phone calls this number doubled. Time commitments were the main issue for LSAs being released from their work with learners to attend network meetings. Feedback from both network events, however, was very positive with many delegates citing the sharing of practice with other professionals as the key benefit.

Colleges were very keen to share their best practice and this was evident in both network events. There were some difficulties in trying engage colleges to trial approaches. Several colleges dropped out of the trials because they could not sustain the work required. Those whose commitment was sustained produced valuable outcomes.

Learners contributed to both network events both presenting and contributing to discussion groups. This was extremely valuable for delegates in hearing learners' views on the development of approaches. Five learners from the reference group presented at the National Conference and answered questions on their involvement with the project. One learner concluded with the following speech:

> *'I feel very honoured at being invited to London to speak at this National Conference. It makes me very happy to feel useful and able to contribute something on a personal level.*
>
> *Children and young people with learning difficulties often feel very sad and isolated. Too many people regard them as "dumb" and don't want to listen to what they have to say.*
>
> *Sometimes I have felt so lonely that the pain has been unbearable.*
>
> *I have been in crowded rooms but no-one has spoken to me.*
>
> *I had no friends in mainstream school and I was always bullied for being different.*
>
> *Only now, late in my education, have I found friends. I can talk to other young people with similar problems and we can relate to each other.*
>
> *I also have fabulous tutors and teachers who are patient with me and listen to me.*
>
> *For the first time in many years I feel happy and of some worth to others.*
>
> *Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.'*

Evaluation

This project together with its sister project in the North West had the same aim 'to develop approaches and resources that enable learners to be involved in identifying, planning and managing and, where appropriate, directing their own support', but have taken different approaches to achieving this.

The North West region used existing resources that have been cited as effective and trialled these with learners in order to establish feedback on their use with learners. A range of very useful resources are available on the project website and detailed descriptions of learners' views can be found in the project report.

This project took a different path in that learners were involved from an early stage in developing a series of approaches for organisations to trial with their learners. It then transpired that through the development of these approaches, learners were involved in developing their own resources as part of the trial. The resources produced through this method are not necessarily exemplary, but work for the learners and organisations that shaped them. Therefore, the key outcome from this piece of work is the methodology used in involving learners to develop their ideas and subsequently work with their organisations to shape the most appropriate resources for their use. This can be seen in the model below:
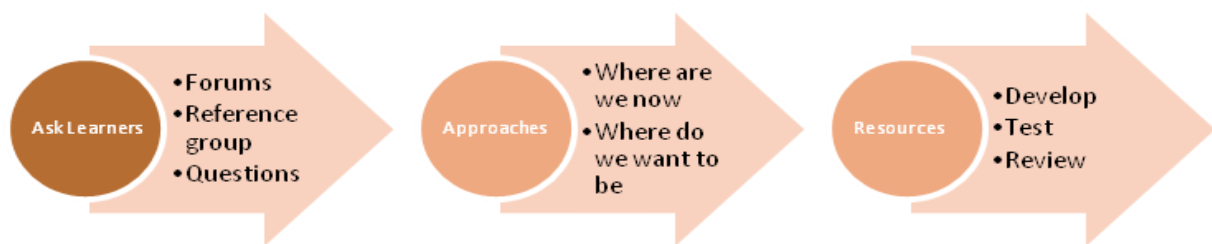
The advantage of this model ensured that the learners involved in the project gained significantly; however, this approach was very time-consuming and led to several colleges dropping out of the trials because they could not sustain the work required.

Impact of the project

- Learners involved in the project felt they had far more control over their support and this would lead to greater independence in the future.

- Some organisations involved in the project recognised the need to change their culture from one of imposing support, to one of engaging learners in shaping their own support needs from the outset.

- Sharing practice with other providers has enhanced the learning support for all involved and has encouraged a partnership approach.

20

Recommendations

Both Network events worked extremely well and were valued by LSAs, managers and learners. It would therefore be useful to establish localised communities of practice in which to develop the approaches outlined in this report. This would require Learning Support managers to establish an Enhancement of Learner Support Network.

Recommendations for organisations

- Involve learners from the beginning to develop their ideas and shape the most appropriate resources for them to use.

- Establish a learner reference group to advise and shape the development of approaches to enhance learner support. This should be representative, active and enable real change.

- Consider the approaches they are taking to developing the enhancement of learner support. This should initially be through audit and involve learners in canvassing their views.

Recommendation for LSIS

- The Excellence Gateway should hold examples of the resources used in this project, both from this project and that of the North West region.

Annexes

Annex. 1.   Learner Voice Activity – Enhancement of Learner Support Pilot 2010

Annex. 2.   Resources capture sheet

Annex. 3.   Five Approaches

Annex. 4.   Enhancement of Learning Support Agenda - National Star College 15 November 2010

Annex. 5.   Feedback Network event 15 November 2010

Annex. 6.   Resources development and testing

Annex. 7.   Summary findings and data capture sheet.

Annex. 8.   Enhancement of Learning Support Agenda - Weston College 17 February 2011

Annex. 9.   Feedback Network event 17 February 2011

Annex 1: Learner Voice Activity – Enhancement of Learner Support Pilot 2010

Getting to know each other (10 minutes)

Warm up 'speed dating': say something about yourself in 10 seconds.

What is Learning Support (15 minutes)

Talk together and write key words on the flipchart. Use the words to make a sentence

Focus on support (1 hour)

Spend 20 minutes in each workshop:

- o **Workshop1: Making a drama out of support**

  Make up a short story or play about '**what learning support means to you'**. It can be serious or funny. It could show good support or bad support. This will be filmed through the flip camera.

- o **Workshop 2: Creative support**

  Write a poem or a song or draw a poster together, to show the **group's feelings** about learning support.

- o **Workshop 3: Radiohead**

  Imagine you have been asked to be on the radio to be interviewed about what learning support means to you. This will be recorded.

  The questions are:

  - o How does learner support help you with your learning?
  - o What is good about having a support person with you in your classes?
  - o What could be done better?
  - o What would your advice be to a support worker?

Expectations (30 minutes)

Split into 3 groups to discuss one topic:

1. Attitudes – make a spider gram.
2. Approach – make a spider gram.
3. How support is delivered – make a spider gram.

Share your ideas and agree what is important

Values (25 minutes)

Diary room – plan and record

1. What things you feel are important about teaching support.
2. How would you like to give your views in the future.

Enhancing Learning Support

SW Regional Network Meeting 15th November 2010

Pre event activity– please complete and bring with you on the 15th November 2010. Be prepared to bring examples of resources and/or approaches that you use and to also share your examples with others during Swap Shops activities during the day.

Name of resource/approach	*(Please bring an example with you of how your organisation engages learners to promote learner voice particularly in enabling the shaping of the learning support offer)*
Setting in which this resource is used	*This may be classroom based, work related or work based learning, community or residential setting. It may be tutor led or peer led for example*
Profile of learners	*Age, disability, gender, ethnicity etc.*
Stage of support journey	*(Initial/diagnostic assessment, support planning, on programme support, review and evaluation)*
Learner feedback	*(What do your learners say makes this resource/approach particularly effective? Are there any limitations/aspects that you feel might be improved?)*
Practitioner feedback	*(What do your support staff say that makes this resource/approach particularly effective? Are there any limitations/aspects that you feel might be improved?)*
Organisation	
Contact details	
Additional Information	

Enhancing Learning Support

'to develop approaches and resources that enable learners to be involved in identifying, planning and managing and where appropriate directing their own support'

Approach 1 - How can I comment of the support I receive?

Develop and trial a resource that enables learners to comment on the support they are receiving (session by session or week by week) in order to enable the future planning and delivery of that support. This may be setting up an online blog for students to comment or creating a suggestion feedback scheme. During the trial we would like to know how the information from this feedback is being used to shape support provided.

Example:

College	Sample College	**Approach**	To establish personal tutor feedback suggestion boards. Specific questions about support allow students to grade and comment through posting thoughts and suggestions onto a centralised pin board through post it notes during each weekly personal tutor session. Thoughts are discussed each week as a standing item in group discussion and a summary is forwarded to the learning support planning committee.

Approach 2 - How can I review my support?

Develop and trial an on-going review process between tutor, support facilitator and learner. This may be a regular review meeting with a learner or group of learners. The review will have clear terms of reference, an example of how the agenda is constructed and how outcomes are recorded and implemented. Organisations wishing to develop this approach will formulate a rationale for its use and a timescale for implementation.

Example:

College	Sample College	**Approach**	To establish a timetable of half termly individual reviews with each learner in the trial group (7 learners) – 2 reviews during the trial period. Tutors, support staff and learners will work together to agree the terms of reference and the rationale for the reviews. Joint agendas will be constructed at the beginning of each 45 minute review. Outcomes

			form each review will be entered onto the learners support plan.

Approach 3 - How can I tell my support worker what's working and what isn't?

Develop and trial a method for learners to be able to directly feedback to support staff on the effectiveness of their support during a learning session. This may be a tracking sheet used in session, a review meeting with the learner at the end of the session or a questionnaire that learners complete post session. The trial needs to be clear on how information is captured, feedback to support staff and used to plan and shape further support (this may be in terms of support staff CPD or support implementation).

Example:

College	Sample College	**Approach**	To establish a tracking form used by support staff to document the support given during the session and grade the effectiveness of this support with the learner. Specially formulated questions will be constructed to allow the learner to confirm what's working and what is not. A grading system will also judge the perception of effectiveness of support during the session. Feedback forms will be used by support staff to in their termly review of support plans and will form part of individual support staff review and development meetings with a line manager.

Approach 4 - How do I access and contribute to the support information my learning provider holds about me?

Develop and trial an on-line support plan through your institutions MIS. This will have controlled access for tutors, support staff and learners. It will allow information to be viewed by learners and enable them to comment on support they have received or further support information they require support staff to know about.

Example:

College	Sample College	**Approach**	To establish an on-line support plan accessed by tutor, support staff and learners. The plan allows learners to view and comment on the support they need and receive. The support plan will be part of the college MIS and can be used particularly ensuring up to date information is available for staff. i.e. a student suffers from fatigue in an IT session from looking at a VDU for too long, they are dizzy and need a rest.

			Following the session the learner is able to access the support plan on-line and make a note that this happened and suggests breaks from the screen as part of a support plan. The support worker assigned to this learner logs into the support plan for the next session and sees this note and plans the support for the session accordingly.

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Approach 5 - How do I make sure my support arrangements will meet my future needs?

Develop and trial a resource that enables learners to contribute and shape the support they will receive during transition, this may be between courses, between living or learning environments or between institutions. This resource will enable students to plan their transition requirements with their support facilitator and/or tutors and agree a support strategy. This may well document the current support profile and look at how this is reshaped for transition. This may take the form of a structured meeting, transition support passport or a transition support plan.

Example:

College	Sample College	**Approach**	To establish a transition passport which each learner will take with them when they move learning contexts. The passport will be compiled through meetings with support staff to evaluate the nature of current support and assess increases or decreases in support levels and how support is best delivered in a new context. The learner will be able to add to the passport with a bearing on their learning aims for the transition. Passports may be paper based or electronic.

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National Star College 15 November 2010

Programme for the day

10.00am	**Welcome and programme overview**
10.30am	**Aims of the day – Video of learner voice**
	Examples of learners feedback from the pilot study
11.00am	**Using activities to promote learner voice (DF)**
	Examples of activities used in the pilot study to promote learner voice
11.30am	**Tea/Coffee**
11.45am	**Workshop #1 - Swap Shop**
	Resource exchange from pre event activity
12.45pm	**Effective practice**
	Feedback of effective resources being used by providers
1.00pm	**Lunch**
1.45pm	**Workshop # 2 – Modelling resources**
	Development of approaches to shaping and modelling resources
2.45pm	**Trial and revelation! - What next...**
	Colleges sign up for trialling and testing. Outline of trial requirements
3.45pm	**Evaluations**

Annex 5: Feedback, Network Event 15th November 2010

Network Event Feedback: National Star College 15th November 2010
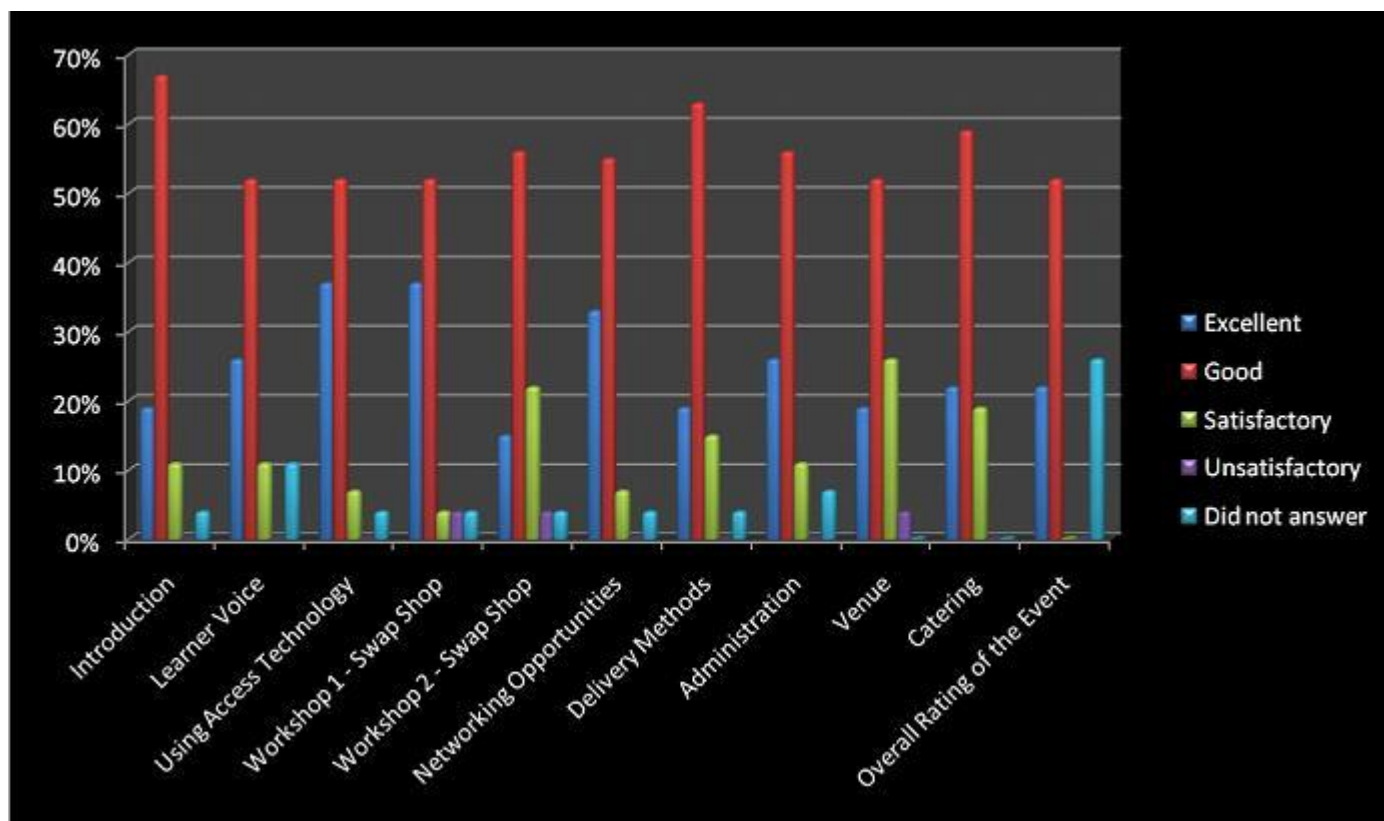
Number of returns – 42 delegates attended, 11 delegates did not return evaluations, 31 evaluations received. 100% of overall satisfaction was good or better.

Feedback

'It was a great sharing of experiences and ideas in order to develop better practice'

'JISCTechDis Access technology outlines were really useful'

'Great getting resource ideas from other providers'

'Weston College induction booklet was really good, I enjoyed meeting with other colleges'

'Great ideas to take back to the workplace. Great networking for contributions –a really good event'

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Resource development and testing – Approach selection

Having read through the five approaches for developing resources please select the one which your institution would like to trial with learners. The trial period will be between November 2010 and March 2011 and will involve small groups of learners (5 – 20+) dependent on the organisation.

Please write a very short abstract of the approach you will take – use the examples given on the approaches pages to help you.

We will be following up your progress with a phone call week beginning **10 January 2011** and asking for the first half of the evaluation sheet below – the data bit!

We will be inviting one college from each approach to give a short feedback at the Network meeting at Weston College on **17 February 2011** on the journey so far, what learners say about the approach and how well it is working. Some flip/camcorder videos of student responses that can be shared at the event would be excellent.

The final questions and examples of the resources will be expected by week beginning **14 March 2011** to upload to the Excellence Gateway

Approach Chosen
Please select from drop down list

Name of College	
Abstract *(200 words max. please)*	
Lead Contact	
e-mail / telephone	

Please send this page by e-mail to delsdon@natstar.ac.uk
Any queries please contact 01242 527631

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Resource development and testing – Recording

College		**Approach**	Please select from drop down list
Context	Please select from the drop down list		

Data Capture						
No.of Learners		16-18		19+		Disability	Please select

Male		Female		Full time		Part time	

Ethnicity							
White		Mixed		Asian, British Asian		Black, Black British		Chinese, Other ethnicity	

How well does this resource enable learners to be involved in managing and directing their own support?

Please complete the following in no more than 300 words per box please.

The views of learners
Exemplar outcomes
How was the resource used and/or modified
Recommendations for others

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Weston College 17 February 2011

Programme for Day

10.15am – 10.30am	Arrivals, registration (atrium) tea and coffee (rm167) Housekeeping (rm 162/163/164) Welcome and Introduction – 'The story so far – an explanation of how we got to this point' Clarification of aims and expectations for the day (JF and Learner Reference Group)
10.30am – 11.00am	Feedback from the trialling of Approach 1: 'How can I comment on the support that I receive?' Weston College
11.00am – 11.30am	Feedback from the trialling of Approach 2: 'How can I review my support?' • National Star College • William Morris College
11.30am – Noon	Feedback from the trialling of Approach 3: 'How can I tell my support worker what is working and what isn't?' • Hartpury College
Noon- 1.00pm	Lunch
1.00pm – 1.30pm	Feedback from the trialling of Approach 4: 'How do I access and contribute to the support information my learning provider holds about me?' • Truro College • Plymouth College of Arts • Foxes Academy
1.30pm – 2.00pm	Feedback from the trialling of Approach 5: 'How do I make sure that my support needs will meet my future needs?' • Gloucestershire College • West of England College

33

2.00pm – 2.15pm	Outline of National Conference what are this is aiming to do and showcase (including other strands)
2.15pm – 2.45pm	Group work based around 5 approaches (BM) Participants to choose an approach, work in groups to identify what would work in their organisation, identify possible impact and challenges (facilitators JF/DF/HS/BM)
2.45pm – 3.00pm	Evaluation of whole project to this point (DF designing) Evaluation of Network Day

Network Event Feedback: Weston College 17 February 2011
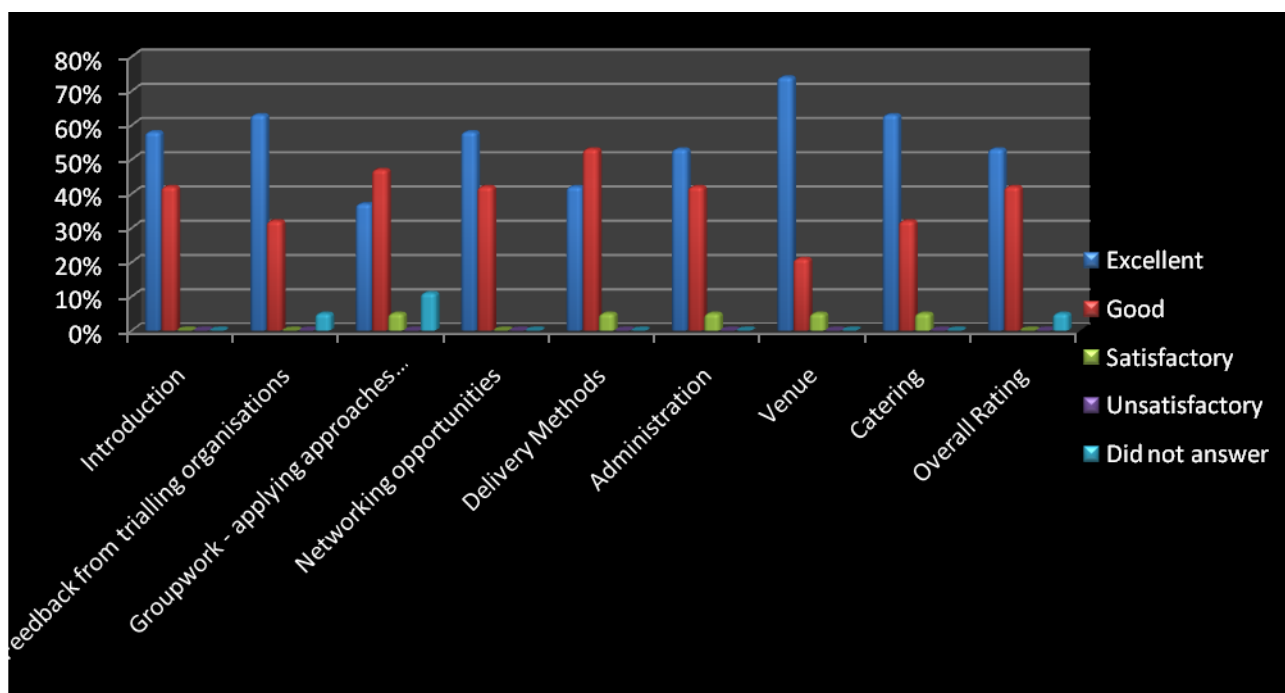
Number of returns – 40 delegates attended, 5 delegates did not return evaluations, 35 evaluations received. 100% of overall satisfaction was good or better.

Feedback

'I found that we will be able to take away and use some of the approaches in our college. It has been an invaluable experience.'

'The most useful thing about today has been the diversity of all the colleges that reflect the diversity of their students and the openness and willingness to share'

''There has been an excellent variety of resources developed'

'Excellent opportunity to network with other colleges'

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