

PUBLIC BENEFIT REPORT

2019–2020

ETFOUNDATION.CO.UK

Welcome to the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) Public Benefit Report



David Russell is the Chief Executive of the Education and Training Foundation

I am delighted to present the 2019–2020 Public Benefit Report for the Education and Training Foundation (ETF). This report sets out the difference we make for leaders, teachers and trainers in the Further Education (FE) and Training sector and how this translates into delivering benefit for society.

The ETF was founded with the sector in 2013 to be the expert body for professional development and standards in FE across England. Everything we do is for the benefit of learners and this key principle sits at the heart of all our activity. We strive for excellence, and over the last year, our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has been accessed more than 50,000 times by leaders¹ and practitioners in the sector to help further develop professional standards and excellent practice. This in turn, ensures learners can benefit from the latest knowledge, research, and insight into pedagogical methods.

We are committed to listening, responding to the sector and including that feedback in innovative learning solutions. Throughout this report you will find statistics and case studies highlighting how our programmes are evolving, deepening engagement and motivation for learners and leading to improved outcomes. Such progress would not be possible without the expertise of the ETF and our partners, and the dedicated work of colleagues in the sector identifying excellence and disseminating it through collaborative practice.

The ETF exists as a means to an end, not an end in itself. We do not make a profit. We are a trusted partner, working collaboratively to improve skills, educational attainment and employability for the good of our society. Ultimately our aim is not simply to improve the system, but to co-create a self-improving system with practitioners, leaders and partners in the sector. We can do this thanks to our grant-funding and contracts won from the Department for Education (DfE) and other government departments, and the professional membership services we provide through the Society for Education and Training (SET).

We are facing some of the biggest global disruptions in recent history, our sector remains a particularly challenging environment, both financially and operationally. Whilst the focus of this report is very much on the last financial year, it feels prudent to recognise the absolute commitment to one another, our learners and our communities, which have been unfaltering in recent months. We have all embraced digital learning and CPD opportunities to minimise disruption and I am immensely proud of the development we provided with our partners to support the sector.

I hope you enjoy reading about the impact of the ETF in 2019–2020 which as evidenced in this report, has made a tangible difference for learners. I look forward to updating you on the difference we made during the 2020 pandemic in next year's report.

If you would like to know more, please look up etfoundation.co.uk or email enquiries@etfoundation.co.uk so we can continue the conversation about professional excellence with you.

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1. Grant Reports to the DfE (The ETF, 2019–2020).

Who we are and what we do

The ETF is the expert body for professional development and standards in Further Education and Training in England.

Our charitable purpose is to improve education and training for learners aged 14 and over.

We do this by building networks and influence, facilitating the sharing of knowledge and the provision of transformational programmes, to work towards our vision of:

- **First-class leadership of the sector**
- **Highly effective, professionally confident teachers and trainers**
- **FE as the career of choice for ambitious professionals who wish to make a difference.**

Designing and delivering CPD for all leaders, teachers and trainers in FE in settings including colleges, independent training providers (ITPs), third sector providers, adult community education, employers and offender learning providers is at the heart of the ETF. It is integral to driving leadership and recruiting talent to our sector.

Our world-class programmes, research and knowledge, enable teaching professionals to excel, leading to ever-improving outcomes for learners and in turn, a highly skilled workforce equipped to meet the changing needs of our economy and our society.

To deliver our vision, we have four external strategic objectives:

- **Grow** the sector's membership body (SET) and increase the number of colleagues with professional statuses and the number of high-quality entrants becoming teachers and trainers.
- Enhance the sector's **Leadership**, building an integrated approach to identify and develop leaders.
- **Inform** key decision-makers and stakeholders with data, experience and insights.
- **Develop** teachers and trainers to excel through training programmes, networks, research and advanced professional development.

Our external strategic objectives are supported through our fifth objective, **Evolve**, which helps us to continuously adapt and thrive internally in order to fulfil our strategy.





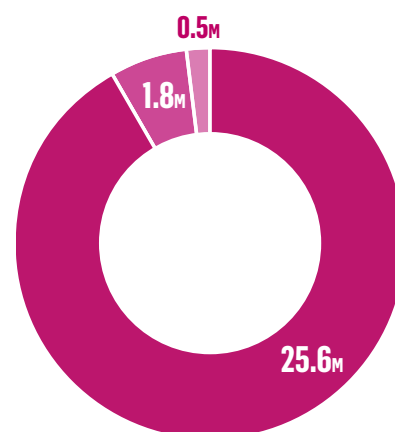
In 2019–2020, the ETF has successfully:

- 1 Grown membership of SET**, the national professional membership body for people working in education and training by 6 per cent¹.
- 2 Enabled leaders in the FE sector to access CPD leadership programmes over 4,071 times to build their capability to operate at a senior level** in complex and fast-changing environments².
- 3 Increased the quality and quantity of the workforce data** collated via the Staff Individualised Records (SIR): 91,800 anonymised records were analysed from 186 providers providing insight into the latest workforce trends to aid policy and programme development.
- 4 Led professional development for the sector**, with leaders and practitioners accessing and engaging with our CPD offer over 50,000³ times, an increase of 35 per cent year-on-year. In addition, Prevent online training modules were accessed over 254,000 times⁴.
- 5 Invested £22.8m⁵ in developing and delivering programmes** to support and develop the sector and improve education and learning for learners aged 14 and over.

Funding⁶

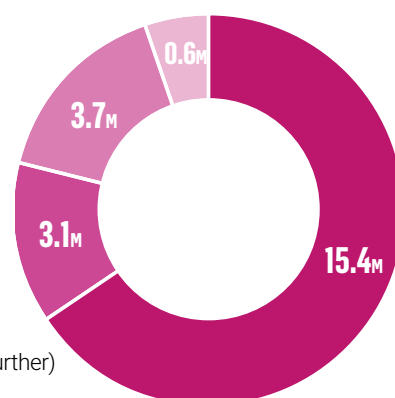
We are funded through a mix of grant and commercial income. In 2019–2020, the ETF invested £27.9m in programmes development, membership and accreditation and research and workforce data.

- Programmes development
- Membership & accreditation
- Research and workforce data



A grant of £22.8m from the DfE funded a significant proportion of the CPD programmes managed by the ETF in 2019–2020⁷.

- CPD for Teachers & Trainers (Inc. T Levels)
- CPD for Leaders, Chairs & Governors
- Sector recruitment (incl. Taking Teaching Further)
- Other



Our programmes and the difference we make

Grow

– professional membership and status

To build and promote the professional status of the sector is a key objective for the ETF and its membership arm SET, the only membership body dedicated to professionals working across FE, vocational teaching and training.

For many teachers, becoming a member of SET demonstrates personal commitment to their career, sustaining professional standards and investing in ongoing CPD and learning opportunities. Individuals are empowered to take ownership of their learning journey and supported to get the professional recognition they deserve amongst their peers and the sector.

As part of their professional journey and providing they meet the entry criteria, SET members are eligible to undertake Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status and Advanced Teacher Status (ATS) to advance their careers. Run by the ETF and conferred by SET, accreditation highlights an individual's commitment to teaching, as well as evidence for employers and peers of their skills and capability.

88%

OF ATS PARTICIPANTS REPORTED POSITIVE IMPACT ON THEIR LEARNERS.

In 2019–2020:

- The ETF grew **Membership** of SET by 6 per cent, and now has over 20,000 members¹ who are regularly accessing resources and development opportunities.
- Research confirmed the **Professional Standards** for teachers and trainers, developed by the ETF in 2014, are being used by 65 per cent of FE teachers and trainers every month. An overwhelming majority (87 per cent) confirmed the Standards made a difference to their professional practice.
- 2,000 professionals made the commitment to advance their career and began studying for **Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills** (QTLS) status, with 800 gaining the status in this period. To date, SET has conferred QTLS status for more than 24,000 teachers and trainers across the post-14 education and training sector.
- 74 individuals² were awarded **Advanced Teacher Status** (ATS), the Masters-equivalent badge of professional excellence, bringing the total number holding this prestigious accolade to 106. Underpinned by the 20 Professional Standards, and the next step after achieving QTLS, ATS is conferred through SET and brings automatic Chartered Teacher Status³.
 - 88 per cent of ATS participants reported positive impact on their learners⁴ and the ETF anticipates deepening this impact when a further 75 individuals join the new cohort in October 2020.

1. SET data, 2019–2020. 2. SET data, 2019–2020. 3. The ETF in partnership with the Chartered College of Teaching ensures holders of ATS are conferred Chartered Teacher Status. 4. SET data, 2019–2020.

Recruitment

Building a diverse and skilled workforce to support learners is a critical part of the ETF's mission. The recruitment programmes attract new talent to the FE sector and forge stronger links with industry to meet the future needs of our economy.

During the last year:

- 78,000 people were supported by the **FE Advice Service**, which provides information on becoming a teacher. This was an uplift of 30 per cent year-on-year¹ and an impressive 121 per cent increase on target.
- 366 students have or are actively participating in the **Talent to Teach** programme², which raises awareness of FE teaching as a career option among final year undergraduates. The post programme survey highlighted 85 per cent³ or more of participants were satisfied with the activities in which they took part. There was a significant increase of 42 percentage points³ for self-reported interest in a teaching career in FE post-placement.
- The **Taking Teaching Further**⁴ programme is a national FE initiative to attract teachers, and experienced industry professionals with expert technical knowledge and skills. The ETF has supported colleges to recruit and retain 113 industry experts into 'hard to fill' technical teaching roles. The programme funded 144 hours of intensive support as well as 140 hours of a reduced teaching workload (in the first year) to support the better retention of new teachers in the FE sector.
- **SET for Teaching Success**⁵ recruits, trains, mentors and supports new teachers of Science, Engineering and Technology (SET), graduates and industry technical experts, with a focus on technical education. There have been 138 trainees on the programme to date, with 49 graduates in 2020.
- The **Further Forces** programme supported 200 service leavers to transition into FE Technical Teaching roles and work towards the achievement of Level 5 or above ITE qualification, CERT Ed, or PGCE⁶.



The programme appealed to me because it has been designed specifically to help you to teach my SET subject specialism, and it allowed me to complete a one-year intensive course at Level 7. It enabled me to try new ideas and reflect on whether or not they worked for my learners. Within a couple of months of starting the SET programme, I found noticeable results in improved classroom behaviour, a reduction in late assignment submissions, and higher student satisfaction. The new methods of assessment that I was taught positively impacted on the learners and their grades.



ELLIE BENNETT

AN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER AND CIVIL ENGINEERING LECTURER AT STEPHENSON COLLEGE, WHO WAS SUPPORTED THROUGH SET FOR TEACHING SUCCESS



Leadership

– supporting Principals, CEOs, Chairs and governors to lead the FE sector

Enhancing the sector's leadership capability to create a positive environment for learners to succeed underpins the broad range of leadership programmes and initiatives provided by the ETF.

Partnerships with leading organisations and technical experts ensured the ETF programmes were dynamic, responding to the complex and fast-changing environment in which leaders operate. Through the programmes the ETF reaches tomorrow's leaders, creating opportunities to broaden the diversity of our sector and recruit individuals with innovative ways of working that can inspire and motivate learners to progress.

Enhancing ability, increasing practitioner confidence, and building sustainable networks of peer support were consistently evidenced in programme evaluations.

In addition:

- The ETF added 18 online training modules for FE governors, bringing its specialised portfolio to 26 modules across seven areas of focus. The online training was accessed by governors 2,965 times during the year¹.
- The Preparing for CEO Programme² has supported 130 participants with 26 now successfully appointed to a Principal/CEO position within a college. Delivered by the Saïd Business School, University of Oxford, on behalf of the ETF, 100 per cent of those attending rated the course 4+ (out of 5). An impressive 87 per cent continue to utilise the networks facilitated through the course.
- Leading from the Middle motivates and inspires middle managers and builds leadership capacity. Delivered on behalf of the ETF by FE Associates, participants self-report³ increased knowledge and 83 per cent of participants introduced new processes and procedures in their department to help more effective planning and management of their business area.
- Overall, the full suite of FE Leadership Programmes was accessed on 4,071 occasions⁴.



1. Foundation Online Learning, Programme Management Data 2019–2020. 2. Saïd Business School. 3. The Evaluation of the Middle Managers Programme Final Report (The ETF, December 2019). 4. Programme Management Data (The ETF, 2019–2020).



Inform

– through unique workforce data and research

The ETF undertakes workforce research to help providers, policy makers and sector bodies understand trends and patterns within the FE sector to inform policy and programme development.

- The ETF increased the quality and quantity of the workforce data¹ collated via the Staff Individualised Records (SIR). There were 91,800 anonymised records analysed from 186 providers, giving insight into the latest workforce trends in demographics, staffing numbers and pay. Findings from SIR27 included an increase in the mean value of CPD hours from 35 (SIR26) to 38 hours, evidencing the value the sector is placing on development.

Key insight for the sector to consider in the year ahead includes:

- Providers are offering more subjects, except in the humanities.
- The workforce remains predominantly female.
- The overall 'Black' and 'Asian' representation in senior leadership positions has decreased.
- The gender pay gap for all staff working in colleges is comparable to SIR21 (2014) highlighting the need for more focus.

The ETF led a number of independent reports into the training needs, skills and well-being of the workforce. This included:

- **The Workforce capability to deliver the digital entitlement** report affirmed the sector's confidence in its ability to deliver basic digital skills training in post-18 education and training organisations in England. This was ahead of the

introduction of the new standards and Government entitlement in 2020. It also highlighted some specific areas for further training and support such as more detail on the qualifications available for staff, and consistency around assessments for learners.

- In **Understanding the well-being of the post-14 education workforce** report published in November 2019, the ETF confirmed the wellbeing of staff working in the education sector was lower than that of the general population. Two key milestones were identified, starting as a Newly Qualified Teacher and a change in role, as impacting on work-related wellbeing. Three themed recommendations concluded the report.
- The **Professional Standards Survey** report launched in November 2019 confirmed that almost two-thirds of FE teachers and trainers use the Standards every month and 63 per cent said that the Standards informed CPD.

All reports can be found under Research on **www.etfoundation.co.uk**

In addition to research, the ETF offers a number of CPD initiatives, such as the Practitioner Research Programme and the Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment programme on developing research and reflection skills in the workplace. This enables practitioners to increase levels of empowerment, motivation and improvement for our learners. You can read more about these programmes on page 14 and page 16 of this report.

1. Further Education Workforce Data for England (The ETF, 2019–2020).



Develop

– professional capabilities
to enable teachers and
trainers to excel

Building a professional sector with the skills and capability to optimise support for learners sits at the heart of the ETF and all that we do.

We are passionate about designing and delivering evidence-based CPD, mapped to the Professional Standards, for teachers and trainers. Support ranges from the use of educational technologies (EdTech), leadership and governance development, maths and English enhancement, through to special educational needs and disability (SEND) provision.

We are wholly committed to ensuring that knowledge, research and the latest in best practice is shared across FE. We use a blend of formats allowing for individual and collaborative learning. In the last year, the ETF offered hundreds of development opportunities for leaders and practitioners to grow their expertise, excel at what they do and help more learners aged 14 and over to succeed.

- Good literacy and numeracy skills are central to success in education, work and life. The ETF offers a comprehensive range of CPD courses to support effective teaching of **maths, English and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**¹ for teachers of GCSE, Functional Skills, apprenticeships, study programmes, and adult and community learning.

In the last year, almost 400 ESOL teachers attended the New to ESOL professional development course.

Our **Shaping Success** programme ensures learners progress in post-16 maths and English. It was accessed 4,661 times by practitioners, an increase of 17 per cent year-on-year. When surveyed, 95 per cent of respondents agreed that the course had a positive impact on their knowledge and skills.

“... we have genuinely seen people’s mind-set shift... from an older perspective of what the learning practice was all about and what the focus was... the culture now is all focused on in-class progress for the students.”

Head of Maths and English

“Our outcomes are better than they’ve ever been at the moment... a culmination of things including the training that we’ve had.”

Teaching and Learning Manager

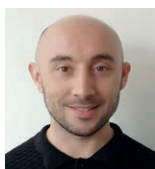
4,661

OUR SHAPING SUCCESS PROGRAMME DESIGNED TO ENSURE LEARNERS PROGRESS IN POST-16 MATHS AND ENGLISH WAS ACCESSED 4,661 TIMES²

Develop

- The ETF works to make **inclusive teaching** the norm for FE providers so learners are able to achieve their aspirations. Since launching in July 2019, 733 leaders, managers and practitioners¹ have engaged in activity with the three new Centres for Excellence in SEND (CfESEND). Plus:
 - Support for learners with SEND on Excellence Gateway, which hosts resources for those working in SEND provision, was accessed 22,673 times during the year².
 - Attendance trebled for the SEND face-to-face courses (606) and the Foundation Online SEND Learning Courses were accessed 1,366 times³.
 - Recognising the valuable contribution of the ETF's SEND offer combined with the CfESEND, the DfE has awarded a £1.2m grant for further development in 2020–21.

“Mental health continues to be one of the key challenges within education, especially during uncertain times. My ongoing engagement with CfESEND webinars has allowed me to discuss and share strategies with other like-minded professionals. This enables me to continue guiding learners through challenges, using a growth mindset to develop their own strategies to support their wellbeing in future. The shared resources and toolkits have been an invaluable tool for my planning of future learning.”



RYAN PICKERING,
EAST COAST COLLEGE
GREAT YARMOUTH CAMPUS



- In order to **increase the diversity** of those accessing its CPD provision, the ETF continues to improve and develop its online provision. It offers a number of free places on paid for courses. In addition, the Diversity in Leadership Programme launched in November 2019 to challenge bias, remove obstacles to attaining leadership roles and to use tools to build confidence in aspiring leaders.
- The **Outstanding Teaching Learning and Assessment (OTLA)** programme has delivered effective and valuable support for providers, empowering them to make improvements in their teaching, learning and assessment practices. The focus on action research and the opportunities for peer-to-peer research were highly valued. See case study on page 16.
- In partnership with the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, four new **Technical Teaching Fellowships** were awarded in 2019–2020 in recognition of professional excellence. This prestigious award is made to those exceptional individuals who can improve the quality of technical teaching and training by sharing best practice and foster high quality collaborations at a local level between industry and the sector.

- The Government invested £6.4m in professional development to help the sector prepare for the successful introduction of T Levels¹.
- The ETF believes a research-literate and engaged FE workforce will improve their skills and pedagogical practice and in doing so, generate better learning experiences for students. Interim findings for the **Practitioner Research Programme**² set out positive outcomes for the sector, employers, participants, and anecdotally, their students. See case study on page 14.
- The **Enhance Digital Teaching Platform**³ promotes and facilitates the use of digital to enhance teaching, learning and assessment as well as change the sector's perception of new technologies. A series of new webinars including teaching via the virtual classroom and engaging learners in virtual learning environments assisted the sector to rapidly respond to teaching remotely. To date, 625 organisations have signed up and 1,807 modules completed, scoring an average of 4.2 out of 5.



The Enhance Digital Teaching Platform training looks good, it's inviting and it's both useful and interesting. The service allows staff to tackle training at their own pace and in their own way. Even the most initially reluctant members of staff said they'd do more modules. ”

MARK BEETLESTONE, IT LECTURER AND CURRICULUM AREA LEAD FOR ENTERPRISE AND DIGITAL INDUSTRIES, FAREHAM COLLEGE

SET Conference 2019⁴

The second national conference, hosted by the Society for Education and Training (SET), landed an impressive 96 per cent satisfaction rating from delegates.

Shaped by members and led by practitioners, the event delivered support and practical guidance for FE teachers, trainers and educators as part of their CPD.

Thought Leadership and interactive sessions covered the latest in different areas of pedagogy including mental health, SEND, inclusion and learning support, Technical Education and Leadership.

- More than 337 delegates had the opportunity to network and learn from each other and an impressive 92 per cent would recommend the event to a friend.
- With 170 organisations represented, 24 speakers sharing insight, research and knowledge and 16 exhibitors showcasing products and services to support best practice, 96 per cent of delegates cited a positive impact on their professional practice.



1. T Levels Workforce Development Programme (The ETF, 2019–2020). 2. Evaluation of the Practitioner Research Programme (The ETF, October 2020). 3. DfE Report and Programme Management Data (The ETF, 2019–2020). 4. SET, Conference data 2019.



Case Study – Centres for Excellence in Maths

Our Purpose

The Centres for Excellence in Maths (CfEM) programme is a national improvement programme delivering a step change in maths teaching up to Level 2 in post-16 settings, with a focus on 16–19 year olds.

The Programme

There are 21 CfEM in England providing practical support, resources and networks for teachers and trainers to test approaches to professional development.

The ETF manages and leads the programme. Activities are built around four pedagogical themes: Contextualisation; Motivation and Engagement; use of Technology and Data; and Mastery. All the themes were identified from international research to help learner achievement and improve employability.

2019–2020 was the first year of the National Trials, Action Research and Wider Centre Activity delivered through the CfEM programme:

- **National Trials** test the effectiveness of supporting teachers to utilise the themes and included model lessons, cluster meetings, teach meets and classroom activities.
- A separate cohort participated in the centre-led **Action Research** to build learning communities to support and guide teachers in researching maths practice.

- **Wider Centre Activity** provided funding for colleges to purchase additional resources and maths equipment to run activities linked to the four themes of the programme and support the quality of maths teaching up to Level 2.

Impact

Over two-thirds of participants (see numbers opposite) on the National Trials and Action Research¹ were found to have achieved a good increase in teacher knowledge of the four themes and how to apply these themes to their teaching. This in turn led to behaviour change and improved teacher confidence and motivation in teaching maths. Teachers felt more valued and had the confidence to try new things.

Good feedback was received for the content being used as part of the trials and at least half of teachers planned to continue to use some or all the content, with incredibly positive feedback for Mastery and Contextualisation.

Over 70 per cent of teachers² reported an increase in the quality of their lessons as a result of National Trials and Action Research.

The Wider Centre Activity provided a unique opportunity for colleges to buy the necessary resources to support the National Trials and Action Research and deliver bespoke maths CPD events.

Whilst only in the first year of these new CfEM activities, the evaluation noted teachers reporting they believe the changes had a positive impact on their learner achievements for 2019–2020. This was quite substantial, rated at 4.4 and 6.5 out of 10 for the National Trials and Action Research respectively.

In addition, some providers had already identified improvements in assessment or mock test results. Providers believed learners were likely to achieve higher grades than if they had not participated in the National Trials and Action Research.

“The mock results are much improved. Without a doubt this was affected by having learners in maths environments. It’s made a real difference. The change in classroom set-up has had a huge impact across the network... success rates and pass rates, whilst still relatively low, have improved significantly (not dramatically). Rates are well above average in the sector.”

Participant A

“Our attendance has gone up by 10 per cent this year, less staff leaving, more staff meeting observation standards, more peer observations happening. My November resits for maths had improved by 10 per cent from last year... we were hopeful of the GCSE results to reflect what we’ve done.”

Participant B

Alongside the evidenced outcomes, most teachers also reported that the programme had a significant impact on learners’ confidence, motivation, and self-esteem, as well as creating more independent learners. This could potentially lead to learners progressing to further learning and continuing to study maths at higher levels.

Looking ahead

Evaluation confirmed there is widespread support for the programme, and the structure and the support provided to teachers is broadly right. Some suggestions have been tabled to further develop support for providers, increase the use of cluster meetings, and assist with sharing of best practice in engaging network partners.



233

colleges, sixth form colleges and other providers of Level 2 maths in England are currently participating in the programme¹.

21

CfEM each host between 5–14 network partners to share practice, learn from each other and from national activity. This ensures the programme reaches and benefits the entire FE sector.

161,500

to date, 161,500 maths resit students have benefited from OTLA projects¹.

The CfEM has been funded by the DfE since October 2018. It is managed by the ETF and contracted to the University of Nottingham to deliver the National Trials with support from the AoC, Behavioural Insights Team (BIT), EEDI, Pearson, touchconsulting and White Rose Maths.

City College Plymouth (CfEM) is motivating and engaging maths students in different activities and in different learning environments, making maths part of college life and culture.

Compete with ME, Maths Corner and Inspire ME are just some of the activities using a combination of challenge, competition and inspirational talks to motivate students to rethink their approach to maths.

“There has been a shift in students’ attitude and an increase in participation of optional sessions and activities. The alternative learning environment has increased student engagement and interaction. For the ESOL group where joint teaching was used, attendance and engagement has increased. In August 2019, our GCSE results were 8.5 per cent above the national average for grades 4–9.”

Katie Fremlin, Project Manager



Case Study – Practitioner Research Programme



Our Purpose

The ETF believes that a research-literate and engaged FE workforce will improve their skills and pedagogical practice to generate better learning experiences and outcomes for students.

The Practitioner Research Programme (PRP) builds the sector's capacity for improvement through practitioner research. It is research by the sector for the sector.

The programme gives FE practitioners the time and space to reflect, experiment, apply existing research, and generate their own research evidence. This in turn informs best practice and creates a better learning experience for students.

The Programme

Funded by the ETF, the PRP enables staff across the FE and Training sector to explore their research ideas and build research skills to inform practice. By sharing the insight and knowledge gained across participant's organisations, the value of the original investment can be amplified for learners and sustainable learning networks established.

The PRP is delivered on behalf of the ETF by the University of Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training (SUNCETT). Both the MA Short course and the MPhil programme provide participants with expert research training and support from a renowned team of FE specialists.

Over a period of residential development workshops and ongoing tutorials, participants are guided to refine, develop and test their research idea.

Impact

Whilst interim, the findings of the second evaluation report¹ set out positive outcomes for the sector, employers, participants, and anecdotally, their students.

Confidence of practitioners as researchers in conducting and designing research as well as communicating their research and its implications for practice improved. Practitioners reported changing their own teaching practices as a direct result of the research. This included new ways of giving student feedback or embedding the use of digital technology.

“Now she has the confidence and freedom to develop her own resources to meet her students’ needs in a more personalised way. She has also realised that as a teacher it is acceptable to get things wrong... now she can use students’ questions as a teaching tool or as a research discussion point. This has made her classroom more collaborative.”

MPhil investigating the potential of an integrated circles pedagogy for the development of English language skills and shared understandings in an ESOL context.

The evidence also suggests that the PRP stimulates participant interest in research and research informed practice. It motivates individuals to continue to expand their professional knowledge and that of their colleagues who have been exposed to their colleagues’ research ideas and new ways of thinking.

Many practitioners have reported on and disseminated their findings internally within their own institution and externally, amongst sector networks. Sharing knowledge in this way as well as at academic conferences and through peer reviewed publication, increases the reach of the PRP.

The evaluation highlighted the important role of management and those in senior leadership roles actively supporting the dissemination of findings. This raises awareness of best practice and drives behaviour change outside of the department where the research took place.

The full impact of the programme for learners is difficult to ascertain in the short-term; however, practitioners have observed improvements in learner engagement and progress. One practitioner noted that the average pass rate for reading rose from 45 per cent to 77 per cent following a six-week English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course. Another practitioner confirmed a 100 per cent pass rate at Functional Skills Level 1 and 95 per cent at Level 2 for a recent cohort of learners.

1. Evaluation of the Practitioner Research Programme (The ETF, October 2020).

Looking ahead

Practitioners on the course value the programme and report improved research skills, plus an increased knowledge of pedagogical practice. Suggestions for future programme design include increasing opportunities to network with other practitioners on the course, for example, through an online classroom, and building in more time for reflection and reinforcement during residentials.

41¹

practitioners were supported on the Practitioner Research Programme during the year.

100%

of survey respondents who rated the quality of teaching at the residential stated that it was good or very good and knowledge of the teaching staff was excellent, as was knowledge of the FE sector.

95%

of participants completed and passed the course, with 41 per cent of survey respondents reporting potential for new career opportunities as a result of the programme.

83%

of research projects were disseminated in some way to colleagues, conferences and other FE providers.

The PRP is part of a portfolio of action research and research development opportunities provided by the ETF to support staff across the sector to explore their research ideas and build research skills to inform best practice.

MA Short Course: A supported experiments story: can popular culture enhance engagement?

Participant: An experienced practitioner, with a remit to re-engage the most difficult to engage students.

A key focus of the research project was to explore whether the use of music can develop positive engagement in lessons.

Approach: In collaboration with colleagues, practitioners used a range of methods to include music in their lessons. These included allowing students to listen to music on their phones, students working independently with background music throughout the lesson and music incorporated within activities.

Findings: Initial findings indicated that the use of music improved student engagement in the classroom. In particular, music without lyrics such as classical, jazz or ambient were considered more helpful for student engagement. Further research is required to better understand whether one method is more effective than another.

The research findings have been shared within the department and other teams. Other teachers are now using popular culture and music as a tool in the classroom. In addition, the participant's positive experience has encouraged others to try and test new ideas in the classroom.

The participant attributed an improvement in attainment to the programme. Last year, he achieved the best maths results to date (88 per cent pass rate) and believes the inclusion of popular culture and music increased learner engagement with maths.

The participant also improved his professional skills, is now a more reflective practitioner and has increased professional confidence in testing new creative and innovative ideas.

"There is clear evidence in this case study and in many others, substantiated by the volume of peer-reviewed publications and other research outputs from the PRP. The evidence demonstrates the PRP is making important and positive contributions to understandings of and debates about the role and potential of HE-supported practitioner research in bringing about sustained improvement in educational practice in the FE and skills sector."

Maggie Gregson, Professor of Vocational Education, Research Lead School of Education, Director of University of Sunderland Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training.



Case Study – Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Our Purpose

The Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) programme brings together providers and practitioners to collaborate and solve challenges impacting the FE sector.

The Programme

Through OTLA, the ETF facilitates collaborative practice and action research projects to tackle common themes impacting the sector.

Informed by research and evidence, activities under the OTLA banner focus on improving professional practice, outcomes for learners and improving the skills of those involved.

The ETF sets the themes and providers are invited to define the issue on the ground and apply for funding. Delivery partners assess the applications, award funding and assign a mentor to ensure the project is delivered against the agreed criteria and timescale. A commitment to 'passing it on' is a key principle of the OTLA programme. Results are widely shared so that any learnings benefit the wider sector and where possible the employer and industry ecosystem.

During the last year, the programme enabled 400 practitioners from 45 providers to support 12 projects¹ to develop evidence-based solutions for the improvement of English teaching, learning and assessment. Projects included using oracy and visualisers as classroom catalysts, creating a reading culture and developing reading and writing.

Impact

The ETF's evaluation² confirms consistent effective delivery of the projects. Importantly the funding has enabled providers to improve their teaching, learning and assessment practices. Peer-to-peer interaction and the sharing of good practice is highly valued.

Through participating in the projects, practitioners reported improved understanding of action research and increased confidence and knowledge about what progress and mastery in their subject looks like. These perceived improvements translated into:

- Changes in teaching practices.
- Participants making changes to address the needs of individual learners.
- Assessing the effectiveness of their teaching more frequently.
- Using a wider range of assessment techniques.

Such changes in participants' teaching practices also had positive effects on learners and the wider organisation.

The majority of survey respondents agreed they had seen improvements in learners' work readiness (86 per cent), behaviour (72 per cent), and attendance (62 per cent).

As well as delivering benefits for learners, participants reported the activities undertaken in class helped form better teacher-learner relationships. Immersion in an action research environment was reported to aid the development of a research culture amongst staff. Some 76 per cent plan to use action research approaches again in the future. The ETF is confident that the OTLA programme is building sustainable knowledge networks.

Looking ahead

The evidence supports the case for continuing OTLA with wide ranging benefits for the participant, their learners and the provider. Suggestions for future development include increasing opportunities for participants and providers to come together to share learning. Another suggestion involved increasing the availability and accessibility of the programme to as many providers as possible.

231

OTLA collaborative projects completed since 2015¹

440

Practitioners directly benefited from OTLA programmes in 2019–2020¹

1,683

A further 1,683 indirectly benefited from colleagues sharing their knowledge¹

2,500

More than 2,500 teachers and trainers involved nationwide from across the FE community¹

1,095

Practitioners collaborated in our Professional Exchange Networks across England¹

South Devon College explored how progressive marking strategies, including directed improvement and reflection time (DIRT) used widely in school settings, helped learners raise their grades².

Impact: All A Level and GCSE learners made progress in their marks, which was reflected in many cases in the grade boundaries.

“It teaches you how to improve.

I think that’s very important as we

ll want to get the best grades we can...

The feedback... helps us get a better

grade... The process makes it all

seem achievable.”

Learner A

“It gave me confidence for other exams

throughout the whole school, so I know

I can actually do this and improve on

everything I do.”

Learner B



Suffolk New College explored and adapted approaches using visualisers (a video camera, overhead projector and a magnifier in a single piece of equipment) to annotate texts live in class¹.

Impact: Students' confidence in writing a response to an exam style question with pertinent and appropriate quotations increased. There was also an increase in single word analysis and the linking of connotations to a word or phrase.

Higher order thinking skills were developed and students achieving a grade 4 increased from 38 at Assessment 1 to 164 at Mock 1. Additional observations by teachers indicated an improvement in student behaviour, a higher level of engagement and greater enjoyment of the lessons.

Feedback from learners included:

"It makes it easier to understand my teacher's explanations when they are linked to specific words that I can see visually."

"Annotations on the visualiser help me to understand the text."

"The visualiser helps me to see where I went wrong."

"It makes it easier to see where I have gone wrong on an exam question."



Burton and South Derbyshire College

aimed to promote greater reader development and attainment for a group of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learners based at a general FE college¹.

Impact: Structured as a reading challenge, students were given greater autonomy in the selection of reading material and formats which led to increased engagement in reading. Participants developed a better understanding of online materials particularly non-fiction, which many had not previously considered to be a natural context for reading.

Learners reported improved confidence and self-efficacy through taking part. They felt much better equipped to address their English needs and recognised that building effective reading habits and mastering good reading skills were crucial for their success. This led to learners who had not used the library services before becoming regular and active members of the college's library community.

Results were also shared with Newcastle College and enabled their ESOL team to overcome technology barriers that were stifling ESOL learners' writing for purpose.

"I really love this challenge, because this challenge make me happy and it made me gain confidence. Thank you for giving me this chance."

“

The SET for Teaching Success Programme has helped me to develop my teaching skills, boost my confidence and know the theory behind every aspect of teaching which has changed the way I relate to learners. The recent session on digital technology has really helped to show how I can make more use of the technology my learners use in my lessons.”

AKEEM AHMED, TEACHING FOR SUCCESS PARTICIPANT

“

Her analogy about AB having to have his ducks lined up stayed with me and helped me to really think about what was useful to him. I noticed a change in AB when I started implementing the feedback; he began smiling and also seemed to view the tasks as an adventure. The real turning point came when he was able to write a complete letter in about 15 minutes. He was clearly pleased and was able to acknowledge that he had done well.”

OTLA, CITY LIT PARTICIPANT

OUR PARTNERS



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for Education

We welcome any feedback on this report to help inform the 2020-2021 Public Benefit Report.

communications@etfoundation.co.uk

For other correspondence or queries:

157-197 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 9SP

020 3740 8280

enquiries@etfoundation.co.uk

ETFUNDATION.CO.UK

ETF397/10/20

Company registration number
(England and Wales): 08540597.
Charity number: 1153859