

Case Study: Learner Voice and the Quality Development Plan

'Assessment and learning: involving the learner'. LSC funded project.

**The context:**

The Foundation Department is set within the Vocational Academy at Tyne Metropolitan College. It caters for young people aged approximately between 16 and 21 years who have a learning difficulty and/or disability.

The Social and Vocational Skills Course aims to provide an inclusive education for those young people who are potential NEET, who haven't achieved the grades at GCSE that would enable them to access main stream courses and/or have behavioural or emotional difficulties. The underpinning philosophy of the course is to promote confidence and self esteem as well as self awareness, communication and social skills which will ultimately lead to further education, training or work.

The challenge:

As part of the `learner voice` strategy all students across the college complete a questionnaire, which surveys their thoughts and feelings around all aspects of college life. This in turn informs the Quality Development Plan (QDP). Although a useful tool in the implementation of change within college, for our learners this survey is inappropriate because of the complexity of the language and the grading system. Because of the unsuitability of this survey to adequately access the views of our learners, it is necessary to create a discrete strategy which will more successfully reflect their views.

What we did:

Learners were introduced to the concept of Edward De Bono's Six Thinking Hats (de Bono, E. (2000) *Six Thinking Hats*. London: Penguin)

In a series of different sessions, learners were asked to consider different types of thinking to enable them to undertake various tasks. This allowed them to reconsider their own views and to challenge the views and ideas of others. This in turn helps them formulate and articulate their ideas. The development of higher order thinking supports them in identifying the positive aspects of themselves instead of them constantly focusing on the negative which, in turn, constitutes a barrier to learning.

In small groups, learners recognised the various aspects of college that provide help, support, guidance and services. From this they were asked to focus on the college refectory, and to give their feelings and thoughts on the service the refectory provides to the student body.

The completed task sheets were used as an aide memoire for them to then complete a simple learner questionnaire which only required an “agree/disagree” response.

The outcomes:


- Recognised the principle of de Bono’s ‘Six Thinking Hats’.
- Selected and used the appropriate hats in a variety of situations to complete a series of tasks.
- Evaluated the services provided by the refectory
- Identified the positive and negative aspects of this service
- Carried out a student survey and then rated the refectory services.

The impact:

- This provided a meaningful tool for students to put forward their views in a non-threatening manner.
- It helped them to explore their ideas and opinions.
- It gave the students a feeling of ownership.
- Students gained the belief that their feelings and opinions matter, and will be heard and acted upon.
- Provided students with a tool to enable them to think more effectively.
- Supported higher order thinking skills
- Promoted greater self confidence and self esteem
- Provided a template for further development of ‘The Learner Voice’.

Supporting documentation:

- Task sheet – The college refectory
- Learner questionnaire – The college refectory

 <p>tynemetropolitancollege</p>	<p>For further information contact:</p> <p>Lesley Gibb, Course Tutor,</p> <p>Telephone number: 0191 229 5279</p> <p>Email address: Lesley.gibb@tynemet.ac.uk</p>
---	--



THE COLLEGE REFECTORY

What are the positive things about the college refectory?

What are the negative aspects the refectory?

How do you think the refectory could be improved?

Learner's Questionnaire – The Refectory



Read through the following statements and ✓ the column which applies to you

	Agree	Disagree
The refectory is generally clean & tidy		
It is easy to get a seat		
The staff are helpful		
I can get served quickly		
There is plenty of choice		
The prices are reasonable		
I can get hot food if necessary		
The atmosphere is friendly		
I enjoy meeting my friends in the refectory		
I prefer to buy my lunch from the local shops		
It is good value for money		
The food is tasty		
There is a choice of healthy food options		
There are a good selection of hot and cold drinks		