



The SIP Project Training 12-16th March 2018 – External Evaluation Report

Introduction

The SIP Projects first training course was delivered from the 12th to the 16th March 2018 in Maidenhead in the UK by Learning Plus UK Data Ltd.

The course was attended by 3 Spanish delegates, 6 Czech Delegates, 5 Finnish delegates and 4 teachers including a head teacher from 2 Irish schools. There were 18 delegates in total.

The external assessor attended 3 days of the training and undertook a number of evaluation activities whilst present. All delegates and the event co-ordinators facilitated these seamlessly in the schedule and cooperated fully. Particular thanks must go to the course director for this JMcl and other staff at Learning Plus UK Ltd including DR, SP, JW and CF who were all involved in aspects of the training.

The Learning Plus UK Data Ltd training event delivered as part of the SIP Project was evaluated through the following methods:

- A pre training questionnaire completed by delegates analysing their expertise and requirements. 3 Finnish delegates completed this together, 1 individually, 3 Irish delegates completed returns along with 3 Spanish and 6 Czech.
- An activity gaining immediate feedback from all delegates on the course.
- A detailed post training questionnaire aimed at judging the impact of the training for individuals.
- An action plan aimed at recording individual and institution plans to use the training and expertise developed during the 30 hour course. The action plan will be used by the partners to track activities within their institutional delivery and by the evaluator on a sampling basis to look at the impact of the overall programme. The action plans were gathered by Learning Plus UK Ltd and will be used to monitor progress.

Background

Learning Plus UK Data Ltd were tasked with delivering a 5-day course in March 2018. They developed the Grade Predictor tool in the UK. They have significant experience in the training of teachers and other staff in education settings around the use of data and tools to measure and improve performance. They bring a meticulous and analytical approach to their training and the use of data.

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The aim of the course as described in the project submission was to prepare staff to trial the grade predictor tool in their own country and institution/s.

Aim

The aim of the course was to give professionals working in schools including teachers and other staff such as careers counsellors the skills and knowledge to support students to make the right decisions on their course choice, to avoid early school leaving or indeed under achievement. The course would also acknowledge the need to and provide tools for the identification of students who may not present themselves as needing help or who are in danger of falling through the net.

The course aimed to provide 30-hours of delivery including the following topics:

- An introduction to the Trial Grade Predictor Tool
- How Grade Predictor works. The methodology. The Validity.
- The importance of data to address Early School Leaving and Achievement
- A day of case studies and trying it yourself.
- A one day' observation in a school where Grade Predictor is used.
- Two workshops on interventions to accompany the Grade Predictor Tool including visits to institutions.
- Participants to visit at least 2 schools where Grade Predictor is used meeting staff and students.

It was recognised that across Europe it is not just teachers who are involved in work with students who are making decisions on courses, who are potentially liable to dropout or who are underachieving and also similarly that not all interventions which are successful happen in the classroom. Therefore a range of staff were involved in the training including senior staff, those involved in staff development and teachers/counsellors in secondary schools/ colleges and the Labour Market office in Vsetin in the Czech Republic. The training was carried out through observation/lecture/workshop/discussion and other methods. The event was certificated by Learning Plus UK Data Ltd.

Delegates had the opportunity to experience what worked well and gain background knowledge and experience as to how this happens in order that they are equipped to replicate these techniques in their own educational settings.

The training aimed to provide examples of excellence but also challenge the practice and approaches of participants. It aimed to provide innovation captured from the UK and showcase excellence.

It was expected that training activities would inspire, up skill and provide resources and techniques which participants can use in their own country. This would align with project objectives.

The course was delivered by a range of staff at Learning Plus UK Data Ltd. and led by JMCL. It included: observation/shadowing/lecture/workshop/discussion and other methods including attendance at the Learning Plus UK Data Ltd National Summit. It included short placements in schools/counselling centres to observe and work shadow practice.

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Learning Plus UK Data Ltd staff were available to mentor staff during the course delivery as they aimed to develop a tool to replicate their training and practice with colleagues in their workplace and region/country.

An action plan was developed by individuals and teams at the end of the training to support this action.

The Expertise and Experience of delegates

All delegates were asked to complete a pre-training questionnaire for the trainers to gauge the level of expertise of delegates, to endeavour to address specific requirements and to provide a course which delegates would find pertinent and something that they could learn from and replicate.

Delegates were asked to respond to a range of questions.

Here a short summary is provided of the pre training questionnaires received:

Czech Republic

Summary

- Most delegates appear very new to the concept of the Grade Predictor tool and how it can be used.
- One delegate brings data expertise.
- Delegates are keen to use the tool to address dropout particularly with students who are experiencing difficulties.
- The plan appears to involve a range of school staff from Head teachers to counsellors to make an impact across the Zlin region.

Ireland

Summary

- A number of staff appear new to the project.
- All are keen to use the tool and disseminate widely.
- They want to put students in the centre of their own goal setting.
- They are keen to create an environment of collaboration.
- They want a steer on how to implement and to look at examples in practice.
- Work has been carried out on the collection of data.
- A teacher with maths expertise will be in attendance.

Finland

Summary

- Some staff are familiar with school management systems and data.
- All are keen to address how the tool can help with recruitment and marketing.
- Others wish to know can it be used with adults and how does the counselling aspect work.
- Another question for Finnish delegates is if the tool it worth using in the college application process.

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- All are keen to observe practice in the UK.

Spain

Summary

- A good understanding of the topic is in place as a number attended the initial meeting
- Keen to progress and implement.
- Have identified and gathered data
- Keen to impact on dropout and success.
- Delegates want steps to follow.

Overall Summary

The questionnaires portray generally a picture of partners having put together teams of staff for implementation and begun to identify and collect data. Many have also thought about how they might use the tool and some of these ideas are very imaginative. They now wish to look at how others have used the tool and want to think through how they can implement it in their own settings and how it will provide most benefits.

Feedback from the training.

An informal group activity was held at the very end of the training to gain immediate feedback from delegates. Here are a few of the responses from delegates:

What is the most memorable thought that you will have from your weeks training course in Maidenhead?

- The input at the Data Summit from the HMI. Consistently delegates saw this input as important, strategic, well delivered and having pertinence for their own settings.
- The use of data to strategically make a difference.
- The visit to the catering college in London, the facilities, the range of students.
- The learning environment. The opportunity to mix learning with a brilliant cultural experience with visits to the Palace, shopping, Paddington Bear, the theatre and other activities.
- The opportunity to get to know other delegates and learn from them.
- The exposure of the challenges ahead to implement the tool in respective countries.
- Slainte-An Irish phrase for health.

Summary

Undoubtedly delegates give the impression of having been thoroughly impressed by the training and its content. They really enjoyed the opportunity to mix cultural activities with their learning with 2 of the training days taking place in Central London. They all appeared to take a very hands on and pragmatic approach to the implementation of the tool in their country, the Irish thinking through how they could get other schools involved, The Finnish team working out a strategy across their counselling services and so forth.

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On a show of hands most felt inspired to progress onto implementation whilst a smaller number felt moderately confident in addressing the task ahead.

Post Training Evaluation Reports

15 delegates returned an individual detailed post training evaluation report. A group of 3 Finnish staff compiled a joint return. After completion they were also asked to complete an action plan which they were given about 30 minutes to plan with their own institution colleagues.

The post training evaluation report aimed to give delegates the chance to state how they felt about the training delivery and content and whether it had impacted on their knowledge and skills to implement developments in the future. The results are as follows:

The objectives of the training were clearly defined.

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree-9

Agree-7

Neutral 2

Summary

All were clear on what to expect.

The materials distributed were helpful.

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly agree-5

Agree-9

Neutral-4

Summary

Most delegates were happy with this aspect. It seemed to cover well the variance in expertise of delegates on a very difficult topic and task which was new to many.

The content was organized and easy to follow.

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree-7

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Agree-11

Summary

A very strong endorsement of the training content and techniques.

Overall the training was highly effective.

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly agree-5

Agree-13

Summary

All saw ways to use and develop what they had learnt. The training was deemed highly effective by all participants.

This training experience will be useful in my contribution the implementation of the use of grade predictor in my institution.

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree 6

Agree 10

Neutral 1

Not answered 1

Summary

A very strong outcome here. The neutral response came from a non educational colleague and the non response was from a supervisory colleague.

My expectations were fulfilled.

Strongly Agree - Agree - Neutral - Disagree - Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree-9

Agree-7

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Neutral-1

No comment 1

Summary

Expectations were largely fulfilled. The trainers endeavoured to design a programme to meet expectations from delegates and to address the project requirements.

What did you most like about the training?

- Half an hour with JW discussing the tool and then half an hour as a team x 3
- The school visit and to see how Grade Predictor was used.
- Understanding how the tool can be used for improvement.
- Understanding Grade Predictor and how to reconstruct it in the Czech Republic.
- Meeting colleagues.
- School Visit x3.
- London.
- The atmosphere. JMcL enabled this.
- Clear Instructions.
- The college visit x 2.
- The Grade Predictor tool and its sophistication.
- Networking x 2.
- The Summit.
- Clarity.
- Flexible and participative workshops.
- Interactions with partner schools/groups.
- The HMI input at the summit.
- Understanding the tool.

Results

How would you rate your current understanding of the training topic?
(1 novice - 5 expert)

1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

5-1

4-9

3-5

2-3



Summary

There is still a little work to do with those who graded themselves as 2. They however are all from the one country where the coordinator reports a high understanding of the topic. They all reported a low understanding of the topic at the outset.

The other scores show a remarkable achievement with 10 delegates reporting a really strong understanding as a result of the training. This is very positive and a reflection of the content and training methodology.

How were your skills and knowledge enhanced?

- A better understanding of the UK education system and that in partner countries.
- Knowledge on Grade Predictor outputs.
- Ideas on interactions/interventions teachers can give to students to impact on achievement and progress.
- How to use Grade Predictor.
- Generating and using data for enhancement of student outcomes.
- Understanding the Grade Predictor tool and how we can use it in Finland.
- The purpose and goals of Grade Predictor.
- "I understood how to use Grade Predictor in the Czech Republic".
- "I understood the potential of Grade Predictor".
- How to gather and use data and also how to input it.
- Improved knowledge of the British Education system.
- How to use Grade Predictor in a mentoring role and how to advise students and families using its results.
- An understanding of how to use Grade Predictor in the Spanish Education system.

Summary

All delegates reported something in this section largely reflecting their ability now to understand how the Grade Predictor tool works and how they might adapt it to their own institution and practice. A few commented on wider learning from the training such as an understanding of the British education system. By and large delegates however focussed on the understanding of the tool and how they can implement it, how they will collect data and use the outputs. They were very focussed on this.

The most interesting thing you learnt.

- The range of possibilities for the use of Grade Predictor.
- The need to make progress.
- Knowledge of other education systems.
- Apprenticeships in England.
- How important it is to take care of students.
- Students well being and achievement is what really matters.
- How to use Grade Predictor with students.
- Observing students and teachers in a school setting.

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- Importance of the Vocational Education setting in England
- To visit Altwood school and observe.
- Timetabling and assessment in Altwood School.
- The approach of the mentor in Altwood school
- The good practice at Westminster College.
- Which information is required to enable Grade Predictor in my country?

Summary

A great range of learning here from meeting colleagues in the UK, observing practice, attending seminars and focussing on Grade Predictor practice.

Did the training inspire you to do something new in your daily work?

- To see the whole journey of the pupil. To support to the next level.
- Yes. Looking forward to seeing the accuracy of data in Ireland.
- Identification of underperforming students.
- Introduction of a grade prediction method with a whole school and whole staff approach.
- Introduction of the tool in my school x5.
- We will test and trial the tool in the first place x2.
- Use of the tool by counsellors in our college.
- To link the tool to personal development planning for each course in the college.
- Improve careers guidance.
- Use Grade Predictor during student induction.

Summary

Here once again we see individual and institutional approaches to implementing some change with virtually all colleagues having ideas. The link to personal development planning, inductions and careers guidance all show innovation and development.

What other topics did you learn about that might help you to do your job better?

- My spoken English has improved 😊
- The HMI workshop x 3.
- The English Education Curriculum.
- The presentation from the counsellor at Altwood.
- The influence of the education system on the labour market.
- How the House System worked in Altwood School.
- How to help students improve.
- The benefits of Grade Predictor for monitoring purposes.
- Careers Counselling.
- How data can motivate students.
- School security. We could learn from this in Finland.
- The importance of data.

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- Interventions to impact on students positively.

Summary

Undoubtedly the inputs from Altwood School were popular bringing the tool to life in a school setting. Others however gained knowledge on the general approach to education in the UK with one even noting safeguarding approaches. Attendance and participation in the Data Summit in London was popular with delegates and many were highly impressed by the HMI input.

Conclusions

The training certainly met all its aims and objectives. It was very well attended as planned by project partners. The Czech partner used an extra place whilst one of the Irish delegates could not travel at the last minute. All received certificates. All delegates were suitable and provided a range of expertise to enhance networking and stretch discussions. The counselling team from Finland, the teachers from Ireland and Spain and the mix of staff from the Czech Republic all combined well to provide a productive and problem solving group who participated with great enthusiasm in a relaxed and respectful environment.

In addition the international delegates delivered an input at the National Data Summit meeting which seemed very well received by over 60 delegates there.

“The aim of the course was to give professionals working in schools including teachers and other staff such as careers counsellors the skills and knowledge to support students to make the right decisions on their course choice, to avoid early school leaving or indeed under achievement. The course would also acknowledge the need to and provide tools for the identification of students who may not present themselves as needing help or who are in danger of falling through the net”.

The feedback from delegates through informal discussion, observation by the external evaluator, small workshop activity and questionnaire would support the judgement that the training met all its aims and objectives.

What was most remarkable was what an impact the training had on so many of the delegates by increasing their knowledge and expertise on the use of data and grade predictor and providing them with confidence and tools to trial and hopefully implement changes in their individual teaching, their counselling, their induction of students, their careers guidance and in their institutions, all to benefit students. One partner talked about disseminating the outcomes of the trial across their Training Board to get more schools involved.

The training of course raised questions and challenges and has set the benchmark for the rest of the project. The resources to be produced within the project have taken on significance, the testing and then trial of a customised tool in each country is required by November. Testing needs to be carried out by June/July 2018. Each partner appears well equipped to do this. They are all aware of the tasks they need to undertake. Perhaps the biggest challenge is in the Czech Rep where the greatest number of institutions are involved but the delegates have good leadership and a clear steer on what needs to be done. The Spanish team have some very firm ideas on usage and benefits in their vocational setting, whilst the Irish recognise data challenges and the need to engage partner schools. It was fantastic that The Finnish team were able to have a group of staff together on the training

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that will be responsible for the delivery in their college and they had many strong and imaginative approaches to aligning the tool with practice in Finland. All partners are in a good position to progress.

It was very encouraging and significant that whilst all seemed to focus by necessity on the mechanism of the Grade Predictor tool, many mentioned that the end goal was about helping young people and students “students well being and achievement is what really matters”.

In the overall evaluation of the project the external evaluator has set 5 topics and it is useful to address these in relation to this training.

1. - Exchange of practice - are the products genuinely good practice;

The content and delivery of the training was genuinely good practice. Delegates with a range of experience endorsed this. Some superb practice was experienced. Grade Predictor is a unique tool and the transfer of it across European national boundaries is genuinely good practice.

2. - Transnationality - the success of transnational working and the effectiveness of partners' contributions;

This was strong. Delegates learned from each other and shared practice. All however were generally impressed by the strength of what was in place in the host country. The approach of the use of data was genuinely new to most and challenged their practice significantly. Many were inspired to develop ways of planning its transfer and usage to their own setting.

3. - Partnership - the overall management and administration of partnership working;

Everything ran like clockwork. The management and administration of the week was outstanding. This was praised by a number of the delegates who mentioned staff by name.

4. - Dissemination - whether partners have reached a wide audience;

Plans are in place to do this in every country. The tracking of action plans by partner leads and sampling of these by the external evaluator will evidence if intention becomes reality.

Valorisation - whether partnerships have achieved multiplier effects through mainstreaming activity.

It will be interesting to gauge over the length of the project whether for example more GRETB institutions become involved or indeed more schools in Zlinsky kraj. These are just two examples. The embedding of the tool in the practice of individual institutions it could be argued will be a multiplier effect in itself.

Brian Martin on behalf of SES13-19 Ltd

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