Race

1. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities learning outreach

Our original project proposal

The aim of our project was to encourage members of the Gypsy, Romany and Traveller (GRT) community within Herefordshire to engagement and participate in all kinds of learning, from light touch family learning through to accredited education and training.

The project gave us at Herefordshire Council an ideal opportunity to explore 'what works' to engage the GRT community in adult learning opportunities.

Who could participate?

Adults aged 19+ from the Traveller community in Herefordshire, inclusive of those in the community with all forms of learning or physical disability, and women who have had interrupted learning and have no formal qualifications.

How we identified the need

In the 2011 Census, 360 Herefordshire residents declared themselves as being in the Gypsy and Irish Traveller ethnic group. It is estimated that the actual Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) population is between 550 and 800.

Nationally, pupils from the GRT community are among the lowest-achieving groups at every Key Stage of education. In Herefordshire, all 20 children from the GRT community entering the foundation stage at school during 2008 and 2009 failed to meet the basic attainment criteria. It is believed that this is largely due to the lack of education their parents obtained, thus leaving them unable to pass on basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Attainment gaps are a complex issue and the underperformance of GRT pupils is due to a combination of factors, including financial deprivation, low levels of parental literacy and aspiration for their children's academic achievement, poor attendance and bullying. Furthermore, more parents are electing to provide home schooling without the necessary skills required to support their children.

Combinations of these circumstances mean that even today very few members of the Traveller community gain 5+ GCSE's (2 in 2011). Engagement with adult learning in Herefordshire is low (5 of 3702 learners enrolled 2010 - 2013).

Objectives

- To engage a minimum of 35 members of the Traveller community in family learning.
- Undertake a learning assessment with a minimum of 20 participants, and signpost and support them into learning opportunities.

- Support the delivery of a minimum of 10 courses with individuals or small groups, and delivered in venues within the Traveller community, where possible.
- Undertake research to understand what works in terms of engaging the Traveller community into adult learning through the use of focus groups and case studies.

The Rural Media Company was commissioned to produce an end of project film to highlight the learner's journey and achievements, and project as a whole:

https://youtu.be/UTkNs5Vy50w?list=UUIlnJQmKVdRe1MjlRc37URg

What went well?

The recruitment of a dedicated Outreach worker who earned the respect of the community worked extremely well. This was because it built on existing relationships between professionals and families (partnership work).

Working jointly with the community to identity and run courses of direct interest to the community, being flexible to the needs of the learners e.g. location and timing of courses.

The partnership between Herefordshire Adult and Community Learning and Social Inclusion Equalities team worked extremely well. The Outreach worker was able to learn from colleagues within the Traveller Education team to understand the best ways of working with the community, visiting prospective learners in their own homes, accepting hospitality and plan together whilst listening carefully to the learners needs.

The learning Providers were chosen carefully and adapted superbly to the diverse needs of learners.

For example:

- Bespoke fire safety for Showmen
- Skilled tuition in welding to capable learners who were barely literate
- Driving theory – supporting apprehension and fear through calm tuition and modern learning support tools

What lessons did we learn?

Firstly, due to unforeseen HR problems the recruitment process took much longer than anticipated, leading to a delay in commencing the project. A different approach from the outset may have alleviated these issues, and any future process which take this into account

Secondly, allowing learners to dictate the programme of learning was fundamental to the success of the project, but this led to more bespoke courses being delivered in addition to those available through existing Council contracts. To facilitate this funding was diverted from funds reserved for development of the service. It was felt the learning and training needs of the Traveller community was more important. However, future courses will need to utilize existing avenues of funding to ensure we can adequately meet the demands of the community.

Finally, the evaluation of long term outcomes could not realistically be obtained during the short timescale of the project. These outcomes will need to be revisited in conjunction with whichever organisation takes on the responsibility for delivery of the project model, subject to a successful bid with Big Lottery Reaching Communities

What are Herefordshire Council doing to sustain the project?

Due to the success of the project Herefordshire Council has found funding to continue supporting the model until December 2014. Concurrently a funding bid with Big Lottery Reaching Communities is being prepared by Red Spark Learning CIC, based in Leominster in Herefordshire. The bid will be supported by Herefordshire Council, specifically the Project Development Officer (Voluntary and Community Sector).

Further courses specifically tailored for the Showmen located in Ross-on-Wye will be run in Autumn/Winter once their travelling season ends. We shall also look to expand the agricultural courses utilising our allocation of Adult Skills Budget funding where possible. Learners will also be signposted to opportunities Community Learning funded opportunities within our existing contracts, or other organisations allocations.

Finally, we will continue to support learners into further education where possible, and contribute to fees if possible.

Attachment

Case study 1 GRT02 JT 31 07 14.doc

Case study 2 GRT23 HM 05 08 14.doc

2. **Improving Equalities in Talent Match and Traineeships**

What did we set out to do?

Our original plan was to develop a model of coaching and mentoring aimed at promoting equality, diversity and inclusion of BAME learners in The Big Lottery Talent Match programme, and increasing achievement rates and progression from Talent Match on to Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

The proposed strategies were –

- Establish whether one to one counselling for 20 BAME learners would enable them to progress on to mainstream Further Education, work or an Apprenticeship.
- Promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to the new Big Lottery funded Talent Match programmes and influence how EDI may become more significant in Talent Match.
- Promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to local employers, learners and training providers involved in delivering Traineeships.
- Engage local BAME employers and learners to participate in main stream programmes through demonstrating the benefits of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
- Develop a business case for investing in one to one coaching for disengaged N.E.E.T. learners to ultimately save the State money as the learners progress out of benefit dependency.

A key focus of our project was the new Talent Match programme.

Talent Match

Talent Match is a long term programme funded by The Big Lottery Fund in 21 locations across England. It aims to target young people who are furthest from employment. A learner led programme, in Sheffield City Region Talent Match provides a wide menu of services to meet the needs of some 1,300 young people by bringing together partnerships of employers, education providers and others.

It is led by local charities in each of the 21 regional areas. Each has its own approach for how it supports young NEETs.   See http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/talentmatch.

 Sheffield City Region, which includes all of the South Yorkshire area, is one of these key areas and its approach includes –

- Coaching^{definition}.
- Mentoring.
- Employability.
- Counselling.
- Re-motivation.
- Work Experience.
- Subsided Employment^{definition}.
- Leadership Skills.

Since our project started Sheffield Talent Match was allocated funding of £10,000,000 in January this year, three months into our project. Sheffield Talent Match is still in an earlier stage than anticipated.

By the end of our project over 70 learners have been engaged. The managing organisation, Sheffield Futures, has appointed 20 full time job coaches. We deliver coaching support to NEETs as a partner provider.

Traineeships

Traineeships were first introduced in 2013 – 2014, and so are still relatively new. They replaced the Access To Apprenticeships programme, and offer a pre-Apprenticeship programme of up to six months, for young people who are not yet job ready. Traineeships have four components –

- Functional skills training and qualifications.
- Employability skills training.
- Confidence building and work ethic.
- Work experience.

The uptake of traineeships has been mixed in the first year. Some providers have been cautious about what they are required to deliver, as the delivery framework was modified several times during 2013. Some providers, mainly FE^{definition} Colleges, have been concerned about the relatively small amount of funding available to pay for this programme of intensive support.

We have developed our own delivery model for traineeships, as part of our project. Our model incorporates the mandatory components, as well as several sessions of personal coaching for every learner.

We have also developed a Talent Pool of learners who progress successfully through traineeships. As they become job ready, so we refer them to colleagues in our employer engagement team who look to place them in to a suitable Apprenticeship vacancy.

Partnerships

Our partners included –

- A local multicultural centre.
- Three SME employers.
- A provider of short term accommodation for homeless people.
- Several other training providers.
- Sheffield Hallam University.

What did we do?

The focus of the project was BAMEs who were age 24 or under and seeking to progress on to training or an Apprenticeship.

What did we learn?

We found out that:

- Young people from BAME groups are encouraged and influenced by their families to continue their education and training in further and higher education, rather than Work based learning.
- Apprenticeships and vocational training were seen as being inferior and not something that they would wish their children to pursue.
- Young people from BAME communities were not interested in a traineeship or Apprenticeship.
- The heart of the problem with traineeships is that they have a low profile with BAME learners or their employers.

At first, because the percentage of BAME groups in South Yorkshire is lower than in many other regions, we considered that this reluctance of BAME take up was a regional variance. However, in December 2013 our findings were also echoed on a national level by The Institute for Employment Studies in their report *Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeship.*

https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/UnderRepresentationInApprenticeships.pdf

The report found that barriers to greater inclusivity in Apprenticeships includes –

- Parental views of suitable occupations.
- Perceptions about routes to a good job.
- Lack of knowledge of the benefits of Apprenticeships.
- Negative perceptions of Apprenticeships.

- Apprenticeships are seen as a 'second best, second chance' route or simply as a route to trade and craft occupations and not the professions. This is also reflected by almost a third more BAMEs in continuing education than in Apprenticeships.
- Parents and other influencers of young people often simply do not understand the current Apprenticeship offer and its benefits.

Who we worked with

Reflecting the rich BAME diversity in South Yorkshire, our 22 learners came from a diversity of cultures and backgrounds;

- 8 Pakistan
- 1 Indian
- 2 Greek
- 1 Iranian
- 1 Slovenian
- 1 Eire
- 1 Egyptian
- 1 Syrian
- 1 Nigerian
- 1 Columbian
- 1 African
- 1 Spanish
- 1 Chinese
- 1 Serbian

Some of their individual stories are attached below in the resource <u>Just Some of Our Successes</u>

What we did

- Working with our partners we identified a number of people who would benefit from support to start their learning journey towards mainstream provision.
- Initially we anticipated that a major need would be ESOL^{definition}, but this only applied to one learner out of the 22.
- The majority of the learners needed confidence building provided by help with academic English, functional skills, communication, living skills and mentoring and coaching.
- The support we provided was all personal coaching on a one-to-one basis, apart from where learners who needed their confidence building meant working in a small group of three or four

How we did It – our approach

In his book *The Adult Learner at Work* Robert Burns uses a metaphor of the 'petrol tank' view of school education, to describe the need for learner led Adult Learning (Andragogy). 'fill the tank full at the only garage before the freeway, then away we go on life's journey' However, if people have not had their tank filled completely at school there needs to be service stations along 'the length of the highway of life'.

This supports the view that by adulthood people are self-directing. This is the concept that lies at the heart of successful adult learning which should be therefore learner-led and directed experience-based, problem-oriented and collaborative.

Our approach was based on the ethos that:

- Each learner had an assessment of their needs which we, along with the learner, developed into an individual action plan and a schedule of progress reviews.
- For many of the learners a major issue was lack of confidence in their skills or ability.
- The process was learner led using the collaborative / problem solving basis which enabled the learners to decide on their needs, give them empowerment and build their confidence.
- Some coaching went as scheduled, whereas some grew to encompass other areas.
- For example, while all learners had 'one to one' sessions, some developed into wanting to meet other learners for a more interactive experience. What we did

Each learner's needs were different. The various learning strategies, subjects, practical support and coaching delivery are well illustrated in the individual stories in the attachment. As an example, each learner had a 'Can Do' note book where they recorded the skills, abilities and qualities that they had and to which they added as their confidence developed.

A main course for under 60p each

- Although there was a wide diversity of support, teaching and confidence building activities, one particularly successful session was the 'meet and eat', or 'how to cook a two course meal for under 99p a head'.
- At the dissemination events there was a great deal of interest in the sort of approaches that we had adopted. As well as sampling the meal for less than 60p, visitors took a book mark and an information sheet containing the recipe and a range of ideas for embedding Functional Skills and confidence building. The information sheet is attached.
- The 'meet and eat' sessions started out as an unplanned response to a learner's problem. In this case the learner was spending their limited resources on fast food, and in response we suggested that a two course meal could be cheaper than the cost of a basic MacDonald's burger.
- Rather than have a one to one session, the learner suggested that other learners could be invited to the session.
- The learners prepared and cooked a two course meal at a cost of 96p per serving.

Benefits of the meet and eat sessions

- **Economic Benefits:** The amount of food prepared, a main course and a dessert, was more than a standard 'fast food' item. With a slight increase the food could provide more than one meal. This meant that the learners had more available money each week.

- **Learners Learnt New Skills:** Some learners had limited or no cookery skills and the sessions taught them practical skills which could help them in the future both in everyday life and job search. Something to add to the 'Can Do' note book.

- **Improving Speaking And Listening Skills In English:** As English was the common language in the sessions the learners were able to practice their English with others who did not have English as their first language. This made them more confident at speaking English without any fear of being laughed at, and improved their 'social' English.

- **Improving Numeracy Skills:** The sessions gave many opportunities for practical applications of Numeracy, such as proportions, addition, and division, to improve the learners' numeracy skills.

- **Learners Taught Other Learners Skills:** Those learners who already had cooking skills taught other learners. This importune teaching acted as a boost to their confidence.

- **Healthy Eating:** Eating healthily has been shown to improve general good health, reduce depression and improve energy levels. All important factors in boosting confidence and subsequent preparing for a learning journey.

- **Team Work:** Team work is an important factor in both learning and employment. Cooking together developed new and existing team skills with everyone working together to shop, prepare, cook, serve and wash up.   Another boost to the learner's confidence and 'Can Do' list.

- **Socialising:** Learners got to meet new people and widen their circle of friends.

- **Greater confidence and enhanced self-esteem:** All the above benefits helped in boosting learners' confidence and enhancing their self esteem.

Sustaining the momentum

The first meet and eat group proved so successful that it became a regular event with our traineeships and with our Talent Match learners. Each session included a menu and plan for the following session. The groups still meet and eat every fortnight.

Where are we 6-months on?

- 22 people from BAME groups were supported instead of the expected 20.
- Nearly all have progressed on to FE, Work, or Mainstream programmes.
- The 'meet and eat' group is still going strong.
- We deliver IAG^{definition} on potential routes to those who are still undecided about which education or training course to pursue.
- Significantly, during the duration of the project, attitudes have changed from **can't** (go to college or into Work Based Learning), to **could**, to **will**, to **what** (course at college or Apprenticeship).

Impact of our project

Above all the project was about individuals and progressing them towards mainstream provision. The work has made a demonstrable positive impact on its twenty two recipients. Had it not been for the personal coaching the lives of these individuals would have continued to tread water, but now they have restored

confidence and self esteem. Undoubtedly the seeds that we planted and the nurturing we gave have borne fruit.

- In 2007 a report commissioned by The Prince's Trust estimated the cost to the state of just one NEET as £56,000. Some seven years on this sum will have risen. Measuring the tangible savings to the State of our project is not a precise calculation, however -
  - Each of learners received £72.40 in unemployment benefit and an average of £110 in Housing and Council Tax Benefit per week, giving a cost of just under £9,500 per year.
  - With the project cost of £1,000 per learner we conclude the State has saved at least £8,000 per learner in benefits and other financial support.
- The personal coaching provided, ESOL support, mentoring, confidence building and even cookery classes have all contributed to developing a 'can do' attitude in the recipients.
- By enabling training and further education opportunities and specialised support such as help with academic English, some people were even empowered to move towards higher education.
- There are also benefits in how these people feel – happier, healthier and, to quote one recipient, '*able to see a future before me'*.
- The importance of this impact encompasses both long and short term, general and specific.
- In the short term the project has enabled individuals who would not normally progress to mainstream education or training to do so.
- Meeting a challenge and achieving success is good for people's health, they feel better in themselves, more confident, and less stressed.
- In the longer term individuals are more likely to progress to further learning or better careers, which will enhance their life and that of their family.
- They will not be dependent upon benefit and this will broaden their options and life style.
- Generally any improvement in an individual's life style will also impact upon their community. Less public expenditure on benefits and health provision. More growth to the local economy by the generation of expenditure in shops and services.

Policy and MIS impact

Talent Match

- Talent Match will now provide labour market and EDI data to each local project.
- The 21 local projects will be held accountable for their EDI activity, in terms of how good a match their performance is with the labour market data.
- Peter Wells, Professor of Public Policy Analysis and Evaluation at Hallam University and the director of the Evaluation and Learning Contract for the Big Lottery Fund's Talent Match programme, spoke at the final 2014 EDIF conference at Capel Manor about the long term support and engagement which will be available to NEET's young people through Talent Match.

Traineeships

- Traineeships still have little profile either with BAME learners or BAME employers.
- BAME communities do not view Apprenticeships or Traineeships as a preferred   option for their children.

- Some ethnic minority individuals may be missing out on a career route that suits their needs better than, for example, traditional academic pathways.
- Some work could be undertaken to promote the benefits of work based learning to ethnic minority communities so that young BAME people are encouraged by their parents to consider the Apprenticeship route.

How does what we actually delivered compare with our original plan?

Strategy 1: Establish whether one to one counselling for 20 BAME learners would enable them to progress on to mainstream Further Education, work, or an Apprenticeship. This was successful and demonstrated that this is a viable strategy

Strategy 2: Promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to the new Big Lottery funded Talent Match programmes and influence how EDI may become more significant in Talent Match. Talent Match will provide labour market and EDI data to each local project. The 21 local projects will be held accountable for their EDI activity, in terms of how good a match their performance is with the labour market data.

Strategy 3: Promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to local employers, learners and training providers involved in delivering traineeships. Now that traineeships are more widely available we have raised their profile with a range of BAME employers and BAME learners, as well as with local VCS[definition] organisations and training providers.

Strategy 4: Engage local BAME employers and learners to participate in main stream programmes through demonstrating the benefits of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. We now have 20% more BAME employers and 10% more BAME learners across our Apprenticeships, traineeships, and ESF programmes.

How the project will be sustained?

- We will invest in more one to one coaching for disengaged N.E.E.T. learners to ultimately save the State money as learners progress out of benefit dependency.
- Delivery of funded personal coaching and counselling for Sheffield Talent Match across Sheffield City Region.
- Delivery of funded Traineeships and ESF Skills support For The Unemployed for local partners.

What advice would we give to other work based learning providers?

- Building confidence by one to one coaching and Information Advice and Guidance provides an excellent grounding for other activities involving more than one person.
- Be flexible in your overall approach and have viable contingency plans should there be a change in external factors.
- The personal coaching approach can be resource intensive, so try to fund it from mainstream activity or through additional project funding, such as Talent Match, or the ESF Skills Support For The Unemployed.
- Be aware of regional differences. What may be appropriate in one area may not be in another.

- As well as local 'on the ground' sources use data sources such as The National Census , Local Authorities , Health Authorities to build a picture of the target audiences that you are hoping to attract.

What would we do differently if we knew then what we know now?

- If we had known how slowly both Sheffield Talent Match and Traineeships would be getting started, we may have delayed the project by a year.
- If the report on *Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeship* had been published earlier than December 2013, then we may have approached the take up of Traineeships and Apprenticeships by BAME groups differently.
- We would not have used the experiences of other regions as necessarily being typical of our own area.

What next?

- Our project has demonstrated that, with comparatively very little investment, it is possible to motivate and support disaffected individuals from BAME communities to engage in work based learning to the benefit of themselves and their communities.
- We will expand our personal coaching support over the coming year using funding from Talent Match, Traineeships, and ESF Skills Support For The Unemployed. This will enable us to develop a Talent Pool of BAME learners, who can be placed in to Work Based Learning across Sheffield City Region.
- We will promote the personal coaching approach to other providers through our website and networking at local events.
- We will develop resources to promote the benefits of Traineeships and Apprenticeships to BAME employers, learners, and their families.

Attachment

Poster Cooking - S Casserole EDIF large print.docx

FINAL Talent Match Welcome Pack - v2 template.docx

Just Some of Our Successes.docx

3. **Mind the Gap: Supporting BAME Communities into Apprenticeships**

About our project

The aim of our research project was to explore the under-representation of Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups on apprenticeships in Ipswich in the wider

context of skills, enterprise and employability. In particular, in terms of identifying how BAME-owned Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) access relevant skills and business development opportunities and what barriers there are for BAME groups.

The second strand to the project was about educating businesses on Equality and Diversity, focusing not only on legal responsibilities, but also the benefits of creating a diverse and innovative workforce.

Why?

National Statistics show that only 9% of adult learners on Apprenticeships are from BAME groups, compared with 19% in adult learning as whole. This picture is mirrored in Ipswich, where participation is low compared to the resident BAME population – we wanted to explore why…

'Evaluation of Apprenticeships: Employers' (BIS, 2012) identified that public sector employers were more likely to be motivated to create a diverse workforce; 20% versus 8% in the private sector. We wanted to raise awareness among employers about the advantages of creating a diverse and innovative workforce.

Learning is key to 'closing the gap'; learning for the individual and learning for businesses.

A partnership approach

Central to our project was the key partnership between Realise Futures (Learning and Skills) and MENTA (the Suffolk Enterprise Agency - Business Support), with further collaboration with Unity in Diversity, as specialists in engaging with diverse communities.

A stakeholder group was set up at the beginning of the project with representatives from Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council, Business and Training Providers and community organisations. This ensured input and dialogue with key parties from the outset, giving a complete picture of activity and issues across Ipswich.
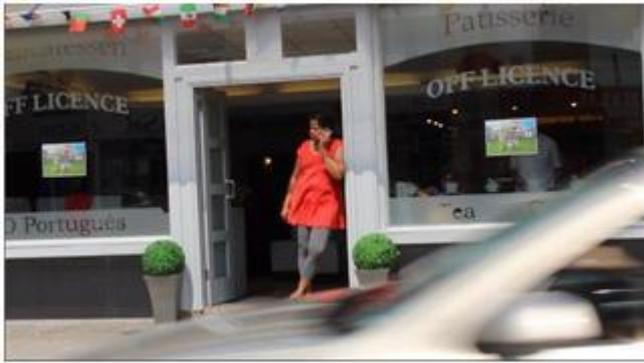
The research

The research element of this project was ambitious. We aimed to carry out:

- Desk-based research – review of recent publications/ data, local and national strategies.
- 10 Structured Interviews with BAME-led organisations.
- 50 surveys with SME's who already offer apprenticeships.
- Learner focus groups.

How did we get on?

The structured interviews with BAME-led businesses went very well. Our Project Researcher, with the support of the Project Coordinator, successfully engaged with businesses in the identified sample area. Those interviewed were very open and responsive, as were the young people questioned; and were very keen to get their voice heard.

The more challenging part of the research was getting a response to the short survey aimed at SME's in Ipswich already employing apprenticeships. We wanted to reach a wider number of employers for this element, to be able to draw together some good quantitative data.

This went out as a short survey monkey questionnaire. Anticipating a lower response rate for non face-to-face surveys, we liaised with the local Apprenticeships Provider Network. Keen to support the project, these providers sent out the link to their current employers, ensuring that the survey was coming from a known source. Telephone calls were made to businesses currently advertising positions in Ipswich at the time of the survey, again to have that initial contact prior to sending the survey. Finally, the surveys were sent via Menta's extensive database of businesses.

However, we still failed to engage with our target. At a time when we are all bombarded with 'quick survey' after 'quick survey', this was not an effective method even with the additional measures we put in place. Instead we carried out more in-

depth dialogue with employers that providers had put us in touch with; this was less structured and we did not ask for any company statistics etc but it did provide us with valuable viewpoints.

The nervousness that exists, in terms of saying the 'wrong thing' when it comes to equality and diversity and not wanting to put themselves, or a business under the spotlight, is reflected in people's reluctance to discuss the subject matter. Face-to-face engagement is essential!

In total, eleven BAME-led businesses, employing between 1 and 250 staff were interviewed between February and April 2014; informal dialogue took place with a further 8 BAME-led businesses and 5 non BAME-led organisations providing apprenticeship opportunities. Two focus groups took place with young BAME individuals and detailed interviews with 3 BAME apprentices. We also undertook interviews with 2 apprenticeship providers in Ipswich, to look at the challenges on both sides.

Summary of key findings

Skills	Enterprise	Employability
No dialogue between specific training providers and BAME organisations.	Apprenticeships appear to not add quality to the business need, additional skills training or alternative training sourced.	Strong family and community integration for skills needs within a business - e.g. utilising sons daughters relatives etc.
Business Owners fear of engaging with other organisations and government initiatives.	Businesses established, without consideration of realistic business model.	Language and perceived perception of business advice not really accepted. Business support organisations have lack of cultural awareness.
Language and perceived business advice not readily accepted from Business Support Organisations.	Relevance and understanding of business support for BAME SMES / micro business.	BAME communities utilise families and communities to build business and employment opportunities.
Value and perception of peers and family members of apprenticeships.	Cultural values and integrity are key to traditional BAME business development e.g. accessing finance.	Apprenticeships are not a priority for micro SMES - due to cost time and running a business.

Our full research report can be found here: EDIF research report Mind the Gap (PDF).

Employer workshops

The other strand to our project was raising awareness among employers through a new Equality and Diversity workshop. These workshops focused on the business benefits of creating a diverse and innovative workforce, as well as legal requirements.

All course material was given to delegates on a USB – this enabled us to bring sustainability into the mix!

A big thank you to Deborah Williams County Manager for Health and Wellbeing_{definition} for developing and delivering this exciting new workshop – the employer feedback speaks for itself!

"It was a very informative course and brilliant to bounce ideas and options off you - you are obviously very knowledgeable in your chosen path."

"Most enjoyable aspect was the interactive nature. Very interactive, all views welcome… Would like more courses around legislation presented in the same way."

"Going forward, I will be thinking about recruiting associates with more diverse skills i.e. language"

"I'll be more cautious when working with new partners/ associates; due diligence!"

"I intend to find out the percentages of different people e.g. age, ethnicity, who we can market to."

Recent national research on Apprenticeships

If you would like to read more about Equality and Diversity in Apprenticeships, here are links to some of the key national research papers published recently:

- Review of Apprenticeships Research (Institute for Employer Research): http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/research/reviewapprenticeship/.
- Good Practice Evaluation of the Diversity in Apprenticeship Pilots (Institute for Employment^{definition} Studies): http://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/496.pdf
- Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34731/12-891-making-apprenticeships-more-accessible-to-smes-holt-review.pdf.
- Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeships: Research Summary (Union Learn, with the TUC): https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/UnderRepresentationInApprenticeships.pdf.

A big thank you!

We would like to say a huge thank you to all the people and organisations that took part in this project and made it such a success!

4. Mind the gaps in ESOL: narrowing attainment gaps in ESOL classes

Summary

Over the last three years at Salford City College, ESOL^{definition} for white European learners has shown steady improvement, which is not reflected for people of African, Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani and other Asian backgrounds. To investigate this discrepancy and explore different solutions, the college has conducted action research at class level. A project toolkit has been created to enable teachers to identify learners who are at risk of not achieving and to use a range of measures to support them at class, centre and department level.

What did we want to do?

We had established a group of eight teachers who are passionately interested, like all ESOL teachers, in enabling our learners to make the most of their learning to achieve their aspirations.

We had noticed that some learners just weren't fulfilling their potential and sometimes dropping out. There were some barriers that seemed to be getting in the way like low literacy, lateness, lack of engagement in the classroom, partially sighted and blind learners and those with hearing difficulties. As teachers this is what we reflect on but we had never had the opportunity to explore these in more depth and with sustained focus.

Interestingly this was reflected in some of our achievement and retention statistics so we knew we needed to go back to first principles and closely examine what was happening in the classroom.
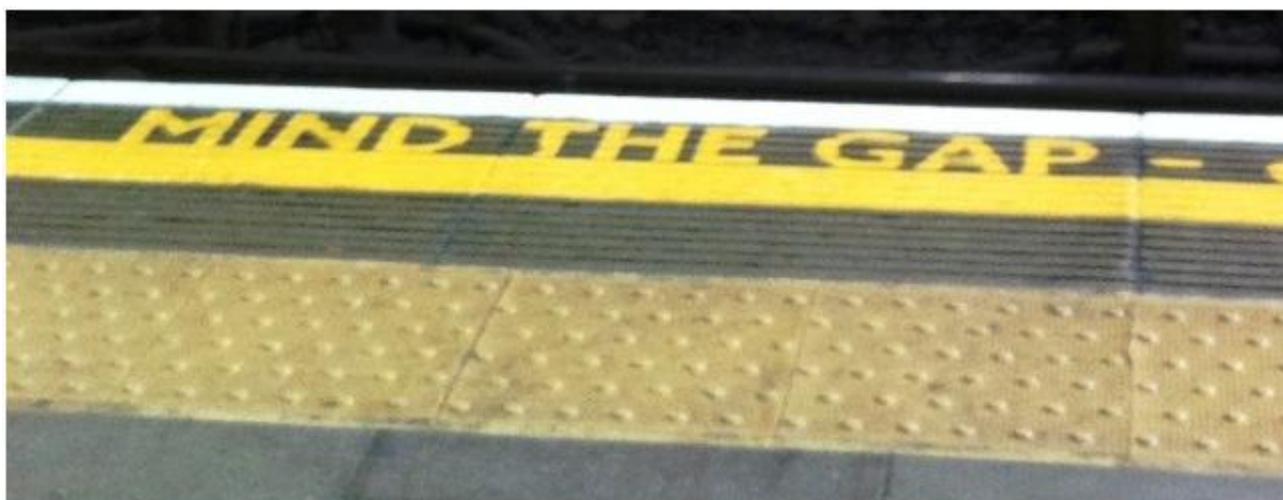
What did we do?

Step one: ideas and background research

Lots of ideas generation! Initially we put together a list of classes with learners who had the barriers of lateness, low literacy, lack of engagement so we knew the classes we wanted to go into. We did some background reading and then we worked out what we needed to look for. These links were especially useful:

For the American point of view we took this as a starting point: The ESL Standards: Bridging the Academic Gap for English Language Learners: http://www.ericdigests.org/2001-3/esl.htm.

The Runnymede Trust briefing on educational attainment had some useful insights into school and post school attainment nationally: http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/Parliamentary%20briefings/EducationWHdebateJune2012.pdf.

One of the project team was working with a blind learner and we also had other partially sighted learners in our cohort. These documents were a great starting point for this area:

- http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/assets/documents/SuggestedTeachingStrate giestousewithBlindandPartiallySightedStudents.pdf.
- http://valenciacollege.edu/osd/documents/BlindnessDraft.pdf.

And this is her fantastic blog on working with blind ESOL learners that you might find interesting:

Step 2: agreeing a method

Our first success was agreeing a peer observation method.

Our approach was not to read any class profile before the session but to go in with as impartial a mindset as we could have.

These questions are at the heart of our project and reflected in the peer observation method. There are a lot of questions here but we did want to make sure we weren't leaving anything out.

1. Does the learner arrive on time? Does the learner drop off/ pick up children and leave early?
2. Does the learner have everything he/ she needs?
3. Learner's body language?
4. Learner's interaction with other learners?
5. Skills learner demonstrates in class.
6. How often does the learner ask for help from the teacher/ other classmates? Does the learner ask for help?
7. Does the learner always sit in the same place? (Might need teacher to advise).
8. Does the learner sit with people who speak the same language/ feel safer/ feel happier in the same ethnic group?
9. Does the learner take the lead in group work or let others dominate and do the tasks?
10. Does the learner work well with certain other learners but not others?
11. What teaching/ learning strategies are used?
12. How does the teacher help/ support the students?
13. Is the questioning effective? How?
14. Does the teacher adjust the lesson content, if needed?
15. Are the aims and objectives and teaching materials differentiated?
16. Does the teacher use any error correction techniques? How?

Step 3: observing and collating feedback

The project funding to arrange cover for classes was essential to the success of this. We agreed that classes had to give consent for the team to come in and that feedback had to be open and honest. We were observing each other in a spirit of mutual enquiry after all!

It did take time for all the observations to take place but the results were well worth it. We came up with a list of common themes and this did surprise us... the fact that it was the same issues!

Our top emerging issues were (in no particular order):

- Lateness/ leaving early.
- Sustaining learners' contribution (e.g. in a speaking task, groups/ pairs).
- Organising a folder.
- Switching to their first language for extended periods of time.
- Board location/ distance.
- Seating arrangement.
- Students at lower/ higher levels.
- Not all learners involved.
- Lack of study and organisational skills.
- Handout layout not clear.
- Pronunciation mistakes.
- Mobile phones used inappropriately.
- Fear of being laughed at.

Does this echo any of your classroom situations?

Step four: what we did next

More ideas generation: how could we address these issues? What could we do? Our full set of ideas is in a table here.

Step five: getting learners involved

We had wanted to get a focus group together and took the project to our ESOL student council. Members of the project team discussed it with them and we took a group learning activity to an Entry 1 class (one of those we were focusing on). This was really productive as it focused learners on their own learning experiences and successes, as well as more problematic areas. These we followed up by talking to five learners individually, three who were visually impaired and two learners with dyslexia. These interviews were very thought provoking as you can see in this summary of the key learning points.

The project team was beginning to develop their own specific interests: you can see how blind and partially sighted learners are important to us, as are learners with low literacy. Our colleague who focused on this area created an INSET session which really helped us move forward in this area. We also arranged for CPD^{definition} sessions from community members on different cultural groups in our learner cohort where we felt we needed more help. These are all detailed below.
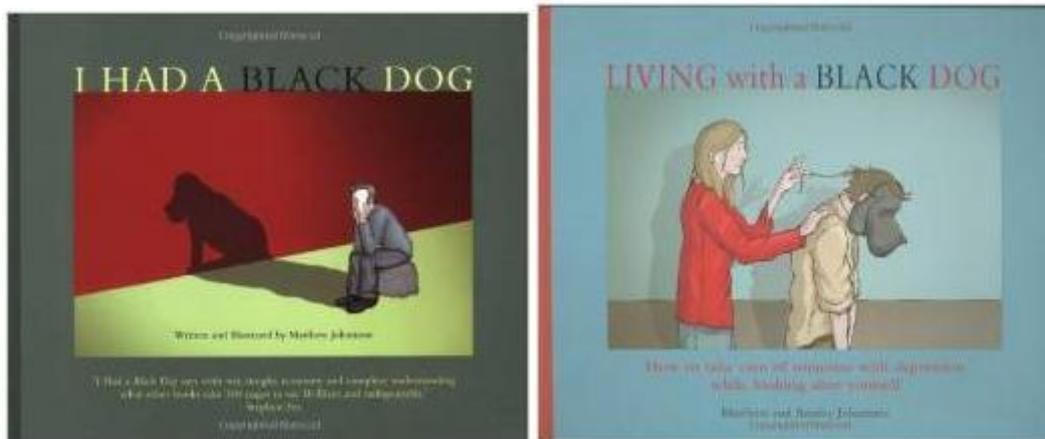
Step six: dissemination events

We thought really carefully about how to present what we had learnt. We tried to model this in our approach to the events differentiating for people who came to talk to us.

Sharing the issues that had come to light and positive ways to overcome them was a key part of our own learning and we found that these issues are becoming more and more prevalent. Feedback reassured us that we were taking the right approach. We filled our own gaps by discovering new protected characteristics to consider, e.g. we now run specific groups for 16-18 year olds so we are addressing age-related concerns such as gender orientation and sexuality.

We loved the afternoon focus circles and got a lot from attending one about LGBT projects and are looking forward to integrating what we have learnt into learning and teaching.

Step seven: engaging learners and teachers moving forward

So it's the start of a new academic year. How are we engaging learners and staff across the department and college?

- Our enrolment process now enables learners to ascribe a Roma background to themselves, to disclose that they are experiencing mental health difficulties, or that they are living in a hostel/ at risk of homelessness.
- We have a new ILP in the form of a learner notebook. You will see this promotes diversity through our "What are we celebrating this week?" section that links to a calendar of events across all our learner communities.
- We are establishing our Equality and Diversity group, bringing learners, teachers and community partners together and are planning the first meeting for October. We have a What can I do if poster project on the agenda to take forward issues that we have collected through the second part of the project.
- We are continuing to develop training sessions for the whole team and have our next one booked in for 13th October. This will be a refresher on the common themes spinner and support on the What can I do if... issues.

So back to our first image... you will notice the adjustments in the surface under foot, the very clear font on the text, the bright colours. We have a greater understanding of the adjustments the learning environment needs, and we have begun to put those adjustments in place through making learners and teachers aware of where the gap begins.