

Sexual Orientation

1. The Pride Project

Summary

Following discussions with lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) learners attending North Lindsey College during the academic years 2011-12 and 2012-13, it became evident that a number of them have experienced homophobic bullying. After research with staff, students, and external organisations using innovative professional dialogue methodology to identify specific LGBT needs and issues, learning resources and support material were to be developed for use by all staff within the college. Through this work the college hoped to create a more supportive and inclusive community for its LGBT learners.

The outcome of the current project was to be a 'Good Practice Guide' for use by staff across college. The guide was to be developed using a collaborative template called, 'Professional Dialogue'. This is a practical working document which is a result of staff and learners working together. The process leading to its creation is documented in detail on the blog link provided here.

About the project



There was a need to develop a resource for teaching staff across college whose source originated not from one individual but from the collective voices of a representative group of learners and staff. The resource was to be a tool to be used

by staff on a regular basis both in tutorials and in subject specific sessions addressing both homophobia but also celebrating the contribution of the LGBT community to a range of different subjects. Such a resource could be used to enable learners to reflect upon their own attitudes whilst at the same time empowering the LGBT voice. The image above is of our core team who developed the 'Good Practice Guide' for staff which was the primary output of 'The Pride Project'.

Development: Professional dialogue

The project developed in its initial stages using the 'Professional Dialogue' template. This enabled the core team to identify at the very outset, the required outputs and to map the path towards achieving these outputs. So, over a period of several months and several workshop sessions, the core team met to identify each of these areas and to determine the content of the final guide.



Structure

Following the initial workshop sessions the ideas of the team were then brought together into a structured format capable of being utilised by staff on a regular basis. The guide was structured in two clearly defined sections: the first section addressing methods of tackling homophobia using a range of scenarios and self-reflective activities whilst the second section focussed upon methods of embedding LGBT themes into a broad curriculum, looking at curriculum role models and providing specific lesson plans. The guide sought to focus on interaction within groups using human software in both awareness-raising and learning sessions. However, the guide was also to be viewed as an organic document whose content could possibly

change from year -to-year related to changing political, social and cultural contexts. The content of the guide attempted to move away from commonly accepted models to new and innovative activities with a focus on the contemporary and real experience whose source was the learner voice in some cases.

Pilot

Responses to initial piloting of the guide in selected learner groups was extremely positive. The focus on both self-reflection and contemporary examples gave 'reality' to the guide from both the perspective of the learner and also the tutor.

Sustainability

The development of the guide continues from year-to-year with revisions of content being made in accordance with changing stakeholder profiles and related social, political and cultural contexts. In this sense, the guide does not remain 'frozen in time' but grows organically. We expect to see the guide still being used ten years from now, albeit with different content and methods and possibly a different form of presentation related to new technologies being introduced. The latter is significant as the guide is not technology dependent.

Accessibility

In its current format the guide has been tested for accessibility using a range of screen-reader software. The most effective has proved to be 'Thunder' which is also economically accessible being available as a free download. Reviews of 'Thunder' have all been positive which support our own positive experience with this software.

2. Raising the profile of LGB and/or T people using innovative e-learning materials

Summary of project:

Using the latest e-learning technology to create 21st Century learning materials, Sussex Coast College Hastings, in partnership with Jisc, will engage both its staff and learners to transform perceptions of LGB and/or T groups. A group of learners will develop the learner version of the e-learning package and tangible research pre and post training will be carried out to assess the project's impact on the college community. The ultimate aim of the project is to make the college a safe and welcoming environment, free from discrimination

The Sussex Coast College experience:

Our aim for the project was to change the type of materials we use to educate both staff and learners, to raise the profile of LGBT, to challenge ignorance and everyday language and behaviours used by learners. Using interactive and innovative software to outline the legal rights and responsibilities, foster good relations and actively challenge the negative perception of LGBT groups.



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Background

FELTAG (Further Education Learning Technology Action Group) recommended that 50% of courses (where appropriate) to be online by 2017, this includes the ability for learners to take these courses online.

From our initial research it was apparent that Ofsted have highlighted that not enough is being done to educate learners of ED & I; either, due to lack of teachers knowledge or that there is not enough confidence from teachers to challenge inappropriate behaviour.

Therefore our aim was to bring these two recommendations together to form the basis of our project, used correctly E-Learning could be an extremely valuable tool to raise the profile of EDI but particularly LGB & T groups within Sussex Coast College Hastings.

Through discussion with JISC^{definition} and Stonewall we found little evidence of interactive eLearning materials available to colleges. Currently within Sussex Coast College and the FE environment, materials used for educating staff and students consist of nothing more than PowerPoint presentations or Word documents, these do not take into account the 'Z' generation of students we are all about to receive into FE.



[Take a look at our promotional video above \(click to follow the link\)](#)

Our initial project involved a small pilot group of staff and students, who would complete a survey before undertaking the LGB & T eLearning training and finally retake a similar survey to ascertain:

- Staff and students current understanding of LGBT
- Issues which have arisen within the community
- The rights and responsibilities we all share
- Finally, how successful the training has been

We can then analyse our results to ascertain how successful the training materials have been, so we can:

- Determine how to use the experience to develop other strands of EDI
- How we can continue to develop our eLearning skills and
- Understanding how to further raise awareness in our community.

THE ACT IDENTIFIED A NUMBER OF PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS:

AGE DISABILITY GENDER REASSIGNMENT
MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIP
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY
RELIGION AND BELIEF SEXUAL ORIENTATION
RACE GENDER

And we have a Public Sector Duty to take pro-active steps to promote

- 1 EQUALITY BY ADVANCING THE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY
- 2 FOSTERING GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN DIFFERENT GROUPS
- 3 ELIMINATING UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND VICTIMISATION

FOR BOTH EMPLOYEES AND LEARNERS

Project Report:

Matthew Hancock, Minister of State for Skills and Enterprise, based on the October 2013 proposals from the Further Education Learning Technology Action Group (FELTAG) recommendation that by 2017/18, 50% of courses (where appropriate) will have a wholly-online component. FELTAG, initially set up by Matthew Hancock in January 2013, main aim was to ensure "...the effective use of digital technology in learning, teaching and assessment in Further Education and Skills." (FELTAG Recommendations 2013, p4).

Ofsted highlighted within their report on schools and colleges (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender^{definition} issues, February 2012) that not enough is being done to educate learners of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (ED&I); either due to a lack of knowledge of individuals rights and responsibilities or due to a lack of confidence from staff in challenging inappropriate behaviour.

Therefore, our project aims to bring these two recommendations together to form the basis of our argument that, when used correctly eLearning can be an extremely valuable tool to raise the profile of LGBT.



Why is the project important?

As discussed above, the FELTAG report published in 2013 highlighted a number of recommendations which potentially could have a massive impact on the further of education within England and Wales (FELTAG, p.23).;

1. Fully support the adoption of new digital technology and learning methods.
2. Should encourage 'learning presence' not 'physical attendance.'
3. Providers need a drive to develop and use high quality online learning content with a relaxation of current guided learning hours to encourage this.
4. Every publicly-funded learning programme from 2015/16 to have 10% wholly-online component, with incentives to increase this to 50% by 2017/18.

Following the FELTAG recommendations, the Education Technology Action Group (ETAG) was established in February 2014 by three ministers, Michael Gove, Matthew Hancock and David Willetts, to promote the use of digital technologies across the education sector including schools, FE, HE definition and employers.

If recommendations from FELTAG and ETAG become adopted by government and implemented into the education system there will be a big shift in the way teachers and educators are to teach and produce materials as well as the way learners are to learn and access these resources. This will have far reaching implications and consequences, but does not necessarily mean these recommendations are not positive.

According to Virtual College (2012) 82.3% of all South Korean Schools used online learning in their official curriculum, ensuring that quality can be maintained but costs of education can be lowered and resources shared and supported in an open

marketplace. Coughlan (2014) highlights South Korea as top of the global education league table, while the UK is 6th (see table below).

TOP 20 EDUCATION SYSTEMS

- 1. South Korea
- 2. Japan
- 3. Singapore
- 4. Hong Kong
- 5. Finland
- 6. UK
- 7. Canada
- 8. Netherlands
- 9. Ireland
- 10. Poland
- 11. Denmark
- 12. Germany
- 13. Russia
- 14. United States
- 15. Australia
- 16. New Zealand
- 17. Israel
- 18. Belgium
- 19. Czech Republic
- 20. Switzerland

Source: Pearson/ Economist Intelligence Unit

ELearning is not a new concept, but it tends not to be the education system in the traditional senses, who are the pioneers behind these new learning technologies. Flynn (2013) discussed the benefits organisations such as Khan Academy can bring into education, highlighting the fact that it contains over 4700 videos, 560 interactive practical exercises, offered in 28 languages, in 216 countries reaching over six million students worldwide, who can learn at their own pace. With organisations such as Khan Academy already in existence, it is important for FE establishments to not only utilise resources such as these but also develop their own 'future-proofed' dynamic learning materials.

This is becoming ever increasingly more important as FE colleges are now enrolling the new 'z generation' of learners, those who have grown up with easy access to technology. Traditional methods of teaching will not meet this generation's learning needs and we need to incorporate dynamic activities driven by technological advancements to engage and retain these future learners.

3 OUT OF 5 GAY STUDENTS
60%
WHO EXPERIENCE HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING SAY THAT TEACHERS
WHO WITNESS THE BULLYING... **NEVER INTERVENE!**

ONLY 10% OF GAY STUDENTS REPORT THAT
TEACHERS CHALLENGE HOMOPHOBIC LANGUAGE...
EVERYTIME THEY HEAR IT!

DO YOU HAVE THE CONFIDENCE TO HELP MAKE THIS 100%?

Methodology

The first stage of the project was to design an effective initial survey (appendix to follow) to determine the current levels of knowledge of staff regarding LGB&T. Due to the nature of the project it was especially important to ensure the terminology was correct, in order to avoid offending anybody who takes part in the training. Not only was terminology considered at this stage but also due to the personal nature of the questions, it was important to have answers such as 'prefer not to disclose' and 'other' in efforts not to offend. The survey went through a QA procedure to ensure it was fit for purpose.

It was important that the survey was easily accessible and would not take too long to complete as the initial idea was to have a link at the end of the survey to directly take pilot group members to the actual training materials themselves, and if the survey was overly long was risked losing interest in the materials before the training had even begun. In order to ensure this did not occur we limited the questions to only relevant data which would have tangible outcomes. To also ensure the survey was easily accessible, it was released using Survey Monkey, which also meant we could use a path system so only questions relating to choices made by participants would link to other 'linked' questions; therefore limiting the amount of time required to complete the initial survey.

The next stage of the project, which was being worked on alongside the survey was the planning and designing of the actual eLearning training materials themselves. Through the design process we broke it down into four different sections, each one designed slightly differently from the last for example; one would have more of a focus on text based information, another would focus on representation the information in video form. The concept behind this thought process was, during the post survey we would ask which sections the pilot group found most useful in terms of; engaging interactivity, ease of use and information share, so any future materials could be tailored to meet the needs more effectively.

After successfully completing the survey and with all designs in place the next steps were to learn the software which would be used in creating the materials. During our project proposal we declared that all funding would be used to purchase software which would be used to create the eLearning materials. Video Scribe, Articulate

Storyline and Adobe Captivate were chosen. One of the requirements for the project was to demonstrate our eLearning materials as an exemplar for other teachers to develop their own materials in the future. After an extensive period it was decided that Captivate was designed far more toward a technical audience and therefore would not be appropriate to use at this stage of the project. And that VideoScribe and Articulate Storyline would be easier to use for non-technical staff when creating their own materials.

To gain experience in creating the eLearning resources (neither of us have ever created resources to be used specifically for eLearning) we need to gauge best practices, therefore we spent a lot of time reading tutorials, using already created resources and trial and error while utilising the software.

The final stage required for the completion of the training materials was the inclusion of the actual information itself. For this we approached Stonewall, with the aim of utilising the wealth of research which had already been conducted by them. Stonewall agreed and along with discussions at the many other events and meetings we attended the training materials could then be created.

DIRECT DISCRIMINATION
OCCURS WHEN A PROVIDER OF A SERVICE (such as an FE college)

REFUSES THIS SERVICE TO INDIVIDUALS BECAUSE OF A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC, AND ARE THEREFORE TREATED LESS FAVOURABLY THAN OTHERS

FOR EXAMPLE REFUSING;
A TEACHER A TEACHING POSITION,
A CUSTOMER BEAUTY TREATMENT,
OR A STUDENT EDUCATION
BECAUSE OF THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION

INDIRECT DISCRIMINATION
OCCURS WHEN THE USUAL RULES OR PRACTICES OF THE PROVIDER HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON INDIVIDUALS WITH THE PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC AND PUTS THEM AT A DISADVANTAGE WHEN COMPARED WITH OTHERS, WHO DO NOT HAVE THAT CHARACTERISTIC.

FOR EXAMPLE,
LEARNERS OR TEACHERS WHO ARE UNDERGOING GENDER TRANSITION
MAY BE UNCOMFORTABLE USING LADIES OR GENTS TOILETS,
AND THEY MAY NOT WISH TO USE TOILETS DESIGNATED FOR DISABLED PEOPLE,
SO A NUMBER OF SINGLE TOILETS COULD BE RE-LABELED 'UNISEX'.

Changes to the project schedule

Our initial application for the Equality and Diversity Innovation Fund stated a number of requirements:

1. To create innovative eLearning materials that are available and accessible 24/7
2. Educate staff and students to LGBT issues challenging perception

3. Improve confidence of staff, enabling them to discuss LGBT topics with students and to deal with arising issues
4. Improve attitudes and behaviours towards LGBT groups
5. To introduce staff to the latest technologies and how it can enhance the learning experience

Our workplan also stated a number of milestones required in order to achieve the above project requirements. Unfortunately, due to a number of factors (e.g. acquiring of software) this workplan has been changed to meet the ongoing project requirements. We realised we had been over ambitious in our initial scope and due to issues around resources, it was agreed with NIACE^{definition} that the project would be scaled down in order to meet the timeframe. The project will still meet the above 5 requirements, our current prediction for the final report is October 2014. The main change to the project requirements were using our student pilot group to help create materials for their peers; this will still occur, however, these materials are currently not available, but will be by September 2014. These will be added to the induction process, during the same month.

Result obtained to date:

Q3: Which of the following best describes you? Identified 8.82% (3 participants) who answered “prefer not to disclose” compared with only 3.03% (1) who answered with this response for Q6: What is your ethnic origin? And Q7: Do you consider yourself to have a learning disability? For Q8: Do you consider yourself to have a disability? 0% (0) answered with this response. Although conclusions cannot be drawn from this alone, when combining Q3’s other responses; lesbian (1), bisexual (1), other (1), prefer not to disclose (3), and the resulting Q4: Who have you disclosed this too? 60% (3) have told nobody with 20% (1) informing only those close to them and 20% (1) who told all that knew them, 1 participant opted not to answer this question. It can be seen that some of the participants find it easier to disclose their ethnic origin and disabilities rather than their own sexual preference.

Q14: Do you feel confident dealing with and challenging inappropriate comments or behaviour...? 18.18% (6) highlighted that they would not be confident. This in itself outlines the potential value of these training materials; if training materials are made available to all staff during their induction period, we would hope that after training this figure would be reduced. The vast majority of participants had heard the term, “that’s so gay” or similar (78.79% Q11) but according to Q13: Do you consider the term to be offensive? 30.30% felt it was not. This result shows that we although as teachers who are supposed to tackle all inappropriate language, some may never as they believe it is a harmless.

Participant 34 stated for Q13 that it is not offensive because, “it has nothing to do with sexual lifestyle” and when asked how they felt after they had heard similar comments for Q12 stated, “Indifferent. Harmless school children’s attempts to redefine the perceived ‘dirty’ word in the innocent context, to provoke the uninitiated (teachers, parents.)”

Participant 16 stated for the same question, “Have heard young teens use it from talking to them about it they don’t really know why they are saying it, just that their friends use it.” While participant 3 stated, “No reaction whatsoever – it all depends on the context. As slang for naff, tatty, rubbish it’s the current term and will no doubt, be replaced by something else in due course.”

Of course these are only a selection of the responses taken, and although the majority stated that they would deal with such comments, it does highlight even trainee teachers, do not consider that terminology such as the ‘that’s so gay’ could potentially cause offense. Not dealing with the issue because ‘it is just slang’ gives the impression to learners that it is acceptable terminology.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Sustainability (TBC October 2014)

At this stage it is very difficult to come to a closing argument regarding my initial question, when used correctly E-Learning can be an extremely valuable tool to raise the profile of LGBT, as the pilot groups have yet to undertake the full training. However from the research we have conducted throughout the project, discussions we have had with the many meetings and events attended and the initial results discussed above, we can make a series of recommendations and suggest how the project is sustainable and how it can have a lasting impact.

- There needs to be more exposure around the college of issues affecting LGB&T peoples through the use of education and displays demonstrating the value these groups can bring into society.
- The induction of staff process requires changes with more of a focus on how to deal with inappropriate language and behaviour, with more information relating to legislation and our public duty.
- The staff development process itself could change with an increasing focus on eLearning; potentially the college could offer flipped learning for staff to undertake training throughout the year and use staff development days for discussing of the issues.

It is sustainable and its lasting impact will be that:

- Through the creation and testing of three different software products I gaged which is most appropriate for staff to use. Following the project staff can be trained to use this software, encouraging them to be more creative when developing learning materials also to promote a more blending learning approach to teaching.
- This training will be used for all new staff and students and will be developed as and when legislation and policies are updated, ensuring that it remains up-to-date.

- The created training material can be used as a basis for developing further strands of the equality act.

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The Insider's Guide to Becoming a Rapid E-Learning Pro

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<http://community.articulate.com/> Excellent tutorials and tips on how to create eLearning materials with Articulate

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