

City College, Norwich

“Personalisation represents a different kind of pedagogy for us and a significant organisational challenge – one that shouldn’t be watered down to fit existing structures.”

Christopher Lambert, Vice-Principal, College Improvement, City College, Norwich

City College has a strong tradition of giving learners a voice at all levels but looking at the implications of developing personalised learning led them to take a robust look at teaching and learning* itself. A traditional approach to teaching, where success was measured in terms of whether learners met the requirements of their programmes, would not deliver the results they were looking for. They wanted learners to take greater control and responsibility over their own learning whilst in college and develop skills to contribute to society when they left.

To support this move towards developing learners, the college embarked on ten projects. These were in areas that significantly impact on personalised learning and the development of expert learners.

Ten different schools within the college are involved. Each project has been planned in detail, and will identify:

- the context of the project
- activities to be undertaken
- resources to be developed
- monitoring and evaluation arrangements
- impact measures.

Each project team must be explicit in stating how the learners’ voice will:

- inform the project objectives
- influence the development process
- contribute to the evaluation of materials
- enable learners to be involved in the evaluation of outcomes
- identify the impact on leadership and management from the course to a collegiate level.

The outcomes of the projects will influence the rollout of wider arrangements to support the personalisation agenda.

Developing the expert learner

Focus of project	Approach
Information, advice and guidance	<p>Traditionally, this stage is where the provider assesses whether a learner fits what is on offer. City College adopts a different approach. They focus on learners' hopes, dreams and aspirations. They convey their high expectations of learners and start a dialogue about what the learner might do. Level 2 programmes could be the start of a journey to degree level.</p> <p>The outcome of this project will be the trial of a set of personalised learning initial engagement processes to be used college-wide.</p>
Individual learning plans: planning for success	<p>The aim of this project is to enable learners to take responsibility for defining their own precisely defined targets through ownership of an interactive electronic individual learning plans.</p>
Skills for lifelong learning: learning to learn	<p>The strategy here is to involve learners in planning parts of their curriculum as a way of engaging their interest and boosting their achievement levels. An example of this is the case of an information and communication technology teacher who invited learners to suggest how they would like to learn a module that previous learners had deemed 'boring'.</p>
Differentiation in teaching and learning strategies and materials: effective teaching and learning strategies	<p>This project is about finding ways of catering for different skill levels and learning styles whilst at the same time stretching each individual to achieve at the highest potential.</p>
Citizenship skills: learner empowerment	<p>In this project, groups of learners create their own behavioural norms within the prevailing social contract in the college. This contract is based on each individual understanding the consequences of their behaviour and how their behaviour affects others.</p>
Negotiated assignments: curriculum entitlement	<p>Here, teachers are moving away from telling learners what to do and what standard to aim for. Instead, the teachers are defining the outcomes that</p>

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and choice	are required and are discussing with learners what sort of evidence of achieving those outcomes would be acceptable.
Assessment for learning: peer and group self-assessment	The purpose here is to create a dialogue between learners in which they agree criteria for assessing work throughout their programme and how they will critique each others' work. This helps students to develop the understanding of standards and to develop their skills in giving and receiving feedback.
Assessment for learning: negotiated assessment	The challenge in this project is for learners to monitor their own progress and to identify when they are ready for assessment.
Mentoring for success: mentoring and tutorial support	Learners who have been at the college for a year or more act as mentors to new learners. The predicted outcomes are greater engagement from the Year 1 learners and the development of reflective skills in those in Year 2.
Learner voice and quality assurance: learner empowerment	The School of Education Studies is exploring the training a small group of learners to national standards of classroom observation. The aim is to enable learners to play a significant role in the observation of teaching and learning rather than merely expressing their personal opinions of teaching and learning methods.

*We use 'teaching and learning' and 'teacher' as generic terms to include:

- teaching, training and learning
- teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in the further education (FE) system.