BALEAP PIM: Leadership and Management 5th June 2021

22 Items

Fighting the battle: EAP teacher education and development on a Pre-Sessional Programme. Induction and beyond

BALEAP PIM: Leadership and Management - BALEAP

BALEAP

Durham University are inviting you to a PIM dedicated to the issues and experiences of leadership and management in EAP.

Introduction

The latest pandemic has stressed the ongoing problem of (a lack of) teacher education and development for short term contract EAP tutors in particular. We know the precariousness of the discipline and the difficulties EAP tutor face when it comes to securing long-term contracts. Many are forced to resolve to years of EAP summer jobs (interspersed with other teaching). But engaging even in short EAP HE work, practitioners still wish to develop their skills and knowledge. The very nature of pre-sessional programmes (as well as the immediate challenge of post-Brexit recruitment modifications) adds to the pressures and exacerbation in terms of addressing these needs.

I would like to share here further details on some of the ideas put into practice (at the University of York) to assist colleagues in facilitating their development despite the challenges, in particular those relating to building a community of practice in a scenario where the stakes are high, the tempo fast and the time sparse.

Building Successful Communities of Practice by Emily Webber - Mind the Product

Summary: Communities of practice can be powerful tools to enable both individuals and organisations to increase their effectiveness. By bringing together people who share a common interest or passion, new skills ar...

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Some interesting readings

Please, see below few suggestions for related readings. Some are fairly new, others less so. Some bring it back to basics and others are more theoretical but all transferable to EAP context and supporting our Teams' CPD. They all, however, can be of help in considering how to approach the EAP (summer) practitioner's CPD, and, more importantly, what would work best for you an your institution.

- Jean Lave, Etiene Wenger and communities of practice
- Teacher educator online community of practice
- Reconceptualising the conference: An imaginative, inclusive and innovative approach to CPD in the digital age
- A professional development framework for online teaching
- The fractal structure of communities of practice: Implications for business organization
- Thinking together: What makes Communities of Practice work?
- Transnational Communities of Practice: Their Development, Operation, and Contribution
- Using digital environments to design inclusive and sustainable communities of practice in academic libraries
- Developing EAP Practitioners

Preliminary difficulties

It is by no means easy to cater for the professional development needs of a variety of professionals who work (frequently short-term) with us. We know that our potential PSP team may be a cauldron of 'in-house' colleagues unfamiliar with the programme, established EAP professionals new to the institution, early EAP career colleagues and others. This in itself creates a challenge when it comes to planning training. Different professional experience, various knowledge of the institution and the programme, not to mention the nature of pre-sessional courses putting considerable time constraints on everyone involved, make this a rather tricky task.

We have colleagues who may work in EAP all year round and feel less inclined to get involved in CPD over summer (as they would rather focus on teaching). We have colleague who may be working within other areas or disciplines for the remaining part of the year and very much look forward to further development within the EAP.

Is it possible to satisfy every party involved? [...] Still, we can try to make the most of the resources available to make it work.

I would like to share with you some of the ideas that have emerged (partially) in the course of (if not as a result of) the COVID pandemic.

General approach

Simplify, simplify, simplify

There is nothing wrong with trying to keep things simple. In fact, many would agree (she hopes) it is actually beneficial.

Where to start?

* Establish your primary goals
* Think about your team
* Consider possible platforms
* Look at the resources at hand
* Give some thought to timing
* Opt for ease of access
* Try to build the community
* Invite reflection
* Nurture in-team support system
* Invite feedback

EAP Teacher Education and Development.pdf

Examples of how some of these issues may be addressed...

Creating a 'common space' as part of community building

Everyone needs a platform allowing them to connect and share thoughts, views, ideas, examples of professional practice. It is - more often than not - the case that PSP teams are particularly diverse hence, even from a purely business perspective, there is a clear need to create a safe space allowing colleagues to get to know one another's diverse cultures (Leung et al., 2005). Having a designated platform like a Padlet or Wakelet - anything that is easy for you and your Team to access, operate and contribute to will do. Think ahead what your focus for this will be, e.g. is it used for the socio-cultural aspect and aimed to help build the team, do you wish this to be used as a springboard for Team CPD ideas, is it your course informal tutor Q&A board, or maybe a mixture of things? Specify how you expect it to be used.

Using Padlet
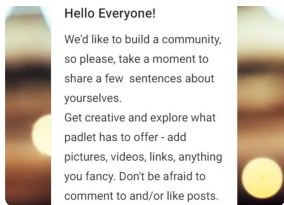
Hello Everyone!

We'd like to build a community, so please, take a moment to share a few sentences about yourselves.

Get creative and explore what padlet has to offer - add pictures, videos, links, anything you fancy. Don't be afraid to comment to and/or like posts.

unknown

- or a similar tool - to get to know one another and help create a sense of community [This may be used for other purposes too, like needs analysis, discussion groups, sharing point etc.]

Building a common frame of reference

There are numerous challenges behind developing a common framework (Barron, 2000, pp 403-04) for any team, and in particular a PSP one when it comprises of a varied collective. This is why induction, with its aim to 'collectively create meaning' (Thompson, 1998) is so crucial and should be perceived as in integral part of CPD.

EAP Teaching Ideas

You will find here a series of links to various (more and less obvious) tools you may wish to incorporate into some of your practice.

Live Sessions Guide. Thoughts, Ideas and Considerations

Have a go at this short learning module.

It offers some suggestions and thoughts on running live sessions.

HE Teaching Practice CPD

If you'd like to further develop your knowledge and skills, or simply are looking for something to read and/or discuss with your buddy/buddies, this is your place to be.

Many useful links (for safekeeping)...

Group cognition

Getting to know our colleagues constitutes part of developing group cognition (Clark & Brennen, 1991; Hutchins, 1995) and can be perceived as consisting of two major elements:

- professional grounds
- socio-cultural (read 'extracurricular') basis

both of which play an instrumental role in negotiating 'common meaning' (Engestrom et al, 1995). This is why approaching PSP CPD as a process beginning with team's day 1 at work (and not day 1 of teaching), hence approaching induction as an integral part of staff development, helps to mould a better team. By bringing social environment and psychological functions together (Velsier, 2000), it can enhance the experience of building a 'community of practice' (Sergiovanni, 2000; Wenger, 1998).

Communities of Practice

Team as One
Easy access to (suggested) common framework, followed by clear explanations together with a set space for questioning and reflection enhance teaching practice. This adds to shared understanding and responsibility (Sackney et al, 2005).
Examples here might include (asynchronous) sharing of the necessary materials and documentation, with potential tasks clarified, and to be utilised in (live) meetings. Such meetings should then have clear focus, agendas and time limits (and adhere to those). This allows for smoother communication and helps us assure the Team acts as one.
Targeted Group Support
Creating mini support groups enhances collaboration as well as reflective practice, and can invite developing instructors' individual skills by creating more learning (and cooperation) opportunities (Sackney et al, 2005). All this, in turn, can result in instructors sharing good practice and feedback, getting involved in supportive peer observations, cooperating on mini projects (e.g. developing a short lesson, etc.), which they can then share with the rest of the Team.

Reflection

Creating opportunities like these can boost reflection on team and individual level, and add to team building and professional development. It may help instructors tackle the complex issue of professional interrelationships considered here as an amalgamate of sociocultural identities, professional/classroom practices and language perception (Duff & Uchida, 1997, p. 451).

UoY (Some) Essential Sites Links ⊘ A⬇

Browse through the content to discover some of the guides available at UoY.

(VLE) Support Guides ⊘ A⬇

Find here some useful VLE guidance prepared by UoY PDLT.

Zoom Crash Course ⊘ A⬇

Most likely you know everything there is to know about Zooming by now. But, should you feel you need a reminder, feel free to explore some materials shared here.

Collaborate Essentials ⊘ A⬇

We ask you to use Zoom for live sessions. However, you will notice that Collaborate is made available to students and should be pointed out as one of the ways for them to meet up online and study and work together.

Most of it is pretty much self-explanatory but if you feel you might need a bit more information or guidance, browse through this module.

Live session materials ⊘ A⬇

You will find here some suggestions for your live sessions.

CPD and EAP professionals practice

Following Harwood & Clark's (2006) call for grounding CPD in practice, developing 'instructors support bubbles' can create a great basis for informed further development. This can help in, e.g. introducing semi-formal reading clubs with a clear focus each time on a certain element of professional practice. It can help everyone get engaged in/with the results of the latest theoretical research and link it to their professional practice.

Introduction ⊘ A⬇

Welcome to the mini **CPD section** on VLE that focuses on **EAP in HE**.

Feel free to browse through the contents and explore some of the ideas shared.

There is a little bit for everyone - some reading, few listenings, useful links (to organisations, courses, tests etc.) Hope you find the information shared here useful.

Happy surfing 😄

Interesting Readings (BIG'n'small) ⊘ A⬇

...some referring to HE practice, others to theory...

Do have a look!

Professional Frameworks Hub ⊘

Teaching EAP at university ⊘ A⬇

Some links to job search sites

Other considerations

- Are there any elements of the already existing EAP professional CPD scheme that may be used for the purposes of a PSP?
- Have you thought about short ('lighting') sessions?
- Have you considered PSP staff contributions?
- Do you remember about the fun element?
- Have you asked yourself what (mini) training may offer useful transferable skills? (EAP research and theory are important but many EAP professionals may be looking for something more hands on.)

References

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