

An introduction to OTLA

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The Education & Training Foundation (ETF) is the government-backed, sector-owned national professional development body for the Further Education (FE) and training sector. Our role is to support the continuing transformation of our technical and vocational education system by ensuring the sector has world-class leaders, teachers, and trainers. It is the expectation that this leads to ever-improving learner outcomes, a more highly-skilled workforce for employers, and a stronger economy, country, and society. We do this by improving, driving, and championing the quality of leadership, teaching, and training.

Alongside Leadership and Governance and support for Maths and English, Outstanding Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) is one of our flagship programmes, and includes training courses, collaborative projects, and our regional Professional Exchanges.

Our collaborative projects aim to improve teaching, learning, and assessment by giving practitioners the time and space to explore solutions to the challenges they face. There is a strong emphasis on collaboration, both within an organisation and also externally with other providers and employers.

The key principles of all of our collaborative project activity are:

- enhancing teaching, learning and assessment towards 'outstanding' status
- implementing and promoting the use of the Professional Standards
- offering peer-led, collaborative development of teaching for leaders and practitioners
- creating sector-led solutions to sector defined problems
- evidence-based, research informed.

It is our belief that enabling practitioners to engage in action research or joint practice development activity (Fielding et al, 2005) supports a greater likelihood of longer-term change in practice. As

solutions and strategies are tested, trialled, and evaluated, practice becomes more embedded and honed.

Phase 3 of the OTLA programme was our first to support providers in the north-east, Cumbria and south-central areas of England. Projects in previous phases had taken place in London, Essex and Kent, the East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the south-west. The projects focused on approaches to attainment, retention, and progression.

Continuing with the theme of sharing and collaboration, we are excited and pleased to be able to share the learning from all of these projects with the sector.

References

Fielding, M. et al (2005). *Factors Influencing the Transfer of Good Practice*. University of Sussex.

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