PebblePad

Educators at the core of lifelong learning

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Chosen theme(s)

Institution agendas

The context

The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) develop qualifications that cross the aquatics industry including teaching and coaching in swimming, diving, synchronised swimming, water polo and open water. Courses cross different levels from entry through to higher education. As well as certificates, awards and diploma qualifications there is also a suite of some 50 continuous professional development courses that the aquatic workforce can engage in.

The core of the delivery of all the training is the licensed tutor workforce. The organisation have approximately 160 licensed tutors, 40 trainee tutors and a further 60 potential tutors waiting for the next opportunity to train themselves in becoming an ASA licensed tutor. The tutor workforce work across the UK and deliver in some of the ASA approved centres abroad.

Over the last few years, the focus has been on developing the tutor workforce to ensure that they reached a minimum requirement in teaching qualifications, for example the "Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector" (PTLLS) (now the Level Three Education and Training) and the Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement (CAVA).

The Educator Lifelong Learning Plan project was developed to tackle three issues:

- Tutors currently feel isolated. There are few opportunities to discuss work. They work alone with no access to current good practice resources created and shared by their peers.
- There is no framework documenting the skills and experience development pathway for a tutor. How does a tutor identify their training needs?
- Introducing a further level of pre-requisite teacher training will be unpopular with existing tutors.

How it was …

To qualify to become an ASA licensed tutor it is a pre-requisite that the tutor holds the PTLLS and CAVA, or equivalent qualifications. It is the responsibility of the individual to gain these qualifications either through a training provider of their choice or by attending the training course through the Institute of Swimming, the largest provider of aquatic training in the country.

Traditionally, once accepted on the programme, the tutors were responsible for pursuing their own ongoing personal development either through attending courses delivered through the Institute of Swimming, the ASA, or a combination of ASA with studies from another training provider. The ASA training offered is both face to face and over WebX.

Data shows that tutors do not engage in face to face training during winter. The busiest time for training uptake is spring and prior to licensing renewal in the spring period.

It was felt there was a need to identify "gaps" in tutors own knowledge, establish a training programme as a result of the identified gaps, provide new training opportunities associated with professional development, support the development of the "gaps" through supportive learning observations and start the tutors themselves on their own, lifelong journey.

The approach

A number of methods were used to engage educators in the use of PebblePad.

The first development was an Educator Community Site in ATLAS. This environment was created to encourage sharing of resources, enable safe discussion and debate over the discussion forums, provide the educators with regular news and updates through a blog on the About page, and provide access to a workbook called the Educator Lifelong Learning Plan. In reality, with a workforce that is geographically dispersed who only meet once or twice a year, the online community gave them an additional opportunity to "meet" people and engage in conversations.

The second development was the Educator Lifelong Learning Plan. The plan was created in a workbook using capabilities. The Educator can work through the plan and self-assess their

teaching skills from planning a session through to their understanding of how to reflect. The workbook also enables the users to upload evidence, reflect on their own practice, develop an action plan, and share their thoughts and findings with anyone inside and outside the system or simply to keep the plan as part of their own individual development.

To support the educators with their recognised areas for development on the Lifelong Learning Plan a number of learning modules (i-Learns) are being created. The Educators will be able to review and revise their knowledge and revisit learning theory by working through these i-Learns. These interactive i-Learns, created in Articulate Storyline, will be made available in Workbooks so that the Educators can always access the materials from their personal learning space. They will be able to attach the associate workbooks to their Lifelong Learning Plan to make it a multi-dimensional record of their development over a lifetime of teaching delivery.

How it is now ....

In October 2012 the use of PebblePad was announced at the Tutor Conference. A specific group of tutors were trained in preparation for the delivery of blended learning courses. This is now ongoing training and with a new cohort of tutors going through the ASA Tutor Training Programme, the use of PebblePad and being a blended learning tutor is an integral part of that development programme.

The Educator Lifelong Learning Plan was launched at the annual Educator Conference in October 2013. As the plan only requires an individual to submit it to the Community Site should they wish to have feedback, it is difficult to know the current uptake of this. We are hoping with the new cohort of 45 potential new tutors starting in June 2014 that the plan will become embedded and integral to the individual recognising areas for development and reflecting on their teaching practice.

Every ASA tutor has to apply for an annual licence. This is a quality kitemark to ensure they meet the National Governing Body's requirements of: being qualified at an appropriate level; ensuring they have a DBS and have attended Safeguarding training; and have participated in professional development during that annual period. The licensing scheme has been reviewed and updated after many years and all ASA tutors will have to apply for a new licence from 1st April 2014. This process is being done through a PebblePad workbook to enable the licensed tutors to have one central area to keep all their records and update them easily on an annual or ongoing basis.

In the beginning of 2014 a new Head of Workforce Development was appointed. A change in management has also seen a change in attitude towards how PebblePad can be adopted and used by the wider workforce, not just the learners and educators. There is a particular focus on developing the workforce in their knowledge and using PebblePad to ensure that the administration and assessment of apprenticeship programmes is more efficient and cost effective.

![Pebble Learning]

As a result three key projects have been escalated as priorities. The first is the development of online CPDs, hosted within PebblePad, for all staff in Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity and Safeguarding. The second is to create a "PebblePad Champion" scheme throughout the organisation with representatives in each area to support the 350 or so internal staff across the ASA, The IoS and British Swimming. The third is to ensure that the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE) use PebblePad as a means of gathering evidence for the tutors to provide feedback on over the system. It has been suggested that to do this effectively the learners use published collections of their work.

The benefits

The largest benefit to date is the recognition by the new Head of Department of all the opportunities PebblePad could potentially provide in terms of meeting our learners' needs and engaging a wider audience of staff in the organisation.

Other anticipated benefits include:

- The sense of belonging to a community and an increase in an identity as an ASA Educator through discussion forums and participation on the community site
- Sharing of own developed resources to include narratives and reflections on how to use the resources
- Able to identify own areas of development and access appropriate training and resources to support own development
- Sharing of lifelong learning plan with key people for ongoing support and feedback

Lessons learnt

- Our experience indicates that the system is not particularly intuitive and therefore people do not just go off and use it independently without the addition of face to face or Web-X training, supporting materials and guidance.
- We tried to train people with too many things in one session, for example creating a blog then sharing it with individuals, collaborating and publishing. We have now developed a more progressive programme of training or targeted, small activities that are relevant and fit for purpose with the audience.
- Users of the system find the language of PebblePad difficult to understand. People find it difficult to understanding the differences between Pebble+ being their personal learning space and ATLAS being the formal learning space. The use of webfolios on the About page have been crucial to clarifying the terminology and to support the users with the navigation between the two areas.

In brief – personalising the curriculum

- Self assessment
- Community of practice
- Sharing best practice
- Identity
- Ongoing review and feedback
- Access to relevant learning