



Western Vocational Lifelong Learning Network

WVLLN

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Issue 21

Newsletter

Editor's comment

The last few months have seen considerable changes to the WVLLN. As reported in the last newsletter we are now in the sustainable phase of the network. The core team has moved up to Claverton Campus, Bath and we are now settled into life on campus.

October saw the successful launch of the EKEN and in this issue you will find a report by Kate Thomas on that event.

We are currently working on taking some of the SWLLN's work forward in the areas of IAG and progression. Developments on this work will feature in future issues of our newsletter.

In November the WVLLN and Aimhigher held a very successful event on vocational learners and progression to HE. Photographs & presentations will be on our website in the next few weeks.

Wishing everyone all the very best for 2010.

BTEC National Diploma Transferability to HE Level 4

The WVLLN Progression Co-ordinator at Bath Spa University has obtained useful data to support the WVLLN's BTEC National Diploma Progression Agreements which recognises the transferability of skills and knowledge from BTEC National Diplomas at Level 3 in the priority subjects of Business, Creative Industries, Engineering, Health & Social Care and Conservation & Environment to Level 4 Higher Education programmes within the WVLLN region. The WVLLN Progression Co-ordinator carried out a skills mapping exercise to identify curriculum between Level 3 BTEC National Diplomas and Level 4 Creative Industries programmes.

BTEC NDs in Music & Performing Arts, Beauty Therapy, Business, Engineering, IT, Travel & Tourism were all identified as having transferable modules applicable to Level 4 Creative Industries programmes in the WVLLN. Applications from BTEC National Diploma students to Level 4 Creative Industries programmes at Bath Spa University have supported these findings. In 2008/09 an applicant with a BTEC ND in Beauty Therapy

Sciences was accepted onto the BA (Hons) in Cultural Studies programme at Bath Spa University, similarly in the same year a BTEC ND IT Practitioners student was accepted onto the BA (Hons) in Creative Writing programme at the university and in 2009/10 a BTEC ND Performing Arts student was accepted on to the Foundation degree in Publishing course.

Further examples of transferability of the BTEC National Diplomas as a route into Higher Education can be found below. These show BTEC ND applications to HE courses for 2008/09 entry across individual WVLLN HEIs.

Bath Spa University saw applications from BTEC National Diploma (ND) in Engineering apply to BA (Hons) Creative Music Technology; from BTEC ND in Children's Care, Learning & Development apply to BA (Hons) Dance Studies; BTEC ND in Forestry & Arboriculture apply to FD in Contemporary Circus & Physical Performance.

University of Bristol saw an application from a BTEC ND in Beauty Therapy Sciences apply

to FD in Counselling.

University of Gloucestershire saw applications from BTEC NDs in Travel & Tourism apply to BA (Hons) Business & Events Management; BTEC ND in IT Practitioners apply to BA (Hons) Interactive Games Design; BTEC ND in Sport apply to BA (Hons) Business Management.

The Royal Agricultural College saw an application from a BTEC ND in Public Services apply to BSc (Hons) Agriculture.

The University of the West of England saw an application from a BTEC ND in Accounts apply to BSc (Hons) Adult Nursing.

We aim to develop case studies from these examples to further support and promote the transferability and sustainability of our BTEC National Diploma Progression Agreements and progression opportunities for vocational learners.

Report by Victoria Trachy, Progression Co-ordinator based at Bath Spa University.

WVLLN 14-19 External Knowledge Exchange Network (EKEN) - report by Kate Thomas Progression Co-ordinator based at the University of the West of England

The WVLLN 14-19 EKEN is a new regional initiative funded by the WVLLN and led by UWE. The EKEN creates virtual and physical spaces for discussion enquiry and knowledge exchange focusing on 14-19 developments in the WVLLN area, particularly Diploma and progression to HE. The network has been formed following the WVLLN's Diploma event in November 2008. It is co-ordinated on behalf of the WVLLN by UWE-based Progression Co-ordinator Kate Thomas and strategically supported within UWE by Professor Ron Ritchie, Assistant Vice-Chancellor and Dean, School of Education who oversees UWE's existing internal knowledge exchange networks (IKENs).

The EKEN aims to:

* Extend existing internal 14-19 networks & arrangements within WVLLN partner HEIs;

* Develop the interaction & impact of Diploma Champions and key contacts across the region in new ways

* Create regional coherence in the HE response to 14-19 developments

* Encourage curriculum links between HE and Diploma consortia

* Develop and share practice/research

* Facilitate regional professional development events focused on Diploma issues

It is hoped to facilitate enquiry groups ie: interest groups with a practical focus and to provide small amounts of funding for individual EKEN members to attend relevant conferences/events, where no other

funding is available. Membership is drawn from all WVLLN partner HEIs (including the Open University South West), FE Colleges, Local Authority (LA)14-19 advisors and groups, 14-19 area partnerships and consortia, schools and regional and national 14-19 networks such as SSAT and Aimhigher.

The EKEN was formally launched in October 2009 with a well-attended event at UWE's Frenchay Campus. Participants attended from HE, FE, Partnerships and Consortia, schools and other 14-19 stakeholders including Aimhigher and the Learning and Skills Council. The event featured keynote presentations on 14-19 Curriculum Reforms and a regional Diplomas update, both by representatives of the Department of Children, Schools and

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Our aims for the next month

Elaine Fisher



The EKEN was launched successfully on 20th October with delegates from a range of organisations attending. Subsequent events are being planned and one on the Extended Project was held on 1st

December. The EKEN is a wonderful opportunity for those interested in the 14-19 agenda, in particular the Diplomas, to engage in the sharing of ideas and contacts. If anyone is interested in taking part then please contact Kate Thomas at kate2.thomas@uwe.ac.uk.

The WVLLN is now in its sustainability phase and plans are underway for further progression agreements including extensions to those for Advanced Apprenticeships.

The Apprenticeship projects are almost completed and details will follow in future newsletters.

The end of year HEFCE report was completed and thanks to the Data team for their hard work in pulling all the data together. Also thanks to all the progression co-ordinators &

admissions/registry at all partner HEIs for their support in ensuring deadlines were met.

We are continuing to work with Aimhigher and the OU on a project aimed at producing resources for vocational learners in FE to support their progression to HE.

Sue Lewis has been busy consulting partners about the proposed changes to Lifepilot which we hope to relaunch in March 2010.

November saw the LLN, in collaboration with Aimhigher and National Office LSC, presenting a workshop at the Action on Access conference 'Work-based and Apprenticeship progression to HE'. This was a chance to highlight the work all three organisations are engaged with and concluded with a very lively discussion around progression issues for vocational learners.

In November the WVLLN and Aimhigher ran a very successful collaboration event 'Vocational Progression into HE' which

featured presentations from a variety of presenters together with workshops on finance and vocational progression. Photos from the event together with the presentations will be available from our website in the next few weeks.

We are looking forward to taking some of the legacy from South West Lifelong Learning Network forward in the areas of IAG and progression. Details will follow in future editions.

Please note that the core team have moved from Carpenter House and are now based at Claverton Campus, Bath.

Upcoming Events

- 2nd December—Summative Evaluation, Claverton Campus, Bath
- 9th December—Team meeting, Claverton Campus, Bath
- 10th December—Action on Access conference, London

Progression Focus

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Families (DCSF). The launch also publicised the new EKEN virtual resource, Sharepoint (<https://share.uwe.ac.uk/teams/eken14to19/default.aspx>). Hosted by UWE, this resource is accessible by external users with a login and password obtainable from the EKEN Co-ordinator.

The EKEN's first workshop entitled **The Extended Project: Innovation and Collaboration**, took place on 1 December and again was attended by practitioners from a range of settings including HE, FE, Consortia and LAs. Lloyd Harris (Kingswood Partnership) and Marie Huxtable and Andrew Barker (B&NES/Apex) presented on structural, logistical and pedagogical aspects of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ), triggering discussions on the potential for and challenges of innovation and collaboration in the delivery of the EPQ. Feedback on the event was overwhelmingly positive, with participants welcoming the opportunities for networking and sharing expertise. An event on the theme of IAG and Progression is planned for Spring 2010.

If you would like to be added to the mailing list and/or obtain access to the EKEN Sharepoint site, please contact Kate Thomas, EKEN Co-ordinator at kate2.thomas@uwe.ac.uk

Social Return on Investment (SROI); a possible evaluation tool?

Our neighbouring network, the South West LLN, held a workshop in June exploring the value of SROI as a descriptor of the effectiveness of their impact. SROI is basically an economic model which seeks to measure the ratio between the expenditure committed to a project or intervention and the impacts generated by the project. It is an extension of the cost-benefit analyses used to assess the feasibility of major developments or, as in this case, to judge the 'value for money' (VFM) outcomes flowing from the establishment and operation of an initiative like an LLN. In an era in which VFM and 'impact' are key criteria by which educational interventions or policies are evaluated, it is timely to investigate the possibilities of applying this framework to the WVLLN.

In brief, the study, carried out by Nick Wiseman (Plymouth) and others, including workshop participants, found that the dominant influence on SWLLNs impact was the allocation and deployment of the Additional Student Numbers (ASNs) awarded by the funders, the Higher Educational Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Direct funding of these ASNs in the relevant Higher and Further Education intuitions, (in perpetuity), was augmented by the benefit presumed to flow to the students taking these places, in additional income over their working lifetime. These two major sums also generated externalities and multiplier effects, including spend of these sums by the beneficiaries on local good and services.

The ratio calculated in SWLLNs case was 36 to 1, a good outcome by any measure, although many caveats and provisos accompanied the analysis. A summary of the work has recently been widely circulated and received favourable mention in both keynote speeches at the LLN National Forum Conference in Birmingham on 18th November. I will be presenting a fuller evaluation of this work to the WVLLN shortly and any development will be noted in subsequent editions of the Newsletter.

Article by Frank Williamson, Progression Co-ordinator, WVLLN based at the University of Bristol.