

Participant 1

Academic lead, HE project

What approaches have been tried to capture lessons learned in the HE setting? Which approaches have worked best?

Interviewer

*Did the project use a formal project management methodology such as PRINCE2?
Have you had any project management training?*

Participant 1

None.

None.

How many of the challenges faced by projects in implementation had been identified in advance as part of the planning?

Interviewer

At the start of the project, what did you see as the main challenges you would face?

Participant 1

Potential lack of participants wanting specialist teaching in rural area

Relationship with third party provider

Competition/overlap with other consortium partners

Interviewer

How confident were you that the project would succeed?

Participant 1

Recruited desired staff

Knew targets unrealistic: would have to be amended

Interviewer

How was the project's progress monitored?

Participant 1

Project Board, steering groups, committees

Monthly claims report and targets

Known or unknown issues encountered?

Interviewer

What known or unforeseen issues were encountered in implementation?

Participant 1

Unexpected: Commissioned third party provider: demand not sufficient

Had to develop inhouse CRM system for project

Consortium partnership working

Interviewer

What was the biggest challenge the project faced?

Participant 1

Impact of corporate merger on delivery and academic programmes

Interviewer

Was there a point where the early closure of the project was considered?

Participant 1

No

32:52

Interviewer

What were the institutional benefits derived from running the project?

Participant 1

Enhanced academic offering: module development

Opportunities for students

Interviewer

Did the project meet its targets? What changes were made to the targets over the course of the project?

Participant 1

Met targets

41:40

Interviewer

How was project closure planned and implemented?

Participant 1

They are all archived in Lampeter. The project closed in June 2015. We had an audit in August and November, and of course can be audited at any time in the next 11 years. We had a closure file which was really good. We had it all signed off by the Pro Vice Chancellor

The digital archive went to REIS, and all the boxes labelled and stamped.

Interviewer

Did you have to do that after the end of the project?

Participant 1

Yes, with no one around! [laughs] It's unbelievable! That sort of annotation doesn't quite fit. They might pick out one page from a file and have no idea.

How well have institutions absorbed lessons learned from projects?

Interviewer

How were lessons learned captured during the project and at the end? Have these informed the institution's future practice?

Participant 1

(No formal lessons learned exercise: external evaluation)

Clearer relationship with partners

Financial processes

50.12

How have individual practitioners been affected by their experience of working on projects?

Interviewer

What impact has the experience had on your professional practice?

Participant 1

What's really interesting is when a project comes to an end it would be really nice if there was another project to go straight onto. Because otherwise it seems like a divorce, you know, for a long time when I'm walking around it's like I've no friends anymore [laughter] I've no people close to be with. I didn't feel like I managed them, I felt we had a really fair relationship. They'd all moved on because there weren't any posts for them, so then you kind of revert back to doing the things you always do anyway, but you didn't have the extra work to do, you know, it was quite creative some of the things that were happening in the project as well. So you lose that and you try to fill the gap with other things. So recently I took on a Leadership and Development module because I felt that I could do that now, you know, take on teaching a module in that area which I would never had done before

Interviewer

[interviewer]

Participant 1

I felt that I could examine traits and behaviours and things in an interesting way you know because I had seen you know it's so much easier to just manage a system than it is a person, you know

Interviewer

[projects v normal work]

Participant 1

There's like a hierarchy that you have to work with [in non-project work], and in a project, you create your own, [interviewer]

52:40

Interviewer

In terms of your role what was most challenging personally?

Participant 1

In some ways it was more the people management side because I tried to allow people get on with the tasks and then we'd have the –well not weekly meetings - monthly meetings where everybody was in the room and we'd talk. We didn't talk about things at length there were particular people who would want to go off and do things. But I found that some people needed to see me all the time, every day, and I found that hard, because I had to be up here for a meeting or down in Swansea and I'd say 'Oh I don't have a long time to talk'. But you can't turn someone away from your door because I found then that it might lead to something negative so you have to learn to find time for people

Interviewer

[interviewer]

Participant 1

and I don't know if I did a good job, I still don't know. [laughs] And it's awful, you know, because you always want to give them the benefit of the doubt, and you'd need to have this conversation and I'm thinking 'how does that fit in with a conversation I had three weeks ago with them, so, you know, is there something I need to be aware of?', you know, making sure we don't cross the line with each other, don't get too friendly, and at the same time you're trying to show them some empathy, you know, because people are so different. So that was the trickiest part, sometimes I'd go home with a bit of a headache [interviewer] And I I'm not sure I dealt with that - should I be more managerial? I just wasn't sure.

55:14

Interviewer

Did you have to deal with any difficult [personnel] issues?

Participant 1

I did. There were two different individuals, and yes, so I don't know how much to say – [interviewer: you were having to address performance issues?] Yes, that's right. and then knowing when somebody was given a more technical task and they just, I would say, No, actually I don't expect you now to do this, so I'd rather you concentrated on this, and they'd say if I just had another two months to learn how to do this, and I'd say I don't have two months, so we have to make a decision here. And that was hard because the- umm- person wouldn't want to have been kind of shown up [] but you didn't want to show it as a failing, but at the same time they did know what was expected going in

Interviewer

[interviewer]

Participant 1

And then there was another problem with somebody else who was doing fine but was very aware that everyone else in our team was getting up from their desk and going in their car and go off to a business or a conference, you know, a day away or so, and this person did not want to be the desk person, but that was the role, and it was difficult then to kind of meet that person to say 'well, if you're willing to do this when you go to this particular meeting then by all means go, but you can't just go there to do paperwork, it's not a day out, we just don't have that kind of budget or flexibility, we need all hands on deck all the time. So that was tricky, and I met that a number of times, and I always had to find ways of, you know, - but it was a negotiation and I often found that it hadn't been thought through on this person's part before they saw me and I kind of planned out why this was necessary, and - oh! -

Interviewer

[interviewer]

Participant 1

Fantastic. Thanks very much. It's so funny looking back on it now.