

Participant 4

Lead academic of work-based learning project

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

Interviewer

Expected challenges

Participant 4

Staff with right skills (teaching and admin)

Targets

Unclear how sincere positive responses were

Interviewer

Targets?

Participant 4

Not confident to achieve targets (60%)

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

Interviewer

Project management

Participant 4

Some PRINCE2 elements: reporting

Interviewer

How was the project's progress monitored?

Participant 4

little internal oversight: PMU

"I didn't feel that the project was being monitored by the institution"

Interviewer

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

Participant 4

Yes- below profile

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

Interviewer

What known or unforeseen issues were encountered in implementation?

Participant 4

Known

Ineffectiveness of cold calling

Positive responses not turning into enrolments

Unknown

All of team had to contribute to respond/be flexible

Need to develop products with employers

Interviewer

Biggest challenge

Participant 4

Maintaining team momentum

Interviewer

Meet targets?

Participant 4

Yes “had a bit of good luck” “success breeds success”

How well have institutions absorbed lessons learned from projects?

Interviewer

Lessons learned?

Participant 4

Reflection throughout leading to changes in way project worked

Lesson learned exercise at end

Included in closure report

“what gets measured gets done”

Interviewer

Inform future practice?

Participant 4

Lessons incorporated in project planning

“the institute itself probably hasn’t learned that it needs to monitor these projects, and have feedback on a regular basis. Umm The only times they really get involved is when things go awry and then all of a sudden the University’s at risk, financially I mean, and at that point then, in some respects, it could be too late.”

“the assumption is there that the project will meet all its targets, will do what’s required: the targets themselves are based on fingers in the air and assumptions and feedback from potential customers that may not materialise. [. . .] But the university seems to think that once the money’s been agreed, [. . .] everything is fine.”

Need for resilience

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

Interviewer

Impact on personal practice?

Participant 4

“I think - it’s not that I learned it, because I was already aware of it, but it’s the power of the team, the importance of keeping track of where you are, and being prepared to change your course if things aren’t going well. Again these are all things that I’ve experienced previously and perhaps what the project has done is just reinforce them. I can’t say I learned anything new, other than I suppose, comparing it to a previous project it’s the importance of involving the customer in designing what you’re delivering. That has to be the biggest lesson from it. And that’s been carried through from my perspective in my practice in working with [a specific employer] that started with a conversation, then taking it back - does this meet the bill? Oh ok, and going through several iterations until we finally end up with in their case a pathways which is going to make the devil of a difference to the skills of employees within [the sector]. I think it has to be the way forward for the institute. [. . .] I’m prepared to put the time in. [. . .] For every 10 I talk to, we get two.”

Interviewer

Most challenging

Participant 4

“What’s concerning is that when you’re not hitting targets then you’re dealing with your team’s mortgages, their home life, their income, the whole shooting match, and so for me it’s the importance of - it’s making sure that you do everything you can to make sure that the project is a success because so many people, families, are involved, with income generated from that project. So I think that’s the most worrying side of any project. If people’s jobs are on the line if the project doesn’t succeed then you going down to having to say goodbye to people, then things are going well.

Interviewer

Did you feel that as a weight of responsibility?

Participant 4

Periodically, I’d say. When the project was not meeting targets. If I was a selfish individual I’d say I don’t care and just carry on, and not change anything and I’m all right Jack, because I’m a full time employee, but I could never think that way and therefore, it wasn’t the only one, but it was one of the catalysts of changing tack and doing things differently in order to meet the targets. It’s part of a

load of things, it is there, it's sort of niggling at the back of your mind, that if things go belly up then there are people who will suffer financially because of it.

Interviewer

Emotional labour?

Participant 4

You get to that point where you need to get more involved in things, and the reason that you give for becoming more involved with things are not the genuine reasons. The genuine reason is that you're worried that the project isn't being successful so you're rolling your sleeves up as well, but what you're telling your team could be something completely different. You could tell the team that you've been told to do it. [. . .] There were certainly times when I was getting a bit concerned and ended up stuffing envelopes or whatever it was just to get a feel for what's going on and ensure that everyone is pulling their weight.

Interviewer

Need to conceal

Participant 4

In the role of project managing, or managing a team whatever they are, there are responsibilities you carry [. . .] you then have the dilemma of being sworn to secrecy for one aspect, and the pastoral care of those that work for you. There can be conflict in your own mind as to how you address the situation [. . .]

Interviewer

Part of standard management?

Participant 4

I'd see it as part and parcel of being a manager and maybe for people who haven't been a manager and get involved with projects maybe they are not aware of. [. . .] You know what the organisation expects of you, and you live to that standard, I guess.;

Interviewer

Leading a team?

Participant 4

I've run projects in a manufacturing environment: yes you monitor progress, you make sure you've got the numbers, you know exactly where you are, if not a daily basis then certainly on a weekly basis, you react to any issues that might crop up, and part and parcel of it is how you manage your team, how you motivate them, how to make sure that they themselves are developing, so you don't have to do everything, you can rely on your team to deliver what's needed, and you have the

confidence in them that if things aren't going correctly, they'll tell you and let you know. There is that open feedback. But also as a manager you have to trust the people who work for you. And I'm sure as a team [on a project] he would not have been happy if I'd been sitting on his shoulder, asking loads of questions. I had to trust them, and I did trust them, and I like to think that that was to the benefit of the project.