

Participant 5

Academic lead, WBL project

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

No formal process: independent evaluator acted as critical friend

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?

Level of engagement and commitment of project partners

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Interviewer

How confident were you that the project would succeed?

Very confident – experienced with type of project, selected team partners

Participant 5

Interviewer

How was the project's progress monitored?

Participant 5

Monthly meetings and reports, shared website

Known or unknown issues encountered?

Interviewer

What known or unforeseen issues were encountered in implementation?

Participant 5

Known:

Unknown:

Team member who lack the skills needed to complete the task assigned to them

Interviewer

What was the biggest challenge the project faced?

Team mmmebr not able to deliver

Participant 5

Interviewer

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

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No

Interviewer

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

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Yes. Additional outputs when opportunity arose

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?

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External evaluator as Critical friend, closure report from evaluate r. Not fed back to institution; fed back to profession.

“It’s been a bit sad.”

“When I closed [the project] down and archived it, I was like [oh]. People felt a bit bereft.”

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 5

“Validated the use of good project management awareness and tools. I like sleeping at night. Overlaid by real sensitivity to the human conditions going on around you. Particularly the recognition that it was essentially voluntary- everybody ended up putting in more than their 53 days or whatever and to appreciate each others ways of working [. . .] This was the first time I did a sustainability piece in there about earning money, and I think that’s a real learning. I’ve also learned how much impact you can make on 200 grand, by beg borrowing and stealing, and small projects are worth doing and they’re finely tuned [] as long as you do more project management on the little ones because you have very little room for manoeuvre, so every bit of activity has to go to an output. You can’t have any wasted time. Irrespective of size, it still needs the same. [. . .] Keep with the programme, keep the process. People thought I was a bit over the top with the GANTT chart and the big launch, but when [the other partners] came to me and asked what’s happening, I’d say look at the chart you’ll see we’re right bang on target. [...]

Interviewer

In terms of your role what was most challenging personally?

Participant 5

I didn’t find anything that challenging about it. I enjoyed doing these things enormously, it’s a little bit out of your ordinary day job, you’re following a passion – it has to be a passion, and you’re working with people who are equally passionate, and I know that I’m the best at the job, given for that group. { ‘ . . .] There are times when you just sit there and go ‘why does it always end up with me?’ . Because you set it up, comes the answer. And you have to take it on the chin, yourself: you

wanted to drive this, you want the kudos from it, let's be honest, and sometimes the challenge is just that "I'm overloaded now and I don't know what I'm doing" – yes you do, you've got the tools.

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I've got enough project management to have a fair degree of self-efficacy about it: I know I can find stuff. I'm a good solution finder. And there are times which are equally useful when I go 'Well I'm stumped' and actually saying that can free everybody up. So I have confidence in my colleagues that I don't really have to look after them, it's just nice if I do, they're grown ups, they'll come up with the goods.

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There has to be one grown up around, everybody loves giving it to you; it's quite funny they want you to be the grown up, and one or two of them had their own struggle, they're used to being the leader on everything, but they want you to be the grown up, and you can see them struggling. You have to keep to your own bit of being clear but not imposing your will too much. And that meant letting them be the leader as well, that's why I had leaders in the work groups. I was working group member in two groups, there was a degree of matrix management here, that allows people to have a leadership role that doesn't jeopardise the plan. So you can still be the grown up but you can let them be the leader there. [] They're leaders in their field, I've got to be careful not to go 'don't be silly'. One of the bits of feedback I've had is 'You're always in safe hands with [me]'. I allow a certain amount of flouncing around and flicking of hairs and walking out and all the rest of it because you don't want to get involved. You have to stay as the safe pair of hands.

Interviewer

Occasions you had to conceal/ manage emotions

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Oh totally, it's like 'Oh behave yourself' and head-to desk. [] There was one instance, a meeting when someone was being particularly stupid and I was like what world view makes that ok? And also they were making me responsible, and that's not how it works. I want to be the safe pair of hands but everyone has to be responsible for their own part in it. And I snapped, just slightly, not fully, just slightly, it was a very useful thing to do, I didn't lose control, then I went out for a moment, and when I came back, everyone was like naughty children, I felt slightly bad about it, but say, come one let's grow up, and the individual was very pleasant and compliant for the rest of the day without me actually making any comment. [. . .] You can support each other and just vent, you know, [. .] All of that malarkey bonds the group, tells you where those issues are, you don't have to be indulgent, they're not therapy sessions. [. .] You have to move into the relational aspect.