Tyne Metropolitan College: Using the Learner Voice to aid recall and create an effective learning environment

Summary

Staff at Tyne Metropolitan College (TyneMet) use flip cameras to film the outcomes of one session and to start the next session. It is a practical and effective method of using the ‘learner voice’ as a stimulus to aid recall and speed up the creation of effective learning environments.

About TyneMet

TyneMet is a medium sized general Further Education College. It offers full time Foundation Learning courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The type of learners

Learners within the Department of Foundation Studies fall into four broad categories:

- Profound complex and multiple learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Moderate learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Social and behavioural difficulties.
- Autism Spectrum Disorder and Aspergers Syndrome.

The challenge

Learners at the Department of Foundation Studies take time to be effectively involved in the learning activities. This can be particularly challenging when learning activities are carried out over several sessions over several weeks. The team at the Department of Foundation studies wanted to find an effective ‘shortcut’ to the time needed to create an effective learning environment.
The department already owned a few flip video cameras and the team decided to try
the video cameras to record the outcome of one session, then to start and inform a
following session. Each group of sessions ran over at least two weeks. The team
selected three groups of learners to trial this method with:

- learners with Moderate Learning Disorders (MLD).
- learners with Profound and Multiple Learning Disorders (PMLD).
- learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Key elements from the end of each session were recorded, for example the closure
activity, and played at the start of the new session. Learners who were unwilling to
be filmed found roles as camera operator or as voice-over.

The videos were kept short (some less than 20 seconds), only displaying key
elements and played on a loop while the learners entered the classroom at the next
session.

**The outcomes**

The project worked very well for all three groups. Using video clips sped up the
creation of an effective learning environment significantly; it took learners on average
20 min less to be effectively involved in the learning activities. For example, one
learning activity used chairs and other classroom objects to create a village. At the
next session, a week later, the camera played a clip of how the classroom was set
up as the village the week before, while a learner’s voice over explained the activity.
When the learners entered the classroom, they instantly recognised the setting and
started to build the village back up, without needing much explanation.

**The impact**

This method has proved to be a simple and practical way of using the learner voice
as a stimulus to aid recall and speed up the creation of effective learning
environment for all groups.

**The lessons learned**

1. One of the barriers the team encountered was that some learners were
   reluctant to be filmed (especially in the MLD and ASD groups). This was
   resolved by:

   - Using volunteers at the first session and the manner in which the material
     was shared at the beginning of the second, dramatically reduced this
     barrier.

   - Students unwilling to be filmed found roles as camera operator, in one
     case offering a voice over in 'student as teacher' role, instructing the
‘performers’ in their work.

2. It is also essential to keep the videos short: editing down longer clips was time consuming and not an effective use of teacher time.

3. Recorded material should be quick and reliable to access – at TyneMet the material was stored on the intranet and hyperlinked from the learning outcomes on the lesson plan. These are typically displayed at the outset of the session.

4. The need for a camera operator – student volunteers were used for the MLD group. Gorilla pods (small clamp able tripods which can be mounted to chairs, tables etc) for the PMLD group.

Useful links

Tyne Metropolitan College

Jisc RSC Northern

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