

Award Winning leadership development for HLTAs in Essex schools



*Receiving the
National Training
Award, September
2007*

"The delegates have excelled and their enthusiasm for the training and, more importantly, implementing the learning in the workplace, is an inspiration to everyone."



East of England
National Training Awards 2007



The challenge

Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) within Schools, like all staff, are given the opportunity for continuous professional development. To compliment existing HLTA development programmes, Essex County Council Standards & Improvement Service (SAIS) wished to improve leadership skills within this vital area of school support. Leadership and management came out as key development requirements with HLTAs who frequently manage their own teams, as well as liaise throughout the school.

Solution

PDT's education specialist Jeremy Lewis worked with Denise Manson from SAIS to create a unique programme which gives HLTAs a recognised qualification – the ILM Level 2 Introductory Certificate in Team Leading. Two programmes in Colchester and Basildon were piloted to deliver specially tailored leadership and management skills, including the development of effective communication, organisational and motivational qualities, assertiveness skills, the ability to deal with conflict and the confidence to support colleagues more effectively. Between March and December 2006, 86 HLTAs from various primary schools across Essex completed the course with a further 79 still working towards their qualification.

Benefits

The aim of the programme was to develop the quality of leadership in the teams working within the schools. In reality the benefits were much wider:

"Delegates have reported a feeling of higher self-esteem, a better understanding of their role within their school, and last but not least, a sense of empowerment – enabling them to take more control of their own and their teams' contribution to teaching and learning across the whole school community. It has benefited the schools in many ways – including improved communication with head teachers, more effective management of team conflict, more effective performance management and a stronger team ethos and staff morale," added Jeremy. *"Pupils, parents and carers are also benefiting from familiar and well trained school staff delivering lessons and other activities."*

Evaluation

An evaluation day followed the completion of the first two programmes and was held to celebrate achievement and to look at how each individual's personal development had been affected by the training. As a result of the success of these pilots, further Level 2 programmes and Level 3 programmes are planned.

National Training Award

In 2007 PDT and Essex County Council entered this programme for the highly prestigious National Training Awards and won the East of England Regional Award.

Ongoing development

Programmes for other support staff in schools were added to the pilot, and further programmes, including Level 3, are planned for 2008.

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