Eduplan Project

Limerick City of Learning Steering Group

For the purposes of piloting the Eduplan Tool with our Limerick Partners, we used the various networks represented on the Limerick City of Learning Steering Group.

The Limerick City of Learning Group is a partnership forum that brings together sectoral networks and partnerships that are committed to creating a culture of learning in Limerick.

The 18 'Pilotees' came from the following organisations: -

- **Downtown Centre,**(an information, guidance and support centre for adults (aged 18+) who are interested in progressing to higher education)
- **Limerick City Adult Education Service (LCAES) Community Education Programme**
- **LCAES Basic Education Solutions Programme**
- **LCAES Upskill Solutions Programme**
- **LCAES Youthreach Programme**
- **LCAES VTOS (**Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme **) Programme**
- **Limerick College of Further Education**
- **Limerick City Sports Partnership**
- **Limerick Community Education Network** (x 3)
- **Enterprise Support Section, PAUL Partnership** (x 2)
- **Incredible Years Limerick** (an early intervention and prevention programme to promote educational and social competence for children, and incorporates a 'Parent Training' element)
- **Jobs Club, LES** (provides a range of facilities and services to help those who are unemployed, in training, or in part-time or low paid employment)
- **National Franchise Centre** (3rd level franchise education centre, assisting both franchisees and franchisors, enabling participants to make informed choices with regard to locating suitable franchise opportunities)
- **Fás** (Irish employment authority promoting job opportunities and training courses for school leavers, post graduates and professionals.)
- **Limerick City of Learning Steering Group** (Partnership forum that brings together sectoral networks and partnerships that are committed to creating a culture of learning in Limerick)

The exercise went very well overall, and the reception of the pilotees was very positive. The challenge when liaising with the pilotees around completing both the questions in the Eduplan Tool and then the Evaluation Document (providing feedback) was one of time primarily. The pilotees were all engaging in the process as an 'add-on' to their own jobs; and had to find time to complete, and to liaise with me (Yvonne Lane, as the contact from City of Learning Steering Group) with their questions and comments.

The questions they had before using were around the purpose of the project, what the tool would be used for in practice, what exactly was involved in their task to 'pilot' the tool, and how long was

involved, etc, and would there be follow-up as a joint group of pilotees. The issue of confidentiality arose for a number of our partners; expressing the wish that their data in both the tool and their feedback in the Evaluation Questionnaire remain confidential.

The feedback was very positive once the pilotees had completed the questionnaire in the Eduplan Tool, the comments included: -

- The Eduplan would encourage us to engage more proactively in implementing formal quality standards and management systems.
- Useful for self-evaluation in non-accredited learning where the needs of the local communities are prioritised over market place
- The tool is quick to access and to complete the questions; and is user-friendly on the whole.
- Useful to see the design of this questionnaire and to compare with our own evaluation systems and tools.
- Having a structured task to assist us in this work – and also facilitate colleagues to feel even more part of a team.
- This definitely gave our organisation food for thought.

The Pilotees all had very positive comments and attitudes towards Self-Evaluation: -

- Self-evaluation helps maintain standards and encourages people to think about Quality Assurance.
- Self-evaluation can improve quality of service and promote best practice within an organisation.
- Self-evaluation can highlight issues that need to be dealt with or affirm best practice
- Imperative that we examine on a regular basis or record in relation to Quality Assurance.

The comments around how Organisations adopt and continue to implement Self-Evaluation Procedures varied, as follows: -

- Both tutoring and non-tutoring staff operate in a culture of self-reflection and self-evaluation. However, evaluation outcomes need to be addressed to maintain a positive attitude towards this process.
- Impartial objective and comprehensive self-evaluation is the only way to ascertain the truth and improve quality standards.
- It is important to ask various people in an organisation to complete evaluation (e.g. Co-ordinators, Tutors, and Learners – Would their answers correspond?)
- Trying to maintain quality can be difficult in the day to day work
- It's useful to reflect – but as the Eduplan exercise was completed by the pilotees on their own, any insights or observations would be more useful when shared within an organisation.
- Self-Evaluation sometimes takes place more extensively and formally when requested by funders, certifying bodies, etc; although staff engage it in informally all the time.
- In general most people see the benefits but there are some that view it as a waste of time.
- The attitude of people within an organisation towards Self-Evaluation depends on the role and value attached to it.

Ideas for Further Development and Improvements for the Tool included:

- More useful as a tool for shared analysis in an organisation i.e. where a team of people considered the questions together, this would also be more likely to lead to some changes or improvements in practice.
- The Information Management Section of the Evaluation could have focused on how information is gathered and how that process may influence course planning and delivery.
- Questions may be too broad at times; more specific questions could yield more value and learning for an organisation.
- Some overlapping concepts in the questions.
- It is not apparent to the user whether information is saved and can be retrieved in the Eduplan Tool.
- Instructions on right-hand side are a little confusing and not immediately apparent to the user.
- There is an issue with how the page refreshes when answers are given there is a tendency to move the wrong slider when the page refreshes to another point.
- The Ranking Blocks are not specific enough; we should be able to give ranking on individual percentage basis.
- Submit button needed at the end of the Questionnaire
- It took me a while to understand exactly how to complete (e.g. using the slider, etc)

In relation to ideas for future use, there was a suggestion that it could be useful for our current FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) Self-Evaluation Process that is being using for Adult Education Programmes.

The Limerick Community Education Network (LCEN) had the comment that if it was to be used by their partners in the future, they would need to be able to modify the questions in the tool to best suit their own members' needs.

Our partners would be happy to keep updated on the progress of the Eduplan tool after the lifespan of the project.