Implementing University Lifelong Learning: The importance of staff development

Recommendations to Managers and Policy Makers

These recommendations arise from the IMPLEMENT project and before that the BeFlex Plus project: both have been concerned with the development of training materials – first printed and now on-line - for professionals in University Lifelong Learning http://implement.eucen.eu

1. An organisation is only as effective as the individuals in it and their collective efforts. So changes in policy and practice and strategies for organisational development must involve appropriate active staff development to:
   - Ensure engagement and a sense of ownership of the changes
   - Enable hopes and fears to surface and be addressed
   - Explore anticipated/desirable and unanticipated/undesirable results and impacts
   - Plan implementation and development
   - Explore alternatives and the opportunities for and/or constraints on flexibility
   - Share reactions and views on future developments
   - Promote clarity and common understanding of roles and timetables

2. Staff development also contributes to the culture and context in which individuals and teams work – it should:
   - Motivate staff
   - Create a richer working environment
   - Invest in the improvement of the organisation
   - Manage the retention of talent

3. The grouping of participants in staff development activities should be carefully considered. There may be times when the group is best constituted by staff in a similar position and similar seniority; there may be others when it would be better to mix different categories of staff in the training – those who will need to work together in some way on a particular development e.g. managers, teachers, counsellors, administrators. Selection criteria should include:
   - Purpose and expected learning outcomes
   - The needs of all the staff (academic, administrative, technical, support staff….)
   - How and by whom the changes will be implemented

4. Staff development must:
   - Be conducted in an atmosphere of trust and confidence
   - Be followed up with appropriate management and mentoring
   - Be evaluated: the easy kind is done at the end of a session with a short questionnaire or discussion; the difficult kind is to measure the impact some time afterwards. Both are very important and if there is no impact then… was it worth it?

5. Policy makers and funding agencies at European and national level should support institutions in their responsibility for staff development by:
   - Encouraging them to include staff development as a criteria for success in project proposals and applications for funding
   - Promoting a range of different forms and methods
   - Making better use of courses and training opportunities that already exist in a variety of media (including adapting/translating as necessary) rather than always 're-inventing the wheel'

6. The EC should recognise that staff development is a key element in the drive to modernise universities and promote innovation; it should therefore be a key element in the budget plans for 2013-20.

Project Details

IMPLEMENT

51882-LLP-1-2010-1-BE-KA4-KA4MP

- Website:
  http://implement.eucen.eu
- Learning Platform:
  http://moodle.eucen.eu
- Email:
  implement@eucen.eu

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

eucen

Project co-ordinated by EUCEN
http://www.eucen.eu

BeFlex+

The IMPLEMENT online courses are based on the training materials of the BeFlex Plus project
http://www.eucen.eu/BeFlex Plus/index.html