

FINAL REPORT FOR KMLLN PROJECT 2007 – 2009	
PROJECT TITLE	Experimental Strategies for Re-engagement of Learners in FE
NAME OF MAIN CONTACT	Richard Dean/Sandy Kojak Canterbury College
DATE OF END OF PROJECT	July 2009
<p>PROJECT SUMMARY AND KEY LEARNING POINTS</p> <p>The initial project aims were to “capture the early leaver from Level 3 and 4 courses in order to identify reasons as to why they left their course early “ and whether this data complemented the findings of a project carried out by Careers Wales in 2006 and which was submitted to the Department of Education.</p> <p>The overall aim of the KMLLN project was to benefit future planning and to highlight areas that would need to be developed in order to support students to complete their course. The project also aimed to identify a range of tactics for re-engagement of the former learner which would lead to an outline for a strategy of re-engagement which could be employed by the College and be possibly utilised by other FE institutions.</p> <p>The initial delivery of this project was by the College’s IAG Team with support from Connexions. It was originally intended to compare two cohorts from Early Years and Art and Design. However this was not possible due to a low response to the re-engagement letter sent out to 56 former Level 3 learners. Following a delayed start, the project was taken over by a newly appointed Higher Education Mentor who could offer more intensive tracking of and detailed contact with early leavers.</p> <p>A range of strategies for re-engagement were employed to support the delivery of the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opportunity for 1:1 interviews to identify their reasons for leaving early • Signposting to relevant support teams both internal and external as well as to appropriate Educational Providers 	

- Using Advocacy to benefit the former learners return between learner and tutor or learner and support team or learner and educational provider
- The opportunity to gain continued advice and “mentoring” through the initial stages of re-engagement
- Refinement and development of initial learning support screening and referral systems to be in line with the DSA requirements

The range of approaches which the Higher Education Mentor employed was as above but with a more personalised approach. It was decided that the first initial contact would be best offered by phone during the early evening period when a majority of people were in and this proved to be most successful. A total of 127 people were contacted by correspondence and phone and out of these over 50% (57) were contacted by phone. Of those contacted by phone approx. 40% did come in for consultation with the Higher Education Mentor as opposed to 12% who responded from contact via letter.

Key Learning Points

Reasons given by learners for non-achievement were:

- a lack of support, advice or guidance to help them with their problems
- struggling with the academic work
- the course was wrong for them,
- they were unhappy with the organisation of the course

Evaluation of the data showed that following strategies would benefit former learners to re-engage and achieve:

- Better support for learners through their studies
- Offering comprehensive pre-course IAG on course content and expectations and commitment needed from students. This could be delivered in a variety of ways such as from Progression Sessions, Familiarisation and Taster sessions where aspects of HE are experienced prior to the course
- Offering HE study skills opportunity as part of or pre-course study skills sessions

The data showed that quite a few students had struggled with academic writing and through the conversations that took place during the time of the research it came to light that many had either not disclosed or had an undiagnosed special educational need, such as dyslexia.