



Newsletter 06

Our Modules include:

Age

Disability

Gender

Religious Belief

Sexual Orientation

The Welsh Language

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The Engaging Diversity Development Partnership is now providing 4 diversity awareness modules with Disability, Gender, Age and the Welsh Language modules available to all partners. As of September 2006, 1471 users are participating in the project and since the commencement of Action 1 the cumulative figures for modules completed so far are:

Race Module = 990 beneficiaries finished

Disability Module = 619 beneficiaries finished

Gender Module = 422 beneficiaries finished

Age Module = 80 beneficiaries finished

The moderator course is now underway and includes both the Transnational Partners from the Collaborative Learning Project and the partners from the Engaging Diversity DP. Participants are able to take part in a multi-cultural e-community where they can converse and discuss diversity awareness issues with their European counterparts. Techniques for moderating an e-community and using the community to develop and share best practice are covered which will help each partner get the most out of the e-community that is set up for them.

CASE STUDY

Powys County Council as one of the Development Partners has been extremely successful in setting up their training programme over the last few months.

Julie Grafton, the Equalities & Diversity Officer explains...

E-learning did not have a good reputation within

Powys County Council after a bad

experience a few years ago so it was

critical that we got this right. We

wanted e-learning to be used more and more within the organisation so it was crucial that we ensured that all the 'i's were dotted and the 't's were crossed. Initial difficulties such as lack of sound cards in the majority of older computers, and Firewalls and internal systems all contributed towards the frustration of the Project Team who wanted to roll the programme out to all staff as soon as possible. By our ICT Service Desk and the BTC working together effectively these problems were dealt with and sorted.

By providing a choice for employees to use their own computers or access the programme via a formal training venue enabled the staff to choose the most appropriate method for them. Feedback regarding the format has been generally positive, especially as the standard of the modules has improved as they have progressed. The mixture of the documentary style, the factual legislative sections and the opportunities to reflect have lead to greater understanding of diversity issues throughout the authority. In the first three months, 220 have completed the Race module, 125 disability, and 88 the gender module.

E-learning has the potential to be

huge within Powys County Council. Its geographical and numerical spread of employees sets its own challenges with regard to training. Centrally located courses are not always accessible for employees. E-learning is definitely the way forward and this programme has provided us with a firm foundation to develop an e-learning strategy as well as providing the employees with key skills and knowledge with regard to diversity.

RESEARCH

A new research officer from the University of Wales, Bangor has now joined the DP. The UWB are in process of preparing tools for assessing the longer-term effectiveness of the modules and the varying ways the partners are making use of them in diversity training programs. So far this has involved documentary research as well as conducting an initial, on-line, survey of users. Analysis of the responses on this survey has confirmed much of what was said in the published research, but also provided an initial structure for understanding how this training is viewed by the users, some of the preconceptions they come to it with, as well as the personal, professional and organisational goals they bring

to the process.

TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERS

In September a two day workshop was held in Setubal, Portugal with 16 participants representing Portugal, Poland, Slovakia and Wales. The members of the workshop discussed the design & running of the knowledge sharing e-community and the added value and expectations of each DP. Based on these discussions it was agreed that:

- IT teaching where ideas and resources on current IT methods are obtained, teaching methods defined and the role of IT teaching be identified.

- The Welsh Team wish the Polish team to concentrate on age in the work place and the Slovakian team obtain details of gender in high skill professions in industry. This will fulfil the Engaging Diversity DP report on the experience of differences and similarities between the context of diversity issues in different member states and the range of solutions used to tackle discrimination.

- The criteria and methodology for the evaluation of the TNP will be discussed using the knowledge sharing e-community.

The next TNP meeting will be held in Slovakia on the 5-6th of December 2006.