

ACTION RESEARCH

Joint Practice Development and Action Research
across the Further Education and Skills sector



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— *Intro*

The Learning and Skills Teacher Apprenticeship



The Level 5 Learning and Skills Teacher Apprenticeship integrates practical experience with academic studies, including the theory surrounding teaching and learning. It is aimed at anyone who currently works in, or plans to work in the Further Education and Skills sector. This can include vocational education, training, coaching and mentoring roles across a variety of industries.

The apprenticeship is designed to develop professional teaching and learning knowledge. It will progress apprentice planning, designing and delivery skills, supporting them to become highly reflective practitioners. Experienced academics with a wealth of employer experience support apprentices to engage with teaching and learning educational theories and practice, helping apprentices to explore how to implement this in practice.

Throughout the programme, apprentices investigate the techniques involved in the design, development, delivery, assessment and evaluation of learning.

— Intro

Editor's Note

Welcome to the second issue of Action Research, where our Learning and Skills Teacher apprentices share their Joint Practice Development projects. Each study reflects a commitment to learner-centred practice, demonstrating how research undertaken in professional contexts can directly shape teaching, learning, and progression in the Further Education and Skills sector.

This issue brings together projects on learner confidence, assessment, and inclusion. From questioning strategies for EAL learners and adaptive teaching approaches, to community wellbeing initiatives, the focus on building confidence and learner voice is clear. Alongside this, research into formative assessment, retrieval practice, and practice assessment documents shows how assessment can move beyond measurement to actively drive engagement and learning.

A further strand of inquiry highlights organisational change, with projects such as workplace passports for neurodiverse learners exploring how educational support can be sustained into employment. Together, these studies underline the sector's role in fostering equity, wellbeing, and opportunity. Above all, they show the power of practitioner research to reimagine practice and improve outcomes for learners.

Reece Sohdi
Programme Leader - LST Apprenticeship



What is Joint Practice Development?

Joint Practice Development (JPD) refers to a collaborative process where educators work together to enhance their professional practice in a collaborative approach, developing, testing, and refining teaching strategies and approaches.

Unlike traditional top-down professional development, JPD is a bottom-up, practice-based model that values mutual learning and knowledge exchange among educators. It fosters a culture of trust and shared responsibility, encouraging continuous improvement. Fielding et al. (2005), highlights the importance of this approach in building sustainable professional learning communities, and Cordingley (2015), underscores its effectiveness in supporting deep, context-sensitive improvements in teaching practice.

How does the introduction of a functional Practice Assessment Document (PAD) impact healthcare apprentice autonomy, engagement, and progression?

Michelle Archer & Rebecca Wish

Introduction and Background

The Practice Assessment Document (PAD) was developed to structure observational criteria in NHS healthcare apprenticeships while encouraging learner autonomy and ownership of their education. Designed for adaptability, including SEND needs, the PAD aims to support personalised learning, reflective practice, and improved communication. By embedding these principles, the project sought to enhance learner engagement, retention, and progression, as well as to foster a culture of continuous improvement in both training delivery and the apprentices' preparation for End Point Assessment (EPA).

Literature Review

Competency-based education focuses on demonstrating knowledge, skills, and behaviours in authentic contexts (Mulder et al., 2007). Stack (2017) advocates for personalised, learner-driven approaches over traditional models, while Hess et al. (2021) highlight the need for authentic assessments that reflect modern demands. Together, this literature supports the PAD's emphasis on real-world application, adaptability for diverse learning needs, and the role of reflective practice in fostering both skill mastery and educational ownership across apprenticeship pathways.

Methodology

The pilot involved learners across multiple apprenticeship cohorts transitioning from old to new diploma standards. Data was collected through learner feedback surveys, questionnaires, and interviews with current and former learners. The focus was on gathering qualitative insights into PAD usability and quantitative tracking of learner results across cohorts. This mixed-methods approach aimed to evaluate both the functional design of the PAD and its perceived impact on learner engagement, confidence, and readiness for assessment.

Analysis of Results

Cohort results indicated steady learner progression and successful EPA readiness, particularly in newer diploma cohorts. Across 15 cohorts, distinctions and passes were achieved consistently, with withdrawals decreasing in later groups. Learners described the PAD as adaptable, accessible, and supportive of reflective learning. It improved communication between learners and trainers, supported SEND inclusion, and encouraged learning to the highest level – “teach to the top” (Mansworth, 2021). Early evidence suggests the PAD promotes both autonomy and engagement while supporting achievement outcomes.

Discussion

The PAD was well received by learners and staff, demonstrating benefits such as personalisation, reflective skill development, and enhanced trust between learner and trainer. These features align with literature on competency-based education and authentic assessment. While scalability remains to be tested, the initial impact indicates the PAD could be embedded across programmes. The adaptability for SEND learners and its integration into EPA preparation suggest it can serve as both a tracking tool and a cultural shift towards learner empowerment.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The pilot has been successful, with strong learner engagement and practical application across apprenticeship pathways. For long-term success, the PAD should be embedded into curriculum design, timetabling, and EPA preparation, while maintaining flexibility for SEND and diverse learner needs. Continued evaluation should track retention, progression, and achievement, alongside qualitative feedback. With further refinement, the PAD could help widen access, enhance inclusion, and establish a culture of lifelong learning within apprenticeship training. Scalability will be the key future test.

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How would the use of retrieval practice grids impact on police recruits' abilities to recall and apply legislation in a professional training setting?

Hannah Ayling & Merlean Eaton-York

Introduction and Background

As a British Transport Police (BTP) recruit trainer, I observed students often struggled to recall legislation taught earlier in a fast-paced, 20-week course. Retrieval practice grids were introduced to support memory retention and application in practical scenarios. These grids contained key legislative points for regular review, aiming to boost confidence, recall, and performance. The project sought to address gaps in adult vocational training research by exploring whether this approach could improve learning outcomes and be adopted more widely across future training intakes.

Literature Review

Jones (2019) highlights retrieval grids' ability to strengthen long-term retention through spaced repetition, while Lovell (2020) draws on Sweller's cognitive load theory to explain how repeated retrieval moves knowledge into long-term memory. Gravells (2017) stresses the importance of regular questioning for adult learners. Vygotsky's theories (1978) suggest retrieval grids could promote behaviourist "drill" learning, potentially leading to recall without deeper understanding – a risk in policing where justification of decisions is vital. This study explored both benefits and limitations of this method in practical training contexts.

Methodology

A single intake of 12 Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) trainees completed seven retrieval grids over a 10-week course. Eleven students completed an end-of-course questionnaire combining open and closed questions on learning, recall, and scenario performance. Anonymous scores from six grids were analysed for progression. The lead trainer was interviewed to gather qualitative insights. This small-scale study used consistent delivery conditions but lacked a control group. The mixed-methods approach provided both quantitative patterns and qualitative themes from learner and trainer perspectives.

Analysis of Results

Survey findings showed 100% of learners felt the grids improved learning and recall, with repetition and handwriting noted as key benefits. Many reported reduced anxiety in assessments, particularly those with ADHD. While 45% linked the grids directly to improved scenario performance, others found them more useful for written exams. Trainer feedback noted score improvements over time and strong summative performance from learners who valued the grids. Although comparative analysis with other intakes was limited, the pattern suggested a positive learning impact.

Discussion

The findings align with Jones (2019) and Gravells (2017) on the benefits of repetition for retention, and with cognitive load theory principles on embedding knowledge in long-term memory. Evidence included learner-reported confidence gains and reduced reliance on notes. However, without testing deeper understanding, results may partly reflect behaviourist recall rather than conceptual mastery, raising questions for further research. The small sample size and absence of a control group limit generalisability, but the positive learner feedback and incremental score gains are encouraging.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Retrieval practice grids were well-received, supporting hypotheses around improved confidence and learning. While the study couldn't conclusively measure long-term recall against a control group, learner and trainer feedback suggest grids can be an effective tool in vocational police training. Recommendations include expanding use across intakes, incorporating retrieval into lesson planning, and creating timetabled space for grids. Future research should include a control group, more participants, and scenario-based observation to better understand their impact on legislative application and decision-making in practice.

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Would implementing a Workplace Passport support police recruits in the transition from classroom -based learning to professional operation?

Michael Charnick & Jenny Phillips

Introduction and Background

The British Transport Police (BTP) offers strong SEND and wellbeing support during training, but this often fails to transfer effectively into the workplace. A Workplace Passport (WPP) – a single document detailing an individual's needs – could bridge this gap, enabling consistent support from training school through operational duties. This project aimed to explore whether WPPs could improve learner wellbeing, help officers feel more confident in expressing needs, and strengthen workplace relationships with tutor constables and sergeants through better understanding of those needs.

Literature Review

Government policy supports lifelong learning but lacks detail on workplace application. Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs), introduced in the 2014 Children's Act, offer a holistic support model until age 25, aligning with BTP's recruitment age but are currently under review. The Equality Act 2010 mandates reasonable adjustments, requiring public sector organisations like BTP to embed inclusive practices. Most existing research focuses on compulsory education, with limited evidence on vocational and workplace-based lifelong support, highlighting a gap this project sought to address in operational policing contexts.

Methodology

Using a Design-Based Research (DBR) approach, Learning & Development and Operational Policing planned to co-develop the WPP. Student officers would create their WPP during training school. After the learning period, students and tutors would complete Likert-scale questionnaires to identify successes and challenges, feeding into WPP refinement. Annual reviews would occur during PDR cycles. The aim was iterative development, aligning the process with operational realities, and embedding the WPP into organisational policy and culture for sustainable, lifelong support for officers.

Analysis of Results

Implementation faced significant disruption: recruitment paused, the WPP project lead left without replacement, and data collection was minimal. One learner used a WPP successfully, adapted from prior employer support. The researcher trialled a personal WPP for non-SEND reasons, gaining insight into potential benefits. These experiences revealed that lack of organisational coordination, ownership, and commitment were the main barriers. Without structural support and leadership buy-in, sustaining lifelong support tools like WPPs is unlikely, regardless of individual or localised successes.

Discussion

The project highlighted that organisational readiness, not tool design, is the key challenge. Feedback suggested operational pushback (*"It won't work operationally"*) and concerns over scalability (*"We can't have everyone wanting one"*). Wider societal struggles with lifelong support appear mirrored in policing contexts. While the original aim of evidencing benefits wasn't met, the process provided insight into internal structures, policy constraints, and the importance of early engagement with stakeholders. Forging links with staff networks and other policing researchers emerged as valuable by-products.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The research reframed the question: *"Would it be practical to offer a Workplace Passport to all student officers?"* Practical feasibility must precede evaluation of benefits. For successful implementation, BTP would need a coordinated approach, leadership commitment, and alignment with operational demands. Future research should explore cost-benefit implications, trialling the WPP with a larger cohort to build evidence for adoption. Despite its challenges, the project increased organisational awareness of SEND support needs and the potential role of structured, portable support tools.

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What is the impact of supporting pathology apprentices with on-programme progression and timely completion within a healthcare training setting?

Stuart Costelloe-Ferguson & Carol Tudor

Introduction and Background

Formative assessment and learner tracking are not consistently applied in pathology vocational qualifications, leading to prolonged learner support needs, reduced motivation, and delays in completion. As of November 2024, 18.5% of staff within an NHS trust in the North-East were enrolled, with 32.5% overdue and 22.5% expired. This impacts departmental competency programmes. Research by Black & Wiliam (1998) and Sadler (1989) highlights formative assessment's role in closing learning gaps, building motivation (Wiliam, 2005), and improving outcomes when success criteria are clear (Hattie, 2011).

Literature Review

Feedback motivates and reinforces learning, yet Burgess et al. (2020) report that healthcare learners often lack direct observation and feedback. Formative assessment methods are well documented in clinical (Alismail et al., 2021), pathology (Ahmed et al., 2019), and educational contexts, as well as portfolio-based assessment (Morris & O'Connor, 2023). Pathology-specific Institute of Biomedical Sciences (IBMS) resources and local policies exist, but enforcement is inconsistent and protected time for training is rare. This gap limits structured feedback, standardised tracking, and reflection opportunities within pathology education.

Methodology

Between January-June 2025, monthly reviews (n=6) were conducted using a tracking document, with one learner opting for bi-weekly sessions. Reviews included feedback, Q&A, and target setting, with progression measured by percentage completion rather than marking times. Initial and ongoing questionnaires gathered learner perceptions on support and progress, alongside qualitative reflections on wellbeing. The study excluded assessor delays as a variable, focusing solely on learner progression. Targets and objectives were set at the outset, with progress monitored against these benchmarks.

Analysis of Results

Learners reported increased motivation, accountability, and planning ability when meetings and targets were in place. Viewing completion percentages was a positive motivator, and mentor support was valued. Barriers included shift patterns, lack of protected time, unmarked work, and withdrawal of support in some departments. Some learners set personal targets but failed to meet them without structured guidance. Wellbeing was closely linked to feeling supported, with demotivation reported when observing peers with more dedicated time for portfolio work.

Discussion

The project demonstrated that structured reviews, clear objectives, and active mentor support improved learner progression and motivation. Method refinements, such as using Microsoft Forms, could improve engagement. Barriers like shift clashes and limited service flexibility need organisational solutions. Mentor and manager training is required to embed consistent support from the outset. Extending the approach to other qualifications and disciplines could provide further insight into optimal support structures and the relationship between formative assessment, learner engagement, and wellbeing.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Protected time, consistent mentor support, and structured targets from programme start are essential. Standardised departmental approaches and mentor training should be introduced to strengthen formative assessment practice. Findings align with Burgess et al. (2020) on limited feedback in healthcare, Wiliam's (2005) link between formative assessment and motivation, and Hattie's (2011) emphasis on clear success criteria. Support and structured monitoring positively influenced progression, motivation, and wellbeing, highlighting the need for consistent formative assessment in pathology education.

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How could effective and targeted questioning and engagement strategies build speaking confidence among adult EAL learners?

Monika Galic & Harriet Thirkell

Introduction and Background

This research explored how questioning techniques and engagement strategies can improve speaking confidence among English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners. Drawing on lived experience of EAL, the study was informed by curiosity about learner perspectives and ways to strengthen teaching practice. Organisational gaps were identified in resources, accessible learner documentation, tutor training, and targeted support. The study aimed to address these gaps and improve learner outcomes by examining how classroom approaches could foster confidence, motivation, and practical speaking ability.

Literature Review

Existing literature largely focuses on school-aged learners and general education settings, with limited work on adult EAL in community learning. Theories from Sweller (1988), Rosenshine (2012), and Wiliam (2011) informed the study, emphasising scaffolding, daily review, and effective questioning. Mansworth's Teach to the Top (2021) and Bell Foundation guidance (n.d) provided strategies for structured, collaborative questioning, while EAL Hub resources (2023) offered practical engagement techniques. This evidence base supported the hypothesis that combining scaffolding with challenging, structured speaking opportunities can improve learner confidence in varied EAL contexts.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach combined quantitative confidence questionnaires and qualitative interviews, open-ended responses, and case studies. Three contexts were studied over 12 weeks: a primary school conversational course (n=5), two community learning hives (n=6), and one 1:1 Functional Skills English learner. Pre- and post-course confidence scores tracked progression, while tutor interviews captured changes in questioning techniques, engagement strategies, and classroom setup. Learner case studies provided rich accounts of experiences, challenges, and real-world application of language skills, such as attending appointments without support.

Analysis of Results

Qualitative data revealed tutors prioritised safe, supportive environments, scaffolding, and real-life topics to encourage speaking. Learners reported feeling welcome, unjudged, and increasingly confident, with one progressing from requiring a companion at appointments to independently communicating with a doctor. Strategies included integrated craft/group work, adapted seating, and accessible resources. Organisational changes followed, including NOCN diagnostics, wellbeing tools, and the introduction of Skills for Life ESOL qualifications. While quantitative confidence gains were modest, qualitative evidence showed significant perceived improvements in speaking confidence and participation.

Discussion

Findings suggest that structured questioning, scaffolding, and safe, welcoming classroom environments can build speaking confidence in EAL learners. Tutors used real-life contexts, collaborative tasks, and flexible questioning to engage learners. Small numerical gains in confidence scores contrasted with strong qualitative evidence of personal achievement and independence. Organisational outcomes included better diagnostic processes, expanded EAL provision, and embedded wellbeing strategies.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The study recommends embedding questioning techniques, scaffolding, and collaborative engagement strategies across EAL provision. Creating safe spaces with structured challenge supports learner confidence, wellbeing, and progression into wider opportunities such as volunteering. As a practitioner, the research prompted greater focus on targeted questioning, goal setting, and classroom setup to reduce anxiety and foster participation. Organisationally, the findings have led to diagnostic tools, coordinated EAL provision, and improved tutor collaboration, ensuring that learner confidence is supported from enrolment through to independent language use.

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Can community-based wellbeing activities improve unemployed adults' confidence, wellbeing, and progression into education, training, or employment?

Catherine King & Paula Robson-Lamb

Introduction & Background

This study investigated the impact of a weekly wellbeing walk at Bedlington Learning Hive, designed for socially isolated adults with low confidence, poor mental health, or limited motivation in traditional learning settings. As a Community Engagement Tutor, I aimed to test whether such social engagement could foster confidence, peer support, and resilience, ultimately increasing progression into training, volunteering, or employment. The research drew on both quantitative data and lived learner experiences to explore the value of informal, community-based learning.

Literature Review

Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social constructivism positions learning as a collaborative process, mirrored in the peer support and shared experiences of the walking group. Maslow (1943) emphasised that belonging and emotional safety must be met before confidence and achievement, with the group offering this foundation. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory was also relevant: participants built confidence through mastery (regular attendance), social persuasion (encouragement), and modelling (observing others succeed). Together, these theories explain why wellbeing interventions may positively influence educational and personal progression.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was applied over three months, combining pre- and post-course Wellbeing Star assessments with qualitative interviews and reflective learner voice data. Five participants were recruited, with outcomes tracked against personal development, confidence, and progression indicators. Learners were also asked structured post-course questions on mental health, peer support, and confidence changes. Qualitative feedback was prioritised to capture the deeper, often unquantifiable, impact of wellbeing interventions beyond traditional classroom measures (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017).

Analysis of Results

Quantitative data showed modest improvements in wellbeing ratings, but the most powerful evidence came from case studies. Learners described the group as safe, non-judgmental, and transformative: one participant with PTSD gained peer acceptance and later joined a clinical support group; another overcame isolation and secured employment. Even those who felt unsure about confidence gains valued belonging and connection. Outcomes were not always visible on paper but represented meaningful, personal progress. Learner voice highlighted that the group offered something classrooms could not: safety, nature, and authentic dialogue.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that wellbeing walks create conditions for learning and growth by meeting social and psychological needs. Peer relationships reduced isolation, encouraged openness, and built resilience. While quantitative measures underreported progress, qualitative accounts captured significant life changes that traditional surveys overlook (Patton, 2015). The project illustrates how adaptive, informal learning interventions can widen access and support progression for those furthest from the labour market. However, challenges remain, including participant motivation and practical barriers such as transport or anxiety.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The wellbeing walk had clear benefits for confidence, social connection, and progression into education, training, or employment, even if these were not always measurable in standardised ways. Learners' voices and case studies confirmed the initiative's value as both a wellbeing and educational intervention. The group is now transitioning to a learner-led model, with plans to launch a second group, reflecting its sustainability and impact. Going forward, further research should explore how to capture these "silent wins" more effectively and embed them within community education practice.

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What are the benefits of adaptive teaching and inclusive learning on adult learners' progression, confidence, and qualification achievement?

Abi-Leigh Law & Melanie Martin

Introduction & Background

This research explored whether inclusive and adaptive teaching positively impacts adult learners' education journeys, particularly for those who did not achieve qualifications in school (Rapp & Corral-Granados, 2024). As a Community Engagement Tutor within an adult community training provider in the North East of England, I work with learners aged 17+ on qualifications and wellbeing programmes. Many learners reported lacking support during school years. The study aimed to assess whether creating a safe, supportive environment with tailored adaptations could boost confidence, foster peer respect, and help learners achieve their educational goals.

Literature Review

Westwood (2018) highlights that inclusive and adaptive teaching can increase opportunities for social interaction, communication development, and positive peer modelling. It promotes awareness of diverse abilities, fosters helping skills, and benefits all students through modified resources and flexible delivery (Vygotsky, 1978). These benefits align with the research aim of ensuring all learners access the same curriculum while recognising individual needs (Mitchell, 2020). Inclusive learning environments, when well designed, not only improve educational attainment but also strengthen social cohesion and learner self-belief.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was taken using open-ended learner questionnaires at the start of sessions to capture prior experiences and support received. At the end of the course, learners completed feedback forms on their experience within the training organisation. Questionnaires were distributed to 10 learners during the research period, with six returned. This mixed qualitative and basic quantitative data aimed to capture both personal experiences and measurable indicators of learner satisfaction and progression.

Analysis of Results

Learner feedback indicated strong progression when inclusive and adaptive strategies were in place. One learner reported significant improvements in reading and spelling after joining the Learning Hive, attributing this to targeted support. Activities like the "*Tree of Positivity*" demonstrated full participation across abilities, reinforcing the value of a collaborative, inclusive approach. While quantitative data was limited, qualitative case studies provided compelling evidence of improved confidence, communication, and motivation to achieve qualifications despite prior barriers.

Discussion

Findings support Westwood's view that adaptive teaching promotes academic progress and social benefits for all learners. A safe, respectful environment encouraged open participation, stronger peer relationships, and greater self-confidence (LGA, 2020). Although the sample was small, the consistency of positive experiences suggests that inclusive practices enhance both personal growth and educational outcomes. The study also revealed the importance of personalised support and the adaptability of teaching to meet diverse learner needs within adult education contexts.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Inclusive and adaptive teaching approaches showed clear benefits in learner engagement, confidence, and skill development. Although the quantitative data set was small, qualitative evidence strongly supports the value of these methods. Future work should expand data collection, exploring specific adaptations and their impact on measurable achievement rates. Continuing to develop inclusive strategies will ensure all learners, regardless of background or ability, can progress toward their goals and experience positive, empowering educational journeys.

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How can improved formative assessment increase learning, retention and progression among apprentices in manufacturing?

Stephen Simm & Rob Dodds

Introduction and Background

National apprenticeship achievement rates for 2023/24 were 60.5%, with a government target of 67% by 2025 (Camden, 2025). Institutional results fell below benchmark in recent years, signalling possible issues in programme quality, learner support, and skill development. Formative assessment practices lacked depth, focusing on compliance over learner needs. This project aimed to redesign assessment to better differentiate learning, engage apprentices, and support progression toward End Point Assessment (EPA), while improving retention and morale for both learners and supervisory staff.

Literature Review

Formative assessment is essential for understanding learner needs and adapting teaching (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Cowley, 2018). Gregson & Duncan (2022) emphasise assessment's impact on engagement and progression, while Hattie's Visible Learning advocates active learner involvement in feedback processes. Mitchell & Sutherland (2020) highlight the value of systematic formative assessment in fine-tuning delivery. Effective curriculum design in technical and vocational training (TVET) links skilled workforce development to broader economic and sustainability goals, making tailored assessment critical for both learner achievement and sector growth.

Methodology

We reviewed past cohort results and co-developed an improvement plan with colleagues. For a new cohort of 10, initial assessments were expanded to include cognitive processing needs, learner biographies, ILPs, and wellness plans. Supervisors received training on apprentice strengths and support needs. Knowledge, Skills, and Behaviours (KSB) mapping was introduced, with learner-accessible trackers and enhanced review documents. Regular trainer progress meetings focused on assessment use in planning. Learner surveys and structured feedback informed delivery adjustments, fostering a more personalised, responsive teaching environment.

Analysis of Results

Improved initial assessments created a more welcoming and informed learning environment, enabling faster rapport and targeted teaching. KSB mapping and accessible trackers allowed learners to monitor progress and identify knowledge gaps, increasing engagement. Reviews shifted from confirmatory to conversational, facilitating early intervention. Engagement from supervisory staff improved, leading to quicker resolution of issues. Retention rates rose to 92% ten months into the programme. Enhanced curriculum design boosted morale for learners and staff, while aligning teaching content more closely with EPA requirements.

Discussion

Findings suggest that structured, personalised formative assessment strengthens engagement, retention, and attainment in apprenticeships. Improved initial assessments and wellness planning built learner trust and informed differentiation. Accessible progress tracking encouraged ownership, while supervisor involvement enhanced pastoral and workplace support. Results mirror literature emphasising formative assessment's dual role in measuring and influencing learning. Sustainability of results will depend on embedding these practices into standard operating procedures, ensuring supervisors remain engaged, and refining KSB tracking to further align with EPA readiness standards.

Recommendations and Conclusion

1. Maintain expanded initial assessments, including wellness planning.
2. Continue KSB mapping with learner access to trackers.
3. Train supervisors in supporting apprentice learning and wellbeing.
4. Use structured, conversational reviews to maintain engagement.
5. Embed formative assessment into ongoing curriculum design and planning.

The project demonstrated that rethinking formative assessment leads to higher engagement, improved morale, and significantly better retention, positioning apprentices to succeed in EPA and beyond. Results exceeded recent benchmarks and align with the national push toward higher apprenticeship achievement rates.

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