Family Learning Case Studies – Scotland

Case Study: DigiDabble

North Ayrshire Council, Scotland: Family learning for digital skills

Dabbling at Ardrossan Library

Background

North Ayrshire Council have developed an irresistible digital offer, where popup all-day Saturday events in libraries provide a safe and supported environment for families to explore new technologies and adults, children and young people can improve their digital skills.

Public demand for innovation from its library service was evidenced through falling visitor number on Saturdays and public consultation meetings in late 2015. The council knew they had to offer something globally innovative and took inspiration from library MakerSpaces and coding clubs in Australia, USA and New Zealand. Uniquely, North Ayrshire wanted to offer an informal, unstructured fun day with digital 'toys' for families to play and learn together. Demand is carefully managed and the team has brought partners on board to increase capacity. These events are still very much a targeted intervention in council plans to increase equity and digital participation

Essentially these events are aimed at the poorest families and are rooted in developing family learning through spending time together playing, having fun and building family relationship through shared experiences. The libraries are carefully selected and are prioritised as identified in North Ayrshire's Council Areas of Family Resilience data.

Increasing digital skills and digital participation through library events co-located with Employability Hubs is especially positive. North Ayrshire's economic challenges are well documented and growing interest in digital skills as well as STEM subjects will contribute to

developing employability and career aspiration, especially for girls, among local families. Developing these skills locally builds workforce capacity and creates a more attractive location for digital businesses.

Kilbirnie's Library and Employability Hub dabblers

"The events bring a new audience to libraries with more lads, dads and teenagers, as well as DigiDabble 'groupies' who follow the events around as we pop up in different local libraries. We are responding to requests for sessions in schools and our library holiday club activities in areas where there is demand for wider digital participation and financial hardship. "

DigiDabble is demand-led and offers local families access to technology that is widely available in more affluent homes and city centre locations. It is designed to increase equity for families who might never hold an iPad otherwise. Recognised by an Edge Digital Library Award, the programme provides a communal toolbox made up of software, digital tools, 3D printer, robotic kits, gaming, virtual reality and coding. Families have fully embraced DigiDabble, following events around local libraries, attracted by the chance to try something new and by the opportunity to build skills and confidence.

Programme development
Library and adult learning staff collaborated to develop the programme, which aims to support critical thinking. After lengthy research the Library Team identified fantastic digital tools which include:

- Osmos: developing the iPad to coding, literacy, numeracy and drawing – fun-based collaborative learning in a range of games and programmes
- Makey Makeys: an invention kit using basic conductive science – it really is playing SuperTrouper on the carrots, gummi bears or cups of water
- Minecraft storymakers: collaboration, storyboarding, digital skills and project management feature in this animation application
- Use of robotic droids Sphero BB-8 app enabled droid and SPRK+ programming robot: These help with planning, programming, digital and communication skills
- 3D printer: develops creative and digital skills
- Pre-school early coding activities using Cody the Mouse and Fisher-Price Code-a-Pillar.
- Tiggly words, shapes and maths using the iPad to teach literacy and numeracy to younger children;

- Marbiotic Smart Letters and Magik Play which combines different learning challenges for the iPad with the simplicity of traditional toys; and
- Quiver app which allows children to bring their colouring to life using 3D augmented reality.

The first sessions were all about the staff trying out their new skills and identifying whether they could satisfy public demand for digital skills support. Within a couple of sessions the Dabblerteam secured the support of partners such as the Youth Services Team and a volunteer group of gamers to help enhance the range of digital participation opportunities. That increased the team and broadened the range of skills supporting events. The gamers brought a vibrant enthusiasm and a knowledge and skills library staff don't have. The Youth Team brought Mario Kart and Virtual Reality headsets, which have been a real hit. The Scottish Government recently gifted a 3D Printer and training programme for each library, so these events are a great opportunity to promote the new service. The Council has also added an animation specialist to help with the digital storymaking kits. The YouTube video How DigiDabble is Making a Difference in North Ayrshire tells the story.

The littlest Dabbler at Kilwinning Library

Improvements Achieved and Challenges Overcome

Staff skills have been a concern but the objective is not to teach digital skills or be 'experts' but to provide the technology and be a support as families explore together. The library staff are learning new skills and have enjoyed it so much that there's been a clamour about who should have the next DigiDabble Day. The senior Information and Culture staff team devoted part of their quarterly meetings to learn from Dabblerteam what the tools could teach and do to broaden their understanding.

The drop-in programme is in its early stages so there has not been a formal evaluation of the impact. This early intervention measure is stimulating attainment and achievement, with the following outcomes:

> • 100% of respondents said that taking part in the project had benefitted them and their children.

• Digital participation increased among younger children;
• Increase in library visits;
• Increase in library opening hours;
• Younger learners are better equipped to meet the capacities of [Curriculum for Excellence](#);
• Levels of literacy and ICT literacy among participants have improved.

Sessions are run on a drop-in basis and each session has grown attracting a larger audience on each occasion. Over 1000 people have been reached in just 5 events. Many parents attend because they know their children are going to be coding at school and they don't know much about it and want to be able to support their children better.

The videos have a background noise of gleeful laughter as participants find out the amazing things they can do. Feedback is always positive and the growth in confidence and competence by children and adults is inspiring. The most remarkable aspects are participant empowerment and the shared learning experience which brings parents/carers and children closer together.

Comments from participants have included:

'It's amazing what you can do in the library these days. It's Phenomenal'

''My 4 and 5 year olds loved the Tiggly games, the Magik Play and Toca Band. It's a great way to find and try good apps. Thank you!'

'Excellent event! Learned about 3D printer, tried animation and a carrot piano! Very worthwhile morning. Thank you'

'We thought this was a great event. Really, really, really cool. Loved the dancing robot, the 3D printer, VR headset, Osmo and Mario Kart. Here for over three hours and really enjoyed it. Would definitely come back if on again. Dad really enjoyed it too'

'Great to get to try out all your new tech. Kids loved it. Thanks all'

'My kids loved learning about the 3D printer and were even given a 3D item to take home, thanks'

Dad ready to advise at Kilbirnie

A couple of normally challenging teenagers came back twice during the day, bringing first a couple of other boys and then a group of girls to try out the digital tools and to play with the competitive games. The coding skills of some of the younger boys – 7/8 year olds – astounded their Dads and they stayed most of the day. An older man was particularly keen to see the 3D printer and travelled a considerable distance to see it in action, and he was thrilled to go home with his printed @ sign!

Outcomes and Future Targets & Goals

Library staff have responded to the evidence that traditional library opening hours on Saturdays were unsuccessful at attracting families. They have actively sought a development route for extending opening through pop-up digital events in different libraries and these have attracted large and enthusiastic audiences. Our goal is to continue to develop these and have an attractive family learning offer of monthly digital participation events in libraries.

DigiDabble recently won the 2017 Edge Digital Library Award. The judge was the Scottish Local Government's Chief Digital Officer Martyn Wallace who said that "*North Ayrshire Council's DigiDabble stood out as it felt like an amalgamation of all the different ideas and innovation but in a package to have specific "digital days" to enthuse, excite, inform and help locals not only through Digital inclusion but also social inclusion.*

I felt this was something that all libraries in the UK if not the world could lift and shift as a model for innovation or rollout to hackathon events etc to really engage all aspects of the community.

North Ayrshire to me felt like they pulled everything together in a simple package.

Ideally all libraries should look to be branded Digital hubs in the community, helping tackle gaps in digital skills but also helping foster new ideas and ways of working with communities too."

DigiDabble recently featured at the #notwithoutme event held by the BBC, Scottish Government and Carnegie UK, an event to encourage digital inclusion for young people. Since then approaches have been made by Digital Communities Wales and services in England and

North Ireland. It will also feature in two UK library conferences in 2017 because of the uniqueness of its practice.

As a result of the success of DigiDabble a funding application was made to Ayrshire LEADER, a European fund which supports rural communities and £180,000 was awarded in November 2016 for a three year programme for MakerSpaces in Rural Communities. This will bring a permanent collection of digital tools and staff support to our more isolated communities. Public support and great feedback was key to this success.

There is growing demand from schools for DigiDabble and a proposal has been developed for the Scottish Government Pupil Equity Fund, for Head Teachers to help invest in programmes to close the attainment gap for those pupils receiving free school meals and clothing grants.

This will fund twilight training sessions for staff and volunteers to run events in schools and they can either invest in the equipment or borrow the core collection.

There is also potential to use the Osmos with an entirely different audience and to explore with our Health and Social Care Partnership how using simple literacy and numeracy software could stimulate mental agility and provide a mitigation against the progress of dementia.

Learning and Employability Stirling

Introduction

The Adult Learning team in Stirling has been expanded recently to include the Supported Employment team, Employability programmes and Apprenticeships and is now known as Learning and Employment Stirling (LES). Most of the provision is directly delivered. Family learning is offered in several nurseries and schools and includes PEEPS, family literacy and numeracy, health and well-being, digital art and supporting transition from

nursery to school. The focus of this interview is the **Make and Taste** course delivered at East Plean Nursery. The five week course has been developed in partnership with the council's health team.

Development of the course

The initial programme was focussed on healthy eating, to encourage parents to prepare wholesome food with their children and to encourage them to eat healthily. This has been developed by LES to include literacy and numeracy skills development. This was delivered three times in the second year of funding. In the following year a Train the Trainers course was delivered to expand the provision. An accredited cookery course for adults has been delivered five times. Most of the courses are offered in Plean but there has been some delivery in other areas.

Funding is an issue. More parents could be recruited if core funding was provided. Currently LES can't meet demand. The Make and Taste course is a hook into further learning and so it would lead to an increase in family and adult community learning recruitment.

There is a strong emphasis on information, advice and guidance with the expectation that parents will progress on to further learning. This may be wider family learning, adult basic skills, accredited courses in cooking and nutrition or courses offered within the general adult learning programme.

Outcomes

The Make and Taste course is funded by Health Scotland. The application for funding included targets for recruitment, attendance, completion, achievement and progression and data is collected to demonstrate achievement of the targets. The project staff have used a **Test of Change Improvement methodology.** In addition to quantitative data the parents and staff have been asked to record changes that they have noticed in the children's behaviour and parent-child interaction.

A pre course and post course questionnaire (paper) is used for parents to record what they think will change and actual changes. There is a number of statements

requiring parents' responses. The post course questionnaires are completed at the last session.

Additional data and intelligence

Tutors collect ad hoc responses during the course. This may be activity or interactions observed during the course sessions or feedback from parents about activities they have done with their children at home.

Case studies are created, usually for specific purposes such as to support nominations for awards. Videos of parents' stories have been made. There has also been a video recording of one of the sessions.

Photographs are taken throughout the course and are used to create an individual photo book for each child to take home at the end of the course.

Implications of collecting additional material

The costs associated with collecting and recording evidence are indirectly built into funding applications. The Test of Change approach is considered as essential not as an additional or add-on cost. The data is all collected in a paper format so there are some additional inputting costs. Staff time is not easy to measure as it is integral to the adult learning staff roles. Staff maintain contact with the families through the nursery, school and adult learning programmes so they often receive post course progression information several weeks or months after the end of the course.

There isn't a system for formally contacting parents after the end of the course. It is acknowledged that some evidence may be missed. Post course information is not collected in a structured formal way. It is a challenge to collect post course data at times when there are other demands on staff time. Reports from various projects are often requested at the same time.

Collecting feedback from partner organisations (such as nurseries) is time consuming. It is not always seen as a priority by nursery staff.

Data is needed to support funding applications for more projects. The short-term nature of the funding is a challenge itself.

Sharing and celebrating outcomes

Case studies are collected to support awards nominations.

e.g. A learner completed the 5 week Make and Taste course when her child was at nursery. She progressed onto literacy and numeracy courses. She then supported a Make and Taste course as a volunteer helper whilst her second child was at nursery. She completed accredited cookery and nutrition courses in the following year and became a school learning assistant. She was nominated for a Scotland Learning Partnership's award and used the £100 she won to pay for another adult learning course.

Groups have also been nominated for the Scottish Health Care Improvement awards.

The nursery holds end of course celebrations at which parents receive certificates and the photobooks that are created during the course.

Additional Information

One of the unexpected aspects of recruitment is the number of grandparents who took part in the course as many of the parents were working.

The feedback from parents showed that they saw the time they spent one to one with their child during the course sessions as special time. This was especially the case for working parents.

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Glasgow Life

Introduction

Glasgow Life is community interest company, an arms-length organisation working on behalf of Glasgow City Council to manage its arts, museums, sports, libraries and community services. It supports Glasgow's Improvement Challenge 2015 – 2020, a holistic strategy for raising attainment and achievement for all children and young people and incorporates the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Schools with higher than average levels of social and economic deprivation are allocated additional Pupil Equity Funding to support the "Closing the poverty-related attainment gap" initiative. Some of this funding is used to deliver Family Learning as part of its Community Learning and Development offer. A team of nine community development workers was established in 2017. They are allocated to specific schools which enables them to establish good relationships with the school community. Consultation with parents is an essential element of the initiative.

https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/23800/Glasgows-Improvement-Challenge

Collection of evidence

Learner Information is gathered on the Glasgow Life Outcome Evaluation system (GLOES) and this includes intended destination at the end of the course. Quarterly reports are submitted to the Glasgow Life board. Data relating to children's outcomes is routinely collected by schools.

Additional data and intelligence

The "How good is our CLD" is a self-evaluation form that is used for every Glasgow Life activity. It includes:

> *How to you know the difference or the impact your work is making?*
> *Guidance:*
> *You know the difference the work is making. Try to take 'you' out of it.*
> *What could you use to show someone else the impact?*
> *Try to include all the activities/forms/processes that can be used to evidence this.*
> *If you don't have much evidence other than your own observations and ideas, what could you use in the future?*

Every project has a folder in which other types of evidence are collected such as case studies, discussion recordings, impact statements.

A pre-course and post-course questionnaire are completed by every learner on a family learning course. This uses a five point rating system through which quantifiable data can be collected (e.g. 70% of adults who completed the Family Fun with Words course now spend more time reading with their children)

A new system called Upshot evaluation is being introduced for 2019/20 but it hasn't been implemented yet.

The implications of collecting additional material

Time to collect additional information is a factor. Time is included in contracts as non-teaching time but there is no formula to calculate what proportion of the non-teaching time should be used. The GLOES system is paper based and therefore inputting time is required. There are also issues about the appropriateness of the form for learners with language needs.

There are positive implications in that the data collected can be used by management to evaluate the quality of provision and to plan programmes. As the CLD forms are used by all provision it could be used for comparative purposes but this isn't done routinely.

Challenges

The GLOES system only collects intended destination. There isn't a system for collecting actual destination data. It is recognised that many of the impacts will not be achieved until several months after the end of the course (e.g. parents gaining employment or going into further education). However, this data is collected informally through the community development workers attached to schools. The workers are part of the school community and therefore have regular contact with parents, especially those who have several children at the school. Parents who have attended family learning courses will be seen after the end of the course by community development workers. Laura, who is based at St Roch's Primary sees parents at Feel Good Friday events. These are family activities arranged by the school such as child and parent yoga, family lunch club. This provides an opportunity to find out which parents have started voluntary or paid work or

progressed into further learning activities. There isn't a system for collecting this information systematically.

Some of the family learning provision is delivered by partner organisations, such as third sector delivery partners. There is a challenge to collect data from them.

Sharing and celebrating the outcomes

Schools hold their own celebration events such as assemblies, presentation days.e.g. A family learning language group created their own recipe book and made the dishes to share with the school community.

Glasgow Life uses the evidence for its own publicity
http://www.glasgowslearning.org.uk/about_us/family_literacies_learning

Staff development networks share good practice at regular meetings.

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Renfrewshire Adult Learning and Literacies Service (ALLS)

Introduction

Renfrewshire Adult Learning and Literacies Service's (ALLS) project known as Pizza Learning is a partnership with Renfrewshire's Raising Attainment project. Pizza Learning is a family learning programme for families with children in primary school. The content is linked to the primary curriculum and includes Pizza Reading, Pizza Maths and Pizza Time (which is a programme for P6/7 children to support their transition to high school). The families take part in family learning activities and then have pizza together. (Food is the hook to get families involved) There have been several reports into the impact of this project including a longitudinal study at St David's Primary School, Renfrewshire in 2016/17 conducted by University of West of Scotland and a report by Education Scotland National Improvement Hub in 2018[1]

Outcomes and progression data

The project is funded by the Raising Attainment initiative and therefore outcomes data is required to support the aims of the project. In schools these are; Positive Attitudes to Self and School (PASS) and improvements in attainment in reading and numeracy. ALLS collect recruitment and attendance data and an evaluation report is completed for each session. Regular meetings are held between ALLS and school staff to review development and impact. There is a regular dialogue about the families involved. The relationship with the families is long term as they progress through the various

programmes and on to other community learning courses so the long term progression is seen and recorded in case studies and other qualitative data. Adult learners have progressed on to community learning, joined the parent councils and have reported in improved relationships with the school. One mother who started on the first programme became a volunteer to support other courses and is now delivering the programme herself whilst working towards her BA Community Education. Progression in employment is recorded but this is not a focus of the programme.

The ALLS management information team collate and report on the data. This is considered as integral to the project and is "business as usual". Community Learning Officers are involved in collecting the data, videos and photographs in support of the tutors, so the onus isn't on the tutors to provide all the evidence.

The project wasn't started as a research project so the involvement of the University of West of Scotland's research is seen as a bonus.[2]

Challenges

The funding for the projects is short term but the impacts are long term and are not seen immediately (Though in fact the project has run at St David's School since 2015). A service restructure in which the Adult Learning and Literacies Service moved from the Children's Services department into Communities, Housing and Planning has affected the relationship with partners and led to some challenges in data collection and reporting. Training for staff in delivering the Pizza Learning programme and family learning so that they understand the need to show progression as well as the curriculum is costly and time -consuming.

Celebrations

Schools hold their own celebration events including a graduation ceremony for the parents and children who complete Pizza Learning, including mortar boards and scrolls!

The programmes have won various awards for community work. Staff have given presentations at Scotland's Learning Partnership's Learning Festival and have taking part in "Talk to Me" at the Scottish Parliament (an opportunity to talk face to face to ministers). The CEO of Renfrewshire Council has visited schools.

Contact

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References

[1]https://education.gov.scot/improvement/practiceexemplars/A%20family%20learning%20approach%20to%20reading%20-%20Pizza%20Reading%20in%20Renfrewshire

[2]Renfrewshire Council (2018) Pizza Learning Longitudinal Study 2016/17: Renfrewshire Council