

Effective Leadership Skills Programme

'Making a Difference'

'Implement a Department of Humanities Mission Statement'

Cheryl Ellis is currently the Head of Department for Humanities at Cardiff Metropolitan University. With a core staff of 31 plus 16 additional associate tutors to manage and over 800 students on 23 different combinations of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.



Cheryl commenced our ilm Endorsed Effective Leadership Skills Programme in April 2016. Prior to commencing the programme Cheryl invited her manager and two colleagues to complete a 360-competency based assessment. From this assessment it was identified Cheryl lacked a real confidence in her own ability to lead the Directorate and especially a difficult group of staff within one area. She recognised she needed to take a step back and micro manage less, getting Section Heads and individuals to take responsibility, being proactive and meeting deadlines, without being constantly chased or being disruptive.

Cheryl developed both her leadership skills and confidence and used these throughout the ELS Programme. She recognised that her Directorate were becoming deeply disengaged from the previously enforced strategy plans and from their learning and teaching of health and wellbeing. Cheryl's Making a Difference project was therefore to implement a Department of Humanities mission statement and strategy plan and achieve no less than 80% of agreed KPI's by March 2017. This was important as it provided a shared understanding of the direction to the whole department, all staff were involved and had ownership towards the mission statement and core values shared.

The Effective Leadership Skills Programme is delivered through a combination of 8 full day workshops, covering various elements of leadership and management, several one to one coaching sessions and the implementation of a Making a Difference Change project.

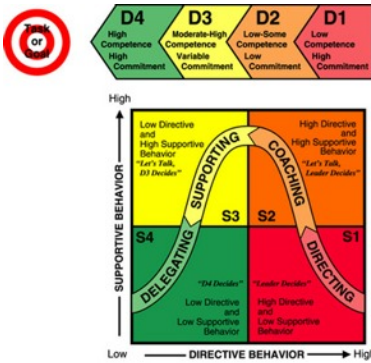
Cheryl clearly demonstrated throughout the programme a thirst for knowledge and understanding the theories and models covered. In addition to reviewing and reflecting upon the materials provided by Palladium she took every opportunity to access additional resources via the ilm portal and her own University's resource centre.

Between the eight workshops, Cheryl further demonstrated outstanding knowledge by embedding her learning through the implementation of the tools and techniques (theory into practice). These action plans covered the following key leadership areas of:



- Developing Self-awareness, identifying strengths and limitations.
- Developing her Personal Branding and addressing gaps and areas for development through a Personal Development Plan.
- Managing Change.
- Developing a Vision and Strategy.
- Implementing a Making a Difference Change Project generating a return on investment.

A key characteristic of an effective leader is that of developing self-awareness and recognising their positive qualities and potential liabilities and limitations. Cheryl, from the outset, approached this development programme with an open-mind and a real willingness to change to improve her personal circumstances. John Mayne, Programme Director recalled the initial pre-programme one to one he had with both Cheryl and her manager. Whilst Cheryl lacked genuine confidence about her ability to lead and deal with the difficult challenges her manager had total trust and belief she could deliver.



During the programme, Cheryl adopted a range of leadership and management tools to enable her to win the hearts and minds of her immediate team. Two key tools were the Situational Leadership Model and the need to adapt the four management styles to the different situations and staff she was managing. Her initial thinking of one style fits all (see Journal reference) was a key learning moment for her in understanding of why she needed to adapt her style. The second tool was an understanding of the Coaching Spectrum and the need to adapt a directive/non-directive coaching style for the person/situation.

Cheryl's biggest challenge was developing her capability to be more people orientated rather than task orientated. She acquired a less directive approach to leadership using questions such as 'What do you think we should do?', but as a leader still making the final decision to support her team.

The key to Cheryl's success and being able to turn around a low performing Directorate was down to her willingness to change both her mind-set and behaviours. This was essential to win the hearts and minds of her key team members and deal with the difficult group.

Changing personal behaviours is a challenge in itself. Sustaining these changes required Cheryl to be innovative through the implementation of the tools, techniques, theories and models. When faced with resistance and negativity she simply approached the challenge with a different approach, involving those that could provide the most creative solutions along with those that provided the greatest opposition. She simply facilitated the implementation of a revised vision/mission and change plan to bring about a higher performing Directorate.

Her Making a Difference (MaD) Project, implemented between Workshops 7 and 8 clearly demonstrated both innovation and originality in working towards generating a win-win-win outcome. This was about her people helping to win as individuals and regain their passion and motivation to deliver on their personal objectives. It was about getting the individual teams to win and deliver on their KPI's, and it was about getting the Directorate to win by working as a single team and managing out the negativity, resistance and conflict.

