**Apprentice Voice Project**

**Background**

Our work with apprentices is split into two main categories. Bringing through the apprentice voice at work, and the apprentice voice at college. Within the Scottish Education system there are a number of types of apprenticeships, ranging from Foundation Apprenticeships, to Modern Apprenticeships and newly formulated degree-level Graduate Apprenticeships. The apprenticeship model means apprentices divide their time between formal education at school or college, and on-site learning.

**Apprentice Voice at Work**

Our project around bringing through the apprentice voice at work focuses on engaging employers in an apprentice development package. Employers look for their apprentices to be articulate, confident and able to participate effectively in quality improvement and review. Apprentices themselves need to have the space and the capacity to have their say about how they learn at work, and how what they do at work matches their learning from college. sparqs delivers a training package aimed at developing these capacities in apprentices, and building structures to incorporate the apprentice voice with employers.

**Apprentice Voice at College**

Apprentices often have quite a different college experience to full-time or other part-time students. Often working through the holidays other students have, and being divided between multiple different employers during the time they are not studying, colleges and college students’ associations face a number of challenges in hearing the voice of apprentices. With the new apprentice package we work to develop, through training, their capacity to feed back on issues related to enhancing their apprentice experience. Developing the abilities of apprentices to feed back on their learning, recognising that they are the experts in how they learn best.

**Overview of Materials**

The materials include an introductory presentation, designed to be used by colleges to generate initial interest from apprentices. It focuses more on introducing the apprentices to the concept of learning and teaching and how they can effectively feed back about their experience at college, whilst also introducing them to the role of the apprentice rep.

The materials for the training session, aimed at newly elected apprentice reps, contains a presentation, workbook and evaluation form. The training aims to develop apprentices’ confidence in their rep role, as being an apprentice rep for the first time can be a daunting prospect. We work with the apprentices to develop their capacity to feed back on issues related to enhancing their apprentice experience. Whether this is making sure their college curriculum is aligned with the needs of their employer, or ensuring that they receive the best possible career support from their institution, we prepare apprentices to make their collective voice heard across the college.

The training lasts approximately 2 hours and we have a dedicated sparqs Associate Trainer to deliver the apprentice rep sessions. All of the materials are available to download from the website, there is also a full session planner available on request. Apprentice rep sessions are available to book via the main Course Rep Training Booking page on the website or for any further information on any of the above, please contact Morven Stewart, morven.stewart@sparqs.ac.uk

**Engaging School pupils who are experiencing learning in a college setting**

Bringing through the voice of the learner in their education has always been at the heart of sparqs’ work. Our work on pupil voice includes the development of the pupil voice in colleges where school pupils are timetabled to study particular subjects. Integrating the pupil voice in colleges into established college student representative structures is a challenge which requires co-ordination across the students’ association, the college and the school, as well as with the pupils themselves. We offer a consultancy package to colleges looking for support in this area, as well as facilitation for bringing through the pupil voice in focus groups or representative clusters.

We are keen to hear of any exciting activity going on around these learners and we are also equally keen to hear from any institutions who would like to look at the provision for these learners. For any further information please contact Morven Stewart.

**ENGAGING APPRENTICES AND SCHOOL PUPILS – PLANNING TOOL**

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|  | **Engaging apprentices** | **Engaging school pupils** |
| What have you learned about national developments? |  |  |
| What have you learned about sparqs’ activity? |  |  |
| What do you know about provision in your college, including subject areas, student numbers, and representation and engagement levels? |  |  |
| What do you think are the priorities in your college? |  |  |
| What can (or should) your students’ association contribute to addressing these priorities? |  |  |
| How can the college and SA work in partnership on this? |  |  |
| Where could you contribute to sparqs’ work on this? How could sparqs support you? |  |  |