



OPEN TRAINING  
COLLEGE

[www.opentrainingcollege.com](http://www.opentrainingcollege.com)

# **The Open Training College**

## **Evaluation Report**

**Programmes funded by the**

### **Action Plan for People Management 2005**

1. Training Programme/ Forum in Essential Management Skills
2. Understanding and Managing Conflict in the Workplace
3. Interculturalism and Diversity in the Changing Social Care Workplace

**March 2006**

## **Table of Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
Acknowledgements	3
<b>SECTION 1: BACKGROUND</b>	4
<b>SECTION 2: OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PROGRAMMES</b>	
Programme 1: Forum in Essential Management Skills	5
Programme 2: Understanding and Managing Conflict in the Workplace	7
Programme 3: Interculturalism and Diversity in the Changing Social Care Workplace	9
<b>SECTION 3</b>	
Conclusion / Recommendations	11
References Appendix A	12

## ***Acknowledgements***

The Open Training College would like to thank the Health Services Executive for supporting the development and delivery of three courses under the Action Plan for People Management (APPM) 2005. Furthermore, we wish to extend our thanks to our partner organisations for their support and to the participants who participated in the learning in an enthusiastic and creative manner.

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to the presenters and facilitators who conducted the programmes and the staff of the Open Training College whose professional input in planning and preparation contributed greatly to the success of the courses.

***Karen Finnerty: Director, Open Training College***

***Brendan Collins: Course Director, Open Training College***

***Gerard Sweeney: Course Developer/ Tutor, Open Training College***

***March 2006***

## **SECTION 1: BACKGROUND**

In February 2005 the then Director of HR and OD of the Health Services Executive – Eastern Region wrote to all Health and Social Care providers requesting applications for funding under the Action Plan for People Management 2005. The focus of this initiative was to encourage individual and con-joint human resource initiatives between and within agencies / hospitals across the region. The key themes that underpinned the framework were to:

- Encourage organisationally focused responses to identified human resource needs.
- Promote innovation in HR practice.
- Encourage collaboration and shared learning, add value, and contribute to service / client needs.

In response to this call for funding applications, the Open Training College identified three distinct areas in which it was interested in making an application. These areas had been identified by various Health Sector strategic documents and also by the College's own research and customer enquiries (see appendix A). The areas identified as having particular relevance to the disability sector were subsequently researched and developed into proposals and after approval by the HSE they were developed into two and three-day courses. The courses developed were:

**Programme 1.** Training Programme/ Forum in Essential Management Skills.  
(For newly appointed First Line Managers and those in acting appointments).

**Programme 2.** Understanding and Managing Conflict in the Workplace.  
(For First Line Managers and Mid-Level Managers).

**Programme 3.** Interculturalism and Ethnic Diversity in the Changing Social Care Workplace.  
(For Social Care / Management Educators, Tutors, Trainers and HR Managers).

### ***Programme Content***

Due to the wide and relevant range of subjects that the Open Training College delivers through its HETAC accredited courses the above named programmes were identified as being particularly relevant and were subsequently delivered to participants. The content of the programmes was developed over a period of time in close collaboration between College staff and the Course Presenters. All three programmes were developed based on common themes of person-centredness, inclusion and quality of life.

### ***Evaluation of the Programmes***

All three workshops were evaluated in accordance with the formal quality assurance model as utilised within and by the Open Training College. Following each event, participants completed a Workshop Evaluation Form. The evaluation focussed on the following areas; clarity and achievement of workshop objectives, strengths of the workshop, weaknesses of the workshop, the workshop environment, overall rating and final comments. The data was analysed and is presented in Section 2 of this document following a description of the programme.

## SECTION 2: OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION OF EACH PROGRAMME

### Programme 1: Training Programme/ Forum in Essential Management Skills

#### Trainers:

Course Presenter: Des Gargan, Training Consultant.  
 Course Developers/Tutors: Gerard Sweeney, Open Training College.  
 Brendan Collins, Open Training College.

**Duration:** 3 Days  
**Location:** Croke Park Conference Centre  
**Date:** October 5<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> 2005  
**Number of Participants:** 16

The overall aim of this programme was to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to approach learning in a creative and interactive manner suited to the adult learner. It provided a fundamental understanding of the essential ‘need to know’ issues, which directly impact upon newly appointed first line managers and their capacity to understand and work in this new and sometimes ambiguous role. Participants reviewed what could and could not be done in particular situations, learning to appreciate the importance of context, why certain behaviours and actions are appropriate in one context and not in another. The forum explored issues of conflict, dignity and emotion in the workplace, heightened awareness of bullying and harassment and the role of the manager in its prevention. They learned the skills of problem definition, involving others in developing options and thinking through solutions to decision making. The forum also provided a critical opportunity for managers to learn from and with their peers, networking and discussing issues in an open and non-threatening manner. This approach assisted some of the participants in building their confidence and supporting them to make the transition from staff member to team manager.

#### *Evaluation Feedback:*

##### Clarity of stated objectives of the Workshop in areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes:

	<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not Really</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• Knowledge	80%	20%	-	-
• Skills	73%	27%	-	-
• Attitudes	80%	20%	-	-

##### Achievement of stated objectives of Workshop:

	<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not Really</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• Knowledge	67%	33%	-	-
• Skills	53%	40%	7%	-
• Attitudes	67%	33%	-	-

### **Strengths of Workshop – Selected Comments:**

- “Very practical approach to dealing with management issues.”
- “Information pack very helpful.”
- “The three days were intense but every aspect was covered clearly.”
- “I feel that I now have a good grasp of the theory but need to develop skills the used the theory in a practical sense.”

### **Weaknesses of Workshop – Selected Comments:**

- “Too short for me I would have liked more time.”
- “Not specific to nursing roles and management.”
- “I would like to have learned more about changing organisational culture.”

### **Ratings of Workshops methodologies:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• <b>Overheads</b>	80%	20%	-	-
• <b>Role Plays</b>	73%	20%	-	7%
• <b>Group Work</b>	87%	7%	-	-
• <b>Handouts</b>	80%	20%	-	-

### **Workshop environment conducive to learning:**

- 80% of participants indicated that the environment was conducive to learning.
- 7% negative comments such as "room cold".
- 13% no response.

### **Overall rating of Workshop:**

- 60% rated the workshop as excellent.
- 40% rated the workshop as average.

### **Final comments – Selection:**

- “Very enjoyable refreshing, the programme although intense (quality wise) it was very welcome. I felt mentally better as the programme alleviated some of my doubts. Given me a pathway.”
- “It was quite a realisation to feel that I have gained or could gain skills and improve on existing ones in such a short programme, this course has proven me wrong, I thought it would be the usual boring uninformative course. You all proved me wrong, thank you.”

## Programme 2: Understanding and Managing Conflict in the Workplace

### Trainers

Course Presenter: Brendan Schutte, Training Consultant.  
Course Developers/Tutors: Gerard Sweeney, Open Training College.  
Brendan Collins, Open Training College.

**Duration:** 3 Days  
**Location:** Croke Park Conference Centre  
**Date:** November 16<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> 2005  
**Number of Participants:** 16

The overall aim of this programme was to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to approach conflict in a creative and holistic manner. It provided a fundamental understanding of conflict in the workplace inclusive of the ability to identify the early emergent stages of conflict. The course helped participants to identify the difference between positive and negative conflict, heightened their awareness of stress and its implications on the individual, the team, the working environment and the organisation, itself. Participants were supported in defining appropriate behaviour in the workplace, defining dignity and understanding bullying, harassment and sexual harassment - what it is, and is not. The programme also explored the legal, emotional and cultural influences of conflict.

### *Evaluation Feedback:*

#### **Clarity of stated objectives of the Workshop in areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes:**

	<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not Really</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• Knowledge	69%	31%	-	-
• Skills	85%	15%	-	-
• Attitudes	85%	15%	-	-

#### **Achievement of stated objectives of Workshop:**

	<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not Really</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• Knowledge	92%	-	8%	-
• Skills	92%	8%	-	-
• Attitudes	92%	8%	-	-

#### **Strengths of Workshop – Selected Comments:**

- “Very well presented and interesting.”
- “Great interaction and group work.”
- “Mediation skills and openness to situations.”
- “Good presentation and information.”
- “Well paced, all material relevant.”

### **Weaknesses of Workshop – Selected Comments:**

- “Too short on time slightly rushed at times, would have liked to have had another day.”
- “Perhaps more advice on bullying would have added to the programme.”
- “Not comfortable with role play.”
- “I would have preferred some input on skills/strategies to mediation, good work environment and prevention of conflict. However, the skills I did learn will contribute towards this.”

### **Ratings of Workshops methodologies:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• <b>Overheads</b>	92%	8%	-	-
• <b>Role Plays</b>	77%	23%	-	-
• <b>Group Work</b>	85%	15%	-	-
• <b>Handouts</b>	77%	23%	-	-

### **Workshop environment conducive to learning:**

- 92% of participants indicated that the environment was conducive to learning.

### **Overall rating of Workshop:**

- 92% rated the workshop as excellent.

### **Final comments – Selection:**

- “Very informative, clear and concise. Brendan’s approach was very inclusive and enjoyed Ger’s anecdotes and insights.”
- “Thank you all who facilitated this course. I really learnt a lot and am now more confident in my role.”
- “Very interesting course will recommend it to my co-workers.”
- “I am glad to have gained more knowledge and understanding of conflict in the workplace and how to manage this more effectively.”
- “Enjoyed the three days. Great team work in the presentation of the course.”

## Programme 3: Interculturalism and Ethnic Diversity in the Changing Social Care Workplace

### Trainers

Course Presenter: Helen Harnett, Training Consultant.  
 Course Developers/Tutors: Gerard Sweeney, Open Training College.  
 Brendan Collins, Open Training College.

**Duration:** 2 Days  
**Location:** Croke Park Conference Centre  
**Date:** December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> 2005  
**Number of Participant:** 18

The overall aim of this programme was to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to approach issues of interculturalism and ethnic diversity in an open and challenging manner. It also served to inform College staff and members of the Corporate and Regional HR and Training Teams of the organisation of the theoretical and interpersonal frameworks surrounding cultural differences and diversity. The course aimed to raise awareness of the difficulties that may emerge in intercultural communications while allowing time for reflection upon the changes within the workplace and issues that may arise in regard to the management of services. The course also provided the framework to explore racial discrimination and prejudices that may exist or emerge either overtly or subliminally within organisations. It allowed time to the participants in order to reflect upon multicultural factors in regard to curriculum development, and to reflect upon current and emerging issues in an organisation in which 7.5% of the workforce are non-national and evaluate the supports that will be required in order for all staff to reach their full potential.

### ***Evaluation Feedback:***

#### **Clarity of stated objectives of the Workshop in areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes:**

	<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not Really</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• Knowledge	94%	6%	-	-
• Skills	82%	18%	-	-
• Attitudes	94%	6%	-	-

#### **Achievement of stated objectives of the Workshop:**

	<i>Definitely</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>Not Really</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• Knowledge	94%	6%	-	-
• Skills	82%	18%	-	-
• Attitudes	94%	6%	-	-

#### **Strengths of Workshop – Selected Comments:**

- “A jolt to our collective assumptions and frames of reference.”
- “Superb presenter - lots of examples, strategies, ideas and activities.”
- “Style and structure of the workshop, non-threatening and informative with Helen’s knowledge.”

### **Weaknesses of Workshop – Selected Comments:**

- “Would have been good to include other agencies.”
- “I found one of the activities on day one confusing.”

### **Ratings of Workshops methodologies:**

	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>No Response</i>
• <b>Overheads</b>	65%	24%	%	12%
• <b>Role Plays</b>	12%	-	-	88%
• <b>Group Work</b>	88%	-	-	12%
• <b>Handouts</b>	59%	29%	-	12%

### **Workshop environment conducive to learning:**

- 82% of participants indicated that the environment was conducive to learning.

### **Overall rating of Workshop:**

- 88% of participants rated the workshop as excellent.
- 12% did not respond.

### **Final comments – Selection:**

- 88% of participants indicated that the environment was conducive to learning.
- 12% did not respond.

### **Final comments – Selection:**

- “A brilliant idea and very stimulating.”
- “Great two days I feel enriched by the experience.”
- “This was an excellent programme. Personally I have learned so much with more to do. Well done Ger and Helen.”
- “I really enjoyed the course but I feel the senior management of the organisation should have been here as they are the major change agents for the organisation. Thank you!”
- “Very enjoyable and enlightening workshop. Lots to think about. It would be good if the senior management were here to ensure that best practice is implemented in the organisation. Thanks for a great two days.”
- “Helen was an excellent facilitator – I would recommend the course to others.”

## **SECTION 3: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **General Comment:**

Ongoing feedback from participants was very positive and learning took place throughout the programme. The format of two and three-day forum styled programmes have generated great interest among staff at all levels. The three programmes have as is evidenced from evaluation feedback, attained their objectives and aims, which were to create a series of short learning courses addressing Human Resource skill deficits identified in the Action Plan for People Management. To this effect the three programmes focussed upon the following themes:

- Theme 1: Managing People Effectively
- Theme 2: Improving the Quality of Working Life
- Theme 3: Investing in Training, Development and Education
- Theme 4: Best Practice Policies and Procedures

The guidance given in the Action Plan for People Management combined with access to the targeted funding ensured that the courses that were developed and the subsequent learning were highly beneficial. The College will continue to use a substantive portion of these courses tailored to the specific soft skill needs of organisations in Health and Social Care with a particular focus on the Disability Sector.

It is hoped that further funding under the APPM initiative will be forthcoming in 2006 in order to continue to support the development of People Management skills.

### **Recommendations:**

- Based on a review of the feedback forms it is recommended that the current programmes be delivered through 2006 on a regional basis.
- The programme on Interculturalism and Diversity should be adapted to address strategic issues at senior management level with a re-focus on Regional Manager, Clinical Directors, Deputy CEO and CEO levels. Funding should be sought for this.
- Further programmes aimed at first line and middle management, based on the same format should be developed during 2006 and funding sought for such developments.
- That a further in-house two-day training programme be funded with a view to developing best practices approaches in the area of education and training.

## **Appendix A**

### **References**

Department of Health and Children (2002), *The National Health Strategy, Quality and Fairness for All*.

Department of Health and Children (2002), *Action Plan for People Management*.

The National Federation of Voluntary Bodies (2004), *Training Needs of First Line Managers*.

The Open Training College (2004), *Measuring Effectiveness: Outcomes from the Certificate in First Line Management. Survey of Course Participants*.