

Mrs Lucie Rush – Inclusion Coordinator

My role has changed and developed hugely thanks to the job and CPD opportunities at TCC. I first joined in April 2012 as a Teaching Assistant and during my 2 years in this role I benefitted from two CPD opportunities. I have a particular interest in maths so was invited to take part in a CPD programme called 'Improve Maths' which was held at Blackbourne Middle School and involved other teaching assistants from the surrounding middle schools. I also went to Lowestoft to be trained in CatchUp Numeracy and both these experiences helped me develop my role and played a huge part in me gaining my next role at TCC as Higher Level Teaching Assistant: Maths in September 2014. In November 2014 I began my studies for gaining official HLTA status and achieved this in May 2015. By this time I had moved departments (in January 2015), from Academic Support to Inclusion. Since April 2015 I have been Inclusion Coordinator at TCC and have developed my pastoral and mentoring skills through attending a 'Focus on Inclusion' CPD, an ATL workshop called 'Teenage, Trauma and Transition: Mental Health' and I have also recently been trained as an Arts Award Advisor so I can deliver this qualification to students who access the ILR and any PP students.

Mr George Shaw, SNITT Trainee

I've had many training opportunities offered by the school. When I was HLTA Literacy, I requested training in a reading programme, Catch Up Literacy. This required 3 half day training sessions in Colchester. The costs and fuel were completely covered. I also attended a Catch Up organised conference on interventions to target disadvantaged groups, in London. This and the travel was also funded. These two opportunities enabled me to develop professionally and also add to my repertoire when devising, delivering and evaluating literacy interventions.

I've also been informed of a free TA conference scheduled for a Saturday. This I attended, which supported the delivery of my role. And without the school I would not have learned about this.

As an associate staff member, I have also volunteered to attend Twilight sessions on topics that were a personal interest, such as R&D. There was also sessions on Literacy which were useful to attend in order to support the school when delivering my role as HLTA Literacy. When successfully enrolled on the SNITT Salaried SCITT, Thurston offered me a training placement. This provided me with an opportunity to make a smooth transition from associate staff to teaching, with minimal disruption. The school have been very accommodating and supportive and the professional relationships I have already formed have only been reinforced by the experience.

Mr Harrison Ruffell: Teaching and Learning Leading Practitioner

TCC has provided me with opportunities to develop my practice in a number of different ways. As a Lead Practitioner for Teaching and Learning across the college I have been able to focus on numerous different school-wide initiatives such as: work scrutiny; whole-school literacy; delivery of CPD programmes and supporting and developing colleagues of different experiences and departments to name a few. Without these opportunities I wouldn't have been able to develop and become a better leader, TCC enabled me to add substance to my skill set which has given me the ability to move on to become a Head of Department and Senior Leader. These opportunities have provided me with valuable CPD experience – without which I would not have been successful in my own rapid career development. I am very grateful that TCC has been able to offer me such diverse challenges which not only support the outcome and welfare of students, but also significantly developed aspects of my own practice.

Mr Ewers: Assistant Principal: House Leader

In my 6 years as teacher and leader at Thurston two CPD opportunities stand out from the many opportunities I have had and I would encourage any member of staff wishing to improve and reflect upon their classroom and leadership practice to pursue the following:

1. NPQSL course: We all attend courses where speakers deliver enthusiastic seminars and we leave thinking does that really work in practice? The NPQSL course worked for me in that it started off by me asking my colleagues to peer assess my strengths and areas to develop, against my own opinion. The next step was to analyse my own strategic leadership implementing a whole-College priority. This live case study enabled me to continually analyse my planning, delivery and review the success of my whole school strategy. This invited me to proactively consider how I would get buy in from colleagues when implementing change, consider solutions for potential barriers to success and, most importantly, consider how I would measure impact/success.

2. This one is for free – I have really benefited from having an opportunity to get into the classes of colleagues which students have recommended as particularly strong practitioners. I try to take away 2 new teaching strategies each time (sometimes it's a case of being reminded of ones I used to use and the students loved) ...simple!

Mrs Surrell : Teacher

TCC has provided me with many opportunities to develop professionally, offering a variety of courses and training to support me in my career progression. I am a Lead Practitioner in Teaching and Learning and currently Acting as the Head of the Art and Design department; this has all happened in the past 5 years whilst I have been teaching at Thurston Community College. Without the wide range of programmes and CPD opportunities available I would not confidently be able to deliver to lead and manage Art/Design and T&L to this high standard. The OTP offered me many creative and innovative ideas to support my teaching and learning and I have been able to share some of my skills by delivering a variety of T&L twilights to staff. Having recently completed the NPQML I feel it has developed my leadership skills and I am able to model excellence to my team, both inspiring and motivating others to work with my passion and vision for improvement.

Ms Cheyne Payne: Head of Department

The OTP course run by Thurston Community College has been one of the most influential CPD experiences of my career so far. After the meetings and lesson studies, I felt inspired and re-energised to start reflecting on my teaching critically again, to re-use good but forgotten ideas, and to try out the new ideas I gathered from my colleagues. It was a great experience to have the forum to meet with teachers from different departments to share good practice and seek advice.

I have also had the opportunity to attend a range of mentor training courses run by SCITT and the University of Cambridge. Being a mentor is a great privilege, and has helped me to stay closely connected to educational research and to a rich vein of new ideas. I am really grateful that TCC has been willing to support me by offering and facilitating these brilliant CPD opportunities.

Mr Blenkin: Assistant Principal: House Leader

Thurston Community College has provided me with a huge variety of opportunities to develop professionally, mainly via line management and mentoring, which has challenged and supported me in my career progression. I am an Assistant Principal House Leader and have been for the last 6 years. Previously I had been both Assistant Head of House and also Head of Year in 6th Form; all whilst I have been teaching at Thurston Community College. Most recently I have completed the NPQSL as well as a course run by the Army – both have allowed me to reflect on my practice as well as challenge current thinking and approaches.

Mrs Julie James: Adminsitrator

I thoroughly enjoyed my initial period in my new position and workplace. The role was well-represented through-out the recruitment process, the level of training was high and the systems/procedures were well managed. The support and welcome from my line manager and colleagues was key to me settling-in quickly. In addition my line manager and I noted an area where additional training would be both beneficial to my role and to my own focused area of development. I was positively encouraged to identify an external course which would meet this requirement and this was fully supported through the CPD programme.

Mrs Sophie Jones: Teaching Assistant

As Teaching Assistant, Club Leader and PSHCE Trip Leader, the college has consistently ensured that I have the appropriate training and CPD to meet the challenges and requirements of my roles. I have always been well-supported and guided where appropriate in the professional execution of my various activities. This includes training in Good TA Practice; First Aid; Educational Visits, and Safeguarding, and guidance in completing the necessary documents for trips and clubs e.g. Risk assessments.

Miss Stella Price: Careers Coordinator

Thurston Community College has allowed me to attend various information events that has helped in my job role and in turn has enabled me to pass this information onto students. The Suffolk Skills Show and the West Suffolk College Advisors Day helped me to find out what was available and how this can support our students. I have also attended regular meetings with Connect Education & Business regarding work experience and this has benefitted me and has given me a real overview on work experience and also how our process compares to other local schools as well as building employer relationships.

Mrs Kate Gajewska: Finance Assistant

I started working at Thurston Community College two years ago and have very quickly realised how lucky I am to be a part of the community and how friendly everyone is. We have only moved in to Suffolk a year before and this was my first position in the school environment and yet with support of my colleagues it immediately felt like at home. Thurston Community College is such a great place to grow. After I started my role Finance Assistant I was very keen to develop my accountancy skills. I received great support from my colleagues and I even received financial backing! Two years on, I have finished AAT Level 2

course and can already see how much more I am capable of doing. I am now planning to start next level of my AAT.

Mr Luca Nicotra: Maths Tutor

As a TA, my department hosted regular sessions to improve our proficiency in helping the students we were responsible for supporting. These included being shown how different computer programs worked, for example a text-to-speech software to help students with dyslexia, or a program to create mind maps to encourage students to record their ideas in a systematic fashion for revision purposes or before tackling the writing of an essay.

The SEN department made an effort to give value and make use of the skills of each of the members of the team, who would be called upon to deliver INSET sessions based on their strengths and prior qualifications. Myself being a qualified teacher of English as an additional language, I had occasion to deliver a session on how to support students who are at different stages of language acquisition.

When confronted with the case of a student who had a set of needs which was out of the ordinary, the SEN department provided me with funding to purchase material to study his need and devise strategies on how to best support him. I was then given me ample opportunity to put my knowledge into practice and my line manager was always very supportive of me when I came up with a new idea.

In my new capacity as a Maths Tutor, I was offered the opportunity to attend a series of training sessions on Maths pedagogy. The course runs for the whole year and it includes a 2-days residential. The knowledge that I have acquired by attending those sessions has greatly helped me in understanding what students find difficult and why, and also helped me making sense of the key misconceptions behind the mistakes students make and how to help them to overcome them. This has improved the quality of the bespoke interventions I deliver.

Mr Harkin: Student Support Manager

I joined Thurston in November 2015 having spent 25 years as a Civil Servant.

I took up the role of Student Support Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

I was impressed with how quickly I was allocated to training to help me undertake my role. Within a very short space of time I have completed Safeguarding Training, and Online Safety Training. This training helped me enormously in expanding my knowledge, and raising my confidence levels.

Having completed this training, I then attended the Training for Trainers in both subjects, and I now provide training to all the staff at the college, including the Principal, Miss Wilson! I also regularly take assemblies on Online Safety, and am involved in PSHE activities.

I am grateful for the time, and effort the school have invested in me, and they have made the transition to a new career after such a long time in my previous one, an enjoyable one, and Thurston is a place where I feel supported and valued for my work.