

Preparing for Silly Season

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Summer stressors

1. Recruitment
2. Inducting and supporting new teachers
3. Providing a Teacher Development Programme
4. Planning managerial time
5. Collecting useful feedback from short term staff and students

Recruitment Problems

- Recruiting enough staff of the right quality.
- Predicting numbers a long way in advance of summer.
- The risk of losing returning staff.
- Last minute drop outs.
- Finding good teachers who will work for short contracts of 1 week. Finding teachers who are flexible.
- Predicting fit for the LTO culture.
- Matching teachers and students.
- Interviewing via Skype.

Recruitment Solutions

- Start recruitment early. Issue contracts early.
- Overstaff by 10% to account for possible drop outs.
- Be optimistic when predicting numbers.
- Keep in touch with previous staff.
- Be transparent about what you can offer.
- Get in contact with CELTA course providers.

Inducting Teachers Problems

- A lot to cover in a short time
- Staff not expressing their anxieties/insecurities.
- A lack of training for those responsible for delivering the induction sessions.
- Inductions happening in different centres at the same time – having to spread yourself around.
- Trade-off between returners and new teachers in induction sessions.

Inducting Teachers Suggestions

- Provide an induction agenda with space for teachers to tick off if they feel they've covered the item in enough detail, and space for them to write questions.
- Employ a teaching and learning coordinator who can support new teachers.
- Have the teacher induction the day before the course starts.
- Use experienced teachers in a buddy system.
- Hold short mingling sessions with new and returning/long-term teachers where staff have to find out something new about each other.

Inducting Teachers Suggestions

- Get teachers to create a quiz based on the induction session.
- Have written support for the induction information and first week.
- First day video.

TD Programme Problems

- Timetabling to maximise attendance – no time when all teachers are free.
- Supervision of students while teachers are training.
- Differing needs of new vs. long term teachers and teachers working at higher vs. lower levels.
- Teachers too worn out to attend.
- Short-term teachers – difficult to develop teachers, they feel there is no need.
- Teachers refuse to participate.

TD Programme Suggestions

- Ensure your TD programme is well targeted: ask in feedback questionnaires or PDIs (appraisals/exit interviews) what sessions teachers would like for the following summer.
- Allow teachers to choose between sessions and/or managers to direct teachers to appropriate sessions rather than expecting all teachers to attend all sessions.
- Keep sessions short and sharp with practical content.
- Send out info about the TD programme in advance.
- Encourage attendance through bribery with food: lunch and learn, wine and whine.

TD Programme Suggestions

- Use pre-contract online training including online safeguarding courses.
- Invite publishers to run training sessions, especially those whose coursebooks you are using.
- Set up moodle CPD courses for teachers. Suggested topics:

Evidence of student learning

Project work

Classroom management

Interactive whiteboards

Dealing with languages

What outstanding looks like

Managerial Time Problems

- Managers don't have enough time.
- It's impossible to be in two locations at the same time – management of multiple locations is a challenge.
- Wanting to spend time supporting new teachers but not being able to.
- No time for planning or thinking ahead. Being in the thick of one week and having to plan for the next.
- It's difficult to stick to plans and arrangements.
- Problems all come up at once.
- Providing cover for absent teachers.
- Being proactive in planning but reactive day to day.

Managerial Time Suggestions

- Do as much before summer as you can. Brief key support staff.
- Draw up a managerial rota in advance including slots for lesson observations and teacher support sessions.
- Allocate time in advance to group leaders, including an induction outlining when you are (and are not) available for them.
- Plan CPD in advance of the summer and arrange for people other than the DOS to present sessions.
- Extend the managerial team for the summer. Employ ADOs and senior teachers with a remit for teacher support. Deputy roles so there's cover in a crisis.

Collecting Feedback Problems

- Not everyone responds post-course.
- Asking at the time does not give staff/students much time to reflect.
- Staff/students don't have much time for giving feedback.
- There is a tendency to focus on the negative.
- Staff may not be honest – especially if they want a job next year or a positive reference.

Collecting Feedback Suggestions

- For students, no feedback = no certificate.
- Allow time between handing out and collecting feedback to deal with problems.
- Build in feedback as a part of exit interviews. Hold exit interviews with someone without direct contact, such as the operations manager or academic manager rather than line manager. It's useful to have some distance.
- Send a reflective survey to parents after a couple of weeks. This is good for marketing. Include a reward/incentive to ensure it is completed, e.g. A free dictionary or 10% off next enrolment.

Collecting Feedback Suggestions

- Make feedback surveys short and easy to fill out with prompts, especially for young learners. Trial it beforehand.
- Arrange a Skype interview for after a staff members had left – but definitely arrange the time for this before the staff member leaves!

A photograph of a stone wall. The wall is constructed from large, rectangular, light-colored stone blocks. A central stone block is engraved with the text "10 MILES TO LONDON" in a serif font. The text is arranged in four lines: "10", "MILES", "TO", and "LONDON". The stone has a weathered, textured appearance. The background is a solid blue color with a subtle grid pattern.

10
MILES
TO
LONDON

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