Learning platform training

Schools were provided a free to schools learning platform training programme in the Autumn term 2020 with the aid of a grant provided by the Centre for Applied Educational Research (CAER). The programme was offered to support schools serving disadvantaged communities to develop teacher skills and confidence to provide rich remote learning experiences to children and young people in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Overview of the training

Session one – choosing a learning platform
Duration – 1 hour
Focus: Session for headteachers (or similar) and technicians to consider the benefits/constraints of each learning platform: Teams; G Suite/Google Classroom; and Seesaw in order to help them make an informed decision when selecting the platform for their school.

Session two - an overview of each platform
Duration – 1 hour 45 minutes
Focus: How to create classes, add children, add co-teachers, send announcements, create tasks, add resources, assign work to classes, groups or individuals, how pupils complete work and turn it in, how to send comments to classes or privately to pupils, how to mark work and give feedback, assessing with grading and rubrics, how pupils can respond to feedback to improve work and resubmit. It also looked at effective tools for safe peer to peer discussion and check how traditional classroom materials can be adapted for use in this environment and how tools can be used to help differentiate tasks and make use of tools to assist learners with special needs. Each teacher was asked to complete a gap task using our Teams/Classroom/Seesaw platforms. This took the form of adapting one of their teaching sequences for online learning. They receive feedback from us on their work and can ask additional questions through the platform.

Session two – designing effective learning resources
Duration – 1 hour 45 minutes
Focus: This session focused on asynchronous learning where teachers set tasks and children complete them later rather than in real time. The G Suite and Teams sessions examined the tools built into these platforms that can also be used such as docs, sheets, slides, forms, sites, keep and more in G Suite and Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote (including class notebooks), Forms and Sway. It examined the functionality for collaborating and commenting built into these tools. It looked at some external online learning tools that can be used with learning platforms. This involved creating video tutorials and using extra tools

for verbal feedback (not necessary in Seesaw as the core product already does this), setting and submitting video prompts, creating self-marking quizzes and polls.

Participants also completed a gap task, creating a learning resource using one or more of the tools mentioned. They received feedback from us on their work and can ask additional questions on the platform.

Session three – synchronous learning & additional tools
Duration – 1 hour 45 minutes
Focus: Part of this session was centred around synchronous learning where teachers and pupils are online at the same time. This involved using the video calling facilities in Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom/Meet. Teachers learnt how they can set up the video calling platform to enable a positive classroom management experience. This involved recommended settings and safeguarding procedures and how to mute, remove, using messaging, answer questions and more. It looked at whiteboard tools and polls that can be used live by all participants. It explained how breakout rooms can be used for group discussions. The second part of this session continued to look at external tools to use alongside the platform that were considered in session three. These tools enabled teachers to record presentations, create self-marking quizzes and set and respond to video prompts. This session recapped all the training and outline strategies showing how teachers can train colleagues in school. Delegates were provided with access the video resources to support this training. Participants completed a gap task, creating a quiz or video prompt resource and outline their plan for disseminating training to colleagues. They received feedback on their work and can ask additional questions on the platform.

Session four – training plan and dissemination
Duration - 1 hour
Focus: Participants were supported to consider how they can effectively disseminate the training to colleagues in their own school. This will consider supporting teachers that are working remotely (e.g. those teachers isolating at home but continuing to provide some teaching. Some children may be in school whilst others are also isolating at home); full-staff meeting/CPD event(s); and 1:1 support. Participants should consider preparing a training plan to discuss with the headteacher and governors.

Evaluation

101 teachers access the learning platform training programme.

Of these delegates:
- 39% accessed training for Google Classroom and G-Suite
- 41% accessed training for Microsoft Teams and Office 365
- 20% accessed training for Seesaw

The delegates were asked to self-assess their skills and confidence before and after access a four-session training programme based on their chosen learning platform: Microsoft Teams; Google Classroom; and Seesaw. In addition, a briefing was provided for leaders and technicians still considering which learning platform to use.

Based on the six self-assessment points graded on a five-point scale, where 1 equalled 'very low' and five equalled 'very high', in relation to their:

- familiarity with the learning platform;
- confidence to use the learning platform;
- skills in using the learning platform; and
- readiness to use the learning platform with children.

Each saw marked improvements from the pre- to the post-training assessments:

Pre- and post-learning platform training self-assessments
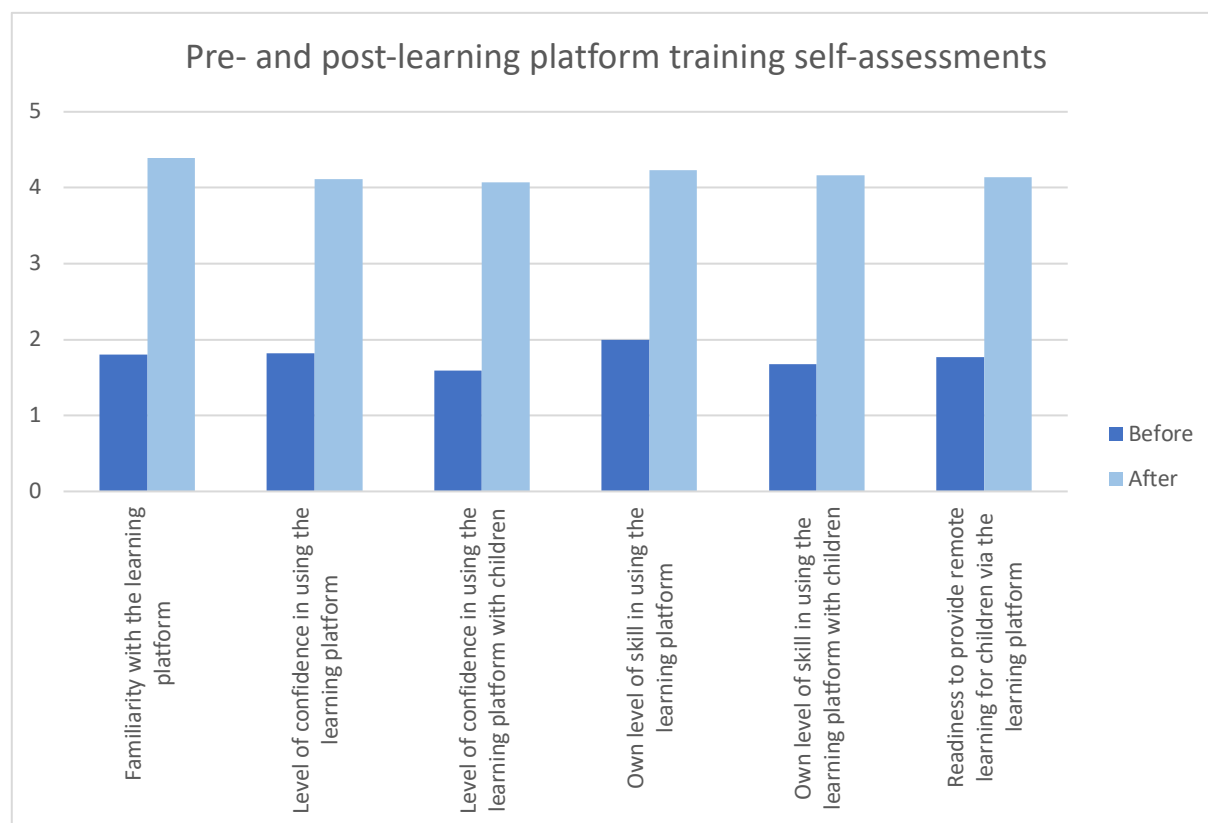
100% of delegates felt that the learning platform training has enhanced their ability to deliver rich learning experiences to children/young people.

84% have or intend to develop a training plan to support their colleagues to develop their use of the learning platform.

33% intend to seek accreditation to recognise their new skills, e.g. Apple Teacher, Microsoft Certified Educator or Google Certified Educator.

59% of delegates felt that they now had the skills and confidence to support teachers in another school to develop their use of a learning platform.

Overall, the training was rated 4.57 out of 5 with 96% grading the programme as 4 or 5 stars.

7ᵗʰ December 2020