

Connecting and Collaborating Digitally Across the North of Scotland: A Study of Impact

Thursday 5 August 2021 - Parallel Session 5 – 12.45pm to 1.45pm (GMT+1)

MURRAY - Embedding Learning in Culture

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This paper presents the impact of digital technology on connecting educators across local authorities within the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative. The Northern Alliance is an educational Collaborative of 8 local authorities in the north of Scotland. Its vision is focused on 'Developing a culture of collaboration, sharing of expertise and creating local and regional networks to improve the educational and life chances of our children and young people.' The Collaborative covers 58% of the land mass of Scotland and includes its most remote and rural communities. Barriers such as distance, cost and time spent away from home have impacted negatively on connecting teachers and collaborating effectively, often resulting in professional isolation. In response, the Northern Alliance has developed a strategy for creating online learning communities focused around shared priorities and building a learning and improvement culture. Digital technology is utilised effectively through Scotland's digital learning platform. The development of a Collaboration Model enables evaluation of the quality of collaboration within the learning communities. In this paper we present the impact of digital connectivity on the number of educators who are connecting and the extent to which they are collaborating over the course of one academic session. An improvement methodology is used to ensure change is leading to improvement and progress within a range of measures is captured over time. By the end of April 2021, a total of 5,222 collaborative engagements have taken place and 76% of educators agreed that online activity provided new opportunities for collaborative working.