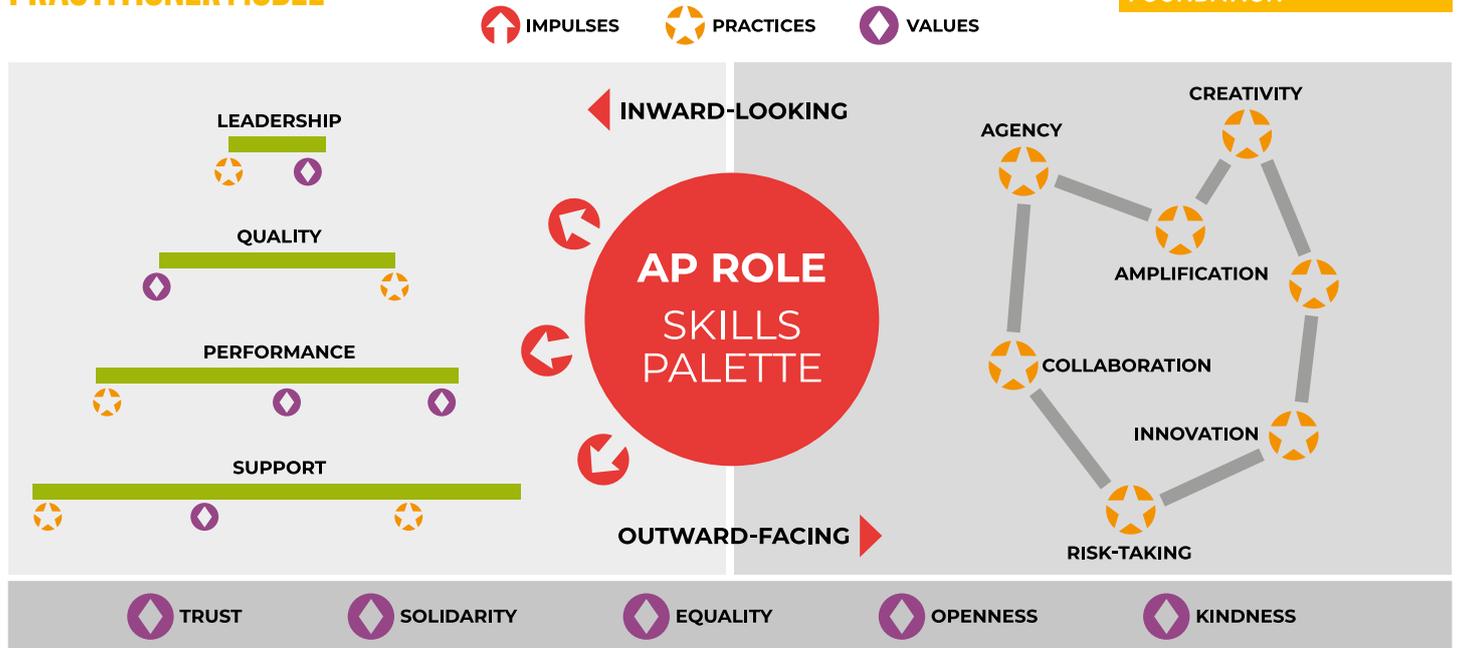


DEVELOPING ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS

ADVANCED PRACTITIONER MODEL

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Full Reference: touchconsulting (2021). Re-thinking the role of the Advanced Practitioner: AP Connect: Year 3 Evaluation Strand Final Report (2020-2021). Burton-on-Trent: touchconsulting Ltd, on behalf of the Education and Training Foundation. at <https://touchconsulting.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AP-Connect-Y3-Evaluation-Report-Final.pdf>

PAN-ORGANISATIONAL

DEVELOPING ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS

ADVANCED PRACTITIONER MODEL

The advanced practitioner model, originating from recent research (2021), shows the hybrid nature of the Advanced Practitioner role, as the AP moves between (outward-facing) communities of practice that inspire them to illuminate the work of their home organisation (inward-facing). Their skills palette builds from this insider/outsider perspective.

'Impulses' represent instinctive and authentic reflections of the increased agency felt by APs in their roles. In some cases this led to redevelopment of policies, or approaches to mentoring and coaching; in others, they led to cross-institutional collaborations to inform professional development.

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'Practices' promote collaboration and the positioning of APs as partners within their organisations, rather than as agents of quality improvement. To build this supportive culture, APs need to be rooted to a set of 'values' which not only support collaboration, but also innovation and risk-taking. The values on the diagram are those agreed by the APs who were part of the co-evaluation research.

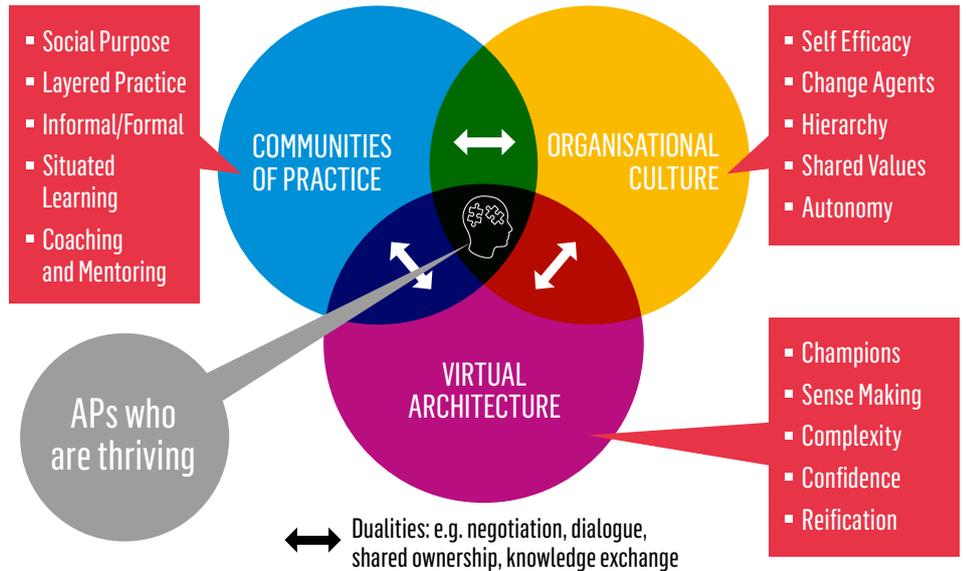
The co-evaluation revealed that APs' capacity to support change may be limited by the architectures they work within, which may be governed by an outcomes-orientated set of priorities which leave little room for flexibility (as illustrated by the 'tree-like' formation representing hierarchical organisational rigidity).

DEVELOPING ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS

CONDITIONS THAT INFLUENCE APs: THRIVING OR SURVIVING

In 2021 touchconsulting Ltd was commissioned by the Education and Training Foundation to undertake research into the influence of the pandemic into how APs work and how they supported others. A model emerged that complemented findings of the co-evaluation research: Re-thinking the role of the Advanced Practitioner: AP Connect: Year 3 Evaluation Strand Final Report (2020-2021).

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DEVELOPING ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS

CONDITIONS THAT INFLUENCE APs: THRIVING OR SURVIVING

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COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

A strong sense of shared purpose emerged from the research alongside the notion of layered dimensions of practice at the heart of the AP role. Thriving was enhanced through APs being seen as authentic teachers and also carrying sophisticated coaching and mentoring skills.

DUALITIES

Reflected the interplay between outside to inside trajectories and between the different organisational spaces where knowledge-exchange was enhanced. Examples included negotiation of practice, collective sense making, dialogue and shared ownership of the issues created by the pandemic.

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Having to operate in a largely virtual world during the pandemic, strongly illuminated the middle space that APs occupy in their organisations. Their positioning on a surviving-thriving continuum may be influenced by tensions between their learning about practice in the external communities of practice and APs' experiences when attempting to bring this learning into their own organisation.

VIRTUAL ARCHITECTURES

APs were engaging with a very wide range of virtual platforms during the pandemic which was further enhanced through champions skilfully constructing virtual spaces using tools that quickly became transparent in exposing rich dialogue and debate. The tools became enablers that allowed AP interactions to be amplified and enriched rather than barriers to conversations.

touchconsulting (2022). Advanced Practitioners during COVID (2021). London. Education and Training Foundation <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ETF-AP-Thriving-Research-Report-31.01.22.pdf>

DEVELOPING ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS

MODELS OF AP DEPLOYMENT

The underpinning research for the original #APConnect programme suggested three models of advanced practice: deficit, developmental and universal. Subsequent research by and with APs broadened their lived practice experience into a fourth model: pan-organisational, which reflects the emerging lived practice of APs, as it acknowledges their role in contributing to and benefiting from the professional learning tapestry of the wider FE sector.

Source 1: Tyler et al (2017) Understanding the Role of Advanced Practitioners in English Further Education

Source 2: touchconsulting (2022). Re-thinking the role of the Advanced Practitioner. AP Connect: Year 3 Evaluation Strand Final Report (2020-2021)

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MODELS AFFECTING POSITIONING OF ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS (APs) WITHIN ORGANISATIONS

Deficit

- APs deployed by managers
- AP role linked to capability
- AP resources focus on teachers that require improvement

Developmental

- Access to AP initiated by teachers
- Peer-to-peer
- Non-judgmental approach

Universal

- APs accessible to all
- Capability still features within a capacity building approach
- Strong emphasis on coaching

Pan-Organisational

- APs work in teams and constellations
- Individuals are active in external constellations
- Strong emphasis on capacity building via professional learning
- Coaching is universal

PAN-ORGANISATIONAL

DEVELOPING ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS

MODELS OF AP DEPLOYMENT

DEFICIT

Focuses on improving the provider's grade profile. AP resources are specifically targeted on teachers that have received 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' through performance management measures. This model emphasises the requirement to make improvements to professional practice. The research (2017) highlighted when AP-type roles are linked to performance management, or are focused on those individuals who have not met organisational standards, the AP role fails to have positive benefits.

DEVELOPMENTAL

APs support and develop all staff through peer-to-peer coaching, developmental (non-judgemental) observations and professional discussions. The research found this relationship is likely to be practitioner initiated, not linked to performance management processes, or part of any mandatory support structures. When AP-type roles are linked to this model, staff tend to have positive perceptions of the role.

UNIVERSAL

Supports staff that require improvement to achieve the level of quality desired by the organisation, as well as support and develop all other teaching staff to move from good to outstanding through peer-to-peer coaching. The emphasis is on support and enhancement rather than capability, which helps the role to be viewed as developmental rather than disciplinary. Perceptions are largely positive where the role is seen to be supportive and valuable when it is made available to all staff. However some tensions are evident, given the model is still linked to mandatory support structures.

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PAN-ORGANISATIONAL

APs work strategically as teams, in vocational areas but organised from the centre, to ensure cross-cutting priorities (e.g. maths, English, digital) maintain a consistent quality focus. Following individual strengths, APs participate in external constellations, supporting steady flows of research & practice evidence in and out of the organisation. APs have influence and their potential energy is often the driving force behind new initiatives whilst supporting individual staff improvement through coaching, professional development and research internally and externally.

PAN-ORGANISATIONAL