



Maximum impact is gained from the quick-win identification and the sustainable, low-cost model of intensive CPD for 30–45 staff in one event. Penny and Graham support the identification of themes, provide training for on-the-day facilitators, and write an ‘outcomes and next steps’ report for senior leaders.



**Facilitator pre-meeting**

Briefing on roles and scope  
Builds confidence in process

**Morning session:**

Rapid SLT Scene setting  
‘Mind the Gap’ starter  
Quick Wins: High Impact or easy to implement ideas

**Afternoon session:**

Scan the sector—good practice  
Strategic Planning  
Poster votes and awards for best ideas

**After the event:**

Report back to Senior Team includes ‘barriers and challenges’ identified and ‘if I had a Magic Wand’ wish-list.

Feedback from all Sandpits has been overwhelmingly positive with individuals and institutions viewing it as ‘*a process, not just a one-off*’. Events are designed so impact can be felt very quickly and the approach, once facilitators have been trained, can be rolled out to other contexts within the institution.

... the challenge with any special event, is to translate resulting energy and enthusiasm into impact, replicating the model to deliver the benefits within the institution ... Sandpit hosts receive full reports back to senior managers with ongoing support for institutional roll-out. *‘Penny and Graham provide the common thread to TEA Sandpit planning, evaluation and dissemination’* (Vanessa Wilson CEO UA).

*‘The first sandpit was hosted at NTU and was hugely successful. I have observed workshop-style course development models before, but none as effective as this. It was a truly immersive experience and the outputs were of very high quality. The course designs were genuinely innovative, and some were articulated so well that they could have gone direct to a validation panel for approval. I attribute this success to three factors: effective activity design, excellent facilitation, and the mix of disciplines and professions within teams. The sandpit provided inspiration for us in the redesign of our own course development approach – and the evidence to convince our colleagues that we should do it.’*

**Jane McNeil, Exec. Dean of L&T at Nottingham Trent**

*‘It is possible to tell how valuable and effective an educational development is by the degree to which it ‘catches’ on. In a sector in which development often moves carefully in a risk-averse environment, the Sandpit has been taken up with enthusiasm by institutions keen to speed the pace of action and to tackle ‘wicked’ problems effectively. Sandpits bring together colleagues working at implementation and strategic level (often cross-sector) with a clear focus on action rather than dissemination. Since the first Sandpit they have gained a momentum of their own and their reputation well has reached beyond Alliance Universities. I recommend this initiative to you strongly.’*

**Dr Sal Jarvis, PVC at Univ. of Hertfordshire and Director of the TEA Programme**

