Skills for Life
Support Programme

LSIS LEARNING AND SKILLS IMPROVEMENT SERVICE

A Case study overview
Title: Developing a whole organisation approach to embedding, Adult Community Learning (ACL) Essex

B Introduction

A Fresh Start - improving literacy and numeracy (DfEE 1999) stated that up to 7 million adults in England have difficulties with literacy and numeracy. Sir Claus Moser claimed that the need for essential skills was more than an economic argument; it was also about social inclusion. For a wide range of reasons, these individuals are unlikely to seek out literacy, language and numeracy learning opportunities. Providers and practitioners were charged with finding different ways to help individuals develop their skills. ACL Essex believes that embedding literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) offers this opportunity.

"Embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language and numeracy with vocational and other skills. The skills acquired provide learners with the confidence, competence and motivation necessary for them to succeed in qualifications, in life and at work." (DfES)
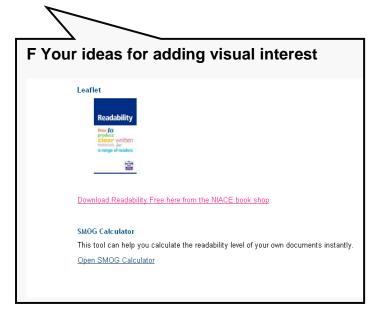
D Context/ rationale

ACL Essex is a large countywide learning provider. It currently delivers learning to over 30,000 learners. Ofsted recently judged it outstanding (June 09) and it was awarded Beacon Status in 2010. It also delivers a wide range of programmes tailored to the needs of the business community.

Over the past 5 years the service has moved from being 9 semi autonomous colleges to one service. A variety of approaches to embedding had been used in the different localities. One main area identified for development was that the service required a single cohesive approach to embedding to be able to support staff and learners most effectively.

E How they worked/ what they did

The service has developed a Whole Organisation Approach through support from the Skills for Life (SfL) Improvement and Support Programmes over the past 2 years. This enabled us to achieve a much clearer way forward. We produced a Whole Organisational Approach to Embedding booklet as well as delivering training to managers and tutors. The pack provides a comprehensive list of websites with ideas on how embedding overcomes barriers, a skills and embedding checklist, an overview of curriculum levels, suggested strategies for literacy and numeracy support, a section on readability, mindmaps and a variety of sample resources. The resources have also been made readily accessible through our own Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and in centres.

We developed a service wide approach as to how tutors evidence embedding of LLN. We do not expect tutors to become experts on using the SfL core curriculum references, so we produced a simple tick sheet which breaks down the elements and shows tutors very quickly where embedding is already taking place in their classrooms, curriculum references can be added later when required. The tick list, as with most of the resources, can be adapted to make it more relevant and useful in the different curriculum areas and contexts. SfL managers are allocated subject sectors areas to support if needed and also actively offer advisory and practical support in the different centres. They visit classes when requested and support learners into Skills for Life provision if appropriate. Curriculum teams have the autonomy to develop the initiative for their subject area as well as decide on the most appropriate initial assessment to be used with their learners. All sectors have been made aware that there are pre-printed contextualised materials already available and some have also chosen to develop their own. To further develop champions in different subject areas the service has delivered unit 1 of the Level 5 award in developing embedded approaches to LLN in the LLLS.

F Your ideas for adding visual interest

Leaflet

Readability

How *to* produce **clear** written materials for a range of readers

Download Readability Free here from the NIACE book shop

SMOG Calculator

This tool can help you calculate the readability level of your own documents instantly.

Open SMOG Calculator

G Your ideas for adding human interest

"Within the assessments tutors are better able to make informed decisions about offering places to learners. They can ensure that learners are on the right course at the right level. Support needs can be identified much earlier and action taken to have this in place prior to the start of the course"

H Opportunities

- Demonstrating that embedding means enhancing and supporting what is already naturally occurring
- Make the resources relevant, adaptable and engaging
- Highlight the vast quantity of good, high quality resources that are readily available and easily adaptable to context
- Highlight, celebrate and disseminate existing good practice
- Develop champions
- Committed senior management team who understand the wider benefits through improved retention and achievement rates

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I Benefits/ impact

- Delivery of the unit 1 of the Level 5 award in embedding – 10 participants. During the course participants were able to share good practice and ideas about how they are developing embedding in their own areas as well as looking at theories, theorists, active learning and resources
- 7 Skills for Life managers developed through the SfLIP as well as other sector curriculum staff
- Awareness raising with managers – approx 40 at Managers development day
- Flexibility has enabled approaches to be adapted to meet need

K Lessons learnt

To tackle people's concerns head-on, get them to identify their worries and demonstrate how a coordinated and supportive approach to embedding can actually dispel a lot of the fears and myths. Highlight that it is not about getting vocational tutors to teach LLN but to identify where it is naturally occurring in their classes, where they are already doing it and how, with support, they can make it even better.
Highlight how it can improve their retention and success rates (as well as course enjoyment!) as learners are more likely to be involved and engage with learning if they can overcome some of their own barriers and develop new skills which will benefit them on their course as well as in their wider lives.

J Quotations to capture provider /staff/ learner voice

"The impact on learners is that they are happier to do literacy and numeracy assessments within the context of their chosen subject and see their value much more than if they were simply Skills for Life assessments. They access the right courses at the right level and understand and are able to cope with the demands of the course"

"Ultimately the impact will show in the achievements of these learners this year"

L Links
www.plainenglish.org.uk For guidance on the design of accessible reading materials

http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/sflcurriculum - online interactive embedding resource

http://www.niace.org.uk/current-work/readability - including a SMOG calculator

Try Tarsia puzzles – adapt to your own need!

M Next steps

Curriculum areas continue to develop through the work of their champions, developing their own action plans and disseminating good practice throughout tutor teams. SfL managers to continue to support the work within curriculum areas and in localities. Continue to develop resources and share through the VLE.

The service has developed online literacy and numeracy courses and is looking at how these could be used to further support the embedding agenda, especially if people wish to go on and take accreditation.

We recognise we are on a journey as a service and that this is an on-going voyage!