Provider final report

Embedding Literacy, Language and Numeracy through a whole organisation approach

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Approximately 1700 words in total plus any appendices and the attachment of agreed resources and other outcomes

1. Background (250 words)

Description of the organisation and its point of departure for the project

Beaumont College was founded in 1977 in Lancaster and offers both residential and day programmes to Learners aged between 18 and 25 with a broad range of physical and learning disabilities. Beaumont College is run by Scope, the largest charity working with disabled people in the United Kingdom. The college offers an extended curriculum with a strong emphasis on creative arts, communication and self expression. Beaumont offers both residential and non-residential programmes for young people between the ages of 16 and 25 with cerebral palsy and associated disabilities and/or learning difficulties. In recent years, the college has attracted an increasing number of learners with complex needs. The college has 89 learners aged 19 and over. Approximately one-third of the learners attend on a day basis. In recent years the college has experienced a growth in referrals for learners with more complex needs and associated challenging behaviour. The curriculum framework is individualised for each learner.

The college has been involved with previous LSIS consultancy to develop embedding learning for Skills for Life and to launch a Whole Organisational Approach to SfL. This has been successfully implemented. The next step was to improve the standard of specific areas within SfL.

In particular, numeracy as this is a key national strategy. We recognised the need to work to maintain existing high standards in terms of targets set and to improve data collected for numeracy. Due to the recent retirement of our Numeracy Tutor and changes to the goal setting model we identified that support was required in order to maintain current good practice. New SfL management is in place and changes to the curriculum including a pilot year delivery Functional Skills in three subjects to a third of our learners has highlighted a need to increase our focus on numeracy (and ICT) within our embedded approach to SfL. Additionally, we identified that the current data collection for numeracy targets and achievement was not sufficiently robust and wanted to improve the system.

2. What we did and how we did it (500 words)

After successful participation in the SfLIP in previous years we wanted to build on the SfL strengths we had developed within that programme. We wanted to continue to further improve on our WOA to SfL. Our provision has changed with new SfL management in place and our Numeracy specialist had retired. Changes to the curriculum included a pilot year delivering Functional Skills in three subjects to a third of our learners. It was identified that Numeracy might be an area we needed to focus on in order to maintain our standard. Once the need was highlighted to increase our focus on numeracy within our embedded approach to SfL an Action Plan was created. A SfL team was developed and through involvement in this project we have gained two new members of the team, Learning Support who now have a responsibility to SfL for half of their current role, one Numeracy and one Literacy specialist. The key challenge has been getting the whole project team together for meetings due to cover issues and the fact that Friday, which is the best day for the entire group except one as it was their day off. This issue was discussed with Senior Managers and an agreement made that part of the grant funding could be used to pay this member of staff to work extra hours on Fridays. Grant funding from involvement with the project allowed this to happen and also resulted in extra hours to one member of staff and one to have time off timetable to meet with the SfL team every Friday morning.

The college was developing projects around a 'mobile learning' agenda linked to internet services that will be synergistically embedded into the college curriculum. It was important that SfL played a major role in this. Whilst literacy and ICT fitted easily into this plan it was proving more difficult to embed numeracy in a 'natural' way. An e-portfolio is being developed and we wanted SfL to play a major part in this. A tagging system was incorporated into the e-portfolio so that any work added to individual e-portfolios (an online portfolio of work across the Creative Arts curriculum) could be recorded and later searched for via this tagging system. This allows us to monitor and record additional achievement. As the e-portfolios started to be populated with evidence it became apparent that little or no evidence included a numeracy tag.

To complete this successfully we went back to the planning stage for each subject area and made sure that reference was made to opportunities to develop SfL, particularly Numeracy.

The Powerful Voices blog was being used effectively to develop SfL and once again literacy and ICT fitted easily into this work but it was proving more difficult to embed numeracy in a 'natural' way.

3. What we produced/created: a description of the outcomes of the action plan (250 words)

Outcomes/final products could be for example a scheme of work, a course outline, a description of a process such as marketing; a financial analysis of a delivery model, a professional development module. (Please list any attachments in Box 7 below.)

Numeracy skills focus included in Creative Arts project plans (that form part of the individual subject schemes of work). Numeracy specialist role for 2 ½ days a week working closely with Subject tutors to suggest ideas to embed opportunities for numeracy development, and support for learners to achieve numeracy targets and develop specific skills. Subject tutors responded positively to this work as they welcomed opportunities to develop numeracy naturally within their subject areas. It has shown an increased focus numeracy work within the Creative Arts curriculum such as a numeracy focus within a Performance session, a subject that previously felt numeracy did not always fit naturally into the

subject.

Links with Numeracy and the blog for example, a tutor emails a learner to request they post to the blog about work in their session on money. The student adds this information and this is developed further by commenting on the blog. Student posts an animated picture of a pound coin. Tutor comments: "What can you buy with a pound?" Learner response: "chokolat" further comment: "Would you get any change from £1? I have put a link to a game you might like to try, you may need to copy and paste it into the web browser." After useful feedback from both our DA and from colleagues during the PEG meeting, it was felt that a 'how to' guide would be useful resource to create.

A 'how to' guide created to advise others on tips for creating a blog.

Numeracy work embedded into the e-portfolio via use of video evidence captured in Creative Arts subject areas. When learners are working on specific numeracy skills such as using directional language in Dance, measuring in Cooking and timing in Performance etc evidence can be captured. This increases evidence to monitor and record against numeracy achievement and also forms evidence for Functional Skills accreditation in Maths.

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4. What the impact was on learners, employers, teachers, the organisation (250 words)
Please include quotations from interviews with some of the above. Please include any quantitative data as per Table 8 (Data) below or in other format as appropriate.

Impact on learners and organisation:

New (part time) numeracy specialist in place supporting subject tutors to increase confidence and raise awareness of numeracy within the Creative Arts curriculum. Links being made for Numeracy Specialist to work with Personal Development staff to increase their numeracy focus particular in areas of goal setting, target setting to providing support for staff to meet learner needs when working towards a Numeracy based P.D. goal.

The feedback completed for the CPD event showed that staff were reflecting on their own practice and evaluating what they would do differently in the future. One member of Learning Support stated that it was "the best training session I have ever had at Beaumont College."

Many members of the staff group reflected on what they had gained for both their work and the organisation from the CPD event. Their responses included:
" be more aware & specific when setting targets & when helping students to achieve them"
"I'll be more aware of how to use Skills for Life within a subject."
"I want to work more collaboratively with subject tutors."
"I'll reflect & embed."
Overall the staff responded well to the event and were enthusiastic about improving their own practice as a result of it.

Positive feedback has been received from staff regarding working in sessions with the new Numeracy Specialist. Staff have welcomed advice about how to develop numeracy and achieve goals, as well as advice on including opportunities to develop numeracy within the subject planning.

One subject tutor said

"Since working with the Numeracy Specialist, I'm able to use Numeracy to underpin everything I do in Environmental Art."

Another has commented:

"I was struggling to find natural ways to develop numeracy in Film Making; it was embedded but always seemed too contrived. Now we work with naturally occurring opportunities that fit with the subject."

Changes have been made to the MIS system that will benefit all staff. It enables the collection and analysis of data on numeracy and literacy target achievement across the whole curriculum, both planned and additional.

Improved quality of planning for Numeracy within Creative Arts projects. Support available and offered to staff to complete this should they require.

The involvement in the programme and the changes this year meant we were able to develop our SfL team further. Due to staff changes this had been neglected so this was a great opportunity to build up the team. This was done in terms of adding new members to the team as well as arranging the opportunity to meet where possible for weekly meetings.

Impact on learners:

The numeracy specialist has been able to work to develop specific numeracy skills with individuals. For example, one learner needed extra support to work with money in order to prepare for her Functional Skills Maths assessment paper. The Numeracy Specialist has worked 1:1 with the learner using actual coins to develop skills. The learner gave feedback about the work:

"I worked with Jan (Numeracy Specialist). I did the maths test and I think I'm going to start paying with cash rather than credit card now I know some new ways of using money."

The e-portfolio system (an online portfolio to record learners' work) is still in its initial development stages. It is hoped to be complete for September 2010 but is currently in a pilot year for a third of learners. Some issues have slowed down the development such as issues around being able to securely store individual cameras that have been distributed as part of the project. This held up the process as did issues with uploading film clips and storing large film files in the college network. Currently the IT department are problem solving with these issues but they have resulted in the e-portfolio development process moving at a slightly slower pace than predicted originally.

5. What we learnt that is of use to others (do's and don'ts) (250 words)
Do plan timetables prior to start of new project.   It proved difficult to arrange times to call a whole (SfL) team meeting once individual staff member's timetables were in place. Some time has been freed up to allow some team members to meet at the same time but ideally this should be protected time to avoid staff been called on to complete other duties where possible.   **Do** include all staff members when planning CPD.   We decided to use the CPD for all our Education Learning Support Workers and it worked well rather than Subject Tutors as we first thought.   **Do** be flexible with ideas for the resource.   The resource we developed evolved as the project went along. It proved difficult to stick precisely to the original idea for the resource as the e-portfolio system is in its early development stages but it soon evolved into the work we competed on the blog.

6. Next steps (how the organisation intends to carry the work forward) (200 words)
From April we will: • consolidate work undertaken within the action plan   • increase goal number for numeracy   • monitor numeracy targets as well as goals   • create more robust links with Personal Development team.   • share good practice around goal setting   • support learners to develop numeracy skills   • support staff to develop numeracy skills

7. List of attachments (including an overview of how the grant was used, actual resources developed, appendices, photographs and other material)
How to use a blog as a learning tool within SfL   Mind map plus text description of goal setting process   Grant funding details (Excel chart)

8 Data

If it is appropriate to include learner data with your outputs, please use this format and include as many fields as possible.

No. in learner cohort	Employer	Where delivered	SfL subject (L/L/N)	Level (E1/E2/E3/ L1/L2)	Vocational subject (if any)	No. completed	No. achieved
89	N/A	Beaumont College	Numeracy	Pre Entry – Entry Level 3		*Number with numeracy goals set* Autumn term: 24 Spring Term: 21 *New goals to be set April 2010*	*Predicted achievement:* 45 – April 2010 75 – July 2010
28 registered for Functional Skills accreditation, *(some in all 3 subjects Math, English & ICT)*	N/A	Beaumont College	Functional Skills **Maths** accreditation	Entry Level 1		*No official figures yet*	Predicted achievement: 9 - April 2010 15 - July 2010