

## CAVTL call for evidence 2012

### Southend Adult Community College

Vocational Team Managers - Anne Horn and Sam Sutton

#### Learning Assistant e portfolio

The roll out of *e-portfolio* across vocational and apprenticeship qualifications has led to many improvements. It has improved *timely completion* and reduced the overall *expense* of the courses. The key benefit to learners is the *accessibility* to learning materials from work, home or college. All resources are stored on the e portfolio including *large documents* (e.g. in Early Years the Early Years Foundation Stage and associated documents are linked to the learners' portfolio) that could not be used in hard copy due to expense and practicality whereas the online documents can be searched from relevant sections. *Differentiated supporting documents* can be uploaded allowing extension activities and reading for able learners and additional resources to meet the individual needs of learners. For staff working with learners no time is lost in assessing work due to its ready availability and it is easy to *cross reference evidence* saving staff time and is a more effective use of learners work. Portfolios are always accessible for IQA and EQA ensuring very *effective quality procedures*.

#### Embedding of functional skills and employability skills

A collaborative approach has been taken between two separate teams in the college to *embed functional skills* into the vocational programme. Initially 'experts' were identified in the Basic Skills team and paired with vocational tutors. The college invested financially to allow the staff to work together to produce embedded schemes of work, identify opportunities in the session plans for embedding of basic skills and support assessor practice in supporting English, maths and ICT. The vocational staff then supported others within the vocational area to develop *embedded SOW and session plans* for every area of the vocational programme. This academic year the team has begun embedding *Personal Learning and Thinking Skills* into the SOW encouraging tutors to recognise the importance of these skills to all learners. This approach is being rolled out over the FE area and new areas of vocational work.

#### Vocational Staff appraisals

In May 2012, in recognition of the coming changes to the Common Inspection Framework the vocational managers decided to redesign the appraisal forms for their team. The emphasis on teaching, learning and assessment married very closely to the vocational team ethos of the key importance of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA). In the summer at the full team meeting with the aim 'from good to outstanding' all tutors carried out an activity on *self-reflection of teaching practice*, looking at the grading criteria for TLA and assessing their TLA. They brought this document to their individual appraisals and discussed with their line manager the aspects they had identified as areas for development and CPD was planned to meet individual needs of tutors. Areas of outstanding practice were acknowledged and ideas for *sharing best practice* decided. Tutors fed back that this approach has been interesting and had supported tutors to understand what they needed to do to improve their practice and achieve outstanding. The Vice Principal requested that the grading criteria for TLA was used as a basis to redesign the TLA *observation methodology* at the college for the academic year 12/13.