

**Developing literacy (communication),
language and numeracy skills with
learners with learning difficulties using
person-centred approaches**

**A one-day continuing professional development
opportunity for practitioners**

Participant pack

Skills for Life Improvement Programme

(The day will include an opportunity to become familiar with the PECF for staff who have not undertaken the PECF training.)

Skills for Life Improvement Programme

Outline of the day

- 9.30 Registration and coffee
- 10.00 Welcome and introductions
Housekeeping
Aims of the day
- 10.15 Introducing the publications on which the day is based, their background and how they link.
- Person-centred approaches and adults with learning difficulties (DfES, 2006)
 - Pre-entry Level Curriculum Framework (PECF) (DfES, 2002)
- 10.30 Person-centred approaches
- The origin
 - The impact on learning
 - An audit activity
- 11.15 Coffee/Tea
- 11.30 A differentiated activity
- To become familiar with the PECF
- OR
- To examine teaching practice, paying specific attention to the development of learners' communication, literacy and numeracy skills, in light of the current focus on person-centred learning.
- This activity is differentiated to meet the needs of teachers experienced in working with the PECF and those less so.*
- 12.30 LUNCH
- 1.30 Assessment
- 2.15 Setting goals and targets
- 3.00 Coffee
- 3.15 Progress and achievement
- 4.00 Evaluation and close

The aims of the day

- To understand how person-centred planning/ approaches should underpin the learning experiences/ 'learning journey', including literacy (communication), language and numeracy, of people with learning difficulties, and how the use of the curricula can support the development of skills in a person-centred context.

Person-centred approaches and adults with learning difficulties (DfES, 2006)

- Published as part of the suite of materials developed as a result of the Learning for Living Pathfinder project.
- The purpose of the document is to support practitioners in developing individualised programmes of learning, within the context of the literacy and numeracy for learners who are working at Pre-entry level and Entry level and who experience difficulty in learning.
- The document also draws on the wider key skills.
- There are 53 organisations involved in contributing to this part of the project, piloting the draft materials, feeding back and evaluating the final materials.
- The organisations came from across the sector including FE colleges, specialist colleges, ACL providers, offender institutions and voluntary & community sector organisations.
- Accompanying CDs and DVD material support staff training and development.
- Exemplar resources are included.

The Pre-entry Level Curriculum Framework (DfES, 2002)

- One of ten recommendations in 'Freedom to Learn':

'A flexible and coherent curriculum at pre-entry level be developed to enable learners at this level to progress towards the entry-level curriculum' (DfEE, 2000)

- It is not a set syllabus to be followed by a group of learners, nor is it a teaching manual.
- Designed to allow individual learners to progress in their own way at their own pace.
- To be used by staff across sectors even though they may not describe themselves as 'teachers', 'trainers' or 'educators'.

What do they have in common?

- Both documents advocate 'beginning with people' – it is the learner who drives the learning, not the document, accreditation or funding.
- Both documents build on the principles that informed Valuing People (DH, 2001)

Rights
Independence
Choice
Inclusion

- Both documents clearly link with the concept of 'Inclusive Learning' (FEFC, 1996)

Remember...

Learners with learning difficulties, like any other learners, have spiky profiles and can access any of the curriculum documents. Working in person-centred ways applies equally to the literacy and numeracy core curriculum.

The Learning and Skills Council states that its vision for people with learning difficulties is one of...

'... person-centred learning, based on the principles of Inclusive Learning, whereby learning has purpose, positive outcomes and meets learner aspirations, and in which the environment matches learners' experiences.'

(LSC, 2006)

The Government vision is one of

'...high quality services which are person centred and/or personalised to meet need'

and which

"seek to promote the idea of person centredness as the starting point and encourage staff at the frontline as well as policy makers to actively involve learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and listen to what they want"

(HM Government, 2007)

What are person-centred approaches?

The current focus on 'person-centred approaches' is linked with the Government White Paper 'Valuing People' (DH, 2001)

'Person-centred approaches are ways of commissioning, providing and organising services rooted in listening to what people want, to help them live in their communities as they choose.'

(Department of Health)

'In many respects the philosophy underpinning person-centred planning is similar to that of 'personalised learning' or 'inclusive learning', with their emphasis on listening to learners and establishing a match between their aspirations, needs and interests in order to plan and implement teaching programmes.'

(LSDA, 2004)

How do person-centred approaches and learning link?

All practitioners are increasingly working in person-centred ways. Adopting a person-centred approach to learning means:

- helping people to work out what they want, what support they require and how to get it;
- listening to learners in ways that genuinely respect their views, experiences, aspirations and interests;
- using individual choices as the basis for planning programmes;
- recognising that the learner owns the learning plan;
- reflecting and building on the strengths, interests and needs of the whole person;
- fostering self-determination through supporting learners to make changes in their lives;
- recognising that the purpose of education and learning is to prompt change in people's lives, no matter how small and incremental;
- being flexible and creative in our thinking and approaches so that barriers to inclusion and the realisation of learners' aspirations are minimised;
- recognising the evolutionary nature of the work, taking time to reflect on and evaluate the experiences of learners and practitioners in order to improve practice.

(DfES, 2006)

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Activity 1 – 30 minutes

An Audit activity

Working with a colleague, read the following case study.

List the approaches used in the case study to ensure a person-centred 'model' was adhered to.

Reflect on your own organisation and audit it against the list you have just produced. Is there scope for improvement?

What are the implications of working in such a manner for you, your learners and your organisation?

Case study – Person-centred approaches in action

Lorraine harboured a lifelong ambition to be a Forensic Scientist. She explained this to the new Supported Learning Manager on a 1:1 basis, when she came to the Day Centre to talk to the learners.

When the manager organised a science class she remembered Lorraine's ambition and asked Lorraine if she would like to join the group. Lorraine attended the group for two years.

Her tutor was pleased at how well Lorraine progressed. She was self directed in her work and continually asked for additional homework, which she always completed.

At the end of the two years the science teacher approached the Supported Learning Manager and said she believed that Lorraine should access the mainstream GCSE Human Biology class.

The manager first spoke with Lorraine to get her thoughts. A small case conference was organised whereby the manager got Lorraine, her mum, her key worker and the Day Centre manager in a room together. It was important that Lorraine knew what she was taking on as it meant that she would have to cut down on her hectic week to accommodate study time. Using a flipchart the manager got Lorraine to record, in order of preference, all her favourite activities. By a process of elimination and group discussion Lorraine decided for herself what it was she needed to cut out of her timetable to accommodate her GCSE class. By the end of the case conference everyone knew what it was that they needed to do to support Lorraine.

The day centre agreed to give Lorraine a quiet room twice a week for an hour each time to study. The Learning Support Manager agreed to talk with the Biology Teacher and set up a meeting for Lorraine to meet with her prior to the course starting. The Manager also agreed to find Lorraine a suitable Support Worker. Lorraine's Mum agreed to take Lorraine to the class each week.

A year later Lorraine sat her GCSE and got a C.

Case study (adapted) taken from *Person-centred planning and post-16 Education* (NIACE, 2006)

Approaches used in the case study:

Approaches used in your own organisation:

How do they compare?

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Implications for.....

	You	Learner	Organisation
1:1 meetings to discuss hopes and aspirations			

Activity 2a – 1 hour

The Pre-entry Level Curriculum Framework

This activity is for you if you are not familiar with the Pre-entry Level Curriculum Framework.

Aims:

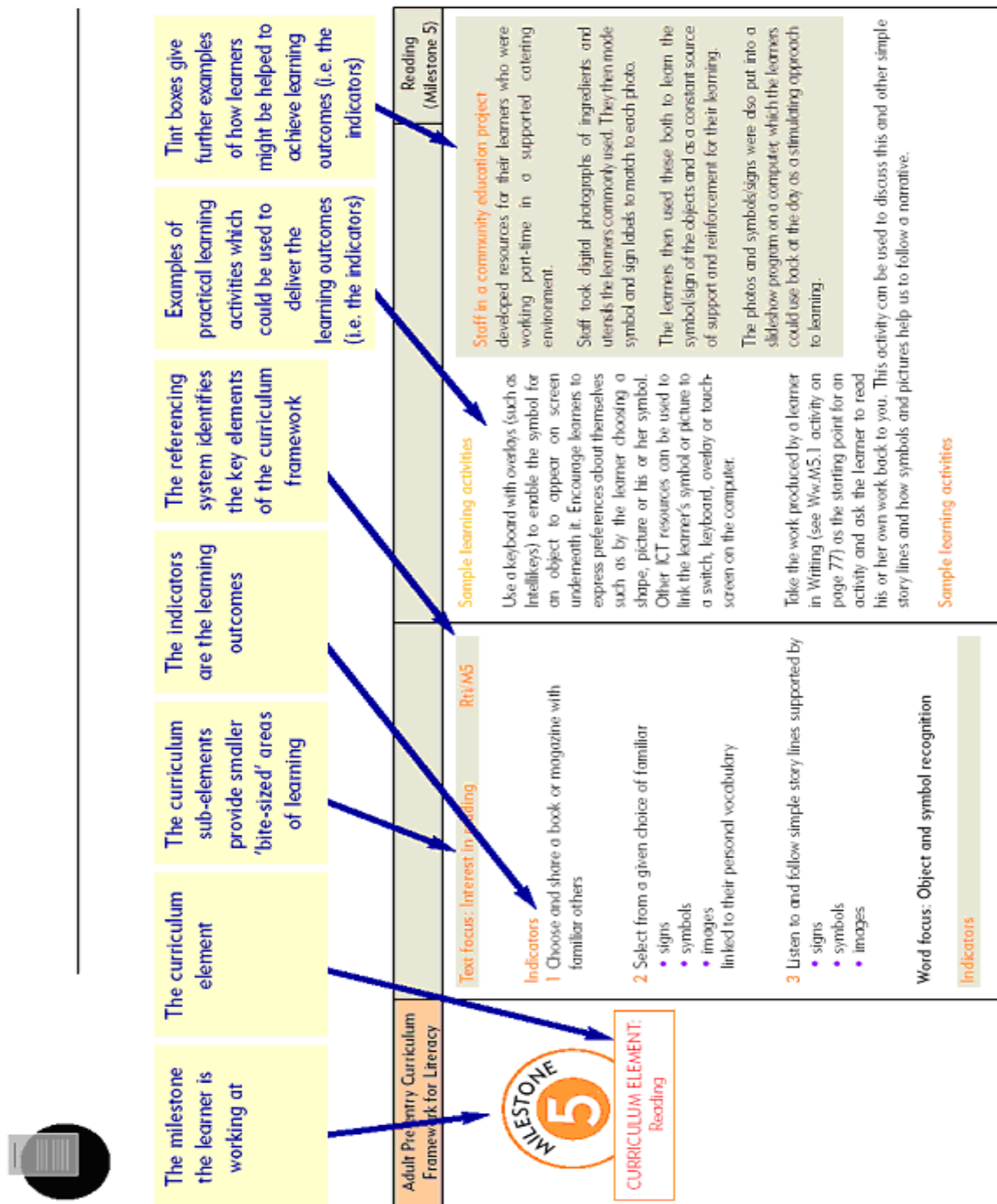
- To examine the core principles in terms of 'person-centredness'.
- To familiarise yourself with the PECF – its layout and referencing system.

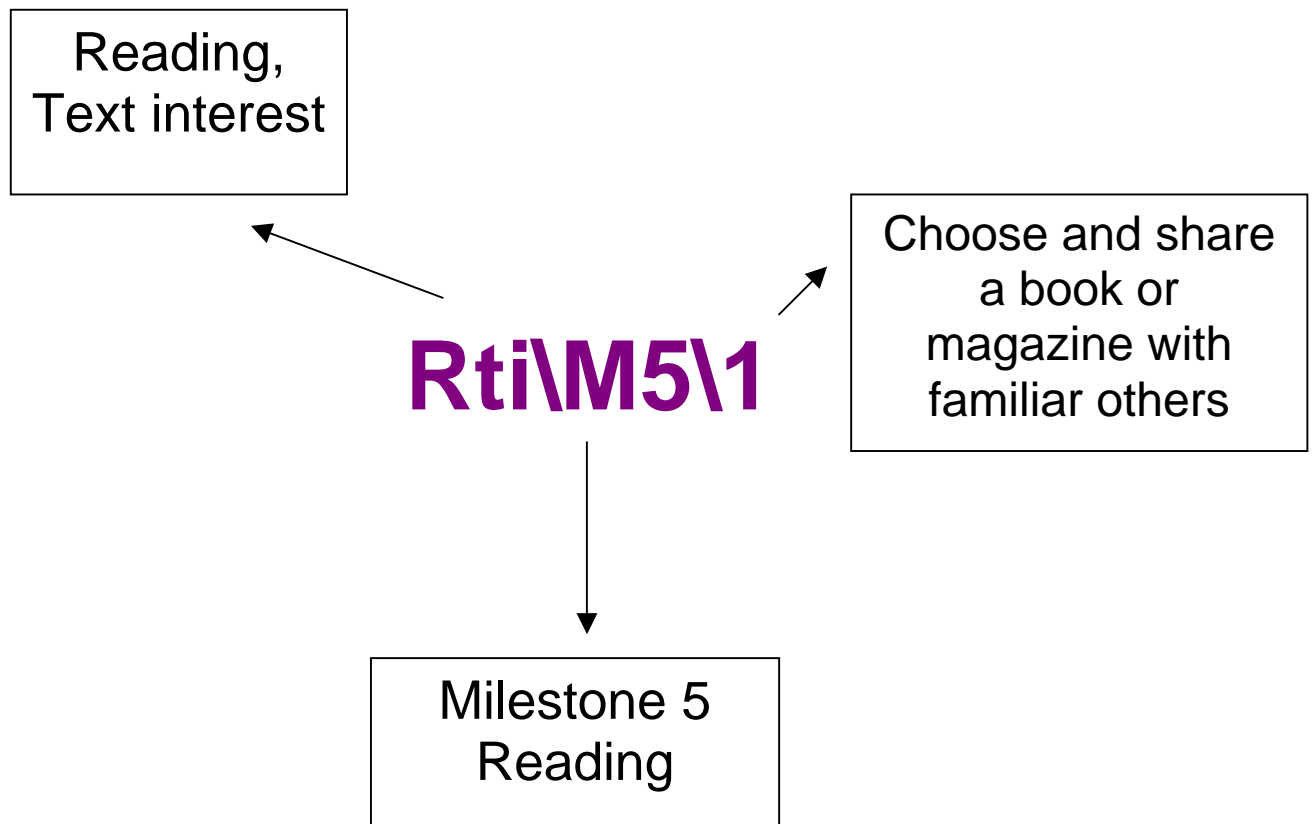
The following core principles underpin the document

- People who have learning difficulties are entitled to learning opportunities, irrespective of disabilities and differences in ability, and should be included in educational provision.
- Learners should be at the centre of, and involved from the outset in, the planning of teaching and learning which is to be provided for them.
- Individual learners, even those who experience similar learning difficulties, can and do learn in different ways and at different paces.
- Learners should be able to acquire skills that are relevant to their day-to-day lives and to their aspirations for the future.
- People should always be able to choose whether or not to participate in learning.
- People should be taught literacy and numeracy skills that meet their individual needs, even when learning takes place in a group.
- Skills should be taught using real-life contexts and adult learning materials.
- People learn best when there is something important to be learned and it is something they really want to learn.
- Learning should build on a person's existing strengths.
- Learning should help to increase a person's quality of life. It can contribute to improved choices and decision making, and to greater autonomy.
- Learning should make a positive difference to people's lives.
- Learning should always be interesting and enjoyable.

The layout of the PECF

- The PECF covers both literacy and numeracy skills.
- It is set out in milestones.
- The introduction section should be read in detail. It offers very useful advice and guidance to practitioners.
- The introduction section also contains the grid that shows the abbreviations used in referencing.
- In the heart of the document you will find the milestones, skills and indicators on the left hand side with the right hand pages offer examples of activities etc. These are useful to check your thinking against.
- Milestones 1a – 3b tend to be used with learners who are functioning at the very earliest level of communication development.





Identify the reference

The first one is done for you...

	Rs	SLlr	Rw	Wt	Ws
	SLc	SLd		Rt	Ww
	Speaking and Listening (SL)		Reading (R)		Writing (W)
	Listen and respond		Text		Text
	Speak to communicate		Sentence		Sentence
	Engage in discussion		Word		Word

www.sflqi.org.uk

Finding your way around the document

Working with the person next to you, look through the document and locate the following:

SLc/M7/1	
MSS2/M5/1	
CNoe/M3a/4	
Ww/M4/1	
	Add single digit numbers a. Reliably to 5 b. With support, to 10
	Recognise/Read and select a combination of up to five <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • words • signs • symbols linked to their personal vocabulary
	Participation is fully prompted

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Activity 2b – 1 hour

This activity is for you if you are familiar with the Pre-entry Level Curriculum Framework.

Aim:

To examine teaching practice, paying specific attention to the development of learners' communication, literacy and numeracy skills, in light of the current focus on person-centred learning.

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The following is an extract from a reflective diary.

The residential seems to have taken up so much of my time in the planning stages and there have been so many obstacles along the way at times that I seriously wondered if it was worth all the effort. That is another story! However on my return I have reflected on how much the students have gained from this experience with particular reference to their basic skills:-

– a relaxed staff team, away from the politics of the college environment. We had time for the students that were not interfered with by other considerations. How they blossomed and grew in confidence! – no rigid timetable – the time was planned, but at a pace to suit the students. I did wonder if the students functioning along the Autistic Spectrum would cope with the unstructured time but it was of huge benefit as we had plenty of time to prepare them for each activity, deal with their worries and concerns. The students had opportunities to develop their skills in a practical setting.

Journey – looking at road signs – who can spot the sign for Yarmouth? How many miles to Caister? What do different road signs mean? Do I need to turn left or right at the next roundabout? Whatever the level of their skills all students were engaged and keen to participate.

Arriving at chalets – matching the number on the key with the chalets, making choice of bed, matching the size of the linen to the bed, organising self, unpacking. Involving learners in all aspects of unpacking helped empower them to be independent within their new environment.

Finding out about the site – looking at the map and finding the venues. Looking at the entertainment guides and times helped them manage time in a visual way. Matching icons on leaflets to different venues.

Breakfast – laying table, matching number of times to number of people, choice of cereal, using toaster, clearing up and putting away, working as a team.

Lunches – making list of choices, going to the shop, counting out the correct numbers of sandwiches.

Boat trip – money – navigating boat – so positional vocabulary.

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Find someone to work with.

- Read the case study.
- Discuss with your colleague how the teacher who wrote this case study demonstrates an awareness of being person-centred.
- Take three of the skills mentioned in the case study and relate them to a reference point in the PECF.

Skill	Reference
Responded to a question.	

Now look at the video of the three learners at work in the Apple Tree Café.

What strategies did you observe that helped to make the learner more autonomous?

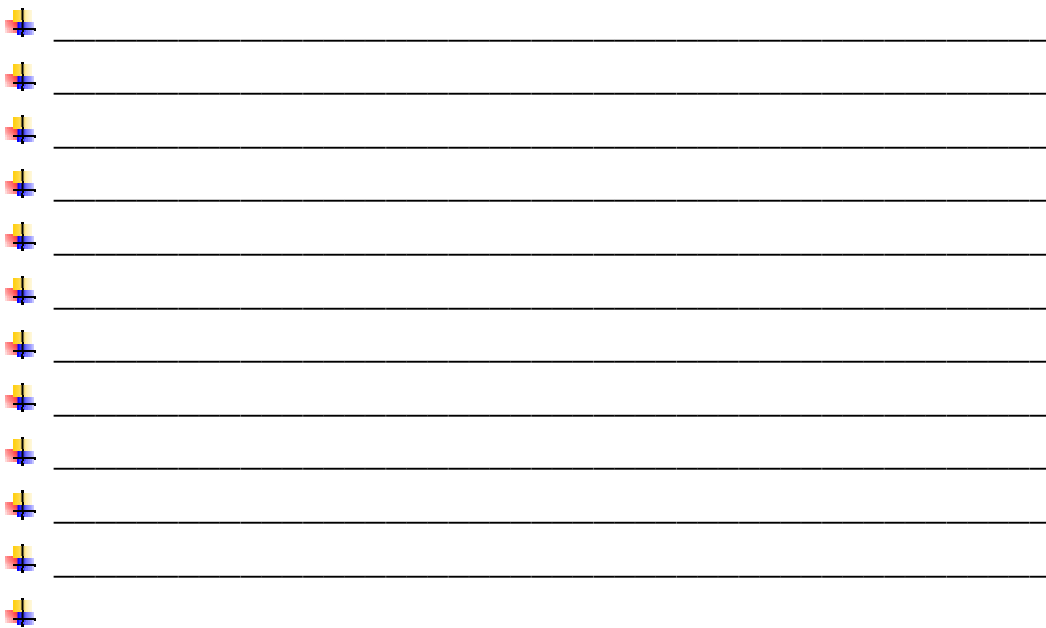
What other skills did you see being developed? Could any of them be related to literacy, communication, and numeracy? Make a list of them.

“On hearing the term ‘person-centred planning’ the reaction of many education staff is one of: ‘*We are already doing that.*’ Person-centred planning is often mistakenly identified as the same as using Individual Learning Plans or one to one tutorials to discuss what an individual wants to learn.”

(NIACE, 2006)

Working collaboratively in a small group, draw together a set of top tips for teachers to support them with working in a person-centred way (draw on the case study and the DVD).

Top tips to teachers on being person-centred.



A list of ten horizontal lines for writing, each preceded by a small colorful icon (a cross with four colored squares: yellow, red, blue, and green).

How might you use the findings of this exercise when you go back to your organisation?

Assessment

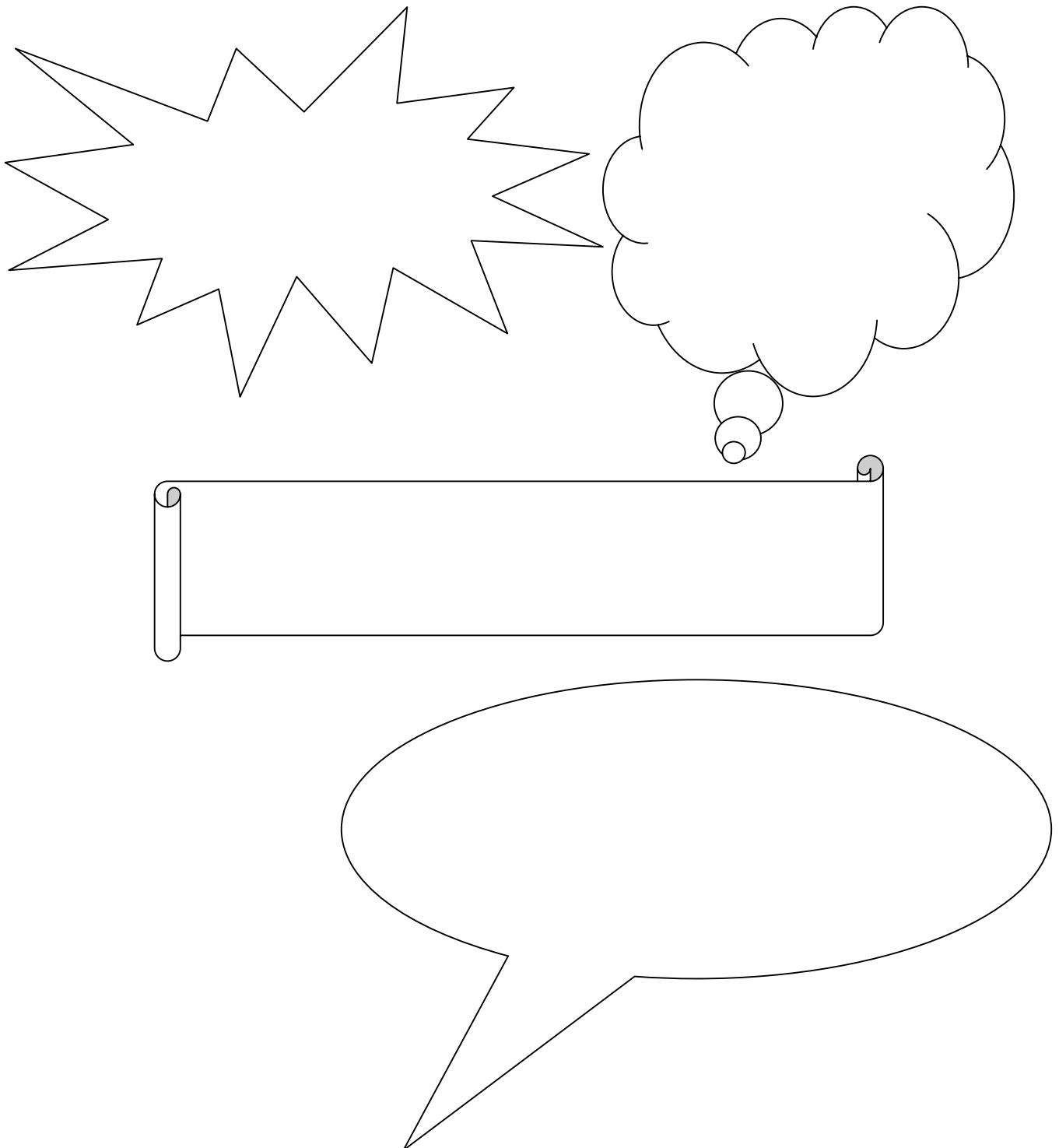
Assessment forms a key element during every phase of the learning cycle. Assessment enables practitioners to:

- identify a learner's level in order to select the right programme. This is **initial assessment**;
- establish a starting point for learning. This is sometimes called **diagnostic assessment**;
- monitor progress and identify next steps in planning learning, termed **formative assessment**;
- recognise and record achievements, called **summative assessment**.

(DfES, 2006)

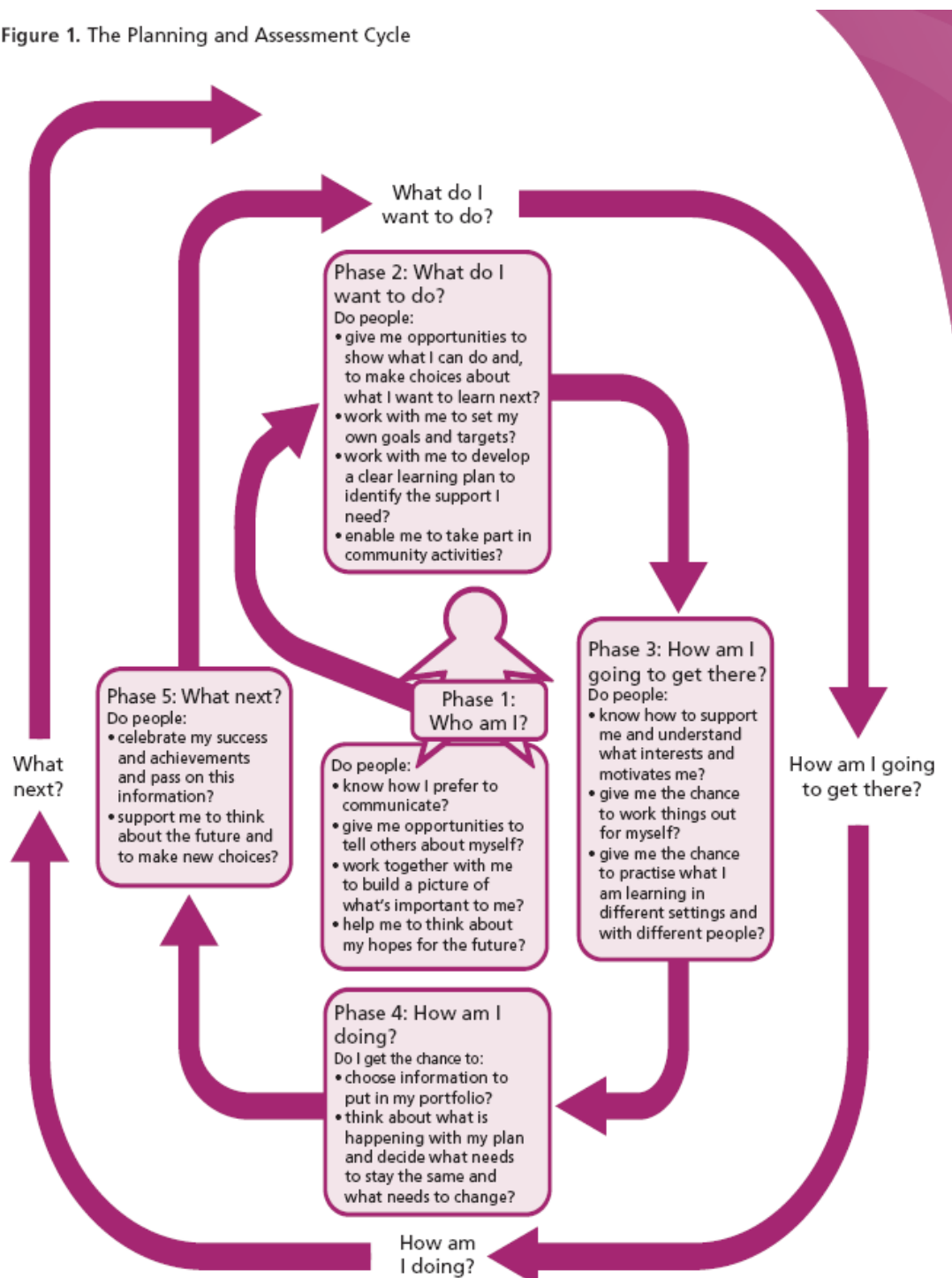
Activity 3

As whole table agree on the key features of person-centred assessment



The Assessment and Planning Cycle

Figure 1. The Planning and Assessment Cycle



Activity 4

Initial and Diagnostic Assessment

Look at Phases 1 and 2 of the diagram on the previous page.

What opportunities exist within these phases to assess literacy, communication and numeracy skills?

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Activity 5

Task Based Initial Assessment

Look at the DVD of the young woman making coffee.

Pay particular attention to her communication and numeracy skills.

Make a note of what you observe.

Link your thoughts to one or two curriculum reference points.

Numeracy_____

Communication_____

Plan an activity you might undertake to further test out your thinking.

Setting goals and targets

As a result of initial and diagnostic assessment, goals and targets are set. These targets should tie into the learner's hopes and aspirations.

For example:

Peter is seeking employment. His happiest times in work have been when he has worked in the open air. He has had three work experience placements in gardening roles and worked as a cleaner in a shop for three years. Peter would like to have a part-time job in a gardening centre.

Peter is a quiet person and can be shy with new people. However, it does not take him too long to get over his shyness and open up. Although Peter has been out of full-time education for many years he is keen to learn and has recently enrolled on a Skills for Life course at his local college. Peter lives and travels independently although he is heavily supported by his niece who reads any letters he receives and fills in any forms for him.

Peter's poor literacy and numeracy skills are a barrier to him getting employment. He has been assessed at Milestone 6 for his literacy skills and at entry level 2 for his numeracy skills.

Peter attends a job club and the manager liaises with the college tutor (with Peter's permission) about the literacy skills Peter is hoping to develop. At the moment they are concentrating on recognising and understanding Health and Safety notices.

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Activity 6

The PECF can act as a reference point for identifying some targets.

Set two literacy targets for Peter and cross-reference them to the PECF.

Target 1:

Target 2:

Imagine you are Peter's Literacy teacher. He comes to you once a week for a two hour support slot on a 1:1 basis. Plan an activity (include the use of multimedia) that will develop Peter in reaching his target.

The activity does not have to be classroom based.

Progress and achievement

Phase 4 of the Assessment and Planning Cycle asks:

How am I doing?

As learning occurs, staff and learners will work together to make a record of what happened, including experiences, events and responses.

Recording progress does not have to be limited to an ILP. The record of progress may take a number of different formats, for example:

- Photographs
- Audio and video
- Sample of work
- Notes made by staff
- Comments recorded by learners

Progress

- Inclusive learning (FEFC, 1996) identified three types of progress.
 - Lateral
 - Incremental
 - Maintenance of skills

- Mentioned again in the PECF (DfES, 2002)

- Mentioned again in *Through Inclusion to Excellence* (LSC, 2005)

- A central tenet in the work on the Foundation Learning Tier and Progression Pathways

- Mentioned again in Progression through Partnership (HM Government, 2007) the joint strategy between the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills, the Department of Health and the Department of Work and Pensions on the role of further education and training in supporting people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve fulfilling lives.

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Lateral progress

Sally is able to recognise three different-coloured flowers in a gardening session: a red rose, a white daisy and a blue pansy. Later in the week she is able to recognise red, white and blue paints in an art session.

Incremental progress

Jane has been used to counting out three mugs for tea in her group at college (N1/M6.3). With help she starts to layout five mugs for tea and five glasses for cold drinks. Over a number of weeks she is able to do this reliably without support (N1.M7/2).

Maintenance of skills

Eric has short-term memory loss difficulties as a result of a car accident. He remembers things from years back but does not always remember what happened or what he did a few minutes earlier. Eric has to repeat an operation a few times, such as going on a journey and reaching a destination successfully, before he learns it. Remembering on a daily and weekly basis how to do something or how to get somewhere is progress for Eric.

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Activity 7

Think of one of your learners who has demonstrated progress.

Describe it below.

Now return to the PEF and try to reference it.

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If the process of reviewing progress and achievement is to be person-centred it should involve the learner. Teachers need to be able to facilitate reflection.

The following are examples of multimedia supporting learners' self-reflection.

Every second week the cookery group meets on a Tuesday morning for two hours. A video is set up in the kitchen prior to the lesson starting. The video runs continuously throughout the session. Every other week the teacher opens her lesson by showing snippets of the video of the previous weeks cookery session. The learners love this. Initially the teacher used the video as a way of getting learners to recall what they did the previous week. However she quickly noticed that learners were using the video to reflect on their performance.

They enjoy seeing themselves on the screen but more importantly they use the video as a means of self-assessing their progress.

At Lilestone Street, a day centre in London working with Paddington Arts, multimedia is now part of many progress reviews. Often learners take the lead and give a presentation about themselves and what they have been doing – this may be projected onto the wall of a meeting room. In this way learners can celebrate successes and feel empowered through taking ownership of their own care plans.

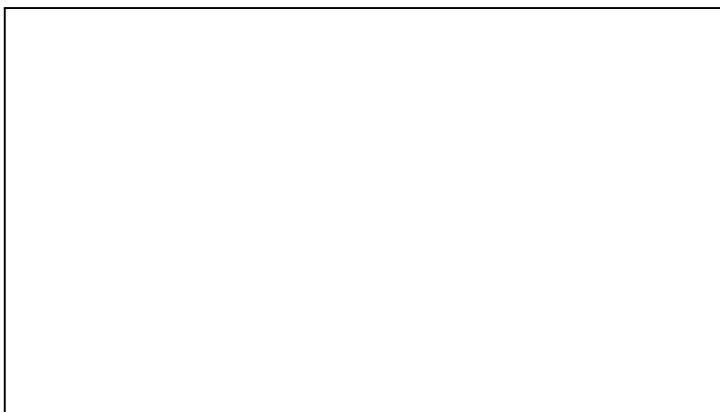
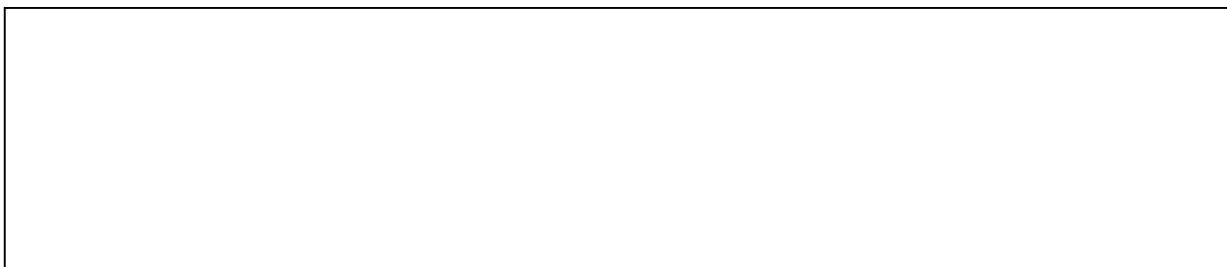
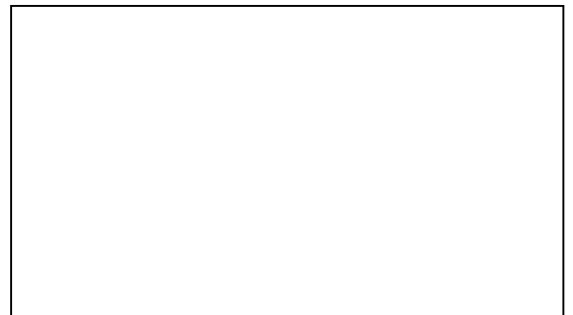
At Tower Hamlets College, learners use digital cameras to record visits and project work. When they return they download the photos and show them to the rest of the group on the Smartboard. This is both immediate and motivating and provides a focus for reviewing learning that does not rely on memory. It can also provide evidence of progress.

Activity 8

On your table share examples of how you use multimedia to record progress and achievement.

I get the learners to devise their own certificates on the PC. They drag and drop pictures of their work onto the certificate.

It is a staged process as they first have to have a 1:1 with me to discuss their progress against the targets we set on the ILP.



Meaningful Individual Learning Plans

“... are those which are owned and used by learners and teachers.... It can provide learners with an understanding of their programme, and of their progress in relation to this programme, and an opportunity to record and review progress towards their personal learning goal.”

(NRDC, *Reflect*, Issue 2)

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The Pathfinder publication Person-centred approaches and adults with learning difficulties has many examples. The CD-ROM also contains hints and tips for using PowerPoint to make ILPs.

To finish today's session you might enjoy watching Jimmy's interactive ILP. Jimmy is a learner at Oaklands College. Both he and his tutor, Kerry Lowe, worked together to produce this person-centred ILP.

Signposts to further reading and websites

Both the Pre-Entry Level Curriculum Framework (DfES, 2002) and 'Person-centred approaches and adults with learning difficulties' (DfES, 2006) publications signpost the reader to additional reading and/or useful websites.

Here are some additional suggestions:

www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk

A very comprehensive website. Visit the reading room.

www.valuingpeople.org.uk

The website to visit for anything to do with person-centred planning and person-centred approaches.

www.circlesnetwork.org.uk

Circles Network is a national voluntary organisation formed in 1994 with educational aims to build inclusive communities.

Or

Simply try 'googling' 'person-centred approaches'.

Suggested reading

Aitchison, J. (2001) *Deciding Together. Working with people with learning disabilities to plan services and support*

Cambridge University and Skills *Enhancing Quality of Life*

Dee, L., Devecchi, C., Florian, L., Cochrane, S. (2006) *Being, Having and Doing: Theories of Learning and Adults with Learning Difficulties*, London: LSRC

Dee, L. (2004) Final Report for Project 10. DDA *Taking the Work Forward*. See LSDA website.

DfEE (2000) *Freedom to Learn, Basic Skills for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities*, Nottingham: DfEE

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Department of Health, *Valuing People: a new strategy for learning disability for the 21st century. Towards Person-centred Approaches, Planning with People. Guidance for Partnership Boards.* Available to download for www.doh.gov.uk/learningdisabilities

Department of Health (2001) *Valuing People. A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century.* A White Paper, London: HMSO

FEFC (1996) *Inclusive Learning*, Coventry: FEFC

Heslop, P., Abbott, D., Johnson, L., and Mallett, R. (2007) *Help to Move On; Transition pathways for young people with learning difficulties in residential schools and colleges*, Norah Fry Research Centre.

HM Government (2007) *Progression through Partnership*

LSC (2006) *Learning for Living and Work*, Coventry: LSC

LSC (2005) *Through Inclusion to Excellence*, Coventry: LSC

Maudslay, L. (2005) *Changes and choices: valuing people in the curriculum. Guidance for colleges and post 16 education providers on implementing the Disability Discrimination Act*, London: LSDA

NIACE (2005) *Catching Confidence. The nature and role of confidence – ways of developing and recording changes in the learning context*, Leicester: NIACE.

NIACE Briefing Sheet: 'Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century' (No. 36) Leicester: NIACE

NIACE Briefing Sheet: 'Valuing People: Briefing paper for Learning Disability Partnership Boards' (No. 37) Leicester: NIACE

QCA (2002) *Designing a learner centred curriculum for 16-24 year olds with learning difficulties* – see www.qca.org.uk

Routledge M., Sanderson, H., Greig, R., (2002) *Planning with People Towards Person-Centred Approaches: The Development of Guidance on Person-Centred Planning from the English Department of Health, DoH*