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Investigate blended/distance learning as part of the curriculum offer for maths, to increase enrolments and retention.

Background

- We wanted to offer different models of learning to meet the varying needs of our learners. Currently we only offer classroom based learning but we would like to offer blended/distance learning especially for functional maths at levels 1 and 2. We wanted to look at using a mixture of learner workbooks, online materials, (including learner forums), with occasional workshops and /or tutor support via email or a virtual learning environment (VLE).
- We needed to research into online facilities, learner workbooks and applications for computers/mobile phones/ipads available for learners as well as other blended packages used by other organisations in order to come up with a package that offers learners the best possible chance of achieving.

What did we do?

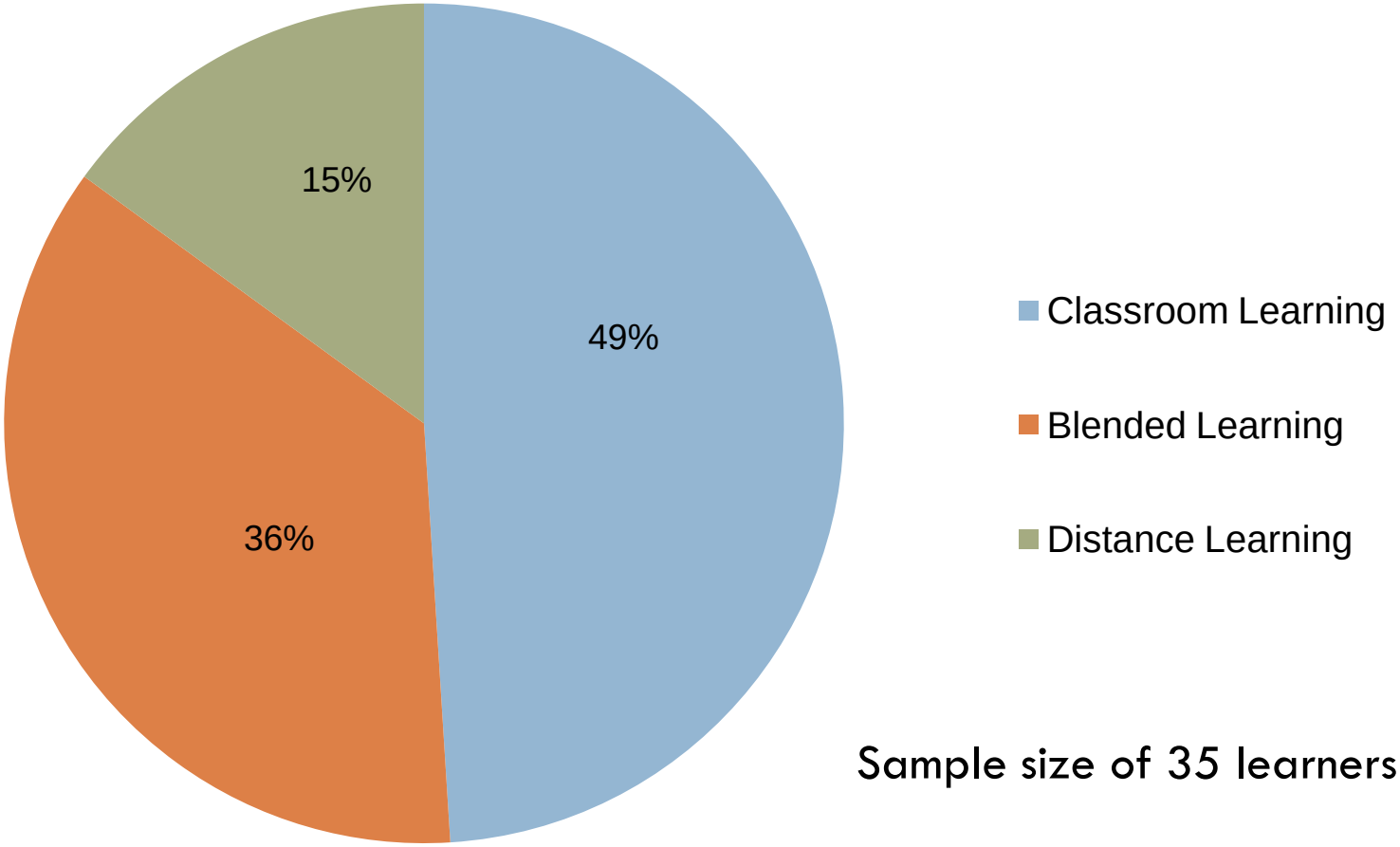
- We drew up an action plan.
- We looked at a number of different learner workbooks.
- We investigated websites and apps.
- We set up a VLE - Edmodo

- We carried out a survey of our learners (71% had no experience of e-learning).
- We are currently piloting a blended learning fast track maths course.

Action Research Plan – Offer blended/distance learning as part of the curriculum offer for maths to increase enrolments and retention

Action Required	Person Responsible	Target Date	Outcome	Monitoring Arrangements	Monitoring Scale	
					Scale	Date
Survey learners		End April	Collate and analyse data	Meetings		
Investigate websites and apps		End April	Appropriate resources identified	Meetings		
Investigate student workbooks		End April	Appropriate resources identified	Meetings		
Obtain a learning platform	PP/BA	Ongoing	Learning platform available to use	Meetings		
Produce assessment materials for awards		May half term	Materials produced	Meetings		
Arrange meetings to assess progress	PP	Ongoing	Meetings arranged	PP		
Put offer together	All	End June	Offer agreed	Meetings		
Pilot offer		End Sept	Pilot offered and evaluated	Meetings		
Progress Comments						

Results of initial learner survey showing interest in different forms of learning.

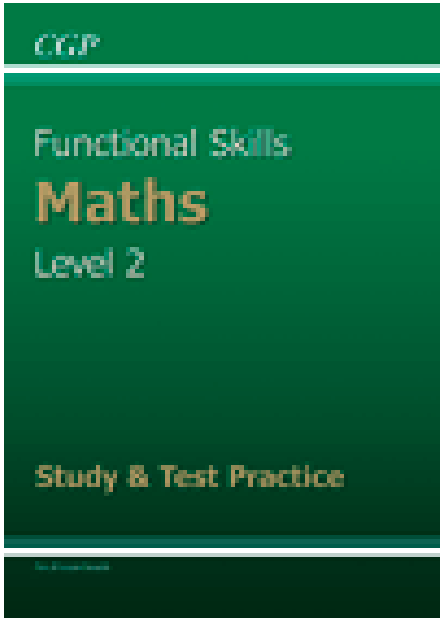


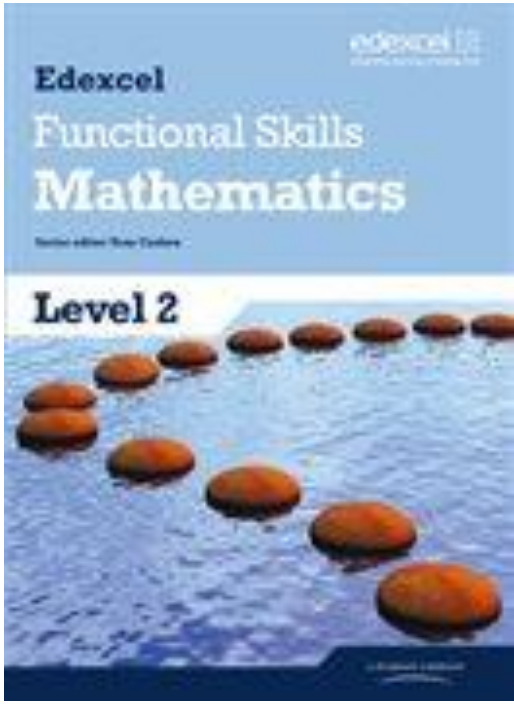
Sample size of 35 learners

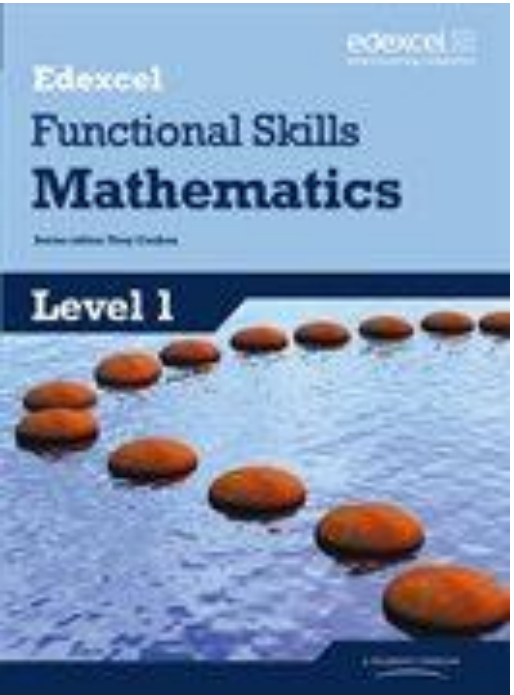
Useful Websites

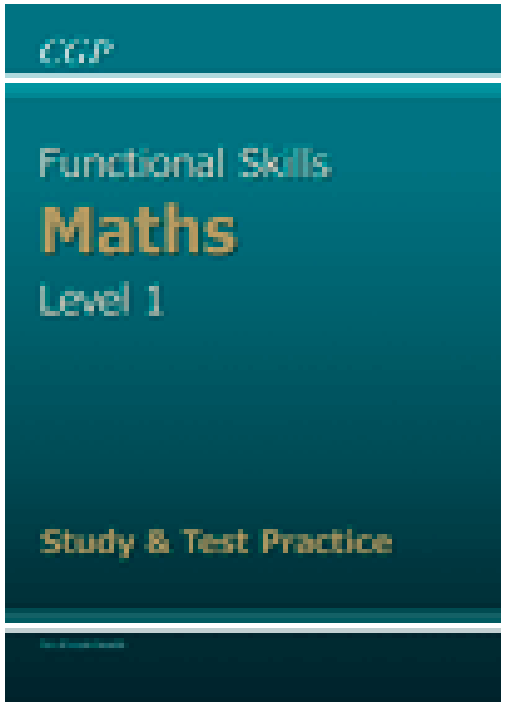
- http://learningmathsonline.ac.uk
- www.mathseverywhere.org.uk
- www.bbc.co.uk skillswise and bitesize
- www.skillsworkshop.org
- www.nationalnumeracy.org.uk

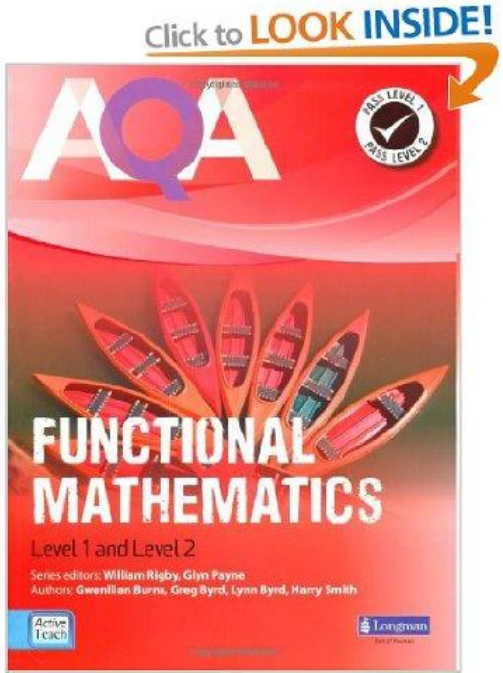
Students' workbooks we considered



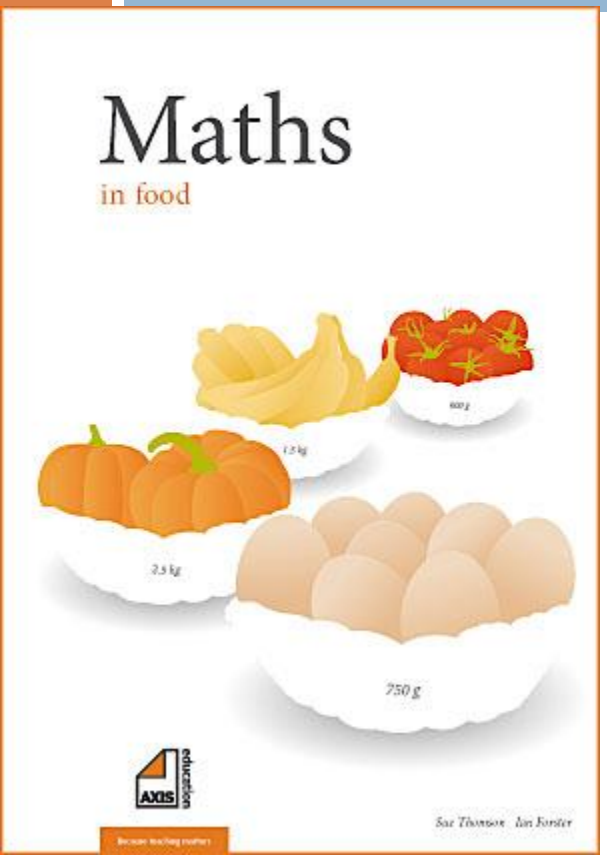


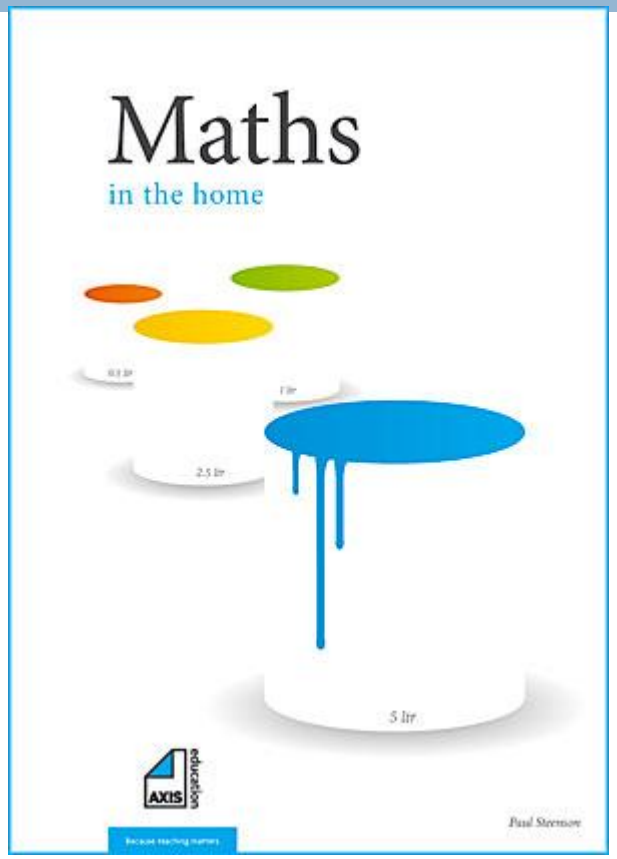


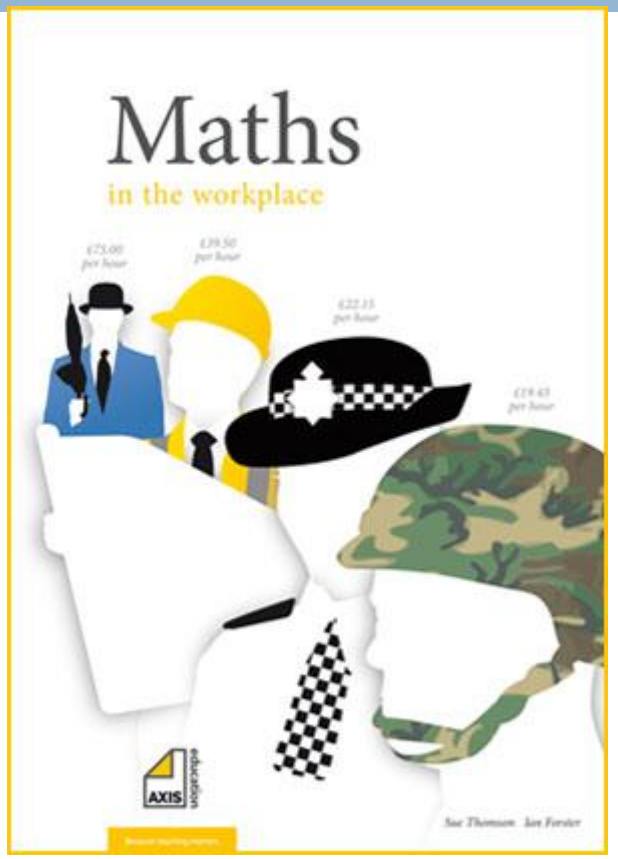




Photocopiable Resources from Axis



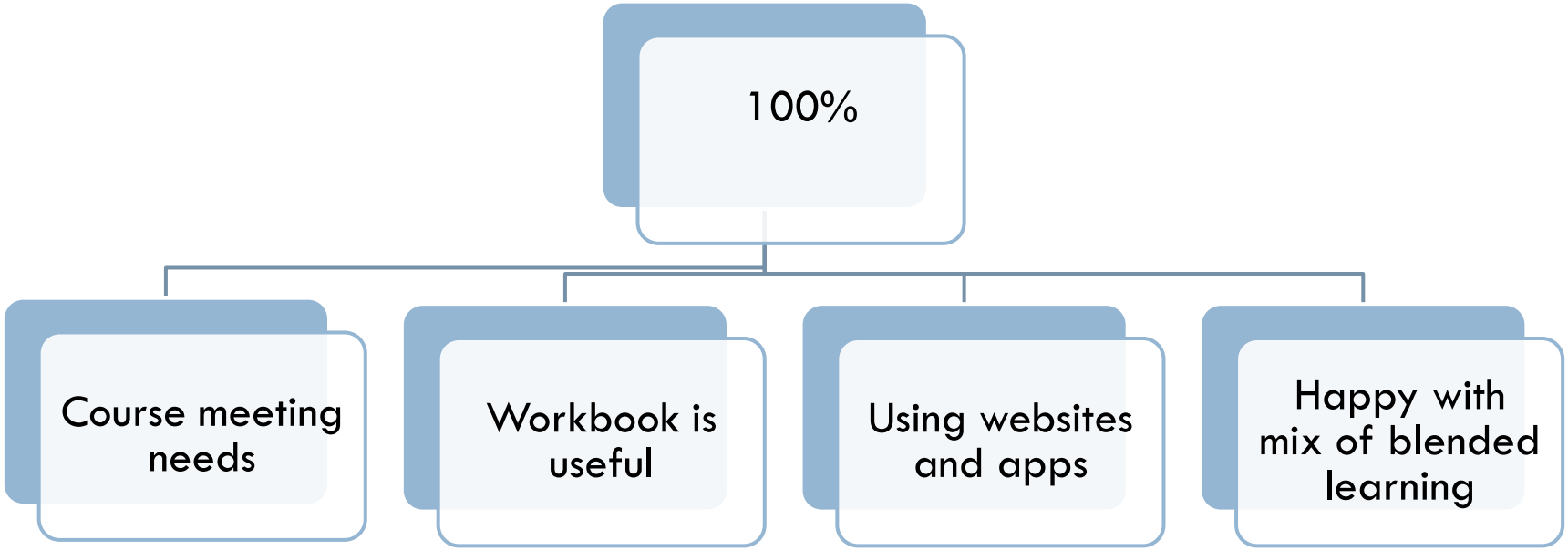




Pilot of Functional Maths Levels 1 & 2

- Two members of staff, each teaching three weeks
- Eight learners
- Scheme of work relates to learner workbook
- Classroom learning five hours per week for six weeks - 30 guided learning hours (GLHs)
- Range of non classroom based learning is from 4 – 10 hours per week
- Mid course survey carried out and results analysed

Results of mid course learner survey



Tutor Quotes

Learners are motivated and driven.

More time needed.

Need to be able to split PDFs.

Learners accessing Edmodo after initial reluctance.

Learner Quotes

Edmodo is a brilliant way to share answers and realise your mistakes so you can learn from them.

Allows extra study and also to seek help in class and online with other classmates.

Recommendation- websites that are useful to learners linked on Edmodo by teachers.

We have all been at different levels so able to help each other.

The teaching is excellent but sometimes can be mind blowing trying to take it all in so quick.

Conclusion

What went well!

- The blended learning has been embraced by learners and tutors.
- The bursary has covered initial costs so future courses will be more cost effective.
- Good mix of classroom, workbook and e-learning.

Not so well!

- Unable to open files from Edmodo on tablets.
- Not all answers contained in workbooks.
- Unable to split PDFs.
- How to record evidence of learning for funding purposes.

What next?

- To introduce blended learning for Functional Maths classes.
- To look at using blended learning for Functional English.
- Meet FELTAG[1] initial target for 2015.
- Refine offer to overcome problems identified.
- Look into using Moodle and/or Google Apps instead of Edmodo when they become available.
- Formula/agreement for tutor hours.
- CPD for staff/Share at regional peer meeting.

[1]Paths forward to a digital future for Further Education and Skills, FELTAG March 2014