

## Middlesbrough College

### Planning and teaching an individualised curriculum at Entry Level 1



#### Background

The timing of the LSIS project coincided with the college's curriculum planning phase for the academic year 2012/13 and it therefore seemed appropriate to share the plans we have made for our Entry Level One programme as it not only gave us a chance to share the good practice that we already demonstrate within our existing programmes but also allow us to collaborate with other colleges in the cluster and learn how they have designed and deliver their E1 programmes.

#### Our approach

The Foundation Learning team at Middlesbrough College have developed a rigorous initial assessment process that forms part of our Initial Advice and Guidance which starts early in the academic year to ensure the transition year between school and college is a smooth one. This process is managed by a member of the teaching staff and the Support Coordinator who gather important, relevant information ahead of the learners' enrolment to help us provide the best match between learner and programme. Initial diagnostic assessment is carried out during this time and further information is gathered during our 'keep warm' days when the learners come to college for one full day and engage in carefully planned activities that enable us to assess a wide range of skills through observation. The college have developed strong relationships with regional Connexions Advisers who work closely with the college, schools and parents to assist with the transition and facilitate opportunities for learners to engage in taster sessions and meet other learners ahead of their enrolment. Formative assessment early in the programme builds upon the initial information we have gathered which enables us to re-evaluate the learners during the first six weeks of their course and make any necessary changes if required. The referral process is illustrated on the attached flow chart and the details on how we facilitate taster sessions are attached to this case study.

The college is keen to ensure the new Entry Level One programme which has been named 'Preparation for Independence' is an individualised programme that offers choice and promotes the 'learner voice' in regard to how the programme is delivered and assessed. Clearly, this involves differentiated teaching strategies to meet learner need, use of experiential and cooperative learning models, working with identified learning preferences and using differentiated assessment strategies that allow learners to demonstrate competence in their preferred ways. In addition to this, the tracking and monitoring of individual progress is captured using Pro-Monitor. This software tool has been successfully used in college for

several years but this year, Foundation Learning tutors intend to use the Mark Book element of Pro-Monitor for the first time to track both individual targets through ILPs alongside vocational targets. There are many benefits to tracking progress in this way with the main one being that all teaching staff within the team are able to access the information from one area. This provides us with an excellent communication tool and enables staff to build upon the successes students are achieving in all subjects as they are able to access live information that is regularly updated on how the learners are progressing within each vocational subject. Mark Book is designed to capture progress on unitised programmes and reports information that links to other parts of Pro-Monitor and Pro-Solution which is proving to be a very useful tool when tried out with our Entry Level 3 learners who are also following a unitised programme. However, we intend to request some changes to the ways information is reported so that it better suits our assessment grading and presents information using either symbols or colour coding so that learners are able to see a more user friendly, visual representation of their progress.

The 1:1 tutorial element of this course will be facilitated by using a well-known coaching model called the GROW Model. This useful tool facilitates learners to be fully involved in their own target setting. It also promotes them to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their own strategies to navigate any problems they may anticipate along the way. GROW is an acronym and stands for:

G = Goal

R = Reality

O = Options

W = Will

Tutors often use the well-known 'Motivational Wheel' which is a segmented circle used to capture the information on areas the learners want to improve which helps form an action plan to promote the learner to consider where they feel they are on a one to ten scale in order to open up a discussion on what it would take to move their score up to a ten. This process helps learners to plan their own progress towards specific goals and consider the things that might prevent success whilst developing strategies to navigate around these pitfalls.

### An example of the outcome and impact of the work

The impact of the new curriculum is expected to be very positive. Not only are we building upon existing good practice we are also developing our provision following consultation with other colleges within the cluster. The impact may be measured in the following categories:

#### Learner

The learners will receive curriculum that has been specifically designed to meet their individual need that takes account of their desire to make choices and develop their skills, understanding, knowledge and experience in ways that best suit their preferred ways of learning. This will improve the quality of their learning experience and better equip them to progress to the goals they aspire to.

## Other aspects of our Provision

Elements of this course will be used on all of the other cohorts in the same ways as described. All learners will have their progress tracked and monitored using Pro-Monitor and all 1:1 tutorials will be facilitated using the GROW model. This is a very positive addition to our learning programmes and will contribute to the quality of this provision.

## Other Stakeholders

Partnership schools (and parents) will receive the new Course Handbook which will assist them in their delivery of transition planning and help prepare learners for leaving school and progress to college. This handbook will be further refined to include important student information such as timetables to help learners settle into their new course and remind them of the important information about key aspects of the course. Connexions advisers will also find this document useful during the referral process and they will use it to advise potential new learners of the course we are providing at this level.

## The Initial Issue we wanted to Address

Our intention was to strive towards improvement of our Entry Level One programme, research good practice from other colleges in order to improve our own curriculum and share the good practice we have already developed within the section. We believe this has been achieved.

## Next steps and future plans

The initial assessment process is an established practice within the department and has been in operation for eight years. However, we continue to refine the process year on year to ensure we achieve continuous improvement. The process is used across all cohorts within Foundation Learning. The observational assessments and continuous formative assessment forms the greater part of our information gathering for Entry Level 1 and Entry Level 2 learners as computer based diagnostic tools do not provide the information we need at these levels.

The curriculum development for this level will be completed by June 2012 ready to implement in September for the 2012/13 academic year. The programme's success will be continually reviewed at regular milestone points to ensure changes are made where required.

The changes we require to be made to Pro-Monitor will be investigated with the software company who developed it.

The GROW model is a very familiar tool to our staff as it is often used during performance review, CPD planning and observation feedback. Using it with students in Foundation Learning is new and the teaching team will undergo specific training to help them use this model with their learners.

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