



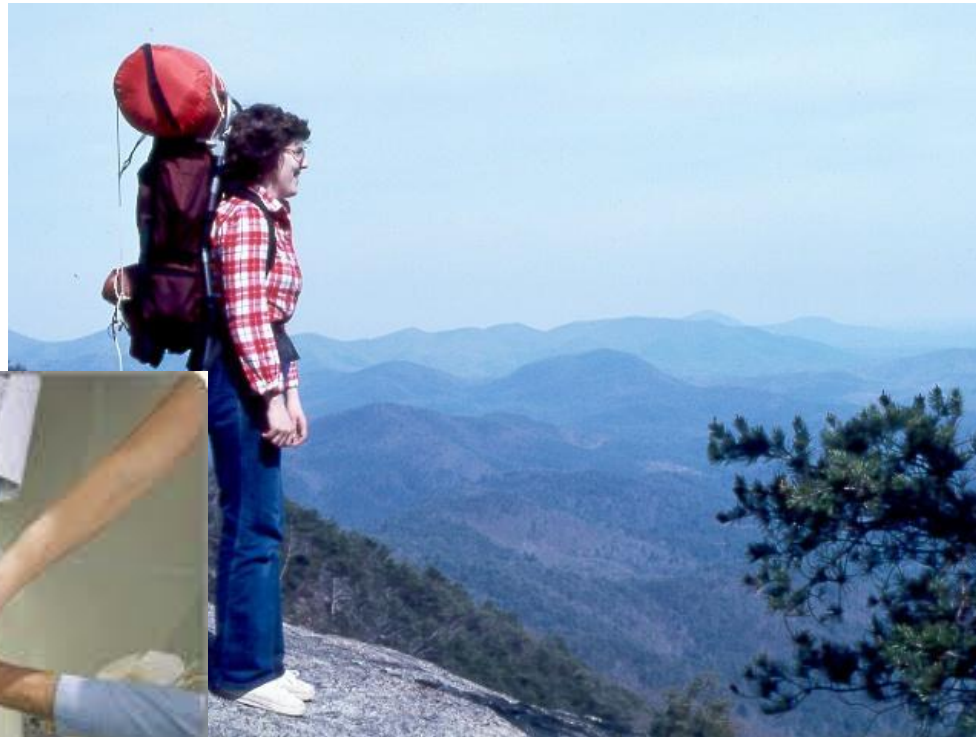
## **Support for English, maths and ESOL**

### **Module 8**

**Improving initial and diagnostic assessment for functional skills**

# Activity 1: Starter task

## *Design the perfect learner*



# Aim



To explore initial and diagnostic assessment within functional skills

## **By the end of the training session, participants will have:**

1. Discussed the purpose of initial and diagnostic assessment within functional skills
2. Clarified the differences between the initial and diagnostic assessment of functional skills and key skills
3. Identified a range of approaches to the initial and diagnostic assessment of functional skills
4. Developed an awareness of the importance of communicating initial and diagnostic assessment information across learners' whole programme of study

## What expertise do you have on your table?

- Use HO 3 to note the expertise you have in functional skills, key skills, Skills for Life, English, maths or ESOL – are there other areas of expertise we should note?
- What specific expertise do you have in initial and diagnostic assessment?

# What is the purpose and value of initial and diagnostic assessment?



## **In your table groups**

- Discuss what the purpose is
- Come up with a phrase which sums this up
- Note these on HO 4 (one per table)

## **Snowball**

- Pass your handout to the next table who can add anything extra. Continue to pass around, share and add until you get your original sheet back.

# Initial and diagnostic assessment



- **Initial assessment** involves finding out the learner's level to help them choose an appropriate programme
- **Diagnostic assessment** is about identifying a learner's specific needs
- Usually initial assessment and diagnostic assessment are separate processes, but...

# The role of initial and diagnostic assessment

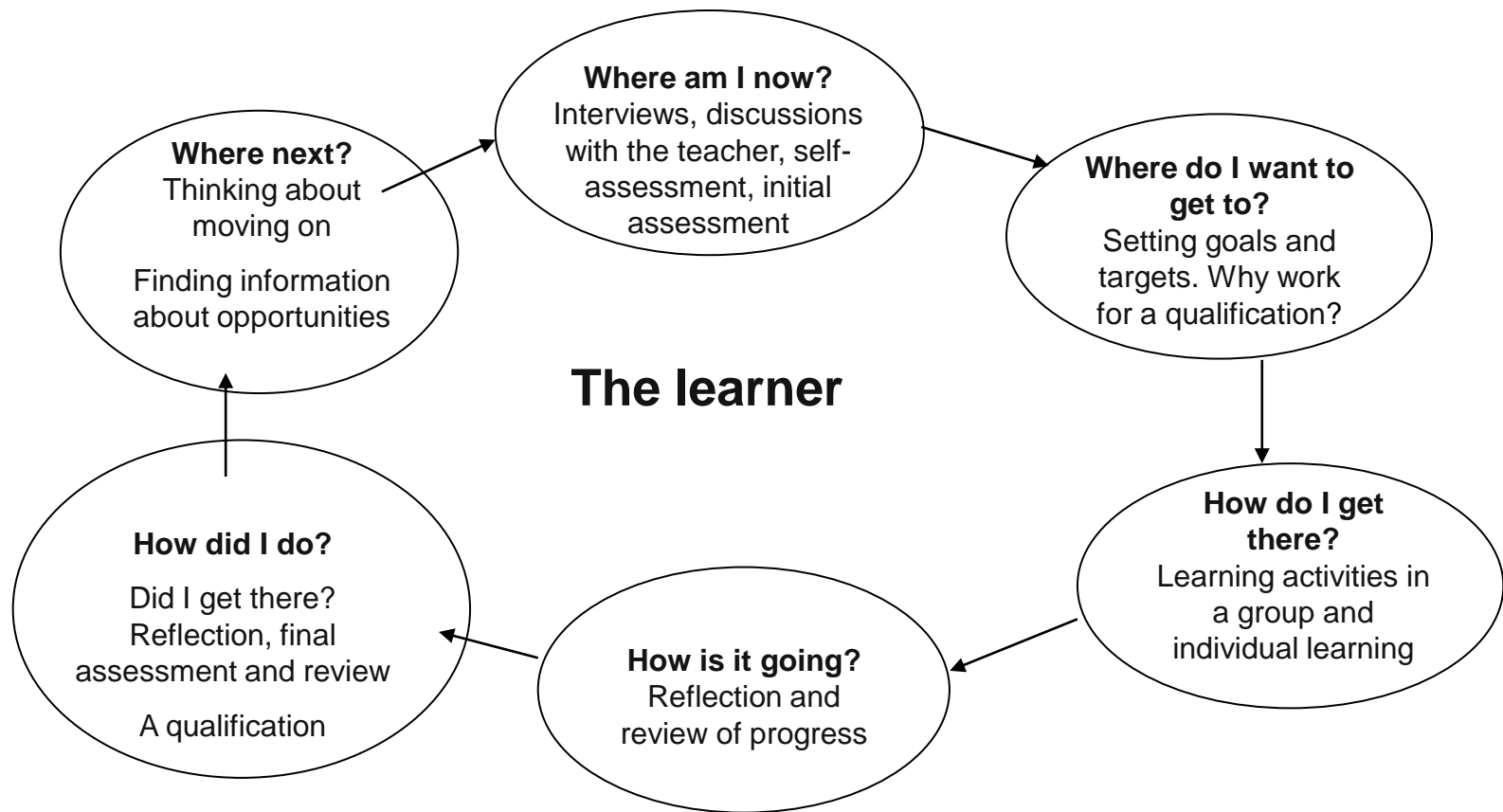


## **Initial and diagnostic assessment:**

- help to establish whether the learner is on the right programme
- help to establish the level of functionality and autonomy
- help you and the learner to negotiate and agree an individual learning plan
- begin the process of building a relationship
- are early steps in a continuing process of assessment for learning
- are not one-off events – they are part of an ongoing process



# The learner journey



Adapted from: *Planning Learning and Recording Progress and Achievement* (DfES 2003)

# What are functional skills?



Functional skills are the fundamental, applied skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) which help people to gain the most from life, learning and work.

Criteria for functional skills qualifications (Ofqual/12/5127)

## Factors affecting the level of demand

- Complexity
- Technical demand
- Familiarity
- Independence (autonomy)

# Initial and diagnostic assessment



What models do you use in your centre?

What other models are you aware of?

# Methods of initial and diagnostic assessment



- Documents
- Self-assessment
- Discussions
- Assessment tools
- Structured activities
- Observation

# Factors for a positive experience of initial and diagnostic assessment



## The assessment....

- involves learners – doing it ‘with them’ not ‘to them’
- supports learners’ self-esteem and sense of self-worth
- recognises strengths and achievements, not just areas for development
- links to learners’ aspirations and their context for learning

# The expectations we have of learners



A recent expert review (2011) looking at educational expectations commented:

“...our existing assessment model assumes that a certain proportion of young people will never be able to master crucial curriculum content, leading to an unjustified lowering of expectations.”

“...evidence identifies the higher expectations of pupils in mathematics, English and science in high performing (countries).”

# Spiky profiles



Every learner is an individual and has:

- gaps
- strengths
- history
- learning preferences

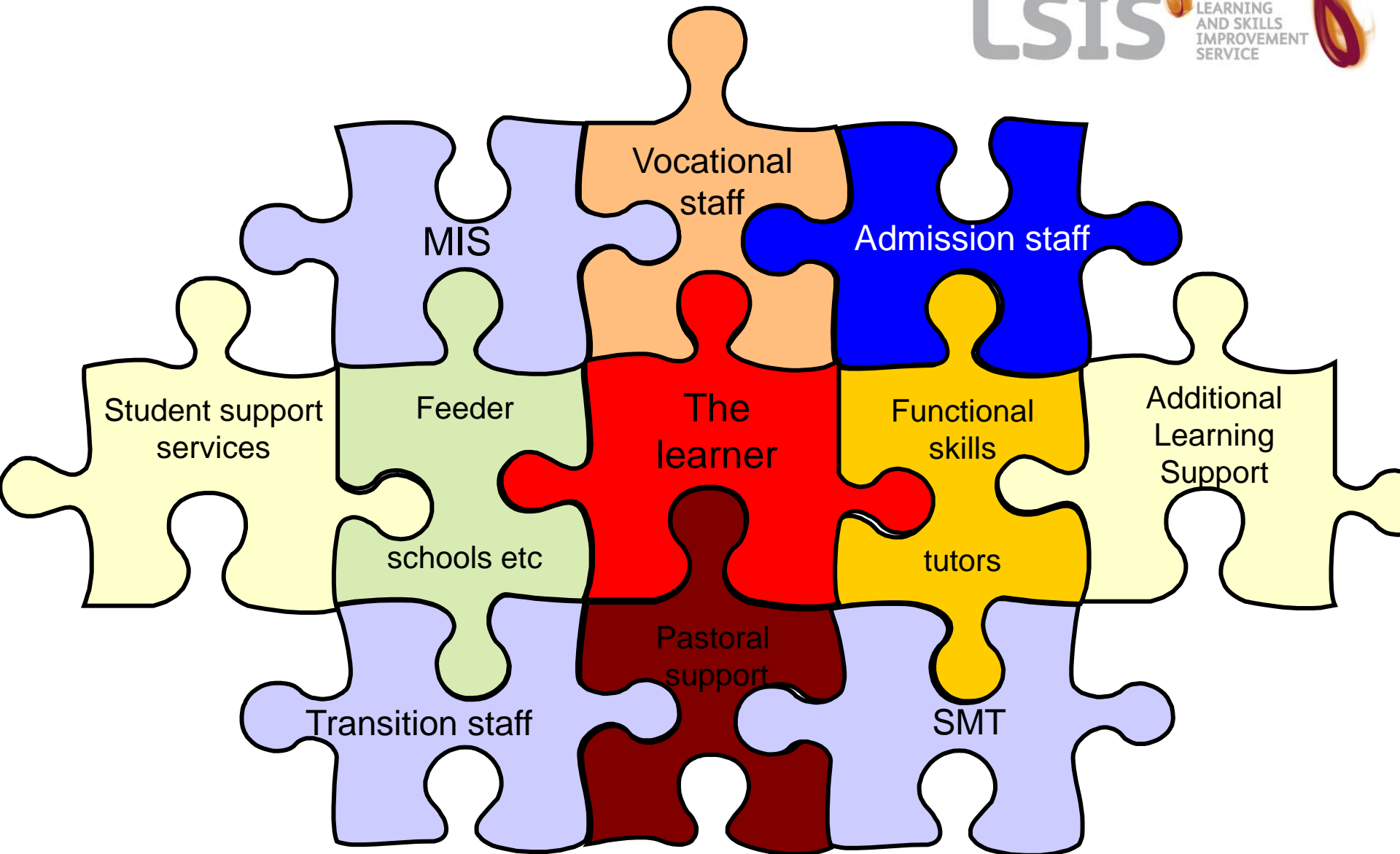


# Spiky profiles: activity



- Review your model of initial assessment in light of a learner with a spiky profile.
- Does it highlight his / her issues?
- Do you need to make any changes or additions?
- Amend HO 8 as appropriate.

# Communication



# Giving feedback from initial and diagnostic assessment



**Research identifies that effective assessment feedback can raise achievement when it is:**

- timely
- positive
- involving the learner
- specific
- focusing on things that the learner can change
- moving forward

# Aim



To explore initial and diagnostic assessment within functional skills

# Learning outcomes



Have we:

- Discussed the purpose of initial and diagnostic assessment within functional skills
- Clarified the differences between the initial and diagnostic assessment and of functional skills and key skills
- Identified a range of approaches to the initial and diagnostic assessment of functional skills
- Developed an awareness of the importance of communicating initial and diagnostic assessment information across learners' whole programme of study?

## Next steps



Write on a sticky note one thing you will take from today's session and apply either in your own practice, or within your institution.

You can also make a note of further CPD needs if you wish.

Put your note on the wall and have a look at what others have written.