

Planning for sustainable development

What is sustainability?: guidance notes

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Section 1

Introduction

This is the first of a series of activities that focuses on the importance of sustainability and consultation in the planning process. In this activity learners work collaboratively to explore their understanding of sustainability, determine their own definition and compare this to established definitions.

There are four activities that take place over a number of sessions. This needs careful planning to ensure continuity and to get the most out of the tasks. Each session builds on the last. You will find an overview of the activities in the full Teacher* notes document, with indicative timings to help you.

You will be using a range of teaching and learning approaches, but there is a particular focus on using, improving and reflecting on discussion skills, giving feedback and using collaborative working techniques. Make the learners aware that they are developing their personal and learning skills as well as gaining new knowledge. This helps them to become more 'expert' learners.

We have included sheets for you and your learners to record your reflections on using these activities in Section 2.

* We use the word 'teacher' as a generic term to include teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in the further education (FE) system.

Learning objectives

Objectives for learners

Vocational objectives

- explore their understanding of sustainability
- agree a definition.

Literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) objectives

- SLd/L1.2: Respect the turn taking rights of others during a discussion
- SLd/L1.3: Use appropriate phrases for interruption

Learning outcomes for learners

After completing this activities learners should:

- understand the what is meant by the term 'sustainability'.

Learning outcomes for teachers

After completing these activities you should be able to:

- practise embedding LLN into the vocational learning process
- use active learning methods
- reflect on and evaluate your teaching experience
- encourage learners to talk about their learning experience.

Resources required

- Sticky notes.
- Flip chart paper and pens.

Starting points

Learners will need discussion skills at Level 1. The activity aims to move learners on to discussion and listening skills at Level 2. Learners will also need information communication technology (ICT) skills at Level 1 to be able to access the internet. The learners will be asked to read a document that they have found to pick out the main points which is also a Level 1 task. They will build to Levels 2 and 3 by synthesising and presenting information in their own words, both orally and in writing.

Suggested approach (Indicative timing: 60 minutes)

Before you start (Indicative timing: 10 minutes), make learners aware of the ways in which a discussion can be made more productive. Encourage learners to decide on their own ground rules which might include some of the following.

- Use language that is appropriate to the situation and not offensive to others.
- Use appropriate phrases to let others know you want to speak.
- Respect the views of other members of the group.

- Let each person have a turn.
- Everyone should be able to speak without being interrupted.
- Listen actively.
- Differentiate between an objective statement and an emotional standpoint.
- Using a counter-argument is not a personal attack on an individual.

Ask your learners to focus particularly on allowing each person to have their turn, and allowing people to finish what they are saying before interrupting.

Give out **Learner sheet 1**.

Stage 1 (Individually) (Indicative timing: 5 minutes)

Ask learners to write their own definition of 'sustainability' on a sticky note.

Stage 2 (In pairs, then in groups) (Indicative timing: 10 minutes)

Ask learners to:

- combine and revise their own definitions with another person. Write this on another sticky note
- combine and revise this definition with the group on the table
- agree a definition to be written on the flip chart.

Stage 3 (As a whole group) (Indicative timing: 10 minutes)

Ask learners to display the group definitions.

Once the definitions have been displayed and compared it may be useful to pull out common features or key words that appear in several definitions.

Stage 4 (In pairs, then as a whole group) (Indicative timing: 10 minutes)

Ask learners for some examples of materials and approaches that contribute to sustainability. Write these on the board. In pairs, ask learners to:

- choose a material or approach
- write notes on how their chosen material or approach demonstrates sustainability.

Ask for ideas from each group. Note the ideas on the board or flip chart.

Stage 5 (As a whole group) (Indicative timing: 10 minutes)

Review the ideas raised by the group. Show these definitions which are recognised by the industry.

“Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Our Common Future (1987) Oxford, Oxford University Press.

“In construction, sustainability focuses on what is built, where it is built, why it is built and how it is built.”

www.constructionskills.net

Outline the learning methods that have been used and ask the learners for feedback.

Stage 6 (Individually) (Indicative timing: 5 minutes)

Ask learners to reflect on their discussion skills for this activity using the **Learner reflection sheet** in Section 2.

Reflect on your teaching using the **Teacher reflection sheet** in Section 2.

Learner sheet 1

What is sustainability?

Group work

Work out some ground rules for your discussions.

- What sort of language is appropriate?
- How can you show respect for other members of the group?
- Who should be able to talk and when?
- How can you show that you are listening?
- Can you use objective and subjective comments?
- How should you respond to points that you don't agree with?

Stage 1 (Individually)

On a sticky note, write your own definition of 'sustainability'.

Stage 2 (In pairs, then in groups)

- Combine and revise your definition with another person. Write this on another sticky note.
- Combine and revise your definition with the group on your table.
- Agree a definition to be written on the flip chart.

Stage 3 (As a whole group)

Display your group definition.

Stage 4 (Individually or in pairs)

- Choose a material or approach that you think contributes to sustainability.
- Make notes on how the material or approach contributes to sustainability.

Stage 5 (As a whole group)

Discuss your ideas as a group.

Stage 6

Evaluate your discussion and learning skills using the **Learner reflection sheet**.

Section 2

Reflect on teaching and learning

Learner reflection sheet

How are my discussion and learning skills?

Name..... Date

Activity 1: What is sustainability?

	Skill	I do this well	I'm okay with this	I need to work on this
SLd/L1.2	Did I respect the turn taking rights of other people during the discussion?			
SLd/L1.3	When I wanted to make a contribution to the discussion did I:			
	• use eye contact or gestures to show that I wanted to contribute?			
	• allow people to finish what they were saying?			
<p>The actions I can take to improve my literacy and language skills are:</p>				

Reflection on learning

Learning approaches How good am I at:	I do this well	I'm okay at this	I need to work on this
• working individually?			
• contributing to group work?			
• listening to other people?			
• making helpful suggestions to other learners?			
• accepting suggestions about how to improve my work?			
• giving clear oral explanations?			
• asking clear questions?			
• using the internet to select information?			
• making notes that use key words?			

I learn best by:

I find it difficult to learn when:

I could improve my learning by:

Next time I will:

Teacher reflection sheet

How confident am I in my ability to embed LLN?

Was I able to help learners to:		I do this well	I'm okay at this	I need to work on this
SLd/L1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> respect the turn taking rights of other people during the discussion? 			
SLd/L1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use eye contact or gestures to show that they wanted to contribute? 			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> allow people to finish what they were saying? 			

What would help me to embed LLN into my teaching?	I do this well	I'm okay at this	I need to work on this
Show the learners that I value the work on LLN.			
Liaise with LLN or Mathematics specialists.			
Work with a Subject Learning Coach.			
Work with other people who are teaching my subject to plan how to embed LLN.			
Have relevant knowledge of the LLN core curriculum.			
Look at the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC) research which shows how other teachers have done it.			
<p>The action I will take to improve embedding of LLN in my teaching is:</p>			

How confident am I in using these approaches?

If you have adapted these resources and used different approaches please edit this sheet accordingly. You may find it helpful to read Section 3 before doing this self-assessment.

How confident am I using these teaching and learning approaches?	I do this well	I'm okay at this	I need to work on this
Making discussions more effective.			
Establishing ground rules for discussions or group work.			
Facilitating snowball or pyramid groups.			
Encouraging learners to reflect on the development of their skills.			
My key improvement targets are:			

Do I help my learners to become 'expert' learners?	I do this well	I'm okay at this	I need to work on this
I allow my learners to seek for information rather than giving it to them.			
I encourage my learners to explore and discuss information.			
I construct activities so that learners are confident to work independently.			
I work with a Subject Learning Coach to explore methods and approaches which will make learners more independent.			
I use a wide range of active learning methods.			
I get regular feedback from my learners about how they learn most effectively.			
I explain to learners the methods I am using and why they are effective.			
I show my learners how to plan effectively.			

<p>I give timely and specific feedback to learners about their work.</p>			
<p>My learners have personalised learning plans which help them to know what they should be doing inside and outside the classroom.</p>			
<p>I will take these steps to enable my learners to become more 'expert':</p>			

Section 3

Guidance on teaching and learning approaches

Literacy, language and numeracy (LLN)

Recent research has found that programmes that embed LLN lead to a 16% improvement in retention and achievement of vocational qualifications (Helen Casey *et al*, 2006).

In these activities, learners will have the opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills. Tell learners about the skill(s) to be developed in each activity and give specific guidance on how to improve. The notes on each activity help you to do this. Focus on developing one or two skills at a time. Your LLN specialist will also be able to advise you on other strategies and approaches.

As part of your continuing professional development (CPD) you can evaluate your own confidence to embed LLN into your teaching. Use the **Teacher reflection sheet** to do this. This can contribute to your CPD activity for the year.

Ask learners to self-assess their performance using the **Learner reflection sheet**. They can also set targets for improvement.

Glossary

The glossary is a feature of all the materials developed for Construction and the built environment (CBE) in this phase. We have included a glossary that you can adapt.

A range of technical terminology is used in planning sustainability. You can work with learners to develop personalised glossaries. Value the glossary by reviewing it on a regular basis. You may also want to refer learners to one of the following websites to help them in developing their glossaries:

www.esd.rgs.org/glossarypopup.html

www.greenconstruction.co.uk/glossary/default.asp

Co-operative learning

Most of the activities use co-operative learning. Learners work in pairs, teams and opposing groups. The teacher acts as the 'guide on the side'.

The tasks are structured to allow learners to explore information and to seek for meaning; in this way a deeper and more lasting learning takes place. Co-operative learning has been found to improve information acquisition, higher-level thinking skills, interpersonal and communication skills.

Think carefully about pairing and grouping learners. Place those with reading difficulties with those who are more proficient, for example.

Planning learning in multiple environments

Learners need to use their experience from visits to construction sites, general knowledge and research from the Internet to complete these activities.

A visit to a site, or from a planning officer or designer involved in planning, will make the learning experience more meaningful.

Experiential learning

The learner activities in this resource are experiential. Learners are engaged in work-related experiences that allow them to make discoveries and to experiment. They can construct meaning and develop their understanding.

Activity 4 asks groups to look at the planning process from the standpoint of another person or opposition group. This activity should lead to affective (feeling) as well as cognitive (thinking) learning.

Assessment for learning

Giving specific and constructive feedback on how to improve in each task will enable learners to progress more effectively. It will also have a profound influence on learners' motivation and self-esteem (John Hattie, 2002).

There are opportunities for you to become involved in a learning conversation with individuals and groups to help them to identify where and how to focus their efforts.

Assessment for learning does not need to be teacher led. These activities include both self-assessment and peer feedback which are both powerful forms of assessment for learning

Reflect on the teaching and learning approaches used in this activity

You could use the **Teacher reflection sheet** when planning, or after using the activities in these resources. This enables you clearly to identify areas in which you may need development. You can use the instruments outlined below to plan and record the development of these skills. This can contribute to the development of your skills within the framework of the new overarching professional standards for teachers in the lifelong learning sector.

The new professional standards can be downloaded from the LLUK website:
www.lifelonglearninguk.org/standards/new_prof_standards.html

The Institute for Learning (IfL) website, www.ifl.ac.uk can provide:

- a description of the CPD process
- a place for teachers to keep a record of their activities and achievements.

The joint Training and Development Agency for Schools/Lifelong Learning UK website supporting the workforce delivering Diplomas, www.teach14-19.org provides an online interactive training needs analysis for teachers of Diplomas.

If you have adapted these resources and used different approaches you can edit the **Teacher reflection sheet** accordingly. You should undertake this reflection and development with your Subject Learning Coach or another colleague and encourage your learners to give you feedback on the use of the approaches and the development of your skills.

Reference

Casey, Helen *et al* (2006) *“You wouldn’t expect a maths teacher to teach plastering...”* Embedding literacy, language and numeracy in post-16 vocational programmes – the impact on learning and achievement, NRDC, London.