

Case study

Planning for a Foundation Learning Young Apprenticeship in Motor Vehicle Studies

Introduction

Exeter College offers a wide curriculum across most subject areas and levels, with most learners aged 16 to 18 following A level courses. The college is a major provider of work-based learning and Train to Gain (T2G) with around 1,700 learners on this type of provision. The college was part of the national post-16 Foundation Learning pilot from 2007.

The college has strong partnerships with local schools in Exeter and the Heart of Devon (between Exmoor and Dartmoor). The college is also part of four area partnerships in the local authority:

- Exeter4Learning
- a 14-19 consortium comprising six schools (11-16) including one special school for the deaf
- Exeter College
- Exeter University.

Through Exeter4Learning, Foundation Learning has been piloted since 2008 within Devonshire local

authority, in partnership with Exeter College. One of the key features of this pilot has been progression opportunities for post-16 learners and provision of collaborative programmes that meet the Foundation Learning requirements. In September 2009, the pilot expanded and since then two schools in each partnership have been piloting Foundation Learning 14-16 developments.

The college is in its fourth year of delivering Young Apprenticeships (YA) in Motor Vehicle Studies, with high success rates at 88.9%. The YA programme offers genuine progression for 14-16 learners either by entering the motor industry on an apprenticeship programme post-16 or by studying other further education courses; either of these routes is considered successful progression. In February 2010, the college took part in a pilot programme to trial a Level 1 YA in Motor Vehicle Studies. The Institute of Motor Industries supported the choice by the Local Authority

of Exeter College as a pilot centre.

The project builds on successful delivery of YAs in Motor Vehicle Studies, and on the pilot work of the Exeter4Learning consortium in the development and delivery of Foundation Learning. Learners working at Foundation Learning level have in the past found it difficult to have full access to apprenticeship programmes post-16 and have not been able to demonstrate their skills and aptitude for employment with training.

This project, undertaken within the Exeter4Learning partnership, has developed the work of the pilot programme by working with the schools and employers to include all three elements (vocational learning, PSD and functional skills) of Foundation Learning so that the learners on the pilot programme have a more coherent Level 1 learning experience.

This development project took place between January-June 2010.

Aims

The project aimed to develop an approach to improving progression opportunities generally by integrating the Foundation Learning framework and Young Apprenticeship (YA) framework. In order to achieve this, the project:

- plans the introduction of a Foundation Learning YA in Motor Vehicle Studies from Sept 2010
- produces a curriculum framework and schemes of work for a Foundation Learning YA for 14-16 year olds at Level 1 – including vocational, PSD and functional skills qualifications
- provides progression from the YA to post-16 training and learning.

Approach

A project team was established comprising key staff from the college, with project co-ordination responsibility resting with the 14-19 Partnership Development Manager. A project flowchart is included as Resource 1.

Nine schools from across two 14-19 partnerships have been involved with the pilot, all of which have differing levels of experience in Foundation Learning delivery. In order to address this, Exeter4Learning has developed an electronic individual learning plan (e-

ILP) which provides a platform for target setting, liaison between colleges and schools and assessment of functional skills. It is also intended to link vocational and PSD unit content and development. The *Devon e-ILP* is being trialled currently with the Foundation Learning pilot learners and will be introduced later in 2010. A planned programme of training will ensure that all users gain confidence and understanding in how to use it effectively.

Designing the programme

The Foundation Learning YA programme will occupy two days per week for the learner. The motor vehicle units were selected alongside core units from the BTEC WorkSkills qualification (see Resource 7). At the college the PSD tutor will work alongside the vocational tutor to deliver a motor vehicle programme that includes the PSD and functional skills elements of the programme. There will be three hours on the timetable for learners to work on their WorkSkills portfolio and to review and set targets. It has been agreed that the functional skills will be taught entirely in school, but actively practised throughout the programme.

The individual needs of learners are being identified from the interview stage onwards. Individual needs will be addressed with adding relevant units from WorkSkills, setting up individual weekly targets and identifying the level at which the individual needs to work for PSD units. Although the vocational qualification must be achieved at Level 1, the programme allows for a spiky profile of personal and social skills, which also applies to functional skills. Learners are also required to be prepared to achieve Level 1 in all three functional skills if they wish to progress to a Level 2 Apprenticeship. This information, based on the school's assessment, will contribute to the decision as to whether to offer a learner on a place on the programme.

All three key curriculum elements will be included within the learner's overall programme. The challenge will be for the college to work increasingly closely with the schools to provide a coherent learning experience, which the learner recognises as helping him/her reach the planned destination. The tutorial function will be important here, as the person who works with the learner on a week-by-week basis will need to help make the connections. Tutorials

will take place in college with the motor vehicle tutor and the PSD tutor, supported by teaching assistants. The individual learning plan will be the key to capturing all the information for the learner.

Planning the work placement element

The employment-related part of the programme is seen as central and a range of resources have been developed for employers (see Resources 9, 10 and 11). The first step has been to recruit employers as partners in the programme who are fully signed up to the aims.

As well as promoting the scheme to employers, the Automotive Skills team invited a variety of employers who were not engaged in the scheme to a promotional breakfast event where they were briefed on apprenticeships and invited to take part.

Each learner's work-related programme includes a variety of employment-related activities, and aims to give learners a wide range of experiences in which they can develop and practice skills and investigate employment opportunities in order to make an informed choice.

The work-related curriculum is key to the learner's achievement. Learners will identify aspects of the WorkSkills units that they can get accreditation for, either in the workplace or involved in work-related activity. Planning for, and reflecting on, performance will be central to this part of the programme, and templates and diary sheets have been prepared for learners to use.

Successes

The Young Apprenticeship team has identified a range of successes over the course of the project.

- The recruitment process has been successfully implemented. Schools were quickly able to use the materials. The interviews, which were carefully planned and structured, worked well. A total of 16 Level 1 learners have taken up places.
- The YA team realised early on that the same tutors who teach the Level 2 programme would also be teaching the Foundation Learning YA. A successful ongoing staff training programme has been put in place to ensure that all tutors understand the inclusive vision underpinning the programme and can support the planned learning. The teaching team

also understands the requirement to deliver PSD skills alongside teaching motor vehicle skills, and have been trained to do so.

- In order to engage learners that were not likely to reach higher than Entry 3 in the first year, the team devised an entry level programme called YA Automotive Recovery Programme (YAARP). They managed to recruit 12 learners to YAARP, with the expectation that they will progress to the Foundation Learning YA within six months (see Resource 13 for a description of this innovative approach to increasing participation).
- The YA team has been able to build on the successes that were achieved on the Foundation Learning pilot programme in linking the three Foundation Learning components and demonstrating each learner's personal and social development when working with staff in schools that are new to the Foundation Learning YA programme.
- The promotional breakfast event for employers proved particularly successful, and 14 employers are now signed up.

Challenges and lessons learned

A number of challenges arose over the course of the

project. The YA team has been able to address many of these through a concerted outreach programme with its partners or by introduction of innovative approaches or resources.

- Lack of understanding within schools of the aims of the new programme, or of how this provision relates to broader Foundation Learning provision, has been problematic. It took considerable outreach work, usually on a school-by-school and face-to-face basis to ensure that all schools fully understood the aims of the new programme, had a full understanding of their role in the recruitment process, understood the two levels of intake and could provide the level of detail required to support the initial assessment of the learners.
- Similarly, not all schools yet regard this provision as being part of their broader Foundation Learning provision – in some it is perceived as vocational provision at Entry level and Level 1. Success in this area is dependent on staff willingness to engage with the Foundation Learning components and the depth of their understanding of Foundation Learning as a coherent pathway involving the full curriculum in conjunction with the vocational element. It has been a challenge to involve

schools in planning the learners' programmes and to encourage them to take responsibility for functional skills.

- Some schools do not yet understand the requirements for links between the PSD qualification and individual targets set at school. The current links between the learners' planned Foundation Learning YA programme and their planned option programme for Years 10 and 11 are not yet fully developed. Lack of awareness of the importance of a coherent learner programme has also been evident in take-up levels of staff training on how to use the e-ILP.
- It has proved difficult to embed a co-ordinated approach to functional skills across a range of schools, all of which are currently tackling functional skills differently. Essential joint working to agree how to link across and ensure skills are practised effectively has yet to take place.
- There are likely to be ongoing challenges throughout the programme in helping the employers to understand the needs of the young people and support them appropriately.
- The Foundation Learning YA pilot was initiated too late for it to be part of the wider learning options for schools

at key stage 3 and as a result was regarded as an 'extra' within information, advice and guidance (IAG) literature. This will need to be addressed in future years, if the provision continues beyond the pilot. However the initial engagement process designed by the college was rigorous and met the information needs of the learners.

Conclusions and next steps

The Young Apprenticeship team has designed a work-related motor vehicle programme which addresses key personal and social learning needs of those on Foundation Learning programmes.

The value of YAs lies in the strong connection with an identified future of employment and training. This is seen as crucial to the success of Foundation Learning and is a key element of the Foundation Learning YA. At the college, the current YA has a progression rate of 80% to either apprenticeship or further education (although these are not all in motor vehicle). Most important of all, there are 28 learners committed to and excited about the course they are about to embark on, who would not have this

opportunity without this pilot project.

It will be important to demonstrate over time that the same advantages can be gained from Foundation Learning YA programme as from a YA programme. In the meantime, future plans and steps to continue the implementation of the programme will include:

- an employer launch
- introduction of e-ILP
- ongoing work on coherence between schools and the college.

Further information

Resources

Resource 1: Flow chart Level 1 YA Motor Vehicle Studies

Initial engagement

Information:

Resource 2: Application Process (sheet for teachers)

Resource 3: PDF. Information for Learners

Initial assessment

Resource 4: Learning styles questionnaire

Resource 5: Study skills review

The programme

Resource 6: Diploma in Motor Vehicle Maintenance – scheme overview

Resource 7: 2 Year planner (Motor Vehicle and WorkSkills units chosen term by term)

Resource 8: Starting to map WorkSkills units against Motor Vehicle units

Employer-related

Resource 9: Things I need to know about my work-placement

Resource 10: Work place agreement

Resource 11: Guidance notes (for employers)

Resource 12: Presentation to employers

Guidance

Resource 13: Description of the Young Apprenticeship Automotive Recovery Programme alternative

Contact

Liz Hayes, Exeter College
lizhayes@exe-coll.ac.uk

Hele Road
Exeter
EX4 4JS

LSIS accepts no responsibility for the accuracy and quality of the contents of this material.