



The importance of developing the English and maths skills of the vocational tutors

Hull Training

A shared agenda

Hull Training and Adult Education in Hull City Council have come together as one organisation to deliver apprenticeships, adult skills qualifications and community learning to the residents of the city. This has provided both new challenges and new opportunities for the staff and learners. Sharing of expertise has started the journey of working more effectively to provide learning opportunities to learners of all ages. The Adult Education Service has considerable experience of delivering English, maths and ESOL as stand alone qualifications, but not in vocational contexts. The introduction of functional skills provided new challenge for all aspects of our delivery. The commonality of functional skills for adults and young apprentices has been a unifying force.

During this project we worked with senior managers, tutors and assessors working in construction, business administration, catering, childcare, ICT, hair and beauty, foundation learning and those training teaching assistants.

We requested help from LSIS for training our vocational staff to more effectively embed functional skills. We also wanted to develop their personal skills in maths and English in order to boost their confidence in the classroom, so we enabled them to sit functional skills tests themselves. In addition, support was used to help Centre Managers to get to grips with the rigours of functional skills and the implications for apprentices' success in achieving their full frameworks.

“The course is reassuring . . . that we are moving in the right direction. But it also provides a benchmark against which we can measure our progress.”

Ian Walker, construction trainer

Supported provider

Hull Training:

- Sharon Gamble, Quality Manager

Improvement partner

Selby College:

- John Barton, Skills for Life Manager

Impact

It is early days, but the results of the training are already beginning to have an impact. Staff are gaining a greater understanding of functional skills and their application to the vocational areas. Vocational staff recognise the importance of embedding English and maths into their vocational teaching. They appreciate that learning is more effective where this is a shared responsibility. Learners gain from understanding that the English and maths skills that they have used in a vocational context can be transferred to other practical

situations in work, life and learning. This is particularly important in helping them to prepare for functional skills assessments. Managers of vocational areas are more positive about the investment in the delivery of functional skills. Overall, the recognition of the vital role played by English and maths is better understood throughout the organisation.

Outcomes

- Better use of initial and diagnostic assessment and improved systems for identifying learners who have additional learning support needs.
- Vocational staff are more confident of their own maths and English skills and recognise those skills are an integral part of their curriculum delivery.
- 16 vocational staff have undertaken functional skills tests in English, maths or ICT.
- Tutors make links to the functional skills curriculum when they cover related areas in vocational topics.
- Two centres have developed effective partnerships between vocational and functional skills tutors in the delivery of English and maths during vocational sessions. This is being used as a model of good practice across all the centres.
- All the vocational centres have piloted the delivery of functional skills during 2011/12, with 201 learners undertaking tests and a pass rate of 74 per cent.
- Four functional skills leads are enrolling on the Level 5 diplomas to improve the delivery of English and maths across the four centres.

Are you trying to achieve similar outcomes?

Barking and Dagenham College has made a video about engaging learners in maths and English functional skills during construction training sessions. [Follow this link to the relevant page on Excellence Gateway.](#)