

Implementing a Whole Organisation Approach

Supported provider: Community Informal Training Company (CITC UK)

Improvement partner: South Sefton Development Trust

Summary

CITC UK, a third sector training organisation sub-contracted by a further education (FE) college, secured six days of LSIS support in 2011-2012 and three further days of CPD sessions in 2012-2013. This support enabled us to develop new training materials suitable for our cohort of young people, most of who were lacking in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, we have been able to improve the service we offer, and align our provision with national strategic targets.

Introduction

About CITC UK

Community Informal Training Company (CITC UK) is a small third sector organisation based on the Wirral, Merseyside. We offer informal training to help disadvantaged people to improve their quality of life and to increase employability skills for those not in employment. Too small to contract directly with the Skills Funding Agency, CITC UK secures contracts with colleges, such as Oakmere Training, through the Merseyside Voluntary Organisation Learning Association (VOLA), or through local authority sub-contracting. CITC UK has an annual turnover of around £125,000.

In recent years, CITC UK has focused on working with young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), drawn largely from the more deprived estates of the Wirral. Many of these young people have had poor experiences of mainstream schooling, most leaving with few if any qualifications and often suffer other disadvantages. CITC UK has worked with young mothers, those who have been through the criminal justice system, homeless young people and young adults leaving care.

What we wanted to achieve

The training that CITC UK offers is aimed at reintroducing disenfranchised young people to the world of training and work, and incorporating social skills as well as functional skills and employability support. When LSIS approached us, via the South Sefton Development Trust, we were initially unsure whether we could benefit from an approach that seemed more fitting for

colleges and the formal adult learning services. However, as a sub-contractor for Oakmere College, we felt that the LSIS support would enable us to:

- understand national best practice, and align our training more closely with expected Skills Funding Agency outcomes and outputs;
- offer a more structured progression route in literacy and numeracy from assessment to qualification;
- measure what we are doing, and track progress; and
- embed functional skills throughout our programmes.

Implementation

Planning our approach

Following discussion with our lead provider, South Sefton Development Trust, CITC UK agreed that a sensible approach to incorporating literacy, language and numeracy within our existing informal and formal training would be to adopt a whole organisation approach as the framework, with an emphasis on the following.

- Information, advice and guidance, marketing and learner recruitment (section F of the Skills for Life Literacy, Language and Numeracy Health Check).
- Curriculum Design and Delivery (section H of the Skills for Life Literacy, Language and Numeracy Health Check).
- Resources and facilities (section I of the Skills for Life Literacy, Language and Numeracy Health Check).

Improving our practice in these areas, we felt, would help us demonstrate not only improved learner progression and satisfaction, but also link this to a quality management system (section D) and support on going CPD (section G of the Skills for Life Literacy, Language and Numeracy Health Check).

As a small organisation, initially CITC UK had only two staff members-Colin Gilooly, Director and Liz Richards, Training Manager- to engage with LSIS in the first year. As one of the first third sector organisations to secure LSIS support, we were keen to work in partnership with the other two agencies that South Sefton Development Trust were supporting under this programme, East Liverpool Economic and Community Trust (ELECT) and Kirkby Unemployed Centre, both training social enterprises on Merseyside. Although of different sizes and geographical locations, the three organisations all offered similar types of training, largely informal although under contract to FE colleges or local authorities.

What we did

CITC UK worked our way through the whole organisation approach with the support of Cate Murphy from South Sefton Development Trust, grading ourselves on existing practice. This was followed by three joint CPD sessions with ELECT and Kirkby Unemployed Centre and was attended by 14 individuals in total. The CPD sessions were as follows.

- Embedding literacy, language and numeracy as a whole organisation approach.
- Strategic Update on the national approach to literacy, language and numeracy and its impact.
- Assessment Models: A literacy, language and numeracy appropriate approach.

The sessions provided helpful background knowledge that allowed CITC UK to appreciate the importance of incorporating functional skills across the curriculum, and how to identify needs in our clients.

Following these, we then worked with South Sefton Development Trust to tailor two further CPD sessions specifically to CITC UK's needs and the needs of our client group. These sessions, delivered by Claire Collins, were based on:

- [Identifying underpinning literacy, language and numeracy skills and developing schemes of work and assessment plans](#); and
- [Using resources effectively to embed literacy, language and numeracy](#).

These were some of the best training sessions we have had as a company, because of Claire Collins' knowledge and ability to tailor the sessions to best suit CITC UK.

Outcomes and impacts

What we achieved

Due to the support from LSIS and especially from Claire Collins via South Sefton Development Trust, CITC UK developed a range of new materials for identifying and developing literacy and numeracy skills in our young client group, using imaginative methods for embedding and incorporating learning across the programme, without it being obvious that we were teaching functional skills. For our client group, many of whom suffer from low educational attainment, this meant we could provide better support without stigmatising the young people and we had a better chance of making progression on functional skills, and measuring this.

In 2013, when we received the second tranche of LSIS support, we engaged Claire Collins again, via our improvement partner, to provide the following three CPD sessions from the new programme. The new CPD programme can be found on the [Excellence Gateway](#).

- [Module 7](#): Developing the personal maths skills of teachers and assessors
- [Module 15](#): An introduction to teaching English and maths together
- [Module 17](#): Using the self-assessment progress to improve the quality of English and maths provision

We invited some of the young people who had graduated from one of our programmes, and were learning how to become peer mentors or educators, to attend these CPD sessions. This group of young people, predominantly young women, could advise on the effectiveness of materials from both sides; as beneficiaries of the programme and as potential educators. CITC UK now works with our young learners to constantly review and develop the materials.



Figure 1: Graduates from a CITC UK programme

As an organisation, CITC UK is more confident of identifying, tackling and measuring progress in functional skills and we are growing a cohort of peer advocates who are also skilled in identifying needs and referring to appropriate provision. As the young people are setting up their own social enterprise, Youth Resource Centre, and undertaking outreach youth work, this means that the LSIS good practice is being implemented more widely across the Wirral.

CITC UK still relies on the whole organisation approach to measure our progress as an organisation in including literacy, language and numeracy in our considerations of strategy, project development and staff development. This has proved a useful structure and we have seen our practice improve from 3s and 4s (Partially Developed and Not Started) to mainly 2s (Mostly Developed) and we continue working on this until we reach 1s–Fully Developed– across the board. Having this structure and being able to measure progress helps us with our contract bidding, and we have recently won another £50,000 contract on the basis of our ability to clearly demonstrate our outcomes and impacts with the young people.

What we learned

CITC UK has learnt:

- a variety of new ways to approach literacy, language and numeracy and incorporate learning across our programmes;
- the importance of being able to demonstrate how our learners progress; and
- the value of being able to demonstrate how we peg our delivery to national standards and how we measure our improvements to funders and contractors.

“As a third sector organisation, with limited resources, and subject to cuts we have valued the LSIS professional development support, as it has provided us with skill development we couldn’t have otherwise afforded. We particularly liked the flexibility of the LSIS programme to meet our needs and the needs of our client group. We worked with Claire Collins via South Sefton Development Trust and her knowledge and skills were second to none. She really helped us develop a new range of materials and also an understanding of why and how to use them. It’s a real shame that the LSIS programme is not continuing, just as there is increasing demand for more literacy, language and numeracy support.”

Colin Gilooly, Director, CITC UK

“If any further such opportunity presents itself to the third sector, we would firmly encourage any training organisation to take up this invaluable support.”

Colin Gilooly, Director, CITC UK

Contact information

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Provider name: CITC UK

Contacts: Cate Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, South Sefton Development Trust, cate.murphy@ssdtrust.co.uk

Colin Gilooly, Director, CITC UK, colin@citcuk.org