

GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDY 1

EMBEDDING LITERACY AND NUMERACY INTO VOCATIONAL TEACHING AT NORTON RADSTOCK COLLEGE

Short Description

This case study is about how specialist literacy and numeracy teachers work with vocational teachers to help embed literacy and numeracy into vocational teaching. This system has developed over the past two years – the key skills of literacy and numeracy used to be delivered as stand-alone sessions. Many of our vocational teachers are not themselves confident in their own literacy and numeracy skills and so the intention is that the specialist teacher supports the vocational teacher as well as the students. This is currently happening with construction, horticulture and motor vehicle groups. The students are expected to achieve a Key Skills qualification which includes communication, application of number and ICT – this involves completing a portfolio and taking an external test.

Target Group

There are two target groups:

- The vocational teacher who may need support through writing on the board for them, helping them with their spelling, preparing differentiated work for individual students according to their level etc.
- The student group who may need support on either a 1:1 basis or in pairs or small groups, depending on their needs, the task that has been set, etc. The students are largely aged 16-19, although there are also some older students. Most of the students are working at entry level 3/level 1 (equivalent to expected level at age 11-14 years).

Actual Activity

The vocational teacher prepares the scheme of work and session plans. Both vocational and specialist teachers meet each week to discuss what will be covered in the following week, and how the key competences in life skills can be embedded into the vocational teaching.



Education and Culture DG

Resources for Trainers

During the session the two teachers work together in whatever way is best to support both the vocational teacher and the students

Effects

Positives:

- The embedded approach with two teachers has resulted in a higher success rate – all the learners are expected to achieve their portfolios in communications and application of number, which did not happen when the sessions were stand-alone.
- In previous years, the learners had to come in one day a week for key skills sessions and this led to a very negative attitude. Now they do not even realise they are learning these skills and completing their portfolios, so their attitudes are much more positive.
- The skills are seen by the learners as much more relevant because they are vocationally focused.

Areas for development:

- As well as completing portfolios, the students also have to take a national test, and the specialist teacher feels they are not so likely to achieve this.
- This is because the tests tend to be general rather than vocationally specific, and therefore a key national area for development is to create vocationally specific tests.

Transferability

The potential to transfer this approach to other vocational areas is great. The important thing for it to be successful is that the specialist teacher is indeed a specialist in literacy and/or numeracy, and that the specialist teacher and vocational teacher work together closely to embed the skills effectively in the vocational teaching.