Basic Skills Quality Initiative

UNIT 1

BSQI Providers
Unit 1

- Introduction
- Initial Assessment and Starting Points
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Contents

Teaching, Learning and Students' Achievements

Avril Willis

The Basic Skills Quality Initiative is a major programme of staff and organisational development that forms part of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) overall response to the national strategy for improving literacy and numeracy skills in young people and adults. The Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) established the initiative in 1999 and I am pleased that the Learning and Skills Council has been able to continue to build on the foundations laid by its predecessor. I am also pleased that, from 2001-02, work-based learning providers contracted to the LSC also have access to the initiative.

The initiative includes three specific elements. First, a package of materials designed for use by managers and lead practitioners. These materials were originally developed for use by those providers formerly funded by FEFC. They have now been updated and revised to make them suitable for work-based learning providers and it is these revised materials that are contained in this volume. There are two units covering *Teaching, Learning and Students' Achievements* and *Organisation and Management of Training and Quality Assurance*. Second, funding for trained facilitators to help providers make effective use of the materials and support them in addressing key issues. Third, the opportunity to attend a training event designed to focus on the strategic and operational management of basic skills. The three elements of the Basic Skills Quality Initiative comprise a comprehensive and innovative package of support.

All learners are entitled to high-quality basic skills provision. Making sure learners can read, write and use numbers confidently is part of the core business of work-based learning. These skills give learners the opportunity to take part in education and training, to complete programmes of learning successfully and to progress to employment or further study.

While these materials are intended primarily for those concerned with basic skills, they are relevant to everyone working in work-based learning. Whether we teach or manage provision in the workplace, workshops, learning centres or classrooms, the materials provide an opportunity to remind us of the vital processes of teaching and learning, and of the importance of effective structures and procedures to support them.

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The initiative was originally conceived and introduced by Merillie Vaughan-Huxley, formerly a Senior Inspector with the FEFC now with the Adult Learning Inspectorate. Thanks are also due to two of the Council's consultants, Stuart McCoy and Carol Tennyson, who have guided and contributed to the initiative in its original form and extended it to work-based learning. Colleagues from the Council's Quality Improvement team – Emer Clarke, Andrew Lambe, Kathryn O'Regan and Tim Smith – provided support throughout.

Avril Willis

The learning cycle begins with the setting of learning goals. These are usually agreed between trainers and learners and follow an initial assessment of learning needs. Learners begin their basic skills programmes with a wide range of prior experience and levels of skill. For this reason, most learners require individual learning goals and a plan that sets out how and when these goals are to be achieved. The plan may include achievement at more than one level, and in more than one subject. Learning goals may be helpfully broken down into small, achievable steps.

Programme design should take account of learners' learning needs and include a description of intended learning outcomes, teaching methods and procedures for assessment. These need to be linked to the national standards for literacy and numeracy. Programmes need clear aims and objectives, and a rationale for prescribed learning activities. Learning is most effective when the content or settings are realistic, and when all of the elements of a programme are coherent. Design of learning programmes should be carried out within the national curricula frameworks for literacy and numeracy, following the process and stages shown in Figure 1 on page 5.

As learners may have diverse basic skills needs, trainers need to use a wide range of teaching methods to help them learn. The best trainers have a good understanding of how learners learn and the ability to develop interesting and effective teaching and learning methods. Good learning sessions are carefully planned to address the objectives in learners' individual learning plans. Learners respond positively to trainers who have high expectations of them. Effective recording of progress involves frequent reviews of learners' gains in skills, knowledge and understanding, together with careful and comprehensive recording of these gains in relation to the objectives in the learning plan. Learners are central to this process.

Guidance and support are essential elements of all learning provision, but are especially important for learners needing help with basic skills. Guidance helps learners to assess their potential; identify appropriate opportunities; increase their awareness of self and others; and become progressively more responsible for their own lives. Support for learning involves all of the arrangements that trainers make to assist learners to learn, including extra teaching sessions, specialist support for learners with specific difficulties such as dyslexia or hearing impairment, learning materials and workshops and tutorials. The level and quality of guidance and support are key factors in the progress made by learners.

Effective support for learners of basic skills requires sound structures and systems within organisations. Trainers and trainers who teach basic skills and specially trained staff who help with specific needs may all be involved in the support service. Supervision of this service by a senior manager will enhance its status and effectiveness. Staff involved in the provision of support are more effective when they have received relevant specialist training. Learners should have a clearly stated entitlement that includes a description of the range of support that is available. Providers need to ensure that this entitlement is known and understood by both staff and learners.

While many trainers provide information and general advice as part of their usual work, guidance is a specialised function. Guidance is most effectively provided by specialist staff who are qualified and have received specific training

in offering guidance to learners of different ages and with differing needs. Some guidance workers may also be trained counsellors. An increasing number of those who support learners are vocational trainers or workplace supervisors. Additional training may be required for these roles, and organisations may devise a handbook to help trainers and supervisors in this work. Trainers and supervisors provide key points of contact for basic skills learners, many of whom lack confidence at the start of their learning programmes. It is also important to retain and maintain accurate records, including the learning agreement, learning goals, and the progress made towards achieving learner objectives.

Achievement is the attainment of a specified level of skill, knowledge or understanding. This is most relevant and useful to learners when trainers set appropriate learning goals. Learners value achievement when it is recognised, assessed and recorded, and when they are involved in this process. Most learners welcome the opportunity to have their achievement accredited by external awards, but the best basic skills programmes encourage the development of a wider range of achievement. Learners' achievements are often understated by providers. This is partly because of perceived difficulties in monitoring learners' progress and in collecting accurate information about destinations.

The concept of achievement on basic skills programmes has become confused with the related but separate activities of assessment and accreditation. There is a widespread misunderstanding that achievement can only be demonstrated through the attainment of qualifications. This can lead to a distortion of the learning programme to meet the criteria of the

awards rather than the needs of the learners. Assessment is often mistakenly thought to have a purpose linked only to accreditation and the checking of performance, whereas it is also an integral part of the learning process. Without it, learners cannot know what progress they have made or what they have learnt.

Not all awards are well designed; some can be achieved without learning anything while others do not recognise important aspects of learning. Similar awards have significantly different achievement rates and need to be selected with care and integrity by providers. Retention and achievement rates for learners on literacy and/or numeracy programmes are generally low. Learning is most effective where trainers match the content, context and assessment mode to the learning needs of individuals. The other achievements of learners on literacy and numeracy programmes often relate to self-esteem, confidence and other skills for everyday living. Learners are usually highly motivated and eager to learn. It is important to record these other achievements and to use value-added information whenever it is available.

Figure 1. Processes involved in teaching and learning

LEARNERS
TEACHERS
INDUSTRY/COMMERCE
COMMUNITY
MARKETING
(PRE-SALES)

VALUES AND NEEDS

Information and Dissemination Systems

Resources
Facilities
Support Staff
Finance

MONITORING
EVALUATION
REVIEW/CHANGE
MARKETING
(AFTER-SALES)

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

DESIGN

STUDENT-CENTRED
INDUSTRY-CENTRED
NEGOTIATED
CENTRALLY DETERMINED
PROGRESSION
ACCESS (ENTRY)
ACCEPTABILITY
CO-ORDINATION

Research Information

Staff Development

IMPLEMENTATION

TEACHING/LEARNING STRATEGIES
MODE OF DELIVERY
MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT
ACCESS (GUIDANCE)
NEW TECHNOLOGY
ASSESSMENT (STANDARDS)

INNER CIRCLE AND HUB –
The curriculum development cycle

OUTER CIRCLE –
Features of each stage in the cycle

FEU: Relevance, flexibility and competence, 1987

The following principles are fundamental to the provision of good teaching, learning, support and achievement:

- opportunities for interviews and assessment, both initial and diagnostic, to meet individual learners' needs

- information to all learners early in their course about the organisation's equal opportunities policy

- induction into the relevant services provided by the organisation and help in taking responsibility for one's own learning

- initial assessment which is relevant to learners' aims, and that leads to the development of specific learning goals

- comprehensive assessment of learners' additional support needs (e.g. dyslexia, physical or sensory impairment) and access to specialist external advice and guidance for learners with these needs

- collaborative and partnership working with other support agencies, employers and vocational learning programme staff

- learning plans that describe goals for individual learners in small, achievable steps

- learning plans that are linked to the national standards for literacy and numeracy

- teaching which is planned to achieve relevant learning goals

- learning goals that are clearly stated and easily understood

- breaking down learning into manageable units to enable all learners to experience success

- using learners' own interests and experiences as a starting point for learning

- using a variety of strategies, including ICT, to promote independent, paired and group learning

- enabling learners to work at an appropriate pace

- involving the learners in their own learning

- trained staff with relevant specialist qualifications

- high-quality, relevant and accessible learning materials

- regularly reviewing and recording learners' progress in ways that they can easily understand

- providing evidence that learning goals have been achieved by assessing and recording learning gains

- identifying achievement in a way that is meaningful to learners, and that reflects their aspirations and concerns

- using quantitative data to compare and monitor learners' achievements and to identify trends

- regular, structured and confidential opportunities for learners to discuss their progress and the opportunities for further progression.

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

UNIT 1

Teaching, Learning and Students' Achievements

Initial Assessment and Starting Points:

- entry advice and starting points
- initial assessment
- developing learning goals

Aspect

1

UNIT **1**

2

Element 1: Entry Advice and Starting Points

Entry advice

A prospective learner may have been referred from an outside agency, their employer or they may have simply called in with no prior information or guidance.

Their first contact with a provider may be by phone, in person or on-line. Depending on the type of provider, the contact may be directly with a manager, a member of the vocational training staff or basic skills team or with a member of the recruitment or guidance staff.

The importance of the initial contact is recognised by one provider that issues the following guidance for staff to help them alleviate the potential learner's fears and provide information that will lead into an initial interview.

- answer the phone promptly and clearly
- ask:
    - how they can be contacted
    - what made them decide to come now? (aims)
    - what they would like to learn
    - what times would suit them best (responsibilities)
    - what their support needs are.
- explain:
    - they can work at their own pace
    - all learners are adults
    - learners may be working on different things (so there is no competition or comparison).
- listen:
    - to any anxieties the potential learner may have
    - to what they want to tell you about past experiences
    - to what they want.
- reassure:
    - the first step is the hardest – everyone has had to experience a 'first time'
    - they have choices, but will get guidance from their trainers or supervisors

- refer:
    - basic skills tuition may not be appropriate for some people who may need referring on. Each centre needs to have systems to do this quickly and clearly.
- check:
    - personal details
    - details of appointment for first visit or initial interview
    - that they have all the information they need
    - that they feel comfortable with coming in for the first time
    - whether they need anything else.

Example 2

The initial interview is important for a learner. As one provider states, 'without support, encouragement and reassurance, the experience could reinforce negative previous experiences, making the learner feel that the provision is inappropriate. Therefore, sensitivity, tact and gentle questioning are vital on the part of the member of staff'.

The purpose of the initial interview is described by one provider as follows.

1. To provide relevant and appropriate advice.

2. To ensure learners receive appropriate basic skills support at the right level.

3. If appropriate support cannot be offered, to make sure we can make alternative arrangements or refer them to a more appropriate provider.

4. To record information that is supplementary to learning needs.

5. To find out the learner's long-term goal.

6. To record prior experience and knowledge.

7. To inform the initial assessment.

The same provider issues interviewers with the following guidance notes on interviewing and active listening.

Tips for interviewers

1. Make the interviewee feel as comfortable as possible – encourage normal conversation:

- introduce yourself, using first names

- sit alongside interviewee, not behind a desk.

2. Listen! Encourage the learner to talk about aims and experiences, strengths and weaknesses.

Some useful questions:

- do you read anything at all – perhaps some signs, Health and Safety notices, parts of the paper, trade magazines, etc?

- do you avoid writing?

- could you write some things if you had to – some parts of forms, a note?

- do you do any calculations, e.g. change, measuring?

Explain that a frank and accurate self-assessment will help in starting a plan for a programme of work.

3. Give information as well as receiving it.

4. Share any notes with the learner and negotiate what is to be written.

5. Make a start on finding out the learner's aims and learning needs. Write the aims in the learner's own words.

6. Try to ensure that the interview has a positive outcome.

7. Give the learner an opportunity to ask questions.

8. Don't forget to write down essential information so that the learner can be contacted again if necessary.

9. Make sure the learner has all the information they might need. For instance:

- options available (including other centres)

- equal opportunities

- style of learning to expect

- free tuition

- progression

- date of first review

- confidentiality of information

- what happens next.

10. If necessary, write this information down for them.

Example 2 (continued)

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Active listening

Active listening involves:

*   giving the learner your complete attention

*   communicating acceptance

*   being aware of non-verbal communication (theirs and yours)

*   avoiding personal prejudice.

Techniques which can aid active listening include:

*   using open rather than closed questions. For example, instead of asking 'Do you like reading?' you might ask 'What kinds of things do you like to read?'

*   using probing questions, such as 'Can you tell me a bit more about that?'

*   paraphrasing what the person is saying to reinforce and make sure you have understood. For example, in response to 'I've had real problems sorting out childcare and managing to fit in some study at home, but it's great using my brain again,' you might say, 'It sounds like it's been a struggle starting learning again, but worth it all the same'.

*   picking up on feelings that are not being expressed directly. For example, in response to 'I was so looking forward to going on the course, but it's not really what I expected,' you might say, 'It sounds as if you are feeling disappointed'.

*   ending the interview by summarising what has been said and agreed, making sure you have understood and to clarify any outstanding issues.

One provider uses structured interviews together with reading and writing activities as part of its initial assessment process. Interviewers are provided with guidance. They are asked to use short, relevant activities and to help the learner feel comfortable and confident. For the assessment, the learner can choose reading material in the interview room or bring a text from home.

A set of initial interview assessment forms for a learner follows.

Example 3 (continued)

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General initial interview form
including preliminary Learning Agreement

Venue: _____ **Date:** _____

1. **Personal details:**

Name: _____

Postcode: _____ Tel: _____

2. Long-term aims: for example: personal development – new skills or knowledge;
further training – qualification aims; employment.

Qualification in construction

Improve reading and writing to help with NVQ

_____

_____

3. Aims to be achieved within the next few months: first steps to achieving the
long-term aims:

Start NVQ programme and work placement

Would like an assessment for dyslexia, to help his reading and writing.

_____

_____

4. Prior learning: list any qualifications gained in the last five years, including awarding body and
grade. List skills you already have that relate to your long-term aims. You may have learned
these informally, through looking after family, working with community or church groups,
organising activities for friends, hobbies; or formally through school, further education or
training.

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Primary learning goal: List learning objective(s).

_____

6. Support:

a) Learning support – e.g. dyslexia support, carer, volunteer tutor, special equipment

_____

b) Childcare needs

7. Next step:

This learner will start on the (give vocational training programme):

_____

Or

This learner has been referred to:

_____

8. Any other relevant information:

E.g. Employer or work placement:

_____

Signed by member   *Date:*
of staff: _____   _____

I have discussed this learning programme with a member of staff and received advice and guidance as recorded above.

Signed by learner: _____   *Date:* _____

Example 3 (continued)

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Staff are provided with the following prompts to help them during the initial interview.

Prompt list for identifying learning goals

1. General ideas:

   • what do you hope to gain from the training programme?

   • what do you want/need to learn?

   • are you interested in gaining qualifications?

   • you may already have some ideas or you may find this a difficult question to answer; talking things through with the interviewer will help you to work out what you want to learn.

2. Think about:

   • what you hope to be able to do in a year or so

   • what you need to do in your work and everyday life

   • what you find difficult and would like to be better at doing.

3. Would you like to:

   • get a job, do your present job more confidently, get a better job?

   • gain a qualification and get some work experience?

   • gain confidence in your work?

   • be able to help your child with schoolwork?

   • feel more confident about using public services?

   • go on to further study?

   • start your own business?

   • something else?

4. Which do you find easier – reading or writing?

5. Don't worry if you can't think of everything now. You will be able to add to the list at a later date.

One work-based learning provider has produced a handbook for learners with useful information under headings, such as, 'Getting Started', 'Training Programme Information' and 'Top Tips for Success'. The following pages show some extracts from the handbook.

Welcome

Now that you have made the important decision to enter the world of training, it is up to us to ensure that you are successful and happy during your time with us. This handbook is designed to give you information about the services and support that we can offer you. It also outlines what we expect from you and what you can expect from us.

We want all of our learners to be successful in their chosen training programme and to help us achieve this, we employ specialist members of staff with experience and knowledge in their areas. Our company Mission Statement expresses our overall goals:

'We are committed to the Lifelong Learning of the individual to help develop skills which meet the changing needs of employers and learners.

We endeavour to promote close working partnerships that will enable everyone to fulfil their potential'.

In order for us to fulfil our commitment to you as a student, we all need to work in partnership with each other. Remember, we are here for you: to help you achieve the highest standards possible, in your qualifications and chosen career. By working together, we can help you achieve your goals and ambitions. We wish you well in your new career and good luck with your training.

Let Training be the key to your success.

Example 4 (continued)

Equality for You is a project that aims to raise awareness of equality issues. The project has produced the following Best Practice Guide.

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Your place of learning, training and work should:

1. Be accountable to you

When you join an organisation, it is important that you feel confident and comfortable that their rules and procedures will protect you as an individual. Both you and your organisation have rights and responsibilities.

2. Offer individual support and guidance

Your organisation should provide one-to-one support and guidance that will enable you to make the most of your learning and training opportunities. Extra support and guidance may be necessary if you are involved in an area where you are in a minority.

3. Challenge stereotyping

You and your organisation should reject and avoid unfair judgements of others based on gender, race, disability, age, status, class, sexuality or religion. This is called stereotyping. For example a statement such as 'older people can't learn new skills' is based on a stereotype of old people. Stereotypes are negative and create barriers, preventing people from achieving their potential.

4. Create a positive, safe, accessible environment and culture.

You feel safe in a positive environment in which any behaviour that upsets or hurts you is not tolerated. Treating everyone with dignity and respect improves morale. You should feel able to ask for help and support. This improves the culture and effectiveness of your organisation.

Continuous improvement

In order to maintain the high quality of training we offer, we are interested in learning how you feel about the service you are receiving. During your time with us, you will receive three questionnaires: one within six weeks of starting training, one mid-way through training and one when you complete your training.

By completing these questionnaires, you can have a real impact on our efforts to improve our training. Please feel free to discuss the completion of the questionnaires with your training officer.

The questionnaires should only take you a few minutes to complete but are invaluable to us in evaluating, from your point of view, the effectiveness of the training you are receiving. The subjects you will be asked to comment on will include:

- the type of training you are undertaking
- how your training has been carried out
- the assessment procedure
- the support you receive
- the facilities on offer to you
- your overall view of the training you receive.

Example 5

One large work-based learning provider has developed a comprehensive and detailed document on initial assessment. The following example is an extract from the document illustrating the guidance given to staff who interview learners.

What our clients need to know

This interview is the first step for you to find out about us, and for us to find out about you. It will help us to work together to identify the best programme for you.

Some of our service users will have been referred rather than choosing to come to us. They may not know much about us. What they are told depends upon our relationship with the referrer, and how well we have kept them informed.

Have we provided written materials, made presentations, answered questions, given them success stories, kept in touch over individuals? Have we helped them to put across a positive picture of our provision?

We want to know so much, making it easy to overlook the fact that the interviewee will have questions for us. While we are thinking about our questions, an interviewee may be wondering:

- what's in it for me?
- do I really want to do it?
- what will happen if I don't?
- can I do it?
- can I cope with it?
- will it be worth the effort?
- what will it cost me? (personally as well as financially).

Be ready to answer questions, to anticipate and to address what the interviewee needs to know. Unasked and unanswered questions and anxieties that are not addressed can form a barrier between you and the interviewee.

Interview checklist

Good interviewers will build the answers to these questions and the following points into their session, or have printed materials for the interviewee to look at before the interview and to take away with them. The following checklist includes the key points to cover. They also serve as good practice prompts for the Training and Development Unit A22 and the Guidance Quality Standards. You may want to use the checklist as a prompt, or for the development of a handout.

The interviewee will want to know:

- an outline of the programme(s) that they are eligible for or have been referred to
- any qualifications that they may be able to do
- how they will do them
- any other training, learning or work experience included in the programme
- the length of the programme and their hours and days of attendance
- where they will be
- who they will be with
- any financial support or costs to them
- what the organisation can offer them
- what is required of them
- that we will support them to go back to their referrer if we cannot deliver what they need. In some cases we may be able to recommend alternatives.

Example 5 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

The first interview

Introductions and setting the client at ease should lead to talking about why they have come and what they expect. It is important to explain the format of the interview, and how long it will take.

Confidentiality

When the client understands that we are going to ask a lot of in-depth questions and record the answers, you may be asked about confidentiality. They may want to know how the documents are stored, how the information is used, who has access to it, and what happens to the documents if they do not join the programme.

Remember that information is confidential to the *organisation*. This is particularly important where the interviewer will not subsequently be responsible for the learner. If relevant information is not shared, then those members of staff who are actually working with the learner, and the learner themselves will be at a disadvantage. We may inadvertently put the participant and others at risk.

Interviewers must also be aware that whilst information remains confidential to the organisation, this cannot be the case where it would be in breach of the Children's Act 1989.

Introduction

1. *We want to find out:*
    – *where you are now*
    – *where you want to be*
    – *how you can use the programme and our support to get there.*

2. *You may be surprised by all the questions we ask. These are based on the kinds of things that we need to know to help you to get the most out of your programme.*

3. *Not all of the questions in our paperwork will be relevant to you – all our clients are different. For example, we have school leavers looking for their first job, or adults facing a career change. Some live in a city, and some in the country…*

4. *The questions will help us to find out and discuss the things that are important to you.*

No service user comes to us as a blank book. You may have found out quite a lot about them before you meet them. Keep this information in their initial assessment folder – at this stage you do not know what will be important.

Try and give your client your undivided attention; concentrate on what they say. This will help create an atmosphere in which they will feel confident enough to reveal the important issues.

Try and listen without any interruptions, and without thinking about what you are going to say next.

Make 'I'm listening' noises, e.g. mmm, yes, I see, and nod your head in encouragement.

In the same way that you may be distracted from what the interviewee is saying whilst you are thinking about what you will say next, they may have concerns, questions or misinformation blocking out what you are saying. We all have selective hearing that can filter out anything that does not confirm what we expected to hear. Checking meaning and understanding for yourself and the interviewee is very important.

Example 5 (continued)

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Check that you understand what the interviewee is saying by paraphrasing, e.g. 'So what you're saying is...', 'You seem to be worried about...', 'As I understand it, you...' and so on.

Check that the interviewee understands you by asking them questions about how they see the programme, or aspects of the programme, working for them, how they feel about it, or what it sounds like to them.

Remain open-minded and be prepared to re-evaluate some of the judgements that you have made, and that we all make when we first meet people. Control the urge to give advice, or offer guidance until you have a full picture. Support the service user in reaching their own conclusions and making their own informed decisions, rather than telling them what they should think or do.

Sections 1 and 2 of the initial assessment document should be completed by the interviewer, with the exception of page 1, 'Personal details'.

Personal details

Interviewers will spend some time chatting to their interviewee and setting them at ease before they begin the completion of the forms.

The interviewee's personal details hold a lot of clues to their current situation, and can help trigger discussions that can act as ice-breakers for the more searching questions that come later. For example, asking for a contact name and a person to contact in an emergency may indicate whether the interviewee is living at home, is living without support, has a partner, is estranged from their family, and so on. You may need to ask gently probing questions, but interviewees will often tell you what you need to know of their own accord.

Basic skills

The completed 'Personal details' section allows us to begin assessing writing skills and may prompt discussion about the client's literacy and numeracy skills. This may follow on from, or lead to screening and/or further assessment.

Interviewees should be encouraged to complete their personal details in their own handwriting. Some will find this very challenging, and must be reassured. They may have developed strategies to disguise their lack of skills, such as forgetting their glasses, asking to take the form home, or on rare occasions, by being aggressive. Others may not see the importance of developing their literacy and numeracy skills and be quite happy with their current arrangements.

Be persuasive and treat the situation lightly – you will show that you respect the interviewee by understanding that beginner learners are not beginner thinkers.

– *We ask you to complete the first page for yourself.*

– *Please do not worry about your spelling or your grammar. This is not a test to join the programme, but it will help us to see if there is any additional learning support that we can offer.*

– *If you are not happy about doing it, or find parts of it too difficult to do, you don't have to do it, but let's talk about the reasons why.*

Example 5 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Depending on the programme, some interviewees may already have been through screening followed by an assessment in a group situation. Some will have found it traumatic. If you are about to refer them for assessment, the initial interview may give you the opportunity to help motivate them to want to improve their basic skills.

Try not to spell out words that the interviewee is not sure of, as this will mislead anyone else who looks at the document. Encourage them to write what they think is correct.

A box has been left at the bottom of the page to identify any help given, or to note why the interviewee declined to complete the first page.

Pay attention to any words that the interviewee has difficulty in reading and to their speaking and listening skills throughout the interview. Focus on 'listen and respond', 'speak to communicate', and 'engage in discussion', as set out in the Adult Literacy core curriculum. You may want to make notes.

Basic skills indicators

Name, address and date of birth.

Indicators of low levels of skill will include:

– being unable to read familiar words on the form

– spelling mistakes in name and/or address

– address incomplete or incorrect

– date of birth incorrect or omitted

– incorrect use of capitals and lower case letters.

Free writing

Vocational trainers stress the importance of writing skills for the achievement of National Vocational Qualifications, but free writing is not currently assessed. If this section has been completed by the interviewee, look for:

– spelling mistakes

– incorrect use of capital and lower case letters

– incorrect and/or incomplete sentences

– incorrect and/or incomplete punctuation

– poor or inaccurate grammar.

These indicate that the client will need support and should be referred for further assessment where this has not already been done, or where it is not an automatic part of initial assessment. If the assessment is at odds with what they have done, seek further advice from the basic skills trainer.

Do not forget to discuss numeracy as well as literacy, although self-assessment is not always accurate. The section on Travel to Training and Work may offer opportunities for testing skills through the use of bus or train timetables, telling the time, working out times, distances, costs, budgeting, and so on.

Induction Arrangements

Many providers recognise the importance of induction for basic skills learners.

Example 1

One provider describes the importance of induction as follows.

> Many learners have returned to training or education after a long break, or harbour fears about negative learning experiences. Induction should be designed to acclimatise the learner, both into the learning process, and into the training organisation.
>
> Learners need to know what they can expect from their programme, and what the provider expects from them. They also need to know that their opinions and comments on what and how they are learning are valuable and important. One of the most important elements of induction is to encourage the learner to take control of their own learning.

This provider also describes the purposes of induction.

- to enable potential learners to feel part of the organisation
- to inform learners what they can expect from the organisation, their training programme and work placement
- to inform learners what the provider expects from them (e.g. attendance, behaviour etc.)
- to inform learners of the services and facilities available
- to ensure that the centre has the learner's contact details
- to ensure that the learner knows how to contact the centre.

Example 2

The same provider issues the following guidance on what should be included in the induction process.

Structure of work

- discuss options and preferences – individual work, group work or drop-in work
- the need for breaks.

Learner views

- what do they hope to gain from vocational training and any additional basic skills support?
- what are their aims and ambitions?
- what are their interests – can we use these to build on existing skills?
- explain we will build on what they can do, focusing on their needs and preferences. Each stage will be negotiated.

The learning environment

- stress that the pace of learning is dictated by the learner
- discuss the flexibility of learning – that if they feel they do not understand we will try a different approach
- explain the system of books, practical materials and worksheets
- encourage self-access and stress that learners' opinions on training materials are important. Do they find it too easy/hard/boring etc?
- encourage self-checking
- discuss asking for help. Learners learn by questioning and discussing. Stress that they don't have to work in isolation.

The role of staff

- explain that staff can offer advice, guidance and expertise
- the member of staff is there to provide help and answer questions, so they should not be afraid to ask
- discuss how work will be assessed (the timescale) and tell the learner to expect feedback.

Review

- explain that progress will be discussed at regular intervals, but that any queries or concerns arising in the meantime can be discussed with their trainer, supervisor or other members of staff.

Example 3

Advice to staff on the objectives and content of induction are shown below.

Induction process

Information for staff

Rationale

The induction process refers to those activities learners undertake before they are fully on-programme. Learners on some programmes may complete the process by the end of the first week. Learners with basic skills needs may benefit from induction activities extended over several weeks. The aim of the induction process is to help the learner make a smooth transition from school, college, employment or unemployment to their programme.

Objectives

All programmes are designed to help learners to:

- settle in to the organisation
- get to know other members of the group and staff
- become familiar with the services and facilities provided by the organisation
- understand rules and entitlements
- understand their programme structure, assessment procedures, support and progression opportunities
- recognise their preferred learning styles and the implications these have for learning
- complete an induction assignment which is designed to assess their skill levels
- recognise what they have achieved at each stage of the induction programme
- agree their individual learning plan and identify any support needs.

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Induction programme content

Programmes should meet the needs of your learners and include:

- group activities
  - ice breakers – 'getting to know the group'
  - roles and responsibilities of different members of staff
  - equal opportunities
  - policies, procedures and expectations of learners (handbook)
  - entitlements and grievance procedures (handbook)
- orientation activity – finding your way round
- initial assessments in basic skills (if not completed at interview)
- diagnostic assessments (if required)
- an introduction to the programme (handbook)
  - structure and assessment procedures
  - target qualification(s), learning outcomes and progression routes
  - monitoring achievement and required standards
  - timetable (where appropriate)
  - identifying and recording learners' preferred learning styles
- an opportunity to change programme
- procedures for monitoring progress
- support arrangements, including:
  - additional learning support
  - basic and key skills support
  - careers guidance and advice
  - learning resources
  - personal counselling and financial advice
  - medical and welfare services
  - health, safety and security
- planning an individual learning plan and identifying support needs.

Tips for preparing induction assignments

- fun and interesting to do

- made up of small, achievable tasks

- learners can recognise clearly what they have achieved and when they have completed each task successfully

- include 'signposts' of how and where basic skills should be assessed

- the format of the assignment (i.e. objectives, tasks, activities and outcomes) match those used throughout the programme

- instructions are accessible to all learners

- include simple explanations and examples for each task

- include positive feedback at the end of each completed task.

Example 4

In another organisation, learners sign the following form to show that they have understood their rights and responsibilities. The form is used in a group or individual session at the start of a short course. The signatures confirm an agreement to behave in accordance with the organisation's equal opportunities policy.

Rights and Responsibilities

These are your Rights:

1.   To be treated with respect, regardless of your:

Race

Age

Sex

Sexuality

Religion

Disability

National origin

Political views

Colour

2.   To have your personal learning needs met

3.   To receive guidance about learning and other opportunities

4.   To be able to look at any records about you. These will not be passed onto anyone else without your permission.

These are your Responsibilities:

1.   To respect the rights of all other people within the organisation

2.   To attend as regularly as you can and to let us know if you can't

3.   To take an active part in learning.

If you feel your rights have been denied, you should talk to:

Your trainer or supervisor

A manager

Any complaints will be listened to in confidence.

All learners must behave in accordance with the organisation's equal opportunities policy.

I have read this sheet and agree with what it says.

Learner's signature _____

Trainer or supervisor's signature _____

Date _____

Example 5

Another work-based learning provider asks learners to 'Sign on the Dotted Line'.
The document relating to this procedure sets out learners' entitlement to training and
their responsibilities, together with the responsibilities of the employer and the local
Learning and Skills Council.

Sign on the dotted line!

Before you start your training programme, there are some forms that you will be asked to sign to
prove that you agree with your programme and that you are committed to training. The main
forms are described below.

The Pledge

All learners will be asked to sign a pledge. This form shows the commitment of the four parties
involved in your training programme. The parties who will sign and commit to your pledge are:

- you, the learner
- your employer
- the local LSC
- your training provider.

Your commitment is

- to agree a learning plan with your employer and trainer
- to take part in the training and development agreed in your plan
- to regularly review and record your progress and achievements with your employer
- to follow safe working practices and ask for help when you need it.

Your employer's commitment is

- to employ you on the same terms as other employees
- to provide you with training leading to an NVQ and key skills
- to provide you with the necessary resources for you to reach your goals
- to provide you with support and guidance
- to be responsible for your health, safety and welfare
- to ensure that your training meets agreed standards.

The local LSC's commitment is

- to provide encouragement, support and compromise when needed
- to conduct quality assurance checks.

Our commitment is

- to support you throughout your training programme
- to support your employer.

Example 5 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

The Training Agreement

This provides details of your responsibilities as a trainee with us. It also tells you what measures we have in place to protect your interests.

The Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

This form tells you about the training you will receive, where it will take place and how it will be structured. It will also include details of the NVQ and key skills that you are working towards and tells you when you are expected to finish your qualification(s).

Quarterly Reviews

Every 12 weeks, someone from our organisation will make an appointment to see you and your employer to do a three-monthly review. They will ask about and record details of your progress and achievements. You will receive a copy of each review which you should use to update your Record of Achievement.

Attendance Records

You will need to submit attendance records once a month either to your monitoring officer or by sending them to the training centre. If you have been off work sick in that month, a copy of your sickness certificate will need to be attached to the attendance record. You will only need to tell us about holidays, unauthorised absence or sickness.

Evidence Plans

Your trainer will give these to you and will explain how the units of your NVQ and key skills will be learned and assessed. They will also discuss and plan with you how and when the units could be achieved. It is your responsibility to make sure that you achieve these targets or tell us if there will be any problems in meeting them.

Prompt Questions for Element 1

■

How do potential new learners find out about the basic skills provision you offer?

■

How do you ensure the initial contact in your organisation is welcoming and effective?

■

What arrangements do you have in place to make sure new learners have an effective initial interview?

■

What strategies do you use to induct new learners to the programme and the facilities and services available to them?

■

Element 2: Initial Assessment

Definitions

The most effective basic skills providers make a clear distinction between the initial screening and diagnostic assessment, and plan each as separate stages in the assessment process. These providers may use the following definitions to guide their assessment activities:

- **initial screening –** broad generic screening of the majority of new learners as a first filter to identify levels of skills and whether some may require further diagnostic assessment

- **diagnostic assessment –** individual specific assessment designed to identify what the learner can and cannot do, and why.

Example 1

One provider sets out the following underlying principles for staff undertaking initial screening and diagnostic assessment:

- the assessment is a positive experience for the learner

- we acknowledge the learner's strengths

- we maintain confidentiality

- we listen to the learner

- we are sensitive to the learner's concerns

- assessment tools are used appropriately (build up a relationship with the learner before using the test)

- initial interviews contribute towards the assessment process (for example, a general lack of confidence or the learner's attitude towards reading or numeracy may be picked up during interview).

Materials to support assessment

Providers use a variety of home-grown and commercially developed materials to support their assessment processes. The most effective providers deploy a set of criteria questions to inform the development and use of materials. Questions might include:

(i) are the right things being assessed in the right way?

(ii) do learners understand the purposes of assessment?

(iii) will materials provide staff with the information they need to agree realistic and relevant learning goals with the learner? Will the materials help staff devise effective learning plans for basic skills?

(iv) are the materials at the right level for the learner? Are they straightforward and easy to follow?

(v) do the materials take account of the social and cultural background of the learner?

(vi) do the materials help identify what learners can do already, as well as what they need to learn?

(vii) do the materials prompt discussion and activity, rather than just reading and writing?

(viii) do the materials help identify learners' preferred style of learning and how they feel about learning?

(ix) are the materials related to real life? Do they take into account the requirements of a learner's vocational programme?

(x) do the materials take account of the outcomes of previous assessments, where relevant?

An example of a framework for assessment follows, together with an extract from an initial assessment handbook and examples of assessment procedures used by different providers.

Example 1 (continued)

One large provider has the following assessment framework for basic skills provision.

Induction and enrolment
to basic skills provision

↓

Initial screening
including a skill based assessment

↓

Diagnostic testing
to identify specific needs

↓

Individual learning programme
devised from information gathered during assessment based on long-term aims

↓

The learning programme
is regularly reviewed and amended, to reflect the learner's changing needs

↓

Progress reviews
to gather information about skills gained and record comments on the learning experience.
Comments are used to revise the learning programme

↓

Awards
if appropriate, learners are entered for awards that meet their needs

↓

End of programme assessment
achievements measured against the learner's long-term aims, and advice given on
progression routes within the basic skills provision and elsewhere

Example 2

This is an extract from the initial assessment handbook used by one large provider.

Initial assessment

Deciding what to assess

Any assessments that are carried out during induction should be based on the demands of the programme. Staff need to be clear:

i.   what skills learners should have when they begin the programme

ii. what skills will be taught

iii. what skills they should have when they finish the programme, in the context of the activities that the programme demands.

Throughout the handbook we have listed some of the more common on-programme activities and underlying skills.

The handbook also contains a more detailed analysis of the basic and key skills needs and levels for some of the vocational programmes and NVQs we offer. These are under review, and are being further developed to include all vocational areas. They can form the basis for understanding the basic and key skills needed on some of the programmes.

For those vocational areas where the analysis has not been completed, staff should devise assessments and make decisions about the essential skills and knowledge the learners need in order to access the programme. Staff should think about:

• programme delivery methods (skills might include note-taking, understanding technical vocabulary)

• tasks that have to be performed on-programme, such as assignments or activities (skills might include extracting information from texts, writing an explanation or a description, calculating an area, making an oral presentation)

• final assessment, which might be a portfolio presentation or final exams.

Staff will also have to agree the **level** of skills required. For example, what sort of texts do learners have to be able to read at the beginning of the programme? What level of writing skill do they need? Is knowledge of a specific vocabulary necessary? How much concentrated listening will they have to do?

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Types of programme-related assessment

The amount of assessment during induction and the type of assessment used will depend on the programme. It is important not to over-assess. The outcomes of all assessments should be shared with learners, and used to inform training.

There are two approaches to devising programme-based induction assessments. For many programmes a combination of the two will be most appropriate.

Induction assignments

These can be designed to assess a range of skills and activities which learners need to do on their learning programme. The advantages of this type of assessment are:

- learners can be accredited for the work they do

- the assessment more closely reflects the real situation in which learners will work

- learners are able to learn at the same time as being assessed

- some learners find the approach less stressful than more formal timed assessments.

The disadvantages are:

- if learners do not complete the assignment successfully, it may not be easy to identify difficulties

- learners will always want to show their skills to the best advantage. The use of outside help may disguise difficulties which it is important to understand.

Some of the disadvantages of this type of assessment can be reduced by asking learners to perform at least part of the assessment in situations where staff can observe how they approach certain activities.

Controlled assessments of particular skills

These are assessments given in controlled conditions, for example in-house and possibly timed, where skills are isolated and assessed individually.

The advantage of this type of assessment is:

• staff obtain a clear indication of a learner's level of skill in a particular area and an understanding of why they may find certain activities difficult.

The disadvantage is:

• learners can be intimidated by the more formal setting. Adult returners and young people with poor experiences of school are particularly vulnerable in this respect.

Making judgements about learners

Although this handbook divides assessment into skill areas, it is important, when making judgements about learners' skills and learning requirements, to consider all the evidence you have about them as learners. Formal assessments are only part of the picture, and will contribute to the process of making informed judgements about what will help learners succeed on the programme and progress as they would like. Observation, past experience, consultation with other staff and the learners themselves are also part of this process.

Assessments are a starting point. They inform training and provide a base on which to evaluate progress. They are a tool and their effectiveness will depend on how well they are designed and how they are used.

Example 3

As part of the initial assessment process, one provider collects information about learners by:

- using the information from programme-specific (occupational) assessments devised as a basis for discussion with the learner

- analysing information from an area of work or learning that the learner has found difficult

- building a profile of the learner from an informal interview; attitudes to previous educational experience and the current learning programme are explored at this stage

- analysing the learner's self-assessment of their perceived difficulties and any strategies they use to overcome them

- using relevant assessment tasks such as the Basic Skills Assessment Pack or other graded assessment activities.

Extracts from the documentation used in this process follow.

Example 3 (continued)

In this example, free writing is used as part of the initial assessment of learners on a Level 1 Hairdressing course.

Literacy

Level 1

1. Why do you want to be a hairdresser?

2. Where would you like to work when you have finished the course?

3. What do you like doing in your spare time?

Example 3 (continued)

A numeracy assignment is used for initial assessment on a Level 1 Hairdressing course.

Numeracy

Please work through this exercise following the instructions carefully.

Imagine that you are opening a salon – *your* salon.

Make a list of eight items you will need and what they might cost. Here are two to start your list:

a)   3 pairs of scissors @ £7.00 each...............................£21.00

b)   2 pairs of tweezers @ £3.50 each..............................£7.00

How much will you spend on the eight items altogether?

How much will you spend if you don't buy the scissors and tweezers?

On which days of the week, and at what times will your salon be open? Use the 24-hour clock.

How many hours a week will your salon be open?

Make a list of six treatments you will offer and the prices you will charge. Here are two to start your list:

a)   Shampoo and set...£6.00

b)   Children's cut...£3.60

If retired people get a discount of 20%, how much do they pay for a shampoo and set?

Example 3 (continued)

The following exercise is used to diagnose deficiencies in learners' ability to punctuate for a Level 2 Leisure and Tourism course.

Punctuation

Please write out the following passage, putting in all the necessary punctuation.

benidorm is a resort which might be said to have a split personality in summer it is the throbbing destination for millions of families and teenagers so that in july or august it is difficult to put a foot between the bodies on the beach however in the winter it is a paradise for those that can afford the time to take a break from the winter weather in the uk the beaches are empty and spotless making a beautiful sight with their clusters of palm trees the weather is calm and warm rivalling the average british summer discos and bars on the seafront resound to the music of tea dances and the british pensioner reigns supreme in a resort where english is becoming as common as spanish once the summer season returns the entertainment restaurants and hotels adapt themselves so that the busiest resort on the mediterranean can once again offer its clients everything in the way of sand sea and fun

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Example 4

Another provider carefully identifies the basic skills that a learner needs in their job. Learners' abilities in relation to these skills are assessed and the information gathered forms the basis of their individual learning plans.

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Maria: care assistant
Basic skills in the workplace
Please tick skills needed/used in the workplace

	Frequency of use: often/ sometimes/never			IT used?	Area(s) of work where skill is used
	O	**S**	**N**	**Y/N**	
1. Reading skills e.g. health & safety manual					
Read and understand text		✓		N	Always given verbally/practically
Follow written instructions			✓		
Consult reference sources		✓			Handbooks available – rarely used
Choose and use appropriate material from more than one written source	✓			N	Incident Forms
Select and evaluate materials from a wide variety of written texts			✓		
2. Reading graphical material	**O**	**S**	**N**	**Y/N**	
Understand signs and labels	✓				Covered in practical sessions e.g. food preparation
Follow a route on a map or plan			✓		
Follow instructions given in pictures or diagrams			✓		
Find information from tables	✓				Staff timetables
Plan a journey using maps		✓			Taking clients out
Select and interpret material from more than one graphical source		✓			Case studies, files
3. Using reference systems	**O**	**S**	**N**	**Y/N**	
To find specific information	✓				
Organise material into a reference system			✓		
Select and create a reference system			✓		

Please tick skills needed/used in the workplace

	Frequency of use: often/ sometimes/never			IT used?	Area(s) of work where skill is used
	O	S	N	Y/N	
1. Conversing (with one person) face-to-face/telephone/answerphone/automatic call handling systems					
Giving information	✓				Face-to-face and telephone
Obtaining information	✓				
Supporting and reassuring someone	✓				Talking to clients
Holding conversation	✓				
2. Working in groups	O	S	N	Y/N	
Making introductions and farewells	✓				Meeting new clients/relatives/change of staff
Giving information to group	✓				Ward rounds, team meetings, daily handover meetings
Making a formal presentation			✓		
Explaining, describing in a formal situation		✓			Ward rounds, relatives
Putting and justifying a case		✓			
Contributing to a discussion	✓				
Explaining a complex activity in order for people to understand it	✓				Might be too complex for patient/client. Need to repeat speech accordingly
3. Anything else?	O	S	N		
Big need for improved verbal communication skills, e.g. phone calls					

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

	O	S	N	Y/N	
4. Completing forms and other pre-printed documents					
Read and understand requirements	✓				Incident Forms, work-based training
Fill in forms, claims etc.	✓				
5. Communicating in writing	O	S	N	Y/N	
Notes, letters, memos, reports	✓				Case notes, reports on occasions – incidents, complaints, care plans
Ordering ideas and structuring writing			✓		
Specialised formats (CVs, reports, leaflets)					Would be useful to structure reports – not just write
Forms requiring complex information	✓				Accident and Incident Forms. Property forms
Using a variety of styles to convey information and opinions			✓		Only factual written work – no opinions
Writing effectively to convey ideas and experiences		✓			
Appropriate use of spelling, grammar, punctuation conventions	✓				Practical, verbal
6. Anything else?	O	S	N	Y/N	

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Please tick skills needed/used in the workplace

Skill	Frequency of use: often/sometimes/never			IT used?	Area(s) of work where skill is used
	O	S	N		
1. General number work				Y/N	
4 rules (+ − × ÷)		✓			
Using a calculator			✓		
Using a 12- or 24-hour clock	✓				Shifts
Estimating skills	✓				
2. Working with money				Y/N	
Cash payments/check change and receipts		✓			With clients, e.g. shopping. No direct responsibility for cash
Non-cash payments/check change and receipts			✓		
Totalling up			✓		
Work out discounts (fractions & percentages)			✓		
Share out payments (dividing)			✓		
Calculate and convert amounts in foreign currencies (ratios)			✓		
Understand wages and salaries			✓		Basic introduction included in induction session
3. Select goods and services				Y/N	
By price and quality			✓		
By investment and credit arrangement			✓		
Compare interest rates in decimal and fraction forms			✓		
4. Plan use of money and time				Y/N	
Plan use of money/compare/record totals			✓		
Plan and schedule events					Plan a day out with a client. However, not a key skill
Calculate average income/expenditure			✓		

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

	O	S	N	Y/N	
5. Measuring lengths/calculating area				Y/N	
Use of metric and imperial			✓		
Calculate areas, e.g. to keep wastage to a minimum			✓		
Make scale drawings			✓		
Understand and use scale drawings			✓		
6. Measuring weights and volumes				Y/N	
Use of metric and imperial to weigh/calculate volume		✓			Specific diets (Eating Disorder Unit). Qualified staff organise cooking, so not often
Calculate and measure volume		✓			
7. Converting metric to imperial and vice-versa				Y/N	
length			✓		
weight			✓		
estimating			✓		
8. Setting timing devices/timing activities				Y/N	
analogue		✓			Maybe alarm clocks
digital		✓			
9. Giving and following directions				Y/N	
Estimating distances, times		✓			Transport dept. organise long journeys and course attendance
Follow directions on a route/map		✓			

10. **Reporting numerical and graphical information**	O	S	N	Y/N						
From tables (pie charts/bar charts/ pictograms/line graphs			✓							
Report orally or in writing from information presented in numbers			✓							

Example 5

This case study of John, a learner on a 'roll-on, roll-off' basic skills support programme, illustrates assessment in action.

John: A case study of assessment in action

John attended a small basic skills group working together on a roll-on, roll-off course.

Initial discussion with learner

This established the learner's aims. For John this was 'Help with reading and writing'.

If the aims are vague, as they are here, the discussion is used to elicit the specific basic skills needed at work.

The interview with John indicated that he did not have a clear idea of what he would like to read and write and had difficulty thinking about the possibilities. This was one pointer to the possibility that working in a small group rather than a workshop style of programme would be suitable.

The initial discussion also obtains information about the learner's educational history, current employment situation and employment history, limitations on the times at which the learner is able to attend and any critical health issues such as epilepsy.

John had attended a local special school. He lives in sheltered accommodation and works at a nearby motorway service station as a kitchen assistant.

Writing task

What the learner is asked to write will depend on the level of ability identified during the discussion. All learners are asked to write their name and address to help the interviewing tutor to complete the interview form. This gives an indication as to how appropriate it is to ask the learner to do any further writing.

John was able to write his name but could not spell the name of his home town and transposed two letters in the name of his road. He could not spell the name of the service station he worked at and said that he never wrote anything else. He was not asked to write anything else.

Reading task

The level at which the learner will be asked to read is established during the course of the informal discussion.

John was given a random selection of social sight words and kitchen-related terms to read, some of which he was able to do. He was asked to name his favourite food dishes and find them on a menu from the service station café, which he could also do, although he could not find some other dishes selected at random. He was also asked to read a Basic Skills Agency entry-level assessment on a jumble sale. He was able to read approximately half the words on the advertisement and did understand that it was about a jumble sale, although he could not read the name of the school at which it would take place.

Additional information

In John's case it was clear that although he was talkative he did not focus on the questions he was being asked or what was being explained to him. This suggested he might benefit from oral work.

This led to the suggestion that he should attend the small group and also contributed to the development of his first learning plan. He and his employer would like him to start working towards a catering-related qualification and future training for this in the workplace is to be discussed.

Agreeing learning goals

At the end of the interview the interviewer agrees learning goals with the learner.

If the learner is very specific about their aims, these are usually straightforward. If not, as in John's case, they need to be agreed so that the first learning plan can be developed.

Example 5 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Interview and assessment record for John

Primary learning goals

'To improve my reading and writing'

1. To write name and address
2. To write notes and messages
3. To read notices about health and safety in the workplace
4. To read other items of interest
5. To listen and join in with a discussion.

Literacy	Present level (using Basic Skills Agency standards)	Priority H = High M = Medium L = Low C = Can do now
Reading textual material	Pre-E	H
Completing forms	Pre-E	H
Using reference systems	Pre-E	L
Communication in writing: – spelling	Pre-E	H
– punctuation	Pre-E	H
– grammar	Pre-E	H
– write letters	Pre-E	M
– write essays	N/A	

Numeracy
Current skills: Not assessed, will assess if John decides he would like to attend a numeracy group.

IT
Current skills: Never used. Interested in using the computers to 'see how he gets on'.

Interviewed by: ....

Date of interview: ....

Assessment attached: Yes ☐ No ☐

Using the Outcomes of Initial Assessment to Identify Learning Goals

The outcomes of initial assessment should be analysed and used to identify relevant and realistic learning goals. Staff work back from these goals to devise the right learning plan.

Some examples follow showing how different providers manage the process of analysing and using the outcomes of initial assessments to identify learning goals and devise learning plans.

Example 1

This shows how links are made between an initial assessment, learning plan and record of work.

1. Initial Assessment Summary

Learner details:

Method	Result
Discussion	would like to improve reading/ writing skills, particularly so that I can get a job. Hoping to start a forklift truck driving course soon.
Reading: E. Level Level 1	no problems, reported main points guessing longer words but then re-read and predicted words to try and make sense of sentence.
Application forms	no problems with reading and following instructions attempted every question problems with spelling (capitals and full stops – see sheet)
Writing – can do/can't do checklist.	support needs to centre on job search skills.
ACTION	Support programme to include form filling, letter writing for jobs plus work on extending spelling skills. Prefers one-to-one. Any day and time.

2. Learning Plan

Name:

Date: (Today): 9/11/99

(Review date): 7/12/99

My main aims are:

To improve my writing skills – spelling, punctuation and grammar – to help my chances of getting a job.

In order to achieve this I will need to work on:

Completing a 'Training Application/Personal Details' form with short sentences.

Completing job application forms.

Writing letters.

I will attend 1:1 ~~group~~

Day: Tuesday

Time: 9.00am

Learner's signature.................................

Trainer's signature:...............................

Over the next five weeks I will work on:

Personal details form skills

- language of forms
- capital letters and full stops
- proof reading
- spelling key words and phrases
- spelling
- short vowel sounds
- consonant sounds
- long vowel sounds i-e
- double letters u-e

3. Record of Work

Date	Working on	Comments
9/11/99	'BLOCK CAPITALS' Capital letters/full stops usage. Short vowel sounds.	Comprehension – good. Homework – neatness improved. Vowel sounds need more oral practice.
16/11/99	Short vowel sounds. Long vowel sounds i-e. Double letters.	As above Understanding – clear. Usage – few problems only
23/11/99	Language of forms. Capital letters and full stops. Short vowel sounds. Consonant sounds. Double letters.	Comprehension – 'applicable/appropriate' difficult to read and understand. Revision – with good results.
30/11/99	Short vowel sounds. Consonant sounds. Long vowel sounds i-e. Proof reading for word order.	Well remembered from last week. Understands the rule – needs practice in application. No problems re logical order.
7/12/99	Long vowel sound u-e. Personal details – assessment.	Difficulties with 'cure' and 'sure'. Problems with consonant sounds – n/d, sh/g and i-e.

Please fill in the review sheet on the next page.

Review sheet

Review date: 7/12/99

What I've done	Confident	Not so confident	Needs more work
Language of forms	✓		
Capital letters and full stops	✓	✓	full stops
Form assessment	✓		spelling, reading
Spelling key words & phrases	✓✓		
Short vowel sounds	✓		
Consonant sounds	✓		
Long vowel sounds, i-e	✓		
u-e	✓	✓	'ur'
Double letters			
Proof reading for word order			

Other comments about work

Next I would like to work on
'ur' sounds
Consonants – n/d, sh/g
Commas in lists

I will continue with
Full stops, u-e, and i-e and form filling

Now I can
Read and understand what is needed on basic forms.

Trainer's signature..

Learner's signature...

Over the next six weeks I will work on:

Task: Spelling	Task: Punctuation
Skills:	**Skills:** full stops, commas in lists
n/d sh/g confusion	Grammar: verbs – tenses in
i-e, u-e, long vowel sounds	answers, e.g. I would like…..
ur sounds	

Record of Work

Date	Working on	Comments

Example 2

This is another example of the same process of linking an initial assessment, the learning plan and the record of work.

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

1. Initial Assessment Summary

Learner details

Method	Result
Discussion	would like to improve maths skills disliked school – especially – maths gardening assistant, wants to start horticulture NVQ and pesticide application certificate – would like to be able to do all the calculations involved
Numeracy can do/can't do checklist	add/subtract no problems times/divide need revision: knows tables and good mental arithmetic skills % – basic knowledge – extend to cover future requirements help with fractions would like to revise metric weights and capacity ratios – new area.

ACTION

Programme to cover skills for NVQ Level 2 amenity horticulture. Deliver support for practical skills training and portfolio work.

2. Learning Plan

Name:

Date: (Today): 9/2/99

(Review date): 10/3/99

My main aims are:

To begin horticulture NVQ

To be able to tackle all calculations for this and pesticide application certificate.

In order to achieve this I will need to work on:

Multiplication and division, percentages, fractions and decimals, metric weights and volumes, ratios, time – drops per min etc.

I will attend ++ group

Day: Wednesday

Time: 2-4pm

Leaner's signature.................................

Tutor's signature:................................

Over the next five weeks I will work on:

Task: Multiplication skills

- short multiplication
- long
- x10, 100, 1000
- multiplying decimals
- problems from work.

3. Record of Work

Date	Working on	Comments
9/2/99	Learning plan, short multiplication, long multiplication (2 numbers), Henley Pack	Some problems with direction and sequence. More for homework
16/2/99	Checked homework. More work as above. Everyday examples 'problems'.	-clear on sequence but slips with lining up figures -more for homework.
23/2/99	Homework Revision sheet Started x10, 100, 1000 Hesse book.	-no problems -no problems -more work needed.
3/3/99	Homework Revision sheet Multiplying decimals x10, 100, 1000.	-all correct -small slips when carrying -needs more work.
10/3/99	As above – Hesse book Multiplying decimals short numbers long whole numbers REVIEW	-getting the idea -no problem -

Please fill in the Review Sheet on the next page.

Review sheet

Review date: 10/3/99

What I've done	Confident	Not so confident	Needs more work
Multiplication – whole numbers – short and long	✓		
Multiplication – whole numbers x10, 100, 1000	✓✓		
Problem sheets			
Multiplying decimals – x10, 100, 1000		✓	small slips – check with calculator
Multiplying decimals – using whole number	✓		
As above with 2 numbers		✓	

Other comments about work:

Next I would like to work on:
Problems using multiplication from workplace
Start revising division

I will continue with:
Multiplying decimals using whole numbers and decimals.

Now I can:
Short multiplication ⎱ Whole numbers
Long multiplication ⎰
Short multiplication with decimals

Learner's signature:...........................

Trainer's signature:...........................

Over the next five weeks I will work on:

Task: Multiplication

Task: Division

Skills: multiplying decimals with

Skills: short division (whole numbers)

- whole numbers –
- multiplying decimals with decimals
- recording to 1 or 2 decimal places
- examples from workplace
- using multiplication.

- long division (whole numbers)
- dividing whole numbers out to
- decimal places.

Record of Work

Date	Working on	Comments

Example 3

Skilled staff use specific learning tasks as part of the initial assessment. In the extracts that follow, a member of staff describes and analyses for the learner concerned the learning tasks that will contribute to assessment and help to devise learning goals.

Analysis of initial numeracy assessment for Gina (working for NVQ in hairdressing)

The member of staff says:

'In the first session I checked to make sure Gina still wanted to work on addition, and that she was already aware of carrying tens. She wanted to begin with easy examples to build confidence. Gina worked on addition without carrying, then with carrying, including money questions and some one or two money questions and some one or two money subtractions. In the money addition, Gina was not sure how to write the answer in pounds and pence when the bill came to more than 100p.'

'At the end of the session I talked to Gina about how she would like to continue. She was very nervous about till work, using calculators and giving change in the hairdressing salon. I suggested looking first at changing pence into pounds, which would help with using a calculator for money problems. A work plan was selected and adapted to address these topics by breaking tasks down into small stages. This ensured Gina gained confidence and felt in control of the learning. Gina wanted to add and take away without a calculator too, and this was included in the work plan, together with multiplication which she was keen to try.'

Extract from initial numeracy assessment for Gina

Entry level numeracy		
Name: Gina		

My aim is to:

Feel confident to do maths needed for working as a hairdresser.

	Can do	Want to work on
1. Give the right money and check change		✓
2. Use a calendar to check dates	✓	
3. Use different types of clocks	✓	✓
4. Measure with a ruler or tape		✓
5. Use weighing scales		✓
6. Add up numbers	✓	*money*
7. Take away numbers	✓	*money*
8. Use a calculator	*x2, x5, x10*	
9. Know times tables		✓
10. Understand maths used in work or programme *Millilitres and litres*		
11. Other (please describe) *Be able to use a till.*		
12. What would you like to work on first? *Adding up money and taking away.*		

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Extract from numeracy learning plan for Gina

Tasks	Subskills	Need to work on	Completed	Date
				Qualification: NOCN Entry
				Teaching strategies
Addition	Know different language, e.g. plus, total			
	Add whole numbers with carrying			Demonstration
	Addition in everyday life			Discussion in workplace
	Link to money addition (see learning plan decimals)	See over		Handouts
				Practical
Subtraction	Subtraction by another name, e.g. difference, take away			Video/Audio
				Workbooks
	Subtraction – by decomposition	See over		**Books for further work**
	– by adding on			
	Subtraction in everyday life/wages			1. The Basic Skills
	Link to money – giving change			Chapter 1
Multiplication	Explain use or repeated addition			2. Work Out Numeracy
	Introduce tables and table square			Chapter 1
	Quick rules for tables			
	Short multiplication x 2 figures, x3 figures			3. Henley College Workbooks
	Bulk buying/money/uniforms/wages			
	Long multiplication			4. Flexi-pack maths
Division	Split into parts			
	Different format			Update 22/12/99
	Use of tables			
	Short division			
Calculator	Use of calculator signs			

Extract from Gina's record of work

Date	Work done	What next?			
		Finish off	**More practice on**	**See work plan**	**Add to work plan**
22/9/99	Taking away		✓		
29/9/99	Money		✓		
6/10/99	Money		✓ *(See link task sheet)*		
13/10/99	Maths change		✓		
20/10/99	Maths multiplication		✓		
10/11/99	Three of everything		✓		
17/11/99	Uniforms	✓			
24/11/99	Take away				
1/12/99	Take away				
8/12/99	Take away				
15/12/99	Wages				

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Link task sheet for Gina

Task	Link task	Subskills	Completed	Books for further work
Money	1	Change pence to pounds	Yes	Worksheets drawer A
		Use calculator to add pence	Yes	Addition and subtraction drawer
	2	Use calculator to add pounds	Yes	
		Use calculator to give change for £1	Yes	Worksheets drawer A
		Use calculator to give change for any amount	Yes	
		Give change for £1 without using a calculator	Yes	
		Give change for any amount	Come back	
	3	without a calculator	to later	
		No borrowing	Yes	
		Borrowing 2 figures	Yes	
		Borrowing 3 figures	Yes	
		Zeros		

Prompt Questions for Element 2

■

How does your organisation distinguish between
initial screening and diagnostic assessment?

■

How does it ensure that all those who require
diagnostic assessment receive it?

■

How are your staff, learners and their employers helped to
understand the assessment process?

■

How is induction used for assessment purposes in
your organisation? How might you add to the opportunities
for assessment during the induction programme?

■

Element 3: Developing Learning Goals

Learners begin their basic skills learning programmes with a wide range of prior experience and levels of skill. For this reason, most learners require individual learning goals and a plan that sets out how and when these goals are to be achieved. The plan may include achievement at more than one level, and in more than one subject. Learning goals may be helpfully broken down into small, achievable steps. It is essential that the outcomes of the initial assessment process are used to inform the development of individual learning goals and plans with links to their vocational learning programme.

The following examples show the approach of different providers to the setting of learning goals.

Example 1

One large provider uses the outcomes of assessment to identify learning goals and individual learning plans, as outlined in the figure below.

The process

After initial assessment, a learner's primary learning goal is identified and recorded. There is a range of work plans covering the literacy and numeracy tasks needed at Entry and Level 1 with pre-completed task analysis of the skills and knowledge needed for each task. A task to work on as the starting point is agreed and the corresponding work plan is selected. The trainer and the learner then discuss the specific skills the individual learner needs to develop. Additional aspects particular to the learner are recorded on the work plan and resources and activities are agreed. This process continues throughout the year with regular reviews.

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Initial assessment      │
│     identifies levels and   │
│       starting points.      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
              │
              ▼
┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Tasks and work plan     │ ◄──┐
│    are agreed and selected. │    │
└─────────────────────────────┘    │
              │                    │
              ▼                    │
┌─────────────────────────────┐    │
│    Record on the work plan  │    │
│  the skills and knowledge   │    │
│  that the individual        │    │
│  learner needs to develop.  │    │
└─────────────────────────────┘    │
              │                    │
              ▼                    │
┌─────────────────────────────┐    │
│      work plan reviewed     │────┘
│  and skills developed are   │
│        recorded.            │
│  Skills to develop further  │
│         recorded.           │
└─────────────────────────────┘
```
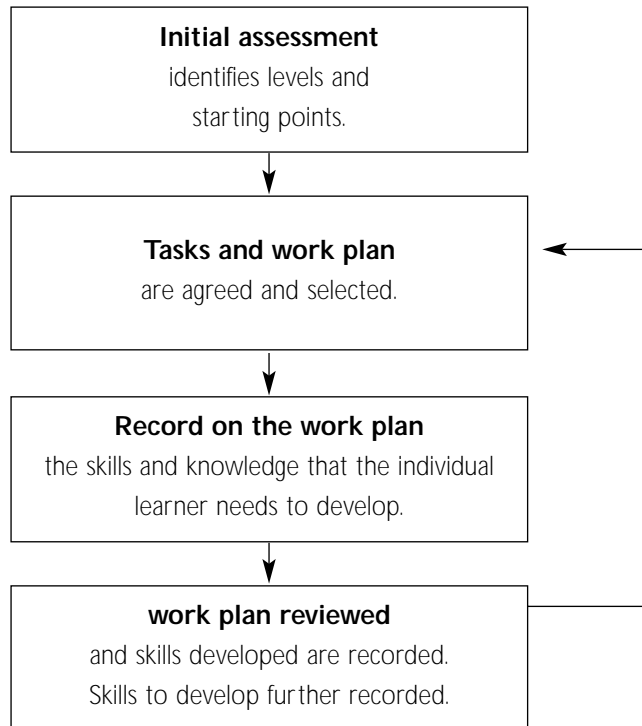
Example 2

The outcomes of self-assessment are used to devise learning goals and work plans in the following two figures.

English Learning Plan

Trainer: Anna **Learner:** Terry **Date:** 18/1/00

Methods to be used

Demonstration ☐ Discussion ☐ Handouts ☐
Practical ☐ Workbooks ☐ Audio/video ☐

Topic: Reading

Qualification aim:

Task	Subskills and knowledge	Need to work on	Can do	Possible activities	Suggested resources
Reading new words	Phonics/sounds	✓		language experience	materials from work
	Breaking words down (syllables)	✓		answering questions	cloze exercises
	Blends	✓		cloze exercises	comprehension from NVQ underpinning knowledge
	Letter patterns	✓		underlining words not sure of	signs and notices in the workplace
	Recognise whole words	✓		shared reading	100 most used words
	Reading in context (making sense of words read)	✓		giving opinion	everyday words at work
	Re-reading more fluently	✓			

New words (tick when learnt)

nail ✓ joints
wood ✓ health
tool ✓ safety
saw ✓ hammer ✓

English Learning Plan

Trainer: John   **Learner:** Theresa   **Date:** 18/10/99

Methods to be used

Demonstration ☑   Discussion ☑   Handouts ☑
Practical ☑   Workbooks ☐   Audio/video ☐

Topic: Writing formal letters

Qualification aim:

Task	Subskills and knowledge	Need to work on	Can do	~~Possible activities~~ Words	Suggested resources
Identify topic	Discuss/think about reasons for writing		✓	through	
Brainstorm ideas	Identify method of brainstorming	✓		thought	
	Write ideas relevant to topic		✓	though	
Plan writing	Organise ideas from brainstorm	✓		beginning	
	Identify beginning (introduction)	✓			
	Identify middle (main body)	✓			
	Identify ending (conclusion)				
	Use appropriate start & finish (dear/yours)				
Draft writing	Understand layout				
	Spell words used (see spelling work plan)	✓			
	Use appropriate formal vocabulary/style	✓			
	Use relevant punctuation (see punctuation work plan)				
	Use paragraphs		✓		
Proof read work	Check for errors independently	✓			
	Check for errors with trainer support		✓		
Redraft	Edit and rewrite corrected letter		✓		

Example 3

One large provider uses the following guidance for basic skills numeracy trainers.

Five steps to using initial assessments to set up learning goals

Step 1: Before meeting the learner

i)   Read the learner's initial interview notes, taking note of the learner's long-term goals and past learning experiences.

ii) Read through the notes on what the learner has said they can and can't do.

iii) Select an appropriate initial assessment test to give to the learner at the first session.

Step 2: First meeting with the learner

i)   Give the learner the initial assessment.

ii) Discuss your analysis with the learner.

iii) Find out more about some areas of difficulty.

iv) Agree goals for the first learning plan.

Step 3: On-programme

i)   Make sure each piece of work links to learning goals.

ii) Make sure there are links with vocational training.

iii) Complete an evaluation of each session.

iv) Record progress in achieving goals.

v)   Note areas of work that should be included in future learning plans.

Step 4: Four weekly review

i)   Review learning goals for pace and relevance.

ii) Record progress and achievements.

iii) Set new learning goals using initial assessment and on-programme evaluations.

iv) Include vocational trainer and/or employer in review and goal-setting.

Step 5: Quarterly review

i)   Review as before with all parties.

ii) Record achievement.

iii) Reset learning goals.

Example 4

One provider describes three different aspects of setting learning goals to enable staff to be clear about the purpose.

These different aspects are:

1. Achievement and personal learning goals; the learners define their achievement in their own terms, for example:

    –   being able to read health and safety manuals

    –   running my own business

    –   being able to cope with requirements of NVQ

    –   learning enough to be able to get promotion.

2. Achievement and external awards; care must be taken to provide learners with programmes that match their individual learning needs. Too much emphasis on external awards may mean the other achievements of learners are not recognised or valued.

3. Achievement and primary learning goals; these are goals against which achievement is recorded for funding purposes; they should also be broken down into personal learning goals.

Example 5

Skilled basic skills staff work with learners to establish relevant and realistic learning goals. They adopt a staged approach to setting learning goals, identifying milestones or key points in progress toward the goals, and recording progress. One provider uses the process shown below.

Work with the learner to decide what they need and want to learn

Break down the learning into small steps

Set an achievable learning goal for each step

Decide how you will know whether a goal has been achieved

For example:
- task satisfactorily completed
- learner able to use new concept
- learner builds on new learning to tackle a different task
- learner applies new learning in a different setting.

Build in regular checks to see whether a goal has been achieved, using:
- observation
- working with the learner
- open-ended questions
- learners' work
- class or group discussions
- setting of specific tasks
- testing
- learners' own views about their learning.

Decide how to record learning and how to involve the learner in the recording

Record learning, including the achievement of a learning goal

Set new learning goals

Example 6

Effective learning goals are realistic and relevant to learners' lives and work.
One provider issues guidance to staff on how to set achievable goals and then to
identify and record learning. They use a six-stage process:

Stage 1   Setting of learning goals

Stage 2   Identifying skills needed to achieve learning goals

Stage 3   Finding out what the learner can do already

Stage 4   Planning learning activities

Stage 5   Recognising and recording learning

Stage 6   Setting milestones

How the process works is illustrated in the following case study.

Setting goals for George

George is married with two teenage children. He has always struggled with writing and went to a
special school. He believes he may be dyslexic. George works for a company making fitted
kitchens. He avoids doing any writing. George would gain promotion if he could fill in requisition
forms, work completion forms, accident forms, risk assessment forms, and so on. At the moment
George 'keeps his head down' in case he has to write anything. George can spell his name but
only part of his address. However, he can spell the names of his wife and children. He is not able
to spell the name of his company. George is unclear how to use capitals. When he writes, he
always uses capital letters. During the interview, George did not do any handwriting; he found it
stressful just to write his name and address. George could read the entry level assessment
material (jumble sale advertisement and instructions for cleaning a paintbrush). He says he never
reads maps because he finds them confusing. He always drives and his wife navigates.

Stage 1 Setting of learning goals

George described his learning goals as:

'I want to improve my writing'
'I need to fill in forms at work'
'I want to be able to take down phone messages'

Example 6 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Stage 2 Identifying skills needed to achieve learning goals

George's learning goals were broken down into the following smaller steps:

'I want to improve my writing' might involve the skills of:

- punctuation
- grammar
- spelling
- handwriting
- thinking what to say.

Each of these skills was broken down again. For example, punctuation might involve recognising and understanding how to use:

- capitals
- commas.

Stage 3 Finding out what the learner can do already

George's completed interview form and supporting information are provided below.

Example 6 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

LEARNING GOALS

Overall learning goal: to improve writing.

Specific learning goals:

- cope with the writing required for his work
- write letters.

Literacy	Present level (using Basic Skills Agency standards)	Priority H = high M = medium L = low C = can do now
Reading textual material	E (Entry Level 1)	M
Completing forms	Pre-E (Pre-Entry)	H
Using reference systems	Pre-E	M
Communication in writing: • spelling	Pre-E	H
• punctuation	Pre-E	M
• grammar	Pre-E	M
• write letters	Pre-E	M
• write essays	N/A	N/A

Numeracy
Current skills: N/A

IT
Current skills: N/A

Interviewed by: Maria

Date of interview: 15 September 1999

Assessment attached: Yes ☐   No ☐

Example 6 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Stage 4: Planning learning activities

George's learning for the first few weeks of his programme might include:

- learning strategies for remembering spellings
- writing his address unaided
- learning key words used on work forms to spell unaided
- writing letters of the alphabet in upper and lower case
- reading and understanding the main forms used at work.

Remember the words George needs to read will not necessarily be words he needs to spell.

Stage 5: Recognising and recording learning

Work with George to decide whether or not he had achieved each of his learning goals. Decide how to work with George to record his learning.

Stage 6: Setting milestones

Work with George to set significant stages, or milestones, in his learning. These milestones will be used to assess if his generic learning goals have been achieved.

Example 7

One provider issues the following advice to its basic skills staff on how best to describe learning goals for learners on vocational training programmes receiving basic skills support. It illustrates how learning goals are set for a learner needing basic skills support on a vocational programme.

Lennie is an advanced modern apprentice in Sport and Recreation. His initial assessment indicated that he needed help with spelling, taking notes and punctuation. The following support plan review form illustrates Lennie's learning goals and the support tutor's comments on his progress.

Name of learner: *Lennie*	**Main programme title:** *AMA*	
Term: *Autumn 1998*	**School:** *Sport and Recreation Level 3*	
Goals for the term	**Learner's and learning support tutor's comments on progress**	**Is further work needed? Please tick**

Spelling:
 • *understand and use the Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check method of learning spellings.*
 • *identify spelling strategies that work.*
 • *learn six spellings a week – course related.*
 	
 Writing:
 • *Learn to take notes from*
   i. an audio source
   ii. a written source.
 	
 Punctuation:
 Learn to use the apostrophe for possession.
 	
 Study skills:
 Learn to use notes for planning work and recording meetings
	Uses the method effectively and finds it helpful.
	 Has identified five strategies.
	 Kept to the target and can remember new words learnt in past six weeks.
	
	 Needs to practise more
	 I still find this difficult. Please could Peter find more examples for me to work on.
	
	 I can use the apostrophe OK most of the time now.
	
	 Made a good start but now needs to practise using bullet points.	

Comments on attendance		
Learner's signature	**Learning support tutor (print)**	

Taking Account of Learning Styles when Developing Learning Goals

In developing learning goals, the assessment of learning styles is worthwhile only if the outcomes are analysed and used to improve learning and achievement. Checking effective learning styles is an important stage in determining an appropriate starting point. The assessment of learning styles has five main purposes:

i)   to find out how the learner prefers to learn in order to set relevant learning goals and devise learning plans

ii) to find out whether the learner uses effective or ineffective learning strategies

iii) to provide information so the trainer can adapt their teaching styles to fit the learning style of the individual or group

iv) to enable the trainer to help the learner 'learn how to learn' by developing a wider range of effective learning strategies

v)   to start the development of the learner as a reflective learner, able to understand and improve their own learning processes, to think about what they have learnt and what they need to learn next.

It is important that trainers are well informed about the processes and tests used to identify learning styles. They should also know how to respond to the outcomes by varying their teaching methods and learning materials.

Example 1

In this example, one provider has developed the following approach to identifying learning styles and matching them with appropriate teaching styles.

Learning Styles Survey

The Learning Styles Survey (LSS) can help to raise awareness about learning strengths and weaknesses and is best used alongside a range of other resources.

The survey is not a diagnostic tool, but a way of signposting learners to learning resources that will help them to achieve and enjoy their learning experience.

The LSS is available on the provider's intranet. Learners can work through it independently and print off their results, or a trainer may prefer to work through the survey with the learner.

Using the LSS as a starting point for an individual learning plan

The LSS will give a current picture of the learner's preferred method of learning. The information is used to help each learner access the most suitable learning resources, whether that is through formal or guided teaching, group work, one-to-one tuition or independent learning.

The survey highlights strengths and weaknesses in the following four categories:

IF learner style:
- practical tasks
- games and role play
- finding your own answers to things
- choosing your own topics to study.

WHAT learner style:
- listening to people telling you things
- writing notes
- reading to find things out
- working on your own.

WHY learner style:
- listening to other people
- having time to think things through
- sharing ideas with others
- collecting information.

HOW learner style:
- doing things
- trying things out
- watching people do things
- seeing how things work.

Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

The survey will give scores that indicate a spread of preferences. It is suggested that at induction with a new learner, emphasis is given to providing learning resources that play to their obvious strengths. This will encourage early success and provide additional motivation as their learning gets under way.

The provider maps the outcomes of assessments of learning styles on the following grid showing four main learning styles and a range of teaching styles.

Trainers can take account of their learners' learning styles by planning learning sessions which use approaches which match their learners' preferences.

Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

LSS: Grid showing the inter-relation of learning styles with teaching style

TEACHING STYLES ↑ / LEARNING STYLES →

Teaching style \ Learning style	IF STYLE	Practical tasks	Games & role play	Find own answers	Choose own topics	WHAT STYLE	Listen to people tell	Writing notes	Read to find out	Work on own	WHY STYLE	Listen to others	Time to think	Share ideas with others	Collect information
Work sheets		•		•			•		•						•
Simulation		•													•
Projects		•													•
Visits or Field trips							•								
Experience							•		•	•			•		•
Case study															
Assignment															
ASSESSMENT/ TASKS															•
Multi-media															
USING INFO TECH												•	•	•	
Team work			•												
Role play															
GROUP ACTIVITIES															
Work placement												•	•	•	
Mentoring													•	•	•
Interactive learning									•	•					
Independent learning							•					•		•	
Discussion															
LEARNER CENTRED		•	•												
Work-based training															
Team Teaching							•	•				•			•
Lecture/ lecturette													•		
Facilitation									•						

Example 2

Another provider has produced the following guidance for staff planning individual learning plans to suit a learner's learning style.

The guidance was provided as part of a development course on learning styles for basic skills staff. Most of the participants were basic skills specialists. The course aimed to:

i) introduce staff to the ideas of learning style and teaching style

ii) help staff use teaching styles and learning strategies to improve learning.

Understanding learning styles

What is meant by a learning style?

In simple terms, a learning style is the way in which an individual learner tries to learn.

The method used may not be successful but the learner continues to use it because he or she is unaware that alternative styles are possible.

What is meant by a teaching style?

In simple terms, a teaching style is the way in which a trainer:

i) tries to convey information to a learner

ii) suggests ways in which the learner can learn, and do new things.

Finding the right learning and teaching styles for a learner

Learning is more likely to take place if the trainer offers information in a manner that matches the learning style which is most successful for a particular learner.

(**Note** – in literature on learning styles the term 'preferred learning style' is often used. A learner's 'preferred learning style' may not always be the one that would be most successful for that learner. The learner may be unaware that other learning styles exist.)

For successful learning to take place, the trainer needs to be aware of:

• the learning style the learner is currently using for a particular task

• whether or not this is successful

• any learning styles with which the learner has particular difficulties

• the teaching style that the trainer is trying to use

• alternative teaching styles that may be more successful.

During initial assessment you may identify that a learner has a particular learning style, for example:

- visual
- auditory
- kinaesthetic or motor.

You can then devise their learning programme to match the way the learner learns now, and to help the learner discover new ways of learning.

Visual learners

Developing reading skills

Teaching strategies could include:

Basic reading	– write key vocational words in colour
	– link key words to posters and pictures
	– stick key words around the workplace where the learner will see them frequently and visually link to the place.
Developing comprehension	– encourage the learner to draw or visualise summaries of a passage, e.g. a nursery nurse working on health and hygiene for an NVQ unit could draw key points as he or she reads them.
Increasing readability	– use colour
	– use boxes, frames, illustrations
	– spacing.

Learning goal

- understand which methods will improve his or her ability to recognise specific words
- understand which methods will improve his or her comprehension
- use methods which will improve comprehension when reading
- comprehension skills are improved
- define a number of key words to be learned in a given time period.

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Developing numeracy strategies

Teaching strategies could include:

- ways of illustrating processes visually
- using colour for signs, e.g. + − ÷ ✓
- using colour for numbers used in processes, e.g. decimal points, multiplying by 10
- showing processes you describe on paper
- asking the learner to write down a process as you describe it.

Learning goals

- the learner creates a clear visual record or processes – colour, clearly laid out
- the learner uses visual marks and guidelines in working with or remembering processes
- the learner remembers the processes defined.

Auditory learners

Developing reading skills

Teaching strategies could include:

Basic reading   –   make sure the learner has been taught and knows sound letter relations and all blends (e.g. digraphs and sounds. Do this by using words the learner needs to know for his or her course. **Don't** work through rows of sounds or irrelevant words.

           –   teach common 'chunks' of sounds in words, e.g. -ment, -tion, -fully (learners often use phonics inappropriately and divide and blend words at the wrong points)

           –   teach the learner to break words up according to recognisable chunks, not single sounds, e.g.:

> man / age / ment
>
> horti / culture
>
> agri / culture

           –   teach the learner to recognise when decoding a word by sound is not working because the word is irregular. They need to know how to use the context to arrive at meaning, e.g. choir.

Developing reading   –   encourage the learner to read paragraphs onto tape. Listen and then identify key points

           –   encourage the learner to read quietly and then say key points.

Learning goals

- break down unknown words into sound 'chunks' to decode
- recognise when an unknown word cannot be decoded by sound and where the context gives clues as to meaning. Learners need to learn to move on in reading when they encounter an unknown word.

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Developing essay/assignment writing skills

Teaching strategies could include:

- teach the learner to brainstorm onto a tape recorder

- teach them how to use this tape to draw up a plan – this could be in the form of a mind map or a linear plan

- arrange with the vocational staff for the learner to record learning sessions

- teach the learner how to use this recording to write clear notes.

Learning goals

- learner to try tape recordings to see if they work

- if they work, use tape recordings to aid note-taking and assignment planning.

Example 2 (continued)

Other strategies for all learners.

Help your learner to understand the structure of words – root, prefix, suffix.

Teach word families and word building.

Encourage your learner to link words with similar meaning:

medical
medicine } – learner is less likely to write an 's'

sign
signature } – learner is more likely to spell sign in the correct letter order

Encourage learners to link words to their meaning:

Sunday   –   the day of the sun god

Monday   –   the day of the moon god.

Encourage learners to link words to a known spelling even if the sound is different, e.g. link 'said' to 'paid'.

Encourage learners to identify the difficult part of a word and think of a strategy to overcome it, e.g.:

pro**f**e**ss**or: one fool in front of many students

eff**ici**ent: ICI paints are efficient.

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Build up visual memory

Although the learner may not like a visual learning style, it is essential that he or she recognises the importance of visual memory in spelling and aims to develop techniques to improve his or her visual memory. This is important for all learners with spelling difficulties.

Divide pairs of vowels in words to help the learner remember the order, e.g. bu/ild.

Identify words within words.

Use different coloured pens to highlight the difficult parts of words.

Look for symmetrical patterns, especially in the middle of words, e.g. ind/ivi/dual.

Space the word out on a page emphasising small words, single, easily omitted letters, prefixes and suffixes, e.g.:

> parl i a ment
> dis appoint ment

- emphasise spelling patterns in words in colour.

Learning goals
- find methods to learn spellings that work
- use these methods to remember spelling and practise the spelling using Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check.

Developing memory skills

Teaching strategies could include:

- teach learner how to record key points onto tape (possibly against a background of instrumental, not vocal, music)
- teach learner how to tap out key points rhythmically
- teach the use of alliteration in memorising key facts
- work out mnemonics with the learner.

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Learning goals

- learner to identify which memory methods work for them

- use these methods in revision

- remember identified fact or process.

Developing numeracy skills

Teaching strategies could include:

- learn tables by rhythmic repetition, tapping them out

- learn tables to music (there is a tape available with tables to music)

- learn key formulae on processes in a similar way

- tape the rhythmic chanting of formulae or processes.

Take care!

Be careful about trying these strategies in situations that might embarrass your learner. You may need to tape materials or use a private room where your learner can talk, chant or recite in privacy.

Learning goals

- try using auditory materials of learning tables, formulae and processes; decide whether they are useful

- use auditory means of learning numerical processes etc., if they are useful

- learn the defined process using this method.

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Kinaesthetic (motor) learners

Developing reading skills

Teaching strategies could include:

Basic reading	–	trace words while reading them
	–	have a real object next to the written word, e.g. nail
	–	use the real object while the word is visible
	–	model a word in clay or plasticine (if appropriate for a learner).
Developing reading	–	to improve comprehension, try using actions to describe or draw out key points.

Learning goals

- learner to assess learning method to see whether it works
- learner to use method if it works.

Developing essay/assignment writing skills

Teaching strategies could include:

- suggesting the learner plans each section and paragraph on a different piece of paper and physically moves them around
- teach cut and stick
- role play a process before writing it down.

Learning goals

- learner to assess personal usefulness of different strategies
- learner to use different strategies if found appropriate.

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Developing spelling skills

Remember

- whatever strategy a learner uses to remember a spelling they also need to practise spelling regularly using Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check
- offer alternative strategies
- encourage the learner to work out what works for them. It may not be the same as what works for you.

Teaching strategies could include:

- encouraging the learner to trace out words in the air
- suggesting to the learner that they write in large flowing handwriting
- if your learner gets stuck on a word, teaching them to go back and start again using joined-up handwriting to keep the flow going.

Learning goals

To practise writing words regularly with joined-up handwriting. Define the number of times each week each word should be practised.

Example 3

One large provider encourages learners to be analytical about how they learn throughout their programmes. However, it was found that very few learners actually commented on their record sheets about how they had learned. Their comments tended to be more about what they had learned and what they felt they still needed to learn. To explore further how learners prefer to learn, a few trainers discussed learning styles with their learners and either the trainer or learner recorded their responses. The comments received from learners had some useful lessons for staff.

Don't label your learner

Learners are rarely wholly visual, auditory or kinaesthetic learners. They may prefer different learning styles for different activities. For example, Mike talked about numeracy:

> *'I don't often remember the way a sum looks'*
> (suggests non-visual learner)

> *'I like to hear the sound of my own voice in my head when doing calculations'*
> (suggests auditory learner)

> *'I don't often use practical activities but I think it might be useful. I often count with my fingers'*
> (suggests kinaesthetic learner who needs to be guided in techniques to use this style of learning)

> and:

> *'Initially I like examples with diagrams, words and numbers'.*

Staff would have been mistaken to assume Mike had only one preferred learning style.

John suggested he was both a visual and an auditory learner:

> *'I have to remember the layout of a sum in my mind or picture it on a page in order to remember how to do it the next time'*
> and:

> *'Speaking aloud does help me remember how to do a sum.'*

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Likes and dislikes

Staff need to be aware of learning styles that individual learners like or dislike.

For example, Mary said:

> *'Being shown the breakdown of a sum by colour does **not** help me remember how to do it.'*

Using activities such as cutting things up to understand fractions produced the response:

> *'This would not help as I would get bored when trying to think about what I was supposed to be cutting up and I would not be thinking about the end result of the sum.'*

About learning spelling, Joy said

> *'I don't like the word being divided up – it gets me muddled.'*

Finding new ways of learning from the learner

For example, Philip said:

> *'I learn spelling best by mentally projecting each letter on the wall and seeing the word like a slide. When I have done this I spell the word forwards and backwards so that it sticks in my head.'*

Be aware of other possible learning styles

Several references were made to styles of learning that could be termed 'cognitive'. These included remembering link words to learn spellings, remembering how to do a sum by linking the process to remembering a particular situation or moment; and 'using pegs to help memory.'

Learner preferences

Some learners work best with a structured linear approach, while others prefer a more flexible learning method.

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

For example, Tina and Neil preferred structured approaches, and said:

> *'Using bullet points for major ideas list them in order of how you'd write it. Each bullet point is a paragraph.'*

> *'I like an emphasis on structure and planning assignments because I find it difficult to get my thoughts down on paper and I forget what I say.'*

Some learners are happy working alone with support available when they need it. Others learn more successfully in a small group or with staff intervention.

Miriam said:

> *'I hate being given work and not allowed to get on with it.'*

Samuel said:

> *'Working on your own with a member of staff can be too slow.'*

Developing basic skills at the same time as doing real practical work is a technique that can work for other learners.

John prefers this:

> *'Our trainer always checks how we have coped when we need to measure up a job. She gives us lots of chances to practise.'*

■

How might you improve the process used in your organisation to establish individual learning goals?

■

How do you ensure learning goals are realistic and relevant to learners' own lives and aspirations?

■

How do you use the information gained from your initial assessment and any carried out by vocational trainers to set appropriate learning goals?

■

How are the outcomes of assessment analysed and used in your provision to inform the design of individual learning programmes?

■

How are the outcomes of learning styles assessments used by staff, including vocational trainers and supervisors, to inform their teaching methods?

■

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

UNIT 1	**Teaching, Learning and Students' Achievements**

Teaching and Learning:

- programme design
- approaches to teaching and learning
- learning resources

Element 1: Programme Design

The development of individual learning and support programmes has received less attention in basic skills teaching over recent years as staff have focused on implementing standardised schemes that lead to nationally recognised awards. This emphasis has led to some staff mistakenly accepting the scheme of accreditation as the learning programme. The result may be that programmes are less well-matched to individual learning needs and not linked with vocational goals. More experienced and effective staff recognise that the standardised scheme may specify content and intended outcomes, but that the programme still needs careful design and planning. This includes consideration of teaching methods and materials, assessment procedures, learning contexts and settings.

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

The most effective providers use clearly stated principles for the design and teaching of learning programmes for basic skills. Although providers may use different terms to describe each stage in the design process, they generally follow a common cycle which includes the processes illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Processes in the design and teaching of learning programmes

Undertaking needs analysis.

Reviewing and making necessary changes to the programme.

Prioritising **what** skills need to be learnt; deciding **how** these skills should be taught.

Monitoring the programme's effectiveness.

Designing the programme, including **where** and **when** the programme should be offered.
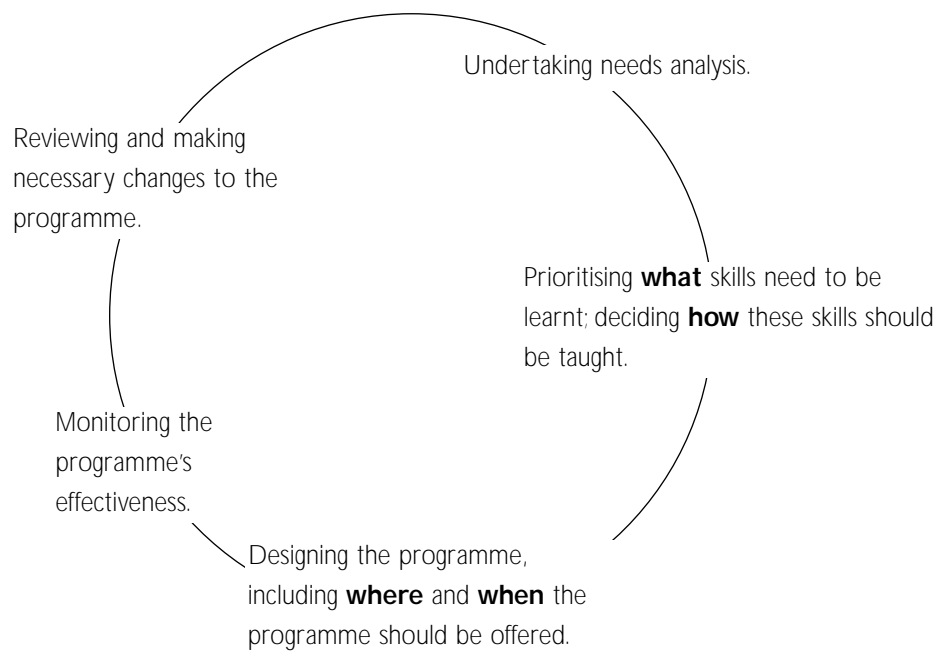
The best programme design gets the right learning to the learner, in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place.

A selection of design principles and the various stages of design used by different providers follow.

Example 1

The figure below shows one provider's analysis of the wider factors influencing its design of basic skills programmes.

Design of programmes of learning — influenced by:

- Employers' expectations
- Award/assessment requirements
- Funding requirements
- Understanding of how learners learn
- **Learner**
  Needs, expectations, learning styles, values, beliefs, ability, interests, employment ambitions, time/travel/financial constraints and commitments
- Opportunities for progression – NVQ, Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships, industry-specific awards, Open College, employment
- In-house resources:
  - staff
  - accommodation
  - materials
  - reprographics
  - admin. support
  - ICT
- status of basic skills provision within the organisation
- senior management support
- Staff experience
- Support workers' experience/availability

Example 2

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

One work-based learning provider uses the following set of arrangements for designing programmes, including all literacy and numeracy provision.

Programme Design

Purpose:

- to ensure that, whenever a programme is created, or changed, it achieves its aims, objectives and expected outcomes
- to communicate all aspects of the programme to all concerned
- to promote consistency of delivery on programmes within the Centre
- to provide the foundation for continuous improvement via programme review
- to facilitate the transplanting of best practice between Centres.

Procedure:

- agree and record the design inputs of the new or modified programme with the manager and/or training co-ordinator. Use page 1 of the Prog Design Checklist, N113, to ensure all design inputs are covered
- establish whether a similar programme exists within YMCA Training. Obtain a copy of the design and utilise as the basis for the following steps whenever possible
- identify the resources needed to satisfy the design, indicating whether these already exist, need to be bought or be developed. Record on page 2 of the Prog Design Checklist N113
- the manager and/or training co-ordinator to verify the resources identified, agree timescales and the people responsible
- ensure all resources can be precisely identified (e.g. unique ID, date)
- develop or procure the required resources
- ask an appropriate colleague to check the design and resources
- present the design and resources to the manager for approval
- secure a master copy (hard and soft, if possible) of the design and materials
- pilot the programme
- amend the design if necessary.

Guidance:

- all programmes should be subject to the design process
- design inputs that are not relevant to a particular programme should be identified as 'not applicable' and a brief comment included as to why
- additional design inputs should be added to the checklist when necessary, to ensure they are included in future programme reviews
- expected outcomes should be quantified wherever possible and used to compare actual outcomes during programme review
- programme design has financial and quality implications, therefore, all designs should be seen and approved by the manager before delivery.

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Programme Design Checklist

Design Inputs: Tick to show each has been agreed and recorded or mark 'n/a'	
Programme title	
Client group	
Aims and objectives	
Expected outcomes: qualifications (specify last entry date), employment, etc.	
Expected duration	
Attendance pattern	
Staff: Participant ratio	
Participant entry requirements	
Recruitment pattern: roll-on/roll-off, block intake/roll-off, fixed duration	
Programme content	
Initial assessment: specify materials to be used and how the results are to be utilised	
Mode and location of training delivery:	
– underpinning knowledge	
– practical experience	
– key skills	
– exit training	
– frequency of day release	
Review frequency, location	
Assessment:	
– method	
– location	
– frequency	
– assessor	
Internal verifier	
Employer or placement provider's role:	
– training	
– experience	
– assessment opportunities	
– assessment	

Design Inputs agreed: **Date:** ____/___/___

Resources required:	Exists	Bought	Developed	By When	By Whom
Training aids: e.g. workbooks, OHTs, exercises, videos, handouts					
In-house: e.g. seminar room, whiteboard, OHP etc.					
Placement: e.g. computer, tools, stock control					
Assessment resources: e.g. on-job assessors, paperwork, simulations etc					
Session plans/preparation form: ref to prog content and resources					
Written programme outline: (for recruitment purposes)					
Agreed design requirements and timescales ____/____/____					
Manager...Person resp 1..					
Person resp 2...Person resp 3..................................					
Design and materials checked by appropriate colleague:					
Seen and approved by the manager:					

Example 3

The following flowchart shows the stages in the design of one provider's basic skills provision.

(1) Needs analysis
- identify each learner's aims, goals and expectations
- assess each learner's current basic skills levels
- agree a style of learning programme – individual workshop programme or small group working together.

Individual workshop style programme

Small group

(2) Deciding what needs to be learnt
Break down each learner's primary goal into the basic skills needed to achieve that goal.

(2) Prioritising what skills need to be learnt
Member of staff reviews individual learning goals with all learners in the group.

(3) Prioritising skills
With the learner prioritise the order in which the skills should be learnt.

(3) Deciding how skills are to be taught and the signing-off procedure
Trainer agrees a learning programme that incorporates individual and group goals.

(4) Designing the programme
Negotiate a learning plan for the first six weeks stating the skills needed as short-term measurable goals.

(4) Monitoring the programme's effectiveness
Weekly review to ensure programme stays on target for all.

(5) Monitoring the programme's effectiveness
Weekly evaluation at end of each session.

(6) Reviewing the programme
After six weeks, review the learning plan with the learner for achievement, pace and content.

(7) Checking outcomes against original needs analysis
At the end of the guided learning hours assess overall achievement against learner's learning goals. Agree progression.

Example 4

The stages in designing cross-company work-based learning for basic skills are set out by one provider as follows.

Introduction

There are three possible starting points to basic skills support in work-based learning:

i)   the employer asks the provider to provide all the training and support which has already been agreed with the company.

ii) an individual manager within the company asks the provider to participate in negotiations with the company. Managers and union officials within the company have not yet agreed that basic skills support is needed.

iii) the provider approaches the employer to suggest that basic skills support should be provided on the premises.

The starting point decides the first part of the design process.

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1. Needs analysis

Meetings between:

i)   provider staff

ii) managers from the company

iii) union representatives.

The purpose of the meetings is to:

i)   clarify desired outcomes for the company

ii) define the target group

iii) obtain the employer's statement of the literacy and numeracy skills needed by employees to improve job skills and job transferability

iv) agree non-stigmatising recruitment methods

v)   clarify practical arrangements, e.g. timing and location of classes

vi) identify a named person in the company who will liaise with the provider.

---

2. Interview and assess potential learners

The aim of interviews is to:

i)   identify literacy and numeracy needed by learners' jobs and for other training

ii) identify learners' perception of their difficulties

iii) assess the learners' current level of skills.

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Prioritise what needs to be learnt

3. Draw up a list of the literacy/numeracy skills to be covered by the programme using:
   i) employer's statement of needs
   ii) learners' statements
   iii) observation in the workplace, analysing tasks that require basic skills.

4. Decide on the appropriateness and use of external accreditation
   i) include external awards if appropriate and costs
   ii) decide how to assess achievement if no suitable award is available

Design the programme

5. Plan programme
   i) list skills acquisition in priority order
   ii) prepare materials which make the learning relevant to the workplace.

Deliver the programme

6. Deliver programme
   i) build in opportunities for learner evaluation.

Monitor

7. Monitor progress
   i) check learner and employer satisfaction
   ii) check – are learners learning?

Evaluate

8. Evaluate programme
   i) with learners
   ii) with managers and supervisors
   iii) if appropriate, with the union.

Review and make changes

9. Review and make required changes
   i) in the light of feedback from all participants
   i) make changes to design and delivery to provide a better match for learners' needs.

Example 5

This following table illustrates how the basic skills programme was developed by one provider.

1. Needs analysis The needs of potential learners who would like to undertake a basic skills programme were identified. Means of identification: • information provided at initial interview and assessment • information from enquirers • enquiries of other organisations e.g. employers, schools, job centres, social services.	**1. Needs analysis showed:** • basic skills tuition needed from pre-entry to Level 3 • tuition needed in range of locations, not all within easy access of the main site • tuition needed at a range of times of day • many potential learners have limited times when they are available to attend, e.g. only on Thursday afternoons • shift workers need to be accommodated • learners need to be able to begin tuition at any time of the year • some learners with disabilities need additional support • some learners need support in the form of childcare facilities • wide range of personal long-term learning goals – some very general, some specific e.g. wanting to begin NVQ in the future • wide variation in the context of learning for potential learners • wide variation in the confidence of learners to engage in training.
2. Establishing the programme(s) that ideally should be available to learners	• a learning programme that meets the individual's personal learning goals • a learning programme that takes place in the context of the individual's personal life • access to teaching at a time to suit the learner • access to teaching at a location readily accessible to the learner

Example 5 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

	• a style of learning programme that meets the individual's preferred learning style • access to a range of teaching methods and materials. This should include access to IT • teaching by a trainer with a qualification in teaching basic skills • a learning environment with which the learner is comfortable and in which he or she is likely to learn • this includes the physical environment, the size of group, the needs of other learners in the group and the impact of other learners in the group • access to other facilities that will assist the learner e.g. learning resources • the opportunity to obtain external awards • a programme design that facilitates and encourages progression.
3. Establishing the resources available	• the number of staffing hours available • the availability of staff with basic skills teaching qualifications • the possibility of training or recruiting more staff • the geographical locations available • provider requirements e.g. minimum group size.
4. Prioritising	• the priority for this provider was seen to be that each individual should have a learning programme that clearly worked towards their individual learning goals and was placed in the context of their own learning needs • it was also clear that resource limitations meant that only a limited number of teaching hours could be allocated to each geographical area each week • learners' needs were such that it would be impossible to group them into homogeneous groups at times and places to suit all learners. The size of group would not have been sustainable within the available resources • the level of learner confidence suggested that learners needed a consistent training input and a trainer who would offer regular guidance and support in the development of their learning programmes.

	• this led to the fundamental premise to provide a framework for individual learning programmes supported by a personal tutor
	• learners who are able to work individually are placed in a group which meets at the same time each week with the same trainer. Each learner has a personal learning plan and materials that match their own learning pace and style and their own learning needs in terms of the context of learning
	• learners who do not have the skills to work without a high level of trainer input have individual sessions with a voluntary tutor
	• the need to facilitate and encourage progression and the need to provide for a range of learning styles and learning needs has also led to the development of some small groups that work on learning programmes together, incorporating individual aims into the scheme of work
	• work-based learning groups are set up and a scheme of work is put in place for each of these groups to meet the
5. Limitations and compromises	• some aspects of the ideal programme are difficult to deliver within the facilities available e.g. the need to deliver in a wide range of geographical areas has necessitated the use of sites that do not have the full range of resources such as ICT
	• there are other difficulties in providing ideal learning environments. For example, some learners are disturbed by presence of younger learners or learners with mental health or behavioural difficulties. As far as possible support is offered when these difficulties occur but resource limitations mean that balancing the needs of all learners to provide the ideal learning environment for each one of them is not always possible.

Example 6

One work-based learning provider sets out an overview of the training process as shown in the following flowchart.

The Training Stages

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                Application                   │
│                    or                        │
│                 Referral                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             Initial Assessment               │
│                   and                        │
│                Guidance                      │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                Recruitment                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│               Learning Plan                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                 Induction                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                On-the-job                    │
│                 Training                     │
│             Off-the-job Training             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Reviews of Learner's Progress and Modifications to Learning Plan │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│             On-going Assessment              │
│                   and                        │
│                Verification                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                Evaluation                    │
│                    of                        │
│                 Training                     │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
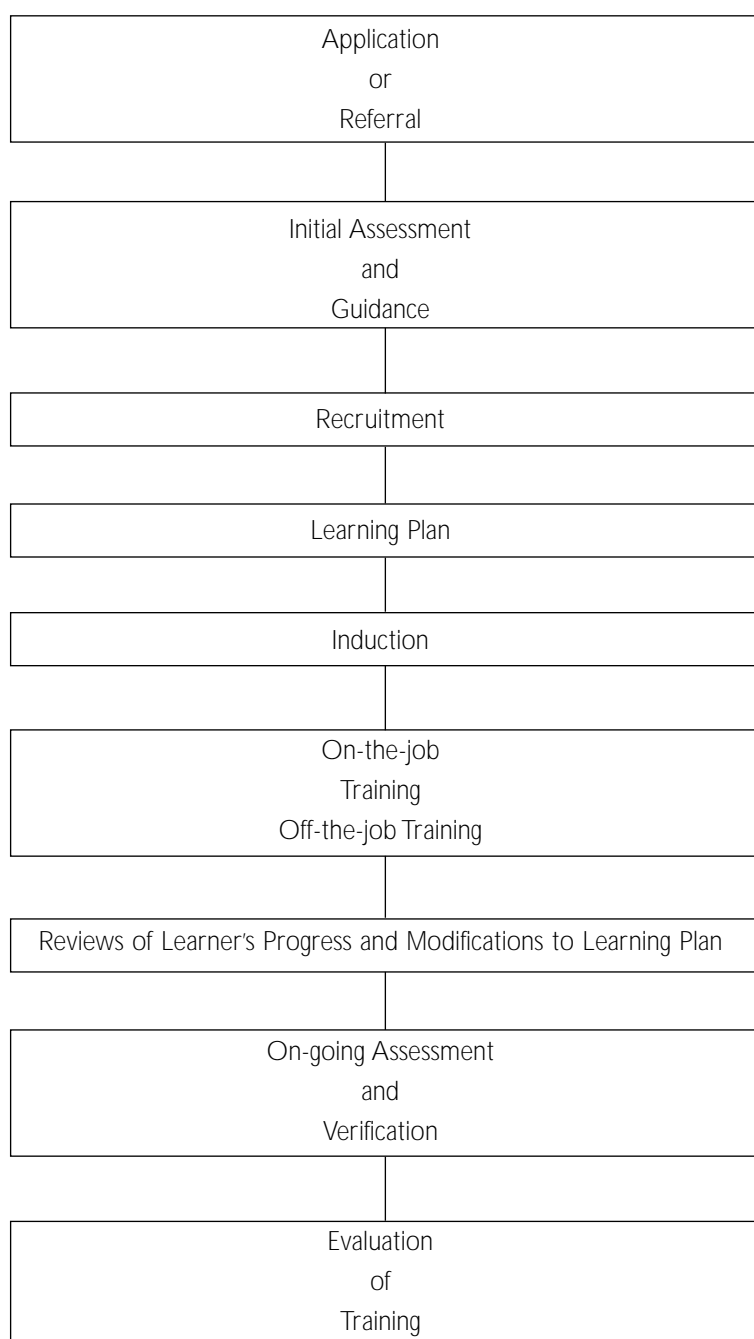
Example 6 (continued)

The general training stages, illustrated on the previous page, are applied to basic skills provision as shown below.

Basic Skills – Process and Paperwork

1   **Initial Screening Test** – to determine the overall skill level of the trainee. These are carried out every Wednesday morning at 10:00 am.

2   **Diagnostic Assessment** – to identify any specific skill needs. These are also carried out every Wednesday morning at 10:00 am.

3   **NVQ Information** – this is given at induction, where NVQ qualifications, assessment process and the awarding bodies are introduced and explained.

4   **Personal Record** – name, address, date of birth etc.

5   **Personal Learning Plan** – this is completed at induction by the trainer and the learner. It should link basic skills learning with vocational learning where appropriate.

6   **Induction Procedure** – this form is filled in following induction and is signed by the trainer and the learner. It ensures that all aspects of the induction to the training programme and organisation are covered. Further induction to the workplace may be required.

7   **Assessment Plan** – involving the learner, vocational trainer and employer or supervisor. This plan should identify tasks and activities in the workplace or off-the-job training that could contribute to basic skills or key skills assessment. Any relevant materials from the workplace that could be used as learning or assessment materials can also be highlighted.

8   **Assessor Feedback to Trainee** – this form is used for formative and summative assessments.

9   **Progress Reviews** – to involve learner, trainer, employer or supervisor and explore progress towards all learning goals. These can be useful as additional evidence for basic skills, key skills or NVQ portfolios.

10 **End of Programme Questionnaire** – to be completed by the learner.

Example 7

Another work-based learning provider uses the following format for programme design forms.

Programme title	3793-50 Communication Skills (Wordpower)
	3794-50 Numeracy Skills (Numberpower)
Client group	Category B-endorsed trainees
Aims and objectives	To address a broad range of basic skills:

Aims and objectives — To address a broad range of basic skills:

i)   Wordpower includes reading, written communication and oral communication at basic (Entry) level

ii)   Numberpower includes handling data, application of number skills, measuring, weighing at basic (Entry) level.

Expected outcomes   City & Guilds Certificate

Expected duration   Open-ended, but usually about three months.

Attendance pattern   Full-time work placement with agreed off-the-job training for underpinning knowledge and portfolio building.

Off-the-job sessions are held at the Irlam Training Centre usually once a week or fortnight, depending on the level of support required. Off-the-job training sessions will be agreed individually with the employer

Centre Hours:	Monday–Thursday	9:00 am–4:15 pm
	Friday	8:45 am–1:30 pm
Lunch Breaks:	45 mins	
Breaks:	15 mins (Mon–Thur: two a day; Fri one only)	
Employer Hours:	Monday–Friday	9:00 am–5:00 pm (max. 40 hours a week).

Some off-the-job support may be given at the employer's premises. Times to be agreed.

Trainees to work a minimum of 30 hours and a maximum of 40 hours.

Example 7 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Staff: Participant ratio	One-to-one
Pre-programme requirements:	Initial interview (clients referred from Careers Office).
	Open Door policy
	Application form, informal interview
Recruitment pattern	Roll-on/roll-off. See Procedure 1 Participant Recruitment retained in Staff Handbook (master copy in Manager's office).
	Interviews take place daily as and when required.
	Inductions take place weekly.
Programme contents	Each project contains a task sheet designed to address occupational skills areas. APL or APA to be considered where appropriate.
Initial assessment	See Procedure for Initial Assessment retained in Staff Handbook plus Initial Assessment Toolkit (master copies in Manager's office).
	Initial assessment takes place at induction. Depending on the results of this, the Basic Skills Assessment may be applied. This identifies the client's requirement for Wordpower or Numberpower or both.
Mode and location of training delivery	
Underpinning knowledge	Coaching is done on a one-to-one basis where a skill deficiency is disclosed or becomes apparent.
Practical experience	Wherever possible, real-life work experience is used. Where this is not possible, simulations are used. Every effort is made to ensure validity and accuracy.
Key skills	N/A
Exit training	Category B learners will be working towards employment status or will be employed in a placement company and working towards an NVQ. Further support to be identified to assist completion of NVQ.
Day release arrangements	One half-day a week, or by arrangement with the leaner, trainer or placement company.

Example 7 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Programme title	3793-50 Communication Skills (Wordpower)
	3794-50 Numeracy Skills (Numberpower).
Client group	Category B and C Opex-endorsed individuals.
Aims and objectives	To address a broad range of basic skills:
	i) Wordpower includes reading, written communication and oral communication at basic (Entry) level
	ii) Numberpower includes handling data, application of number skills and measuring at basic (Entry) level.
Expected outcomes	City & Guilds Certificate
Expected duration	Open-ended, but usually within 12 weeks.
Attendance pattern	Full-time, front-loaded before vocational placement or training commencement.
Staff: participant ratio	one-to-group size
Participant entry requirements	Formal assessment by the Opex Assessment Centre.
Recruitment pattern	roll-on/roll-off
Programme content/syllabus	Learners select a theme from a choice of five. Each project contains up to six task sheets designed to address basic and occupational skills areas. Alternatively, real-life work experiences can be offered up for APL or APA.
Initial assessment	Externally by the Opex Assessment Centre. Internal initial assessment takes place at interview, during the induction and in the workshop. During the first week, simple tasks are suggested before progressing to more complex tasks as confidence and competence increase. Learners retain the right to choose themes and tasks and complete them in any order they wish.
Mode and location of training delivery	
Underpinning knowledge	Coaching is done on a one-to-one basis where a skills deficiency is disclosed or becomes apparent.

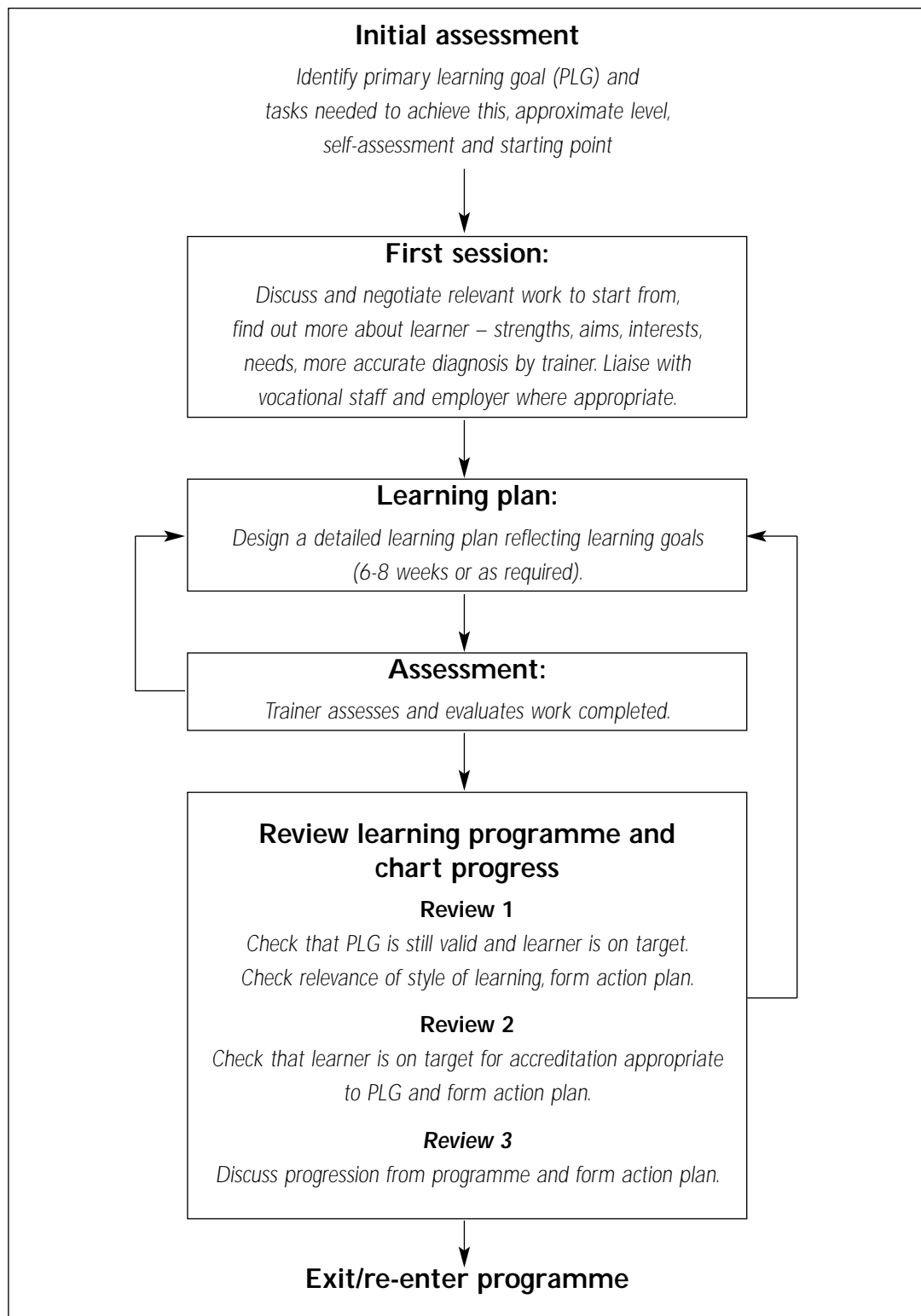|	
Practical experience	Where practical, real-life work experience is used. Where this is not possible, simulations are used, with effort to ensure their validity and accuracy.
Key skills	N/A
Exit training	Learners graduate to vocational training, but all are prepared for this by the transitional phase in which they formally address progression and are given the opportunity to feed back and reflect on the learning programme. The personal learning plan is revised.
Day release arrangements	N/A
Assessment method	Assessment of the finished task, project or assignment, and first-hand observation.
Location	A dedicated facility at the Leeds Centre is used.
Frequency	Formal progress review every four weeks and ongoing at the end of each task or project. Informal assessment takes place during the work.
Assessor	Stuart Fowler (Cert Ed; CITD; D32; D33; D34)
Internal verifier	Robert De Boer (D32; D33; D34)
Employer/placement provider's role	N/A

Individual Learning Plans

Once an effective programme framework has
been developed, experienced providers use
learning goals, information about learning styles
and the results of initial assessment to create
learning plans that promote the development of
new basic skills and, where appropriate link
these with their vocational skills development.
The match between the learning plan and
learners' needs is the most important factor in
appropriate and effective provision.

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Example 1

The process used by one provider to design individual learning plans is shown below.

Initial assessment

*Identify primary learning goal (PLG) and
tasks needed to achieve this, approximate level,
self-assessment and starting point*

First session:

*Discuss and negotiate relevant work to start from,
find out more about learner – strengths, aims, interests,
needs, more accurate diagnosis by trainer. Liaise with
vocational staff and employer where appropriate.*

Learning plan:

*Design a detailed learning plan reflecting learning goals
(6-8 weeks or as required).*

Assessment:

Trainer assesses and evaluates work completed.

**Review learning programme and
chart progress**

Review 1

*Check that PLG is still valid and learner is on target.
Check relevance of style of learning, form action plan.*

Review 2

*Check that learner is on target for accreditation appropriate
to PLG and form action plan.*

Review 3

Discuss progression from programme and form action plan.

Exit/re-enter programme

Example 2

Guidelines for designing individual learning programmes for basic skills
are shown below.

Guidelines for designing individual learning programmes for basic skills

Aims

To plan and record a relevant programme of work which can be used to review progress and to provide information for other staff.

Procedure

i)   discuss the starting point identified at the initial assessment and use to suggest appropriate tasks for the first session(s)

ii) find out more about the learner's strengths, needs, aims and experience. This will provide a basis for a more accurate and informed learning plan.

iii) learning plans should identify:
  * the topic learner wants or needs to work on
  * tasks that are relevant to the learner
  * subskills involved
  * possible activities
  * suggested resources
  * teaching strategies
  * qualification aim (if relevant).

Designing learning plans

i)   discuss with the learner the skills they would like or need to work on and make suggestions yourself, based on the initial assessment

ii)   explain how the learning is broken down into steps according to the level the learner is working at, and how it will help them to achieve their aims

iii) be aware of underpinning skills e.g. any diagnostic needs or the need to consolidate learning

iv)   use the plans differently for different people according to pace, interest and learning style. For example, it is possible to focus more on some skills than others, to add extra ideas or to use two plans concurrently

v)   explain to the learner how and why you are making the plan

vi)   write details down so that the learner and other staff can understand

vii) plan a variety of work

viii) be flexible and prepared to negotiate tasks or topics if learner's circumstances or interests change.

Example 3

Another example of how learning plans may be designed follows.

Designing a Learning Plan

1. Gather information from initial assessment

2. Prioritise aims

3. Identify some themes

4. Discuss tasks/subskills needed

5. Identify areas to work on

6. Decide how to work on tasks and subskills including teaching strategies and activities

7. Use appropriate materials

8. Set time to update workplan.

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Guidance for Basic Skills Staff on Designing Learning Plans

The process of putting together the learning plan should:

- use the information provided by the learner at the initial interview and initial assessment
- involve the learner in prioritising learning goals
- break down the learner's long-term goals into short-term goals
- break down those short-term goals into the skills required to achieve the goals
- define these skills in measurable terms so that achievement can be assessed, measured and recorded
- translate easily into session plans
- link to the next stage of the learner's learning programme.

Using the information provided at the initial interview and assessment, break down the learner's primary learning goals into smaller component goals. The learner often finds this difficult to do at interview.

Then:

- work with the learner to prioritise the component goals
- break down these component goals into the basic skills needed to achieve these goals
- using the initial assessment and further consultation with the learner, establish which of these skills the learner already has
- with the learner, agree a learning plan for six-week period
- write the learning goals in such a way that the learner and trainer work together to assess, measure and record what has been learned by the end of the six-week period.

Example 4

The stages of developing an individual learning plan are set out by another provider as follows.

---

1. Identify the learner's personal learning goals

i) He could possibly gain promotion at work if he felt more confident in his ability to do writing required for work.

ii) He has a desire to improve English in general, and writing skills in particular.

2. Assess the learner's current level of skills in writing

i) Spelling – Level 1

He feels reasonably confident about spelling and always uses a dictionary when necessary.

ii) Punctuation – Level 1

He has no problems with the use of capital letters, but does not know when to use apostrophes, commas or other punctuation marks. He does not know when to start a new paragraph and is unsure when to end one sentence and start another.

iii) Grammar – Entry Level

In writing his sentences are very long (see above). He tends to mix tenses, and some sentences have no verb (gerunds are used instead).

iv) Content – Entry Level/Level 1

He is not confident about planning content and does not know how to make sure all points are included.

v) Tone and Style

He is not confident about the phrasing of business correspondence.

vi) Handwriting

His handwriting is good and he has access to a word-processor, which he can use. He would like to develop his IT skills further.

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

3. Prioritise one or two writing tasks the learner needs to complete successfully

This is important as it places the learner's writing skills in context. The skills learned to complete these tasks can be transferred to other tasks. The priorities must be agreed with the learner.

Suggested priorities:

a) Write minutes from a departmental meeting

b) Write a letter requesting a meeting with your personnel manager.

4. Break these tasks down into the required skills
Example 1: Writing departmental minutes

1. Note-taking at meetings
   - use of abbreviations
   - writing key points
   - verbally reviewing points for accuracy and agreement.

2. Planning a draft with meeting notes
   - ordering points
   - coherence and links.

3. Format of minutes
   - formalities, for example list those present plus apologies, review of past minutes
   - use of heading and subheadings.

4. Style
   - appropriateness.

5. Key spelling
   - identify in relation to context.

6. Punctuation
   - beginning and ending sentences
   - commas
   - apostrophes
   - speech marks
   - indirect speech.

7. Grammar
   - simple sentences
   - complex sentences
   - tenses.

Example 2: Write a letter requesting a meeting with your personnel manager

- letter layout using IT skills

- formalities – opening and closing formulas

- content

- key points to include, e.g. date, time, venue, request for reply

- appropriate style

- key spelling – identified in context

- punctuation

- grammar

- making planning notes

- planning a draft from notes

- writing short sentences

- using templates for future letters.

5. **Agree priorities for the first learning plan**

6. **Teach skills in each learning session**
   - use context to teach
   - draw attention to general transferable skills.

7. **Evaluate each session**
   - record work done and evaluate for pace and learning achieved.

8. **Review achievement at end of six weeks**
   - review each goal against the learner's ability to use the skill or complete the task.

9. **Agree a new learning plan**
   - discuss priorities and pace, and set targets for a six-week period.

Example 5

This is another example of the stages of developing individual learning plans.

Learner:	Plan Number: on this programme
Trainer: the trainer negotiating the learning plan with the learner	**Date:** when the learning plan is being filled in
Main Programme: e.g. NVQ and level, modern apprenticeship 1; Numeracy Entry Level etc. **Supporting programme:** literacy, numeracy plus level	**Review date:** equal to or less than contractually required. Always set the date at the beginning. It can be amended – note why.

Long-term aims: future goal, e.g. to become a supervisor; to retrain and get a job in IT; to cope with everyday tasks needing literacy and numeracy.

Primary learning goal: the goal established at initial assessment, e.g. to be competent in money calculations involving addition and subtraction and apply skills in practical activities; to achieve specific NVQ, key skills and additional certificates as part of modern apprenticeship; to pass a driving theory test.

Short-term needs/aims: agreed with the learner – a manageable unit. This should take into account the pace, style and learning needs of the learner moving towards the primary learning goal established at initial assessment and should establish the areas to be worked on during the period of this learning plan. Where additional support is required, short-term needs/aims for this should link with primary learning goal.

What can I already do? don't write down everything the learner can already do, but focus on skills relevant to this learning plan which can be built on when working towards short-term goals. For subsequent learning plans, this information is taken from the review at the end of the previous learning plan.

Targets:	Ref:	Materials:
Here the trainer works out the steps needed to reach the short-term goals for each individual learner taking into account skill gaps and the level of reinforcement needed (established in diagnostic assessment).	Unit/ Element/ framework Ref. etc. – if relevant.	Suggested material for the activities opposite and location if appropriate for self-access.

Activities and materials can be amended and added to in response to learner needs. Make a note of any amendments. Targets section – it is important to set targets at the beginning – this section should not become a list which is added to as you go along. Record-keeping and review are separate sections on the back of the ILP. A reminders sheet for noting topics for the next ILP can be useful.

Example 6

This example shows an approach to incorporating basic skills learning into a vocational subject.

---

1. Analysis of the initial assessment results

Team meeting held to analyse the initial assessment results and to identify the basic skills that need to be worked on by all staff. For example:

- all staff should work on developing a learner's spelling

- all staff should make sure they give their learners clear guidelines on the format for written assignments

- check the methods being taught by key skills staff e.g. for percentages so that they can be reinforced

- allocate responsibility to specific trainers for reinforcing identified skills. For example, on a nursery nursing course, one trainer might be responsible for reinforcing teaching on budgeting.

2. Be clear about the needs of learners being referred for learning support

Trainers keep a list of learners receiving learning support and a brief summary of their learning support needs.

Example 6 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

3. Planning a learning session

i) State the vocational aim of the session.

ii) Plan the delivery to take into account the basic skills needs of all the learners.
For example, if learners have poor reading skills deliver key information through practical and visual activities in favour of written handouts or text books.

iii) Note where different activities are needed to meet the needs of individual learners.

iv) Plan opportunities to teach basic skills. For example, teach memory techniques for learning particular vocationally-related words and words you know that learners mis-spell, or use a written assignment to teach techniques of brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing and proof reading.

4. Prepare materials and check availability of resources

Check your materials for readability.

5. Plan how you will evaluate the session

How will you check the learners have learned what you wanted them to learn? Strategies could include summarising the key points at the end of a session and checking understanding and skill acquisition in subsequent sessions.

Example 7

One provider gives the following guidance to staff providing individual basic skills support for learners.

Before meeting your learner

i) Read the learner's learning support interview notes, the initial assessment results and any diagnostic assessment results.

ii) Liaise with the vocational staff to establish requirements, e.g. off-the-job training sessions, assessment requirements, dates, limitations of support.

iii) Make a list of the sort of work your learner will need to do.

iv) Use checklists of the skills needed to complete these tasks.

v) Using the initial assessment and interview notes, highlight those skills the learner is likely to find difficult.

The first meeting with your learner

i) Complete a learning plan with the learner, agreeing the areas of learning and long and short-term goals. These can be added to if new needs become apparent.

ii) Agree with the learner that he or she will bring vocational learning and assessment materials to the session so you can ensure the relevance of the learning support by linking basic skills teaching to NVQ requirements.

iii) Prepare an activity based on the NVQ programme and the learner's needs.

Example 7 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

3. On programme

i)   Make sure you have clear learning targets for each session with the learner.

ii) Constantly identify the difficulties your learner is experiencing on the programme and provide
     exercises to develop appropriate skills. For example, if your learner misreads words during
     their NVQ work, write exercises that will help your learner with word discrimination. If your
     learner does not understand or remember what he or she has read, write exercises related
     to the text or develop tasks linked to passages of work.

iii) Record each session's work with comments from you and your learner on what has been
     achieved and what still needs addressing.

4. At the end of each learning period

i)   Review the learner's achievement against the learning goals.

ii) Jointly agree modifications to their learning plan.

iii) You and the learner sign the form.

iv) Send a copy to the learner's vocational trainer and workplace supervisor (if appropriate).

Monitoring and review are an integral part of the process of continuous programme design and development. Most providers use working definitions of the two terms along the following lines:

monitoring – systematic checking that the right learning is taking place

review – planned time to reflect on the learning so far and to identify what needs to be learnt next.

Example 8

This example has practical questions for staff to consider during the monitoring and review process.

Benefits of the review process

The review process offers the opportunity for the trainer and learner to evaluate progress and reflect on the following:

Has learning taken place?

This can be assessed by:

- considering what the learner can now do and what they still need to learn
- evaluating against the objectives in the learning plan
- measuring learning against basic skills standards or relevant vocational standards
- obtaining feedback from other staff, other learners, employer or placement company.

How does the learner feel?

- positive
- negative
- sense of success
- sense of failure.

How does the trainer feel?

- learning has taken place according to plan
- some things should have been done differently
- methods, options and materials need revising.

Next steps

- adapt learning plan
- negotiate further support
- plan next stage of learning
- decide if accreditation is an option
- set new objectives
- think about plan for progression
- make modifications to programme (e.g. revise methods, change pace)
- consider staff development needs.

Timing of the review process

Monitoring is a continuous process that takes place each session. Reviews should be held at periodic intervals and at the end of the course.

Methods in the review process

Learners should be informed of the purposes of monitoring and review. Feedback should always be positive and encouraging. The aim is to compare what learners can do now with what they could do at the start of their course. Methods might include:

- the learner keeps a learning log
- the learner dictates thoughts on to audiotape
- making a video or taking photographs to show progress (useful for practical activities)
- observation of the learner performing a task (staff and/or peers can be involved)
- using records of work done
- using individually set targets
- using a portfolio of work to show evidence of achievement
- using pictures or signs to denote a response
- learner completes an evaluation sheet
- trainer records progress
- conducting a group review
- an interview between the trainer and the learner
- progress reports from other interested parties such as placement providers, employers and so on.

Potential problems

What if no significant learning has taken place?

- go back to the initial assessment; has your teaching been appropriate to the evidence of ability?
- is the learner on the appropriate course? Refer for advice and guidance if necessary
- is there a need for increased basic skills support?
- are there obstacles to learning, such as an undetected disability or learning difficulty, inappropriate vocational training or supervision or emotional or domestic difficulties?
- evaluate your own teaching approach and seek advice from a colleague.

The learner wants to give up

- probe reasons – these could be learning programme-related, practical or emotional issues
- discuss their original motivating factors
- go through what they have achieved
- negotiate more achievable targets
- suggest learner talks to other learners who have had similar feelings but are now making progress.

Prompt Questions for Element 1

■

What are the principles which guide the design of basic skills
provision in your organisation?

■

What are the stages involved in designing programmes
for your learners?

■

Are the learning activities described in their learning plans the right
activities to help your learners achieve their learning goals?

■

How is the learning plan designed and co-ordinated to ensure
each part fits with the others – particularly with
vocational aspects?

■

What arrangements are in place for monitoring and review?

■

Element 2: Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The reasons for needing help with literacy and numeracy are many and varied and as a consequence staff and trainers need to be able to use a variety of teaching methods to help learners learn effectively. Of particular importance for staff are an understanding of how learners learn and an ability to develop interesting and effective teaching and learning methods.

Group work

The following section describes approaches to individual and group learning and session management. Group work can be a useful way of helping learners acquire basic skills. However, working co-operatively does not come easily to every learner. Some learners may need encouragement and support to help them benefit fully from the exchange of ideas, development of communication skills and mutual support provided by this type of learning. The following example outlines the information one provider gives to its basic skills staff to explain the rationale for group work.

Example 1

The benefits of group work

- multiple activities can be conducted in a single session

- a variety of learning styles can co-exist

- opportunities for learners to support each other

- some activities such as discussion and investigation work more effectively within groups

- learners can share ideas and influence each other

- group work helps learners develop listening, communication and social skills

- participants learn to demonstrate respect for the views of others

- self-confidence is increased within a safe, supportive environment

- a feeling of belonging to the group reinforces the sense of identity as a learner.

Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Using group work as a teaching method

1. Read all the information about each learner from the initial interview to get a sense of the likely composition of the group before you start.

2. Do not have your planning set in stone: your plan should be flexible to match the needs of members of the group.

3. Explain to the learners that it takes time for a group to 'gel'. Explain why you are using certain activities. Build in a break and changes of pace. At the start of the session, let the learners know how the time will be divided up. Try to diffuse tension. Go with the learners on their break. Encourage people to sit with others from the group so that nobody feels left out.

4. Try to ensure that cliques do not form by discussing the problems of cliques and their potentially damaging effect. Plan to get learners used to leaving the safety of 'their' chairs to re-form in a variety of ways. Introduce learners to each other and establish opening links for them.

5. Remember that too many obvious ice-breakers can put off some learners who want to do 'real work'. Make sure that the first session moves on by making a start on the types of skills acquisition they expect. This will reassure students who don't want to feel they are 'just messing about'.

6. Basic skills learners often have a high level of anxiety at first about what to expect in group work. They need to take small risks from a position of safety. Be sensitive to this, for example, many learners express a horror of having to read out their work at initial interview. In a supportive group, many can feel at ease enough to try difficult things at a later date. It can then be seen as a real achievement and confidence booster.

7. Always be sensitive to the dynamics of the group. Be prepared to orchestrate them to develop more and better interactions. Vary the composition of small groups and help people take on new roles in the group.

8. Be aware of the dynamics of the group particularly when assigning work to smaller groups. It may be counter-productive for certain learners to work together in pairs or in a small group. Others might be distracted and gain little benefit for their targeted skills from the interaction.

9. Encourage interaction. Do not just dispense information. The learners need the opportunity to gain from a variety of interactions.

10. Be flexible enough to respond to the group's needs. Every group will be different. Monday's group will be different on Wednesday. It helps to have Plan B and Plan C in the wings.

Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

11. Remember the needs of individual learners. Have extended activities for some learners which develop the common theme. Adapt texts for those learners who need this. Where available, use volunteers to give specific additional support if this is needed.

12. Allow space for individual learning styles within the group. Discuss different styles, for example visual approaches to spelling, hands-on approaches to basic numeracy. Remember that your own preferred teaching style may not match the preferred learning styles of the learners. Try to suit all of the learners some of the time. Acknowledge the differences.

13. Be flexible enough to change role within the group, for example, by acting as member of a small group if necessary.

14. During group discussion keep the group focused by pausing to sum up and repeat the topic. Deal with drift quickly. Make learners aware that discussions need to be managed and they should practise the skills involved. Peer pressure can keep topics on track effectively.

15. Try to encourage learners to play different roles within the group – initiating ideas, building on the ideas of others, gate-keeping, summing up etc. Give feedback to group members when they try new roles as this is not only valuable for that learner but illustrates the skill for others in the group.

16. Learners can often resolve minor conflicts themselves but intervene early if you foresee long-term problems. It is important you act as a good role model within the group. Speak privately to learners where individual problems arise.

17. Some learners will always be more dominant within the group. They may need encouragement to try other roles so that they do not hog the group session. Work to involve quieter learners by drawing on their experience and making a space for them to contribute.

18. Don't allow demanding learners to take over the session. Suggest that some things are best dealt with at another time and agree when.

19. Use a variety of methods to check the skill acquisition of learners within a group. Some learners may have gone through school or employment finding anonymity within the group. It has become an established habit to 'hide'. Try to counteract this by gently drawing out such learners and positively reinforcing their efforts.

The following section includes examples of
methods and activities that staff have found
useful in teaching basic skills. It includes examples
of the ways in which staff have broken down
tasks into manageable steps for learners. It also
describes how staff have helped learners to
learn by planning activities that build on learners'
strengths and interests.

Example 1

This example suggests some strategies in teaching literacy.

Introduction

i) Use a wide variety of activities in a session

ii) Don't try and teach too much at once; little and often is best.

iii) Give the learner constant encouragement.

iv) Try different coloured pens to aid memory and try using different coloured paper – the glare of white paper can be difficult for some learners.

v) Offer the learner different types of pen.

vi) Encourage the learner to keep all his or her work in a file in different sections. The learner can then refer to it as needed.

1. Teaching letter shapes and visual discrimination

- play matching games
- play the game that looks for 10 differences between two pictures.

Explain to the learner why you are doing this.

Matching games are valuable because they can be used to teach important words quite quickly. This might include social sight vocabulary (e.g. 'police', 'hospital' etc) and important common words or vocational vocabulary.

Matching games include the familiar card game Snap, Bingo, and a form of dominoes in which sentences are created using cards with a word written at either end. Snap can be adapted to match pairs of words, homophones etc. More advanced games include:

– junior scrabble, writing the words on the whiteboard first

– word searches. Create these, using vocational words the learner is practising

– simple crosswords for learners with a small reading vocabulary.

Other useful games include:

- matching a word on a line (one word on the left hand side of a line is matched with a choice of words adjacent to it)
- finding words within words (for example 's**in**k')
- matching words with pictures or symbols (use socially useful symbols, health and safety signs etc)
- matching flash cards bearing words or letters to the same word or letter in print, using everyday materials (order forms, stock labels, work plans etc).

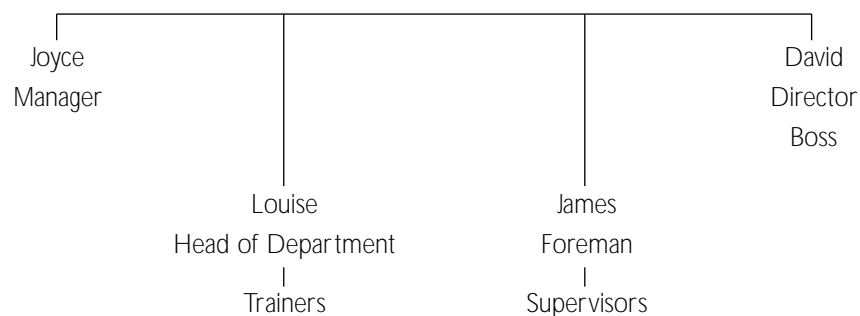## 2. Teach important words by the 'look and say' method

The 'look and say' method has a number of advantages:

- most learners can learn a number of words by shape

- automatic word recognition is an important factor in fluent reading

- learners can gain a useful, interesting vocabulary early

- many common words are phonically irregular e.g. 'said', 'come'

- some social sign words are phonically difficult e.g. 'police'.

3. Word recognition exercises

Word recognition is an important part of literacy. To encourage this skill, try the following exercises:

- cut up a sentence or name and address and ask the learner to match the words to the whole address or sentence. At a later stage, the learner will not need the original

- ask the learner to label a picture, giving the learner a list of words to use

- use flash cards for making and re-making sentences (for example 'Here's the shampoo' and 'The shampoo is here')

- ask more advanced learners to match words in capitals and lower case letters

- exercises in which the learner supplies a missing word

- finding the odd one out in list of words learned

- draw an organisational chart and write in the names with the relationships:

Joyce		David
Manager		Director
		Boss

	Louise		James
	Head of Department		Foreman
	Trainers		Supervisors

Exercises should be interesting, and relevant to the learner's interests and learning aims.

Example 2

One provider has described the following method which they have found to be successful in teaching basic skills.

Counting in batches

An instructor had been working alongside Maria, a learner on a Childcare NVQ, for some time trying to help her to understand that when counting large quantities, it is possible to count in batches rather than count each item individually.

The instructor had tried several methods without success:

- putting coins in piles and then working out the total amount. The learner could not grasp the concept that if there were 10 piles of 10p coins then the total was £1.
- rubber banding batches of pencils in tens and then counting the batches to find the total number of pencils
- using a tally sheet to count a range of items and then marking off the tallies in fives and tens.

Counting in twos, threes, fives and tens seemed quite nonsensical to the learner.

The breakthrough came when the instructor started working with Maria in her work placement – a children's nursery. She noticed the stock of packets of disposable nappies and used them to show Maria how counting the number of packets and then multiplying by the number of nappies in the packet gave the total number of nappies in stock.

The 'I've got it' factor was achieved by showing the direct relevance of the concept to Maria's life.

Using a dictionary

Simon was very careful to check any spellings he didn't know in the dictionary. However, he took a long time to find each word as once he had located its initial letter, he would run his finger down the headword list until he finally came to the word he was looking for. Simon couldn't be persuaded to scan through each section for the second and third letters in the word. He felt that if he scanned too fast he might miss the word he wanted.

The breakthrough came when Simon was shown the running heads at the top of each page in the dictionary, indicating the first word and the last word on each page. He was happy to trust these as a guide through the dictionary and his use of it was speeded up.

Remembering a particular spelling

Learners often need to learn a particular spelling in relation to their work, their studies or their home life. The trainer can find a memory technique that will help the spelling stick.

Jim was a mechanic who had never been able to spell the word 'mechanic'. At the assessment he wrote it as 'mancanick'. The trainer identified the key difficult bits for the learner.

The 'me' at the start was remembered by the learner as 'me, the mechanic'.

The trainer tried linking the 'ch' in the middle to an image of chains. She also drew attention to the pronunciation and suggested Jim pronounced the 'ch' when saying the word. The learner tried these but didn't show any enthusiasm for these links.

The trainer did not want to link to the word 'machine' because of the danger of incorrectly spelling the start as 'ma' again.

Instead she moved onto the end of the word and drew attention to other words ending in 'ic' such as 'picnic'. This immediately appealed to Jim, who thought he would remember the spelling by thinking of 'me, the mechanic, chomping at a picnic'.

Jim could always spell 'mechanic' after that, and always said the mnemonic under his breath as he wrote it.

Example 3

This example illustrates various approaches to the teaching of spelling.

Context

Tracy is in her mid-twenties. She is on the Full-Time Education and Training option of New Deal. Her overall learning goal is 'to learn to spell'.

Her immediate learning need is to be able to spell the name of the road she lives on: 'Watling Street'. This will be useful for filling in job application forms.

Tracy was so uncertain about spelling 'Watling' that she avoided writing it all and refused to try to write it for the assessment. She said, 'I don't know what to do after the W'.

Tracy could spell her name, simple single-syllable words and could put together some letter digraphs. She used upper and lower case letters in writing and correctly wrote in the assessment: "My name is 'Tracy'."

Teaching method

i)   The trainer wrote out the correct spelling and capitalisation of 'Watling Street'

ii) The trainer limited the task to spelling 'Watling' in the hope that by learning this in her first session, Tracy would gain confidence.

iii) The trainer experimented with ways of helping Tracy remember what she had learned.

Session 1

Stage 1

•   the word was divided into two parts: 'Wat' and 'ling'.

Stage 2

The trainer and Tracy worked on 'Wat'.

•   the trainer suggested Tracy pronounce 'Wat' as it is spelt, i.e. so that 'Wat' rhymes with 'bat'

•   Tracy was asked to write 'Wat' without copying. She succeeded.

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Stage 3

The trainer and Tracy worked on 'ling':

- Tracy was asked to write 'ling' without copying

- Tracy was unsure so the trainer wrote 'ling' and then divided the 'l' from the 'ing'

- Tracy could hear the sound 'l' and could relate it to the letter 'l'.

The trainer and Tracy talked through other common words beginning with 'l' to accentuate the sound, such as 'London', 'long', 'look'. No attempt was made to look at the spelling of these words, and they focused instead on the 'l' sound.

- Tracy was then asked to write 'ling' which she did successfully.

Stage 4

Putting it all together:

- Tracy was asked again to write 'ling', which she did successfully

- she was asked to put the whole word together and write 'Watling' without copying. This she also did successfully and was extremely pleased with her success

- Tracy was asked to write 'Watling' three more times without copying, saying it in a way that exaggerated the spelling rather than its sound

- the trainer set up a 'look, say, cover, write, check' practice book for Tracy to practise the word, and asked her to write it without copying at least six times in the following week.

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Example of 'look, say, cover, write, check' practice sheet.

Word	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
Watling						
Street						

Stage 5

Tracy was then asked if she thought she had done enough spelling for the week or if she wanted to work on the word 'Street' as well. She thought she would be able to spell 'Street' and did spell it correctly. The trainer and Tracy agreed to add it to the practice sheet for the week and then check it again the following week to see if there was anything in the word that might catch her out later.

Session 2

Tracy was able to spell Watling Street straight away. The spelling was linked to other key words. For example, Tracy lives near Watford and frequently sees the word 'Watford' on signs. A process similar to that used for 'Watling' was used.

As the link between the two words appealed to Tracy, other links between spellings were discussed. 'Watling' was linked to the spelling of 'was' and 'want'. These were recorded, together with 'Watford', as words to be learned in the following week.

As additional practice, the sentence 'I do not want to live in Watford' was dictated. ('live' was written down for Tracy to copy as this wasn't a word she was learning at the moment). Note that no link was made to the spelling of 'what' at this stage as this could have been confusing.

Tracy thought she could cope with a few more words so links with 'ing' were also discussed. To avoid overloading the learner these were limited to 'ring', 'sing' and 'thing'. It was agreed to add to these in the following week.

Session 3

The spelling of 'Street' was discussed. Tracy had no problems with this and the letter patterns 'str' and 'ee' were used as links in future weeks for other words. In later weeks, the words were practised using capital letters.

Subsequent lessons and alternative strategies

A range of reinforcement strategies was used in subsequent weeks. The strategies could also be alternative teaching strategies if the first methods hadn't worked.

Mnemonics

Mnemonics can be useful for learning some words. In the case of 'Watling Street', the mnemonic may only be useful for the first three letters e.g. 'what a trek' to Watling Street – to be said as the learner writes out the first three letters. Note however the danger of confusing 'what' and 'wat'.

Learners often like working out their own mnemonics to reinforce memory.

Movement to reinforce memory

Strategies include:

- writing in the air using a large flowing movement
- writing with a large pen using a flowing movement.
- using joined-up handwriting so that the flow reinforces motor memory.

Words within words

Looking for smaller words within the target word to be spelt can be a useful technique, although 'Watling Street' did not lend itself to this method. See example 2 above for a case in which this method was useful.

Asking others

If the trainer and learner get really stuck as to how to remember a particular spelling, it is often helpful to ask other learners and trainers. Both learners and trainers enjoy working on mnemonics and memory techniques and it helps the learner make a conscious effort to remember spellings.

Example 4

This example shows how one provider approached the teaching of basic skills to learners on a construction programme.

Introduction

Learners who had expressed an interest in joining a construction programme were contacted by the provider's construction co-ordinator and invited to attend a week-long induction programme.

The induction programme included:

- literacy and numeracy assessment
- workshop experience in craft-based activities including bricklaying, painting and decorating, and plumbing
- the completion of units of Wordpower and Numberpower linked to the workshop activities or contained in the study skills course booklet.

Process

The course was cross-referenced to Wordpower and Numberpower at Level 1. It was intended that the learners would achieve units towards certification, which could be completed in study support sessions throughout the year.

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

1. The basic skills manager met the training manager to identify areas where basic skills input would be most beneficial.

2. The basic skills manager and the training co-ordinator from the construction department met to discuss staffing, content and timing of provision.

3. Basic skills staff met construction staff to integrate basic skills into the course curriculum, using Wordpower and Numberpower, to design practical activities in the workshop as well as paper-based exercises.

4. A staff development meeting was held to co-ordinate provision.

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Accreditation requirements

Element 3   (extract from Wordpower communication skills – Level 1).

Hold a conversation with one person

Evidence indicators – your portfolio must contain:	Notes on type of location of evidence	Code
Two occasions dealing with two different topics.		

Performance criteria – you must be able to:	Range dimensions and categories:
	Topic
a) Greet another person in an appropriate way.	Routine (e.g. responding to day-to-day enquiries: discussing routine tasks).
	Audience
b) Make contributions clearly, which are appropriate to the topic.	People known to the learner
	Context
c) Pay attention to the other person's contributions.	Face-to-face or on the telephone to an individual
	Non-verbal cues
d) Respond appropriately to the other person's verbal and non-verbal cues.	Facial expressions, body language
	Images
e) Use images appropriately to illustrate points made.	Illustrations selected from those readily available in the context (e.g. sketches, diagrams, still photographs, charts)
f) End the conversation in an appropriate way.	

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Practical vocational activities

Talking to other people

1. You have heard that there might be some work available for bricklayers on a housing development. All you know is the address of the site, and you think the foreman is Mr Singh. You have to find Mr Singh and try to get a job from him. Have a think about what you might need to say to Mr Singh. What would you have to say to him once you've found him?

2. Someone has just delivered 60,000 paving slabs to your site. You have in fact ordered 600 to re-pave a garden and patio. The driver insists that he has delivered the right order. How do you convince him that he has brought too many paving slabs?

3. You have been paid for the week's work. You should have received £231.59 after tax, but there has been a mistake and your payslip has only been written out for £225.70. Your supervisor thinks the amount is right and that you have worked fewer hours than you thought. How do you tell her that you have not been paid enough?

Example 5

This example is a case study of how a learner's strengths and interests in a vocational area were used to address his difficulties with basic skills.

Introduction

Dennis, who had previously worked as a decorator, wanted to improve his writing and confidence in reading. He demonstrated a high degree of practical ability which he used in home DIY projects. He was able to use these skills while explaining to a fellow learner the intricacies of installing ceiling coving. Dennis then constructed a model as part of his demonstration to the rest of group. The activity was recorded in a series of photographs.

Dennis was able to use his confidence in practical do-it-yourself as a starting point for the development of new basic skills.

1. Starting point: A learner enquiry during the coffee break, on how to install ceiling coving, led to a brief discussion.

2. The discussion highlighted the complexities of this 'ordinary' DIY task.

4. The trainer suggested that the work could be incorporated into Dennis's portfolio, providing evidence for his 'research tasks' and 'listening and speaking skills'.

3. Dennis discussed with the trainer the complexities and the need to show others what he was talking about. He felt his verbal descriptions needed diagrams, pictures or even models to get the messages home. Using a model was discussed and decided upon.

5. Dennis produced a scaled-down model showing how coving could be cut to accommodate a chimney breast that fitted in the room. As this was an inverted model, sitting on the table rather than the ceiling, the parts were labelled as appropriate to indicate walls and ceiling.

6. At this stage, Dennis decided to record the demonstration with a series of photographs. These would enable the key points of the construction to be identified.

8. Dennis worked with his trainer to devise a plan. He then produced a draft copy.

7. Dennis took and labelled photographs, and made short explanatory notes. These became the basis for a written explanation of 'How to install ceiling coving'.

9. The draft was then combined with the photographs, suitably labelled, to produce a final copy. Sketches and diagrams were added to provide additional information.

Example 6

The following extracts describe evidence which can be gathered by NVQ Level 1 hairdressing trainees to address their basic numeracy skills as part of an Entry Level award.

Hairdressing Level 1 – Basic Maths Support Programme

How are you getting on? Can you use these skills in at least one everyday situation?

Trainee's signature............................ Instructor's signature............................

Can you?	Example contexts (not vocationally specific)	Evidence (please initial)
1. Recognise numbers in everyday situations, keep and record important numbers	Bus numbers, phone numbers, personal insurance number	Make appointments with date, phone number, time
2. Put numbers in order	Sizes, ages, height, scores, prices	Arrange prices in order quantities, e.g. 325 ml
3. Recognise the value of a sum of money and work out change	Batch coins, check small change	Change for £1, £10 etc
4. Double and halve numbers without a calculator	Price of tickets, doubling or halving receipts	Half price/cost of two
5. Tell the time using digital and ordinary clock faces	Read clock, read the times of TV programmes	Appointment times
6. Write the date in numbers	Birth date, session	Appointment dates
7. Measure length in metres and centimetres or feet and inches using ruler and tape measure	Body measurements, photo frames, everyday objects	Measure metres and centimetres, ml equipment
8. Recognise shapes (square, rectangle, triangle, circle, cube, cylinder)	Buildings, designs, food packaging, tile patterns	
9. Estimate the cost of everyday items		
10. Use a calculator to add, subtract, multiply		

Example 6 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

How are you getting on? Are you ready for a credit? Can you use these skills in at least one everyday situation?

Trainee's signature.................... Instructor's signature....................

Can you?	Example contexts (not vocationally specific)	Evidence (please initial)
1. Read and write numbers as words and figures	Time (o'clock), newspaper reports, read and write cheques	Writing and checking cheques and receipts
2. Read and understand large numbers up to 100,000	Football crowds, newspaper reports, house prices, earnings	Compare earnings/shop prices/magazine extracts
3. Add numbers up to 1000 and take one number from another	Journey distances, dart scores, car mileage, electric bills, sale prices	Clients' bills/change and discounts
4. Multiply any number up to 100 by any number up to 9 (with or without a number square)	Booking tickets, multiple packs in supermarkets	Buying, e.g. shampoo in bulk
5. Multiply by 10 and 100	Batching packs of 10, catalogue discount, pounds into pence, metric measurement	Packs of 10 and 100
	Restaurant bill, instalments, lottery syndicate, weekly savings	Wages (divide by 4 and divide by 12)
6. Share an amount (max 1000) into equal amounts (with or without number square)		
7. Understand and use am and pm, the 24-hour clock and a calendar	Read timetables, set video, birth dates, holiday dates, sporting events	24 hour clock app han
8. Estimate the length of everyday items in either metric or imperial units	Heights, spacing of plants, furniture dim	
9. Measure perimeters in metres and/or centimetres as appropriate	Edging s	

Example 7

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

This example shows the advice given by one provider for vocational staff about the teaching of spelling.

1. **Identify with learners words they must be able to spell**
   - select words needed specifically for the programme of learning
   - select words you notice occur frequently in written work.

2. **Work on strategies to learn these words**
   - write them and discuss together how they can be remembered.

3. **Make sure learners record these on their 'look, say, cover, write, check' sheets**
   - every so often do a quick check that these are being completed.
   - have a stock of new blank sheets to give out as needed.

4. **Draw out links between words**
   - for example, if your learner needs to write 'cancel' teach 'cancellation' as well and draw attention to the double 'l'
   - if your learners are spelling 'writing' incorrectly, e.g. as writeing, look at other words that drop the silent 'e', e.g. hope – hoping; give – giving; take – taking.

5. **Dictate words learned in sentences**
   - every so often, dictate a sentence using the words that have been learned
   - get your learners to correct it themselves from a master copy
   - get your learners to write the correct version in their 'words to learn' list if they have made a mistake.

6. **Give all learners a glossary of vocationally-linked words**
   - always give this to learners at the beginning of the programme so that they have a list of correct spelling for reference.

7. **Feedback constructively**
   - when looking at work with spelling mistakes, select key spellings and write them out for the learner
   - do not just underline the word or write 'sp' in the margin unless you know the learner already knows the correct spelling.

■

How do you help staff to understand the rationale for using different types of learning activities?

■

How effective is the guidance you give to staff on choosing teaching methods and learning activities?

■

What guidance do you give to staff to help them develop effective schemes of work and session plans?

■

To what extent is basic skills learning integrated into vocational courses in your provision? What steps might be taken to strengthen its integration?

■

How do you use learners' strengths and interests to help them address their difficulties with basic skills?

■

Matching materials to learners

Providing the most effective learning experience for individuals with needs in basic skills relies heavily on the availability of appropriate materials for teaching and learning. A range of resources is needed to facilitate the all-important match of teaching and learning to the needs, capabilities and interests of individual learners.

Basic skills are taught to a variety of learners in a diverse range of settings. For example, it may be one-to-one tuition to meet a specified individual need, teaching small groups of learners on vocational programmes. Although the needs of learners may look similar, their capabilities and interests and the teaching and learning needed to meet their needs will be very different. It is important to have resources that enable staff to take account of this diversity and to use teaching methods and learning resources that are selected with the individual learner in mind.

Materials may have been produced commercially, or they may be created by staff working individually or collaboratively. Materials for literacy work may also be produced by a member of staff working together with the learner to produce short pieces to be used for literacy skills. Finally, they may be produced by learners for other learners; for example instruction manuals or an article for a training newsletter. Whatever the available materials, it is important not to rely entirely on the bank of existing materials, since these are unlikely to cover all of the learners' varying needs and personal interests.

The remainder of this section sets out a number of guidance notes and samples of materials developed by providers to help ensure that the resources provided to support teaching and learning are appropriate and easy for learners to use.

Example 1

The diagram shows the criteria that one provider has identified to help trainers select appropriate resources.

Criteria for assessing the quality and relevance of resources

- Clear learning outcome(s) that match the learner's objectives
- Clearly set out and well presented
- Helps learner learn more efficiently
- Instructions for use clearly explained
- At the right level of complexity
- Requiring some response from the learner
- Relevant to learner's needs and abilities
- Up-to-date and durable
- Of interest to learner and their area of work
- Adult-appropriate
- Supports effective teaching
- Free from bias of any sort

Example 2

One provider asks staff to complete the following form when selecting material for inclusion in its resource bank.

Selection criteria			
	Yes	No	Evidence
Proven effectiveness?			
Complete?			
User-friendly?			
Vocational relevance?			
Appropriate to level of vocational learning?			
Transferable?			
Worthwhile?			

Example 3

A provider issues the following guidance to help staff think about learning styles when selecting resources and teaching methods.

Learning styles and learning resources

A learner's learning style will affect his or her approach to learning and how information is processed. To teach a basic skills learner most effectively, the trainer needs to be able to find out or recognise individual learning styles, so that the most appropriate resources can be selected and any helpful adaptations made to the learning environment. The range of resources available, including equipment, should be as extensive as possible; the trainer's style of delivery should be flexible enough to cater for all the learners in the group; and the training room thoughtfully planned and set out.

Does your learner learn best by:
- hearing/listening
- speaking
- sight
- touch
- doing things
- a combination of these?
- working alone at their own pace on individual projects?
- interacting with other learners and participating in collaborative activities in pairs, in a small group, as a team?

Does the learner like the training room to be:
- quiet or with background sounds?
- bright or softly lit?
- cool or warm?
- formally or informally arranged?

It is important to be aware of all of the above options. It is likely that the trainer will need to use both oral and written guidance and also practical demonstrations, as well as opportunities for the learners to apply and practise what they have learnt individually and/or in groups. A broad range of teaching and learning materials will also allow learners to explore and discover for themselves as well as being directed by their trainer.

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Suggestions for teaching methods and learning resources

*If your learner learns best by **hearing** and/or **speaking:***

- give verbal instructions and encourage verbal answers
- spell words out orally
- try brainstorming and discussion before beginning independent silent work
- use oral word games
- make use of tapes, video, radio, etc
- encourage the learner to explain learning points to you or other learners, using their own words.

*If your learner learns best by **seeing:***

- give written instructions to accompany oral ones
- make good use of ICT packages at the right levels
- highlight key points in a text or exercise with coloured pens
- frame the shapes of words
- add symbols to draw attention to certain points on a worksheet
- show pictures, photographs and flashcards
- let him or her work with maps, charts, diagrams
- write letters, words or sentences on cards for sequencing
- encourage the learner to take notes, using underlining and highlighting
- have a word-processor available.

*If your learner learns best by **touching** and/or **doing:***

- bring real-life materials into the training room and ask the learner to do the same, bringing in something they want to work on
- encourage the learner to use computers, calculators, tape recorders, headphones etc
- introduce games and role play
- tap out sounds and syllables
- experiment with a variety of writing equipment and materials.

For all learners:

- always introduce and talk through any written information provided
- use the 'multi-sensory' approach to teaching: hear it, see it, say it, write or record it.

Uses of ICT

Information and communication technology (ICT) is still an under-used resource in basic skills teaching. Despite the ready provision of computers and software, many basic skills staff are hesitant to use them. Yet ICT has enormous potential as a resource for basic skills learners. Where it has been used effectively, staff report substantial gains in capability and confidence. It is a very good way of introducing self-directed learning. This does not necessarily need a high level of technical competence. It simply means providing opportunities for learners to make choices from available materials or about features of their screen displays. The improvement in basic skills is almost a by-product of wider gains in learners' abilities. One member of staff described this process as 'not just about literacy and numeracy, but about gaining a sense of themselves as people who can learn'. Staff, too, find the reality of using ICT far less daunting once they have begun to work with it.

ICT offers:

- independence, confidence and self-esteem (for staff as well as learners)
- opportunities to match learning more precisely to the needs of learners
- ways of accessing and extending further learning opportunities.

Example 1

The following list summarises the benefits which various providers have found from using ICT with their basic skills learners.

Benefits of using ICT

- learners feel more comfortable using computers than pen and paper and the end result looks much better
- using ICT raises learners' self-esteem by enabling them to use the same equipment as their peer group for the same purposes
- learners can receive instant assessment and feedback, especially in numeracy activities
- imaginative interactive software can make skills practice more interesting
- it is very easy to draft, edit and get a correct copy quickly
- learners can gain an authentic sense of themselves as writers when they are no longer constrained by paper-based activities
- ICT opens up possibilities for design and communication through use of other hardware, such as scanners and digital cameras, or desktop publishing software
- using a keyboard can strengthen hand-to-eye co-ordination and increase awareness of letter patterns.

Example 2

The following lists summarise the principles and practices which providers have found most effective in using ICT with basic skills learners.

Principles of good practice

- place learners in a learning environment where using PCs is the norm, but pay attention to the arrangement of the room. Avoid a situation in which the room has half a dozen PCs simply lined up facing the walls

- PCs arranged in clusters more effectively replicate the social aspects of learning together

- look for ways of customising screen displays to match learners' needs and preferences

- integrate IT into each learner's overall programme, selecting packages to take account of individual preferences, abilities and skills

- make sure that staffing levels allow learners to have their questions answered promptly when they first start using computers

- learners and trainers need to be clear about exactly why they are using ICT

- get learners to work in pairs or small groups where appropriate, to encourage mutual support, joint problem-solving and other collaborative learning opportunities

- use with specialist hardware and/or software to allow maximum access for learners with disabilities

- look for ways of using computers which will have personal or vocational relevance for learners, e.g. emailing work (standard office procedure), finding work-related websites

- it is never too early to start using IT – even for the first interview you can ask interviewees if they've ever used a computer and let them enter their name and address on a template.

Useful tips

- check that computers are working and switched on before the session starts (and that you know someone in the organisation who can solve technical problems!)

- use the right technical terms from the start, and always model safe working practices

- make sure that font and size are set as needed until learners are confident about changing them (many learners prefer larger fonts perhaps because they're easy to see, but maybe also because they fill the screen space more quickly)

- 'Comic Sans MS' is a font that many learners find easy to work with – it looks friendly and informal

- start with products that you know and trust

- make writing more interesting by using desktop publishing programmes and clip art

- give ownership to the learner through personal disks and directories and folders

- templates can be a useful way of getting learners started

- keep an open mind and be confident.

Example 3

Here are some examples of the kinds of things that basic skills staff and learners do with ICT.

ICT-based learning activities

- strengthen spelling strategies by using dedicated programmes
- writing job descriptions, scanning in pictures and photos
- researching work-related information from the Internet
- using Maths games software to develop and extend number skills
- using spreadsheets to develop money skills
- planning journeys using information from websites
- emailing work colleagues
- keeping their own records of progress
- building their own websites
- creating their own posters and displays
- developing Internet search skills
- preparing CVs and job applications
- preparing for the driving theory test
- planning, drafting and editing pieces of text
- compiling group newsletters
- giving learners access to learning resources via folders or intranets.

Example 4

Basic skills staff and learners use the following hardware and software.

Hardware and software

- customising the display of standard word-processing packages: as well as font, size and colour, consider borders, shading, use of tables, sticky and shortcut keys

- customise your mouse!

- standard desktop publishing packages, including Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Publisher can make writing and presentation more interesting than standard word-processing packages

- standard spreadsheets and databases, such as Excel and Access, can support simple learning activities such as budgeting

- predictive typers (for example Penfriend and the Autocorrect function) suggest words when you have typed the first one or two letters and may be useful for people with literacy or motor difficulties. A useful feature of Penfriend is that it can speak words back to you

- predictive word-processors, such as Texthelp and CoWriter, suggest options and offer choices for developing pieces of writing

- vocabulary aids, for example, Wordbar, help learners build their own word lists and personal dictionaries. Used with word-processing programs, the software displays a personalised vocabulary on the screen

- games software, such as Wordshark and Numbershark can be set up to accommodate various levels of difficulty and enable learners to practise a range of word and number skills through different game formats

- helping pre-readers explore ideas about symbolic language e.g. Widgets

- helping pre-writers plan, draft and organise text e.g. Inspirations

- lots of good basic skills material exists on websites, e.g. BBC, Funbrain, Hot Potato, Thinks; Epals for worldwide pen pals; and many local town and newspaper sites

- search engines, e.g. Ask Jeeves, which uses everyday language and gives lots of suggestions to extend awareness of related topics

- in-house produced resources, for example packages and workbooks, can support independent learning about IT and how to use it

- small, low-cost (about £200) word-processors such as Alphasmart and Dreamwriter are a good way of getting learners started, particularly if they want to practise without being observed. Can easily be loaned

- voice-activated software, for example, Voice Type, Dragon, Naturally Speaking, enable learners who cannot use conventional methods of producing text to write and edit text, and calculate. They do however require some investment of time in setting them up for individual voices

- split keyboards, trackballs and joysticks for learners with motor difficulties or who find it hard to use a mouse.

Example 5

The considerable possibilities of a genuinely multimedia approach are highlighted by one provider.

'We have a good, memory-rich, computer network, a digital camera, a digital video, a video playing machine and real colour printer. Staff and learners can use these tools in many combinations. For learners, it can mean learning about communication, photography, computers and printing all in one go. This can be really useful when a learner becomes excited about something in particular. For example, we used the equipment with horticulture foundation modern apprentices recently to help them learn plant identification skills. Learners photographed leaves and trees with the digital camera, manipulated the image on screen both to show a leaf, say, and the tree it came from. Stills were produced from the video. The computer skills needed became clear to the learners, who were all keen to reach the end product. We also have good software that allows learners, whatever their level of ability, to add text to things that are important to them. Most of all multimedia is fun to do!'

Example 6

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

The examples which follow illustrate IT in practice. They describe ways of using email and the Internet, the use of IT to help vocational learners develop basic skills, and a case study of how one trainer used staff development to help her introduce IT into her work with her basic skills learners.

Using email and the Internet

The Internet can provide a wide range of learning opportunities for learners who have basic skills needs. These can include the use of the Internet as an information source and resource bank.

One of the most useful parts of the Internet is the email facility. Learners can use email to send information to each other, either within the same room or training centre, or to other people across wider geographical areas. It is a great way to expel fears about poor spelling or reading ability because the message can be written, checked if necessary and then sent. The recipient does not necessarily know how long it has taken to formulate the message, nor how many errors were in it before help was given. There is a certain anonymity which seems to give learners extra confidence to write what they feel instead of only what they can spell!

A good way of using email is to ask the learners to write an email requesting information from a named person. I used this technique for a couple of World of Work sessions with New Deal clients, learning about different jobs and work-related responsibilities. The clients formulated questions to ask, wrote them as standard email messages and sent them. My named person received them and we got together to discuss replies. These were printed in email format and sent back to the clients.

The clients opened their personal replies from, as they saw it, an unknown and very important person. This made the clients themselves feel important and that they had learnt a lot – not only about the person's job, but how to get information using email. This project to find out about one person's job, from start to finish, took three, two-hour sessions.

Another excellent way of using email with learners who have basic skills needs is to ask for a specific task to be completed, then emailed to yourself. I asked the learners to write a set of evaluations for the vocational areas they worked in. I was very specific about what I wanted – I wanted some writing, using different fonts, sizes and layouts, and some pictures which were relevant to the subject. This task alone brought in lots of the generic skills required in order to produce a piece of work using ICT. It is not possible to produce pictures and fonts into email format so the learners used Word instead.

Then I gave the learners my email address and asked them to send their piece of work as an attachment. I taught a small number of the more able learners how to send an attachment with an email, then suggested that they teach their peers. It was highly successful. The learners could then see the email appearing on my screen – they commented on how quickly it arrived!

Examples 7 and 8

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Internet chat-rooms

Internet chat-rooms can be a good idea if there is a large group, or if the session is during the evening. Learners can 'chat' to other people from other places about their interests. It can be difficult, however, to plan for using chat-rooms because you can never tell if there are going to be other people using the same chat-room – the group of learners could very easily end up chatting to themselves.

Other problems concerned with chat-rooms are that, firstly, the content cannot be checked by the tutor prior to the learner reading it – some statements can be quite suggestive. Secondly, the 'chat' takes place in 'real-time'. This means that the meeting is like a telephone conversation using text, where one person sends a statement, and another replies – the text can be seen by all the people in the chat-room, including spelling mistakes and slow typing!

Sport and recreation NVQ

Subjects covered in this unit include health and safety in sport. As with the former example, the primary form of ICT used during this learning session is the Internet. An example of this is the use of the Internet to provide information on the situation involving crowd violence during the European Football Championships. Using the Internet, learners were able to log onto sites such as the BBC current affairs site, and gather up-to-date information on the situation concerning England's involvement in the troubles.

The use of ICT allows the member of staff to provide learners with contemporary information and encourages learner-centred learning. If each learner has access to his or her own terminal, individuals can explore the worldwide web at their own pace, gathering information as they do so.

To conclude, the use of ICT to support learners as they develop basic and key skills is mainly through the use of the Internet. Additionally, ICT is also used for its word-processing capabilities to present learners' work. ICT is an integral part of the learning process with learners and supports their studies and research. Other media such as video, printed material (handouts, acetates) and whiteboard information are also used to address individual learning styles and preferred learning activities.

Hairdressing

Through additional funding the Hairdressing section was able to buy a computer, workstation and printer to be housed in the centre's hairdressing salon. This facility has enabled Level 1 learners to have access to a computer and an Internet facility during sessions. Learners have eagerly used the word-processing programs for presenting their portfolio work and have used word art and clip art programs to design referencing systems for the units of their NVQ. In addition, the Internet has become a tool to research a range of fashion topics, hair products, styles and makeover techniques. Some members of the group did not attend school, and did not have a PC at home. A key advantage of the hairdressers having this facility has been that it has presented opportunities for young people to access ICT and develop ICT skills.

Learners were allowed to explore the computer independently, but with extra reassurance that should they need help the staff all held a good level of ICT skills to support the learning. This helped learners to gain confidence when using ICT and created an interest in developing their skills further.

Example 10

Using ICT to improve basic skills in the workplace

Jane is a 51 year-old woman who works as a press operator in an engineering company. She was very nervous about coming to talk to me and almost had to be dragged off the shop floor. Once she had entered her name and address into the computer she couldn't wait for the first session. Now, when I give her a printout of her work she is speechless with delight for several seconds. She always insists that I bring in two copies – one for her folder and the other to take home to show her son. She recently announced that she is going to apply for a Team Leader post.

Andy is a young man who works in a semi-skilled job in an engineering company, but he would rather be working as a gardener. He spent his schooldays in the remedial class. Using a computer has brought out his artistic talents. After concentrating solidly for half an hour on getting colours in his WordArt heading to match his clip art image for a health and safety leaflet, he suddenly announced, 'Who would ever have thought that I would spend all this time getting it just right!' On seeing his work, his supervisor suggested that he should give the company secretary some lessons to improve the company newsletter.

Alan had been working in the same company for 20 years. The first day I visited the company, he had just resigned. The company had asked him to go on a Quality course. He was terrified that, after 20 years, people would discover that he couldn't read and write. The MD insisted that I had a word with him and I persuaded him to give the key skills sessions a try. He still comes to the sessions, and has achieved several Entry Level credits in basic skills and ICT. He now looks forward to going on training courses. 'I still can't spell, but it doesn't matter because it's all out in the open now, and I know I'm not the only one!'

Example 11

In this example a basic skills trainer explains how she began to use ICT in teaching after attending a staff development event.

As a basic skills specialist I had very little experience of using ICT and thought that the training would be an ordeal. I had managed to avoid using a computer prior to the staff training.

After several sessions I felt fairly confident in basic word-processing using Word. I also found clip art, word art, Publisher and the information on CD-ROMs easy to use. I used these new skills in supporting my learners with their project and library work.

In addition to the benefits already listed, I found using the computers alongside traditional basic skills support very liberating. With guidance, the Internet provided a wider range of reading matter and it encouraged learners to read maps and diagrams in addition to text. Material could be downloaded and text selected or omitted easily because the learner could edit the text.

I used the software mentioned above to devise both group and individual tasks which were linked to project work. When teaching sentence construction I used traditional methods of building words from cards in addition to using the computer. The learner transferred the words to the screen, which reinforced reading skills. Although I was aware of specialist packages that are available to teach sentence building, I used a generic word-processing programme because it gave me the freedom to teach in the way that was most appropriate for the learner and also used learner-centred material including materials from their place of work.

The advantages for learners were that:

- they could work at their own pace
- they could use a large font size if appropriate
- the spell-checker provided a positive guide
- it was easy to start over again if they wanted to.

The learners were not daunted by the prospect of using the computers: for some, their computer skills were more advanced than those they had in literacy. The computer enhanced their learning and gave them a sense of success.

The staff training provided:

- taught sessions from specialist trainers
- open access to staff training workshops
- ICT support specialists on duty throughout the day in workshops.

This made access to help with ICT easy. I try to observe these principles when working with my own learners.

Printed Materials

Effective providers are making increasing use of learning resources that are presented through a range of media such as audio, video, CD-ROM and ICT. However, most of the resources currently in use remain firmly paper-based. This might reflect the range of settings in which basic skills are taught which affect the equipment available for use. It might also reflect the limited amount of adult and simple to use multimedia learning materials which are available and the need for staff themselves to become more confident in using the equipment.

Because of the preponderance of paper-based materials, many providers give guidelines to staff to help them ensure that the paper-based resources they produce or use are as accessible to the learner as possible. One key factor is the 'readability' of a text, that is, the reading age or ability the text expects of its reader. If learners are to work through a text successfully, their reading ability needs more or less to match the reading ability required by the text. There are a number of commercially available readability tests such as the Fogg Index and the Flesch Test which assess the reading levels required by a text. These are based on counting the number of sentences and multi-syllabic words in a passage, because for the most part readability tests are founded on the premise that if a piece of writing has long sentences and many long words, it will be harder to read than a piece with short sentences and short words, although other factors such as subject matter affect readability.

Example 1

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

One provider issues the following guidance to its staff on factors affecting readability.

Factors which may affect readability

Reader factors

- interest in the topic; motivation
- prior knowledge and experience
- cultural background; gender
- reading ability

Content factors

- number of familiar words
- how the text is organised (layout, headings etc)
- pictures, diagrams

Linguistic factors

- sentence structure; number of clauses in sentence
- grammatical complexity
- vocabulary used (jargon, slang, technical etc)

Print factors

- size and type of print
- quality of reproduction
- use of upper/lower-case letters
- use of colour, bold, italic fonts etc
- amount of space between words and lines
- length of lines, margins

Example 2

One provider sets out the following procedure for designing texts.

Start with:

Your knowledge of the learner	• interest in subject
	• knowledge of subject
	• familiarity with vocabulary.

(The stronger these are, the more likely the learner is to succeed.)

Then consider:

Length of text	• select the ideas you want to keep
	• take out repetition, padding.
Sentence structure	• start with the subject of the sentence
	• avoid complicated sentences with lots of clauses; break them into shorter ones
	• avoid the passive tense: use active instead (e.g. 'I mixed the ingredients' not 'the ingredients were mixed').
Range of vocabulary	• change difficult words for easier ones but make sure you keep the essential technical terms
	• leave out words or phrases that do not add interest or understanding
	• repeat words as appropriate to make it easier (but don't let the repetition become irritating)
	• avoid 'vague' words like 'might', 'should', 'rather': use definites wherever you can
	• avoid negatives, especially complicated ones: e.g. 'remember' is better than 'do not forget…'
	• use verbs in preference to nouns: e.g. 'if you reduce your fat intake' is easier to understand than 'a reduction in fat intake'.
Visual cues	• add clues to meaning: nothing childish – tables, illustrations, maps, flowcharts
	• don't include information that is not relevant – it will simply add to the complexity the reader is already trying to decipher.

Layout	• space out well and break into manageable sections
	• keep the right hand margin unjustified (uneven); it makes it easier to find your place on the page
	• separate key points by numbers, letters, bullets or asterisks
	• use headings and indents consistently so they look tidy and aid understanding.

Finally

Produce the text	• do not hand-write (unless you print very neatly)
	• do not write in capitals – they are harder to read
	• keep the font clear and unfussy; avoid italics and 'gothic' typefaces.

Example 3

The following extract is from the guidance a provider gives on how to give basic skills support to learners by simplifying vocational assignments.

Writing assignments to match basic skills needs

The language of assignments

The language used in assignments must be accessible to all of the learners in your group. If you have a learner with a specific problem, e.g. hearing impairment, you can ask a specialist to help you make the necessary adjustments. The language used should match the demands of the awarding body. Technical language must be used where it is specific to the subject being taught. Some staff help learners to learn this technical language by producing a glossary which explains each term in language that the learner is familiar with.

Format of assignments

The format of assignments may be led by the demands of the awarding body in some cases, but generally assignments can be presented to learners in formats that match their skill level.

Example 4

Scanners, computers and printers have made the task of adapting print materials much more straightforward. One provider gives the following advice to its staff.

Adapting print materials

- try to produce, or have produced for you, as much of the standard material as possible, using a computer and storing the original on floppy disk for easy retrieval and adaptation. Material which is created in this way can simply be re-printed when required, incorporating any wanted changes to size and type of font, and any other adaptations needed to take account of the needs and abilities of the learner

- to ensure that the quality and density of the print output is good, it is best to use a laser printer or a good-quality jet printer

- material that is not on disk can be scanned into a computer, ready for adaptation and printing. It is always worth trying to obtain the original version for scanning, unless the copy is very good, as this increases the chances of an accurate scan

- if print quality or layout does not allow for scanning, the material will need to be word-processed or typed and scanned in. This is time-consuming, but in many cases it is necessary and saves time in the long run.

Creating Handouts and Worksheets

Handouts and worksheets, especially worksheets, feature prominently in the array of resource materials used for basic skills provision. There are a number of reasons why this is so. They are easy to produce or to adapt in order to match learners' interests and needs, they are relatively inexpensive, and they do not rely for their use on equipment or machinery that may be unavailable or not working. Worksheets give learners something to do – practise a skill, solve a problem, answer a question – and handouts provide reinforcement for key points, additional information or a reference item for learners to return to if they need to revise or refresh their memories. Sometimes the two formats are combined, and a completed worksheet serves as a reference, or a handout includes a task to check understanding or provide practice in a particular skill.

However, the frequent use of handouts and worksheets is no guarantee that teaching or learning is effective. Too often, worksheets are used simply to occupy learners more or less usefully, without ensuring that the work required of them is matched to the learner's interests and learning objectives, or sufficiently demanding to stimulate the learner and produce a genuine sense of discovery or accomplishment. Too many handouts are unattractive or out-of-date, poorly structured or contain material that is irrelevant or too difficult for the learner to use independently. Recognising these shortcomings and the key role that such materials should play in supporting learning, many providers now ensure that training for their staff covers good practice in producing handouts and worksheets.

Example 1

One provider gives the following guidance to staff on preparing handouts and worksheets.

Checklist of good practice for handouts and worksheets

- start by being clear about the purpose of the worksheet: what you want the learner to gain by completing it

- think about producing the same information in two forms, i.e. in text form point by point, or diagrammatically, e.g. mindmaps, flowcharts

- simplify the text by summarising the main points and using headings and/or numbering them

- make use of the layout (e.g. highlighting, underlining, boxes) to emphasise key words and phrases

- space the text clearly and use a suitable size type; avoid large areas of uninterrupted print

- check that the learner can recognise and understand the meaning of key words or specialist terms before they start work

- consider whether it would be helpful to provide a glossary of terms or a diagram to explain the text as well as (or instead of) simplifying it

- include pictures, but avoid anything childish or irrelevant. Make sure the content is non-discriminatory.

Finally, review your material (asking for the learners' views as well) so that you can make it more accessible to learners next time.

Example 2

One provider sums up the key criteria that all basic skills materials need to meet as 'The Three As'.

> **The Three As**
> - adult – not childish in any way
> - accessible – easy to understand and use
> - appropriate – to the learner's interests, abilities and needs.

There are a number of ways of achieving this. One is to focus work on themes related to vocational studies or the needs of a particular job. This approach can gain added relevance through the use of authentic materials such as trade magazines or brochures.

Example 3

One provider has developed a range of assignments built around an NVQ in Tourism and Leisure. The provider considers this an effective approach because:

- it encourages learners to become more active participants by contributing materials from their own work and ideas for developing each theme
- it acknowledges the validity of learners' interests and existing skills. Many basic skills learners have a wealth of experience and knowledge which is not always used to best effect
- it is based on authentic material e.g. leaflet from gym, travel brochures
- it is interesting and relevant, and contributes to other areas of learning.

Examples of authentic materials
- pay slips and timesheets
- invoices, paying-in books, cheques, deposit slips, etc.
- timetables for the leisure centre facilities
- advertising and promotional material.

The following quotes from learners illustrate the benefit of using such materials:

'I enjoyed working on keep fit leaflets because my boss wants us all to think about advertising the leisure centre's classes. I feel a bit more confident about suggesting things now because I know something more about it.'

'Worksheets can get a bit boring. It's more fun working on real things like travel brochures'.

Example 4

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

One provider has developed a range of materials focusing on work-related tasks that are common to a number of occupations. Like many other providers, it has recognised that the primary aim of a learner undertaking vocational training leading to a qualification is to succeed with the NVQ. Materials that deal with basic skills in the abstract may well appear to such learners as a waste of time, diverting them from their overall aim. It is essential that wherever possible basic skills work is built around the development of skills that the learner will recognise as contributing to success on his or her chosen vocational training. For example, catering learners needing to learn how to break words down into syllables will do much better practising on words such as 'risotto' or 'mushroom' than they would practising on 'imagine' or 'photograph'.

The range of work-related materials the provider has devised focuses on literacy or numeracy skills that are common to a number of vocational areas, such as stocktaking or memo writing. Generic guidance is provided on the skill required, followed by tasks at various levels relevant to a range of different vocational areas. In this way the trainer or learner can select materials that apply the skills in a setting relevant to the overall vocational aims.

The provider finds this approach effective because:

- the tasks relate specifically to written work that the learners will need to do in the workplace

- while the guidance sheets are generic and apply to a range of vocational contexts, the tasks are vocationally specific. They can easily be adapted to cover other vocational areas if required

- the guidance sheets which accompany each set of tasks explain the format or process, and can be kept for future reference

- the learner is provided with 'hooks' to help them get started, e.g. Start your letter with 'I wish to apply for the position of…..'.

Sample tasks for learners undertaking health and social care training who are receiving help with their basic skills are given below.

Example 4 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Level 1

Writing a short standard letter

FOR ALL CARERS

Write a '4th day' sickness letter to your service manager. Include the first date of sickness, the reason for sickness and your expected date of return.

Level 1

Writing a short standard letter

FOR RESIDENTIAL CARERS ONLY

You will need to write two letters. Use the standard letters format.

Write two letters to Percy Scrope, 14 Woodland Way, Charlestown, Lincs, CN6 8MU.

Letter 1

Ask him for details of the trip to the seaside that he is arranging for the elderly residents of Woodview House. Include destination and date of trip, starting time and return time. Also meal arrangements (if a packed lunch is to be provided).

Letter 2

Thank him for organising a trip to the seaside for the elderly residents of Woodview House. Invite him to Woodview House to show the residents the photos he took during his trip. Suggest a date and time for his visit.

Learners are often eager to work with authentic materials. Newspapers, magazines, catalogues, manuals and brochures can be matched to learners' needs and interests. They can be used to increase their sense of achievement and ability to cope with everyday work tasks.

Example

Here is the guidance that one provider gives to its staff. The same principles apply to using any commercially-available publication.

Guidance on using newspapers, trade journals and magazines with learners

- read through it together. Show the learner where to find: contents page, names and addresses, news and articles, advertisements, product listings, job ads etc.

- discuss your and the learner's reactions to an article

- look for key words and make up sentences with them or write out questions for the learner to answer using key words

- compare the same event as reported by two different papers or magazines. Do they use the same words to describe it? What are the differences?

- fill in forms from the magazine to send for brochures etc.

- concentrate on sight words the learner can find easily. Ask them to tick every word they know ('and' and 'the' come up a lot)

- look at the harder common sight words, or words that are topical or interesting and ask the learner to find them in a given paragraph.

Using Audio Cassettes

There are good reasons for including the development of auditory skills as part of basic skills provision. It is part of a multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning, it represents a preferred learning style for many learners, and it is in itself a skill which leads to the development of language.

Cassettes offer a flexible and useful resource for developing listening skills. There are commercially available cassettes, or staff can make their own. They can be used by individual learners to learn on their own, at home, in training sessions or at work. They can also be used for whole group activities such as practice in listening for specific information, picking out the main points of a passage or following spoken instructions.

Example 1

One provider identifies the following uses of audio cassettes.

Uses of audio cassettes

- to bring a variety of aspects of life and work into the learning situation
- to introduce a new topic
- to support beginners
- for practice in taking messages
- to provide a stimulus for discussion or writing
- for dictation practice, perhaps self-checking against a transcript
- to give practice in mental arithmetic
- to provide evidence of oral competence.

Example 2

Another provider suggests specific tasks for developing listening skills.

Listening tasks

- pick out the differences between two points of view, or two versions of a news story relevant to the learner's area of work
- sift information, making notes as required, e.g. train times
- fill a diary with a week's appointments, based on messages
- complete tables or charts e.g. from a weather forecast
- list the sequence of events or instructions
- listen to technical terms and explanations that are to be read afterwards
- listen to a description of an event, in preparation for re-telling or writing it
- infer meanings from ambiguous statements or conversations, in preparation for discussing them.

Example 3

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Making your own recordings

- be clear what outcomes they are designed to achieve

- ensure they are delivered in an interesting manner at moderate speed

- incorporate a range of presentations: song, instruction, story

- ensure that they are clear, i.e. distinct and easy to follow, especially if giving instructions

- ensure that specific sections are easy to find

- label them with date, content, reference numbers as appropriate.

Prompt Questions for Element 3

■

How do you ensure that the resources you use are well-matched to the learners' needs?

■

What guidance do you give to staff to help them select the most appropriate resources?

■

What guidance do you give to workplace supervisors?

■

What guidance do you give to staff to avoid an over-reliance on handouts and worksheets?

■

How do you check the quality of handouts and worksheets?

■

How do you ensure learning materials are linked to learners' individual needs or vocational interests?

■

How effective is the use of ICT in your basic skills provision?

■

What more could you do to integrate the use of ICT into your training?

■

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

UNIT 1 — Teaching, Learning and Students' Achievements

Support for Learning Basic Skills:

- types of learning support and approaches to reviewing and improving support
- progress reviews

Aspect

3

UNIT 1

2

Types of learning support

Providers offer learning support for basic skills in a variety of ways as the following examples illustrate.

Example 1

One provider has the following list of the ways in which it provides support.

- one-to-one support
- group support
- support in practical sessions
- support at work
- specialist equipment
- study skills
- specialist assessment
- specialist support
- numeracy support
- communication support
- language support
- mobility support
- medical/personal support.

Example 2

Another provider lists its support provision as follows.

- informal assessment advice and guidance on basic skills
- a learning plan which sets basic skills targets and ways to achieve them
- one-to-one support with a qualified basic skills trainer
- small workshops at convenient times
- supported distance learning
- access to basic skills resources – Internet, CD-ROMs and paper-based resources
- regular reviews of progress.

Example 3

One provider has two strands of support.

- workshop, where learners can work individually or in small groups
- support in vocational training sessions.

These strands aim to:

- provide support for individuals that is clearly vocationally related
- work with staff to improve materials and the teaching of programmes
- increase basic skills trainers' knowledge of vocational requirements which can then inform workshop practice and vocational programme support for learners
- develop an insight into basic skills practice that enables vocational staff to provide better counselling for learners and present a positive image of support for them
- build partnerships between basic skills and vocational staff
- devise coherent strategies that meet the needs of different vocational areas.

A critical aspect of this is the role played by non-basic skills specialists. Specialist basic skills trainers work with vocational staff to develop the learners' basic skills through the whole programme and a named vocational trainer is allocated to every vocational area to support staff.

Example 4

Another provider has a statement in its basic skills and key skills policy that the development of basic skills should not be viewed in isolation from the development of other skills. 'Basic/key skills development is not independent of cognitive development and in order to be effective and autonomous in their learning, learners should be encouraged to develop holistically with both knowledge and skills being important.' This provider issues guidelines to support trainers and explain the procedures they need to follow to support their learners. These guidelines are disseminated through staff training and through a handbook, extracts from which are reproduced below.

In planning learning programmes, incorporate the principles and practice of equal opportunities into your session plans and learning materials. Plan for the development of basic and key skills, i.e. written and oral communication, application of number, IT and interpersonal skills within the programme. Make the development of key skills an explicit learning outcome. This is particularly important for foundation and advanced modern apprentices in order for them to achieve completion of the framework alongside the NVQ.

It is of critical importance that trainers provide feedback on basic and key skills. Note where there are errors of spelling, grammar or punctuation. If there are many such errors, then trainers should correct some of these to demonstrate to learners what is needed to make their writing technically correct.

The assessment form includes a section for the assessment of basic and key skills.

Example 4 (continued)

Non-basic skills specialists are also offered guidance on how they can develop the basic skills of their learners.

This is achieved by:

- employing a range of training and learning methods, not all of which rely on the written word

- ensuring that any written material is read aloud

- not asking learners to read aloud, unless they volunteer

- offering the use of tapes to record ideas as standard practice

- when requiring learners to record the outcomes of group discussion, ensuring that learners work in groups, with one person recording ideas

- offering support routinely to all learners in the completion of any written work

- identifying the skills that are needed by the learners in the workplace

- identifying the skills that will be developed on each learning programme and integrating this development into the training and learning

- integrating guidance and tutorial opportunities into the course

- mentioning future learning possibilities, including basic and key skills at higher levels.

In order to provide high-quality support in basic skills, it is essential that its effectiveness is monitored and action is taken to instigate any changes required as a result of this monitoring. Further information on this can be found in Unit 2. Many providers have a system for the review of support for learning basic skills.

Example 1

One provider, having recognised the importance of monitoring the take-up and effectiveness of support for basic skills, has introduced the following performance measures. Providers of basic skills may wish to consider the standard of performance that they would wish to apply to each measure. In this case, the first two are set at 100 per cent.

The provider also has a form for monitoring initial assessment and basic skills support, as shown.

Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Performance indicators for basic skills support programmes

1. Percentage of learners that identify a support need on their application form who are given a guidance interview.

   Method: Checking database of applications to ensure referrals are made.

   Personnel: Recruitment Staff

2. Percentage of learners that are identified as having a basic skills need, through initial assessment, who are given appointments for a further diagnostic assessment.

   Method: Checking database of applications and initial assessment results to ensure appointments have been given.

   Personnel: Recruitment Staff

3. Percentage of learners who attend diagnostic assessment session.

   Method: Original referral list checked and learners entered on monitoring sheets.

   Personnel:

4. Percentage of learners who complete a diagnostic assessment that accept and attend the support programme arranged.

   Method: Learners entered on tracking sheets and monitored through the individual learner's support files.

   Personnel:

5. Percentage of learners assessed that attend all support sessions arranged for them.

   Method: Individual learner support files checked and monitored three times a year. Entered on to tracking sheet.

   Personnel:

6. Percentage of learners that regularly attend their support programmes who complete their learning programme.

   Method: Checking learners against programme completion data.

   Personnel:

7. Percentage of learners who regularly attended support programme achieving their primary learning goal or target qualification and/or an additional qualification in basic skills where appropriate.

   Method: Checking learners against qualification data.

   Personnel:

Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Learner tracking and monitoring sheet for initial assessment and basic skills support programmes

Applicant name	Received Guidance interview	Initial assessment results		Diagnostic Assessment completed	Start programme	Support programme agreed	Completed course	Primary Learning Goal achieved	Basic Skill Qualification (Where appropriate)	Withdrew (Date)
		Numeracy	Literacy							

Example 2

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

One provider identified the need for change in its basic skills provision because of a number of findings. First, basic skills staff working with learners on vocational programmes became concerned that the impact of their support was limited because skills learnt were not reinforced in other sessions which learners might be attending. Secondly, through a pilot study looking at whether materials used matched learners' needs it became apparent that many of the materials used did not. Then basic skills trainers working with vocational trainers found that a significant number of trainers were interested in developing learners' basic skills but lacked confidence in how to do it and because of time constraints found it difficult to attend an appropriate training course. Finally, where staff had worked successfully as a team it had been possible to develop the skills of vocational trainers in a supportive way by relating the teaching of basic skills to their area of vocational expertise.

This provider describes how it managed and developed the change required as follows.

'For developments to be successful they need the support of senior management. The strategic plan clearly identifies the agenda and the priorities over the next 12 months and all activity should relate to this. Having a strategy is not enough. The strategy is only effective when accompanied by an action plan that is clear in terms of its objectives and how they will be achieved. It is important that individuals are clear regarding their responsibilities, the way in which they will evaluate their work and to whom they feed back.'

The provider has an effective approach to implementing appropriate changes, as shown on the next page.

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Developing clear objectives

The team delivering basic skills had the following objectives:

- to work with the whole vocational programme team not just the trainer in the session that they were supporting
- to develop the awareness of basic skills in programme teams
- to develop the skills of vocational trainers in preparing materials that are appropriate for the basic skills level of the group and individuals within it
- to assist trainers in building in opportunities for the development and practice of basic skills within the vocational programme
- to develop the skills of vocational trainers in working with different ability levels at the same time and in developing individual learning programmes.

Gaining the support of senior management

The team put forward a proposal for senior managers outlining the following:

- the way in which this met national objectives outlined in the Moser report[1]
- concerns that the organisation was not meeting the basic skills needs as effectively as it might
- evidence for the success of the new approach based on the experience of a few trainers and the pilot undertaken as part of the development of inclusive learning.

Resourcing the plan

As a result of backing from senior managers, the following was able to be resourced:

- a new post of basic skills co-ordinator
- the allocation of a number of hours (approximately four a week) for basic skills staff to work directly with vocational staff in order to develop skills
- staff development time for the basic skills staff as they also developed new interpersonal skills for their new role.

Implementing the plan

It was also important to inform and involve other key staff across the organisation. In order to do that the team:

- ran a session for middle managers
- produced written guidelines regarding the approach to be adopted
- visited vocational teams to discuss issues
- involved programme staff from the beginning.

[1] *Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A Fresh Start. The Report of the Working Group chaired by Sir Claus Moser, DfEE, London, 1999*

Example 3

The action plan below was drawn up by another provider following a review of its provision.

Basic Skills Action Plan 1999/2000

Issue	Action	Performance Indicator	Target	Timescale	Responsible person	Monitor and review
Support take-up rate of learners in the 10th percentile of the initial assessment results.	Target vocational area teams by: a) attending trainer/assessor team meetings to raise issues regarding learner support b) close liaison with work placement officers of identified students c) offering timetabled slots to vocational area teams.	a) a rise in the percentage of learners that fall within the 10th percentile attending for support. b) timetables.	A 2% rise in learners falling in the 10th percentile.	1st November 2000	Learning support manager	June 2000 and October 2000
Proving the benefit of basic skills support.	a) record of achievement of identified learners who received support compared with those who did not accept support. b) record the retention of the identified learners who received support in comparison with those who did not accept support.	The retention and achievement of learners accepting support will be a higher percentage compared to those who are not receiving support.	70% of the learners identified will remain on programme and achieve accreditation for their main learning goal.	September 2000	Learning Support Manager	Review study skills attendance stats on each funding date against withdrawals.
Accurately logging learner support hours. Most learners have a regular timeslot that is easily monitored but additional drop-in hours are not always logged. Therefore, not all support hours are recorded.	Create an attendance sheet for each learner to sign with respect to the hours of support received. Collect accurate learner support data for funding dates.	An increase in the number of additional support hours.	All additional support hours are logged to enable claiming of the hours.	1st February 2000	Learning Support Manager and named trainer	1st November 1999 and 1st February 2000

Example 4

The effectiveness of support is also increased by asking vocational and support staff to provide regular feedback on the support they feel learners need. The form used for this is shown below.

Basic skills feedback sheet

Please complete this form and send back to ....

To: ....

.... is currently attending additional support sessions for support with

literacy and study skills.

....

....

Please could you let me know if there are any additional areas of work for which this learner needs help?

Key focus needs to be on reading and understanding technical information and in organising portfolio/cross referencing

....

....

....

This learner has been attending additional support sessions for 3 months. Do you see any improvement in their previously weak areas? Please comment.

Improved general spelling and sentence construction

....

....

Are there any new areas this learner needs to improve?

....

....

....

Signed ....   Dated ....

Example 5

Several providers monitor the effectiveness of learning support by recording the learner's response to the support they are receiving. This then leads to action in setting up the next stage of the programme. The following documents illustrate how this is achieved.

Review 1: Assessment, induction & starting

				English	Maths
1	What are you attending support for?				
Tick ONE answer box for each question					
2	Who suggested that support would help you on your main learning programme?	*Personal choice*	*Supervisor at work*	*A vocational trainer*	*Other*
3	When was this discussed?	*When my learning programme was planned*	*At a progress review*	*In a learning session*	*Other*
4	How were you assessed for support?	*Initial assessment tests*	*Assessment for NVQ*	*Discussion with trainer*	*Personal choice*

		English		Maths	
		Yes	**No**	**Yes**	**No**
5	At induction for support were you given the name of your basic skills support trainer?				
6	Have you attended regularly?				
7	Do you have a work plan for your support?				
8	Are you writing up your record of work regularly?				
9	Do you feel your support work will give you more confidence to tackle your NVQ?				
10	Have you started to work on areas which need strengthening in your main course work?				
11	Is guidance and feedback from your trainer clear and useful?				
12	Are you satisfied with your progress so far?				

Are there any suggestions you would like to make to improve your support sessions?

Comments:

Actions:

Trainer signature: Learner signature:

Date: Date:

Example 5 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Review 2: On course

		English		Maths	
1	What are you attending support for?				
Now tick Yes or No to the following questions					
		Yes	No	Yes	No
2	Have you been able to attend regularly?				
3	Is the support relevant to your course?				
4	Do you get individual feedback?				
5	Do you have enough time with the trainer?				
6	Is the level of support appropriate?				
7	Is the place where you work on your support suitable?				
8	Are the materials useful?				
9	Do you have a support work plan?				
10	Are you keeping your record of work up to date?				
11	Do you feel more confident on your main learning programme as a result of your support work?				
12	Do you feel you have made progress in your work?				

Comments:

Actions:

Trainer signature: Learner signature:

Date: Date:

Example 5 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Review 3: Summary Review

		English		Maths	
1	What are you attending support for?				
Now tick Yes or No to the following questions					
		Yes	No	Yes	No
2	Have you been able to attend regularly?				
3	Has the support been relevant to your programme?				
4	Has feedback from your trainer helped you progress?				
5	Have you had enough time with the trainer?				
6	Has support been at the right level for you?				
7	Have the resources you have used for support been appropriate?				
8	Are you following your work plan?				
9	Is your record of work up to date?				
10	Are you making progress on your main programme?				
Now answer these questions, please					
11	Are you on target to gain the qualification for your main programme? *Tick*	**Yes**		**No**	
12	What do you intend to go on to after your present programme? *Write below*				
13	If you go on to other training, do you think you will need some further support?	**Yes**		**No**	
14	What might you need support in?	**English**		**Maths**	

Comments:

Actions:

Trainer signature: Learner signature:
Date: Date:

Prompt Questions for Element 1

■

How do managers review provision to check that a range of appropriate support is offered to meet the learning needs of individual learners?

■

How do basic skills staff in your organisation work with vocational staff to ensure learners receive appropriate support?

■

How do you ensure that non-specialist staff are trained to provide appropriate support for learners at the right level?

■

What guidance do you give to workplace trainers or supervisors to enable them to provide appropriate support?

■

What methods do you have for measuring the effectiveness of the support you provide?

■

What systems exist for recording the take-up of the support you have offered?

■

How do you monitor the retention and achievement of learners receiving support?

■

What methods do you have for identifying the need for change in any aspect of support?

■

Review arrangements

One provider's practice is organised as follows.

Personal adviser: Each learner is allocated a personal adviser, who sees the learner in the workplace at regular intervals. Quarterly reviews are planned, but there is a declared 'any time, anywhere' policy of availability, which means that many learners see their personal adviser on other occasions and access help or support as they need it. During the first five weeks of the learning programme the learner will see his or her personal adviser weekly. There are guidelines on areas to be covered during these meetings.

Evaluation: At the end of their 12 weeks, the learner completes, with their personal adviser and workplace supervisor, an Evaluating Own Performance form. This aims to support all parties in reviewing progress. Learner attendance at any support workshops is monitored and learning is reviewed and recorded. Any information relating to the learner's support or skills development is obtained from vocational trainer and basic skills support staff.

Review records: Written records of all reviews are kept and initialled by both learner and personal adviser. In addition, each week the personal adviser records that a review has been held with a particular learner. These records are computerised and accessible to all staff via the intranet. This enables all staff to see whether or not a learner is having reviews regularly.

Learner satisfaction survey: The level of learner satisfaction with both reviews and other support arrangements is assessed via a questionnaire at three points during the learning programme. A report is written using this evidence and action points are identified for areas of concern.

The documentation used for some of this process is given in the following examples.

Example 1

This example provides a flowchart illustrating the review process used by one provider.

Guidance and Reviews

Pre-programme	All learners interviewed ———— No offer of a place
	Offer of a place Offered guidance interview
	Programme information sent
Induction (2 days)	Personal adviser and vocational trainers allocated
(weeks 1-4) includes opportunities for one-to-one careers guidance/educational guidance	Learners see personal adviser for $^1/_2$ hour per week in workplace
	Week 1 – completion of self-profile
	Weeks 2-4 – diagnostic assessment plus basic/key skills checklist completed with personal adviser
On-going vocational off-the-job training	– referral to appropriate learning support
	– basic/key skills learning agreement completed with basic skills trainer
(week 4 onwards)	Weekly review of basic skills progress at end of each session
On-going off-the-job training and basic skills	Personal adviser sees learner every 4 weeks to discuss and monitor learning progress/work placement and give guidance
	Quarterly – overall review and evaluation of progress in skills development for all areas of learning
(last 4 weeks of programme) includes further opportunities for one-to-one careers guidance/CV writing/progression opportunities.	Final review and evaluation of overall progress
	Learner returns to self-profile completed in week 1 and reflects on progress with personal adviser
	Exit guidance
End of programme	

Example 2

A form is used by the same provider to record reviews. This is completed at the time of the review, initialled by personal adviser and learner and kept in the student file.

	Progress Review Weeks		

Learner: ....Personal Adviser: ....

Supervisor: ....

	Comment	Initialled	
		Learner & supervisor	Personal Adviser
Week 1	F is finding his way around and is settling in. He is concerned about the NVQ assessment work – his reading is slow – and he would like one-to-one support from next week.		
Week 2 (Self-profile)	We discussed the completed self-profile. F lacks confidence in many areas. Struggling to understand performance criteria for unit of NVQ. Refer to basic skills for diagnostic assessment. Discuss assessment paperwork requirements with vocational trainer for possible use in basic skills support sessions.		

Example 3

Regular review of learners' basic and key skills progress is an important part of the
review programme. The following basic and key skills checklist is completed in week 7.

Name of learner: **FW**

Worksheet Task	Can Do	Needs Further Support
(respond with a tick in the correct box)		
Extract information from a text	❏	❏
Make notes from a text	❏	❏
Make notes from group sessions	❏	❏
Use of number/interpretation of a table	❏	❏
Evidence diary writing	❏	❏

Other skills:

	Can Do	Needs Further Support
Oral	❏	❏
IT skills	❏	❏

Further comments

1. FW is a slow reader and has to re-read to get full meaning.

2. FW is seeing JW weekly for support.

Learner's signature: FW

Basic skills trainer's signature: JW

Date:

Example 4

A basic skills learning agreement should also be completed. The purpose of this is to record the outcome of the extended diagnostic assessment process and to encourage the learner to identify short- and long-term aims, strategies and a programme to improve his or her skills development. A sample of a completed agreement follows.

Basic and key skills learning agreement

Name: FW

Date:

Programme:

Tutor:

General comments:

F has made an excellent beginning. He has made huge improvements as he has had very little education, but his written skills – structure and organisation – need development and he sometimes needs support to understand concepts.

Charts/tables – he needs support here.

Action plan – Short-term aims:	**Long-term aims:**
1. Planning	1. Improve essay-writing skills
	2. Understand concepts
	3. Understand tables and charts

Suggested programme:	
	1. Attend workshop regularly
	2. One-to-one support with JW
	3. Discuss difficulties with module tutor if necessary

Learner's signature: FW

Basic and key skills trainer's signature: JW

Example 5

At the end of an agreed period, learners also complete a basic skills review of their learning agreement. The purpose of this is to:

- help learners reflect on the strategies adopted to improve their skills development, as identified in their learning agreement and their subsequent progress

- help learners to modify these strategies and their programme as necessary.

This is illustrated on the following page.

Basic and key skills review of learning agreement: Evaluating own performance

Name of learner:	
Date:	
Basic skills trainer:	

General comments:

Short-term aims: **Achieved**	**Not yet achieved:**

Identify the progress you have made:

Which strategies for improvement were successful:

Have/will you change or add new strategies:

Revised programme to improve own performance:

Learner's signature:	
Trainer's signature:	

Example 6

The same provider has recently developed an on-line system for recording reviews.

On-line system for recording reviews – please READ THIS

A new system for recording progress reviews has been devised. I would be grateful if personal advisers could use the system to record when reviews have taken place.

Don't worry about this being time-consuming. It's as simple as clicking on a box with your mouse.

The system resides on your desktop under the 'Review Records' icon

'Double Click' on this and you will open the following window:

'Double Click' on the 'Review Records' icon. This takes you to the Review records system

Tutorials 1999-2000

review records

- Record Review Details
- Save and Quit

To enter the system, click on the 'Record Review Details' button. This gives you a list of learners and personal advisers, always starting at review 1.

Personal Adviser Reviews 1999-2000					
description Introductions					
Week 1				*previous review* ◀	
Date 20 September 1999					
Review records				*next review* ▶	

	Learner			Personal Adviser	Held?	
▶	Peter	Smith	P	Lennon	❏	▲
	Clive	Brown	P	Lennon	❏	
	Dave	White	P	Lennon	❏	
	Wayne	Heslop	K	Bailey	❏	
	Karen	Huxley	K	Bailey	❏	
	Mike	Griffiths	K	Bailey	❏	
	Sarah	Ward	K	Bailey	❏	
	Brian	Cox	S	Bailey	❏	
	Julie	Grant	S	Kirkbright	❏	
	Stuart	Waterhouse	S	Kirkbright	❏	
	Tracy	Gregory	C	Kirkbright	❏	

Record: |◀ |◀ 1 ▶| ▶| * ▶ of 80

Save and Quit

Example 6 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Use the arrows at the top to select the current review.

previous review ◀

next review ▶

Now simply scroll down to find your name (the data are ordered by personal adviser name).

Click in the appropriate box to place a tick, indicating that the review has taken place (see below).

Kelly	Francis	T	Orton	❏
Jo	Glidewell	T	Orton	❏
Katie	Smith	T	Orton	❏
Chris	Jeffries	T	Orton	❏
Mary	Ellis	T	Orton	❏

When you've finished entering your returns, click on the 'Save and Quit' button.

Save and Quit 🚪◀

This will return you to the menu screen.

To exit, click on the 'Save and Quit' button of the main menu.

That's it.

Example 7

One work-based learning provider uses the following progress and action planning procedure.

Purpose:

- to review the participant's progress against the individual learning plan (ILP)
- to involve the participant, employer/placement provider and training adviser in the review
- to agree on future action.

Procedure:

Arrange the review in advance with the participant and the employer/placement provider. Reviews should take place often enough to affect and guide the participant's performance. The frequency should be determined by:

- the participant's needs
- the employer's/placement provider's needs
- contractual requirements. This is the minimum acceptable performance.

Under no circumstances should the elapsed time between reviews exceed 13 weeks or the period specified in the contract.

- use the Participant Review Form (N112) to record the present position, the targets set and the action points agreed
- distribute copies of the Review Form within three working days to:
  - participant (1st white)
  - employer/placement provider (2nd yellow)
  - participant's file (3rd pink)
  - training manager/co-ordinator (4th green)
- action any agreed points.

Example 7 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Guidance:

- participant review is the main method of:
    - monitoring progress against all learning targets
    - identifying problems and additional support needed
    - agreeing action points
    - amending the ILP when necessary

- reviews should be frequent and result in the agreement of effective action plans

- if action points need setting between reviews, use the continuation sheet (N112 2 of 2)

- targets and action points should be expressed in unambiguous terms, avoiding the use of shorthand (e.g. 'complete unit 2') as this tends to make the reviews less useful to people not fully conversant with the standard. Specify what part(s) of unit 2 should be worked on and how

- action points set must be followed up at the next visit

- all review activity (including placements visits and off-the-job reviews of NVQ training or basic skills support) should be subject to this procedure

- whenever possible reviews should take place in the participant's normal place of work

- employers and placement providers should be active participants in the review process.

Example 8

One provider has a review process which takes place three times during the learning process for New Deal clients. This review provides an opportunity for clients and trainers to discuss progress and co-ordinate with New Deal personal advisers' monitoring visits.

The purpose of the review is to:

- ascertain client opinion about specific aspects of the provision or New Deal option
- identify points for further action
- make sure that a client is on the right course
- ensure that the client is satisfied with the style of learning
- ensure that the client is satisfied with the available resources
- enable the client to self-assess their progress
- encourage the client, trainer and New Deal personal adviser identify possible progression routes, employment options or additional learning
- identify possible exit destinations
- summarise and monitor client satisfaction with procedures and resources
- summarise action points.

It presents an opportunity to discuss a variety of issues, including:

- progress
- resources used (including training staff)
- guidance and job search
- counselling needs
- childcare and benefits.

Staff are able to refer clients to a variety of outside agencies when the client has a problem outside the trainer's remit or expertise.

Example 8 (continued)

The following guidance is given to staff carrying out the review.

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Before the review

1. Plan the content

- what needs to be discussed?
- what is the most effective way of getting honest feedback?

2. Plan the structure

- how will it be carried out? (by whom?, on timetabled or ad hoc basis?)
- what needs to be discussed?

3. Discuss the review process with clients

- it is an integral part of their learning – for feedback and planning
- explain that we review to improve the service that clients receive, both individually (in terms of work planning) and as a group
- discuss what form it takes (time taken, how operated, etc.).

4. During the review

- devote time to the review, either in a group, through timetabled meetings or as part of a drop-in session
- seek honest feedback, explaining that change happens through positive and negative comments
- share the paperwork and record-keeping (client or member of staff can write comments)
- keep it informal
- revisit client's original aims and revise if necessary
- discuss possible progression routes
- explore support needs
- discuss clients' and trainers' perceptions of progress and achievements
- plan direction of work using aims and progress made
- ask clients what they feel they have learnt and what they would like to learn next
- agree action to be taken and sign.

The whole process needs to be undertaken with the aim of improving the service we offer clients during their New Deal option. We must reassure them that the comments they make are valued and will be taken into account.

5. After the review

- update work and learning plans
- staff to explore support and progression needs
- make sure clients know that individual and general comments have been noted, actioned and will be dealt with where possible
- feed back action on individual reviews to New Deal personal advisers, employers and placement providers.

Example 9

The following form is used to record the first review.

Name...

New Deal Option

Employer/work placement

How did you hear about the option?...

1. Did you get enough information when you started on your programme?

    ❏ Yes   ❏ No

    What else would it have been helpful to know at the beginning?

    ....

    ....

2. How many hours off-the-job training do you attend each week?

    ❏ 1-2 hours   ❏ 3-4 hours   ❏ 5-8 hours   ❏ 9 hours or more

3. How many hours basic or key skills support do you get each week?

    ❏ 1-2 hours   ❏ 3-4 hours   ❏ 5-8 hours   ❏ 9 hours or more

4. Is the option what you expected?

    ❏ Yes   ❏ No   ❏ Partly

Tell us about anything you would like to change:

    ....

    ....

5. Is the training or support on the option what you need or want?

    ❏ Yes   ❏ No   ❏ Partly

Example 9 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

6. How is the pace of learning for you?

   ❑ Too fast   ❑ About right   ❑ Too slow

7. Is there anything you would change about the way you are learning or being taught?

   Occupational training ....

   Job Search ....

   English ....

   Maths ....

   Computers ....

8. How have you found the support provided by staff?

   ❑ Helpful   ❑ OK   ❑ Not very useful   ❑ I'd like more support
                                                                      and time

   Can you tell us a bit more about this?

   ....

   ....

9. Is there any other support you need?

   ....

   ....

10. Are there any other options or training programmes you are interested in or think
    would be appropriate?

    ....

    ....

ACTION BOX

Example 10

The following is an example of a review form completed at the second progress review.

Name: ....

Option: ....

What have you learnt since the last review?

Occupational area
I have learnt about health and safety in the workplace, how to use hand tools and how to keep them in good condition.

Job search
That it's a good idea in my line of work to talk to people by phone to let them know you're interested in any jobs they might have.

English
I can fill in application forms and I can search Yellow Pages for landscape gardeners.

Maths
Nothing yet.

IT
I've used the computer to look up landscape gardeners in this area. I've made a little database to log any job applications.

What would you like to learn about?

Occupational area
How to lay patios and plant up borders

Job search
Continue as before – also do a CV

English
Reading and spelling plant names

Maths

IT
Word-processing a CV.

What have you liked about the course so far?
I really do like outdoor work – there's more to landscape gardening than I thought.

What could be improved?
I would like to be able to continue some job search work when I go to basic skills support sessions.

Do you have any comments to make about the centre or materials and resources on offer?
I would like to be able to take books home sometimes and read.

How is the overall pace of learning for you?

☐ Too fast   ☑ About right   ☐ Too slow

Are there any areas (occupational, job search or basic skills) which are not at the right pace?
No

Example 10 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

How have you found the support provided by staff?

☑ Helpful   ☐ OK   ☐ Not very useful   ☐ I'd like more support

Can you tell us a bit more about this?

All staff are very patient and explain things well. They also give me information about people who can help me with my housing problems.

Is there any other support you need?

I'd like more crèche time.

Are there any other programmes you are interested in?

I'd like to do more than just the three units of amenity horticulture that were planned for me. After a bit more practice I might like to do some more on computers.

Would you like us to book an appointment with

☐ Support Co-ordinator   ☐ New Deal personal adviser

☐ Careers   ☐ Other ....

☐ Counsellor

ACTION BOX

Staff:

• *investigate possibility of extending number of NVQ units*

• *add 'identifying and spelling plant names and horticulture terminology, planning and writing CV' to work plan*

• *make appointment with Support Co-ordinator for assessment and discussion on computer skills*

• *visit Learner Services to discuss a beginner's programme.*

Basic skills trainers can help learners address specific practical support needs, and can provide general emotional support and reassurance. However, trainers should be aware that they cannot fulfil all professional roles (e.g. counselling) and should refer learners to other specialist staff as and when appropriate.

Example 1

A spidergram produced by one provider shows some of the roles a basic skills trainer should fulfil while supporting learners.
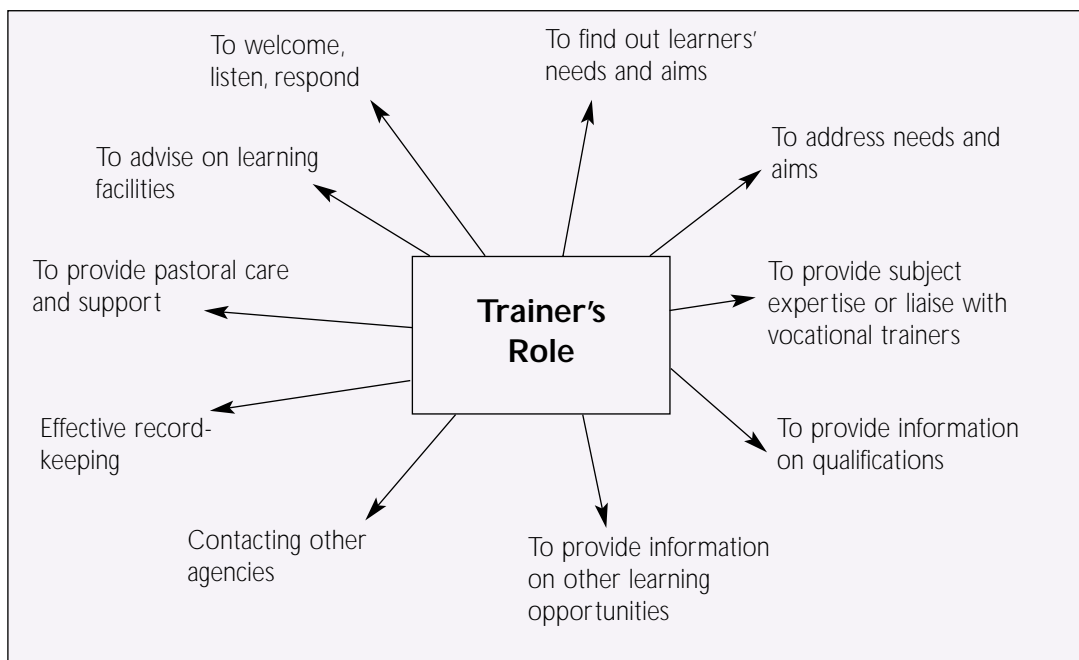
Example 2

The functions described by most providers as part of the role of the basic skills trainer are summarised below.

Role of basic skills trainer

Teaching and learning:

- assessment of learner's learning needs
- planning learning programmes
- teaching
- developing appropriate materials
- assessing and reviewing progress
- recording progress
- reviewing learning plans
- advising on progression.

Monitoring attendance:

- keeping registers
- reporting and following up absence
- reporting and following up early leavers.

Record-keeping:

- ensuring all forms required for central information systems are completed
- ensuring all qualification registrations are completed accurately.

Advice and guidance:

- delivering induction programmes
- conducting tutorials
- advising on where further information can be obtained, e.g. on crèche facilities, counselling.

Functioning as part of a basic skills team:

- attending and contributing to team meetings
- sharing information on learners' needs and progress
- ensuring all staff teaching a learner are aware of their basic skills learning programme and progress
- assisting vocational trainers to develop learning materials and training to reinforce basic skills.

Prompt Questions for Element 2

■

What arrangements do you make to provide effective progress review support for learners?

■

How effective is the training you provide for staff?

■

How do you ensure that staff are aware of the support services provided by outside agencies?

■

How could you improve the ways in which trainers record the outcomes of reviews?

■

How do you monitor the effectiveness of reviews?

■

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

UNIT 1

Teaching, Learning and Students' Achievements

Assessing and Recording Learners' Achievements:

- assessing learning and recording progress
- recognising achievement

Element 1: Assessing Learning and Recording Progress

Effective trainers understand that assessment is an integral part of the learning process. It has a primary purpose of helping learners to know what they have learnt. Such trainers develop a variety of assessment and recording activities to show individual learners the progress they are making towards the objectives specified in their learning plans. They take care to match assessment to the different needs and abilities of their learners, and take into account the different settings for learning. They ensure that the requirements of assessment do not take priority over teaching and learning.
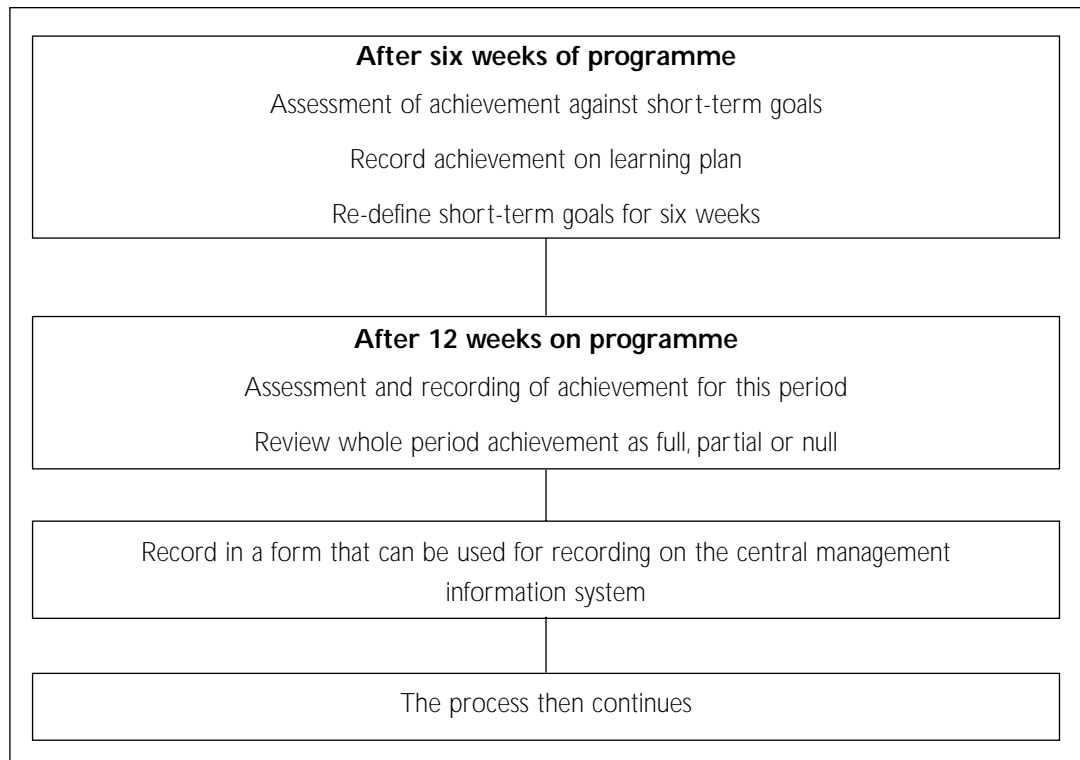
In effective provision, assessing and recording progress is conceived and planned as a whole, carefully staged process, drawing together all the different aspects of the individuals' basic skills learning. The trainer gives careful consideration to the effects of a learner's progress on their everyday life. The best evidence of progress is when a learner is able to demonstrate that she or he can use a new or improved skill.

For some individuals with learning difficulties, providers should use a wider definition of basic skills to include small developmental steps that lead to the acquisition of pre-Entry Level basic skills.

The examples that follow show how different providers plan and implement the process of assessing and recording progress.

Example 1

One large provider uses the following process for assessing and recording the progress of learners working on individual basic skills programmes.

After six weeks of programme

Assessment of achievement against short-term goals

Record achievement on learning plan

Re-define short-term goals for six weeks

After 12 weeks on programme

Assessment and recording of achievement for this period

Review whole period achievement as full, partial or null

Record in a form that can be used for recording on the central management information system

---

The process then continues

Staff are advised that:

- learning goals must be measurable and achievable within the time set
- learning goals should be realistic and challenging, but not daunting
- getting the pace right at the start takes skill
- assessment of progress is based on personally defined learning goals, not only external awards.

The following sheets illustrate six-weekly learning plans and progress records for learners' basic skills programmes.

Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Staged learning plan and progress record

At the beginning of each period, trainers list the learner's short-term goals. They tick adjoining columns as appropriate.

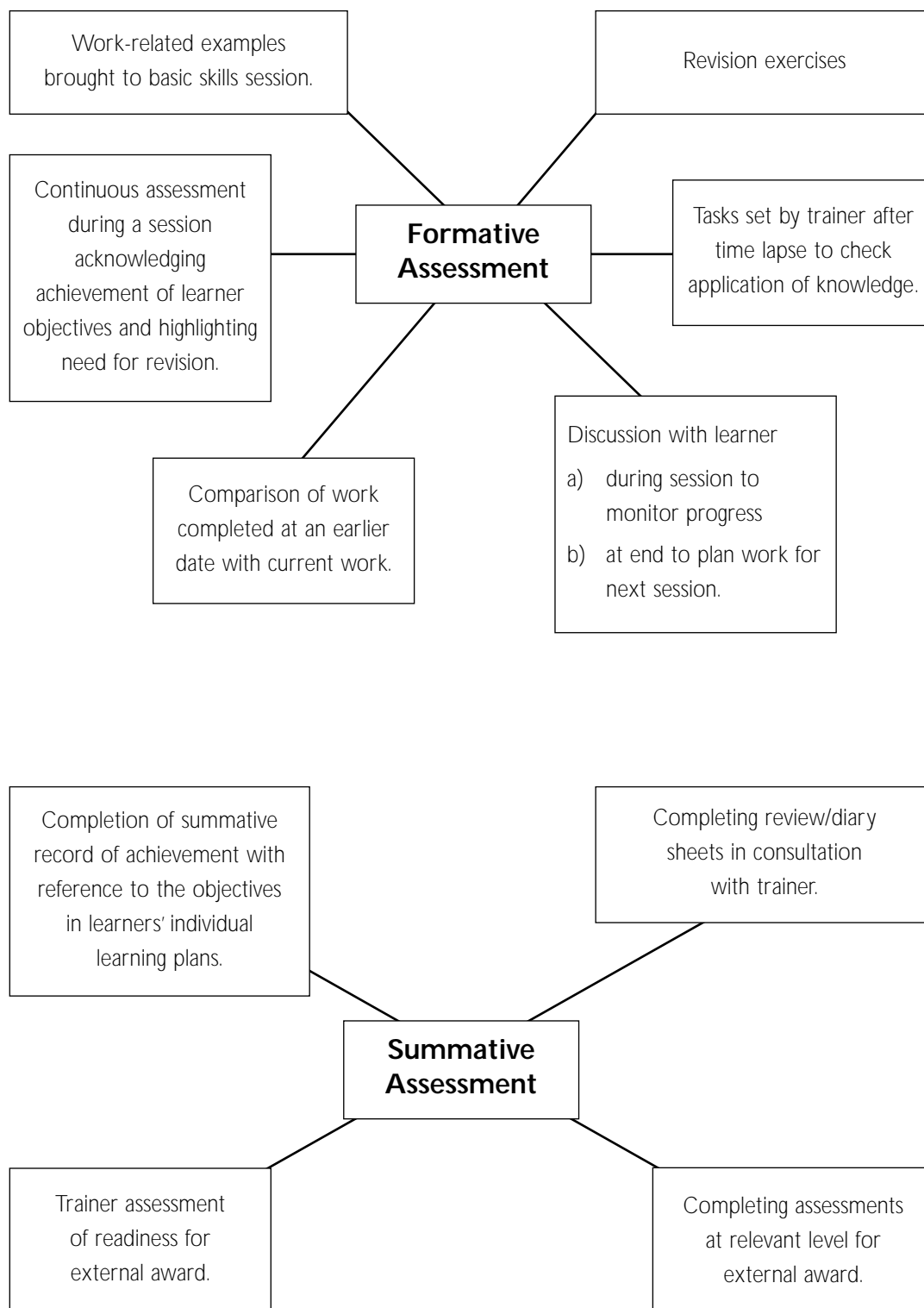Name of learner: *Richard*   Sheet no.: 1

Name of trainer: *Diana*   five possible weeks

Goals for next six weeks	Achieved/Partially achieved	To carry over to next period
Read more accurately Over next six weeks: 1. Do at least four exercises on closely similar words. 2. Successfully complete an exercise with 10 groups of similar words.	✓	
Read with better understanding Over next six weeks: 3. Complete at least four practice gap (cloze) exercises. 4. Successfully complete a gap exercise by reading on (context cueing).	P ✓ ✓	✓
Spelling Over next six weeks: 5. Learn and use 'Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check'. 6. Successfully learn 16 new words. 7. Successfully write a dictated address. 8. Set up a personal dictionary.	✓	
Writing Over next six weeks: 9. Know how to set out a formal letter of application.	✓	
	10 learned P ✓ ✓ P	✓ keep working on keep using still using template

Signature of learner...   Signature of trainer...

Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Name of learner: *Richard*		Sheet no.: 2
Name of trainer: *Diana*		seven possible weeks
Goals for next six-week period	**Achieved/ Partially achieved**	**To carry over to next period**
Read more accurately:		
1 At least five exercises on choosing the right word		
2. Correctly complete a passage with at least 10 word choices.	✓	Would like to read aloud more
Spelling:		
3. Successfully learn an additional 12 words	✓	new set of words
4. Add to personal dictionary and use as needed at work.	✓	
5. Complete accurately two relevant forms.	P	move onto more complex forms
Writing:		
6. Practise five formal letters using correct layout.	P	3 only
7. Using a crib sheet, be able to lay out a letter and write the opening and closing sentences.	P	more on sentences

Signature of learner.. Signature of trainer...

Example 2

The way in which one provider assesses and records progress is summarised below.

Work-related examples brought to basic skills session.

Revision exercises

Continuous assessment during a session acknowledging achievement of learner objectives and highlighting need for revision.

Formative Assessment

Tasks set by trainer after time lapse to check application of knowledge.

Comparison of work completed at an earlier date with current work.

Discussion with learner

a) during session to monitor progress

b) at end to plan work for next session.

Completion of summative record of achievement with reference to the objectives in learners' individual learning plans.

Completing review/diary sheets in consultation with trainer.

Summative Assessment

Trainer assessment of readiness for external award.

Completing assessments at relevant level for external award.

Example 3

The same provider uses the following process to assess and record learning.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Trainer negotiates specific objectives with learner using the     │
│                           diary sheet.                                │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                   ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Progress towards and achievement of objectives recorded on        │
│              diary sheet and revised if necessary.                    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                   ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Ongoing monitoring of learner's work and circumstances by trainer │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                   ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│     Review form completed every six to eight weeks highlighting       │
│          achievement and the need to revise objectives.               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                   ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                     New diary sheet completed.                        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

The provider's core paperwork for measuring and recording learner progress is deliberately open-ended so it can be used differently according to learners' individual needs. The provider uses the following forms to underpin and track the process:

- initial interview form
- learner diary sheet and individual learning plan
- review form.

The forms are designed to be simple to use, thereby encouraging staff to use them as they go along. To make sure the forms are used properly, the provider has put various safeguards in place, including:

- use of the monitoring and review forms is an integral part of initial training of trainers
- on appointment, trainers are informed of expectations relating to their role and the principles guiding the use and administration of the forms
- staff induction sessions and meetings are used to remind staff of these expectations which are set out in a staff handbook
- copies of forms are held centrally by the basic skills co-ordinator for monitoring purposes. This ensures that:
  - the forms are being used by all trainers
  - the forms are being used appropriately to support the learning process
- returned forms are scanned by the co-ordinator who then follows up any possible concerns through discussion with staff or targeted learning session observation
- regular learning session observation includes judging how well forms are used to support the delivery of individual learning programmes.

Initial interview form

The form provides the framework for most of the questions during initial interview.

Diary sheet and individual learning plan

These will normally be available for learner and trainer to consult at every session. The timescale for completion of the form varies according to learner needs and rates of work. Learning objectives are described in the learning plan and trainers record learners' progression in relation to these. The steps indicated may be very small and specific or may be more general, encompassing whole concept areas.

Trainer's checklist for the diary sheet and individual learning plan

- review initial interview sheet with learner (new learners only)
- review old diary sheet and learning plan (existing learners)
- transfer any incomplete objectives to new sheet
- agree short-term objectives from the background given on the initial interview form, bearing in mind the long-term learner aim (new learners only)
- agree a new set of objectives with the learner (existing learners only), bearing in mind any old objectives that need revision and comments made on the periodic review form
- check whether all objectives reflect the long-term aims of the learner
- check accreditation log is up to date (if appropriate)
- copy to learner, vocational trainer and team leader.

Learner's checklist for the diary sheet and individual learning plan

Trainers should encourage learners to:

- look at their previous diary sheet and check whether they have responded accurately to revision needs
- in view of this, transfer any incomplete objectives or objectives seeking revision onto the new diary sheet and learning plan
- discuss and agree new objectives with their basic skills trainer
- refer to any points made on the review form or the initial interview form as appropriate
- check that the new objectives are linked to their long-term aims.

Trainers should work through the process with learners.

Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Review form

This form is normally completed by learner and trainer whenever a new diary sheet is required.

Trainer's checklist for the review form

- collect all diary sheets and the review forms

- discuss each objective with the learner

- agree new main objectives for next few weeks

- review main long-term aims

- consider progression

- sign and date the document

- copy to learner, vocational trainer and team leader.

Learner's checklist for the review form

Learners should:

- collect all diary sheets and review forms

- ensure that they understand the information in them

- review their main long-term aims

- consider progression

- sign and date the form.

Trainers should work through the process with learners.

Note These forms are produced in triplicate. The top copy is for the learner's own use, the second copy is held by the trainer. The third copy is sent to the basic skills co-ordinator for quality assurance and monitoring purposes.

Example 4

The following forms are used by one provider to record learners' progress.

Record of work

Name: *James*

Date	Summary of work	Comments and reminder
23.10.00	*Begin to set up learning plan*	*First goals identified*
	Set up spelling programme	*Only two words to learn this week – 'characteristics' and 'encourage'. Although James wants to improve spelling, anxious at the moment to find ways of tackling NVQ assessment evidence first.*
	Report planning Using notes to set up a plan	*James had brought notes for a report. Didn't know how to pull them into a plan. James found this session very useful. Will bring completed plan next time*
6.11.00	*Report planning*	*Report plan discussed. James felt happy with it. Looked at how to approach other reports, written formats. James to write out 'brainstorm' and then put into plan. James said he found this very useful.*
	Review spelling	*James correctly wrote 'encourage' and 'characteristics'. Had found highlighting chunks in words useful. Would rather spend more time on writing needs at the moment – will attend Spelling Techniques after Christmas.*
	'What is a sentence?'	*Worked together through the Runcorn materials on 'what is a sentence?' Could identify easily in exercises. Biggest problem is when to use a full stop and when to use commas, semi-colons etc. Will bring exercises next week.*
	Specialist vocabulary work	*James had identified this as an area of need. Feels now far more important to keep up with his reports for work and learn how to 'write properly' in sentences and plan reports properly.*

12 weekly evaluation

Name of learner: James

Main programme title:

Goals for this period	Learner's and learning support tutor's comments on progress	Is further support necessary? Please tick
1. Set up and maintain a spelling programme.	1. *A decision was made fairly quickly to postpone setting up a spelling programme until next period when I will attend the short course, 'Spelling Techniques'.*	✓
2. Analyse newspaper article for vocabulary and technical terms.	2. *As above: some terms have been looked at but I will probably attend more sessions.*	✓
3. Look at techniques for writing reports.	3. *Good progress, now more confident on structure. Will continue to work on this as need arises at work.*	
4. Learn structures of a sentence and key terms involved.	4. *Understands terms but need work on sentence structure.*	
5. Learn note-taking techniques to use in meetings.	5. *I have developed techniques that I am happy with for note-taking.*	

Comments on attendance:

Excellent – James has attended every session.

Learning support tutor (print)	Learner's signature

Example 5

The forms below show how one provider gives feedback on their work.

Assignment feedback sheet on Wordpower

Name of candidate:	Terry
Assignment title:	Report of an accident at work
Unit: 305	Element: 2

a)   Acceptable to City & Guilds standards Yes ☑ No ❏

b)   This piece cannot go in your Wordpower folder because:

You need to set it out more clearly and there are several spelling mistakes: e.g. name of the manager needs correcting.

c)   Before you try another piece you will need to work on the following points:

Formats of reports: headings and subheadings

Spelling of key words

Proofreading.

Assessor: Ann	**Date:** 17.11.00

Example 5 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Key skills feedback sheet on Communications Level 1	
Name of candidate:	Jane
Assignment title:	Letter to a friend
Date: 20.10.00	~~**Achieve required standard**~~/**Needs further work**

Informal letter		
Layout	**Yes**	**No**
Your address	✓	
The date	✓	
Greeting	✓	
Closing		✓
Signature/name	✓	
Paragraphs		✓
Content		✓
Spelling		✓
Punctuation		✓
Tone/style	✓	
Drafting/proofreading		✓

Feedback

Plan what you are going to say first, then it will be in a better order.

Revise work on when a sentence ends and when you should put a full stop. I will give you some work on this.

You don't need to write 'Yours sincerely' to a friend. We will work on endings to letters.

Assessor: Barry	**Date:** 20.10.00

Involving Learners in the Assessing and Recording Process

Effective trainers use the assessment and recording process as another important opportunity to involve learners in their own learning. These trainers work with learners to:

- reinforce earlier learning
- reflect on progress and the learning milestones achieved
- identify strengths
- set new learning goals
- agree relevant learning tasks.

They use the following to involve learners in the assessment and recording of progress:

- regular written feedback
- oral feedback
- correcting work
- reviews of progress
- systematic observation and questioning.

Example 1

One provider ensures that basic skills staff go through a careful process to involve learners in assessing and recording their own learning.

1. Involving learners in setting their own goals	**Initial interview** The learner is encouraged to state their own learning support needs and the help they may need to achieve their primary learning goal.
	First meeting with basic skills trainer Learner and trainer together list goals for the next 10-12 weeks. The list can be added to as new needs arise and the learner grows more confident in expressing their needs.
2. Involving learners in recording and commenting on their weekly learning support work	**A typical basic skills session** (Usual length is 45 minutes, 1 hour if assessment suggests more time is required.) The basic skills trainer will have prepared work linked to the learner's recorded learning support goals and in the context of his or her vocational learning goal. The learner may have brought work that has caused difficulty in the preceding week. The basic skills trainer must help the learner acquire the skills needed to achieve, and to manage their own learning.
3. Assessment of achievement at weekly intervals	Some areas are straightforward to evaluate, e.g. spelling. Spellings learned at home each week are checked by dictation of individual words and dictation of words in sentences, including words learned in previous weeks. Words learned and those revised are recorded. The learner's views are sought about the effectiveness of teaching strategies adopted by the trainer. Evidence of learning for some skills will become more apparent once the learner puts these skills into practice on their course. No assessment takes place in learning support sessions of work needed for completion of the learner's NVQ.
4. 10-12 weekly evaluation	Each 10-12 weeks, the learner and trainer work together to review the learning plan and evaluate progress made against the goal identified at the start of the learning programme. Progress is recorded using the record of work, and a joint decision made on whether further work is needed and the learning is then modified. The learner signs to show agreement with the review form and modified ILP. A copy of the completed form is sent to the learner's supervisor and vocational trainer.

Example 2

The reflections of some basic skills learners on what they have learnt follow.

Learners on NVQ support programmes

Mavis says:

'I have found the work both interesting and helpful. The parts that I found most interesting were the use of commas and punctuation. Also the importance of proof-reading, no matter how correct you may think your work is proof-reading inevitably highlights some mistakes. I am aware that I still need to improve, spelling included, hopefully now though I am better prepared to make these improvements.'

Jim says:

'I have learnt a lot and I feel I have benefited. I believe it has helped me be more aware of my writing work as a whole and in planning how I can best put all my evidence together. My grammar and spelling have improved. Completing a spelling list each week has helped me identify the words I continually spell wrong especially all those new technical cooking terms'.

The piece of creative writing I completed which was to help get over how good our restaurant is was really enjoyable. I have not really done any creative writing before, this has helped me draw together all the skills I have learnt in my support sessions. When I started writing I found it difficult to start and be clear on what I was going to write about. But by the end I found it hard to stay within the word limit that was set as I ran over this limit and was unable to reduce it to the required amount.

In conclusion I have found the sessions beneficial in all aspects of English language and I feel my writing skills have developed and improved a great deal since I started.'

Mita says:

'I found most of the techniques I tried useful. In particular, I liked the vowel combinations. I also found useful report writing. Actually planning a report makes it half the task it should be. I found as well, proof-reading to be very valuable.'

Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Sandip says:

'By using the look, say, cover, write, check method and writing out the words, my spelling is improving. The spelling strategies and rules, e.g. changing 'y' to 'i' and doubling rules have really helped me. I understand the rule much better now. The techniques I have been shown for planning a piece of written work have improved my finished standard. My vocabulary is expanding with the use of the word grid. I feel more confident about formal writing and taking notes in meetings at work. I feel my English is improving because I have a better understanding after taking the English Language module.'

Kevin says:

'The course has made it clearer when I should be using various forms of punctuation. I learned various skills to help me with learning to spell…We wrote a short piece of writing which helped me practise all the skills I had learned. I feel improving my writing skills will help me at work. It will also help me teach my son…I took my son on the Internet and showed him how to do it, we played a word game together.'

Joan says:

'I have learned many new things such as mnemonics which will help me immensely. Another practice I will use is words within words. I feel fairly confident now in thinking I can write a proper sentence, which builds confidence so I can write a proper letter. My boss is very pleased that I now offer to draft letters for her to check and sign.'

Kim says:

'I was given information about various ways for learning how to spell effectively…I learnt sentence structure, parts of speech, tenses and punctuation skills. I always thought spelling and punctuation was a minefield, and it can be. The tricks have helped to make the whole thing clearer…I have joined in the group which has improved my social skills. I have used the library and computer. I suffer very poor self-esteem and lack of confidence so this has helped a lot. I also feel more confident to join in discussion with other trainees on my business administration course.'

'The more I learn the more I want to keep learning. I would like to set specific goals for my future, but I know that writing is one of the areas I would like to get better at. I also am at a turning point in my life where I wish to change my outlook and use my administration skills in a job working with people in the community.'

Prompt Questions for Element 1

How do you map, record and review the process for assessing and recording learners' progress in your provision?

How might you adapt some of the approaches in this element to improve what you do?

How do you ensure procedures for assessing and recording progress are not too complex and time-consuming?

How do you decide what needs to be recorded?

How do basic skills teachers liaise with vocational trainers to assess the impact that basic skills support is having on learners' progress in relation to their main programme?

What strategies do you use for helping learners to recognise what they have learned?

How do you know that learning has taken place?

What can a learner do at the end of a programme that he or she could not do at the start?

Recognising achievements that are not qualifications

Not all basic skills learners want or need an award. Some have short-term, specific personal learning goals; they achieve their piece of learning, go away and may or may not return. Other learners may not yet have the confidence to work towards an award. For some learners, an award is irrelevant to their real learning needs. This last group may include learners with learning difficulties who are learning at an early conceptual level or learners who have severe emotional difficulties.

For many learners, having the confidence and self-esteem to use their basic skills learning in their everyday lives is more important than achieving an award. Achievement for these learners may include:

- increased self-esteem and confidence
- increased independence, e.g. travellling to work independently or working unsupervised
- reading a trade magazine for the first time
- voicing their views at work for the first time
- gaining a promotion at work
- getting work after a period of unemployment
- having an article published in their company's or training provider's newsletter
- gaining confidence to pick up the phone and take a message for a work colleague.

Providers use a variety of ways to recognise these important achievements. The examples which follow include different approaches and case studies illustrating the broader achievements of learners.

Example 1

A large provider uses presentation evenings as one of its strategies for recognising learners' broader achievements. All learners, including those who have received formal qualifications from external bodies, receive a certificate awarded by the provider itself. This certificate acts as a record of achievement. It lists, in an easy to read format, the skills which learners have developed. The certificates are adapted to reflect individual achievements.

Each year, learners and their guests are invited to a presentation evening. Certificates are presented by a senior manager. The evening is also a social occasion with refreshments and opportunities for learners to talk to staff and other learners, as well as to show families and friends where they have been studying. Last year over 200 people attended the presentation evening.

Example 2

A large provider publishes learners' own writing.

To celebrate Adult Learners' Week, the local Learning Festival and the start of Year of Reading, the provider invited all basic skills learners to contribute to a publication. The editors soon had a total of 29 entries to choose from. Many staff had spent considerable time encouraging learners to take part in this activity. One member of staff commented:

'Jim was a reluctant writer. He desperately wanted to put pen to paper but it took him an age just to write a few words. The idea that his work may be included in a printed publication really inspired him. He started with an idea we discussed during a session. By the time he returned the following week, Jim had written a whole page. He was so proud of this and told me that this was the first time he felt really inspired to write. We went through his article together, made a few changes to spellings and then posted it off. When the finished booklet arrived he was absolutely thrilled and requested a further five copies for family and friends.'

All entrants received a letter thanking them for their contribution shortly after the closing date. Later each received a free copy of the publication. Basic skills staff were sent a copy for each of the groups they taught.

Example 3

This shows how one learner obtained employment in an area of her choice.

Sally is in her mid-fifties and lacking in confidence. Spelling difficulties meant Sally avoided writing anything unless her husband was able to correct it for her. She was unwilling to attend a group as she had previously been at a college and she had felt that her own needs were not being met.

Sally began working individually with a member of staff as part of a Preparation for Work programme. She progressed into a group where she worked on her own programme of spelling and writing. Eventually Sally obtained a job which involved a considerable amount of written communication.

When she got the job, Sally telephoned all the staff she had worked with to let them know she would not have got the job without their help.

Example 4

This example provides a case study of a learner's progression in personal confidence and literacy skills in the process of gaining a vocational qualification.

Bob is in his late forties. He originally joined a basic skills class to improve his spelling. He has worked in engineering for most of his life and run his own haulage business. Bob has always had back problems and cannot return to physical work. He was looking for a career change and needed to improve his literacy skills in order to obtain employment. Bob is an experienced sailor, with navigation certificates and hopes to combine his boating and engineering skills in some future occupation.

A disrupted education with frequent family moves and his own history of poor health, meant that Bob left school with no qualifications and little confidence in his abilities. He was extremely nervous at the first few sessions. Bob felt his reading was good enough for day-to-day purposes. He could cope with the local papers and only found the 'odd word' difficult. He had some problems with comprehension, having to re-read two or three times to get the meaning. His writing was his priority. Initial assessment showed his writing was at entry level with severe spelling and punctuation difficulties. Bob had many of the characteristics of dyslexia.

Bob negotiated with the trainer a learning plan incorporating a structured spelling programme. Bob soon discovered that, despite his spelling difficulties, he really enjoyed writing and brought a piece of descriptive writing to class each week. One of his stories won a county-wide writing competition. After a year, his confidence had increased and he decided to work towards a City & Guilds Wordpower Level 1 Certificate. At this point Bob wrote in his work record 'I can now express myself with a pen, something I have never been able to do'.

Bob is now working towards a Level 2 award and is hoping to begin an Introduction to Office Skills programme next year. He has compiled a CV and has had two part-time jobs but no full-time work. He has bought a computer and quickly became a proficient and enthusiastic user, emailing friends abroad with descriptions of his boating holidays. In two years, he has progressed from writing a hesitant sentence to surfing the Net with confidence.

Individual Progression Routes

Learners' confidence and self-esteem are often increased by the achievement of an award which can open up new life opportunities, as well as leading to further learning, as these examples of the progress made by individuals show.

Paula is in her early twenties and has never achieved any qualifications before. She achieved Wordpower Level 1 whilst on the Voluntary Sector option of New Deal. Her work placement is at a local country park visitor centre and she has built up enough confidence to now begin some units of a Retail and Customer Service NVQ. Paula has been given more responsibilities at work and there may be a full-time job there for her.

Myra is 19 with no previous qualifications. She achieved Level 1 Wordpower, then applied for a job in a residential home. At interview Myra was asked to write a personal statement as to why she wanted the job. She wrote the statement and got the job. She is now training towards a Level 1 in Housekeeping and hopes to progress to Level 2 care. She intends to keep up her basic skills work in order to achieve this.

Simon attended life skills classes whilst he was in a young offenders' institute. The trainer stressed the importance of communication skills in finding and keeping a job. During these sessions Simon become really interested in outdoor work and has done a lot of research into amenity horticulture. He has had an interview for a work placement with a very supportive grounds maintenance contractor. They believe that Simon has developed his communication skills sufficiently to adapt well to the team work and are keen to support him through a foundation modern apprenticeship.

Selecting an Appropriate Award

In the most effective basic skills provision, learners can pursue their personal learning goals and, where appropriate, work towards an externally recognised award. They can also progress from one qualification to another as their learning needs and aspirations change.

Trainers need to work with learners to consider whether it is appropriate for them to study for a qualification and at what level. Awards are most effective when they:

- provide an appropriate curriculum framework and structure for organising learning

- define standards accurately and align them to national levels

- specify learning outcomes and performance criteria

- have assessment linked to standards

- ensure consistent application of standards through rigorous verification

- provide opportunities for dual accreditation of key skills and basic skills within the same scheme

- encourage the development of both functional and creative language, and both functional and conceptual numeracy

- allow some flexibility for trainers to match content, context and assessment mode to the learning needs of their students.*

*Numeracy, Literacy and ESOL: Evaluation of Entry and Level 1 Awards: National report from the inspectorate, FEFC Coventry, November 1999.

Example 1

One provider gives the following advice on awards to staff.

Notes for staff

Before offering guidance to learners on the basic skills national awards the trainer needs to know:

- levels within the qualification
- the assessment criteria for each level
- the underpinning skills required
- the range of possible progression routes within the national qualification framework.

Working together the learner and trainer should aim to consider:

- short-, medium- and long-term goals
- attitude to learning
- interests
- the learner's ability level
- previous learning experiences and qualifications
- vocationally related learning goals
- expectations
- progression routes
- adaptability of assessment criteria to meet individual needs and interests
- relevance of the qualification to the learner
- timeframe
- feasibility of home-study/independent learning
- study skills
- additional support requirements
- availability of appropriate provision
- financial implications:
    - training allowance or wage
    - benefits
    - childcare
    - transport.

Example 2

A large provider advises its staff that they should consider the following before suggesting a learner works for an external award.

Question	Answer	In favour of offering basic skills assessment	Answer	Against offering basic skills award
1. Is my learner already working for key skills accreditation?	No		Yes	
2. Is my learner likely to achieve key skills accreditation?	No		Yes	
3. Will my learner be overloaded by working for an additional qualification (i.e. basic skills)?	No		Yes	
4. Will the basic skills qualification be a useful additional qualification for my learner?	Yes		No	

Example 3

The same provider offers more specific step-by-step guidance in relation to the use of basic skills national awards.

Step 1

Think about your learner's personal learning goals. The list may include:

- improving my English
- achieving a vocational qualification
- writing more legibly.

Step 2

Now go through the units and elements in the basic skills award, mapping your learner's personal learning goals against the elements.

Step 3

Now use the mapping outcomes to decide whether the learner has personal goals that link to the relevant elements in the qualification.

Step 4

Consider the advantages of offering the opportunity to work for the qualification. Advantages might include:
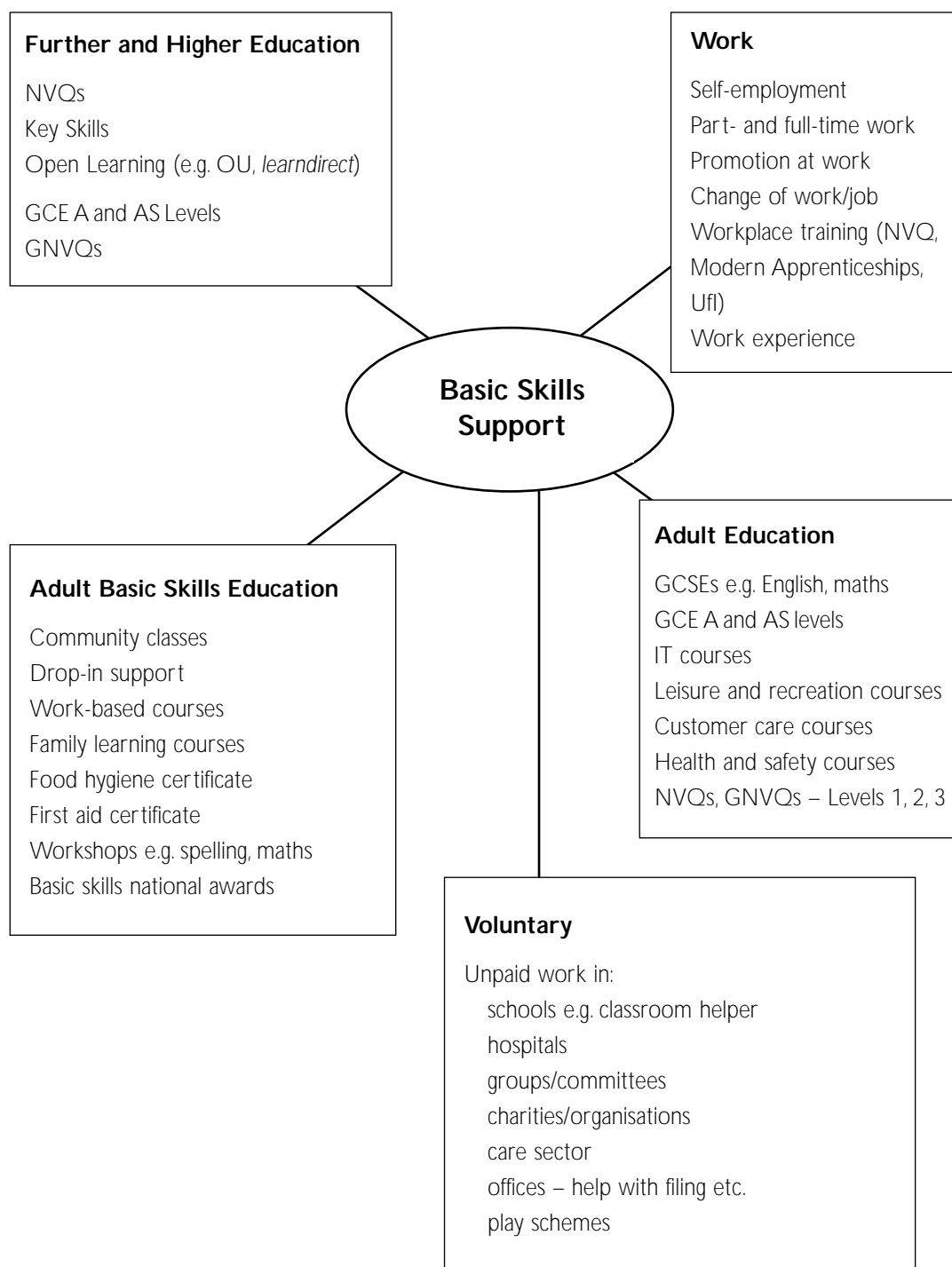
- a framework within which the learner's personal learning goals can fit
- a step along a clearly defined and motivating progression route
- the learner's achievements will be recorded using a national award.

Example 4

The following figure shows the range of possible progression routes from basic skills support.

Progression opportunities from basic skills support

Further and Higher Education

NVQs
Key Skills
Open Learning (e.g. OU, *learndirect*)

GCE A and AS Levels
GNVQs

Work

Self-employment
Part- and full-time work
Promotion at work
Change of work/job
Workplace training (NVQ, Modern Apprenticeships, UfI)
Work experience

Basic Skills Support

Adult Basic Skills Education

Community classes
Drop-in support
Work-based courses
Family learning courses
Food hygiene certificate
First aid certificate
Workshops e.g. spelling, maths
Basic skills national awards

Adult Education

GCSEs e.g. English, maths
GCE A and AS levels
IT courses
Leisure and recreation courses
Customer care courses
Health and safety courses
NVQs, GNVQs – Levels 1, 2, 3

Voluntary

Unpaid work in:
   schools e.g. classroom helper
   hospitals
   groups/committees
   charities/organisations
   care sector
   offices – help with filing etc.
   play schemes

Prompt Questions for Element 2

■

What strategies do you use in your provision to recognise learners' broader achievements?

■

What use do you make of case studies to summarise the progress learners have made?

■

What guidance do you give to trainers about the use of basic skills qualifications?

■

How is information about progression provided for learners?

■

What guidance do you give to staff to help them to construct the case studies?

■

How might you use the material in this element to develop a policy for the use of awards in your provision?

■