Delivering Skills for Life:

The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills

Raising Standards

A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision

Further Education Colleges

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

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Raising Standards

A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision

Further Education Colleges

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Foreword

Each new learner must be given a high-quality learning experience that motivates him or her to keep on learning and to achieve.

Skills for Life (DfES, 2001)

At the present time, it is estimated that one in five adults in the United Kingdom has difficulties with literacy and/or numeracy. This is a situation that adversely affects both our economy and our society, but, equally importantly, has a debilitating effect on the life of individuals and their families. Without these essential skills, these individuals are more likely than ever to be excluded from our fast-moving society.

Since the launch of *Skills for Life* in 2001, we have gained an even greater insight into the effect that low levels of literacy and numeracy skills have on individuals and their families. Much has been done, and continues to be done, to bridge the skills gap and address the needs of these individuals.

One of the key ways of addressing these needs is through improving the quality of teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision, and by increasing learner achievement through the new national infrastructure with its focus on teaching, learning and assessment arrangements. Together, these will contribute to removing the barriers to learning and raising achievement levels.

Over the past two years, much progress has been made and we have seen some exciting developments in improving literacy and numeracy provision and in making it more accessible and effective. We recognise that robust inspection and realistic self-assessment support and ensure the quality of these developments and result in continuous improvement. To assist this process and in response to requests from learning organisations we have developed this series of six contextual guides, each one tailored to the needs of a specific learning setting. The guides follow the publication of *Success in Adult Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision* (DfES, 2002), which aimed to help learning institutions use the Common Inspection Framework to guide their work in raising the achievement levels of adult learners. These publications have been designed to complement the effective practice guides produced by OFSTED and the ALI that help to communicate the need for continuous improvement in literacy, numeracy and ESOL delivery, and offer practical advice both to those who are teaching this provision, and those responsible for inspecting it.

Each contextual guide in the series provides further help to providers, and in particular is designed to bridge the gap between understanding generic advice on improving quality, and taking appropriate and effective action in a specific learning context or setting, be that a general further education college, a prison, the workplace or in one of the varied settings found in adult and community learning. Providers need to feel confident that, if they put their learners at the centre of their provision and get the delivery right, good inspection grades will follow.

The guides are intended to provide practical help to providers in meeting this goal. As Director of the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, I commend the guides to you, and hope that their use will help to secure the successful, positive and enhancing learning experiences for adults that lie at the heart of the *Skills for Life* strategy.

Susan Pember
Director, Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit

Introduction

At the heart of our adult literacy and numeracy strategy is the aim to raise the standard of provision, to engage and motivate potential learners, and to ensure that all those involved in literacy and numeracy skills teaching are working towards a common goal.

Skills for Life (DfES, 2001)

CURRENT ISSUES IN LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN FE COLLEGES

Staff in colleges know that language and number skills underpin all other areas of achievement and are crucial to raising standards. Improved and expanded literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision is vital to address the tasks set for colleges by *Success for All*. The literacy, numeracy and ESOL offer and *Skills for Life* strategy are also important to wider Government goals for social inclusion, raised achievement and improved economic competitiveness. We know that the basic skills gap is wider in the UK than in other developed countries. Those with low levels of language and number skills are at much higher risk of unemployment. Difficulties with literacy, numeracy and ESOL are a barrier to active community participation and are clearly linked to other kinds of disadvantage. Recognising these links, the Government has made a significant investment in *Skills for Life*. Promotional campaigns have raised demand. The new learning and teaching infrastructure has raised the capacity of FE colleges to meet this demand. Colleges are now expected to show that they can raise standards and increase learner achievement. This Guide is designed to support practitioners to meet this goal and to reflect on and improve what they do.

The *Skills for Life* strategy is relevant to all post-16 learners working to improve their literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills. This includes:

- learners at all levels from Pre-entry Level up to and including Level 2

- all those studying key skills in communication and application of number, whether on discrete courses or as part of a vocational programme

- those preparing for GCSE Mathematics or English

- those receiving additional learning support for literacy, numeracy or ESOL

- learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- all those working on language and number up to Level 2, whether full- or part-time learners

- basic and key skills learners in a range of settings, including work-based learning, community outreach provision and e-learning.

THE SCOPE OF THIS GUIDE

This Guide is designed to help providers achieve excellence in their literacy, numeracy and language provision for learners in FE colleges. By taking each of the seven questions in the Common Inspection Framework in turn, it is designed to help providers undertake realistic self-assessment and secure continuous improvement by interpreting the requirements of the Common Inspection Framework within the context of the adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL curricula and their provision in speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy for these learners.

It also offers help by setting out the characteristics of effective practice in literacy, numeracy and language provision for learners, again in relation to the seven questions of the Common Inspection Framework. It contains practical examples and from successful providers ideas of how to achieve effective practice. It also makes reference to *Skills for Life* documents that have been designed to help providers improve their practice.

The Guide also sets out the characteristics of best practice in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision, in particular by drawing on real examples. These are largely taken from one college that has effective and improving practice to give a realistic picture of what might be achieved in a single institution. The examples are designed to give staff in colleges practical help and ideas for improving their literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision.

We wanted this series of guides to offer practical help to providers and practioners – a 'How to' guide that would really focus on what works. For that reason, the guides illustrate what success might look like. For example, how do we know when a learner has made an important new step in their learning? What might be the outcomes of a successful initial assessment? The short descriptions of the progress made by real learners in real situations help to answer such questions.

Finally, the guides all highlight the comments made about this area of work in inspection reports and other documents, to help readers understand how success is judged and reported upon by OFSTED and the ALI.

WHAT IS SUCCESS IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT?

Success in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision in FE colleges is based on:

- a commitment to meeting local learning needs and a learner entitlement to language and number skills development

- a college-wide commitment to literacy, numeracy, and ESOL skills as critical to learner success

- clarity about the use of literacy, numeracy ESOL and key skills and the ways they can be taught together

- a conviction that language and number skills must be embedded in engaging, often vocational, contexts

- a strategy that starts with the learners and is designed to achieve wider participation in success

- a senior management post to lead and co-ordinate the offer.

The examples in this Guide focus on what works. There are many instances of good and effective practice in FE colleges, but there is still work to do. Many colleges still need to:

- reach out to new groups of learners and build the partnerships that will trigger their learning

- train, support and co-ordinate the input of all those contributing to the development of language and number skills

- prepare learners well for their qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ESOL and/or key skills and, in particular, for external assessment

- provide secure and relevant progression opportunities for all learners studying at Pre-entry, Entry and Level 1.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision in the FE college context offers a crucial second chance – and not just for adults. Aliye Husseyin and Sinem Hakki (who appear on the front cover of this Guide) have only just left school but their college course is already reshaping their futures.

I really didn't enjoy school – I didn't find it very interesting or anything. College is much more fun because I understand the subjects more clearly. English and maths make more sense and I understand it more. I just did a punctuation exercise and everything was right – that didn't happen in school. It's quite serious at college – I'm on a tracking sheet so I have to come on time. I'm doing ok and I want to do travel and tourism next.

I just never did the work in school. I didn't really go to maths – I just did not go. I enrolled in college at the last minute. Since I've come here I've been attending – I've had enough of all that bunking. I was a failure at school and I don't want to be a failure again. Here I do the work, I know I've done it. I feel relieved that I can do something.

These are learners who need and deserve the best that we can provide.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

1. How well do learners achieve?

1

1. HOW WELL DO LEARNERS ACHIEVE?

Effective practice which secures continuous improvement is evidenced by:

- success in achieving challenging targets, including qualifications and learning goals, and results over time;

- the standards of learners' work in relation to their learning goals;

- learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential; and

- the development of personal and learning skills.

Sources of evidence could include:

- learner achievements and improving trends over time (the College Performance Report will be crucial) and progress against college targets;

- positive learner achievements relative to national benchmarks;

- the relative performance of different groups of learners (by age, mode, gender, ethnicity etc) and records of actions taken to remedy any equality gaps;

- learner progress relative to initial assessments, personal goals and individual learning plans;

- improvements in literacy, numeracy and language skills which contribute to success on a learner's vocational or other main programme;

- the use of challenging and realistic targets;

- learners' portfolios showing progress towards individual goals and measured against the national standards;

- the use of the National Qualifications Framework;

- records showing the contribution made to the local and national *Skills for Life* targets;

- regular progress review records monitoring performance against the individual learning plan;

- interviews with learners that show ownership of targets and understanding of progress;

- observations of learning sessions – do they produce stimulating and successful learning?

- individual or group signs of growing confidence, independent learning skills and personal skills;

- punctuality, attendance and retention records, and systems to deal with poor participation;

- the positive impact of learning support and literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills learning on wider achievement; and

- learner destinations and progression records that show learners are meeting their goals.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
1.1 results and retention rates compare well with local and national averages.	**1.1.1** retention and achievement rates for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners are better than similar colleges when compared against national benchmarks. **1.1.2** retention and achievement rates in literacy, numeracy and ESOL are improving year-on-year.
1.2 trends in performance over time show continuous improvement or the maintenance of very high standards.	**1.2.1** individual learning plans (ILPs) demonstrate that learners are achieving their personal targets. **1.2.2** ILPs for learners studying literacy, numeracy and ESOL are mapped to the national Skills for Life standards. **1.2.3** a substantial and growing number of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners gain qualifications mapped to the national standards.
1.3 the analysis of added value indicates that learners make at least the progress expected of them.	**1.3.1** initial assessment collects information about learner attainment at the start of the course, and this is mapped to the national standards. **1.3.2** individual progress is measured against this initial baseline to record individual learning gains or 'distance travelled'. **1.3.3** learners receiving additional support on mainstream courses have higher than average retention and achievement outcomes.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
1.4 standards are consistently high across the provider's work.	**1.4.1** planning, co-ordination, resourcing, training and quality assurance are designed to keep standards consistent and to ensure that all learners across the offer have the same opportunities to succeed.
	1.4.2 regular performance reviews inform the next target-setting cycle and drive continuous improvement.
1.5 challenging learning goals and targets are achieved.	**1.5.1** targets are set for individuals, courses and the college.
	1.5.2 individual targets agreed with learners in the ILPs are realistic and represent real progress towards their learning goals.
	1.5.3 performance against learners' ILP targets is regularly reviewed.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH LEARNERS…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
1.6 make significant progress towards fulfilling their goals and potential.	**1.6.1** targets in learners' ILPs for literacy, numeracy and ESOL are realistic, achievable and carefully planned to help learners achieve their personal ambitions.
	1.6.2 the ILP stays with the learner so that it can be updated as progress is made.
	1.6.3 there is clear evidence of learners' progress in achieving the targets set in their ILPs.
	1.6.4 learners receive learning support and key skills teaching that are closely tied to the demands of their main programmes and these have a positive impact on their progress.
1.7 are prepared for effective participation in the workplace and in the community.	**1.7.1** teachers embed learning in meaningful, vocational tasks to support learning in literacy, numeracy and ESOL.
	1.7.2 learners are encouraged to apply skills learned in new and relevant contexts.
	1.7.3 progression opportunities and routes are clear where relevant, and ILPs include targets for personal development and employability where relevant.
	1.7.4 learners understand and develop the language and number skills they need to achieve their career and personal ambitions.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH LEARNERS…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
1.8 progress to relevant further or higher education, training or employment.	**1.8.1** the college records sound information about learner destinations that shows that learners move on and achieve their personal goals through the targets set in their ILPs.
	1.8.2 the college has robust systems in place for providing consistent basic and key skills support as learners progress through the college.
	1.8.3 progression from first rung provision is carefully tracked to demonstrate that learners continue to build their skills and gain qualifications at Level 2 and beyond.
1.9 reach appropriate levels in basic and/or key skills consistent with their main programmes of study or training.	**1.9.1** all learners have an opportunity to gain accreditation in key and/or basic skills.
	1.9.2 learners speak positively about the impact that basic and/or key skills learning has had on their main programme.
	1.9.3 key skills development is relevant and timely and shows how particular skills fit into the main programme and support learner success.
	1.9.4 course teams carry out a language and number skills audit of vocational programmes to identify the skills that learners need to succeed on particular programmes.
	1.9.5 course entry requirements reflect the language and number skills that learners need to succeed on the course.
	1.9.6 course placement decisions ensure there is a good fit between the learner and their chosen programme.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH LEARNERS…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
1.10 develop the skills of critical evaluation, research and analysis.	**1.10.1** learners are involved in developing their ILPs and learner self-assessment is used to agree and review targets.
	1.10.2 the process of negotiating and reviewing ILPs encourages ownership of the targets and a commitment to progress.
1.11 develop the attitudes and skills necessary to maintain lifelong learning, including the capacity to work independently and collaboratively.	**1.11.1** the experiences and skills that learners bring, and the views and judgements they express, are valued and used throughout their learning programme.
	1.11.2 learners can describe their progress and see value in it.
1.12 attend regularly and are punctual.	**1.12.1** high standards for punctuality and attendance are highlighted at induction.
	1.12.2 all courses have systems for recording and following up attendance issues that are suited to their learners.
	1.12.3 lateness is challenged, sensitively but consistently.
	1.12.4 poor attendance is followed up promptly, for example, in tutorials and/or with parents.

HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Monitoring achievement

Gathering reliable information on learners' achievements should underpin providers' planning processes. This information is crucial to charting progress and showing trends over time. Successful providers can evidence progress and positive trends in achievement and retention rates across the college. They relate learner achievements in literacy, numeracy and ESOL to national benchmarks, and examine what contribution the achievements are making to local and national *Skills for Life* targets. Course teams can demonstrate good learner outcomes by:

- recruiting new learners, particularly from under-represented groups

- minimising drop-out

- demonstrating progress against individual learning plans (ILPs) that:

  – are relevant to personal learning goals

  – use initial assessment to build on existing skills and meet priority needs

  – are mapped to the national standards for literacy, numeracy and ESOL

  – are SMART and say exactly what the learner plans to do and the progress they have made

  – prepare the learner for successful progression

- qualifying learners using accreditation mapped to the national standards (listed at www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus)

- progressing learners from first rung provision through to qualification at Level 2 and beyond.

In monitoring the success of programmes in raising learner achievement in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, course teams should:

- review and agree a range of achievements appropriate to each group of learners

- agree annual recruitment, retention and achievement targets that take account of:

  – individual learning goals

  – previous performance

  – college and local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) targets

- calculate the percentage of learners who complete

- calculate the percentage of learners who achieve

- compare these outcomes against:

  – individual learning goals

  – retention and achievement targets for the programme

  – national and local benchmarks where available

  – college benchmarks where relevant.

Demonstrating added value

Added value measures individual learning gain or the distance a learner travels over time. For some national qualifications, there is statistical evidence that shows the progress a learner might be expected to achieve during their programme. Anything extra is 'added value'. There are no similar statistical measures for literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills, but the national standards do provide an agreed form of measurement. By plotting achievements at the start and end of a course against the levels and elements of the core curricula, a common way of measuring learning gain is established. This means individual progress can be compared within and between programmes. Measuring added value can help to spotlight particularly effective practice or areas in need of improvement. To measure added value effectively, course teams should:

- use initial assessment mapped to the core curricula
- record the starting point for each learner: the skills they demonstrate through initial assessment
- agree individual learning targets for the ILP that will take the learner to higher levels of skill
- record achievement using a progress grid mapped to the core curricula
- record each learner's end point: the skills they demonstrate through final assessment
- compare progress between individuals and across programmes
- identify and investigate any particularly strong or poor progress
- use investigation outcomes to plan improvements.

Developing the ILP

The main tool driving the achievement of each learner is the individual learning plan (ILP). The ILP drives the learner's progress through a development cycle (Figure 1), and achievement is evidenced by progress against it.

Figure 1. Development cycle of the ILP
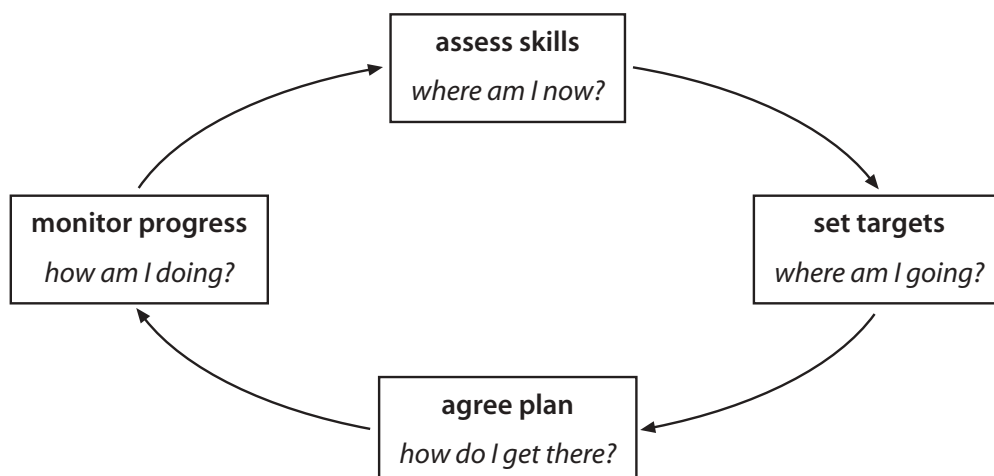
Where possible, the achievements recorded against the targets in the ILP are accredited using qualifications mapped to the national standards for literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

The ILP needs to be a 'live' document. It will take time to agree and it needs to be regularly reviewed and updated. Effective ILPs provide a consistent framework for learning and progress throughout the learner's time at the college and take them through different levels and types of provision. The ILP sets out key actions to be taken at different stages of the learner's programme. The learner needs to be an active partner throughout the process.

Sample ILPs for general and basic skills use are available from the Raising Quality and Achievement Project at www.rqa.org.uk through their Quality Information Packs. These should stimulate discussion about the options. There is also useful work arising from the basic skill and ESOL Pathfinder Projects. You can find out more at www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus.

Course placement

Most learners will have an interview and some assessment of their language and number skills before a decision is taken about the course or learning programme that would best fit their needs. This provides initial information about what the learner wants to do in the future, what they can already do well and the things they most want to improve. There may also be information from a previous provider, such as a school or feeder course, about previous learning experience and achievements. If the learner is following a vocational or other main programme, there should be some indication of the language and number skills needed for success on this course. All of this should be captured for the ILP.

Induction and diagnostic assessment

Effective teaching of literacy, numeracy and ESOL starts by being clear about individual needs and goals. College staff must know the learner's main strengths and weaknesses before work begins. The learner needs to be fully involved at every stage. The diagnostic work at induction is a critical first step. Such work is not a single activity and could include:

- a college-wide language and number test mapped to the core curricula, such as the *Skills for Life* diagnostic assessment
- programme-based diagnostic assessment
- self-assessment
- information about the learner's learning history and preferred learning style(s)
- close observation of course activities to get a sense of how a learner performs, but also, by discussion or observation, a record of which activities they most enjoy and those which feel less comfortable for them
- paying particular attention to signs that the learner has a specific difficulty such as dyslexia
- induction assignments.

By the end of induction, you should have a clear idea of:

- the learner's personal learning goals, including their qualification and career goals
- the particular contexts or tasks which the learner will find relevant and engaging
- language and number tasks where the learner already feels confident
- language and number tasks where the learner would most like to improve
- ways in which the learner prefers to learn
- the target basic skill achievement level
- specific short-term goals for the first few weeks
- the action the learner needs to take to meet these short-term goals
- any particular support needed to meet the targets.

The development of targets in the ILP is fundamental to learner achievement. The starting point for setting challenging, realistic and relevant learning targets is a careful audit of the literacy, numeracy and language skills needed for success on learners' main programmes. In FE colleges, targets set for improving learners' literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills are carefully designed to contribute to their success in their vocational or main programmes.

Clovis is studying Sport and Leisure. 'Doing the measurements helps us compare ourselves to others and we are constantly using our Maths. We work out trends over three months to see our improvements.'

Short-term targets need to take the learner, step-by-step, towards their longer-term goals. These ILP targets need to be SMART, meaning:

- Specific – they say exactly what the learner needs to do

- Measurable – the learner can prove that he or she has reached the target

- Achievable – they build on current skills to take the learner to the next level

- Relevant – they take the learner further towards their personal goals, including vocational goals

- Timed – they have deadlines.

A SMART target might be 'write three sentences using upper and lower case correctly by half-term' – not simply 'improve my writing'.

Diagnostic assessment should be mapped to the core curricula with SMART targets that take the learner to the next level of achievement. The learner's personal goals and the demands of their main programme or their progression aims will suggest the areas in which they most need to improve. The curriculum elements of the core curricula are useful for describing the level of skill learners have at the start. The next level of the core curricula can then be used to propose a SMART target for improvement. An engineering learner, for example, may need to use a technical workbook. He or she may already be able to 'identify the main points and ideas, and predict words from context' (curriculum reference Rt4/E3). But to use the index to find particular information in the workbook, there is a need to 'use organisational and structural features to locate information' (curriculum reference Rt4/L1). The SMART target agreed with the learner in this case might be to 'use the index to find information in X book by half-term'.

As well as recording the targets agreed with the learner in the ILP, it is also important to record the actions that have been agreed to meet the target. This might include a log of the resources the learner will use and a list of the people who can help. All members of the course team, including those providing individual support, should know and use the learner's ILP.

Progress review

Each ILP should include an agreed review date. It helps to be flexible about review dates, shortening or extending the planning and review period depending on how often you see the learner and the amount of support and guidance each learner needs. The learner is a full partner in the review process and is prompted to consider:

- did I meet my targets?

- what do I need to improve?

- what have I found helpful?

- what difficulties do I face?

- what should my new targets be?

- when should I finish them?

- what resources can I use?

- who can help?

- how will I know I'm on track?

Learners at Levels 1 and 2 might be asked to complete a self-assessment sheet; at Entry and Pre-entry Levels, self-assessment might be through discussion. Learners need plenty of opportunity to assess and reflect on their own performance and that of their peers. If this is built in to class activity, learners will find it easier and more natural to be fully involved in progress reviews.

The progress review needs to take account of:

- records of learning activity

- evidence of achievement against the targets

- the learner's self-assessment, whether formally recorded or simply discussed

- progress reports from other members of the course team, including those delivering any vocational or main programme that the learner is following.

It is important to ask whether the progress made has genuinely taken the learner nearer to their long-term learning goals and personal objectives. You are not monitoring progress for its own sake. You need to work with the learner to check the relevance of new skills to the achievement of their personal goals. Progress must be meaningful to the learner.

The outcome of the progress review will inform the agreement of new targets for the next period and the updating of the ILP. If the learner is not making the expected progress, this is an opportunity to look at and discuss:

- the match between the targets and the longer-term learning goals

- the way the learner prefers to work

- the need for further support

- any obstacles that are slowing or preventing progress.

Learners on the Springboard Course for under-19s have a half-termly progress review where class activities give way to intensive individual tutorials.

Planning and preparing for progression

The ILP will be related to the learner's progression goals from the start, and these progression goals will become more focused as the learner approaches their achievement. Individual targets related to progression are also likely to become more specific.

College teams may find it useful to produce progression maps for curriculum areas that highlight potential next steps and further study for which learners are being prepared. Progression mapping should start with community-based provision and provision at Entry and Pre-entry Levels. Progression goals will vary at different stages of the learner's development, and learners in FE colleges may be at very different stages. This means that course teams must design learning programmes to make sure the learner can move successfully to the next stage and that each learner has the language and number skills he or she needs to progress.

Evidencing achievement

At the end of the programme, a good ILP provides a summative assessment of the learner's achievements. This will:

- give evidence of progress against the targets
- provide a starting point for continued learning
- measure 'value added' against the learner's starting point.

*Lee is developing his
work-ready and
number skills through
his Horticulture course.*

Wherever possible, achievements should be accredited. However, in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision, accreditation is unlikely to capture the range of learner achievement. The ILP is therefore an opportunity to record additional, 'soft' or unaccredited achievement. For example, some targets set during the programme may have focused on improving punctuality. The summative assessment will record the learner's final performance on timekeeping as part of the 'distance travelled'.

The summative assessment is also important for recording evidence of the effectiveness of the programme and is a valuable tool for evaluating the college provision. If one learner or one group makes significantly more or less progress than the others, course teams need to work out why, and what is going on.

Finally, the ILP is used to ensure continuity for learners who progress, either at the same college or with another provider, so the same ILP is updated and stays with the learner. That way, learners continue to build on the skills they have acquired.

Accreditation

As suggested above, it is unlikely that accreditation will reflect the full range of learner achievement, but recognised accreditation is still very important to most learners. Qualifications are often the passport to progression – employers and admissions teachers will want this kind of evidence of achievement. There is also a great deal of personal satisfaction and pride for many learners in gaining qualifications. In planning learning programmes, course teams and teachers need to choose the qualifications that best fit the learners and to give them a choice of qualifications wherever possible.

The national tests are, of course, not the only way to accredit achievements in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. There is now a wide variety of qualifications – listed on the www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus website – that are mapped to the national standards. The choice ranges from assessment based solely on external tests to portfolio-based assessment, with variations between these two extremes. Combinations exist that offer a learner, for example, one major externally set assignment or several short externally set tasks with a portfolio. Learners' preferences for the style of assessment have a bearing on the form assessment takes, as do the nature of the programme and the time available to develop portfolios. These will all steer the choice in one direction rather than another.

A critical part of the choice in colleges is likely to be the relevance of the assessment tasks, especially for vocational learners. This may mean choosing portfolio assessment, but there are awarding bodies that offer vocationally relevant externally set assignments. Vocational relevance will not be the only consideration. At Levels 1 and 2, there is the choice of basic or key skills accreditation. Many individual learners might prefer to go for the full key skills award, but within a group you may have a mix of qualification targets. The choice of accreditation is an important part of curriculum planning and the more choice you can pass on to the individual learner, the better.

> **The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit's Regional Co-ordinators are responsible for *Skills for Life* at a regional level. They can give you specific support and advice on implementing and securing continuous improvement for literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision.**

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

In the following example, practice in assessing their classmates is a motivating factor that also helps learners to assess their own progress accurately.

Peer assessment

On one course, peer assessment during spoken presentation requires learners to complete an observer checklist. They report on performance against criteria such as 'uses too many fillers' or 'sums up'. The observer reports are collated to give a group assessment of current performance. This is then used to set individual improvement targets. The observer checklist can also be used to support learners working at different levels. For example, learners working at earlier levels of the Listening curriculum are asked to concentrate on one or two straightforward areas of reporting such as 'asks questions' or 'interrupts others'.

It's important to narrow the targets as learners approach their long-term aims, as the following example shows.

Amir

Amir is a 17-year-old ESOL learner who started with a broad learning goal to 'work with children'. As the programme progressed, he agreed targets for understanding the National Qualifications Framework and researching the opportunities for vocational learning. By the time he was approaching the end of the programme, Amir had agreed a specific target to 'apply for the GNVQ Foundation course in Health and Social care' and to 'prepare for an interview in July.' These targets require particular writing, speaking and listening skills that were mapped to the ESOL curriculum. The targets and the required skills are clearly logged in Amir's ILP.

Number and language skills are both critical to success on Craft and other vocational courses.

Learners may also be helped to succeed by tools that aid critical and reflective learning.

A learning diary

Each member of a group of ESOL learners keeps a Learning Diary, which they complete each week and share with their teachers. In the Diary, they reflect on recent learning experiences and tasks and explore their own learning preferences, things they need to work on and areas where they need help. The Diary is also part of a learning conversation with the teacher that doesn't always arrive at neat conclusions but can draw out issues that wouldn't otherwise surface.

Extracts of effective practice from OFSTED and ALI inspection reports

'Many learners make very good progress towards the achievement of their personal learning goals. They develop the skills which will enable them to cope effectively in the community and in employment.'

'All learners have an initial assessment and teachers monitor their progress towards achieving their learning goals through regular reviews.'

'The retention rate of 93% for learners receiving additional support is higher than the overall college retention rate.'

'Additional support is highly effective. Learners on basic skills courses and those who receive additional support for literacy, numeracy or dyslexia perform well. Many learners said that they valued the support highly and felt they would not successfully complete the course without such extra help. Learners who had received additional support displayed their new skills in a wide range of vocational lessons.'

'Following comprehensive, extended initial assessment, all learners work to suitably detailed individual learning plans. Teachers monitor learners' progress. Attendance at lessons is good and overall retention is high. Learners work hard in lessons and most are successful in achieving their learning goals.'

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2. How effective are teaching, training and learning?

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2

2. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE TEACHING, TRAINING AND LEARNING?

Effective practice which secures continuous improvement is evidenced by:

- how well teaching and training meet individuals' needs and course or programme requirements;
- how well learners learn and make progress; and
- learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential.

Sources of evidence could include:

- lesson observations showing successful teaching and evidence of learning;
- planning documents which take account of national standards and individual needs;
- flexible and differentiated teaching strategies;
- the use of initial assessment outcomes to plan learning;
- individual learning plans with SMART targets arising from initial assessment;
- interviews with learners who are fully partners in the development of their individual learning plans and can describe how the targets take them towards their wider learning goals;
- regular recorded progress reviews and updates of individual learning plans;
- engaged and interested learners who are both challenged and supported;
- stimulating learning materials that promote diversity;
- full participation of learners with disabilities or particular needs;
- marking and feedback that recognise achievement and signpost improvement;
- the development of skills and increased understanding of learners in individual lessons;
- interviews with learners who are clear about their learning goals, the progress they have made and what they need to do to improve; and
- interviews with specialist and mainstream practitioners who communicate well.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH TEACHERS…

2.1 show knowledge, technical competence and up-to-date expertise, at a level consistent with effective teaching, training and assessment of the course or programme.

SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…

2.1.1 all teachers involved in teaching adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL receive intensive training on the use of the new core curricula.

2.1.2 there is an ongoing professional development programme to update all staff members involved in delivering literacy, numeracy and ESOL on the new materials and teaching tools that are produced as part of the *Skills for Life* strategy.

2.1.3 staff supporting literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision as part of a vocational team or within guidance or support teams have been trained to understand the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.

2.1.4 all teachers have received training in developing and reviewing individual learning plans (ILPs) and in negotiating SMART targets.

2.1.5 the college offers regular staff development in areas such as inclusive learning strategies, differentiation and response to learning styles that are particularly relevant to literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.

2.1.6 staff are clear and confident about delivering the core curricula, and are well supported with training that is relevant and timely.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH TEACHERS…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
2.2 plan effectively with clear objectives that all learners understand.	**2.2.1** ILPs build on the outcomes of thorough initial assessment and provide a step-by-step route to the achievement of the learner's personal learning goals.
	2.2.2 ILPs take account of:
	• individual interests and aspirations
	• strengths and learning needs identified through diagnostic and self-assessment
	• individual support needs and learning preferences
	• skills needed for success on any other programme of study.
	2.2.3 ILPs and targets use the national literacy and numeracy standards and the core curricula to frame clear statements of achievement and measures of progress.
	2.2.4 learners are actively involved in planning and reviewing their learning. They can explain their learning targets and describe the progress they have made.
	2.2.5 vocational and other main course induction programmes offer a clear introduction to basic and/or key skills and emphasise the value of skills in literacy, numeracy and language as a integral part of the course.
	2.2.6 vocational and other main course timetables include basic and/or key skills as a core element.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH TEACHERS…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
2.3 use methods and styles of teaching and training that are consistent with the aims of their programmes and learners' personal objectives.	**2.3.1** teaching and learning strategies are adapted to suit the profile of needs and styles assessed across the group. **2.3.2** teaching and learning activities are differentiated to meet the needs and objectives of individual learners within the group. **2.3.3** learning activities and resources are mapped to the core curricula and designed to help learners reach the relevant national standards. **2.3.4** there is a good range of learning activities. **2.3.5** the language and number skills needed on particular vocational programmes are analysed in a skills audit and are used to agree relevant individual learning targets.
2.4 challenge and inspire learners.	**2.4.1** teachers have high expectations of their learners and design activities which are stimulating and stretching. **2.4.2** individual learning targets are agreed, reviewed and updated to ensure that learners are stretched as well as supported. **2.4.3** there are extension activities for learners who can be stretched further. **2.4.4** learners are excited by their achievements and by the opportunities that are opened up by their new skills.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH TEACHERS…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
2.5 set, use and mark assignments and other tasks in a way that helps learners to progress.	**2.5.1** the criteria against which assignments and other tasks are assessed is made explicit to learners.
	2.5.2 learners' understanding of the criteria is checked to make sure they understand what is expected of them.
	2.5.3 assignment outcomes are mapped to the core curricula for literacy, numeracy and ESOL.
	2.5.4 individual learning targets are SMART and learners are clear how their progress will be measured.
	2.5.5 ILPs are regularly reviewed and updated.
	2.5.6 feedback always signposts improvement.
2.6 work with learners to develop individual learning plans informed by initial assessment that are reviewed and updated regularly.	**2.6.1** ILPs take account of: • personal learning goals • the demands of any vocational programme the learner is following • initial assessment outcomes and prior achievements at entry • the national standards for literacy, numeracy and ESOL.
	2.6.2 ILPs include clear review dates at which progress is monitored and targets are updated.
	2.6.3 learners can explain what they need to do and how they are doing.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH TEACHERS…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
2.7 promote good working relationships that foster learning.	**2.7.1** learners are clear about their rights and responsibilities.
	2.7.2 expectations of the learner, and the expectations that they should have of teachers and other college staff, are explicit and clear.
	2.7.3 each learner has a personal teacher who can help the learner to manage their own learning well and to sort out any difficulties or obstacles to effective learning.
	2.7.4 all teachers understand the particular and individual needs of the learners they teach.
	2.7.5 teachers are sensitive to individual needs and provide appropriate support.
	2.7.6 teaching teams work well together and there is evidence of regular liaison between main programme and support teams, for example, in the minutes of meetings.
2.8 use materials and teaching methods that promote equality of opportunity.	**2.8.1** learning activities and resources reflect the diversity of learner groups and make effective use of the different experiences that learners bring.
	2.8.2 learning materials avoid the use of stereotypes and recognise the contributions made by different groups and cultures.
	2.8.3 teachers have strategies to make activities accessible to learners with particular cognitive, sensory or mobility needs and can produce resources in different formats and at different levels.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK TEACHING AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH LEARNERS…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
2.9 acquire new knowledge and skills, develop ideas and increase their understanding.	**2.9.1** understand and are closely involved in setting, reviewing and updating their individual learning targets.
	2.9.2 understand when a new learning point is introduced, and have their understanding checked by teachers through questioning, practice and feedback.
	2.9.3 are encouraged to use their skills in new contexts and settings.
2.10 understand and are confident in what they are doing, how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve.	**2.10.1** know what they are doing and why.
	2.10.2 can describe the progress they have made and give evidence of their achievements.
2.11 apply effort to succeed with their work, work productively and make effective use of their time.	**2.11.1** are set relevant and motivating tasks which are clearly related to their personal interests and characteristics (for example, younger learners, adult returners etc).
	2.11.2 are fully engaged in group activities during classwork sessions.
	2.11.3 are supported, encouraged and praised.
	2.11.4 recognise and understand clear and consistent boundaries for behaviour which are firmly reinforced by all staff.
2.12 are stimulated and show interest in their work.	**2.12.1** can see that their ILPs and group activities are clearly linked to their personal learning goals and interests.
	2.12.2 are active partners in the learning process.
	2.12.3 take increasing responsibility for their own learning.

HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Supporting the teaching team

FE colleges often have large and diverse teams responsible for teaching literacy, numeracy and language and for providing additional learning support. In time, we want every member of every teaching team working at Level 2 or below to have literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills training. Already, basic skills managers are supporting large teams, including many vocational specialists, with new responsibilities for language and number development. Inducting, training and resourcing these teams is a challenge.

A good starting point for colleges planning staff development activities is the training provided through the *Skills for Life* strategy and in some areas by local LSCs. *Skills for Life* Professional Development Centres are supported by forward-thinking local LSCs. The centres provide specialist and tailored training, including training in the new qualifications for teachers and support staff.

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The **Skills for Life** *Professional Development Centre at Lewisham College.*

Each member of staff involved in teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills should agree a personal development plan that offers them curriculum training and other development activities that are related to the *Skills for Life* strategy.

Training, both accredited and unaccredited, to provide effective literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes needs to be offered at different levels. It should include those teaching and those supporting learning. For all those colleges that have significant local literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills needs – and that is most colleges – this should be a key professional development

priority. The planning and resourcing of professional development need to recognise this priority. Development planning will include appraisal and other quality assurance processes that help to identify training needs.

Successful colleges also plan staff training in order to meet the particular learning needs in their communities. One college, for example, works with the local community and hospital-based Mental Health Trust teams to provide linked services for those with mental health problems. Staff are trained to recognise and respond to the needs of these learners. ESOL staff working with refugees have also received training on trauma and its effects.

New colleagues and those new to teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL need particular support. A mentoring system is a good way of offering this support. An established member of the teaching team could mentor new colleagues during their first year. College may need to arrange some reductions in contact time for mentors and mentees to allow time for them to work together. It is usual to offer more time at the beginning of the mentoring scheme, with a slackening off during the year as the new teacher settles in.

Securing the learning 'fit'

Effective learning in literacy, numeracy and ESOL:

- involves the learner

- makes sense to the learner and is recognised as something they need to learn

- fits with other learning

- takes the learner nearer to their goals.

Achieving this can be a real challenge for teachers or trainers when learners don't see themselves as coming to college to work on their literacy, numeracy and language skills. Learners who think they've left all that behind and who want to concentrate on their vocational studies need to see the relevance of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision for them.

A further challenge for teachers and trainers is likely to be the range of literacy, numeracy and language skills within a single vocational group. In many groups, learners will have come from very different backgrounds and have varied prior experiences. They will have different learning histories, different learning needs and different learning styles.

Both of these issues are about learning fit. Firstly, the learning needs to fit the vocational interests and goals of the group of learners. Secondly, the learning needs to fit the needs, goals and preferences of the individuals within the group. There are many ways of improving the fit between the learner and their programme and this section outlines just two: an audit of literacy, numeracy and language skills, and the use of differentiated teaching.

Carrying out a skills audit

An audit of literacy, numeracy and language skills pinpoints the specific level and type of skill needed to succeed on a particular programme. It looks at all the ways learners have to use literacy, numeracy and language skills to follow the programme by examining:

- course handouts and worksheets
- textbooks and any standard reference books
- the use of specialist formats for presenting text or numbers, for example, reports, statistical tables, case studies, account ledgers etc
- the use of specialist terminology
- common teaching strategies, for example, lecture, practical demonstration, simulation
- the ways in which learners are expected to record learning points in class
- private study tasks
- group learning activities
- assignment tasks, assignment criteria and feedback
- other assessment tasks, for example, portfolio management, multiple-choice exam.

An audit recognises that literacy, numeracy and language skills are needed to make good use of all these learning experiences. The skills demanded of learners during the programme may need to be:

- demonstrated at entry before the learner joins the programme
- taught to those with some skills gaps through additional support, or
- taught to the whole group before or alongside the vocational activity that requires the skill.

The results of the audit should be used to:

- map literacy, numeracy and language skills to relevant activities on the main programme
- identify naturally occurring opportunities for developing and assessing literacy, numeracy and language skills through vocational activities
- plan integrated assignments that will allow learners to demonstrate achievement in vocational skills as well as literacy, numeracy and language
- focus the additional support given in order to allow timely development of the skills needed for particular activities on the programme.

Literacy, numeracy and language requirements in other vocational areas might include:

- child observation and accident reports written by childcare learners

- technical specifications and trade brochures used by construction learners

- hairdressing learners making up a dye formula or calculating a discount

- performing arts learners budgeting a performance and estimating sales.

An audit underpins effective joint planning and practical teamwork between teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL and vocational specialists.

Daniel is studying Sport and Leisure. 'We have been trying to improve reflexes from a standing position. The exercises all use quite a lot of maths, as we have to work out the best of the three attempts. Then we have to work out the averages. We have to submit our results and compare with others. We work out the reasons for the differences.'

A literacy, numeracy and language audit is unlikely to prompt only a one-way dialogue where literacy, numeracy and ESOL specialists simply fit their work around the vocational learning. By working with literacy, numeracy and ESOL colleagues, vocational staff may use the audit to change their practice. An audit can also prompt a review of:

- the entry criteria and entry assessment for the programme

- initial and diagnostic assessment

- the reading level, layout and presentation of handouts and worksheets

- the range of teaching strategies

- assignment design.

The audit can also ensure a better fit between the literacy, numeracy and language skills of the learners and the way these skills are taught and assessed on the programme.

Varying learning activities

People learn in different ways and a variety of approach is needed with any group of learners. Basic skills learners in particular, because they may have negative memories of traditional teaching, need variety. All course teams should draw on a range of learning activities including:

- whole-group teaching

- demonstration and exposition

- problem-solving and discovery learning

- the use of case studies, role play and simulation

- games, quizzes and puzzles

- individual and pairwork

- workshop learning

- group work

- the use of different media including ICT and interactive resources

- independent and resource-based learning

- individual coaching

- skills practice and rote learning

- integrated support within vocational provision.

Learners work on a team task in the Learning Centre.

Differentiation to meet individual needs

Variety needs to go beyond the use of different activities for the group as a whole and should offer differentiated activities for particular individuals. Initial assessment and the subsequent ILP have a fundamental role to play in differentiated teaching. Initial assessment outcomes will give information about the learner's preferred learning style. The targets used in the ILP will take these preferences into account to plan activities and tasks that are relevant for that learner. Where learning takes place in groups or as a shared activity, separate tasks can be differentiated to meet the abilities of individual learners. This can lead to the innovative and productive use of differentiated learning that is valuable to learners at all levels of ability by, for example:

- the use of learning resources at more than one level of difficulty

- group work with mixed ability groups where more advanced learners are providing peer support to their fellow learners

- group work with similar ability groups where the activity is simplified for some groups and extended for others

- group tasks with built-in support for some learners, for example, some learners could write a report independently while others complete a prepared format

- in-class support for individuals or small groups

- extension activities for stronger learners

- discovery learning and research activities that allow each learner to work at their own pace and level.

Differentiation also needs to take account of different learning styles. The aim is to help learners acquire the skills and confidence to learn in different ways, but it will help if they start to think about the way that learning feels most natural for them. For those who don't see themselves as successful learners, it helps to know there's no right or wrong way to learn. Successful teachers find out about their learners' preferred styles by talking to them, watching them or using simple self-assessment tests. Self-assessment tests can be found on several websites, such as www.support4learning.org.uk.

Effective teachers also adapt their teaching styles to cater for the different learning styles in the group. Traditional learning usually suits the verbal learner, who is happy to listen to instruction or information and the sequential learner who is comfortable to take things in step-by-step. But many learners find it easier to take information from pictures or diagrams. Some need to see the big picture, not the small steps. Some will understand what is heard or read, but many more will need to be active and doing before it sinks in.

Visual learners need to be shown not told. Colour, size and shape can be used to emphasise written information. Diagrams, mind maps, pictures and cartoons will all have more impact. Auditory learners make good use of verbal instruction, class discussion and listening to their colleagues. They usually like to talk as well as listen and explaining things in their own words will help learning. Kinaesthetic learners are those who learn best when they're active and doing. They will enjoy opportunities for hands-on learning: case studies, simulations, experiments and practical work. It may also help them to turn information from one form into another, such as turning a written handout into a table, using information from a demonstration to prepare a diagram or putting a spoken explanation into their own words.

Finally, all teachers need to check that the learning fit is relevant to the learner's main programme and that it will help them achieve their learning goals. Success on the main programme and progress against the targets set in the ILP are essential indicators of course, but remember that learners are often the best judges of learning fit, and their opinions count. Effective practice ensures that the learner is closely involved in planning and reviewing what is learnt.

> The *Skills for Life* professional development programme for staff across all sectors is to be announced shortly by the Learning and Skills Council. The programme will provide core curricula and specialist training for all staff engaged in teaching adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL, including those who work with learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Training at Level 3 for vocational specialists will also be provided. The programme leads staff to take relevant qualifications. Further information on the new qualifications framework for teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL can be found in *A guide to the Skills for Life Teaching Qualifications* framework available through www.dfes.gov.uk/read-writeplus.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Within successful provision, managers ensure that every member of the team is well briefed and supported. Meetings are not always the best way to do this when everyone is working to a different timetable. An example of an innovative way of keeping staff informed is given below.

Accessible induction materials

Each person joining the Key Skill delivery team receives a half-day induction training and a CD entitled 'Teaching Key Skills'. The CD offers a effective practice guide to:

- *teaching and learning strategies for key skills*

- *integrating and embedding key skills*

- *evaluation of key skill resources*

- *assignment development*

- *initial, portfolio and external assessment*

- *internal verification and moderation arrangements.*

It also includes:

- *external guidance and support material relating to basic and key skills*

- *college-based support*

- *staff development opportunities*

- *a guide to resources and an assignment bank*

- *progress-tracking documents.*

This reinforces the regular staff development programme for the Key Skills team which has recently included Portfolio Building and Action Planning, Designing Assessment Material, Assessing and Feedback and Test Preparation Training. There are also curriculum-specific training sessions which focus on integration and vocational relevance. A second CD on 'Teaching Basic Skills' is in development.

A literacy, numeracy and language skills audit sheds light on the practical needs learners have on their vocational courses.

A joint audit

Key skills and catering staff together carried out an audit of the literacy, numeracy and language skills needed for Food Service NVQs. Their analysis included the:

- *speaking and listening skills needed for different types of customer interaction, managing the restaurant, effective teamwork etc*

- *reading and writing skills needed for menu planning and promotion, stock audits, compliance with health and safety requirements etc*

- *number skills needed for portion control, pricing, cash-taking etc.*

Extracts of effective practice from OFSTED and ALI inspection reports

'Learners are constantly encouraged to build their confidence by applying their language skills in new situations. Skilful lesson planning maximises the opportunities for learners to help each other to learn.'

'Teachers achieve a good balance between being supportive and managing the learning environment. They apply firm discipline when necessary. In an excellent basic skills numeracy session, learners' behaviour and enthusiasm were sensitively managed to allow everyone to participate. There is very effective individual coaching, both by the teachers and support tutors.'

'In basic skills lessons, materials and activities are directly related to the vocational interests of the learners. In the vocational lessons, activities are designed to teach both basic skills and vocational skills. The integration of basic skills and vocational skills helps learners to achieve challenging goals.'

'In the best lessons, teachers introduce a wide range of resources, including ICT, and effective workshop management ensures that all learners are well motivated and work hard. Skilful questioning is used effectively to encourage learners to work out solutions for themselves, and also to tease out misunderstandings.'

'Teachers have high expectations of learners. They support learners in building their confidence to undertake new tasks. In the best lessons, teachers and support assistants praise the achievements of learners, but also challenge them to make choices or to explain their understanding.'

'Learning support tutors work closely with key skills and vocational tutors to try to ensure that activities are vocationally relevant to the learners. In one successful key skills lesson, based on a well-devised assignment on the World Cup, the skilled deployment of the support tutors ensured that the sports and leisure learners were fully engaged in effective development of their numeracy skills.'

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3. How are achievement and learning affected by resources?

3

3. HOW ARE ACHIEVEMENT AND LEARNING AFFECTED BY RESOURCES?

Effective practice which secures continuous improvement is evidenced by:

- the adequacy and suitability of staff; and

- the adequacy, suitability and use of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation.

Sources of evidence could include:

- a high level of specialist Level 4 qualification among staff teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL;

- high level of participation in intensive training on the core curricula;

- staff development records which demonstrate relevant continuing professional development for teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL;

- learning resources which support differentiated activities and suit different learning styles;

- learning resources which positively reflect learner diversity;

- learning resources in accessible formats to meet the needs of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have particular requirements;

- learning centre resources that provide for learners following literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes;

- specialist workshop areas and learning resource banks;

- the use of practical areas and realistic working environments to teach literacy, numeracy and ESOL in relevant contexts;

- accessible ICT resources that include learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities;

- the effective use of ICT to support differentiation and stimulate interest in learning activities aimed at teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL;

- the use of ICT to help literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners develop independent learning skills;

- convenient and accessible locations for learning;

- consistency between the standard of accommodation for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners and other college learners; and

- the use of appropriate accommodation for one-to-one work, including interviews and tutorials.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
3.1 there are enough qualified and experienced teaching, training and support staff to match the demands of programmes and the range of learners.	**3.1.1** staff teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL and staff who are supporting literacy, numeracy and ESOL delivery have specialist qualifications at national standards or are working towards qualification.
	3.1.2 the ongoing professional development programme is relevant to the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners and addresses areas such as: ● initial assessment ● negotiating SMART learning targets ● inclusive learning strategies ● differentiated teaching and learning ● diagnosing and responding to learning styles ● engaging challenging learners.
	3.1.3 training enables staff to meet the needs of particular groups of learners following literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes, such as those with mental ill health.
3.2 the professional development of staff contributes to their effectiveness.	**3.2.1** all staff, including part-time staff, who are involved in delivering literacy, numeracy and ESOL, have regular training and development opportunities to update and improve their skills.
	3.2.2 there is a regular cycle of lesson observation which identifies effective practice and areas for improvement. This feeds into appraisal and/or professional development planning.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
3.3 specialist equipment and materials are used, including facilities which are relevant to the workplace and meet current industrial standards.	**3.3.1** ICT resources are used to deliver, support and manage literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning. **3.3.2** realistic work environments and specialist industrial equipment are used to: ● highlight the ways in which literacy, numeracy and language skills underpin performance in the workplace ● help learners apply the skills learned in new and relevant contexts ● motivate learners and link learning in literacy, numeracy and language to learners' vocational interests.
3.4 accommodation provides a suitable setting for good teaching, training and learning and support for learners.	**3.4.1** accommodation for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners at least matches the standard of accommodation for other learners. **3.4.2** learning environments provide for a wide range of learning activities, including moveable furniture and the use of a range of teaching and learning aids. **3.4.3** accommodation is accessible to all, welcoming and attractive, and displays celebrate learner achievements and interests. **3.4.4** suitable spaces are provided for one-to-one work, enabling confidential interviews and personal support sessions.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
3.5 learners have access to learning resources that are appropriate for effective independent study.	**3.5.1** ICT and resource-based learning materials are used to support learning in literacy, numeracy and ESOL.
	3.5.2 learners have easy and flexible access to the resources and the support they need for effective independent study.
3.6 learners work in a safe and healthy environment.	**3.6.1** health and safety policy and procedures recognise the particular needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.
	3.6.2 safety and hazard notices and risk assessments are appropriate for the level of ability of learners.
3.7 resources are used to best effect in promoting learning.	**3.7.1** learning resources are appropriate and engaging and reflect the experiences and aspirations of a diverse range of learners.
	3.7.2 learning resources are suited to a range of individual learning styles.
	3.7.3 learning resources are differentiated and can support activities matched to individual learning targets in the individual learning plan (ILP) and different levels of achievement.
	3.7.4 learning resources enable learners to meet the national standards for literacy, numeracy and ESOL and, where possible, are mapped to the core curricula.
3.8 learning resources and accommodation allow all learners to participate fully.	**3.8.1** learning environments and resources are accessible to learners with mobility needs and sensory impairments.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT AND LEARNING ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
3.8	**3.8.2** resources are available in alternative formats and staff receive guidance and training in adapting learning materials and teaching strategies to suit the needs of learners.
	3.8.3 assistive technologies, study aids and specialist support are provided for learners with particular needs.
	3.8.4 assistive technologies are used to enable learners with particular needs to participate in learning and assessment to the best of their ability.
	3.8.5 all staff are aware of and use a clear procedure for providing specialist support to disabled learners.
	3.8.6 there is a prompt and supportive response to the disclosure of particular needs.

HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Staff qualifications and training

The new qualifications framework and subject specifications for literacy, numeracy and ESOL teachers must form the basis of all future qualifications gained by specialist subject teachers involved in Further Education provision. All volunteers and support workers should undertake recognised initial training in supporting literacy, numeracy and ESOL development. These staff must be of high calibre, be skilfully deployed and well supervised to ensure that learners receive the help that they need. Vocational teachers should undertake literacy, numeracy and ESOL training courses wherever possible leading to national accreditation.

Teachers are undoubtedly the most important resource for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners, but some colleges have been over-reliant on the dedication and resourcefulness of their basic skills teams. Effective literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision also relies on these learners having equal access to the resources provided for other learners and having specialist resources that meet their particular needs.

College-based accommodation for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners should be of at least the standard of other accommodation. The learning environment needs to be accessible and welcoming. Often this will mean opportunities in community locations. Where teaching takes place in college buildings, locations should be well signposted and easy to find. There are good reasons, for example, for siting ESOL provision close to the college entrance, since this provision will attract learners who are new to the area, the college and indeed English. The college environment also needs to show that learner diversity is recognised and valued.

Engaging and stimulating language and number learning means learners have good use of general college resources including:

- realistic working environments, such as restaurants and workshops, where skills are used in meaningful tasks

- specialist equipment, including language labs, media resources and electronic teaching aids

- learning centre and library resources that allow literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners access and choice.

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Learners should have use of a wide range of learning resources.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners also need access to resources that meet particular needs such as:

- spaces suited to confidential interview and one-to-one support

- assistive technologies such as laptops for dyslexic learners

- base rooms for learners who need stability.

Promoting access

Most colleges have planned or completed an access audit to ensure that disabled learners can get around the college and use all the facilities. Access to the curriculum is at least as important as access to the buildings. Colleges need to make sure that:

- course teams can produce worksheets and assignments in different formats such as large font or on tape

- assessments allow learners to demonstrate achievement in different ways, such as photographs

- learning activities are varied and take account of different learning styles.

This is especially important for basic skills teams. The *Access for All* guidance produced as part of the *Skills for Life* strategy is particularly helpful for ensuring accessibility to learning resources.

Resources and activities must be accessible and engaging to particular learners. Often that means adapting resources to suit individual needs but it can mean adapting to suit a whole group. For some groups that 'fit' means rethinking the way in which information is communicated and learning is acquired.

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Learners running the Posyganza flower company are supported by highly visual learning materials and methods.

Using e-learning resources

Learners need access to a wide range of resources to participate fully in learning assessment and the life of the college. Colleges are increasingly recognising that one resource with great potential for successful literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision is e-learning. Most colleges are actively developing e-learning resources, but sometimes literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners are among the last to see the benefits. While there are particular challenges in using ICT with learners who have literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs, there are also very good reasons for using e-learning. These include:

- the negative memories some literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners have of school. For older learners, ICT is a new medium without these associations

- younger learners may be confident and competent ICT users, whatever their level of skill in literacy, numeracy and ESOL

- surveys suggest that literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners want to learn through ICT

- e-learning activities are suited to differentiated learning

- e-learning can provide the learner with instant feedback

- routine tasks, such as cloze, can be far more fun online

- simulations mean that literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills can be embedded in a wider range of activities

- the use of ICT to present work means that all learners can achieve a professional finish

- many learners find it easier to manage their portfolio and learning resources if these are online.

All literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners should have some opportunities for e-learning alongside other activities. E-learning does not mean abandoning the learner to the machine. It can be an opportunity to adjust the task to the individual learner and to provide more tailored support. Teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL can help by planning activities that use e-learning to:

- motivate, engage and challenge learners

- support differentiated learning

- apply skills to new contexts

- reinforce learning

- help learners to manage their learning

- help learners develop independent learning skills.

ICT resources should also be used to help manage learning, for example, by:

- analysing initial assessment outcomes to give a college-wide profile of needs

- analysing individual initial assessment outcomes to suggest individual learning targets for the ILP

- recording and monitoring individual support plans

- providing flexible access to external assessment

- tracking internal progression for first rung learners.

Many colleges now have or are developing their own virtual learning environment (VLE). This offers flexible learning by allowing learners access to the VLE from home, during private study at college or during class activities. Each learner should be able to manage his or her learning through the calendar, task list and personal folders. E-learning certainly does not need to be an isolated or isolating activity. Used effectively, VLEs give access to email, chat rooms and space for team work, and actively encourage both independent learning and collaboration.

Angela Hunt, ICT Champion says, 'I hold training sessions and help teachers to get the best out of Blackboard. Everyone learns in a different way and this extends the range of possibilities. It is real inclusive learning. The classroom gives a multimedia-rich way of learning. Those who want to repeat again and again can do so, others want to repeat steps or move on more quickly. It allows independence – the learner can go away and learn where, how and when they want.'

More information on the use of e-learning to teach literacy, numeracy and ESOL can be found in the companion guide *Raising Standards: A contextual guide to support success in literacy, numeracy and ESOL: E-learning*.

The Learning and Skills Council is in the process of updating its guidance, *Adult Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL: A Guide to Learning and Skills Council Funding 2002/03***. It is expected to be ready for publication in June 2003.**

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Basic skill learners will benefit from extra support to make good use of college facilities, as in the two examples below.

Key skills facilitator

One college has set up a Key Skill Centre in each of its main buildings. The centres provide a good mix of paper-based and electronic resources, including literacy and numeracy resources. Each centre is staffed by a qualified Key Skill Facilitator who supports class and individual use of the resources.

Learning centres

The college Learning Centres are staffed by a team of Learning Facilitators who are linked to curriculum departments and have a particular responsibility for developing independent learning. Each of the facilitators has received dyslexia awareness training and some have specialist literacy or numeracy qualifications. Working with teachers, the facilitators run information skills workshops and independent learning projects. These are well attended, and are making learners more resourceful and self-reliant. The Learning Centres include a staffed Support Zone and well-stocked Entry Level resources.

Adapting materials thoughtfully can make all the difference for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This applies both to materials that are produced for learners to understand, and to the facilities that learners have available for expressing themselves, as in the two examples below.

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Catering learners who have progressed from discrete provision for learners with learning difficulties run a popular café within the college. There are routine procedures that they must follow to meet food hygiene and customer service requirements. Each procedure has been drawn so that learners have a visual instruction sheet. This is displayed on the wall of the work area. It gives a visual reminder of what learners must do and is accessible to all.

A group of learners with learning difficulties was concerned about an incident they witnessed in the canteen. They wanted to raise their concern with the Principal but several learners did not have the use of written language. The group composed their letter using symbols that they could all understand. The letter was later sent by the Principal to all staff.

Tasks that are realistic and meaningful might also be used with learners who are resistant to or lack confidence in learning.

Bilingual learners

A group of 16–18-year-old ESOL learners participated in a college Drug Week and listened to talks from community-based drug advice agencies. They studied a range of drug information targeted at young people. They used their research to produce their own bilingual drug leaflets giving advice in English and their community languages for a target audience of young people. The styles and formats used by the learners were particularly attractive and informative.

Achievement does not always need to be evidenced through written assignments, and learners should receive credit for achievement that is demonstrated in other ways.

Reaching vulnerable learners

Vulnerable young people on a programme for people with disrupted or troubled backgrounds made a video with the local Teenage Mental Health Project. The video looked at ways of dealing with difficult personal situations, such as finishing with your boy- or girlfriend or raising the issue of using a condom. The learners were highly motivated to talk about the different ways of handling these situations. They acted out their preferred solution, and the resulting video was used as evidence of their speaking and listening skills.

A virtual learning environment

The virtual learning environment used in the college to support key skills development provides each learner with:

- *a folder of resources for each key skill*

- *announcements, including reminders of assignment due dates and key skill exams*

- *copies of key skill assignments and worksheets*

- *dedicated areas to support key skill team tasks*

- *a record of individual progress.*

Some of the resources are designed in college and some are imported from dedicated learning sites such as the National Learning Network (NLN) at www.nln.ac.uk, generic sites such as www.bbc.co.uk/education or sites that are particularly relevant to the learner's vocational area. The NLN, for example, has a

report-writing activity at Level 1 that is both simple and engaging. The choice and quality of materials to stimulate learning is huge. Teachers adapt the materials to make sure that:

- *activities match learner targets for literacy, numeracy and ESOL*

- *learning outcomes are clear and explicit*

- *activities are clearly signposted so the learner can follow through step-by-step*

- *learning is presented in manageable chunks*

- *there are frequent checks on learning and progress*

- *learners receive feedback on their tasks.*

The team is aware how easily younger learners in particular communicate through text and chat. The team plans to set up online teachering and support services. The ICT Champion is a member of the team and she is training colleagues to get the best from the VLE.

Extracts of effective practice from OFSTED and ALI inspection reports

'Part-time staff are fully involved in all training activities. A mentoring system operates for new staff.'

'The college has a wide range of materials for learning including videos, tapes and computer software. Many of these resources are mapped to the new national syllabus. The resources are evaluated for appropriateness, layout presentation and whether they reflect the experiences and lives of the learners.'

'College accommodation for basic skills is very good. Resources to support teaching and learning, such as worksheets and workbooks, are plentiful and of good quality.'

'Part-time teachers teach most of the work in adult basic education. They are well trained and hold appropriate qualifications in basic skills. Some high-quality resources are used in the delivery of adult basic education and learning development. There are well-written paper-based resources designed to meet individual learner's needs in both literacy and numeracy.'

'There is a wide range of resources for learners to use in practical lessons. Paper and computer-based learning materials are good. The Learning Centre provides good facilities for learners both during and out of their lessons.'

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

4. How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learners' progress?

4

4. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING OF LEARNERS' PROGRESS?

Effective practice which secures continuous improvement is evidenced by:

- the suitability and rigour of assessment; and

- the uses of assessment in planning learning and monitoring learners' progress.

Sources of evidence could include:

- initial assessment outcomes which inform individual learning plans;

- observation of assessment and feedback which signposts further improvement;

- interviews with learners who understand the progress they have made and the ways they can now improve;

- interviews with teachers who have a clear grasp of the use of initial and formative assessment to support effective learning;

- planning across teams and programmes to co-ordinate assessment and feedback practice;

- the use of inclusive assessment strategies that allow all learners to demonstrate their achievements;

- records of regular and careful progress reviews;

- individual learning plans that are revised and updated following progress reviews;

- clear systems for internal verification and records which support improving practice;

- positive external verification records and records of effective action taken to tackle any issues of concern; and

- progress reports to parents or carers and employers as appropriate.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
4.1 forms of assessment and recording are suitable for the courses and programmes being followed.	**4.1.1** assessment is matched to the relevant area of the core curricula.
	4.1.2 progress is measured against the learner's personal goals and individual learning plan (ILP).
	4.1.3 wherever possible, assessment tasks are relevant and engaging to the learners.
	4.1.4 alternatives to written evidence such as tape recordings, photographs, videos, witness statements and oral questioning are used for assessment where appropriate.
4.2 assessment is fair, accurate and carried out regularly.	**4.2.1** there are agreed review dates at which the progress of each learner against the targets in the ILP is regularly assessed and the ILP is updated.
	4.2.2 there are clear and well-used internal verification and moderation procedures.
	4.2.3 assignments include clear marking criteria, which tell the learner exactly what they need to do.
4.3 initial assessment provides an accurate basis on which to plan an appropriate programme of work.	**4.3.1** there is a clear procedure for initial diagnostic assessment that maps learner strengths and needs against the core curricula.
	4.3.2 personal learning goals are used to develop the ILP.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
4.4 assessment is used to monitor progress and inform individual learners about how they are performing and how they might develop further.	**4.4.1** ILPs are reviewed and updated regularly.
	4.4.2 individual learning targets are SMART – learners know exactly what they need to do, how they can prove the target has been achieved and when they need to do it by.
	4.4.3 learners are fully involved in the progress review and updating of their ILPs.
	4.4.4 feedback and marking on all assignments and assessment tasks is clear and related to the assessment criteria.
	4.4.5 feedback always tells the learner how they could improve.
4.5 achievements towards learning goals and qualifications are recorded and accredited.	**4.5.1** good use is made of all opportunities for evidencing and recording achievement.
	4.5.2 where a portfolio is used to gather evidence of achievement, learners are guided and supported to produce portfolios which fully reflect their achievements.
	4.5.3 achievements in literacy, numeracy and ESOL are carefully recorded across a range of activities.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK ACHIEVEMENT AND PROGRESS ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
4.6 assessment information, including the analysis of the performance of different groups of learners, is used to guide course and programme development.	**4.6.1** each course team undertakes regular reviews of learning outcomes on their programme.
	4.6.2 progress reviews are compared with the previous performance and national benchmarks, where available.
	4.6.3 course teams for each programme undertake an equality analysis of learner outcomes to compare the performance of different groups of learners.
	4.6.4 any fall in performance, poor relative performance or identified equality gaps are noted and fed into the programme review for improvements to be agreed and actioned.
4.7 assessment, verification and moderation procedures follow regulatory body requirements.	**4.7.1** there are clear and well-used verification and moderation procedures.
	4.7.2 external verification and moderation reports are positive.
	4.7.3 where issues of concern have been identified, these are dealt with promptly and effectively.
4.8 those with legitimate interest, such as employers or parents, are clearly and regularly informed about learners' progress.	**4.8.1** parents or carers receive regular reports on the progress of learners under 19, except where this is known not to be in the best interests of the learner.
	4.8.2 employers receive progress reports on those employees whose studies they are sponsoring.

HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Assessment is an integral part of learning, and basic skills teams are constantly alert to skills development in order to make decisions about individual learning targets and additional support. Colleges with effective literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision make good use of opportunities to assess language and number skills through meaningful activities. When learners are clear about why they need good language and number skills, and they see the difference that improved skills can make to vocational tasks, they are motivated to perform at their best.

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Hayley Hofener works with children from St Joseph's Primary School.

Where assessment shows poor or falling performance by a course group, individuals or a specific group of learners, this must trigger planned and effective action. College basic skill teams know that poor performance on vocational courses is often rooted in language and number difficulties, and this may well be where action needs to be taken.

Assessment outcomes should be a tool for improvement. This means the learner needs to understand what the assessment outcome means and that significant outcomes need to be shared across the teaching team.

For younger learners, parents or carers also need to be informed. Their involvement can reinforce the work done by the teaching team. In effective provision, parents or carers receive regular reports on the learners' progress review. They are invited to parents' evenings, and are

alerted to any concerns where appropriate and where this is in the best interests of the learner. Some literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners, including young asylum-seekers, are less likely than other learners to have a parent at home. The course team should still report progress to elder siblings, hostel key workers, the Leaving Care team, social workers etc. It is also necessary to be aware of cases, including actual or potential parental violence, where the interests of the learner would not be served by sending out reports.

Feedback that supports learning

All learners need to understand exactly how they will be assessed and how their achievement will be recorded. Learners who are preparing for external accreditation need to know exactly what will be involved. This is an important aspect of induction. The first assignment of the programme is a good opportunity to clarify what learners need to do, how their work will be judged, what standards will be used in assessment and marking and what feedback they can expect. If they are preparing for a qualification, they need to know the standards they will be expected to reach and how their achievement will be demonstrated. On most courses, learners can expect regular assessments during the programme and they should have plenty of notice of assessments to help them plan and prepare to do their best.

Assignment planning and design

Each course team needs to agree a calendar of assessments that is sensibly sequenced throughout the programme's duration. It is also useful to have a common marking code so that learners are clear that a tense error, for example, will always be indicated in the same way. There should also be a common format for assignment design that:

- says exactly what learners need to do

- lists the evidence they will need to provide

- gives the criteria against which the assignment will be assessed

- gives a deadline for handing the assignment in and says when it will be returned

- tells the learner about any opportunities to re-do an assignment that does not reach the required standards.

The college needs to support teachers in the design of assignments through training, mentoring and its internal verification or moderation processes. The college also needs to have a policy about the kind of support a learner can be given while working on an assignment. This is particularly important for colleagues providing additional support to individual learners or small groups. Assignments can provide a very focused and motivating context for skills development, but the work must be the learner's own.

Feedback and progress reviews

Course teams need to make sure that learners understand the feedback they receive. This can mean adapting feedback for specific groups of learners.

All feedback must signpost improvement. It needs to tell the learner exactly what they need to change or develop. Feedback should:

- show how well the learner has done, using the agreed criteria
- explain the outcomes against the criteria
- make positive comments before criticisms
- be given promptly
- tell learners how they can improve
- give guidance in the areas learners need to rehearse
- take account of particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities and any special requirements or circumstances.

Each assignment will contribute towards the achievement recorded on the learner's ILP and be part of the evidence that is considered at the regular review of progress against the ILP. The progress review meeting should put this into a wider context and also ask:

- are the interim achievements on the programme taking the learner nearer to their long-term learning goals?
- what is the learner's view of his or her progress?
- does the learner's self-assessment match the views of the teaching team?
- if not, why not?
- what is the learner finding easy and difficult?
- what help has proved useful to the learner?
- which resources were useful, and which less so?
- what new targets should be set?

There are moves to make tests available on demand and on-screen to improve access and provide a more motivating and rewarding experience for learners. A CD of practice on-screen tests, including the mini-tests that give a preliminary indication of which level to try, will soon be available via the Read Write Plus website, as well as being distributed with the test toolkit. This will include the review feedback for each test item.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Meaningful activities

Sport and Leisure learners are assessed through organised fitness activities for groups of children from local primary schools. This is used as an opportunity to develop and assess speaking and listening skills in a relevant and often challenging context. Learners also supervise the college fitness centre and work with customers to develop individual fitness plans. The personal health assessments undertaken at the beginning of this process are used to provide evidence of achievements in numeracy.

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Fitness measurements are plotted to develop the individual fitness plan.

Joint action to improve outcomes

The retention and achievement rates of a group of NVQ learners did not reach the agreed targets. Some members of minority ethnic groups had particularly low achievement rates. The course team worked with managers and the quality team to decide what could be done to improve learner outcomes. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL development and tutoring were agreed as the areas that needed strengthening. A basic skills workshop was created in the vocational area and staff received training. The course team was reinforced with literacy, numeracy and ESOL specialists, and as a result, the learning resources and activities used were revised. All the learners were prepared for accreditation in basic skills. The result was an improvement in learning outcomes for the learners in this group.

Constructive feedback

For ESOL learners in the early stages of their programme, teachers focus on oral feedback, only moving to written feedback as learners build their skills. A marking code that is used consistently by all teachers is explained to learners at induction. The correction of grammar work is often reinforced by asking learners to correct pieces that have the same sort of mistakes as they have made. They enjoy this, and it helps the lesson 'stick'.

Extracts of effective practice from OFSTED and ALI inspection reports

'All full-time and substantial part-time learners have been assessed for their learning support needs.'

'All basic skills learners receive an initial assessment and an individual learning plan. Good use is made of the learning plans. Reviews of progress take place regularly. Learner work is marked accurately and constructively. Internal verification procedures are thorough and reports from external verifiers are positive.'

'There is good monitoring and recording of learners' progress from the first contact to an initial assessment and subsequently through diagnostic assessment, attendance records, progress reviews and accreditation of work.'

'The quality of both written and verbal feedback from tutors is often very good. Learners' progress is monitored effectively. They all have individual learning plans set against the new standards and their progress is effectively monitored and recorded. Most learning plans are clear and suitably detailed; all are regularly updated.'

'Record-keeping at course level is meticulous and detailed, especially with regard to learner assessment and progress.'

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

5. How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners?

5

5. HOW WELL DO THE PROGRAMMES AND COURSES MEET THE NEEDS AND INTERESTS OF LEARNERS?

Effective practice which secures continuous improvement is evidenced by:

- the extent to which courses or programmes match learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience; and

- how far programmes or the curriculum meet external requirements and are responsive to local circumstances.

Sources of evidence could include:

- planning documents which match provision to known local need;

- innovative programmes targeted at under-represented learners with literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs;

- flexible delivery methods that enable learner choice;

- comprehensive initial assessment procedures that identify the full range of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning need among learners;

- planning and delivery systems that meet the full range of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning need among learners;

- induction and learning activities that build on the experience and understanding that learners bring;

- embedded literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision that is vocationally relevant and based on an audit of vocational course skill demands;

- partnership activities that promote literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision to new groups of learners;

- partnerships with schools, voluntary and community organisations and employers that generate new opportunities for literacy, numeracy and ESOL development;

- a Widening Participation Strategy that recognises the importance of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision in extending successful participation to all;

- marketing activities that target prospective literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners and aim to attract new learners;

- promotional materials that highlight the literacy, numeracy and ESOL support available to all college learners;

- information, advice and guidance activities that are tailored to prospective literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners; and

- progression from first rung provision that shows learners are achieving their goals.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK HOW FAR LEARNERS' NEEDS ARE MET IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
5.1 learners have access to an appropriate range of courses or programmes and, where appropriate, achieve suitable qualifications.	**5.1.1** there are comprehensive initial assessment procedures, which identify the full range of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning need among learners.
	5.1.2 all learners have opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills either through discrete provision or as an integral part of their main programme.
	5.1.3 an audit of the language and number skills required for success on vocational and academic courses is used to plan for relevant skills development.
	5.1.4 all learners following substantial programmes have the opportunity to prepare for basic or key skills qualifications.
	5.1.5 there is a wide range of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning opportunities – full time, part time and in the evenings; on-site, in the workplace and community-based; embedded and discrete.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK HOW FAR LEARNERS' NEEDS ARE MET IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
5.2 the curriculum or an individual programme of work is planned and managed effectively to provide coherence and progression.	**5.2.1** the core curricula are used as a common planning and delivery tool for discrete programmes, integrated basic and key skills and additional learning support.
	5.2.2 all staff teaching or supporting a learning programme understand the literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs of the learners and use appropriate teaching and support strategies.
	5.2.3 all staff teaching or supporting a particular learner understand and contribute to the development and achievement of that learner's individual learning plan (ILP).
5.3 the curriculum or programmes of work are socially inclusive, ensuring equality of access and opportunities for learners.	**5.3.1** learning activities build on the diversity of experience and understanding that learners bring.
	5.3.2 learning is inclusive and responds to diverse individual learning needs.
	5.3.3 learning managers are alert to particular needs that may impact on learning such as religious observation or caring commitments.
	5.3.4 learners in all curriculum areas have the same entitlement to basic or key skills development and to additional support with literacy, numeracy and ESOL.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK HOW FAR LEARNERS' NEEDS ARE MET IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
5.4 learners have the opportunity to broaden their experience and enhance their personal development through a suitable variety of enrichment activities.	**5.4.1** enrichment activities allow learners to develop and apply their skills in new contexts and through new roles. **5.4.2** enrichment activities provide opportunities for learners to develop their personal effectiveness and self-reliance alongside literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills.
5.5 programmes of work take account of community and employer needs.	**5.5.1** programmes are planned, developed and evaluated with community and employer partners.
5.6 legal requirements in relation to religious education and collective worship are fulfilled where they apply.	**5.6.1** the college provides for the faith needs of learners, including a room for prayer and reflection.
5.7 multi-site provision and resources are effectively integrated to give a coherent programme of learning.	**5.7.1** where learners work across sites or are engaged in off-site activities, such as work placements, activities are carefully logged and tracked in their ILPs.

HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

College basic skills teams are often leading the challenge to attract new and under-represented groups of learners. It is well-known that those who have done well in the education system are most likely to continue learning throughout their lives, and that those who have not may want to avoid learning in adult life. Engaging hard-to-reach learners is likely to mean working with partners and intermediaries. The direct appeal, however attractive and well-targeted the marketing, is not always going to be effective. Colleges need to work with and through other organisations, such as community groups, employers and support agencies that have established a relationship with potential learners, and in contexts in which improving language and number skills seems worthwhile.

Partnership working can present plenty of difficulties. Partners have different priorities. They plan and work to different timescales. They find it hard to understand college funding systems. Working in partnership can be both messy and risky, and many community groups do not operate the same kinds of planning, record-keeping and quality regimes that colleges have developed. Perhaps most importantly, college teams need to tailor their basic skills offer to the needs of each community group, employer or service. This requires teams to be sensitive, flexible and resourceful.

Reaching learners in their communities

Outreach literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision should be taught in a range of community locations. What these are will depend on the nature of the local community. One college includes among its partners:

- alcohol recovery projects
- carers' associations
- community centres
- Foyers for young homeless
- museums
- supermarkets
- refugee centres
- primary schools
- young mothers' projects.

Successful providers build partnerships with organisations that are already working with groups under-represented in the college.

Opportunities to use their skills in community placements can motivate learners to reach new levels of achievement. This may be particularly relevant for younger learners. Those who have seen themselves as a failure at school can blossom through the chance to contribute. One example of community placement is the Millennium Volunteer programme, which operates countrywide and supports thousands of young people who are working in community settings. Some successful examples appear on page 66 of this Guide.

Millennium Volunteer schemes have good support systems in place, meaning colleges can use them to extend the opportunities for younger learners without taking on all the work of managing the programmes. Such placements are often the trigger to language work and communication skills in particular. They also enable learners to develop and demonstrate the generic skills that all employers want, such as punctuality, initiative and team-working. So community volunteering can also be very helpful in allowing learners to meet their broader progression goals.

Engaging employers

Bringing employers on board is perhaps the biggest challenge presented to FE by *Success for All*. In many colleges, enterprise and business-link units are not well connected to the college's literacy, numeracy and ESOL teams. Yet a number of skills reports – not least those from the National Skills Task Force – have emphasised the national need for improved employee skills in literacy and, especially, numeracy. Of the 7 million adults with skills needs, half are in

employment. As industries evolve, and as individuals get older, those without literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills are increasingly vulnerable. The basic skills gap may be costing business and Government £10 billion a year, and it can cost individual workers their livelihood. An inclusive and responsive literacy, numeracy and ESOL offer needs to include the specific skills required in the workplace. Colleges that are building up their experience of workplace provision might want to start with their own employees and those of companies to which they outsource services.

Effective partnerships with employers start by getting agreement that there is a problem. College staff who are teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL know the range and sophistication of the coping strategies developed by those with literacy and numeracy difficulties. Many do much more than get by and they can be very effective in an established role. This means that the skills that are needed will only be revealed indirectly: a reluctance to train, go for promotion or use new procedures or technologies. The skills gap will still hit profits through inflexible practice, poor communication and high wastage. Employers need to be convinced of the business case for investment in training.

Employers may be persuaded to recognise the need but they will not see the value of literacy, numeracy and language learning unless it is tailored to their business. Each workforce, and each work role within it, will use language and number skills in a particular way. These will vary according to the type of business, the technical tasks undertaken, the interaction with customers, the reporting systems and so on. An off-the-shelf literacy, numeracy and ESOL programme won't have the impact an employer would be right to expect. The starting point must be a job and task analysis that pinpoints the language and number demands of the role and the contexts in which the skills will be applied. Staff in colleges have plenty of guidance and expertise to draw on here:

- their own experience in conducting course language and number skill audits
- college-based experience of training needs analysis
- the training tools in the *Skills for Life* Employer Toolkit.

Once the training needs of the company have been agreed, delivery models also need to be flexible. Individual employees may also want to learn in different ways. Colleges can offer:

- dedicated literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes with a workplace focus, for example, Dealing with Customer Complaints, Stock Audits
- integrated programmes that teach literacy, numeracy and language skills alongside technical training, for example, induction to a new work role or process
- company-based learning centres providing drop-in support and e-learning resources, including **learndirect**
- training for supervisors or workplace mentors to teach them to provide peer support.

Whatever model is decided upon, there need to be agreed learning outcomes for the programme as a whole and individual learning plans that frame each employee's route to these outcomes. Some programmes may require college staff to be flexible, for example by going out to the workplace and fitting in with unsocial working hours, and provision needs to be made for these circumstances.

Success in Adult Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision **is published by the DfES on behalf of OFSTED and the ALI. The ALI and OFSTED guides aim to help inspectors and staff in colleges to evaluate standards and the quality of post-16 provision. The DfES guide identifies the seven key questions set out in the Common Inspection Framework and details what is expected of learning organisations where programmes of literacy, numeracy and ESOL are provided. The guides help learning institutions to:**

- **carry out an analysis of their organisation's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities**
- **devise an action plan.**

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Working in the community

A Community Learning Programme was developed in conjunction with the Youth Service and targeted at vulnerable and disaffected young people outside education, training and employment. Most have disrupted schooling and would not go near a mainstream course. Literacy and numeracy skills are embedded in personal development activities and delivered in a local pub. The course is mapped to national standards and accredited.

Volunteer schemes

Dimitri is a 17-year-old ESOL learner originally from Kosova. He has achieved his Millennium Volunteer award through 200+ hours of working with the Police Community Liaison team.

Sandra is an 18-year-old learner who is improving her literacy, numeracy and language skills on a Level 1 vocational programme. Through the Millennium Volunteer programme, she helps pupils at her local primary school with their reading. She has received a day's training with a local organisation called Reading Together.

Shazia is a 21-year-old learner who has dyslexia. She is studying on a discrete literacy, numeracy and language skills course at her local college. Recently, Shazia volunteered to help in a local school for children with special needs.

Reaching learners at the workplace

Construction sites in London are employing an increasing number of workers from Eastern Europe. The poor language skills of these workers are a risk to health and safety and are certainly a barrier to promotion. One college's Trade Union Studies Centre is working with unions and construction companies to provide ESOL course activities that focus on reading and writing for health and safety purposes and on speaking and listening for workplace interaction. An important part of the workplace interaction element is about tackling racism and this has been built into the course.

Employers are not the only potential partners for colleges setting up workplace programmes for literacy, numeracy and ESOL, as the following example shows.

Union Learning Representatives

The Union Learning Fund provides Government money to support workplace learning. Union Learning Representatives advise and encourage their colleagues to take up learning opportunities. One Trade Union Studies Centre based at a college works with Union Learning Representatives from the civil service union PCS. The Baseline course was developed in partnership with PCS for cleaners and security staff at the Natural History Museum. It uses form-filling and simple report-writing tasks that are actually required of workers at the museum to develop their literacy skills. Laptops are provided and learners also use some of the **learndirect** *literacy modules. Learners find that their studies are highly relevant and that they help them with day-to-day tasks.*

Extracts of effective practice from OFSTED and ALI inspection reports

> *'The curriculum area has been very successful in developing partnerships with the local schools and the borough council. Learners have access to excellent resources. A van and driver takes laptop computers to different sites and provides technical support when required.'*

> *'There are strong links with local schools and other partners. There are very well-established links with the local press, resulting in regular newspaper articles on learners' achievements. Imaginative projects have been initiated with local employers to teach basic skills in the workplace.'*

> *'Efforts are made to make learning relevant. In a community school location, the learners, all parents of children at the school, had produced interesting and well-designed poetry and cookery booklets to share with their children.'*

> *'A notable feature of provision is the programme of visits and residential opportunities that is available to the learners. Learners appreciate these enrichment opportunities which have inspired some very good project work and raised learners' confidence levels and aspirations.'*

> *'Learners benefit from the chance to take part in challenging personal development and team-building programmes.'*

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6. How well are learners guided and supported?

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6

6. HOW WELL ARE LEARNERS GUIDED AND SUPPORTED?

Effective practice which secures continuous improvement is evidenced by:

- the quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance to learners in relation to courses and programmes and career progression;

- the diagnosis of, and provision for, individual learning needs; and

- the access learners have to relevant, effective support on personal issues.

Supporting evidence could include:

- policies, plans, procedures and organisation charts that set out a coherent and learner-centred framework for the management and development of all support services;

- information about a range of local literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision that is comprehensive, accurate, current and accessible;

- welcoming, accessible advice and guidance that is well informed and sensitive to the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners;

- the availability of information, advice and guidance in alternative formats and community languages;

- admission and course placement procedures that ensure a good fit between the literacy, numeracy and language skills of applicants and the language and number demands of courses;

- guidance to teachers (such as a Teacher Handbook) and records of teacher training (including induction for new teachers) that set out clearly the way in which the literacy, numeracy and language needs of learners will be identified and met;

- performance management and quality assurance systems for tutoring;

- induction arrangements that highlight opportunities for learners to develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills;

- induction activities that profile learning goals, preferences, strengths and needs, including literacy, numeracy and language skills, to inform individual learning plans;

- records of screening, diagnostic and referral systems that show that learners who need additional support receive it promptly and that progress is systematically monitored;

- liaison records showing that teachers on support and main programmes work closely together to ensure that support is relevant and effective;

- clear procedures for managing attendance and punctuality and records of effective intervention where problems arise;

- career and progression guidance, including that provided by the local Careers/Connexions Service, that meets needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners using appropriately trained staff and guidance resources that are accessible and appropriate for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners;

- the use of work experience to develop and evidence achievement in literacy, numeracy and ESOL;

- guidance and counselling staff trained to meet the particular needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners;

- personal support records that show that services are well-used by literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners; and

- partnership agreements and relationships with external support agencies that are sensitive to the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK THE QUALITY OF I.A.G. IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
6.1 support arrangements are planned and managed coherently.	**6.1.1** the role of the personal teacher is well defined and teachers help learners make effective use of college support services.
	6.1.2 support is well publicised and learners are clear about the services available to them. Promotional and induction materials take account of the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.
	6.1.3 literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners have easy access to support services and find them welcoming.
	6.1.4 support staff are trained to meet the particular needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.
	6.1.5 there are clear referral and follow-up procedures for support services.
	6.1.6 liaison between the course team and those providing ongoing support is regular and systematic.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK THE QUALITY OF I.A.G. IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
6.1	**6.1.7** where possible, support services are externally quality assured.
	6.1.8 support staff are appropriately qualified and their roles and responsibilities are clearly defined.
6.2 impartial guidance enables learners to choose the course or programme which is right for them.	**6.2.1** learners receive accurate and timely information about all local opportunities to improve their literacy, numeracy or ESOL skills.
	6.2.2 learners are able to have a confidential interview to discuss their learning needs, career and progression goals and any individual circumstances that might affect their choice of programme.
	6.2.3 staff providing educational guidance understand the national standards and their relationship to types and levels of provision.
	6.2.4 staff providing educational guidance understand the particular needs of ESOL learners and the equivalence of qualifications gained in the learner's country of origin.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK THE QUALITY OF I.A.G. IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
6.3 careers education and guidance are effective in guiding learners towards opportunities available to them when they have completed their studies or training.	**6.3.1** there is a clear focus on progression on all literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes.
	6.3.2 progression goals are clearly identified in individual learning plans (ILPs) and progression is considered in agreeing learners' targets.
	6.3.3 literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners are well informed about opportunities for further study and employment.
	6.3.4 the college's service level agreement with the local Careers/Connexions Service ensures that the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners will be met by appropriately trained staff.
6.4 procedures are in place for recognising poor punctuality, non-attendance and poor performance early and for taking appropriate action.	**6.4.1** expectations about punctuality and attendance are made clear to learners at induction.
	6.4.2 there are effective systems for reporting and tracking poor punctuality, attendance and performance.
	6.4.3 poor punctuality and attendance and other issues of concern are promptly followed up with the learner and with the parents or carers of younger learners.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK THE QUALITY OF I.A.G. IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
6.5 induction programmes enable learners to settle into their programmes quickly, to understand their rights and responsibilities and the demands of the course or programme.	**6.5.1** induction helps learners understand and use the course, college, peer and personal resources available to support their learning.
	6.5.2 induction makes clear what the college expects of the learner and what they can expect of the college and its staff.
6.6 individual learning needs are accurately diagnosed and learners receive effective additional support throughout their studies or training.	**6.6.1** initial assessment provides an accurate assessment of learning needs and, where necessary, triggers a prompt referral to additional support.
	6.6.2 clear referral and self-referral systems encourage early identification of learners needing support.
	6.6.3 support is offered promptly to all those learners identified as needing it.
	6.6.4 learners understand why they are receiving support, agree the support plan and can describe their progress and its benefits.
	6.6.5 additional learning support is flexibly delivered and provides a planned and structured programme of skills development that is linked to the demands of the main programme and to the core curricula.
	6.6.6 there is systematic liaison between teachers on the main programme and those providing additional support. They work closely to develop, review and update the ILP and to monitor progress.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK THE QUALITY OF I.A.G. IS JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
6.7 learners have effective personal support to help them complete their course or programme, including access to specialist support services.	**6.7.1** each learner has a teacher who is clear about his or her responsibilities and the help and support that can be made available to the learner. **6.7.2** learners make use of a range of services dealing with personal, financial and practical obstacles to learning. **6.7.3** guidance services meet Guidance Accreditation Board standards and staff are trained to meet the particular needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.
6.8 guidance and support are sensitive to equality of opportunity.	**6.8.1** staff providing programme information and educational guidance have access to interpreting services as needed. **6.8.2** learners with disabilities or particular needs have access to appropriate support from initial interview on.
6.9 partnerships with other providers and relevant agencies involved in advice and guidance are effective.	**6.9.1** college-based services work with external partners to meet a wide range of learner needs. **6.9.2** the college can help learners to access a range of specialist external support. **6.9.3** formal partnership agreements with external partners ensure that the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners are known and met.

HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

Successful providers manage their learning support services to provide:

- early identification of need

- flexible delivery to meet the range of learner needs

- relevance to the main programme and personal goals

- firm links between support teams and teaching teams

- rigorous monitoring and evidence of gain for the learner.

They develop and plan their support services carefully to ensure that they are coherent. Most have a framework document that shows the range of support on offer and how it fits together. The coherence of the support is evident through casework as well as on paper. Effective providers use external accreditation of standards, such as that offered by the Guidance Council, to maintain the high standard of the college's services. Support staff are trained to meet particular learner needs through, for example, dyslexia, disability, mental health and equality of opportunity awareness training. Support staff linked to literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision are encouraged to gain specialist qualifications.

In the best practice, effective guidance and support systems are tied to the curriculum, and course teams are fully aware of what is available. This means:

- there are clear and well-used communication channels between the support services and teaching teams

- support services are well briefed and regularly updated about teaching and curriculum developments

- support services are clear about particular learner needs and they meet these sensitively

- teachers and course teams know exactly what kinds of support their learners can use and how they can access it

- the process for teachers and course teams to refer learners for support is clear and well known to all

- course teachers receive regular reports about learner progress

- support services work well together and learners are not passed between different providers

- support services measure their success against learner outcomes

- support services collect and analyse learner and teacher feedback in order to evaluate their service.

Cross-college support teams (based, for example, in information, counselling or learning centres) should consider the following principles when guiding and supporting literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners:

- a team member has special responsibility for liaising with literacy, numeracy and ESOL teaching teams
- there is good awareness of the level of literacy, numeracy and ESOL need in the college and in the local community
- there is good awareness of the *Skills for Life* strategy and the national standards for literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- staff are clear about the way the service can help learners to meet the standards, for example, by providing information about relevant learning opportunities, loaning laptops to dyslexic learners or offering software mapped to the numeracy curriculum
- publicity about the service is accessible to literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners
- service systems, for example, library catalogues or guidance booking systems, can be accessed by literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners or they are given appropriate support to help them use these facilities
- there are staffed learning centres dedicated to language and number development and they include different modes of provision, including workshops, key skill centres, support zones etc
- relevant staff training is in place that is tailored to the particular needs of dyslexic learners, bilingual learners and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- link staff are offered the opportunity to study specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL qualifications at Levels 2 or 3
- accommodation is appropriate and includes, for example, confidential interview rooms
- resources are available to meet the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners and includes, for example, Entry Level book stock
- links are made to a wide range of external services that are relevant to literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners, including, for example, refugee support groups or publishers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL materials
- the take-up of support by literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners is systematically and regularly evaluated
- learning outcomes for learners receiving literacy, numeracy and ESOL support are measured
- the views of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners and their teachers are collected and analysed in order to deliver continuous improvements to the support service.

Personal support must be sensitive to the needs of diverse learners and must consider the implications for the whole group, not just the learners receiving support. Where staff providing support work closely with course teachers, this will follow naturally.

Learning support teams should ensure that:

- clear information about learning support is available for new colleagues including, for example, staff handbooks, teacher toolkits, and clear staff induction sessions

- planned work with course teams includes language and number audits for specific programmes

- joint planning takes place to make support relevant to the main programme and learners' personal goals

- learners' needs are identified promptly at initial assessment

- clear and easy-to-use referral systems are in place, for example, checklists of language difficulties to prompt learner referrals for help with dyslexia or for ESOL support

- support plans are related to main programme demands and are mapped to the core curricula

- support is sufficiently broad to meet the full range of learner need such as:

  - intensive preparatory programmes before the start of the main programme

  - in-class literacy, numeracy and ESOL support

  - discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL support

  - drop-in support

  - one-to-one support

  - support groups

  - peer support

  - holiday revision or intensive programmes

- there is rigorous monitoring and evidence of progress

- regular progress reports are sent to the teacher and course team

- there are arrangements for joint evaluation of support and planning for improvement.

Ann Pilcher provides one-to-one support for learners.

Attracting new learners

Outreach information, advice and guidance (IAG) services for literacy, numeracy and ESOL opportunities need to be targeted at under-represented groups and provided in a variety of locations. These will differ according to the nature and needs of the local community. One college includes the following locations in its outreach IAG service:

- homeless hostels
- addiction units
- domestic violence projects
- family literacy classes
- young mothers' projects
- mental health units.

All enquirers are offered a confidential educational guidance interview.

Another useful link are the Trade Union Learning Representatives who support a huge range of workers, many with literacy, numeracy and language needs. Some Trade Union Learning Representatives learn about the national *Skills for Life* strategy and its implications for the workplace. This means they able to advise on learning opportunities and career progression for members who want to improve their literacy, numeracy or ESOL skills.

Identifying particular needs

All colleges need clear processes for identifying learners with disabilities. Applicants should be invited to tell the college about any disability or particular learning need. Those who respond should be asked about the kind of support they need at interview or during assessment. There needs to be clear communication and liaison between the admissions teacher or equivalent and course teams. Staff training for teaching and support staff can also be geared to anticipate particular needs so that the applicant can be sure that appropriate support will be in place when their programme begins.

A support plan should be negotiated with the learner. Preferably, a named co-ordinator will provide specialist support and will help the course team to adapt the provision to meet the needs of the learner. The learner's support is tracked throughout their time at college. There will also need to be ongoing opportunities to trigger support for those who did not disclose a need at application or entry.

The right start

Successful providers know that every literacy, numeracy and ESOL learner needs to get off to a good start in their learning. They provide a clear framework for induction, which includes:

- an agreed statement about the purpose and nature of induction

- a toolkit of college-wide resources and support that teachers can use to support learners

- activities that teachers can tailor to individual learners according to their level of ability

- a procedure and resources to use with late enrolees

- a checklist which learners complete and sign to show that the induction objectives have been met

- a survey to check learners' views of induction.

All induction resources need to be adapted for learners at the earlier levels of the literacy, numeracy and ESOL curriculum. Successful providers also see induction as an opportunity to get learners writing and thinking about their personal learning goals.

Tackling poor timekeeping

Work-ready skills overlap with personal skills and it is important to monitor punctuality and attendance, and to tackle any problems as soon as they arise. Effective support for learners includes the use of attendance and punctuality procedures that log lateness or non-attendance. These should fit the needs of particular groups of learners.

Peer support

Wherever possible, learners should be trained and resourced to provide support to each other. Peer support is mutually beneficial, both for learners who take responsibility for helping their classmates, and for the learners who are assisted in this way. Peer support can take a number of different forms, including mentoring, 'study buddying', help at college open days from existing learners and personal one-to-one support.

Planning for the future

Career and progression planning itself can help learners develop their literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills through activities such as:

- researching jobs and training opportunities

- looking at labour market trends

- describing the National Qualifications Framework

- interviewing employers and employees

- presenting their findings

- making applications

- preparing for mock interviews

- assessing themselves against the entry criteria

- assembling evidence to show that they meet the entry criteria.

Support through partnership

Every college will have formal partnerships with support agencies such as Connexions and the Careers Service. Successful providers ensure that the partnership agreements with such agencies specify the nature and level of support that will be provided to literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners with particular needs. They develop additional productive partnerships with targeted agencies such as refugee groups, health teams or specialist projects to enable the college to reach vulnerable and excluded groups and to offer support which recognises and meets the particular needs of such groups.

The DfES has produced two resource packs for learners with specific needs. *Basic Skills for Adults with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities* **is on CD, and it aims to support staff development in this area.** *Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Support materials for ESOL providers* **provides information and training materials for all organisations and teachers offering ESOL provision to refugees and asylum seekers in the post-compulsory education sector. A downloadable pdf version is available on the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/teachingandlearning).**

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Close liaison between support and teaching staff means a prompt response to problems.

Working together

Subject teachers on a 16–18 programme were aware that one of their learners was displaying some unusual behaviour but were taken by surprise when this developed into a disturbing incident in class. They spoke to the Guidance Officer, who agreed liaison procedures to contact the GP and Community Mental Health Team to ensure that the learner received the right medical support. The college is in regular contact with the learner's mental health worker and provides material for private study in preparation for the learner's planned return to college. The other learners in the group were thrown by the incident and they received support from the Guidance team to talk it through and deal with the issues the incident had provoked for them.

Learning support for specific learner needs such as dyslexia require the co-ordination of several strands of support, as in the following example.

Comprehensive dyslexia support

All teaching and support staff receive dyslexia awareness training so they are able to spot learners who might need support in this area. Teachers are given a prompt sheet with indicators that trigger a dyslexia referral and are confident of making referrals. The college also runs an accredited Adult Dyslexia Support course to train both its own and external teachers.

The college publicises its dyslexia support in appropriate venues to learners who can self-identify. During enrolment week, enrolment rooms are leafleted with a 'Do you think you might be dyslexic?' leaflet, and a helpdesk is open throughout enrolment to give advice and further guidance. The college's Managing Dyslexia course, publicised through the community, is often a route into other college provision.

All applicants who reveal dyslexia needs are invited to a two-day Preparation for Study programme before the start of their course. They are also offered a one-to-one programme with one of the 12 dyslexia support teachers.

On-programme, learners with dyslexia are strongly supported. Dyslexic learners can borrow laptops loaded with voice recognition and Text Help assistive software, and there is a Dyslexia Support Group facilitated by a member of the guidance staff. The college hopes to runs Brain Gym classes shortly to promote left/right brain co-ordination through exercise.

The college has evidence to show that its dyslexic support strategy is working. Retention and achievement rates for learners receiving dyslexia support are carefully recorded and have been shown to be better than the college average. A dyslexic learner who had been supported for two years won the college's 'Most Improved Learner' award in 2002.

Stimulating interest in learning

Learners new to an Introduction to Computing course take part in activities designed to stimulate thinking about their aims and ambitions. Each learner completes a Personal Language History, beginning with a group discussion about the learners' different language backgrounds. Each learner then goes on to produces an illustrated and word-processed report about their own language heritage. Many are of a very high quality.

Learners also write a letter to an old school friend, telling them about their hopes and first impressions on starting college. They are encouraged to reminisce about school experiences, and to say what will be different this time.

Research skills are developed when each learner is asked to write a simple report about the Learning Centre, explaining what's there, who can help, how you find things and what facilities are available. This also helps them identify the new skills they want to develop.

These examples show how an innovative approach that learners will respond to can help to improve attendance and punctuality.

Tackling low attendance and poor punctuality

Teachers on fashion courses have found appropriate ways of tackling low attendance and poor punctuality. Strategies include:

- *sending out fashion postcards to learners with poor attendance*
- *celebrating the achievement of learners with 100% attendance at the end of each term*
- *having an annual award for good attendance and punctuality.*

The strategy has seen improved attendance rates among fashion students.

'Blitz Week'

A course for under-19s has a 'Blitz Week' when teachers feel standards of attendance and punctuality are slipping. Letters go out to parents and learners before the week begins, reporting and commenting on punctuality, attendance and behaviour. Learners are warned that the Student Charter will be vigorously enforced during the week, and the college's usual red card system is reinforced. Those learners with a red card have a corner cut off if they are late, if their mobile goes off in class, if they fail to ring in to explain absence or if they forget essential learning resources. Learners know that a red card with no corners will result in disciplinary action. That stage has yet to be reached during a Blitz Week.

Peer support

At this college, learners provide support to their peers through a number of roles, including:

- *Enrolment Buddies – offering basic translation in community languages*
- *Welcome Teamers – supporting induction by showing potential and new learners around the college*
- *Study Buddies – passing on their skills, for example in ICT*
- *Millennium Volunteers – supporting whole-college projects and links with other agencies.*
- *Peer Mentors – giving personal support and dealing with individual and group barriers to success.*

Extracts of effective practice from OFSTED and ALI inspection reports

'The personal counselling service offered for refugees and asylum-seekers enables help to be given on wider issues, such as housing. Good advice and guidance are provided for community-based learners.'

'All full-time learners have initial assessments in literacy and numeracy. The test results are analysed by basic skill specialists who then ensure that additional support is tailored to learners' needs. A member of the basic skills team links with each vocational course, in order to monitor progress and ensure the support provided is vocationally relevant.'

'Initial assessment is comprehensive. All full-time learners are assessed for basic skills needs at entry. Following initial assessment, learners with identified needs are offered support in a Learning Centre or through in-course support. The progress of learners receiving support is carefully monitored.'

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

7. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

7

7. HOW EFFECTIVE ARE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN RAISING ACHIEVEMENT AND SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS?

Effective practice which secures continuous improvement is evidenced by:

- how well leaders and managers set a clear direction leading to high-quality education and training;

- how effectively, through quality assurance and self-assessment, performance is monitored and evaluated and how effectively steps are taken to secure improvement;

- how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled, so that all learners achieve their potential;

- where relevant, the extent to which governors or other supervisory boards meet their responsibilities; and

- how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money.

Supporting evidence could include:

- policy and strategy documents that set out clear frameworks for meeting the *Skills for Life* targets;

- operational and development plans that specify how the college will meet the *Skills for Life* targets;

- target-setting and monitoring reports concerning the *Skills for Life* targets;

- clarity in the scope of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision resulting from an audit, and management arrangements which reflect this scope;

- organisational structures that show clear and coherent management of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision;

- a statement of learner entitlement to literacy, numeracy and ESOL support and evidence that the entitlement is met;

- comprehensive and accurate management information about literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners and their achievements;

- a quality assurance policy and clear procedures that address the needs of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners;

- self-assessment reports and action plans that accurately assess the quality of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision and that drive continuous quality improvement;

- staff development plans and reports that make good use of national training initiatives and enable all relevant course teams to deliver and support the core curricula;

- resourcing plans, including the use of ICT, relating to literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision;

- performance analyses of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision that are linked to resource investment;

- records of Governing Body, senior management and Academic Board meetings concerning the college's response to the *Skills for Life* Strategy and the participation and progress of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners;

- equality policies, procedures and plans that are accessible and relevant to literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners;

- records of college improvement actions arising from complaints and appeals from literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners;

- interviews with managers who are well informed about and committed to the *Skills for Life* strategy and targets;

- interviews with staff who are well informed about the *Skills for Life* strategy and trained, resourced and supported to meet its targets; and

- interviews with literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners who can describe the progress they have made and the benefits of their learning.

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Peter Mayhew Smith, Director of Foundation Studies, prepares for a session in the **Skills for Life** *Professional Development Centre.*

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
7.1 clear direction is given through strategic objectives, targets and values that are fully understood by staff, including subcontractors and work placement providers.	**7.1.1** senior managers know about the *Skills for Life* strategy and documentation and its implications for the work of the college and this is reflected in strategic and operational plans.
	7.1.2 there is a learner entitlement to literacy, numeracy and ESOL and/or key skill development and accreditation.
	7.1.3 the college has undertaken a scan or audit to identify all the areas of provision that are part of its *Skills for Life* offer.
	7.1.4 there is a designated senior post with responsibility for leading and co-ordinating all college activities that contribute to the *Skills for Life* strategy and its implementation.
	7.1.5 there is a literacy, numeracy and ESOL strategy, which sets a clear framework and direction for all provision.
	7.1.6 there are agreed literacy, numeracy and ESOL targets for participation, retention, achievement and for qualification at programme and college level.
	7.1.7 there is a development plan for literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision.
	7.1.8 there is a training plan for literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision.
	7.1.9 all staff are aware of the college's commitment to meet the literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs of its learners.
	7.1.10 all staff understand how the literacy, numeracy and ESOL strategy fits with the national *Skills for Life* strategy, the college's strategic plan and their own role in the college.

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7.2 demanding targets for retention, achievement, progression and employment are set and met.	**7.2.1** there are targets for the participation, retention and achievement of: ● learners on discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes ● learners developing literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills through vocational or other programmes ● learners receiving additional support for literacy, numeracy or ESOL, and ● progression from first rung literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes. **7.2.2** there are clear systems for measuring progress against targets and planning improvements. **7.2.3** retention and achievement rates in literacy, numeracy and ESOL exceed national benchmarks for comparable colleges, where these are available.

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7.3 the quality assurance arrangements are systematic and informed by the views of all interested parties.	**7.3.1** there are agreed quality criteria, which apply across the literacy, numeracy and ESOL offer.
	7.3.2 college quality assurance procedures and guidelines support lesson observation and internal inspection.
	7.3.3 internal verification and moderation arrangements are consistent and rigorous.
	7.3.4 regular course evaluation processes lead to the agreement of an action plan to drive improvement.
	7.3.5 there are clear and well-used systems for obtaining learner feedback and using this to evaluate and develop programmes.
	7.3.6 there are effective systems for obtaining feedback from parents, community partners, employers and other stakeholders.

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7.4 rigorous self-assessment leads to identified priorities and challenging targets for improvement.	**7.4.1** the annual self-assessment builds from programme-level to college-level assessment.
	7.4.2 the self-assessment process is evidence-based and compares learner outcomes with previous performance.
	7.4.3 the self-assessment process looks at progress made since the last self-assessment.
	7.4.4 agreed data are used for learner outcomes.
	7.4.5 all available inspection evidence, both internal and external, is used in the self-assessment process.
	7.4.6 moderator, internal verifier and external verifier reports form evidence for self-assessment judgements.
	7.4.7 learner feedback is an important part of the self-assessment process.
	7.4.8 the self-assessment report is verified at all stages of its development.
	7.4.9 the self-assessment report leads to a SMART action plan for improvement that is communicated to all staff.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
7.5 priorities are supported through responsible financial management.	**7.5.1** managers responsible for literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision and for the wider curriculum planning process are well informed about the funding streams available to support literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning.
	7.5.2 resource management enables available funding to be deployed in the best interests of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners.
7.6 staff understand and are fully involved in the organisation's quality assurance arrangements.	**7.6.1** staff understand the quality criteria against which literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision will be evaluated and know how to demonstrate that these criteria have been met.
	7.6.2 staff understand how to evidence non-accredited as well as accredited achievement.
	7.6.3 moderation and internal verification arrangements are clearly aligned with college-wide processes.
	7.6.4 members of the literacy, numeracy and ESOL support team act as internal inspectors or contribute to this process.

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7.7 the information needs of managers and other staff are met and management information is used effectively to the benefit of learners.	**7.7.1** there are easily available and agreed data about: ● recruitment to the full range of literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes ● retention rates for learners across the full range of literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes ● accredited literacy, numeracy and ESOL and key skill achievement ● non-accredited literacy, numeracy and ESOL achievement, as evidenced by progress against individual learning plans (ILPs) ● retention and achievement rates for learners receiving additional support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL ● internal progression of Entry Level and Level 1 learners ● planned destinations of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners ● patterns of recruitment, retention and achievement by age, race, gender and disability.

IN THE COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ARE JUDGED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH…	SUCCESS IN ADULT LITERACY, NUMERACY AND ESOL PROVISION IN THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT MEANS…
7.8 performance management, staff appraisal and review are effective in improving the quality of provision.	**7.8.1** staff appraisal, review and development processes support staff in meeting the national standards for teaching or supporting literacy, numeracy and ESOL skills and in training to deliver the core curricula.
	7.8.2 staff appraisal, review and development processes encourage all staff teaching or supporting learners at Level 2 or below to receive training and development in literacy, numeracy and ESOL.
7.9 there are explicit aims, values and strategies promoting equality for all, and these are reflected in the provider's work.	**7.9.1** the college's values and ethos promote equality and are known to all learners and staff.
	7.9.2 equality of opportunity is embedded in all policies, practices, decision-making and evaluation processes.
	7.9.3 the college is committed to addressing under-representation of particular groups of learners or staff.
	7.9.4 all staff are clear about standards and strategies to meet diverse learner needs and are equipped to respond effectively.
	7.9.5 there are well-understood and well-used procedures for challenging discrimination, harassment and unacceptable behaviour.
	7.9.6 rigorous monitoring aims to identify and act on equality gaps.

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7.10 governors or other supervisory boards effectively oversee the provider's strategic direction, and regularly monitor the quality of provision and their own performance.	**7.10.1** governors understand the *Skills for Life* strategy, the college's planned response and the impact this has in shaping college strategy, setting college targets and steering the use of college resources.
7.11 there are effective procedures for dealing with appeals and complaints.	**7.11.1** the college academic appeals and learner complaints procedures are accessible to all learners including those following programmes of literacy, numeracy and ESOL.
	7.11.2 complaints are recognised as valuable learner feedback and used to inform improvement planning.
7.12 efficient and effective use is made of resources.	**7.12.1** literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision is effectively resourced to support learner achievement.
	7.12.2 there is a designated budget or budgets to deliver literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes.
	7.12.3 resource use is evaluated within the self-assessment process to assess the impact on achievement and value for money.

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7.13 the 'best value' principles of comparison, challenges, consultation and competition are applied in securing resources and services.	**7.13.1** there is a clear process for reviewing resource inputs and learner outcomes across the college's literacy, numeracy and ESOL offer.
	7.13.2 resource reviews highlight the most and least efficient and effective areas of practice and inform future planning.
	7.13.3 college teams remain alert to effective and efficient practice elsewhere in the sector and beyond.

HOW TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

In many ways, the *Skills for Life* strategy has redefined college basic skills provision. The scope of the basic skills offer is now much wider than in the past, and this can have an effect on the coherence of provision. There needs to be clarity about the scope of the *Skills for Life* offer to inform:

- strategic and programme planning

- target-setting

- resourcing

- professional development

- management information systems

- quality monitoring and performance review

- development and improvement planning.

In particular, all colleges will need to review their management arrangements against the *Skills for Life* strategy, so familiarity with the strategy is essential, as is attending conferences and reading relevant literature to remain up to date with all the various strands of the *Skills for Life* strategy. Clarity about the areas of provision that contribute to the achievement of literacy, numeracy and ESOL targets must be matched by clarity about the way that these are managed. The simplest solution is a single senior post with responsibility for this area of the college's work. Where there is more than one line of management involved, there needs to be a clear framework for coherence in planning, delivery and evaluation.

In looking at the full range of language and number provision at Level 2 and below, most college managers will need to consider areas of work that may have had little previous connection with each other. Community-based ESOL teams, for example, may have had little to do with vocational craft teams teaching at Level 2, even though their ESOL learners will be progressing to these vocational courses.

Managers also need to consider teams that may have very different styles of work. New e-learning teams working on literacy, numeracy and ESOL, for example, may not immediately see what they have in common with teams supporting learners with learning difficulties. In many colleges, the literacy, numeracy and ESOL offer is large and disparate. There may be wide discrepancies in resourcing and in performance. Managers need to pull all this together to ensure a coherent response to challenging targets.

Colleges need to conduct an audit of the areas of work that make up the college's literacy, numeracy and ESOL offer. The audit will look at the way that literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes and support are resourced and taught, as well as examining learner outcomes and team performance for this area.

The existing offer that a college has is, of course, only one part of the equation. The literacy, numeracy and language skills needs of college learners, and the degree to which these are met, are an essential part of any audit. Evidence of unmet learning needs in the local community should also be taken into account. Where possible, it is helpful to involve external specialists in conducting an audit. This may well be an area where those who are close to the provision fail to see the wood for the trees.

Clarity in the management of literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs to be backed by the following principles.

- The governing body is well informed about the college's *Skills for Life* strategy and its progress towards the *Skills for Life* targets. The governing body could include a basic skills champion or a governor with a particular watching brief.

- The college's commitment to meeting the basic skills needs of its learners is well known and clearly understood by all staff.

- The college has a strong commitment and strategy for reaching potential learners in the wider community.

- The senior management team champions the college's *Skills for Life* strategy and integrates *Skills for Life* targets into all planning, resourcing and performance review processes.

- Curriculum managers recognise the contribution of language and number skills development to learner success and they take joint ownership of the *Skills for Life* targets.

- Teams responsible for teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision or for offering support in this area are trained, resourced and supported to provide effective learning and to help make continuous improvements in this provision.

In successful provision, all members of staff know and own the targets they are expected to achieve. Staff benefit from accurate, timely and accessible information about performance against target. Best practice allows each member of staff to call up current participation, retention and achievement data from their desktop. Data are provided at programme, curriculum area and college levels. Managers are supported by the active involvement of teaching teams in data checking. Regular performance review meetings are used to examine progress against the targets. Any mismatch between the types of provision are investigated promptly and improvement actions planned.

The individual learning plan (ILP) is recognised as driving learner achievement. Successful providers hold regular ILP progress reviews to assesses the quality of individual target-setting and progress-monitoring. A random selection of ILPs are sampled to pinpoint effective practice and priorities for development. The outcome of this review feeds into self-assessment, further training and improvement planning.

Managing Success: A study of the management systems and styles that promote the successful teaching of literacy and numeracy to adults was undertaken on commission by the Association of Colleges and is now available. The study identifies effective practice in further education and sixth form colleges in leading and managing provision. It has been designed to help staff in these institutions to review their current systems and structures, in the light of other's experiences, for leading and managing the delivery of literacy and numeracy provision.

The much-awaited *Skills for Life Leadership and Management* programme was recently announced by the Learning and Skills Council. The three-part programme will provide:

- **a professional training and development programme for leaders and managers**

- **management and further development of the quality initiative facilitator network**

- **staff and organisational development materials.**

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Conducting an audit

One college decided to enlist outside help to conduct an audit of its basic skills provision. Areas that were examined included:

- *a review of learner needs, as indicated by screening assessment*

- *learner outcomes at Level 2 and below*

- *language and number skill audits for specific programmes*

- *lesson observations*

- *interviews with learners*

- *questionnaires to all staff*

- *interviews with curriculum managers*

- *a review of key strategic documents*

- *a review of key quality documents.*

The outcomes of the audit were used to guide decisions about:

- *the scope and level of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision management*

- *the scope and emphasis of the basic skills strategy*

- *key contributors to the development and implementation of a literacy, numeracy and ESOL strategy*

- *the quality framework for basic skills development*

- *staff development and training priorities and plans*

- *local delivery partnerships.*

Two years later, the college underwent an inspection and achieved good grades for its provision and support in this area. The college is recognised as a valued provider by the local LSC and has received project funding to lead local training. Managers at the college say the audit was a very worthwhile investment.

Extracts of effective practice from OFSTED and ALI inspection reports

'Leadership and management of basic skills provision is effective. Staff across all the basic skills provision work well together. There is good communication, even where staff work at different sites. Team meetings take place regularly and are well attended. Both managers and staff are strongly committed to continuing professional development and staff training events take place regularly.'

'A strategy and action plan have been developed for the teaching of basic skills across the college. There is a clear commitment to improving standards and developing a range of learning opportunities. The self-assessment report is vigorous and highlights the majority of strengths and weaknesses.'

'The effective co-ordination and management of community provision enables the college to respond effectively to local needs and college requirements. Quality circles meet termly; all staff are involved in moderation and the sharing of good practice.'

'All courses are evaluated by the teaching teams, who take into account the responses to learner questionnaires, and retention and achievement data. These evaluations form the basis of the annual self-assessment report. Realistic action plans are regularly reviewed, and have resulted in significant improvements.'

'The provision is well led and well managed. There is a clear strategy for the development and integration of basic skills across the whole college curriculum. Liaison with vocational departments is good. Vocational staff take part in basic skills meetings.'

'Regular course reviews focus on the needs of learners, target-setting, progress and achievement. Lesson observations are used to identify further training needs for staff. Good use is made of a range of funding sources to enhance learning opportunities. Teachers and managers have comprehensive information about learners' retention rates, progress and achievement.'

THE FE COLLEGE CONTEXT

What *Skills for Life* provision in FE colleges should include

An adult learning in literacy, numeracy and ESOL in an FE college context will be underpinned by:

- the national standards for literacy and numeracy at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2

- the core curricula for literacy, numeracy and ESOL, with a curriculum framework for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

- a common screening tool

- a common approach to initial assessment

- diagnostic assessment

- appropriate learning materials.

What an adult learner can expect

An adult learner receiving tuition in literacy, numeracy and ESOL in an FE college context should expect:

- good advice on how to improve their skills

- a report resulting from their diagnostic assessment

- an individual learning plan

- a programme of learning relating to the national standards and matching their aims and aspirations

- full involvement in planning and reviewing their learning

- feedback and support on their progress

- flexible forms of learning which suit their needs and preferences

- a range of opportunities to acquire non-externally accredited achievements as a springboard to nationally recognised qualifications

- expert and impartial advice on progression routes to other education, training or employment opportunities.

What a learning organisation in FE colleges should provide

All providers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL in an FE college context must:

- prepare and undertake an annual self-assessment that informs their plans to address weaknesses and secure continuous improvement

- monitor, recognise and record all learner progress through non-externally accredited achievement as well as through national qualifications

- raise the level of competence of all teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOl by offering opportunities for continuing professional development and access to programmes of training that lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit is committed to ensuring that all learners seeking to improve their skills have access to high quality materials and support in literacy, numeracy and ESOL irrespective of past experience, skill level or learning context.

Help for providers preparing for inspection

HOW TO PREPARE FOR ASSESSMENT AND INSPECTION

All college staff are used to a high degree of change and new initiatives, but the introduction of *Skills for Life* means this is particularly true for staff teaching literacy, numeracy and ESOL. In many colleges, both the scope and the nature of the literacy, numeracy and ESOL offer are changing rapidly and in the best they are developing a whole cross-college approach. The self-assessment process is especially important to see where the college has got to and where it is going next. Self-assessment is also important for assessing how well the literacy, numeracy and ESOL offer fits with the rest of the college's work, and whether the relationship is as close as effective learning needs it to be. Each college has its own self-assessment framework, but the ideas below are designed to help that process.

Self-assessment needs:

- to involve all those who contribute to the offer

- to start with course teams before building up to programme and college level

- preparation and time to collect and sift the evidence

- agreement about the key evidence to use, for example, recruitment, or retention and achievement outcomes

- to focus on strengths and areas for improvement

- to recognise the progress that has been made

- a willingness to be self-critical

- to decide a grade: outstanding, good, satisfactory, poor or very poor

- to be verified to ensure that it is accurate, consistent and reliable

- to result in an action plan which delivers improvement

The first step in self-assessing college literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision is to decide the scope of that provision. This will include all language or number development at Level 2 or below. This is a substantial part of the offer for most colleges and it may be managed in a variety of ways. An audit of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision enables the college to clarify the scope of that provision and to set out key improvement actions for the college.

A second essential step towards self-assessment is to establish the 'quality hallmarks' that will apply to all literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision in the college. These will give consistency to the internal processes that monitor quality and ultimately feed into the self-assessment process. The following example suggests one possible framework for this.

The quality hallmarks agreed by the Basic Skills Strategy Group at the college as relevant to all areas of literacy, numeracy and ESOL delivery are:

When joining, every learner should have:

- *appropriate information, advice and guidance*

- *accessible provision*

- *informed transition*

- *a profile of personal goals*

- *initial assessment of needs*

- *agreed priorities and transparent feedback*

- *a negotiated ILP.*

On programme, every learner should have:

- *skills delivered through relevant contexts and content*

- *trained teachers*

- *structured opportunities for skills development*

- *regular recorded progress reviews*

- *an ILP that is reviewed and updated in light of the progress review*

- *differentiated resources to meet individual needs*

- *relevant and engaging resources*

- *appropriate use of ICT*

- *access to specialist guidance*

- *specialist support for particular learning requirements*

- *regular opportunities to feed back.*

On leaving, every learner should have:

- *accreditation of achievement*

- *a summative record of their progress*

- *informed and recorded progression planning*

- *an invitation to feedback that inform the course review.*

The format of the self-assessment report should be planned so that all areas are covered.
A comprehensive list would be:

- a summary of progress since the last self-assessment

- a summary of key strengths and areas for improvement

- a summary of retention and achievement rates, with year-on-year comparisons if available

- an assessment of particular strengths and areas for improvement against the seven
  questions of the Common Inspection Framework

- a clear statement of the evidence used

- a SMART improvement action plan including training and development needs.

Assembling the evidence

The Common Inspection Framework and the information that is set beside it in the tables used
in this Guide should be used to prompt self-assessment judgements. It is important that
judgements are supported by evidence. **Essential** evidence sources include:

- the verified recruitment, retention and achievement data for the year

- trends in recruitment, retention and achievement rates and progress against targets

- ILPs and the outcome of any formal ILP progress reviews

- additional support outcomes, including the speed of referrals and the progress and
  outcomes for learners receiving support

- moderator and external verifier reports

- learner feedback, including the results of learner satisfaction surveys and focus groups

- staff qualifications and training records

- the previous self-assessment report and progress against the action plan it contains.

Stages of self-assessment

The stages in the self-assessment process can be plotted as follows:

- course self-assessment report produced by the course team

- course self-assessment verified by curriculum managers

- programme or department self-assessment report produced by the management team

- programme or department self-assessment verified by senior curriculum or quality managers

- college self-assessment report produced by the senior management or quality team

- college self-assessment report verified by the college's governing body or its quality and standards committee

- the final college self-assessment report updated as required and sent to the local LSC

- progress against the action plan is reported and used to inform the next self-assessment cycle.

Tips for self-assessment

- Self-assessment is about honesty and ownership: you are responsible for the judgements you make and responsible for doing something about them.

- Avoid 'good' when describing your strengths: always aim for the specific, for example, '79% of community-based ESOL learners go on to mainstream provision' rather than 'Progression from community-based ESOL classes is good'.

- Be clear about how you arrived at your judgements. For example, if you think additional support procedures are effective, be clear about what makes them effective: 'All learners assessed as needing support have a support plan within four weeks', or, 'Retention and achievement rates for those receiving support is higher than the college average' – and have evidence of this.

- Areas for improvement also need to be specific – if it's not specific, you can't do anything to improve it.

- Many areas for improvement should, through the action plan, become future strengths: make sure the action you plan to take is enough to get you there.

- Evidence is proof – not just a piece of paper that has some vague relationship to the strength or area for improvement in question.

- Evidence only counts if you know exactly what the evidence is and where to find it.

- Give supporting evidence for a particular statement of strength or area for improvement – don't just list catch-all evidence sources.

- Make good use of your other quality processes, such as learner surveys and internal inspection as evidence.

- Self-assessment must focus on the things you have the power to change, and must result in action you can take that will make a difference.

- Planned actions should be SMART. This means you need to be sure that:

  - you can get it done

  - you'll know when you've done it

  - you'll know whether it's been done on time

  - it really is going to deal with the improvement issue you've identified.

- Remember all the things you do well, and don't get stuck on the things you want to improve.

- Remember that nothing is perfect. There will always be areas you need to improve or develop and the point is to ensure you acknowledge and act on areas for improvement.

- Pull in a colleague to act as a critical friend.

- To help you focus on your responsibilities, check the evidence and plan SMART action.

- Finally, ask whether the action plan really represents the kind of things you think you should be doing. This is a good check on the authenticity of the process.

Acknowledgements

WRITER BIOGRAPHY

Wendy Forrest began teaching basic skills in Hackney in the 1970s. She has since worked as a curriculum and senior manager in a number of inner London colleges and currently works both at Lewisham College and independently.

THE RAISING STANDARDS SERIES

A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision: Adult and Community Learning

A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision: E-learning

A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision: Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities

A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision: Prisons

A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision: Work-based and Work-related Learning

Success in Adult Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL provision. A guide to Support the Common Inspection Framework (ref: GCIF02/2002)

Resources

Unless otherwise stated, all publications and other resources are available from DfES Publications Tel 0845 60 222 60, or visit the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus).

A guide to the National Test in Adult Literacy and Numeracy. DfES (ref: DSFL/NT)

Access For All: Guidance on making the adult literacy and numeracy core curricula accessible. Basic Skills Agency Distribution (0870 60 02 400)

Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. Basic Skills Agency Distribution (0870 60 02 400)

Adult ESOL Core Curriculum: Interactive CD version of the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum. Online versions of the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum with *Access for All* can be accessed from the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureCurricula), along with details for ordering CD copies. DfES (ref: CDAECC)

Adult Literacy Core Curriculum: Includes material on spoken communication. Basic Skills Agency Distribution (0870 60 02 400)

Adult Literacy Core Curriculum and *Access for All:* Interactive CD version of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum, searchable and cross-referenced to *Access for All*. Online versions of the Adult Literacy Core Curriculum with *Access for All* can be accessed from the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureCurricula), along with details for ordering CD copies. DfES (ref: CDALCC)

Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum. Basic Skills Agency Distribution (0870 60 02 400)

Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum and *Access for All:* Interactive CD version of the Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum cross-referenced to *Access for All*. Online versions of the Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum with *Access for All* can be accessed from the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureCurricula), along with details for ordering CD copies. DfES (ref: CDANCC)

Adult Pre-entry Curriculum Framework for Literacy and Numeracy. Basic Skills Agency Distribution (0870 60 02 400)

Adult Pre-entry Curriculum Framework for Literacy and Numeracy: Interactive CD of the Adult Pre-entry Curriculum Framework for Literacy and Numeracy. Online versions of the Adult Pre-entry Curriculum Framework for Literacy and Numeracy can be accessed from the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureCurricula), along with details for ordering CD copies. DfES (ref: CDAPCF)

Basic Skills for Adults with Learning Difficulties or Disabilities: A resource pack to support staff development in this area. Also available on CD. DfES

Breaking the Language Barriers: The report of the working group on English for Speakers of Other Languages. DfES (ref: BLB)

Delivering Skills for Life: A briefing pack comprising a booklet and CD that is designed to assist organisations as they prepare to deliver the new teaching and learning infrastructure. DfES (ref: DSFL/booklet)

Delivering Skills for Life Toolkit: A shelf-top library box containing nine Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit publications and a CD. DfES (ref: DSFL)

Diagnostic Assessment: In June 2003, the diagnostic assessment materials will be available to people who attended the training events. Invitations to order additional packs will be sent to curriculum managers in June 2003 and bulk orders of materials will be distributed from July 2003. DfES (ref: DAM3 (literacy), DAM2 (numeracy))

Freedom to Learn: The report of the working group into basic skills needs for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Available in large print. DfES (ref: FTLB)

Learning Materials: In June 2003, the learning materials will be sent to people who attended the training events. Invitations to order additional teacher packs and learner materials will be sent to curriculum managers in June 2003 and bulk orders of materials will be distributed from July 2003. DfES

Living our Lives: Life stories of 10 people with learning difficulties, a resource for learners and teachers. An audio CD is supplied with the books. DfES (ref: LOL)

National Standards for Literacy and Numeracy Skills. DfES (ref: NSALN)

On-line Mapping of Adult Literacy and Numeracy Standards to Occupational Standards: This DfES-funded project extends and enhances the BSA's Getting the Basics Right in… booklets, which map the adult literacy and numeracy standards to a range of occupational standards, working with a selection of sector skills councils. The on-line maps are intended for use in training and development for staff within each sector. The website is now live (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/nosmapping). DfES

Pathways to Proficiency: Contains the results of the QCA's mapping report on the alignment of language proficiency scales for assessing competence in the English language. This includes tables comparing the equivalencies of the national standards with other language scales. A downloadable portable document format (pdf) version is available on the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureAccreditation). DfES (ref: PTP)

Planning Learning, Recording Progress and Reporting Achievements: This project has now produced draft guidance for consultation, models of effective practice and advice on the funding and audit implications of planning learning and reporting achievements (PLRA). These are available on the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructurePlanningLearning). DfES

Self-advocacy Action Pack: A pack written for adults with learning difficulties on speaking up and self-advocacy. An audio CD is supplied with the pack. DfES (ref: SAAP)

Skills Explorer: A CD with literacy and numeracy activities for learners at Entry Level. DfES

Skills Explorer for British Sign Language Users: Practical literacy activities for British Sign Language users at Entry Level. DfES (ref: SEBSL)

Skills for Life: a guide to funding adult literacy and numeracy learning programmes 2002–2003. DfES (ref: SFNFG 02/03)

Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills. DfES (ref: SFLLN)

Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills. Focus on delivery to 2007. DfES (ref: SFLNS2)

Subject Specifications for teachers of adult literacy and numeracy. DfES (ref: SS01/2002)

Subject Specifications for teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). DfES (ref: ESOL/SS01/2002)

Tests and ESOL Qualifications: A detailed list of all accredited ESOL qualifications and the awarding body requirements for 2002 to 2004 is available on the teaching and learning section of the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/ESOLQualificationsReport).

Test and Qualifications in Literacy and Numeracy: This overview table of information on the QCA-accredited Entry Level literacy and numeracy qualifications is available on the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/AdultLiteracyEntryLevelQualifications and www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/AdultNumeracyEntryLevelQualifications). DfES

The National Test Toolkit: The toolkit, incorporating the Move On course outlines and practice tests, will be available in June 2003. A specification for a three-year Move On project has been drawn up. An overview table of information comparing awarding body arrangements for the national tests is available on the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/bank.cfm?section=523). DfES (ref: SFLNTT)

Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Support materials for ESOL providers: This pack provides information and training materials for all organisations and teachers offering ESOL provision to refugees and asylum seekers in the post-compulsory education sector. It includes sections on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), learners, setting up ESOL provision, training, resources and sources of further information. It will be useful for anyone who works with refugees and asylum seekers and particularly helpful for organisations with little experience of this work. A downloadable pdf version is available on the Read Write Plus website (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/teachingandlearning). DfES (ref: WRASPACK)

Yesterday I Never Stopped Writing: Guidance on developing community-based provision for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities. DfES (ref: YNSW)

GLOSSARY

Achievement
This does not necessarily mean the achievement of qualifications. It includes measurable improvement and progression in literacy, numeracy and for language skills in vocational, academic, social and personal contexts.

Adults
In education, adults include all learners after the age of 16; outside education, 18 is often taken as the benchmark age for adulthood, since it is the legal age of majority.

Appropriate
Describes a text, word, utterance, style, method or choice that is suitable for its intended audience, form or purpose. 'Appropriate' incorporates the idea that different contexts require different treatments and is in this respect to be differentiated from 'correct', which is associated more with the right grammatical formulation of an expression, or the 'right' choice or response, etc.

Assessment
Means collecting information in order to make decisions. Assessment should provide the information required to build and maintain a profile of the learner. This will enable teachers and trainers to establish and review both the learner's requirements and the learning opportunities that can be provided for him or her. It will also provide feedback to the learner on his or her progress.

Assistant
An assistant is likely to be the person providing additional training or teaching in literacy, numeracy and/or ESOL support.

Audience
The people addressed by a message in any medium. The term includes listeners, readers of print, film/TV audiences, and users of information technology.

Basic Skills
A shorthand to describe the skills which are the focus of the *Skills for Life* strategy.

Capacity
Availability of opportunities for literacy and numeracy learning.

Coherence
The underlying logical connectedness of a text, whereby concepts and relationships are relevant to each other and it is possible to make plausible inferences about underlying meaning.

Common Inspection Framework
Sets out the principles applicable to the inspections of post-16 non-higher education and training that meet the requirements under Part III of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Inspections are carried out by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI).

The Framework also includes the more specific evaluation requirements that apply to the inspection of individual providers of education and training. The requirements reflect the principles and the general requirements of the Act for Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) and the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning to keep the Secretary of State informed about:

- the quality of education and training;

- the standards achieved by those receiving that education and training;

- whether financial resources made available to those providing that education and training are managed efficiently and used in a way that provides value for money.

The specific requirements for other types of inspections will be guided by the principles in the Framework insofar as they are appropriate. *The Common Inspection Framework for Inspecting Post-16 Education and Training February 2001.*

Common	Used to describe words, signs and symbols, patterns of spelling and grammatical constructions that occur frequently in the learner's everyday experiences, and also units, measures, instruments, tools, etc. that are widely used in everyday life in non-specialist contexts.
Context	The non-linguistic situation in which spoken or written language is used, and in which the learner is operating.
Curriculum	A planned approach to learning made up of identified activities.
Curriculum Framework	A document that sets out the entitlement to learning against which clear and detailed steps can be planned to enable learners to progress in a structured way.
Data	Information of a quantitative nature consisting of counts or measurements.
Discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision	Where literacy, numeracy and ESOL is the main learning programme, literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision is inspected under area of learning.
Disability	*The Disability Discrimination Act* 1995 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	The ability to understand and employ English language in daily activities at home, at work and in the community to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.
Feedback	The ongoing reaction given by an audience to those communicating, which helps them evaluate the success of their communication. Feedback may be verbal or non-verbal (e.g. through facial expressions or action).
Images	Pictures, photographs, graphs, charts or graphical representations.

Indicators

- the specific learning outcomes towards which a learner will work.

- the skills, knowledge and understanding that a learner will not only have acquired but also be capable of using and applying when he or she has been assessed to have achieved these outcomes.

Indicators do not prescribe delivery or dictate the activities a learner will be doing.

Individual learning plan	The output of initial assessment, setting out what the learner plans to learn, by when, the ways he or she will undertake the learning and the resources required to bring the plan into action.
Initial assessment	This may include initial screening to identify whether learners require additional support. It may also include diagnostic assessment to identify the specific areas of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners need to work on to achieve their main learning goal.
Key Skills	Literacy, numeracy and/or language learning concentrates on developing skills, knowledge and understanding, whereas key skills concentrates on their application. The key skills are Communication, Application of Number, IT, Improving Own Learning and Performance, Working with Others, and Problem Solving.
Learner	In relation to the literacy, numeracy and ESOL curricula, a learner is anyone over 16 undergoing a programme of education or training in any context.

Learning infrastructure

The term describes the new *Skills for Life* framework for delivering adult literacy, language and numeracy learning programmes.

The key elements are:

- National standards for adult literacy and numeracy, upon which all learning programmes are based.

- The Adult Literacy Core Curriculum, Adult Numeracy Core Curriculum, Adult ESOL Core Curriculum and the Pre-Entry Curriculum Framework.

- The *Access for All* guidance manual that supports teachers in meeting the needs of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

- Screening, initial and diagnostic assessment materials for adult literacy, language and numeracy.

- Systems for developing individual learning plans (ILPs).

- Systems for recording learner progress and reporting learner achievements.

- National qualifications for adult literacy, language and numeracy, including the national literacy and numeracy tests, and systems for making these qualifications more accessible.

Learning objectives	Literacy, numeracy and/or language qualifications and other learning objectives that enhance learners' employment and career prospects.
Learning support	In relation to the literacy, numeracy and ESOL curricula, is the support provided to anyone over 16 undergoing a programme of education or training in any context.
Literacy, language and numeracy	The ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general.
Literacy	The ability to understand and employ printed information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.
Literacy, numeracy and/or ESOL support	Learning that forms part of the learner's main learning programme. This could be offered on an individual or group basis in separate sessions or as part of the mainstream learning. It may include additional support for learners with specific learning difficulties.
Medium	The way in which language is transmitted from one person, or an agency, to another. The three basic media of language are phonic (speech), graphic (writing) and signing (sign language for hearing impaired people). The term is also used to denote the means of communication (e.g. television, telephone, film, radio, computer, press).
Mentor	A person providing additional support and guidance.
Milestones	Significant points along the continuum in this curriculum framework that have relevance to assessing a learner's attainment: that help identify the learner's literacy and numeracy skills at the most appropriate of these points.

National Qualifications Framework	The list of qualifications that have been accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Qualifications are organised into three categories – general, vocation-related/vocational and occupational – and assigned to one of six levels (according to degree of knowledge, skills and understanding, autonomy, analysis and creative thinking within the qualification).
New Qualifications Framework for teachers of literacy, numeracy and ESOL	New qualifications have been introduced for teachers (Subject Specialists) at Level 4 of the NQF, and Subject Support staff (Level 3) in Literacy and Numeracy, available from Autumn 2002. Equivalent ESOL qualifications will be available from Autumn 2003. A new qualification for Adult Learner Support (Literacy/Numeracy/ESOL) at Level 2 will also be available from Autumn 2002. *Summary of new qualifications* **Level 4** – Certificate for Adult Literacy/Numeracy/ESOL **Subject Specialists** **Level 3** – Certificate for Adult Literacy/Numeracy/ESOL **Subject Support** **Level 2** – Certificate for Adult Literacy/Numeracy/ESOL **Learner Support**
Numeracy	The ability to understand and employ numerical information in daily activities at home, at work and in the community to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential.
Personal development skills	Key skills and skills that enhance learners' employment prospects.
Progression	The measurable improvement or development in learning or teaching that a learner or teacher has achieved.
Provider	Any organisation providing education and training.
Range	A measure of spread in statistics; the difference between the greatest and the least in a set of numerical data.
Skills for Life	In March 2001 the Government published *Skills for Life*, the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills.
Style	A difficult term to define because of its many uses, but it can be defined as the selection of a set of linguistic features from all the possibilities in a language, in relation to context, purpose, audience.
Subject Specifications	Definitions of the knowledge, personal skills and understanding required by teachers and those who support teaching and learning in adult literacy and numeracy programmes. See *National Qualifications Framework, Teaching infrastructure.*

| **Teaching infrastructure** | The new *Skills for Life* framework for delivering adult literacy, language and numeracy teaching programmes. |

The key elements are:

- *New Subject Specifications for Teachers of Adult Literacy and Numeracy* (from 1 September 2002) and *English for Speakers of Other Languages* (from 1 September 2003) at Levels 3 and 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (from August 2002). These documents outline the essential skills and knowledge required of teachers and subject support staff involved in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision.

- New qualifications for teachers and support staff involved with literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision, that recognise the subject specifications.

- New Level 2 Qualifications in Adult Learner Support to cater for a variety of support roles in literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision.

- Training programmes for teachers in the use of *Access for All* and the Core Curriculum and professional development programmes for existing staff.

ACRONYMS

ABSSU	Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit
ALI	Adult Learning Inspectorate
BSA	Basic Skills Agency
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
LLDD (or SLDD)	Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities or Students with Learning Difficulties and or/Disabilities. It is recommended that both are shown in full instead of using the acronym of LLDD or SLDD.
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
Ufi/Learndirect	University for Industry

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