

Teaching, Learning and Students' Achievements

Foreword		2
Introduction		3
Principles of Good Practice		6
Aspect 1	Initial Assessment and Starting Points	7
Element 1	Initial assessment	7
Element 2	Developing learning goals	39
Aspect 2	Teaching and Learning	69
Element 1	Programme design	69
Element 2	Approaches to teaching and learning	97
Element 3	Learning resources	125
Aspect 3	Assessing Learning and Recording Students' Achievements	161
Element 1	Assessing learning and recording progress	161
Element 2	Recognising achievement	187



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Foreword

By Merillie Vaughan Huxley

Senior inspector, BSQI working group chair, FEFC

THE FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL



The Basic Skills Quality Initiative Team

The *Basic Skills Quality Initiative* is a major programme of staff and organisational development that forms part of the Council's overall response to raising standards. The initiative includes three specific elements. First, a package of materials designed for use by managers and lead practitioners. Four units of material include: *Teaching, Learning and Students' Achievements*; *Guidance and Support: Curriculum Organisation and Management*; and *Quality Assurance and Staff Development*. Second, funding for providers to employ trained facilitators to help providers make effective use of the materials and support them in addressing key issues. Third, the opportunity for one thousand members of staff to attend a training event designed to focus on the strategic and operational management of basic skills. The three elements of the *Basic Skills Quality Initiative* comprise a comprehensive and innovative package of support.

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

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

The initiative was steered by four consultants: Teresa Bergin, Pat Hood, Liz Lawson and Sheila LeEVERS. Thanks are due also to the Council's inspectors who guided and contributed to the work: Stuart McCoy, Carol Tennyson and William Lewis. Colleagues from the Council's Quality Improvement Unit – Emer Clarke, Mary Kelly, Kathryn O'Regan, Andrew Lambe, Gillian Blake and Claire Wood – provided support and expertise throughout. Jillian Peach designed the materials and Ray Oram provided technical advice.

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

Programme design should take account of students' learning needs and include a description of intended learning outcomes, teaching methods and procedures for assessment. These need to be linked to, but not constrained by, the requirements of external awards where appropriate. Programmes need clear aims and objectives, and a rationale for prescribed learning activities. Learning is most effective when the content or settings are realistic, and when all of the elements of a programme are coherent. Design of learning programmes should be carried out within an overall curriculum framework, following the process and stages shown in Figure 1 on page 5.

As learners on basic skills courses have diverse needs, teachers need to use a wide range of teaching methods to help them learn. The best teachers have a good understanding of how students learn and an ability to develop interesting and effective teaching and learning methods. Good lessons are carefully planned to address the objectives in students' individual learning plans. Students respond positively to

teachers who have high expectations of them. Effective recording of progress involves frequent reviews of learners' gains in skills, knowledge and understanding, together with careful and comprehensive recording of these gains in relation to the objectives in the learning plan. Learners are central to this process.

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

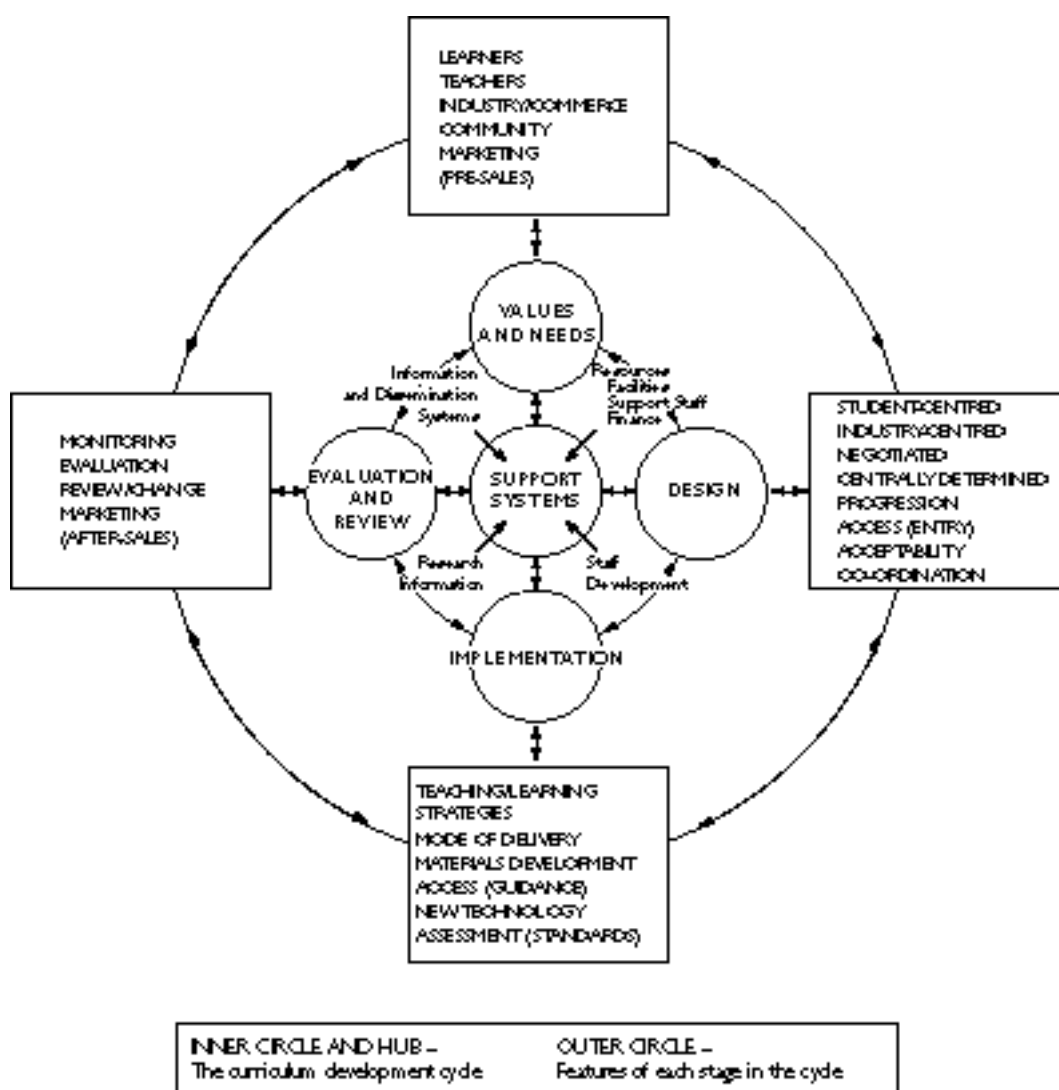
The concept of achievement on basic skills programmes has become confused with the related, but separate, activities of assessment and accreditation. There is a widespread misunderstanding that achievement can only be demonstrated through the attainment of qualifications. This can lead to a consequent distortion of the curriculum to meet the criteria of the awards rather than the needs of the learners. Assessment is often mistakenly thought to have a purpose linked only to accreditation and the checking of performance, whereas it is also an integral part of the learning process. Without it, learners cannot know what progress they have made or what they have learnt.



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



Figure 1. The Processes Involved in Teaching and Learning



FEU:Relevance, flexibility and competence, 1987

Effective teaching of basic skills should:

- ensure that initial assessment is relevant to learners' aims, and that specific learning goals are derived from the assessment
- require learning plans that describe goals for individual learners in small achievable steps
- match the learning needs of the students
- be based on effective assessment of individual learning needs
- be planned to achieve relevant learning goals
- be based on systematic review and recording of individual progress
- provide opportunities for success for all students by breaking down learning into manageable units
- use students' own interests and experiences as a starting point for learning
- use a variety of strategies, including ICT, to promote independent learning, paired and group learning
- enable students to work at an appropriate pace
- involve the students in their own learning
- be given by appropriately trained staff
- be supported by high-quality, relevant and accessible learning materials
- be informed by a clear understanding of what is meant by 'achievement'
- identify achievement in a way that is meaningful to the learner, and that relates to their aspirations and concerns
- identify learning goals that are clearly stated and easily understood
- provide the evidence that learning goals have been achieved by assessing and recording learning gains
- regularly review and record learners' progress in ways that they can easily understand
- use quantitative data to compare and monitor learners' achievements and to identify trends
- ensure that learning is organised to maximise achievement.



Definitions

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

- **initial screening:** broad generic screening of the majority of new students as a first filter to identify levels of skills and whether some may require further diagnostic assessment
- **diagnostic assessment:** individual specific assessment designed to identify what the student can and cannot do, and why?



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

- to make the assessment a positive experience for the student
- to acknowledge the student's strengths
- to maintain confidentiality
- to listen to the student
- to be sensitive to the student's concerns
- to use the assessment tools at an appropriate time, for example in the study skills centres it may be advisable to build up a relationship with the student first before using the test
- to use initial interviews to contribute to the assessment process, for example lack of confidence and attitude to reading or numeracy can be picked up during interview.

Materials to support assessment

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

- (i) are the right things being assessed in the right way?
- (ii) are the purposes of assessment understood by students and staff?
- (iii) will materials provide teachers with the information needed to agree with students' realistic and relevant learning goals, and to devise effective learning plans for basic skills?

- (iv) are materials at the right level for the learner; are they straightforward and easy to follow?
- (v) do materials take account of the social and cultural background of the learner?
- (vi) do materials help identify what learners can do already, as well as what they need to learn?
- (vii) do materials prompt discussion and activity, rather than just reading and writing?
- (viii) do materials help identify students' preferred style of learning and how they feel about learning?
- (ix) are materials related to real life, do they take account of the requirements of a student's vocational or academic programme?
- (x) do materials take into account the outcomes of previous assessments, where this is relevant?

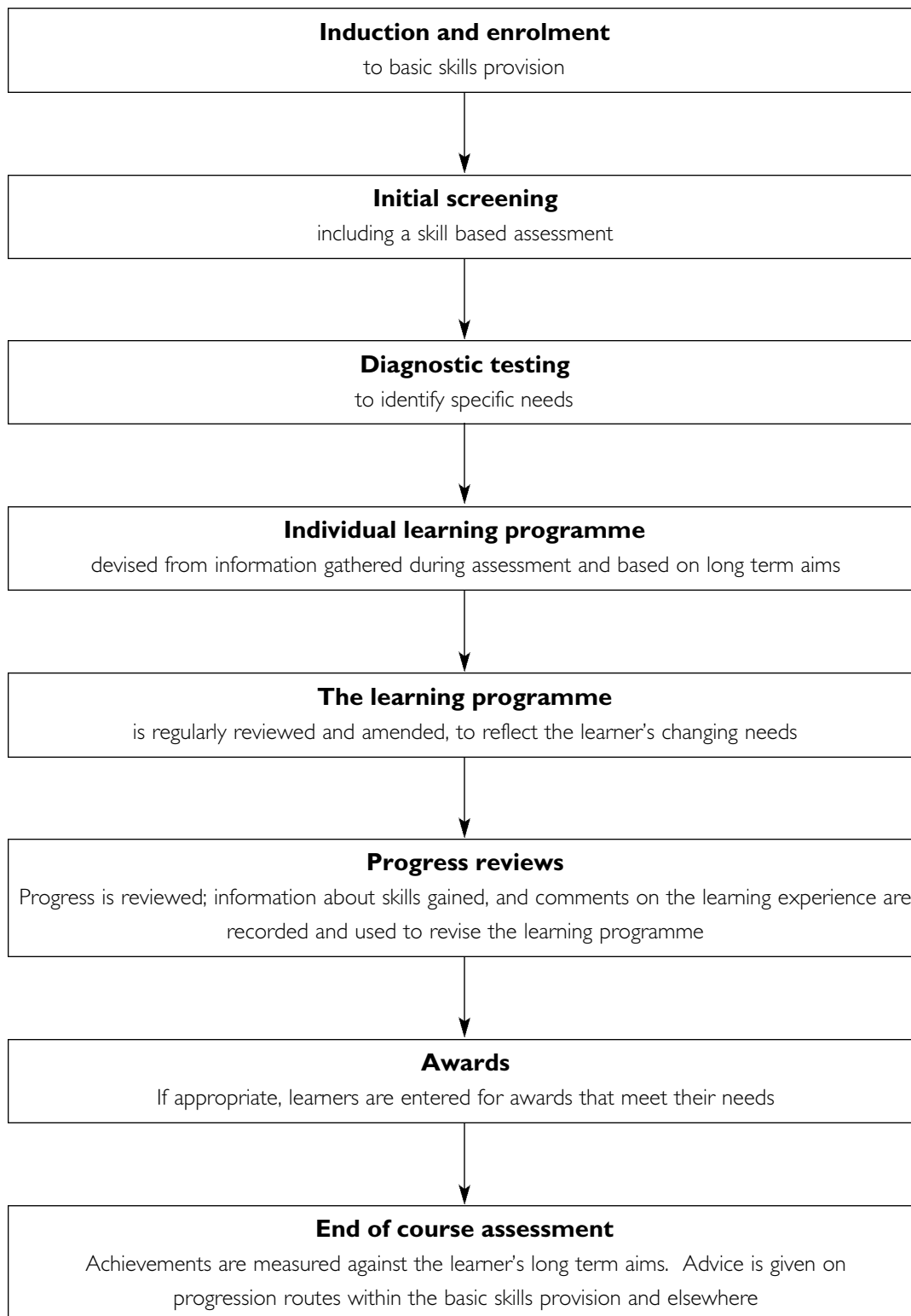
Examples of frameworks for assessments used by different providers follow, together with an extract from an initial assessment handbook.

Example 1



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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

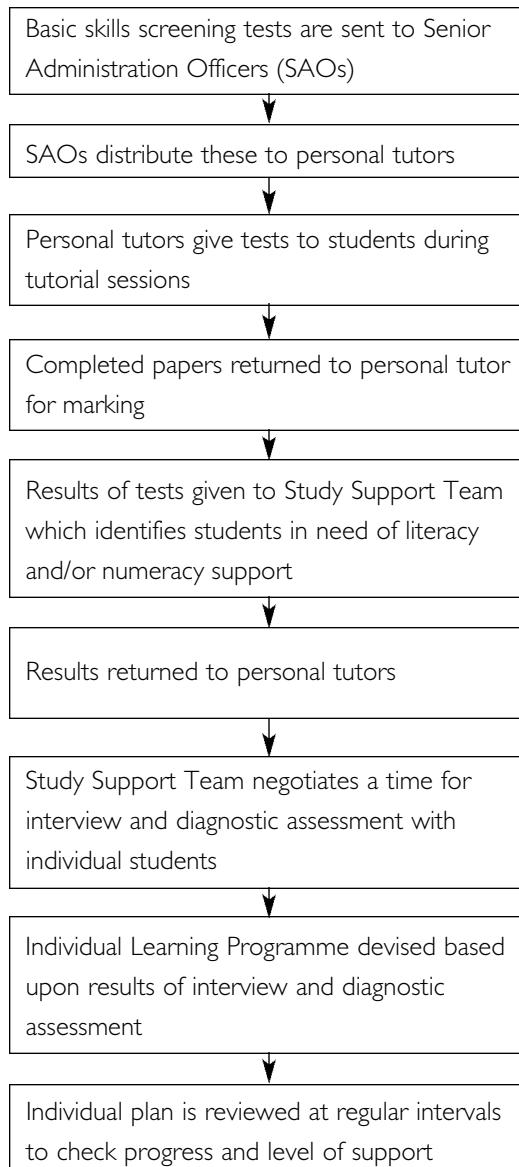




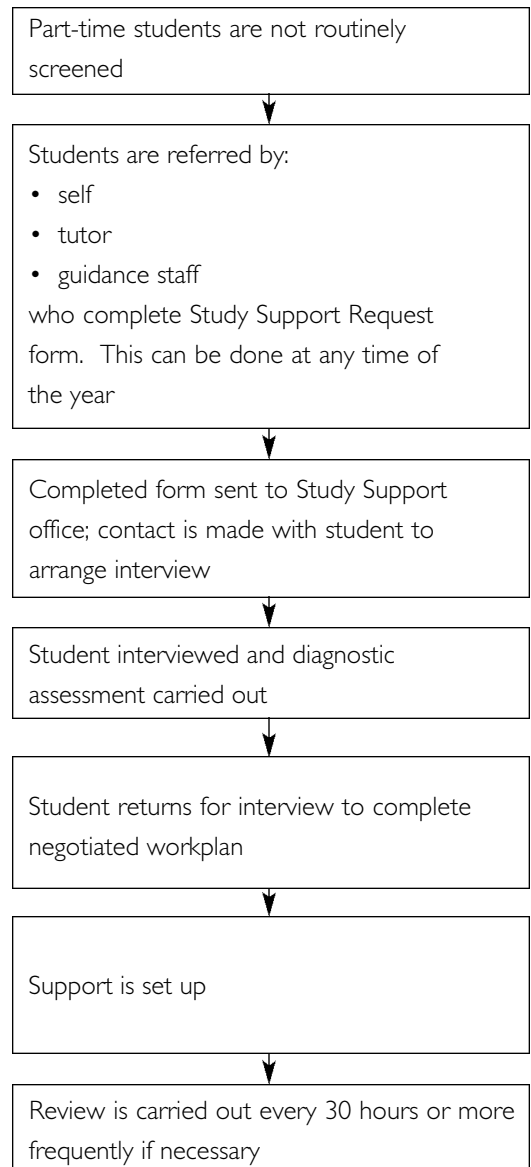
Example 2

Another large college has the following framework for the process of assessment for full-time and part-time students.

Full-time students



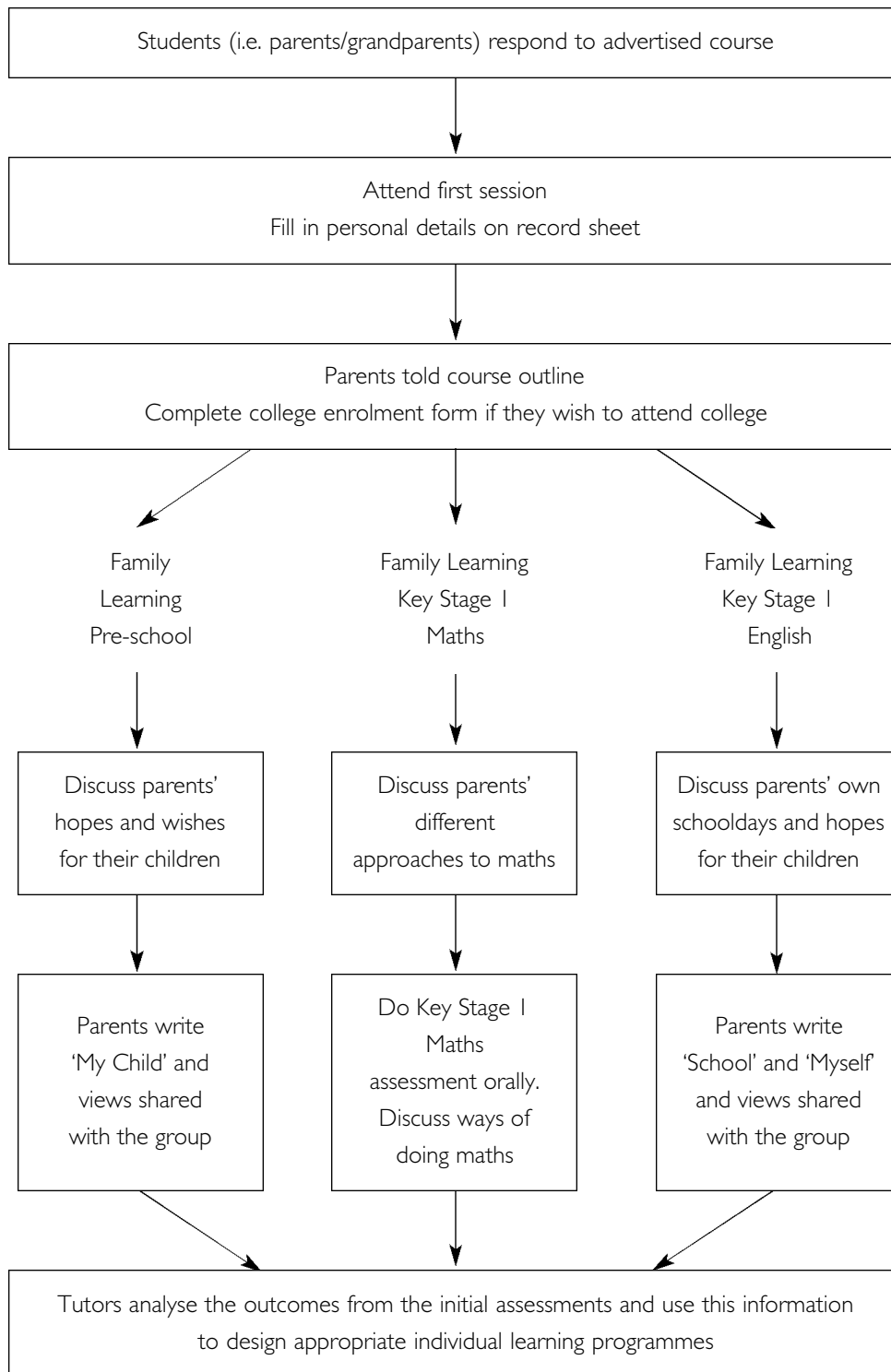
Part-time students



Example 3

Effective providers tailor their assessment processes to meet the needs of certain groups of learners, for example parents in family learning groups.

Initial assessment process in family learning provision





Example 4

This is an extract from the initial assessment handbook used by a large college

Initial assessment

Deciding what to assess

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

- i. what skills students should have when they begin the course
- ii. what skills will be taught
- iii. what skills they should have when they finish the course, in the context of the activities which the course will demand.

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

The college's Admissions Handbook contains Course Entry Criteria for most of the full-time courses in the college. These are under review, as course specific pre-entry assessments are developed, but they can form the basis for understanding the skills needed on the course.

When devising assessments, tutors should make decisions about the essential skills and knowledge the students need to access the course. Tutors should think about:

1. Course delivery methods (where skills might include note-taking, understanding vocabulary).
2. Tasks which have to be performed on course such as assignments or in-class activities (where skills might include extracting information from texts, writing an explanation or a description, calculating an area, making an oral presentation).
3. Final assessment which might be portfolio presentation or final exams.

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

Types of course-related assessment

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

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

I. Induction assignments

These can be designed to assess a range of skills and activities which students need to do on course.

The advantages of this type of assessment are:

- a) Students can be accredited with the work they do.
- b) They are closer to the real situation in which students will work.
- c) This kind of approach enables students to learn at the same time as being assessed.
- d) The approach may be less stressful than more formal timed assessments.

The disadvantages are:

- a) If students do not complete the assignment successfully, it may not be easy to identify difficulties.
- b) Students will always want to show their skills to the best advantage. The use of outside help may disguise difficulties which it is important to understand.

Some of the disadvantages of this type of assessment can be reduced by students doing at least part of the assessment in situations where lecturers can observe how students approach certain activities.



Example 4 (continued)

2. Controlled assessments of particular skills

These are assessments given in controlled conditions e.g. in class and possibly timed, where skills are isolated and assessed individually.

The advantage of this type of assessment is:

- i. Tutors will get a clear indication of a student's level of skill in a particular area and an understanding of why they may find certain course activities difficult.

The disadvantage is:

- i. This type of assessment can be intimidating, particularly to adult returners to learning and young people with poor experiences of school.

Making judgements about students as learners

Although this Handbook has broken up assessment into skills areas, it is important, when making judgements about students' skills and learning requirements, to consider all the evidence you have about them as learners. Formal assessments are only part of the picture. They will contribute to the process of making informed judgements about what will enable students to be successful on the course and to progress as they would like. Observation, past experience, consultation with other tutors and the students themselves are also part of this process.

These assessments are a starting point and, as such, should inform teaching and provide a base on which to evaluate progress. They are a tool and their effectiveness will depend on how well they are designed and how they are used.

Example 5

As part of the initial assessment process, one college collects information about students by:

- using the information from course specific assessments devised as a basis for discussion with the student
- analysing information from an assignment that the student has found difficult
- building a profile of the student from an informal interview; attitudes to previous educational experience and the current course of study are explored at this stage
- analysing the student's self-assessment of their perceived difficulties and any strategies they use to overcome them
- using relevant assessment tasks such as the Basic Skills Assessment Pack or other graded assessment activities.

Extracts from the documentation used in this process follow.



Example 5 (continued)

Literacy

Level 1

1. Why do you want to be a hairdresser?

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

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

Example 5 (continued)



Using a numeracy assignment for initial assessment of students on a Level 1 Hairdressing course

Numeracy

Please work through this exercise following the instructions carefully.

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

Make a list of 8 items you will need and what they might cost. Here are two to start your list:

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

b) 3 pairs of tweezers @ £3.50 each.....£10.50

How much do you spend on the 8 items altogether?

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

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

How many hours a week will your salon be open?

Make a list of 6 treatments you will offer and the prices you will charge. Here are two to start your list:

a) Shampoo and set.....£6.00

b) Children's cut.....£3.60

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



Example 5 (continued)

Using a grammar exercise to diagnose deficiencies in students' ability to punctuate;
Level 2 Leisure and Tourism course

Punctuation

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

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

Example 6

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

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

Example 6 (continued)

Please tick skills needed/used in the workplace

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

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

Example 6 (continued)

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

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



Example 6 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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

Example 7



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

This case study of John, a student on a roll-on, roll-off basic skills course, shows 'assessment in action'.

John: a case study of assessment in action

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

Initial discussion with student

This established the student's aims in coming to the college.

For John this was "Help with reading and writing".

If the aims are vague, such as for John, the discussion is used to elicit the specific basic skills needed at work and at home.

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

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

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

Writing task

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

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

Reading task

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



Example 7 (continued)

John was given a random selection of social sight words and local place names to read which he was able to do. He was asked to name his favourite television programmes and find them in a TV listing which he could also do but could not find some randomly selected other programmes. He was also asked to read a Basic Skills Agency entry-level assessment on a jumble sale. He was able to read approximately 50% of the words on the advertisement and did understand that it was about a jumble sale, although he could not read the name of the school at which it would take place.

Additional information

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

This led to the suggestion that he should attend the small group and also to the development of his first learning plan.

Agreeing learning goals

At the end of the interview the interviewing tutor will agree learning goals with the student.

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

PRIMARY LEARNING GOALS

John

“To improve my reading and writing”

1. To write my name and address
2. To write notes, messages and letters
3. To read notices about local events
4. To read other items of interest
5. To listen and join in with a discussion.

Literacy	Present level (using Basic Skills standards)	Priority
Reading textual material	Pre-E	H
Completing forms	Pre-E	H
Using reference systems	Pre-E	L
Communication in writing:		
• spelling	Pre-E	H
• punctuation	Pre-E	H
• grammar	Pre-E	H
• write letters	Pre-E	M
• write essays	N/A	
<i>E = Entry Level 1</i> <i>Pre-E = Pre-Entry</i>		<i>H = High</i> <i>M = Medium</i> <i>L = Low</i> <i>C = Can do now</i>

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

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

Interviewed by:

Date of interview:

Assessment attached: Yes No

Using the Outcomes of Initial Assessment to Identify Learning Goals

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

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

Example 1

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

Over the next 5 weeks I will work on:
Task: Personal details form skills

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

3. Record Sheet

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

2. Learning Plan

NAME: DATE: (Today): 9/11/99 (Review date): 7/12/99

My main aims are:
 To improve my writing skills – spelling, punctuation and grammar to help my chances of getting a job.

In order to achieve this I will need to work on:
 Completing a 'Training Application/Personal Details' form with short sentences.
 Job application forms.
 Writing letters.
 Improve my spelling skills.

I will attend I: I **group**
 Day: Tuesday
 Time: 9:00am
 Student signature:
 Tutor signature:

1. Initial Assessment Summary

Student details:

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



Example 1 (continued)

Review date: 7/12/99

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

Other comments about work:

Next I would like to work on:

'ur' sounds
Consonants - n/d, sh/g
Commas in lists

I will continue with:

Full stops, u-e, and i-e and form filling

Now I can do:

Read and understand what is needed on basic forms.

Tutor signature:

Student signature:

Over the next 6 weeks I will work on:

Task: Spelling

Skills:

n/d, sh/g confusion
i-e, u-e, -long vowel sounds
ur sounds

Task: Punctuation

Skills: full stops, commas in lists
Grammar: verbs - tenses in answers, e.g. I would like, ...

Record sheet

Date	Working on	Comments

Example 2

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

Over the next 5 weeks I will work on:

Task: Multiplication skills

- short multiplication
- long
- $\times 10, 100, 1000$
- multiplying decimals
- problems from handbook.

2. Learning Plan

NAME: _____ DATE: (Today): 9/11/99
(Review date): 7/12/99

My main aims are:

Apply for Nurse Training
Get GCSE Maths or sit entrance tests
Be able to tackle all calculations in Nursing Calculations Booklet.

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

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

I will attend **++** group
Day: Wed Fri
Time: 6-8am 10am

Student signature:.....
Tutor signature:.....

1. Initial Assessment Summary

Student details: _____

METHOD	RESULT
Discussion	would like to improve maths skills disliked school – especially maths – left without GCSE nursing assistant, wants to enrol on nursing course; needs GCSE or entrance test; brought 'nursing calculations' book – would like to be able to do all the calculations involved add/subtract no problems times/divide need revision; knows tables and good mental arithmetic skills
Numeracy can do/can't do checklist	% - basic knowledge – extend to cover tasks in book help with fractions – major element of book would like to revise metric weights and capacity ratios – new area.
ACTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme to cover skills in Nursing Calculations Book • works shifts. Wed Eve/Fri am groups alternate weeks. 	

3. Record Sheet

Date	Working on	Comments
9/12/99	Learning plan, short multiplication, long multiplication (2 numbers), Henley Pack	Some problems with direction and sequence more for homework
16/2/99	Checked homework. More work as above. Everyday examples 'problems'.	-clear on sequence but slips with lining up figures -more for homework.
23/2/99	Homework Revision sheet Started $\times 10, 100, 1000$ Hesse book.	-no problems -no problems -more work needed.
3/3/99	Homework Revision sheet	-all correct -small slips when carrying -needs more work.
10/3/99	Multiplying decimals $\times 10, 100, 1000$. As above – Hesse book Multiplying decimals short numbers long whole numbers REVIEW	-getting the idea -no problem - -likes money more work

Please fill in the Review Sheet on the next page.



Example 2 (continued)

<p>Review date: 10/3/99</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;">What I've done</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Confident</th> <th style="width: 25%;">Not so confident</th> <th style="width: 10%;">Needs more work</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Multiplication whole numbers short and long</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multiplication whole numbers $\times 10, 100, 1000$</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Problem sheets</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multiplying decimals $\times 10, 100, 1000$</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓ <small>small slips - check with calculator</small></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Multiplying decimals using whole number</td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>As above with 2 numbers</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">✓</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	What I've done	Confident	Not so confident	Needs more work	Multiplication whole numbers short and long	✓			Multiplication whole numbers $\times 10, 100, 1000$	✓			Problem sheets	✓			Multiplying decimals $\times 10, 100, 1000$		✓ <small>small slips - check with calculator</small>		Multiplying decimals using whole number	✓			As above with 2 numbers			✓	<p>Over the next 5 weeks I will work on:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Task: Multiplication</p> <p>Skills: multiplying decimals with whole numbers -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiplying decimals with decimals • recording to 1 or 2 decimal places • examples from handbook • using multiplication. </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Task: Division</p> <p>Skills: short division (whole numbers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long division (whole numbers) • dividing whole numbers out to decimal places. </td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">Record sheet</p>	<p>Task: Multiplication</p> <p>Skills: multiplying decimals with whole numbers -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiplying decimals with decimals • recording to 1 or 2 decimal places • examples from handbook • using multiplication. 	<p>Task: Division</p> <p>Skills: short division (whole numbers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long division (whole numbers) • dividing whole numbers out to decimal places. 	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Date</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Working on</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Comments</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 100px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Date	Working on	Comments			
What I've done	Confident	Not so confident	Needs more work																																			
Multiplication whole numbers short and long	✓																																					
Multiplication whole numbers $\times 10, 100, 1000$	✓																																					
Problem sheets	✓																																					
Multiplying decimals $\times 10, 100, 1000$		✓ <small>small slips - check with calculator</small>																																				
Multiplying decimals using whole number	✓																																					
As above with 2 numbers			✓																																			
<p>Task: Multiplication</p> <p>Skills: multiplying decimals with whole numbers -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multiplying decimals with decimals • recording to 1 or 2 decimal places • examples from handbook • using multiplication. 	<p>Task: Division</p> <p>Skills: short division (whole numbers)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long division (whole numbers) • dividing whole numbers out to decimal places. 																																					
Date	Working on	Comments																																				
<p>Other comments about work:</p> <p>Next I would like to work on: Problems using multiplication from handbook Start revising division</p> <p>I will continue with: Multiplying decimals using whole numbers and decimals.</p> <p>Now I can do:</p> <table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">Short multiplication</td> <td rowspan="3" style="font-size: 2em; vertical-align: middle;">}</td> <td rowspan="3" style="vertical-align: middle;">Whole numbers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Long multiplication</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Short multiplication with decimals</td> </tr> </table> <p>Tutor signature:</p> <p>Student signature:</p>				Short multiplication	}	Whole numbers	Long multiplication	Short multiplication with decimals																														
Short multiplication	}	Whole numbers																																				
Long multiplication																																						
Short multiplication with decimals																																						

Example 3



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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

Analysis of initial numeracy assessment for Gina, a hairdressing student

The tutor says:

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

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



Example 3 (continued)

Extract from initial numeracy assessment for Gina

Entry level Starting maths		
Name: Gina		
<p>My aim is to:</p> <p><i>Feel confident to do maths needed for working as a hairdresser.</i></p> <p><i>Take a maths qualification.</i></p>		
	Can do	Want to work on
Give the right money and check change		✓
Use a calendar to check dates	✓	
Use different types of clocks	✓	✓
Measure with a ruler or tape		✓
Use weighing scales		✓
Add up numbers	✓	money
Take away numbers	✓	money
Use a calculator	x2, x5, x10	
Know times tables		✓
Understand maths used in work or course <i>Millilitres and litres</i>		
Other (please describe) <i>Be able to use a till.</i>		
What would you like to work on first? <i>Adding up money and taking away.</i>		

Example 3 (continued)

Extract from numeracy learning plan for Gina



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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



Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative Extract from Gina's record of work

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

Example 3 (continued)

Link task sheet for Gina



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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



How does your organisation make a distinction between initial and diagnostic assessment?



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



How are your staff and students helped to understand the assessment process?



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



Element 2: Developing Learning Goals



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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

More information on the development of individual learning plans can be found in aspect 2, element 1 of this unit.

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

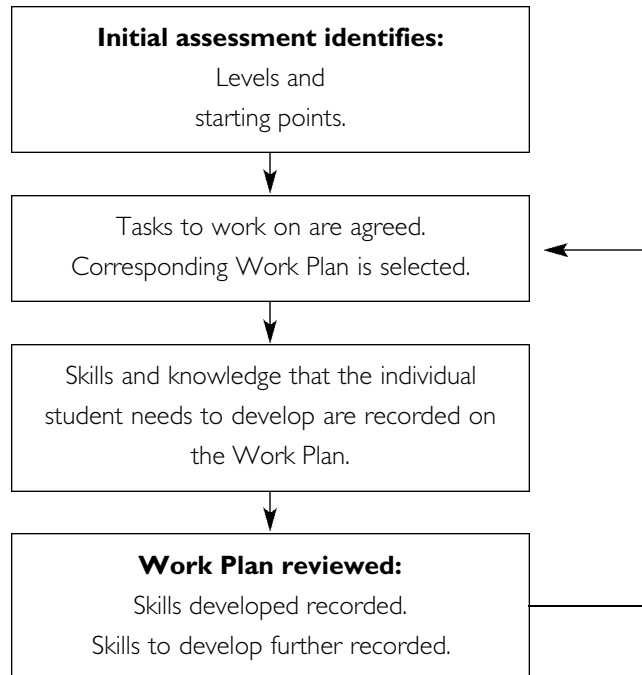


Example 1

The process which one large college has to use the outcomes of assessment to identify learning goals and individual learning plans is outlined in the chart below.

The process

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



Example 2

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

English Learning Plan	Tutor: Anna	Student: Terry	Date: 18/1/00
Teaching strategies/methods to be used	<input type="checkbox"/> Demonstration <input type="checkbox"/> Practical	<input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Workbooks	<input type="checkbox"/> Handouts <input type="checkbox"/> Audio/video

Qualification aim:			
Topic:	Subskills and knowledge	Need work on	Can do
<i>Reading</i>	Phonics/sounds	✓	
Reading new words	Breaking words down (syllables)	✓	
	Blends	✓	
	Letter patterns	✓	
	Recognise whole words	✓	
	Reading in context (making sense of words read)	✓	
	Rereading more fluently	✓	

New words (tick when learnt) went ✓ to ✓ the ✓ have ✓ cup	likes ✓ am town this husband We ✓ makes
---	---

Possible activities	Suggested resources
language experience ✓	own materials
answering questions ✓	cloze exercises ✓
cloze exercises ✓	comprehensions ✓
underlining words not sure of	coursework
shared reading ✓	signs and notices ✓
giving opinion	100 most used words ✓
	every day words ✓

Example 2 (continued)

English Learning Plan	Tutor: <i>John</i>	Student: <i>Theresa</i>	Date: <i>18/10/99</i>
Teaching strategies/methods to be used			
Demonstration <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Handouts <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Practical <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Workbooks <input type="checkbox"/>	Audio/video <input type="checkbox"/>	

Qualification aim:			
Topic:	Subskills and knowledge	Need work on	Can do
			Words
Identify topic	Discuss/think about reasons for writing		✓
Brainstorm ideas	Identify method of brainstorming	✓	<i>through</i>
	Write ideas relevant to topic		<i>thought</i>
Plan writing	Organise ideas from brainstorm	✓	<i>through</i>
	Identify beginning (introduction)	✓	<i>beginning</i>
	Identify middle (main body)	✓	
	Identify ending (conclusion)	✓	
	Use appropriate start & finish (dear/yours)	✓	
	Understand layout	✓	
Draft writing	Spell words used (see spelling work plan)	✓	
	Use appropriate formal vocabulary/style	✓	
	Use relevant punctuation (see punctuation work plan)	✓	
	Use paragraphs		✓
Proofread work	Check for errors independently	✓	
	Check for errors with tutor support		✓
Redraft	Edit and rewrite corrected letter		✓

Example 3

One large college uses the following guidance for basic skills numeracy tutors on primary provision.



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Five steps to using initial assessments to set up learning goals

Step 1: Before meeting the student

- i) Read the student's initial interview notes – taking note of the student's long term goals and past learning experiences.
- ii) Read through the notes on what the student has said they can and can't do.
- iii) Select an appropriate initial assessment test to give to the student at the first session.

Step 2: First meeting with the student

- i) Give the student the initial assessment.
- ii) Discuss your analysis with the student.
- iii) Find out more about some areas of difficulty.
- iv) Agree goals for the first learning plan.

Step 3: On programme

- i) Make sure each piece of work links to learning goals.
- ii) Complete a weekly evaluation of each session.
- iii) Record progress in achieving goals.
- iv) Note areas of work which should be included in future learning plans.

Step 4: Half-termly review

- i) Review learning goals for pace and relevance.
- ii) Record progress and achievements.
- iii) Set new learning goals using initial assessment and on programme evaluations.

Step 5: Termly review

- i) Review as before.
- ii) Record achievement.
- iii) Reset learning goals.



Example 4

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

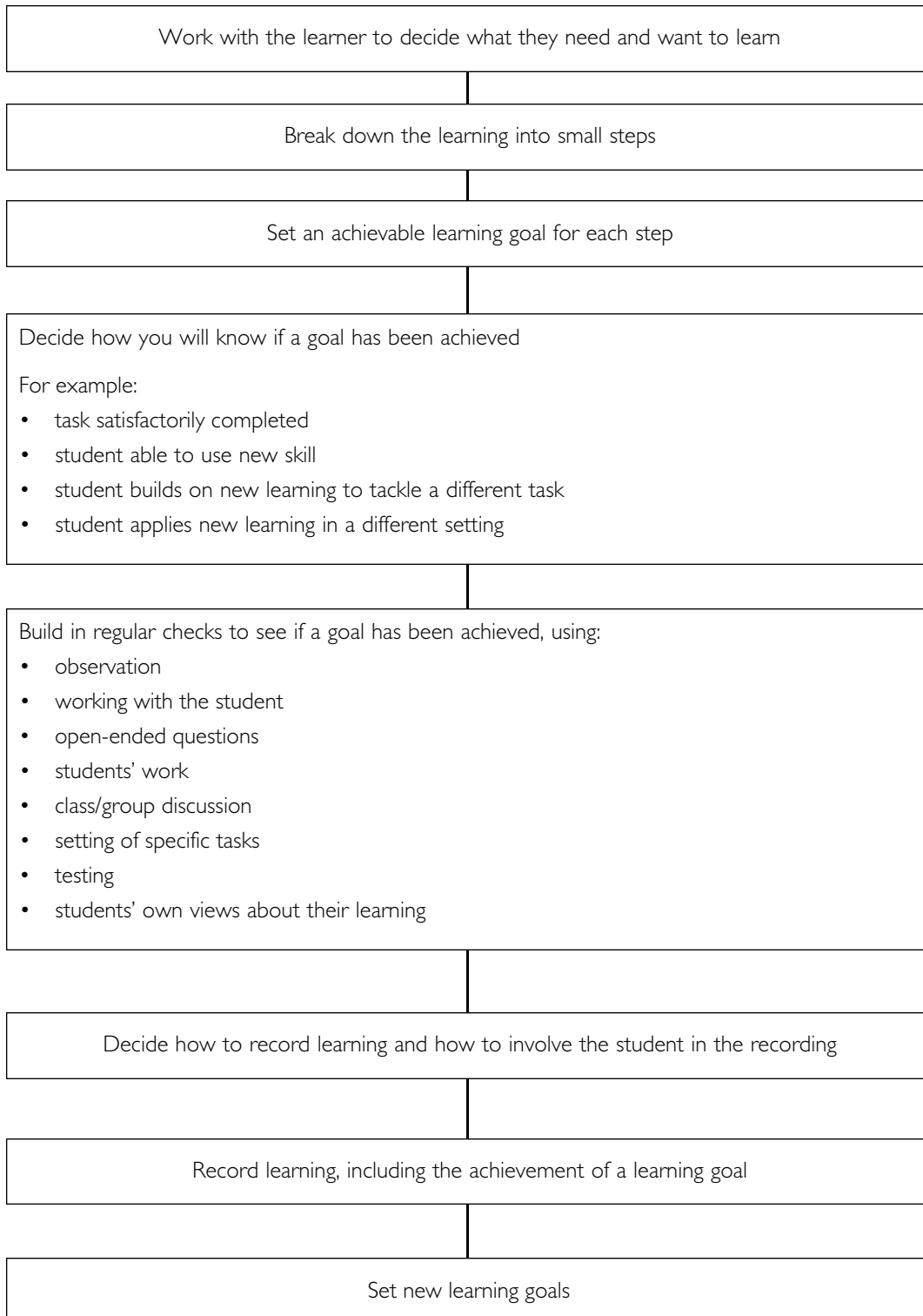
These different aspects are:

- achievement and personal learning goals; the learners define their achievement in their own terms, for example:
 - being able to read newspapers
 - running my own business
 - being able to help my children with their homework
 - learning enough to be able to do a GCSE
- achievement and external awards; care must be taken to provide learners with programmes that match their individual learning needs; too much emphasis on external awards may mean the other achievements of learners are not recognised or valued
- achievement and primary learning goals; these are goals against which achievement is recorded for funding purposes; they should also be broken down into personal learning goals.

Example 5



Skilled basic skills teachers work with learners to establish relevant and realistic learning goals. They adopt a staged approach to setting learning goals, identifying milestones or key points in progress toward the goals, and recording progress. Teachers in one further education college use the process shown below:





Example 6

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

Stage 1 Setting of learning goals

Stage 2 Identifying skills needed to achieve learning goals

Stage 3 Finding out what the learner can do already

Stage 4 Planning learning activities

Stage 5 Recognising and recording learning

Stage 6 Setting milestones

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

Setting goals for George on discrete provision at a college

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

Stage 1 Setting of learning goals

George described his learning goals as;

'I want to improve my writing'

'I need to fill in forms at work'

'I want to be able to take down phone messages'

Stage 2 Identifying skills needed to achieve learning goals

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

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

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

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

- capitals
- commas.

Stage 3 Finding out what the learner can do already

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



Example 6 (continued)

Stage 3 (continued)

George: Interview and initial assessment

LEARNING GOALS

George

Overall learning goal: To improve writing.

Specific learning goals:

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

Literacy	Present level (using Basic Skills standards)	Priority
Reading textual material	E	M
Completing forms	Pre-E	H
Using reference systems	Pre-E	M
Communication in writing:		
• spelling	Pre-E	H
• punctuation	Pre-E	M
• grammar	Pre-E	M
• write letters	Pre-E	M
• write essays	N/A	N/A
<i>E = Entry Level 1</i> <i>Pre-E = Pre-Entry</i>		<i>H = High</i> <i>M = Medium</i> <i>L = Low</i> <i>C = Can do now</i>
Numeracy	Current skills: N/A	
IT	Current skills: N/A	
Interviewed by: <u>Maria</u>		
Date of interview: <u>15 September 1999</u>		
Assessment attached: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

Stage 4 Planning learning activities

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

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

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

Stage 5 Recognising and recording learning

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

Stage 6 Setting milestones

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



Example 7

As well as thinking carefully about learning goals for students on discrete basic skills provision, one college provides the following advice to its basic skills support teachers on how best to describe learning goals for students on other courses receiving basic skills support. It illustrates how learning goals are set for a student needing basic skills support on a vocational course.

Lennie enrolled for GNVQ Art & Design. His initial assessment indicated that he needed help with spelling, taking notes and punctuation. The following support plan review form illustrates Lennie's learning goals and the support teacher's comments on his progress.

Name of learner: <i>Lennie</i> <i>Design</i>	Main programme title: <i>GNVQ Adv. Art & Design</i>	
Term: <i>Autumn 1998</i>	School: <i>Art Design and Media</i>	
Goals for the term <i>Spelling:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Understand and use the Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check method of learning spellings.</i> 2. <i>Identify spelling strategies that work.</i> 3. <i>Learn 6 spellings a week – course related.</i> <i>Writing:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. <i>Learn to take notes from</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. <i>an audio source</i> ii. <i>a written source.</i> <i>Punctuation:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. <i>Learn to use the apostrophe for possession.</i> <i>Study skills:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. <i>Learn to write revision notes for each syllabus topic which will work for MCQ exams.</i> 	Learner's and learning support tutor's comments on progress <i>Uses the method effectively and finds it helpful.</i> <i>Has identified 5 strategies.</i> <i>Kept to the target and can remember new words learnt in past 6 weeks.</i> Completed at the end of term <i>Needs to practise more</i> <i>I still find this difficult. Please could Peter find more examples for me to work on.</i> <i>I can use the apostrophe OK most of the time now.</i> <i>Made a good start but now needs to practise using bullet points.</i>	Is further study needed? Please tick
Comments on attendance <i>Completed at the end of term</i>		
Learning support tutor (print)	Learner signature	



Taking Account of Learning Styles when Developing Learning Goals

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

- i) to find out how the student prefers to learn in order to set relevant learning goals and devise learning plans
- ii) to find out whether the student uses effective or ineffective learning strategies
- iii) to provide information so the teacher can adapt their teaching styles to fit the learning style of the individual or group
- iv) to enable the teacher to help the student 'learn how to learn' by developing a wider range of effective learning strategies
- v) to start the development of the student as a reflective learner, able to understand and improve their own learning processes, to think about what they have learnt and what they need to learn next.

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



Example 1

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

Learning styles survey

The Opal Learning Styles Survey has been devised as a college project under the guidance of FEDA. It introduces the idea of learning styles and practices to students, through working with their mentor or tutor.

The survey can help to raise awareness about learning strengths and weaknesses and is best used alongside a range of other resources.

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

The survey is available on-line in both the Blue and Yellow Learning Zones. Learners can work through it independently and print off their results, or a teacher may prefer to work through the survey with the learner.

Using the learning styles survey as a starting point for an individual learning plan

The Learning Style Survey (LSS) will give a current picture of the learner's preferred method of learning. The information is used to help each learner access the most suitable curriculum learning resource, whether it's through a didactic lesson, small group seminar work, 1:1 tutorials, guided or independent learning through the Learning Zones.

The survey highlights strengths and weaknesses in the following 4 categories:

- IF learner style:**
- practical tasks
 - games and role play
 - finding your own answers to things
 - choosing your own topics to study.
- WHAT learner style:**
- listening to people telling you things
 - writing notes
 - reading to find things out
 - working on your own.
- WHY learner style:**
- listening to other people
 - having time to think things through
 - sharing ideas with others
 - collecting information.
- HOW learner style:**
- doing things
 - trying things out
 - watching people do things
 - seeing how things work.



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

The college maps on the grid that follows the outcomes of assessments of learning styles. The grid shows four main learning styles and a range of teaching styles.

Teachers can take account of their students' learning styles by planning lessons which use approaches which match their students' preferences.

Example 2



Another college has produced the following guidance for basic skills tutors planning individual learning plans to suit a student's learning style.

The guidance was provided as part of a development course on learning styles for basic skills staff. Most of the participants were basic skills teachers or volunteers with some experience. The course aimed to:

- i) introduce staff to the ideas of learning styles and teaching styles
- ii) help staff use teaching styles and learning strategies to improve learning.

Understanding learning styles

What is meant by a learning style?

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

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

What is meant by a teaching style?

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

- a) tries to convey information to a learner
- b) suggests ways in which the learner can learn and do new things.

Finding the right learning/teaching styles for a learner

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

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

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

- the learning style the student is currently using for a particular task
- whether or not this is successful
- any learning styles with which the student has particular difficulties
- the teaching style which the teacher is trying to use
- alternative teaching styles which may be more successful.



Example 2 (continued)

Guidance on planning a learning programme to suit your learner's learning style

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

- visual
- auditory
- kinaesthetic or motor.

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

Suggested learning activities and goals for visual learners

Developing reading skills

Teaching strategies could include:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Basic reading | – write key vocational words in colour |
| | – link key words to pictures |
| | – stick key words in places the learner will see them frequently and visually link to the place. |
| Developing comprehension | – encourage the learner to draw/visualise 'visual' summaries of a passage, e.g. a nursery nurse with an assignment on health and hygiene could draw key points as he/she reads them. |
| Increasing readability | – use colour |
| | – use boxes, frames, illustrations |
| | – spacing. |

Learning goal

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

Developing numeracy strategies

Teaching strategies

- work out ways of illustrating processes visually
- use colour for signs, e.g. + - ÷ ×
- use colour for numbers that are used in processes, e.g.:
 - decimal points
 - multiplying by 10
- when describing a process, always show it on paper as well
- ask the learner to write down a process as you describe it.

Learning goals

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



Example 2 (continued)

Developing reading skills

Teaching strategies

Basic reading – make sure the learner has been taught and knows sound letter relations and all blends – digraphs and sounds. Do this by using words the learner needs to know for his/her course.

Don't work through rows of sounds or irrelevant words.

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

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

man / age / ment

horti / culture

agri / culture

– teach how to recognise when decoding a word by sound is not working because the word is irregular and the learner should then use context cueing to arrive at meaning, e.g. Choir.

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

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

Learning goals

- breakdown unknown words into sound 'chunks' to decode
- recognise when an unknown word cannot be decoded by sound and context cueing is needed to arrive at meaning, i.e. to move on in reading when an unknown word 'blocks' the passage.



Developing essay/assignment writing skills

Teaching strategies

- teach the learner to brainstorm onto a tape recorder
- teach how to use this tape to draw up a plan this could be in the form of a mind map or a linear plan
- arrange with the vocational/academic tutor for the learner to record lessons
- teach how to use this recording to write clear notes.

Learning goals

- learner to try tape recordings to see if they work
- if they work use tape recordings to aid note-taking and essay/assignment planning.



Example 2 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative Other techniques: these are useful for all learners.

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

Teach word families and word building.

Encourage your student to link words with similar meaning:

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

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

Encourage learners to link words to their meaning:

Sunday – the day of the sun god

Monday – the day of the moon god.

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

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

professor: one fool in front of many students

efficient: ICI paints are efficient.

Example 2 (continued)

Build up visual memory



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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

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

Identify words within words.

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

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

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

parl i a ment
dis appoint ment

- emphasise spelling patterns in words in colour.

Learning goals

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

Developing memory skills

Teaching strategies

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



Example 2 (continued)

Learning goals

- learner to identify memory methods which work
- use these methods in revision
- remember identified fact or process.

Developing numeracy skills

Teaching strategies

- learn tables by rhythmic repetition, tapping them out
- learn tables to music (there is a tape available with tables to music)
- learn key formulae on processes in a similar way
- tape the rhythmic chanting of formulae/processes.

Take care!

Be careful about trying these strategies somewhere that might embarrass your learner. You may need to tape materials or use a language laboratory where your learner can talk/chant/recite in privacy.

Learning goals

- try using auditory materials of learning tables, formulae and processes; decide if they are useful
- use auditory means of learning numerical processes etc., if they are useful
- learn the defined process using this method.

Example 2 (continued)

Suggested learning activities and goals for kinaesthetic or motor learners



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Developing reading skills

Teaching strategies

- Basic reading
- trace words while reading them
 - have a real object next to the written word, e.g. engine
 - use the real object while the word is visible
 - model a word in clay or plasticine (if appropriate for a learner).
- Developing reading
- to improve comprehension see if actions can be used to describe/draw out key points.

Learning goals

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

Developing essay/assignment writing skills

Teaching strategies

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

Learning goals

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



Example 2 (continued)

Developing spelling skills

Remember

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

Teaching strategies

- encourage learner to trace out words in the air
- encourage learner to write in large flowing handwriting
- if your learner gets stuck on a word teach them to go back and start again using joined up handwriting – keep the flow going.

Learning goals

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

Example 3

Comments from basic skills students on their learning styles



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Students in one large college are encouraged to be analytical about how they learn throughout their programmes. However, it was found that very few students actually commented on their record sheets about how they had learned. Their comments tend to be more about what they have learned and what they feel they still need to learn. To explore further how students prefer to learn, a few tutors discussed learning styles with their students and either the tutor or student recorded their responses. The messages for basic skills tutors learned from this were as follows.

I Don't label your student as totally a visual learner, totally an auditory learner or totally a kinaesthetic learner

Students may prefer different learning styles for different activities. For example, Mike talked about numeracy:

'I don't often remember the way a sum looks'

(suggests non-visual learner)

'I like to hear the sound of my own voice in my head when doing calculations'

(suggests auditory learner)

'I don't often use practical activities but I think it might be useful. I often count with my fingers'

(suggests potentially kinaesthetic learner who needs to be guided in techniques to use this style of learning)

and

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

Teachers would have been mistaken to assume the student had only one preferred learning style.

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

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

and

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



Example 3 (continued)

2 Be aware of the learning styles your student dislikes or finds unhelpful

For example, Mary said

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

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

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

About learning spelling, Joy said

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

3 Encourage your student to find ways of learning that you may not have thought of

For example, Philip said

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

4 Be aware of other forms of learning style besides visual, auditory and kinaesthetic

Several references were made to styles of learning that could be termed 'cognitive'.

These included remembering link words to learn spellings, remembering how to do a sum by linking the process to remembering a particular situation or moment; *'using pegs to help memory.'*

5 Be aware of students' preferences for a structured and ordered approach to learning or for a more holistic approach

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

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

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

6 Be aware of the students' preferences to work alone, with others or with or without tutor intervention

Miriam said

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

Samuel said

'Working on your own with a tutor can be too slow.'



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



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



How do you use the information gained from initial assessment to set appropriate learning goals?



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



How are the outcomes of learning styles assessments used by teachers to inform their teaching methods?



BLANK PAGE









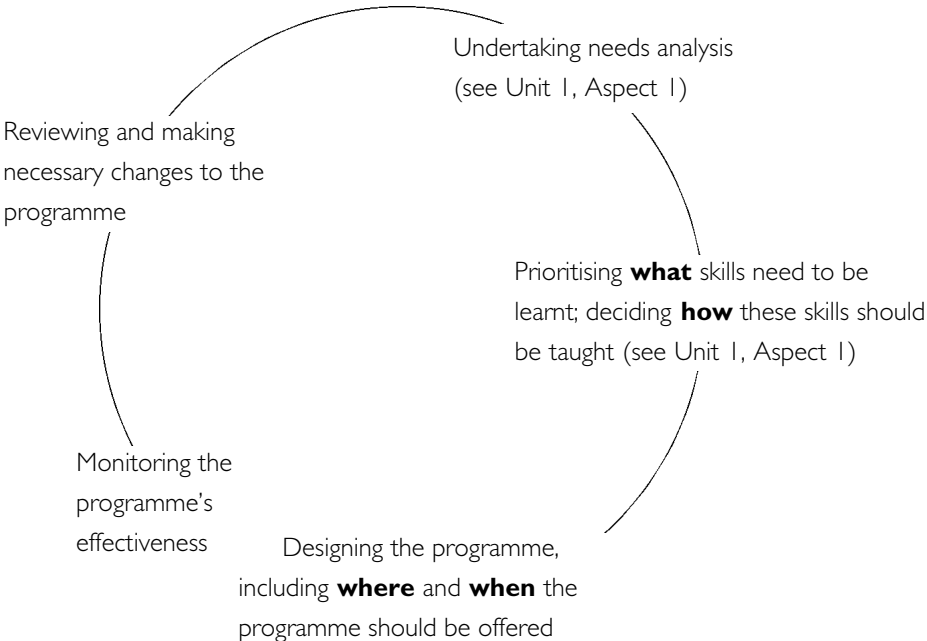


Curriculum development has received less attention in basic skills over recent years as teachers have focused more on implementing standardised schemes leading to nationally recognised awards. This emphasis has led to some teachers mistakenly accepting the scheme of accreditation, or syllabus, as the curriculum. Programmes may then be less well-matched to individuals' learning needs. More experienced and effective teachers recognise that the standardised scheme may specify content and intended outcomes, but that the curriculum still needs careful design and planning. This includes consideration of teaching methods, assessment procedures, learning contexts and settings.



Overall Planning Processes

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



The best programme design gets the right learning to the learner, in the right way, at the right time, and in the right place.

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

Example 1



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

The principles which inform the programme design process in one adult education service are as follows.

Programmes must:

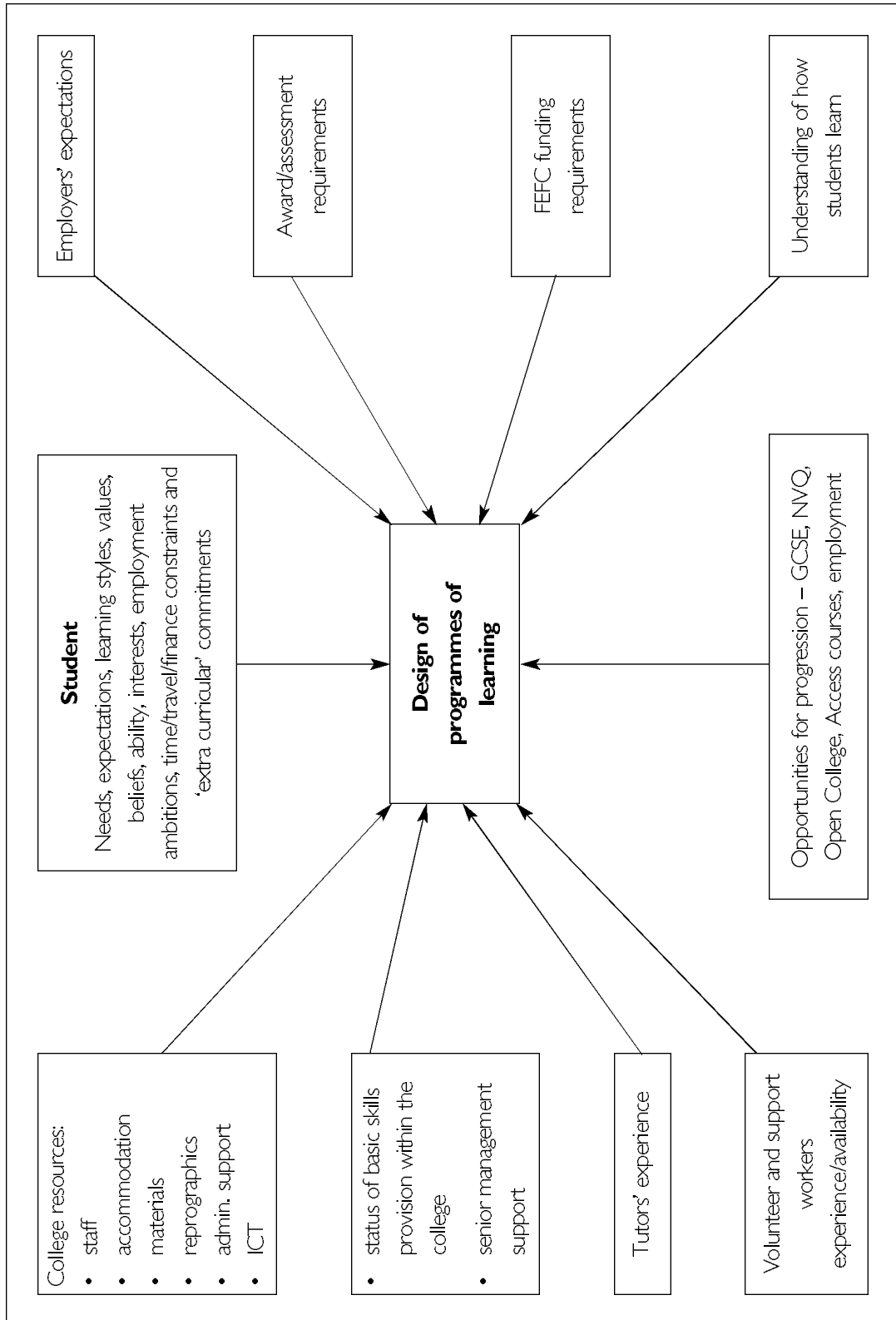
- i. be a first step back into learning, and therefore give priority to the student's own aims and goals
- ii. be flexibly organised to accommodate students' home/work circumstances, and the way students feel they learn best (group work, individual work)
- iii. allow roll on, roll off at any time during the year
- iv. allow for as much individual tuition as possible, by continually recruiting and training volunteer tutors
- v. allow for individualised learning programmes to suit the student's home and/or work circumstances
- vi. allow students to choose whether or not to work toward an award
- vii. respond to needs identified by the student later in the course, e.g. student initially requests literacy support but later requests support for numeracy
- viii. provide opportunities for students to follow individual, workshop and group sessions
- ix. create a sense of moving on by providing opportunities for progression.



Example 2

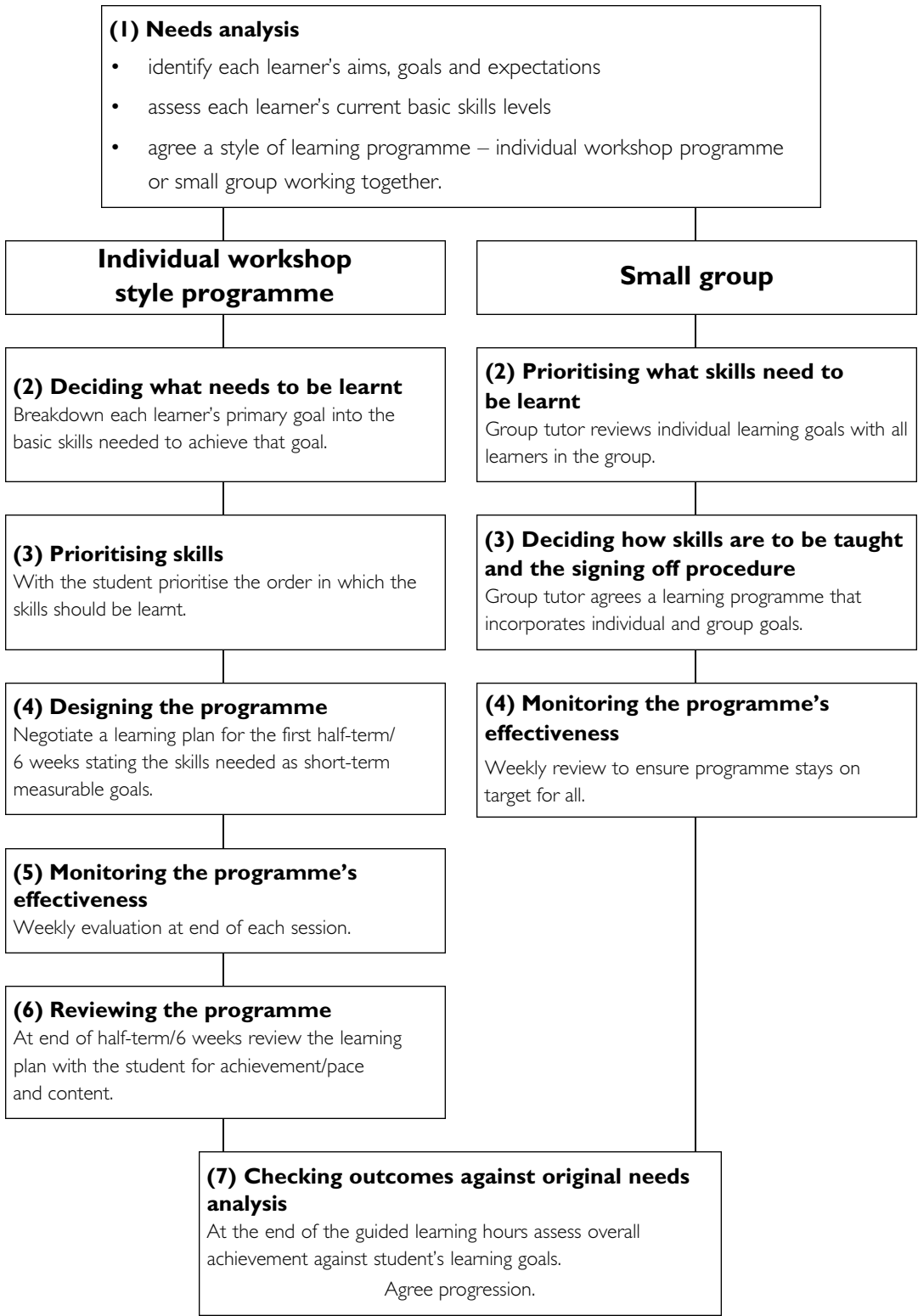
Basic Skills Quality Initiative

A college's analysis of the wider factors influencing its design of basic skills programmes



Example 3

The following flowchart shows the stages in the design of primary basic skills provision in one college.





Example 4

One large college sets out as follows the stages of designing a family literacy programme.

Needs analysis	<p>1. Meeting between:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Adult Basic Skills tutor Early Years tutor School head teacher</p> <p>To establish:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • common understanding of the underlying aims of the programme, i.e. to break the cycle of family illiteracy by working with both parents and children • recruitment methods acceptable to the head teacher and school staff.
	<p>2. Sensitive recruitment of parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making learning fun • building on shared concern for their children.
	<p>3. Adult basic skills tutor meets with early years tutor, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan first session in detail • draft outline plan for whole course.
	<p>4. Planning session</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • group discussion to explore participants' expectations from the programme • agree shared goals for the programme • activity linked to joint activity with children, designed to be fun, interesting and non-threatening.
Prioritising what skills need to be learnt; how they should be taught	
Design the programme	<p>5. Meeting with early years tutor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan more detailed delivery of several sessions, building on first session • review long-term plan to see if still meets identified needs.
Monitor the programme	<p>6. On-going delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide opportunities for regular parental evaluation • flexibility essential • existence of long-term plan essential • regular meetings with early years tutor to check progress, receive feedback.
	<p>7. End of first half term</p> <p>Formal evaluation by participants using questionnaires.</p>
Review and change	<p>8. Regular review of programme, taking into account participants' evaluation</p>
	<p>9. Final evaluation at end of guided learning hours</p>

Example 5



The stages in designing work-based learning for basic skills as set out in one college

Introduction

There are three possible starting points to work-based learning:

- i) The employer asks the college to provide tuition which has already been agreed with the company.
- ii) An individual manager within the company asks the college to participate in negotiations with the company. Managers and union officials within the company have not yet agreed that basic skills tuition is needed.
- iii) The college approaches the employer to suggest that basic skills tuition should be provided on the premises.

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

I. Needs analysis

Meetings between:

- college staff
- managers from the company
- union representatives.

Purpose of meetings to:

- i) clarify desired outcomes for the company
- ii) define the target group
- iii) obtain the employer's statement of the literacy/numeracy skills needed by employees to improve job skills and job transferability
- iv) agree 'non-stigmatising' recruitment methods
- v) clarify practical arrangements, e.g. timing of classes
- vi) identify a named person in the company who will liaise with the college.

2. Interview/assess potential learners

Aim of interviews to:

- i) identify literacy and numeracy needed by learners' jobs
- ii) identify learners' perception of their difficulties
- iii) assess the learners' current level of skills.



Example 5 (continued)

Prioritise what needs to be learnt

3. Draw up a list of the literacy/numeracy skills to be covered by the teaching programme using:

- i) employer's statement of needs
- ii) learners' statements
- iii) observation from walking round the workplace, analysing tasks that require basic skills.

4. Decide on the appropriateness and use of external accreditation

- i) include external awards if appropriate and costs can be met

Design the programme

5. Plan programme

- i) prioritise skills to be taught
- ii) prepare materials which make the learning relevant to the workplace.

Deliver the programme

6. Deliver programme

- i) build in opportunities for learner evaluation.

Monitor

7. Monitor progress

- ii) check student and employer satisfaction
- iii) check – are learners learning?

Evaluate

8. Evaluate programme

- with learners
- with managers

Review and make changes

9. Review and make required changes

- in the light of feedback from all participants
- make changes to design and delivery to provide a better match for learners' needs.

Example 6

This illustrates how the basic skills curriculum was developed in one college.



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

<p>1. Needs analysis</p> <p>The needs of potential learners who would like to enrol on basic skills programmes were identified.</p> <p>Means of identification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information provided at initial interview and assessment • information from enquirers: telephone, college helpline and open days who never get as far as enrolling • enquiries of other organisations e.g. employers, schools, job centres, social services. 	<p>1. Needs analysis showed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basic skills tuition needed from pre-entry to level 3 • tuition needed in range of geographical locations, not all within easy access of a main college campus • tuition needed at a range of times of day • many potential learners have limited times when they are available to attend, e.g. only on Thursday afternoons • shift workers need to be accommodated in the curriculum offer • learners need to be able to begin tuition at any time of the year • some learners with disabilities need additional support • some learners need support in the form of child care facilities • wide range of personal long term learning goals – some very general, some specific e.g. wanting to enrol on a further course in future • wide variation in the context of learning for potential learners • wide variation in the confidence of learners in re-enrolling in education.
<p>2. Establishing the curriculum offer that ideally should be available to learners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a learning programme that meets the individual's personal learning goals • a learning programme that takes place in the context of the individual's personal life • access to teaching at a time to suit the learner • access to teaching at a location readily accessible to the learner



Example 6 (continued)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a style of learning programme that meets the individual's preferred learning style • access to a range of teaching methods and materials. This should include access to IT • teaching by a tutor with a qualification in teaching basic skills • a learning environment with which the learner is comfortable and in which s/he is likely to learn • this includes the physical environment, the size of group, the needs of other learners in the group and the impact of other learners in the vicinity e.g. in a Learning Centre • access to other facilities that will assist the learner e.g. Learning Resources • the opportunity to obtain external awards • a curriculum design that facilitates and encourages progression.
<p>3. Establishing the resources available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of staffing hours available • the availability of staff with basic skills teaching qualifications • the possibility of training or recruiting further staff • the geographical locations available • college requirements e.g. minimum group size.
<p>4. Prioritising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the priority in this college was seen to be that each individual should have a learning programme that clearly worked towards their individual learning goals and was placed in the context of their own learning needs • it was also clear that resource limitations meant that only a limited number of teaching hours could be allocated to each geographical area per week • students' needs were such that it would be impossible to group them into homogeneous groups at times and places to suit all learners. The size of group would not have been sustainable within the resources available • the level of student confidence suggested that learners needed a consistent tutor input and a tutor who would offer regular guidance and support in the development of their learning programmes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this led to the fundamental premise of the curriculum providing a framework for individual learning programmes supported by a personal tutor • students who are able to work individually are placed in a group which meets at the same time each week with the same tutor. Each student has a personal learning plan and materials that match their own learning pace and style and their own learning needs in terms of the context of learning • students who do not have the skills to work without a high level of tutor input have individual teaching with a voluntary tutor • the need to facilitate and encourage progression and the need to provide for a range of learning styles and learning needs has also led to the development of some small groups which work on learning programmes together, incorporating individual aims into the scheme of work • family literacy groups and work based learning groups are also set up and a scheme of work is put in place for each of these groups to meet the needs of the particular group of learners.
<p>5. Limitations and compromises</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some aspects of the ideal curriculum are difficult to deliver within the facilities available e.g. the need to deliver in a wide range of geographical areas has necessitated the use of off campus locations which do not have the full range of resources such as ICT • there are other environmental difficulties in providing ideal learning environments e.g. some learners are disturbed by other younger learners in the vicinity or with learners with other difficulties such as mental health difficulties. As far as possible support is offered when these difficulties occur but resource limitations mean that balancing the needs of all learners to provide the ideal learning environment for each one of them is not always possible.



Individual Learning Plans

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

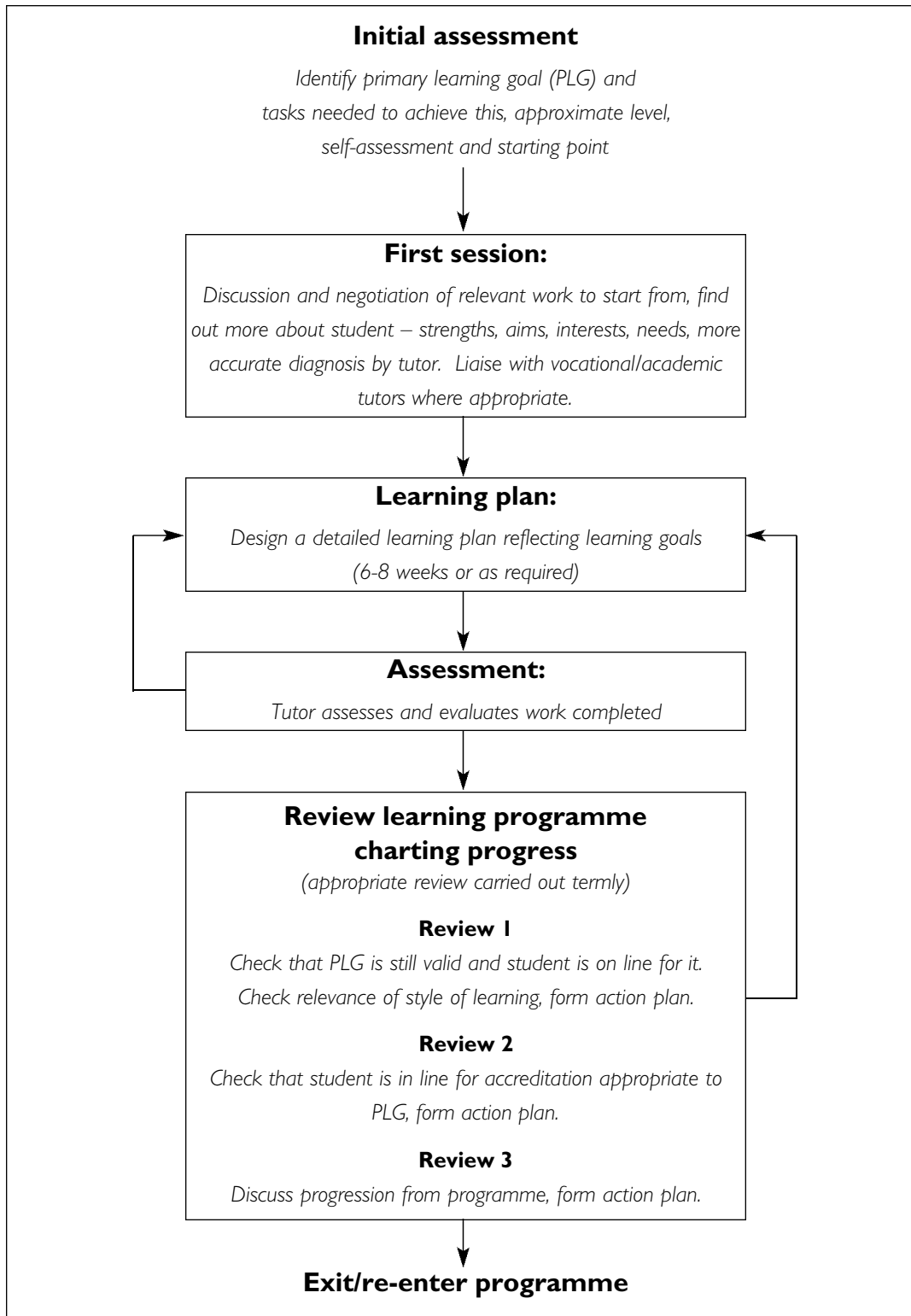
Having developed an effective curriculum framework, experienced providers use learning goals, information about learning styles, and the results of initial assessment to devise learning plans which promote the development of new basic skills. The match between the learning plan and learners' needs is the most important factor in designing appropriate and effective provision.

More information on developing learning goals can be found in aspect 1, element 2 of this unit.

Example 1



The process of designing individual learning plans in one college is set out as follows.





Example 2

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

Guidelines for designing individual learning programmes for basic skills

Aims

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

Procedure

- i) Discuss the starting point identified at the initial assessment and use to suggest appropriate tasks for the first session(s)
- ii) Find out more about the student's strengths, needs, aims and experience. This will provide a basis for a more accurate and informed learning plan.
- iii) Learning plans should identify:
 - the topic student wants/needs to work on
 - tasks relevant to student
 - subskills involved
 - possible activities
 - suggested resources
 - teaching strategies
 - qualification aim if relevant.

Designing learning plans

- discuss with the student the skills they would like to work on and make suggestions yourself based on the initial assessment
- explain how the learning is broken down into steps according to the level the student is working at, and how it will help them to achieve aims
- be aware of underpinning skills and any diagnostic needs
- use the plans differently for different people according to pace, interest and learning style. For example, it is possible to focus more on some skills than others, to add extra ideas and to use two plans concurrently
- DO explain to the student how and why you are making the plan
- DO write so that the student and other tutors can understand
- DO plan a variety of work
- DO be prepared to negotiate tasks or topics if student's circumstances or interest change.

Example 3



Another example of how learning plans may be designed follows.

Stages of designing a learning plan

1. Gather information from initial assessment
2. Prioritise aims
3. Identify some topics
4. Discuss tasks/subskills needed
5. Identify areas to work on
6. Decide how to work on tasks and subskills including teaching strategies and activities
7. Use appropriate materials
8. Set time to update workplan



Example 3 (continued)

Guidance on how to devise a learning plan for basic skills teachers

The process of putting together the learning plan should:

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

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

Then:

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

Example 4



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

1. Identify the student's personal learning goals in coming to college

- i) Possibly gain promotion at work if sufficiently confident with ability to do writing required for work.
- ii) Generally improve English (writing in particular).

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

- i) **Spelling** – Level One
 - feels reasonably confident about spelling and always uses a dictionary to look up anything needed
- ii) **Punctuation** – Level One
 - no problems with capital letters
 - does not know when to use apostrophes, commas or other punctuation marks
 - does not know when to start a new paragraph
 - unsure when to end one sentence and start another one.
- iii) **Grammar** – Entry Level
 - sentences very long – see above
 - tenses mixed
 - no verbs in some sentences (“ing” words instead).
- iv) **Content** – Entry Level/Level One
 - does not know how to plan content
 - does not know how to make sure all points are included.
- v) **Tone/Style**
 - does not feel happy about phrasing business correspondence.
- vi) **Handwriting**
 - handwriting is good but has access to a word processor. Student can use this but would also like to develop his IT skills.



Example 4 (continued)

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

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

The priorities must be agreed with the student.

Suggested priorities:

- a) Write minutes from a club meeting.
- b) Write a letter regarding a match with another club.

4. Break these tasks down into skills required. Write club minutes to successfully complete the tasks

Example:

i) Note taking at meetings

- use of abbreviations
- writing key points
- verbally reviewing points to make sure they are accurate.

ii) Using the notes to plan the final draft

- making sure points are in the right order under agenda headings
- making sure points link sensibly.

iii) Format of minutes

- list those present plus apologies
- review of past minutes
- headings/subheadings.

iv) Style of minutes

v) Key spelling – to be identified in relation to context

vi) Punctuation

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

vii) Grammar

- simple sentences
- complex sentences
- tenses.

5. Write a letter requesting a match with another club. Agree priorities for the first learning plan (Half a term)

- letter layout
- appropriate beginning and ending
- content
- key points to include, e.g. date, time, venue, request for reply
- style
- appropriate opening and closing sentences
- key spelling – identified in context
- punctuation – as above
- grammar – as above
- note taking skills
- planning a first draft from notes
- writing short sentences
- letter layout for a final letter
- draw up a template for a letter requesting a match.

6. Teach skills each lesson

- use context to teach
- draw attention to general transferable skills.

7. Evaluate each session

- record work done and evaluate for pace and learning achieved.

8. Review achievement at end of each half term

- review each goal against the student's ability to use the skill or complete the task.

9. Agree new learning plan

- discuss priorities and pace and set targets for next half term.



Example 5

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

Student:	Plan Number: on this programme/ course
Tutor: basic skills tutor negotiating the learning plan with the student	Date: when the learning plan is being filled in
Subject: name of the course, for example: English Skills Level 1; Numeracy Entry Level etc.	Review date: approx. 6 weeks hence for 2/4 hr per week student. As appropriate on other courses. Always set the date at the beginning. It can be amended – note why.
Long term aims: future goal, for example: to become a nurse; to take over the administration of partner's carpet cleaning business when children are in full-time school in 3 years; to live independently and cope with all the everyday tasks needing literacy and numeracy; to complete a family history for grandchildren.	
Primary learning goal: the goal established at initial assessment, for example: to be competent in money calculations involving addition and subtraction and apply skills in practical activities; to acquire the critical reading and essay writing skills necessary to enrol for GCSE English next year; to explore future options for improving basic skills and achieve NOCN accreditation at Level 1.	

Short term needs/aims: agreed with the student – a manageable unit. This should take into account the pace, style and learning needs of the student moving towards the primary learning goal established at initial assessment and should establish the areas to be worked on during the period of this learning plan.

What can I do already? don't write everything the student can do already. Include skills relevant to this learning plan which can be built on working towards short term goals. For Learning Plan 2 onwards this can be taken from the review at the end of the previous learning plan.

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

Activities and materials can be amended and added to in response to student needs. Make a note of any amendments. Targets section – it is important to set targets at the beginning – this section should not become a list which is added to as you go along. Record keeping and Review are separate sections on the back of the ILP. A Reminders Sheet to note topics to be included in next learning plan can be useful.

Example 6



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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

1. Course team analysis of the initial assessment results

Course team meeting held to analyse the initial grids and to identify the basic skills that need to be worked on by all course tutors.

For example:

- all tutors should work on developing a student's spelling
- all tutors should make sure they give their students clear guidelines on the format for written assignments
- check the methods being taught by key skills tutors e.g. for percentages so that they can be reinforced in class
- allocate specific tutors responsibility for reinforcing identified skills e.g.
 - Nursery nursing course.
 - Tutor responsible for assignment on planning a new playschool to reinforce teaching on area, budgeting, ratios.

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

Teachers keep a list of students receiving learning support and a brief summary of their learning support needs.



Example 6 (continued)

3. Planning a lesson

- i) State the vocational aim of the lesson.
- ii) Plan the delivery to take into account the basic skills needs of all the students.
e.g. If students have poor reading skills deliver key information through practical activities, examples videos etc. – not through written handouts or text books.
- iii) Note where different activities are needed to meet the needs of individual students.
- iv) Plan opportunities to teach basic skills, e.g.
 - Offer memory techniques for learning particular course related words and words you know students misspell.
 - Or use a written assignment to teach techniques of brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing and proof-reading.

4. Prepare materials and check availability of resources.

Check your materials for readability.

5. Plan how you will evaluate the lesson

How will you check the students have learned what you wanted them to learn?

e.g.

- summarise key points at the end
- check understanding of vocational aim in a later lesson
- check learning of basic skills aim at next lesson.

An example of how follows lesson material prepared by a motor vehicles teacher to meet the spelling needs of his group.

Example 7



One college gives the following guidance for tutors providing individual basic skills support for students.

1. Before meeting your student

- i) Read the student's learning support interview notes, the initial assessment results and any diagnostic assessment results.
- ii) Liaise with the curriculum area contact learning support tutor for information on the course requirements – assignments, dates, marking criteria, limitations of support.
- iii) Make a list of the sort of work your student will need to do.
- iv) Either create checklists of the skills needed to complete these tasks or use checklists already available.
- v) Using the initial assessment and interview notes, highlight those skills the student is likely to find difficult.

2. First meeting with student

- i) Complete a learning plan with the student agreeing the areas of study and goals for the first term. These can be added to if new areas of work/need become apparent.
- ii) Agree with the student that he/she will bring course materials/texts to the session so you can ensure the relevance of the learning support by linking basic skills teaching to course requirements.
- iii) Have an activity prepared from the information you have about the course and the student's needs.



Example 7 (continued)

3. On programme

- i) Make sure you have clear learning targets for each week's session with the student.
- ii) Constantly identify the difficulties your student is experiencing on the course and provide exercises to develop appropriate skills.
e.g. If your student misreads words in course work, design exercises that will help your student with word discrimination.

or

If your student does not understand or remember what he/she has read, design exercises related to the text or develop tasks linked to passages of work.

Record each week's work with your and your student's comments on what has been completed and achieved and what still needs addressing.

4. At the end of each term

- i) Review the student's achievement against the learning goals.
- ii) Jointly agree the completion of the Learning Support Plan/Review.
- iii) You and the student sign the form.
- iv) Send a copy to the student's personal tutor.

5. Beginning of following term

- i) Repeat the process of agreeing a Learning Plan.
- ii) Follow points 3, 4 and 5 as in Term 1.

Example 8



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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

- **monitoring** – systematic checking that the right learning is taking place
- **review** – planned time to reflect on the learning so far and to identify what needs to be learnt next.



Example 8 (continued)

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

Why undertake reviews of progress?

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

1. Has learning taken place?

This can be assessed by:

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

2. How does the learner feel?

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

3. How does the tutor feel?

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

4. What next?

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

When?

Monitoring should be carried out during each session. Reviews should be held at periodic intervals and at the end of the course.

How?

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

- learner keeping a learning log
- learner dictating thoughts or taping them
- making a video or taking a photo to show progress, especially useful for practical activities
- observation of a task performed by learner by tutor or peers
- using records of work done
- using individually set targets
- using portfolio of work to show evidence of achievement
- using pictures or signs to denote a response
- learner completing an evaluation sheet
- tutor recording progress
- conducting a group review
- tutor/learner interview
- progress reports from other interested parties.

What if?

What if no significant learning has taken place?

- go back to the initial assessment; has your teaching taken this into account?
- is the learner on the appropriate course? Refer for advice and guidance if necessary
- increase basic skills support
- check there are no 'blocks to learning', for example an undetected disability or learning difficulty, emotional or domestic difficulties
- evaluate your own teaching approach and seek advice from a colleague.

What if the learner wants to give up?

- discuss their original motivating factors
- go through what they have achieved
- negotiate more achievable targets
- suggest learner talks to other learners who have had similar feelings but are now making progress.



Prompt Questions for Element 1



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



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



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



How is the student's learning plan designed and co-ordinated to ensure each part fits with the others?



Element 2: Approaches to Teaching and Learning

The reasons students need help with basic skills are many and varied and as a consequence teachers need to be able to use a variety of teaching methods to help students learn effectively. Of particular importance for teachers are an understanding of how students learn and an ability to develop interesting and effective teaching and learning methods.

Group work

The following section describes approaches to individual and group learning and classroom management.



Example 1

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Group work can be a useful way of helping students to learn basic skills. However, working co-operatively does not come easily to every student. Some students may need encouragement and support to help them benefit fully from the exchange of ideas, development of communication skills, and mutual support provided by this type of learning. The following example outlines the information one college gives to its basic skills tutors to explain the rationale for group work.

Why choose group work as a teaching method?

- individual choice
- able to provide variety of learning styles
- topic based – emerge from individual needs e.g. spelling, letter writing
- opportunity for students to support each other
- some things can be done better inside groups (discussion)
- some things work better in groups (investigations)
- sharing ideas – other influences
- helps to develop listening skills/communication skills
- students demonstrate respect for others' views: increases self confidence
- individual needs can still be met
- response to demand for work on particular topic
- consolidation of skills
- reinforces sense of identity as a student.

Advice on using group work as a teaching method

1. Read all the information about each student from the initial interview to get a sense of the likely composition of the group before you start.
2. Do not have your planning set in stone: your plan should be flexible to match the needs of members of the group.
3. Explain to the students that it takes time to get to know a group. Explain why you are using certain activities. Build in a break and changes of pace. At the start of the session, let the students know how the time will be divided up. Try to diffuse tension. Go with the students on their break. Encourage people to sit with others from the group so that nobody feels left out.
4. Try to ensure that cliques do not form by discussing the problems of cliques and their potentially damaging effect. Plan to get students used to leaving the safety of 'their' chairs to re-form in a variety of ways. Introduce students to each other and establish opening links for them.
5. Remember that too many obvious ice-breakers can put off some students who want to do 'real work'. Make sure that the first session moves on by making a start on the types of skills acquisition expected. This will reassure students who don't want to feel they are "just messing about".
6. Basic skills students often have a high level of anxiety at first about what to expect in group work. They need to take small risks from a position of safety. Be sensitive to this, for example, many students express a horror of having to read out their work at initial interview. In a supportive group, many can feel at ease enough to try difficult things at a later date. It can then be seen as a real achievement and confidence booster.
7. Always be sensitive to the dynamics of the group. Be prepared to orchestrate them to develop more and better interactions. Vary the composition of small groups and help people take on new roles in the group.
8. Be aware of the dynamics of the group particularly when assigning work to smaller groups. It may be counter-productive for certain students to work together in pairs or in a small group. Others might be distracted and gain little benefit for their targeted skills from the interaction.
9. Encourage interaction. Do not just dispense information. The students need the opportunity to gain from a variety of interactions.
10. Be flexible enough to respond to the group's needs. Every group will be different. Monday's group will be different on Wednesday. It helps to have Plan B and Plan C in the wings.



Example 1 (continued)

11. Remember the needs of individual students. Have extended activities for some students which develop the common theme. Adapt texts for those students who need this. Deploy volunteers to give specific additional support where needed.
12. Allow space for individual learning styles within the group. Discuss different styles, for example visual approaches to spelling, hands-on approaches to basic numeracy. Remember that your own preferred learning style may not match the preferred styles of the students – try to suit all of the students some of the time. Acknowledge the differences.
13. Be flexible enough to change role within the group, for example, act as member of a small group if numbers make this necessary.
14. During group discussion keep the group focused by pausing to sum up and repeat the topic. Deal with drift quickly. Make students aware that discussions need to be managed and they should practise the skills involved. Peer pressure can keep topics on track effectively.
15. Try to encourage students to play different roles within the group – initiating ideas, building on the ideas of others, gate-keeping, summing up etc. Give feedback to group members when they try new roles as this is not only valuable for that student but illustrates the skill for others in the group.
16. Students can often resolve minor conflicts themselves but intervene early if you foresee long-term problems. It is important you act as a good role model within the group. Use tutorial time to speak privately to students where individual problems arise.
17. Some students will always be more dominant within the group. They may need encouragement to try other roles so that they do not hog the group session. Work to involve quieter students by drawing on their experience and making a space for them to contribute.
18. Don't allow demanding students to take over the session. Suggest that some things are best dealt with in tutorial time.
19. Use a variety of methods to check the skill acquisition of students within a group. Some students may have gone through school finding anonymity within the group. It has become an established habit to 'hide'. Try to counteract this by gently drawing out such students and positively reinforcing their efforts.

Example 1 (continued)



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Extract from a scheme of work for Pre-GCSE Maths showing planning for individual, paired and group activities

Subject / Module / Element – 1. Statistics 2. Space & Shape 3. Algebra

Date	Areas of work covered	Methods/Resources
Week 1	Introduction to course and its requirements Types of data	By group discussion and sample files. For example Worksheets and paired discussion on answers. Exercises from text book
Week 2	Questionnaire design How to avoid offensive, vague, leading questions, Bias. Tally charts/frequency tables	Comparing two questionnaires, work in pairs , report findings. Group discussion Homework – design and use own individual questionnaire. Examples and exercises
Week 3	Data display Bar charts – including compound bar charts Histograms for grouped data	Graph paper – worksheets, group discussion Read bar charts/histograms Draw bar charts/histograms Use to illustrate results from own survey (as for bar charts) Compare with partner
Week 4	Data display Pie charts	Including use of protractor – demonstration, notes, practice exercise in pairs
Week 5	Data display Line graphs	Graph paper
Week 6	Revision (and any problems) of previous work. Statistical averages mean, median, mode	Brief test/discussion NB Specific individual problems to be dealt with in Drop in support Definitions, examples, exercises
Week 7	Frequency tables - finding, mean, median and mode	Brief revision of previous lesson (prior to half terms) Examples, exercises
Week 8	Probability – as a fraction (or decimal) zero probability. Probability, definitions, calculations of simple probability	Practicals – throw dice, toss coin – work in pairs . Collate all results on white board establish $p(h)$, $p(6)$. Exercises to calculate probability.
Week 9	Review test of work done Space diagrams	Group review. Questions selected from past GCSE papers, examples exercises

A lesson plan for week 1 follows next.



Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Lesson plan for week 1 shows planning individual, paired and group activities

AIM – To introduce course work and to reinforce previous learning.

OBJECTIVES – To enable students to acquire and use strategies for solving difficult problems, apply previously learned skills to practical situations and to use files of work as reference material.

– To enable students to work independently, with others, and as part of a group.

Timing	Order of events (include tasks/exercises carried out by students)	Materials/resources used
13.00	Introduction: Explain purpose of lesson and its relevance to recent and future work Explain how objectives will be achieved	Evaluation sheet
13.05	Revision: Work individually from revision sheet use files for reference check answers together. Individuals take turns in explaining Assessment through feedback	Work sheet Algebra files White board
13.25	Course work: Introduce the task. Read through suggested strategies. Work in pairs (or groups of three) to solve problem. Assessment through discussion	Coursework handbook Squared paper
13.55	Break	
14.05	Report back: Groups explain findings and compare results. Discuss	
14.25	Summarise: What has been learnt – each student makes a suggestion	Make a list of useful strategies on whiteboard
14.30	Evaluate: Individual students encouraged to express opinions verbally. Then complete written evaluation sheet.	Evaluation sheet
14.40	Homework: Write up work done. Explain what the task was, how it was broken down, refer to diagrams, tabulate results. Explain how you reached answer	Handout – listing the steps
14.50	Read and think about next task next week. Bring written work – will look at communication skills. Will work on solving mystic rose problem. Using similar strategies as today	

Example 2



This example illustrates how a creative writing group was developed in an adult education service.

Introduction

The learners

All students have said they want to use creative writing to develop their basic skills. The group is made up of students working at Level One, with a few students working at Level Two. The skills and life experiences of the students vary considerably, ranging from a retired professional footballer, an unemployed single father of four, a native American woman relocated in the area after marriage, a single mother returning to education after her teenage children have left home, a grandmother interested in supporting the literacy skills of her grandchild, to a 22 year old woman wanting to find a career in play-work.

Choosing group work

Group work is effective for creative writing because it presents more opportunities for students to articulate their ideas and feelings. Students extend their opportunities for learning by experiencing the wide variety of responses to each assignment. New ideas are presented and responded to in the group.

In the group, the individual develops skills that can be applied in other situations. Many students work on their oral skills in a setting which is not artificial. The real discussions are better than the staged simulations sometimes necessary in workshop-based oracy work.

Preparation for the session

The room – the students need to sit in the round with the tutor as part of the circle. This allows for student to student interaction. Discussion does not need to pass through the tutor.

Seating students round a long table can lead to sub-groups breaking away from the main group.



Example 2 (continued)

Sample session plan for creative writing group showing planning for whole group work and individual/paired activities

<p>Course Title: Basic Skills Creative Writing Venue / Time: Friday 9.45 – 11.45</p>	<p>Date: 03.12.99 Tutor: S.J.</p>
<p>AIMS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to present models for planning an article; • to develop an awareness of audience; • to explore a variety of styles; • to explain paragraphs and link sentences; • to reinforce proof reading skills; • to encourage students to present their ideas and offer clarification and expansion; • to encourage students to respond, offer feed-back and build on the ideas of others. 	<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) skills to participate in paired activities ii) knowing how to take turns in presenting their ideas and giving feedback iii) skills to use constructive questions to clarify their understanding iv) compare viewpoints. <p>They will participate in full group discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reaching individual conclusions after considering options • justifying their decisions to others in the group. <p>Students will use note form to aid their memories on the points raised in the class.</p> <p>Students will complete a plan for their article in class.</p> <p>At home students will complete a well-sequenced article aimed at a specific audience.</p>

Example 2 (continued)



Timing	Activity	Materials/Resources	Indiv./Group
00–10	Registration	Register	Group
10–20	Return marked work	Marked scripts	Group
20–30	Re-cap on work from last week Reinforce main points Introduce the week's subject and paired activity . Explain the purpose of the activity. Distribute sheet for paired work – My Millennium Reflections – Significant People and Events. Explain note-taking. Demonstrate. Discuss choice of style and audience. Paired activity – discussion and note-taking	Last week's assignment sheet for reference. Sheets for note-taking – My Millennium Reflections Flip chart and pens	Group
30–55	Break – refreshments – give the opportunity for individuals to raise points informally		Pairs
55–65			
65–80	Tutor – explain the purpose of practising discussion skills. Write main points on flipchart as they arise. Students – share ideas with the group . Encourage students to respond, give feedback and build on the ideas of others . Look at options for sequencing the article. Reinforce knowledge on link sentences in paragraphing – demonstrate on flip chart.	Flip chart and pens	Group
80–90	Students – prepare individual plans for article Reinforce points for home assignment		
90–110	Give feedback on assessment of group performance – encourage others to contribute .	Assignment sheet with points to remember	Individual Group
110–120	Record keeping	Individual record sheets	Individual



Teaching Methods

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

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

Introduction

- i) Have a wide variety of activities in a session.
- ii) Don't try and teach too much in one go; little and often is best.
- iii) Give the student constant encouragement.
- iv) Experiment with different colours.
- v) Try different coloured pens and different coloured paper.
- vi) The glare of white paper can be difficult for some students.
- vii) Offer the student different types of pen.
- viii) Encourage the student to keep all his/her work in a file in different sections. The student can then refer to it as needed.

1. To teach the shapes of letter and visual discrimination

- play matching games
- match shapes on a line
- play the game that looks for 10 differences between two pictures.

You will need to explain to the student why you are doing this.

2. Teach important words by the look and say method

Why we use “look and say”

- automatic word recognition is an important factor in fluent reading
- most students can learn a number of words by shape
- students can gain a useful, interesting vocabulary early
- many common words are phonically irregular e.g. to, said, come
- many social sign words are phonically difficult e.g. police.

3. Play matching games

This can be used to teach important words which need to be instantly recognisable: e.g. social sight vocabulary, family names, words on forms, words from a simple reading book, important common words.

- i) **Snap:** Make sets of cards using words, shapes or letters as appropriate. Play snap using these cards and in the case of words and letters saying each word or letter as it is turned up.
- ii) **Bingo:** Divide a piece of card into squares.



Example 1 (continued)

- iii) **Dominoes:** Make cards with one word or letter at each end and play as for dominoes.
- iv) **Pelmanism:** Use cards to pick matching pairs. Letters or words.
- v) **Word searches:** Make up word searches using the words the student is practising.
- vi) **Junior scrabble:** Make your own version of Junior scrabble in which the words are already written on the board. The student has to match their letter to those on the board.
- vii) **Simple crosswords:** These can be used at a stage when a student has a small reading vocabulary.

4. Other matching activities

i) Matching flash cards to a piece of text

This can be used for words or letters.

In either case the student has a flash card on which is written the letter or word being learned.

He/she then matches this to a selected and possibly enlarged passage from a newspaper, a set of instructions, a food or medicine package or simply a selection of words written at intervals on a page.

ii) Matching words on a line

A single word is written on the left hand side of a line. A selection of words is written along the line. The student has to highlight or underline the words which match the one at the beginning of the line.

iii) Finding a small word in a larger word

Such as "in" in "sink"

Student has to underline or highlight the small word.

iv) Matching words to a picture or symbol

5. Other word recognition exercises

- i) Cut up a sentence or name and address.
Match the words to the whole address or sentence.
- ii) Label a picture.
Critical words to be offered to the student to use in the labelling exercise.
- iii) Collect together all flash cards learned in an envelope.
Use them for sentence making and changing.
e.g. Here is the television
The television is here
- iv) At a later stage match words in capitals and lower case letters.
- v) Fill in missing words:
This is a
I have a
- vi) Find odd one out in list of words learned.
- viii) Cut up sentences, address etc.
Student puts them back in order, without original to which to match the words.

6. To teach recognition of family words

Draw a family tree

Write in the names with the relationships

Joyce
Mother
Wife

Louise
Daughter
Sister

James
Son
Brother

David
Father
Husband



Example 2

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

Counting in batches

A tutor had been working alongside Maria, a student on an NVQ caring course for some time trying to help her to understand that when counting large quantities, it is possible to count in batches rather than count each item individually.

The tutor had tried:

- Putting coins in piles and then working out the total amount. The student could not grasp the concept that if there were 10 piles of 10p coins then the total was £1.
- Rubber banding batches of pencils in tens and then counting the batches to find the total number of pencils didn't work.
- Using a tally sheet to count a range of items and then marking off the tallies in 5s and 10s didn't work.
- Counting in 2s, 3s, 5s and 10s seemed quite nonsensical to the student.

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

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

Using a dictionary

Simon was very careful to check any spellings he didn't know in the dictionary. He always took a long time to find each word as having found the beginning letter he needed he then ran his finger down rows of words until he finally came to the word he wanted. Simon couldn't be persuaded to scan through each section for second and third letters in the word. He felt that if he scanned too fast he might miss the word he wanted.

The breakthrough came when Simon was shown that the dictionary had two words at the top of each page: the first word and the last word on each page. He was happy to trust these as a guide through the dictionary and his use of the dictionary was instantly speeded up.

Remembering a particular spelling

Students often need to learn particularly difficult spelling in relation to their work, their studies or their home life. The tutor can find a memory technique that will help the spelling stick.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Example 3

This shows various approaches to the teaching of spelling.

Context

Tracy is in her mid 20's. Her overall learning goal is "to learn to spell".

Her immediate learning need is to be able to spell the road she lives in: Watling Street.

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

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

Teaching method

i) The tutor wrote out the correct spelling of Watling Street

The tutor began by using upper case W and S and lower case for the rest of the letter. Tracy would need to be able to write Watling Street in upper and lower case.

ii) The tutor limited the task to spelling Watling and tried to find a method of remembering the spelling that worked for Tracy

The tutor hoped that by learning to spell Watling in the first session Tracy would begin to build up confidence to learn other words.

Method used in first lesson

Stage One

- The word was divided into two parts: **Wat** and **ling**.

Stage Two

The tutor and Tracy worked on 'Wat'.

- the tutor suggested Tracy pronounced 'Wat' as it is spelt i.e. so that Wat rhymes with bat.
- Tracy was asked to write Wat without copying it. She succeeded.



Stage Three

The tutor and Tracy worked on 'ling'.

- Tracy was asked to write ling without copying.
- Tracy was unsure so the tutor wrote the 'ling' and then divided the 'l' from the 'ing'.
- Tracy could hear the sound 'l' and could relate it to the letter 'l'.

The tutor and Tracy talked through other words beginning with 'l' to accentuate the sound. E.g. long, London, little, look.

No attempt was made to look at the spelling of these words just the 'l' sound at the beginning.

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

Stage Four

Putting it altogether

- Tracy was asked again to write 'ling' which she did successfully.
- She was then asked to put the whole word together and write Watling without copying. This she also did successfully and was extremely pleased with her success.
- Tracy was asked to write Watling three more times without copying, saying it with an exaggeration of the way it is spelt, not the way it is normally pronounced.
- The tutor then set up a look, say, cover, write check practice book for Tracy to practise the word regularly in the following week.

In the other columns Tracy was asked to practise the word without copying on at least six occasions in the following week.

Example 3 (continued)

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

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

Stage Five

Tracy was then asked if she thought she had done enough spelling for the week or if she wanted to work on the word 'Street' as well.

She thought she would be able to spell street and did spell it correctly. Tutor and Tracy agreed to add it to the practice sheet for the week and then check it again the following week to see if there was anything in the word that might catch her out later.

Week 2

Tracy was able to spell Watling Street straight away.

The spelling of Watling Street was linked to other key words.

- Tracy lives near Watford and frequently sees the word Watford on signs.

She particularly liked the link between the two words and was keen to make sure she could spell Watford.

A similar process to Watling was gone through.

- Links between spellings were then discussed. Watling was linked to the spelling of 'was' and 'want'. These were recorded, together with Watford, as words to be learned in the following week.
- As additional practice, the sentence "I do not want to live in Watford" was dictated. (The word 'live' was written down for Tracy to copy as she wasn't sure about the spelling and it wasn't a word she was learning at the moment).

Note: No link was made to the spelling of what or reference to it as this would probably have muddled the student.

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

The spelling of Street was discussed.

Tracy had no problems with this and the letter patterns 'str' and 'ee' were used as links in future weeks for other words.

In later weeks, the words were practised in capital letters.

Subsequent lessons and alternative strategies.

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

i) Mnemonics

Mnemonics can be useful for learning some words. In the case of Watling Street the mnemonic may only be useful for the first three letter e.g. 'what a trek' to Watling Street – to be said as the student writes out the first three letters.

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

ii) Using movement to reinforce memory

- Writing in the air using a large flowing movement
- Writing with a large pen using a flowing movement.
- The student may benefit from using joined up handwriting for this. The flow of the hand reinforces motor memory.

iii) Looking for words within words

Watling Street does not lend itself well to this method.

The 'at' may help. This method can be useful for other words.

iv) Asking other students and tutors

If the tutor and student get really stuck as to how to remember a particular spelling, it is often helpful to ask other students and tutors. Both students and tutors like working on mnemonics and memory techniques and it helps the student make a conscious effort to remember spellings.



Example 4

This shows how one college approached the teaching of basic skills to students on a construction course.

Introduction

Students who had expressed an interest in joining a construction course were contacted by the college's construction department and invited to attend a week long induction programme.

The induction programme included:

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

The process

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

Example 4 (continued)

Designing the programme – extract



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

1. The basic skills manager met the head of faculty to identify areas where basic skills input would be most beneficial.
2. The basic skills manager and the curriculum manager from the construction department met to discuss staffing, content and timing of provision.
3. Basic skills tutors met construction lecturers to integrate basic skills into the course curriculum, cross-referencing to word/numberpower of practical activities in workshop and paper-based exercises.
4. A staff development meeting was held to co-ordinate provision.



Example 4 (continued)

<p>Element 3 (extract from wordpower communication skills – level 1). Hold a conversation with one person</p>		
<p>Evidence indicators – your portfolio must contain: Two occasions dealing with two different topics.</p>	<p>Notes on type of location of evidence</p>	<p>Code</p>
<p>Performance criteria – you must be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Greet another person in an appropriate way b) Make contributions clearly, which are appropriate to the topic. c) Pay attention to the other person's contributions. d) Respond appropriately to the other person's verbal and non-verbal cues. e) Use images appropriately to illustrate points made. f) End the conversation in an appropriate way. 	<p>Range dimensions and categories: Topic Routine (e.g. responding to day to day enquiries: discussing routine tasks).</p> <p>Audience People known to the student</p> <p>Context Face to face or on the telephone to an individual</p> <p>Non-verbal cues Facial expressions, body language</p> <p>Images Illustrations selected from those readily available in the context (e.g. sketches, diagrams, still photographs, charts)</p>	

See next page for practical vocational activities.



Practical vocational activities used to help students learn the skills needed to meet the performance criteria of element 3 Wordpower communication skills – level 1

1. Talking to other people

You have heard that there might be some work available for bricklayers on a housing development. All you know is the address of the site, and you think the foreman is Mr Singh.

You have to find Mr Singh and try to get a job from him.

Have a think about what you might need to say to Mr Singh.

What would you have to say to him once you've found him?

2. Talking to other people

Someone has just delivered 60,000 paving slabs to your site. You have in fact ordered 600 to repave a garden and patio. The driver is adamant that he has delivered the right order.

How do you convince him that he has brought too many paving slabs?

3. Talking to other people

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



Example 5

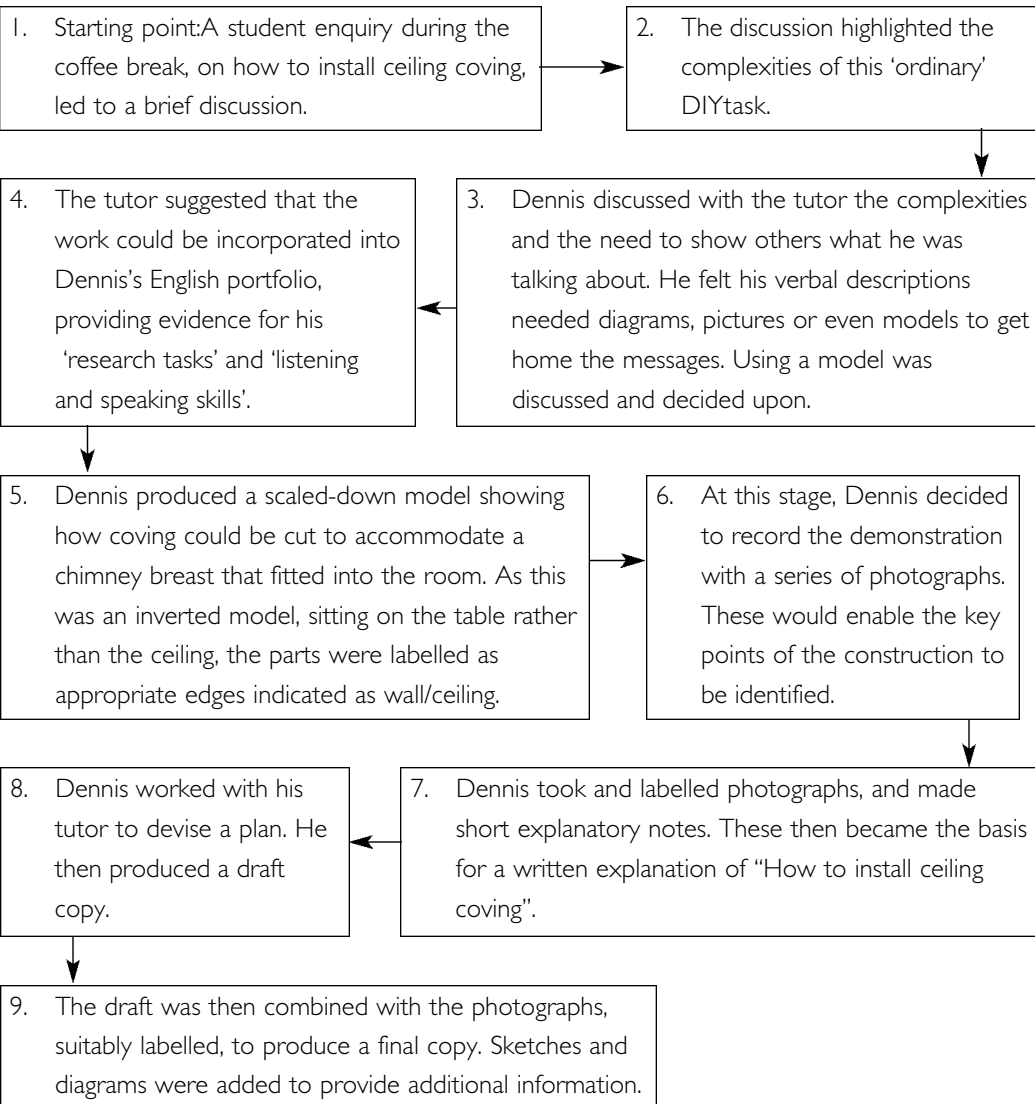
This gives a case study of how a student's strengths and interests in a vocational area were used to address his difficulties with basic skills.

Introduction

Dennis, a retired decorator, enrolled in the study skills centre to improve his writing and confidence in reading, after being recommended to the college by his local GP.

Dennis demonstrates a high degree of practical ability evident in his home and DIY projects. He was able use these skills whilst explaining to a fellow student the intricacies of installing ceiling coving. Dennis then constructed a model as part of his demonstration to the rest of group. The activity was recorded in a series of photographs.

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



Example 6

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

Hairdressing Stage A Entry Level – Basic Maths Programme

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

Student's signature: Tutor's signature:

Can you?	Example contexts	Evidence (please initial)
1. Recognise numbers in everyday situations, keep and record important numbers	Bus numbers, phone numbers, personal insurance number	<i>Make appointments with date, phone number, time</i>
2. Put numbers in order	Sizes, ages, height, scores, prices	<i>Arrange prices in order quantities, e.g. 325 ml</i>
3. Recognise the value of a sum of money and work out change	Batch coins, check small change	<i>Change for £1, £10 etc</i>
4. Double and halve numbers without a calculator	Price of tickets, doubling or halving receipts	<i>Half price/cost of 2</i>
5. Tell the time using digital and ordinary clock faces	Read clock, read the times of TV programmes	<i>Appointment times</i>
6. Write the date in numbers	Birth date, session	<i>Appointment dates</i>
7. Measure length in metres and centimetres or feet and inches using rule and tape measure	Body measurements, photo frames, everyday objects	<i>Measure metres and centimetres, using equipment</i>
8. Recognise shapes (square, rectangle, triangle, circle, cube, cylinder)	Buildings, designs, food packaging, tile patterns	
9. Estimate the cost of everyday items		
10. Use a calculator to add, subtract, multiply		



Example 6 (continued)

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

Student's signature..... Tutor's signature.....

Can you?	Example contexts	Evidence (please initial)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read and write numbers as words and figures 2. Read and understand large numbers up to 100,000 3. Add numbers up to 1000 and take one number from another 4. Multiply any number up to 100 by any number up to 9 (with or without a number square) 5. Multiply by 10 and 100 6. Share an amount (max 1000) into equal amounts (with or without number square) 7. Understand and use pm, the 24 hour clock and a calendar 8. Estimate the length of everyday items in either metric or imperial units 9. Measure perimeters in metres and/or centimetres as appropriate 	<p>Time (o'clock), newspaper reports, read and write cheques</p> <p>Football crowds, newspaper reports, house prices, earnings</p> <p>Journey distances, dart scores, car mileage, electric bills, sale prices</p> <p>Booking tickets, multiple packs in supermarkets</p> <p>Batching packs of 10, catalogue discount, pounds into pence, metric measurement</p> <p>Restaurant bill, instalments, lottery syndicate, weekly savings</p> <p>Read timetables, set video, birth dates, holiday dates, sporting events</p> <p>Heights, spacing of plants, furniture</p>	<p><i>Writing and checking cheques and receipts</i></p> <p><i>Compare earnings shop prices/magazine extracts</i></p> <p><i>Clients bills/change and discounts</i></p> <p><i>Buying, e.g. shampoo in bulk</i></p> <p><i>Packs of 10 and 100</i></p> <p><i>Wages (divide by 4 and divide by 12)</i></p>

Example 7



This shows the advice provided by one college for vocational and academic tutors about the teaching of spelling.

1. Identify with students words they must be able to spell

- select words needed specifically for the course
- select words you notice occur frequently in written work.

2. Work on strategies to learn these words in class

i.e. write on board and discuss together how they can be remembered.

3. Make sure students record these on their LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, CHECK sheets

Every so often do a quick check that these are being completed.

Have a stock of new sheets to give out as needed.

4. Draw out links between words e.g.

If your student needs to write 'cancel' teach 'cancellation' as well and draw attention to the double 'l'.

If your students are spelling 'writing' incorrectly, e.g. as writeing - look at other words that drop the silent 'e', e.g.

hoping
giving
taking.

5. Dictate words learned in sentences

Every so often dictate a sentence with the words learned.

Get your students to correct it themselves from a master on the board.

Get your students to write the correct version in their 'words to learn' list if they have made a mistake.

6. Give all students a glossary of course linked words

Always give this to students at the beginning of the course so that they have a list of correct spelling for reference.

7. Mark constructively

When marking work with spelling mistakes select key spellings and write them out for the student.

Do not just underline the word or write 'sp' in the margin unless you know the student already knows the correct spelling.



Prompt Questions for Element 2



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



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



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



To what extent is basic skills learning integrated into vocational courses in your provision? What steps might be taken to strengthen its integration?



How do you use students' strengths and interests to help them address their difficulties with basic skills?





Matching materials to learners

Providing the most effective learning experience for individuals with basic skills needs relies very heavily on the availability of appropriate materials for teaching and learning. A range of resources is needed to facilitate the all-important match of teaching and learning to the needs, capabilities and interests of individual learners.

Basic skills are taught to a variety of learners in a diverse range of settings. For example, it may be one-to-one tuition to meet a specified individual need, teaching small groups of students in the community, or work on basic skills with students on a vocational course in a college. Although the needs of learners may look similar, their capabilities and interests and the teaching and learning needed to meet their needs will be very different. It is important to have resources that enable teachers to take account of this diversity and use teaching methods and learning resources that are selected with the individual very much in mind.

Materials may be published or produced commercially, or they may be created by teachers working individually or collaboratively. Materials for literacy work may also be produced by a teacher working together with the learner to produce short pieces to be used for literacy skills. Or they may be produced by students for other students; for example a selection of poems, jokes and stories, or local history accounts. Whatever the materials available, it is important not to rely entirely on the bank of existing materials, since they will not cover all of the learners' varying needs and personal interests.

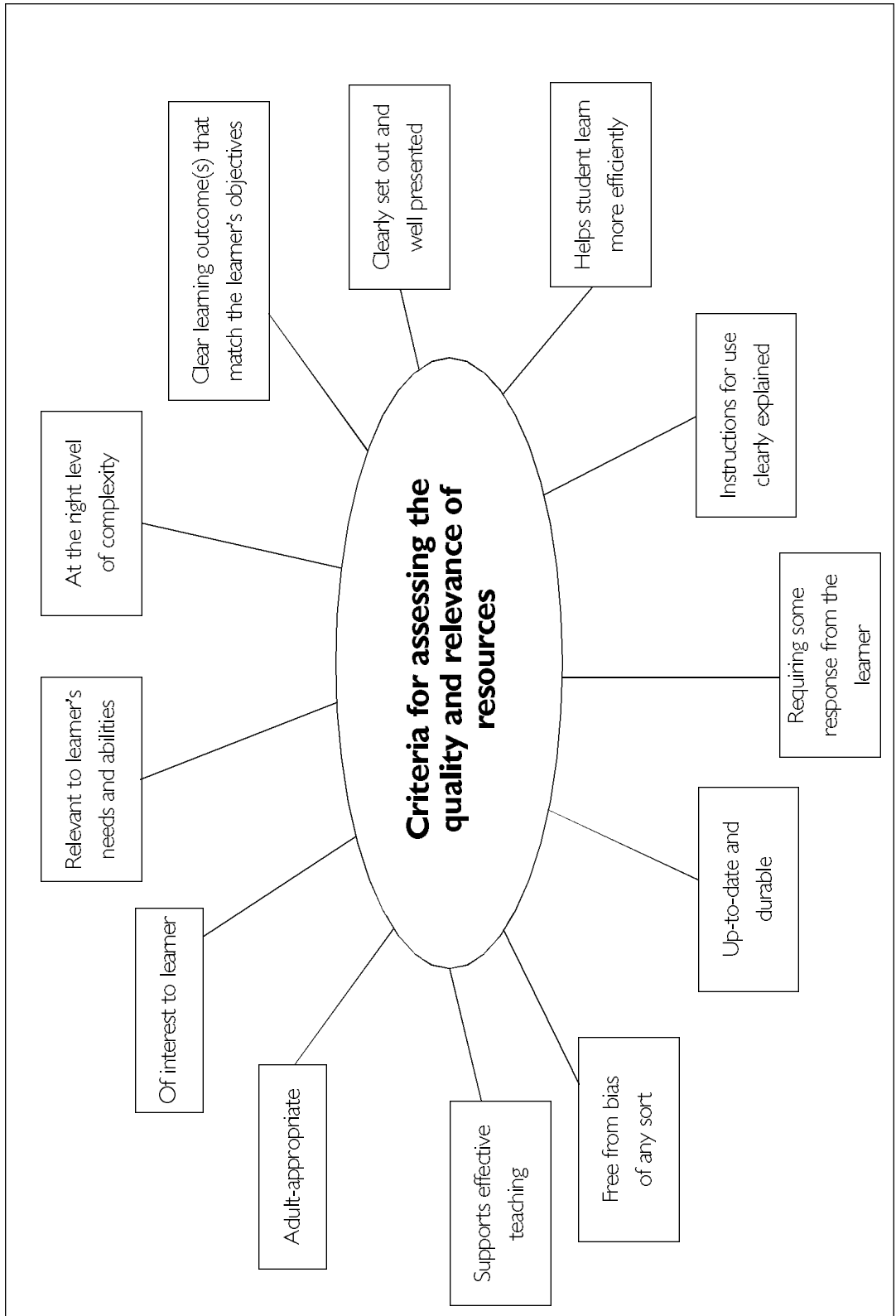
The remainder of this section sets out a number of guidance notes and samples of materials

developed by providers to help ensure that the resources provided to support teaching and learning are appropriate and easy for learners to use.



Example 1

The figure shows the criteria that one adult education service has identified to help teachers to select appropriate resources.



Example 2



One college asks staff to complete the following form when selecting material for inclusion in its resource bank:

Selection criteria			
	Yes	No	Evidence
Proven effectiveness?			
Complete?			
User friendly?			
Broad-ranging?			
Transferable?			
Worthwhile?			



Example 3

An adult education service provides the following guidance to help teachers think about learning styles when selecting resources and teaching methods.

Learning styles and learning resources

A student's learning style will affect his or her approach to learning and how information is processed. To teach a basic skills student most effectively, the teacher needs to be able to find out or recognise individual learning styles, so that the most appropriate resources can be selected and any helpful adaptations made to the learning environment. The range of resources available, including equipment, should be as extensive as possible; the teacher's style of delivery should be flexible enough to cater for all the students in the group; and the teaching room thoughtfully planned and set out.

Does your student learn best...

by hearing? speaking? seeing? touching? doing? a combination of these?

by working alone at their own pace on individual projects?

by interacting with other students and participating in collaborative activities in pairs, in a small group, as a team?

Does the student like the teaching room to be...

quiet or with background sounds?

bright or softly lit?

cool or warm?

formally or informally arranged?

It is important to be aware of all of the above options. It is likely that the teacher will need to use both oral and written guidance and also practical demonstrations, as well as opportunities for the students to apply and practise what they have learnt individually and/or in groups. A broad range of teaching and learning materials will also allow students to explore and discover for themselves as well as being directed by their tutor.

Suggestions for teaching methods and learning resources

If your student learns best by **hearing** and/or **speaking**:

- give verbal instructions and encourage verbal answers
- spell words out orally
- try brainstorming and discussion before beginning independent silent work
- use oral word games
- introduce poetry
- make use of tapes, video, the radio
- encourage the student to explain learning points to you or other students, using their own words.

If your student learns best by **seeing**:

- give written instructions to accompany oral ones
- make good use of ICT packages at the right levels
- highlight key points in a text or exercise with coloured pens
- frame the shapes of words
- add symbols to draw attention to certain points on a worksheet
- show pictures, photographs and flashcards
- let him/her work with maps, charts, diagrams
- write letters, words or sentences on card for sequencing
- encourage the student to take notes, using underlining and highlighting
- have a word processor available.

If your student learns best by **touching** and/or **doing**:

- bring real-life materials into the classroom and ask the student to do the same, bringing in something he/she wants to work on
- encourage the student to use computers, calculators, tape recorders and headphones etc
- introduce games and role play
- tap out sounds and syllables
- experiment with a variety of writing equipment and materials.

For all students:

- always introduce and talk through any written information provided
- remember and use the 'multi-sensory' approach to teaching:
hear it, see it, say it, write or record it.



Uses of ICT

Information and communication technology (ICT) is still an underused resource in basic skills teaching. Despite the ready provision of computers and software, many basic skills teachers are hesitant to use them. Yet ICT has enormous potential as a resource for basic skills learners. Where it has been used effectively teachers report substantial gains in capability and confidence. It is a very good way of introducing self-directed learning. This does not necessarily need a high level of technical competence. It simply means providing opportunities for learners to make choices from available materials or about features of their screen displays. The improvement in basic skills is almost a by-product of wider gains in learners' abilities. One tutor described this process as, 'Not just about literacy and numeracy, but about gaining a sense of themselves as people who can learn.' Staff, too, find the reality of using ICT far less daunting once they have begun to work with it.

ICT offers:

- independence, confidence and self-esteem (for teachers as well as learners)
- opportunities to match learning more precisely to the needs of learners
- ways of accessing and extending further learning opportunities.

Example 1

The following list summarises the benefits which various providers have found from using ICT with their basic skills learners.

Benefits of using ICT

- learners feel more comfortable using computers than pen and paper and the end result looks much better
- using ICT raises learners' self-esteem by enabling them to use the same equipment as their peer group for the same purposes
- learners can receive instant assessment and feedback, especially in numeracy activities
- imaginative interactive software can make skills practice more interesting
- it is very easy to draft, edit and get a correct copy quickly
- learners can gain an authentic sense of themselves as writers when they are no longer constrained by paper-based activities
- ICT opens up possibilities for design and communication through use of other hardware, Eg scanners and digital cameras, or desk top publishing software
- using a keyboard can strengthen hand/eye co-ordination and increase awareness of letter patterns.

Example 2



The following lists summarise the principles and practices which providers have found most effective in using ICT with basic skills learners.

Principles of good practice

- place learners in a learning environment where using PCs is the norm; This does not mean a classroom with half a dozen PCs around the edge, most of which are usually switched off
- PCs arranged in clusters more effectively replicate social aspects of learning together
- look for ways of customising screen displays to match learners' needs and preferences
- integrate ICT into each learner's overall programme, selecting packages to take account of individual preferences, abilities and skills
- make sure that staffing levels allow learners to have their questions quickly answered when they first start using computers
- learners and teachers need to be clear about exactly why they are using ICT
- get learners to work in pairs or small groups where appropriate, to encourage mutual support, joint problem solving and a whole range of collaborative learning opportunities
- use with specialist hardware/software to allow maximum access for learners with a variety of disabilities
- look for ways of using computers which will have personal or vocational relevance for learners, e.g. e-mailing work to tutors (standard office procedure), hobby-related web sites
- it is never too early to start using ICT – even at the first interview: think about asking interviewees if they've ever used a computer and let them enter their name and address on a template.

Useful tips

- check that computers are working and switched on before the session starts (and that you know where the technician lives!)
- use the right technical terms from the start, and always model safe working practices
- make sure that font and size are set as needed until learners are confident about changing them (many learners prefer larger fonts perhaps because they're easy to see, but maybe also because they fill the screen space more quickly)
- 'comic sans ms' is a font that many learners find easy to work with – it looks friendly and informal
- start with products you know and trust
- make writing more interesting with desk top publishing programmes and clip art
- give ownership to the learner through personal disks and directories/folders
- pre-prepared templates can be a useful way of getting learners started
- keep an open mind, be confident.



Example 3

Here are some examples of the kinds of things that basic skills teachers and learners do with ICT:

ICT-based learning activities

- strengthen spelling strategies by using dedicated programmes
- writing life stories, scanning in pictures and photos
- researching hobby information from the internet
- using maths games software to develop and extend number skills
- using spreadsheets to develop money skills
- planning journeys using information from web sites
- e-mailing friends in other countries
- keeping their own records of progress
- building their own web sites
- creating their own greetings cards and posters
- developing internet search skills
- preparing CVs and job applications
- preparing for the driving theory test
- planning, drafting and editing pieces of text
- compiling group newsletters
- giving learners access to learning resources via folders or intranets.

Example 4

Basic skills teachers and learners use the following hardware and software:



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Hardware and software

- customising the display of standard word processing packages: as well as font, size and colour, consider borders, shading, use of tables, sticky keys
- customise your mouse!
- standard desk top publishing packages, eg, Microsoft Powerpoint and Publisher can make writing and presentation more interesting than standard word processing packages
- standard spreadsheets and databases, eg, Excel, Access can support simple learning activities such as budgeting or lists of friends
- predictive typers, eg, Penfriend. These suggest words when you have typed the first one or two letters. It is particularly useful for people with literacy or motor difficulties. A useful feature of Penfriend is that it can speak words back to you.
- predictive wordprocessors, eg, Texthelp and CoWriter, which suggest options and offer choices for developing pieces of writing
- vocabulary aids, eg, Wordbar. These help learners build their own word lists and personal dictionaries. Used with wordprocessing programmes, the software displays a personalised vocabulary on the screen.
- games software, eg Wordshark and Numbershark. These can be set up to accommodate various levels of difficulty and enable learners to practise a range of word and number skills through different game formats.
- helping pre-readers explore ideas about symbolic language eg, Widgets
- helping pre-writers plan, draft and organise text eg, Inspirations
- lots of good basic skills materials on internet websites, eg, BBC, Funbrain, Hot Potato, Thinks; Epals for world wide pen pals; don't forget local town and newspaper sites
- search engines, eg, Ask Jeeves, which uses day to day language and gives lots of suggestions to extend awareness of related topics
- in-house produced resources, eg, packages, workbooks, to support independent learning about IT and how to use it
- small, low cost (about £200) word processors, eg, Alphasmart and Dreamwriter are a good way of getting learners started, particularly if they want to practise without being overlooked. Can easily be loaned.
- voice-activated software, eg, Voice Type, Dragon Naturally Speaking, enabling learners who cannot use conventional methods of producing text to write and edit text, and calculate. (They do require some investment of time in setting them up for individual voices.)
- trackballs and joysticks for learners who find it hard to use a mouse.



Example 5

The considerable possibilities of a genuinely multimedia approach are highlighted by one provider.

"We have a good, memory-rich, computer network, a digital camera, a digital video, a video playing machine and real colour printer. Teachers and learners can use these tools in many combinations. For learners, it can mean learning about communication, photography, computers and printing all in one go. This can be really useful when a learner becomes excited about something in particular. For example, we ran a botany project recently. Learners photographed leaves and trees with the digital camera, manipulated the image on screen both to show a leaf, say, and the tree it came from. Stills were produced from the video. The computer skills needed became clear to the learners, who were all keen to reach the end product. We also have good software that allows learners, whatever their level of ability, to add text to things that are important to them. Most of all multimedia is fun to do!"

The examples which follow illustrate IT in practice. They describe ways of using e-mail and the Internet, the use of IT to help vocational learners develop basic skills, the use of IT to improve basic skills in the workplace using a project on making a video to develop literacy skills and finally a case study of how one teacher used staff development to help her introduce IT into her work with her basic skills learners.

Using e-mail and the Internet

The Internet can provide a wide range of learning opportunities for learners who have basic skills needs. These can include the use of the internet as an information source and resource bank.

One of the most useful parts of the Internet is the e-mail facility. Learners can use e-mail to pass on information to each other, either within the same room or college, or to other people across wider geographical areas. It is a great way to expel fears about poor spelling or reading ability because the message can be written, checked if necessary and then sent. The recipient does not necessarily know how long it has taken to formulate the message, nor how many errors were in it before help was given. There is a certain anonymity which seems to give learners extra confidence to write what they feel instead of only what they can spell!

A good way of using e-mail is to ask the learners to write an e-mail requesting information from a named person. I used this technique for a couple of World of Work sessions, learning about different jobs and work related responsibilities. The students formulated questions to ask, wrote them as standard e-mail forms and sent them. My named person received them and we got together to discuss replies. These were typed onto standard e-mail forms and sent back to the students.

The students opened their personal replies from, as they saw it, an unknown and very important person. This made the students themselves feel important and that they had learnt a lot – not only about the person's job, but how to get information using e-mail. This project to find out about one person's job, from start to finish, took three, two-hour sessions.

Another excellent way of using e-mail with learners who have basic skills needs is to ask for a specific task to be completed, then e-mailed to yourself. I asked the students to write a set of evaluations for the subjects they studied. I was very specific about what I wanted – I wanted some writing, using different fonts, sizes and layouts, and some pictures which were relevant to the subject. This task alone brought in lots of the generic skills required in order to produce a piece of work using ICT. It is not possible to produce pictures and fonts straight on to standard e-mail forms so the students used Word instead.

Then I gave the students my e-mail address and asked them to send their piece of work as an attachment. I taught a small number of the more able students how to send an attachment with an e-mail, then suggested that they teach their peers. It was highly successful. The students could then see the e-mail appearing on my screen – they commented on how quickly it arrived!



Examples 7 and 8

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Internet chat-rooms

Internet chat-rooms can be a good idea if there is a large class, or if the session is during the evening. Learners can 'chat' to other people from other places about their interests. It can be difficult, however, to plan for using chat-rooms because you can never tell if there are going to be other people using the same chat-room – the group of learners could very easily end up chatting to themselves.

Other problems concerned with chat-rooms are that, firstly, the content cannot be checked by the tutor prior to the student reading it – some statements can be quite suggestive. Secondly, the 'chat' takes place in 'real-time'. This means that the meeting is like a telephone conversation using text, where one person sends a statement, and another replies – the text can be seen by all the people in the chat-room, including spelling mistakes and slow typing!

Sport studies

This module is concerned with contemporary issues in sport. Subjects covered in this module include the use of drugs in sport, ethics, violence in sport and the relevance of sporting role models. As with the former example the primary form of ICT used during this module is the internet. An example of this is the use of the Internet to provide information on the situation involving crowd violence during the European Football Championships. Using the Internet, learners were able to log onto sites such as the BBC current affairs site, and gather up to date information on the situation concerning England's involvement in the troubles.

The use of ICT allows the course tutor to provide learners with contemporary information and encourages student centred learning. If each learner has access to his or her own terminal then individuals can progress along the World Wide Web at their own pace, gathering information as they do so.

To conclude, the use of information technology supporting learners as they develop basic and key skills is mainly through the use of the Internet. Additionally, ICT is also used for its word processing capabilities to present learners' work. ICT is an integral part of the learning process with learners to support their studies and research. Other media such as video, printed material such as handouts, acetates and white board information are also used to address individual learning styles and preferred learning activities.

Hairdressing

Through additional funding the Hairdressing section was able to buy a computer, workstation and printer to be housed in the hairdressing salon. This facility has enabled entry level learners to have access to a computer and an internet facility during class times. Learners have eagerly used the word processing programmes for presenting their written work, used the word art and clip art programmes to design project covers and assignment headers. In addition, the internet has become a tool to research a range of fashion topics, hair products, styles, exhibition venues, and makeover techniques. Some of the group did not attend school, and did not have a PC at home. A key advantage of the hairdressers having this facility has been that it has enabled opportunities for young people to access ICT and develop ICT skills.

Learners were allowed to explore the computer independently, but with extra reassurance that should they need help the staff all held a good level of ICT skills to support the learning. This helped students to gain confidence when using ICT and created an interest in developing their skills further.



Example 10

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

A teacher in the Midlands uses ICT to improve basic skills in the workplace

Jane is a 51-year-old woman who works as a press operator in an engineering company. She was very nervous about coming to talk to me and almost had to be dragged off the shop floor. Once she had entered her name and address into the computer she couldn't wait for the first session. Now, when I give her a printout of her work she is speechless with delight for several seconds. She always insists that I bring in two copies – one for her folder and the other to take home to show her son! She recently announced that she is going to apply for a Team Leader post.

Andy is a young man who works in a semi-skilled job in an engineering company, but he would rather be working as a gardener. He spent his schooldays in the remedial class. Using a computer has brought out his artistic talents. After concentrating solidly for half an hour on getting colours in his WordArt heading to match his clipart image for a health and safety leaflet, he suddenly announced, 'Who would ever have thought that I would spend all this time getting it just right!' His supervisor, on seeing his work, suggested that he should give the company secretary some lessons to improve the company newsletter.

Alan had been working in the same company for 20 years. The first day I visited the company, he had just resigned. The company had asked him to go on a Quality course. He was terrified that, after 20 years, people would find out that he couldn't read and write. The MD insisted that I had a word with him and I persuaded him to give the key skills sessions a try. He still comes to the sessions, and has achieved several entry level credits in basic skills and ICT. He now looks forward to going on training courses. 'I still can't spell, but it doesn't matter because it's all out in the open now, and I know I'm not the only one!'

Example 11

Using video-making to develop literacy skills with adult learners



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

The learners

The learners are working at level one and above in an adult education centre. They know each other well, and are used to working as a group. Students have a variety of skills and aptitudes.

Many of them are seeking accreditation in communication or related skills. The video session is designed with them in mind. For others it is an opportunity to experience planning and drafting a series of images, with the appropriate narrative.

Rationale

- creating a video, planned, scripted and filmed by students to demonstrate and develop a wide range of communication skills, in a stimulating and creative environment
- to provide a supportive and friendly environment to help less confident students to flourish.

The session is the first of three or four (it can vary with the group and the nature of the proposed project) sessions culminating in the production of the video.

Preparation for the session

The first half of the session is led by the tutor, with students sitting in groups of four or so, facing the tutor. The tutor should have in place a video player and television, and a flip chart.

Materials

- prepared flip chart with images illustrating a sequence of shots on a particular topic
- video with a series of shots linked by a theme and a spoken explanatory narrative
- worksheet explaining how to set about the storyboard, together with an example
- glossary of key technical terms covered in the session
- illustrated guide to different types of shots.

The session

In the first half of the session, check the pace is right for the students. Gauge this by their individual responses to the tutor's prompts and questions. The group should be small enough (eight or ten) to ensure that no one is left behind or excluded.



Example 11 (continued)

In the second half, students will contribute ideas for the video by creating their own storyboard. This is done with small groups (three to four students) contributing to a shared storyboard or by individuals writing their own. Some students may be new to group work or feel too nervous to share their ideas. The tutor can help by joining in the group and encouraging individual responses. The students' storyboards will be collected in at the end of the session. Written feedback is given for the next session. Along with oral feedback, this will be used to evaluate the session.

Learning plans

Each student has an individual learning plan. Individual literacy targets are linked to the video session.

A sample learning plan follows next.

Evaluation of video session

Ten students participated. They were enthusiastic about making a video of group activities. Earlier work had been done on written texts, looking at sequencing and planning in written work. Students had also worked on paragraphs and key sentences in longer texts on body language. This topic was part of the preparation for the video.

Skills were also mapped at sentence and word level. Vocabulary was extended at word level with the introduction of the glossary. The language of video making extended students' vocabulary. Caption writing on the storyboards and commentary writing for the voice-over helped sequencing and sentence-writing skills.

Students enjoyed the analytical work on the TV sequences. They seemed relaxed and knowledgeable about the context. There was a lot of laughter as the tutor drew the storyboard from suggestions on the flip chart ('Don't give up the day job!'). This encouraged students to try drawing on their storyboards later – nobody was expecting works of art.

Students worked on the storyboards in pairs – one drawing the pictures, one writing the caption. The storyboards tackled the opening shots. The group came together to share its work for the final storyboard. Each pair made at least one contribution to the agreed storyboard.

A sample learning plan, lesson plan, glossary of key terms, worksheet and Paul and Pat's storyboard, and student feedback follow.

Example 11 (continued)

Individual learning plan



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Student:	Plan no.: 1
Tutor:	Date: 27.9.99
Subject: English/Communications	Review date: 9.11.99

Long term aims: GCSE English
Primary learning goal: Accreditation in English/Communications Level 1

Short term needs/aims:	<p>Improve extended writing skills</p> <p>Improve spelling</p> <p>Improve punctuation</p>
What can I do already:	Read and write for everyday usage

Targets	Unit	Materials
Brainstorming Planning Drafting Proof reading		Student's work arising from project/tutor feedback Workshop worksheets
Paragraphing Key sentences Linking		Students' work/tutor feedback Workshop worksheets
Spelling: extending vocabulary spelling strategies		Dictionary Thesaurus Glossary
Punctuation: speech marks commas		Workshop worksheets
Oral skills: range of spoken language explain ideas check understanding		Discussion will be generated by group work and Q & A session



Example 11 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative Lesson plan for linked skills: video and literacy

Neighbourhood Centre – lesson notes		
Course title:	Date:	
Venue/time:	Tutor:	
Aims: To have the student gain an understanding of the way TV/Video is structured by drawing comparisons with written work and by having them write their own storyboard.	Learning outcomes: By the end of the session the students will have some understanding of the structure and 'grammar' of video and how this compares with written work. They will also have attempted to create their own storyboard with a mixture of words and images.	Indiv./gp Group
Timing	Materials/resources	
0.00-0.05	Whiteboard Flipchart Markers	
0.15-0.30		
0.30-0.40	Prepare flipchart with roughly drawn shots to illustrate point	Group
0.40-0.45	TV video and film/video that will illustrate points already made	
0.45-0.55		

Example 11 (continued)

Timing	Activity/input	Materials/resources	Indiv./gp
0.55-1.15	Break		
1.15-1.45	<p>Discussion about storyboarding. An example of brief storyboard will be worked up on a white board using suggestions from students.</p> <p>The worksheet will be issued and the students will be asked to create their own storyboard. They should be told that this may only be the beginning of the video and that it can be completed on a further session if necessary.</p>	<p>Whiteboard/flip chart Markers</p> <p>Worksheet</p>	<p>Group</p> <p>Group/individual This can be done as a group or individual work largely dependent on students</p>
1.45-2.00	<p>Feedback from students on the ideas they have come up with for their storyboard. Q & A session on anything that has been discussed.</p> <p>Record learning.</p>		<p>Group/individual</p> <p>Individual</p>



Example 11 (continued)

Complete a storyboard – the introduction

In your small group:

Plan the establishing shots of the video

Do not put too much into each shot.

Know where you will cut.

Think about the audience. Will they know what is going on?

Use one box for each shot.

In the small box underneath write the words for the voice over

Try this aloud and decide together if it sounds natural.

Remember the tone should be encouraging.

Editing

You can cut the boxes up and arrange a sequence that you think works.

You can stick them in place when you think you have the order right.

Do you understand?

Can you use?

Can you spell?

establishing shots, cut, editing, voice over –

check the glossary

Example 11 (continued)

Student feedback on the video sessions



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Paul – 'I really enjoyed the video planning. There was much more to it than I thought. I watch television in a different way now noticing where the cuts come and how it is put together. I realise when I write I jumble things in the wrong order or I launch straight into things. You need to set the scene first. I didn't realise how important it was to get the order right.'

Pat – 'I nearly died when I heard we had to draw because I've never been any good at drawing. But it's not like writing. Nobody minds about being hopeless. Nobody was very good – some people looked like camels or Minnie Mouse but we knew what we meant – it was a laugh. Some words did come up that we couldn't spell. You had to use the word you wanted even if you couldn't spell it – then you could learn to spell it.'



Example 12

In this example, a basic skills teacher explains how she began to use ICT in teaching.

A basic skills teacher starts to use ICT after a staff development event

As a basic skills specialist I had very little experience of using ICT and thought that the training would be an ordeal. I had managed to avoid using a computer prior to the staff training.

After several sessions I felt fairly confident in basic word processing using Word. I also found clipart, Word Art, Publisher and the information on CD-ROMs easy to use. I used these new skills in supporting my students with their project and library work.

In addition to the benefits already listed I found using the computers alongside traditional basic skills teaching very liberating. With guidance the internet provided a wider range of reading matter, it encouraged learners to read maps and diagrams in addition to text. Material could be downloaded, text selected or omitted easily because the learner could edit the text.

In my teaching I used the software mentioned above to devise both group and individual tasks which were linked to project work. When teaching sentence construction I used traditional methods of building words from cards in addition to using the computer. The student transferred the words to the screen, which reinforced reading skills. Although I was aware of specialist packages that are available to teach sentence building, I used a generic word-processing programme because it gave me the freedom to teach in the way which was most appropriate for the student and also used student centred material.

Learners:

- worked at their own pace
- used a large font which was easier to read
- used spell check as a positive guide
- could start again as often as they liked.

The students were not daunted by the prospect of using the computers: some of them had higher computer skills than they had in literacy. The computer enhanced their learning and gave them a sense of success.

The staff training provided:

- taught sessions from specialist tutors
- open access to staff training workshops
- ICT support specialists on duty throughout the day in workshops.

Therefore it was easy to access and help was always available. I try to observe these principles when working with my own students.

Effective providers are making increasing use of learning resources that are presented through a range of media such as audio, video, CD-ROM and ICT. However, most of the resources currently in use remain firmly paper-based. This might reflect the range of settings in which basic skills are taught which affect the equipment available for use. It might also reflect the limited amount of adult and simple to use multi-media learning materials which are available and the need for teachers themselves to become more confident in using the equipment.

Because of the preponderance of paper-based materials, many providers give guidelines to teachers to help them ensure that the paper-based resources they produce or use are as accessible to the learner as possible. One key factor is the 'readability' of a text, that is, the reading age or ability the text expects of its reader. If learners are to work through a text successfully, then the reading ability of the learner needs more or less to match the reading ability required by the text. There are a number of commercially-available readability tests such as the Fogg Index and the Flesch Test which assess the reading levels required by a text. These are based on counting the number of sentences and multi-syllabic words in a passage, because for the most part readability tests are founded on the premise that if a piece of writing has long sentences and many long words, then it will be harder to read than a piece with short sentences and short words. However, there are a number of other factors to be taken into consideration.

Example 1

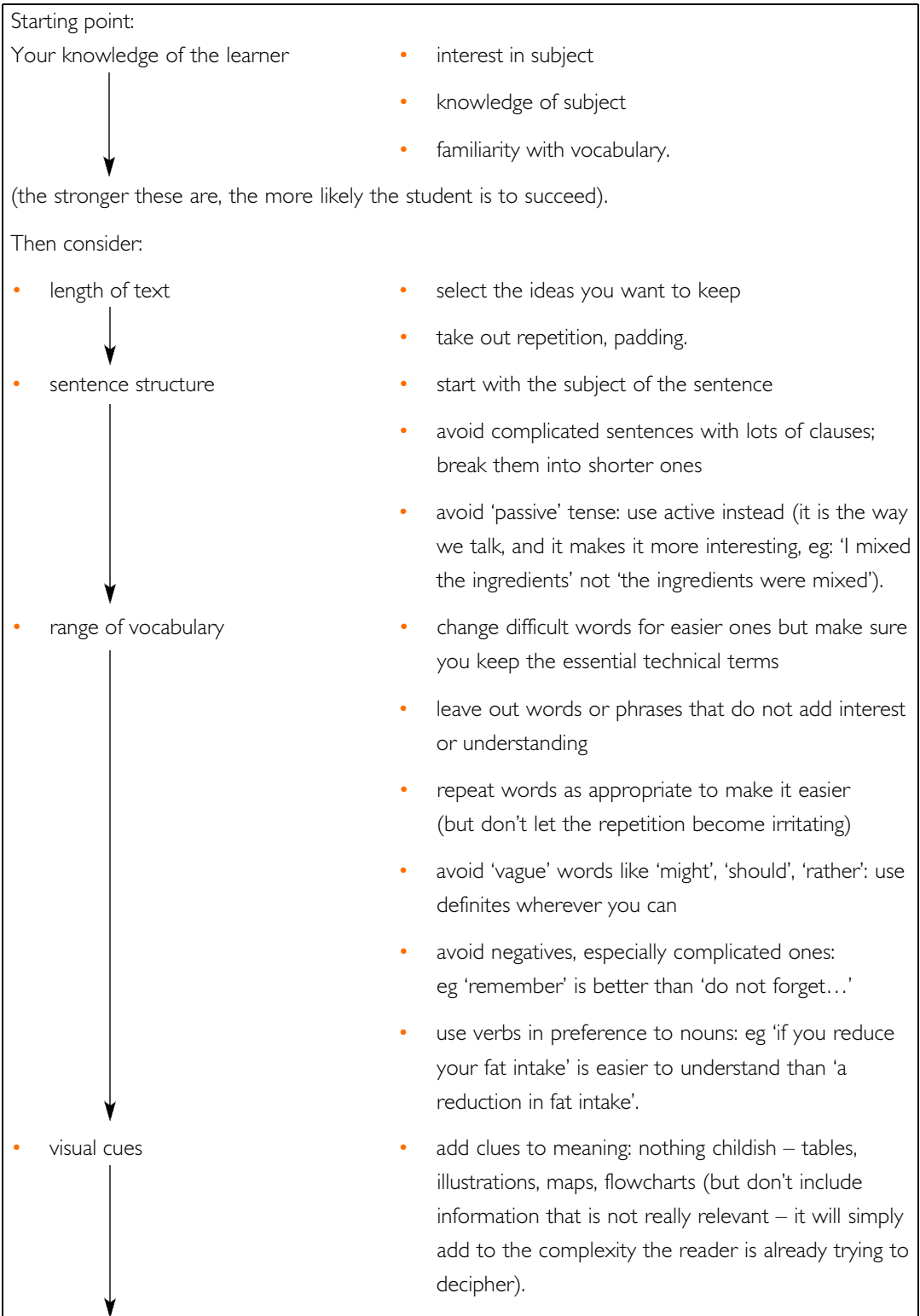
One college provides the following outline guidance to its teachers:

Factors which may affect readability	
Reader factors	interest in the topic; motivation prior knowledge and experience cultural background; gender reading ability
Content factors	number of familiar words how the text is organised: layout, headings etc pictures, diagrams
Linguistic factors	sentence structure; number of clauses in sentence grammatical complexity vocabulary used (jargon, slang, technical etc)
Print factors	size and type of print quality of reproduction use of upper/lower-case letters use of colour, boldening, underlining amount of space between words, lines length of lines; margins



Example 2

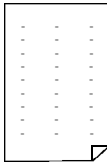
One provider sets out the following procedure for designing texts:



- use of layout

Finally

- produce the text



- space out well and break into manageable sections
- keep the right hand margin unjustified (uneven); it makes it easier to find your place on the page
- separate key points by numbers, letters, bullets or asterisks
- use headings and indents consistently so they look tidy and aid understanding.

- do not hand-write (unless you print very neatly)
- do not write in capitals – it is harder to read
- keep the font clear and unfussy; keep away from curly bits and avoid italics.



Example 3

The following extract is from the guidance a college gives on how to give basic skills support to students by simplifying vocational assignments.

Writing assignments to match basic skills needs

The language of assignments

The language used in assignments must be accessible to all of the students in your group. If you have a student with a specific problem, e.g. hearing impairment, you can ask the specialist tutors to help you make the necessary adjustments. The language used should match the demands of the awarding body. Technical language must be used where it is specific to the subject being taught. Some teams help students to learn this technical language by producing a glossary which explains each term in language that the student is familiar with.

Format of assignments

The format of assignments may be led by the demands of the awarding body in some cases, but generally assignments can be presented to students in formats that match their skill level.

Example 4



Scanners, computers and printers have made the task of adapting print materials much more straightforward. One provider gives the following advice to its staff.

Adapting print materials

- try to produce, or have produced for you, as much of the standard material as possible, using a computer and storing the original on floppy disc for easy retrieval and adaptation. Material which is created in this way can simply be re-printed when required, incorporating any wanted changes to size and type of font, and any other adaptations needed to take account of the needs and abilities of the learner
- to ensure that the quality and density of the print output is good, it is best to use a laser printer or a quality jet printer
- material that is not on disc can be scanned into a computer, ready for adaptation and printing. It is always worth trying to obtain the original version for scanning, unless the copy is very good, as this increases the chances of an accurate scan
- if print quality or layout does not allow for scanning, the material will need to be word-processed or typed and scanned in. This is time-consuming, but in many cases it is necessary and saves time in the long run.



Creating Handouts and Worksheets

Handouts and worksheets, especially worksheets, feature prominently in the array of resource materials used for basic skills provision. There are a number of reasons why this is so. They are easy to produce or to adapt in order to match learners' interests and needs, they are relatively inexpensive, and they do not rely for their use on equipment or machinery that may be unavailable or not working. Worksheets give learners something to do – practise a skill, solve a problem, answer a question – and handouts provide reinforcement for key points, additional information or a reference item for learners to return to if they need to revise or refresh their memories. Sometimes the two formats are combined, and a completed worksheet serves as a reference, or a handout includes a task to check understanding or provide practice in a particular skill.

However, the frequent use of handouts and worksheets is no guarantee that teaching or learning is effective. Too many worksheets are used simply to occupy learners more or less usefully, without ensuring that they are well-matched to the learner's interests and learning objectives, or sufficiently demanding to stimulate the learner and produce a genuine sense of discovery or accomplishment. Too many handouts are unattractive or out-of-date, poorly structured or containing material that is irrelevant or too difficult for the learner to use independently. Recognising these shortcomings and the key role that such materials should play in supporting learning, many providers now ensure that training for their teachers covers good practice in producing handouts and worksheets. There is as yet little

attempt to check how far the guidance provided is followed and whether it has resulted in improvements to the quality of these materials.

Example 1



One provider gives the following guidance to teachers.

A checklist for good practice in making handouts and worksheets

- start by being clear what the purpose of the worksheet is: what you want the learner to gain by completing it
- think about producing the same information in two forms, i.e. in text form point by point, or diagrammatically, e.g. mindmaps, flowcharts
- simplify the text by summarising the main points and using headings and/or numbering them
- make use of the layout (eg highlighting, underlining, boxes) to emphasise key words and phrases
- space the text clearly and use a suitable size type; avoid large areas of uninterrupted print
- check that the learner can recognise and understand the meaning of key words or specialist terms before they start work
- consider whether it would be helpful to provide a glossary of terms or a diagram to explain the text as well as (or instead of?) simplifying it
- by all means include pictures, but avoid anything childish or irrelevant. Make sure the content is non-discriminatory.

Finally, do review your material (asking for the learners' views as well) so that you can make it more accessible to learners next time.



Example 2

One provider sums up the key criteria that all basic skills materials need to meet as 'The Three As'.

The Three As

- adult – not childish in any way
- accessible – easy to understand and use
- appropriate – to the learner's interests, abilities and needs.

There are a number of ways of achieving this. These include focussing work on themes dealing with adult life and on themes related to vocational studies or the needs of a particular job. Both of these approaches can gain added relevance through the use of 'real' materials such as newspapers or brochures.

Example 3

One college has developed a range of assignments built round everyday topics of interest such as planning a day out, getting fit, DIY. The college considers this an effective approach because:

- it encourages learners to become more active participants by contributing their own materials and their ideas for developing each theme
- it acknowledges the validity of learners' interests and existing skills. Many basic skills students have a wealth of experience and knowledge which is not always used to best effect by basic skills teachers
- it is based on authentic material e.g. leaflet from gym, travel brochures
- it is interesting and relevant.

Examples of well-used materials

- gas and electric bills
- cheques, deposit slips, etc.
- timetables
- supermarket bills and receipts
- money-off coupons.

The following quotes from learners illustrate the benefit of using such materials:

"I enjoyed working on the keep fit leaflet because I want to start going but I'm a bit nervous. I feel a bit more confident about going now because I know something more about it."

"Worksheets can get a bit boring. It's more fun working on real things like travel brochures".

Example 4



One college has developed a range of materials focusing on work-related tasks that are common to a number of occupations.

Like many other providers, this college has recognised that the primary aim of a learner enrolled on any vocational course leading to a qualification is to succeed on that course. Materials that deal with basic skills in the abstract may well appear to such a learner as a waste of time, diverting them from their overall aim. It is essential that wherever possible basic skills work is built round the development of skills that the learner will recognise as contributing to success on his or her chosen course. For example, catering students needing to learn how to break words down into syllables will do much better practising on words such as 'risotto' or 'mushroom' than they would practising on 'imagine' or 'photograph'.

The range of work-related materials the college has devised focuses on literacy or numeracy skills that are common to a number of vocational areas, such as stocktaking or memo writing. Generic guidance is provided on the skill required, followed by tasks at various levels relevant to a range of different vocational areas. In this way the teacher or student can select materials that apply the skills in a setting relevant to the overall vocational aims.

The college finds this approach effective because:

- the tasks relate specifically to written work that the students or trainees will need to do in the workplace. Their relevance is obvious;
- while the guidance sheets are generic, and apply to a range of vocational contexts, the tasks are vocationally specific. They can easily be adapted to cover other vocational areas if required;

- the guidance sheets which accompany each set of tasks explain the format or process, and can be kept for future reference;
- the student or trainee is provided with 'hooks' to help them get started, e.g. Start your letter with "I wish to apply for the position of...".

Sample tasks for students on health and social care courses who are receiving help with their basic skills are given below.



Example 4 (continued)

Level 1

Writing a short standard letter

FOR ALL CARERS

Write a '4th day' sickness letter to your service manager. Include the first date of sickness, the reason for sickness and your expected date of return.

Level 1

Writing a short standard letter

FOR RESIDENTIAL CARERS ONLY

You will need to write two letters. Use the standard letters format.

Write two letters to Percy Scrope, 14 Woodland Way, Charlestown, Lincs, CN6 8MU.

Letter 1

Ask him for details of the trip to the seaside that he is arranging for the elderly residents of Woodview House. Include destination and date of trip, starting time and return time. Also meal arrangements (if a packed lunch is to be provided).

Letter 2

Thank him for organising a trip to the seaside for the elderly residents of Woodview House. Invite him to Woodview House to show the residents the photos he took during his trip. Suggest a date and time for his visit.

Learners are often eager to work with authentic materials. Newspapers, magazines, catalogues, manuals, brochures can be matched to learners' needs and interests. They can be used to increase their sense of achievement and ability to cope with everyday tasks.

Example

Here is the guidance that one provider gives to its teachers. The same principles apply to using any commercially-available publication:

Guidance on using newspapers/magazines with students

- read through it together. Show her/him where to find: TV page, racing, sports results, weather, job ads, cinema listings. Ask her/him to look up the weather everyday for the next week, or TV page
- discuss your and the student's reactions to the article
- look for key words and make up sentences with them or write out questions for the student to answer using key words
- compare the same event as reported by two different papers. Do they use the same words to describe it? What are the differences?
- fill in forms from the paper to enter competitions, send for brochures etc.
- concentrate on sight words the student can find easily. Ask her/him to tick every word he knows ('and' and 'the' come up a lot)
- look at the harder common sight words or words which are topical or interesting and ask the student to find them in a given paragraph.



Using Audio Cassettes

There are good reasons for including the development of auditory skills as part of basic skills provision. It is part of a multi-sensory approach to teaching and learning, it represents a preferred learning style for many students, and it is, in itself, a skill which leads to the development of language.

Cassettes offer a flexible and useful resource for developing listening skills. There are commercially available cassettes, or teachers can make their own. They can be used by individual students to learn on their own, either at home or in class. They can also be used for whole group activities such as practice in listening for specific information, picking out the main points of a passage or following spoken instructions.

Example 1

One provider identifies the following uses of audio cassettes.

Uses of audio cassettes

- to bring a variety of aspects of life outside the class into the learning situation
- to introduce a new topic
- to support beginners
- for practice in taking messages
- to provide a stimulus to discussion or writing
- for dictation practice, perhaps self-checking against a transcript
- to give practice in mental arithmetic
- to provide evidence of oral competence.

Example 2

Another provider suggests specific tasks for developing listening skills.

Listening tasks

- pick out the differences between two points of view, or two versions of a story
- sift information, making notes as required, e.g. train times
- fill a diary with a week's appointments, based on messages
- complete tables or charts e.g. from a weather forecast
- list the sequence of events or instructions
- listen to technical terms and explanations that are to be read afterwards
- listen to a description of an event, in preparation for re-telling or writing it
- infer meanings from ambiguous statements or conversations, in preparation for discussing them.

Making your own recordings

- be clear what outcomes they are designed to achieve
- ensure they are delivered in an interesting manner at moderate speed
- incorporate a range of presentations: song, instruction, story
- ensure that they are clear, i.e. distinct and easy to follow, especially if giving instructions
- ensure that specific sections are easy to find
- label them with date, content, reference numbers as appropriate.



Prompt Questions for Element 3



How do you ensure that the resources you use are well-matched to the students' needs?



What guidance do you give to staff to help them select the most appropriate resources?



What guidance do you give to teachers to avoid an over-reliance on worksheets and handouts?



How do you check the quality of handouts and worksheets?



How do you ensure learning materials are linked to learners' individual needs or interests?



How effective is the use of ICT in your basic skills provision?



What more could you do to integrate the use of ICT into your teaching?



Element I: Assessing Learning and Recording Progress



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Effective teachers understand that assessment is an integral part of the learning process. It has a primary purpose of helping learners to know what they have learnt. Such teachers develop a variety of assessment and recording activities to show individual learners the progress they are making towards the objectives specified in their learning plans. They take care to match assessment to the different needs and abilities of their learners, and take into account the different settings for learning. They ensure that the requirements of assessment do not take priority over teaching and learning.

In effective provision, assessing and recording progress is conceived and planned as a whole, carefully-staged process, drawing together all the different aspects of the individuals' basic skills learning. The teacher gives careful consideration to the effects of a learner's progress on their everyday life. The best evidence of progress is when a learner is able to demonstrate that she or he can use a new or improved skill.

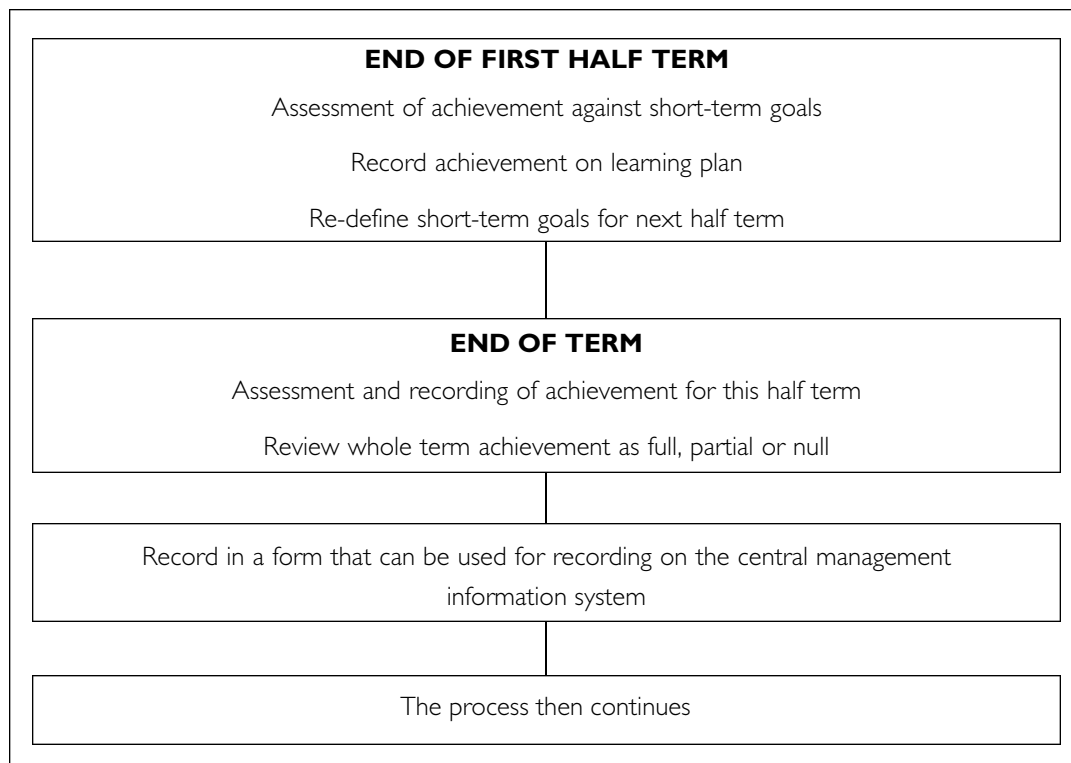
For some individuals with learning difficulties, colleges should use a wider definition of basic skills to include small developmental steps that lead to the acquisition of pre-entry level basic skills.

The examples that follow show how different providers plan and implement the process of assessing and recording progress.



Example 1

One large further education college uses the following process for assessing and recording the progress of learners working on individual basic skills programmes.



In the college, staff are advised that:

- learning goals must be measurable and achievable within the time set
- learning goals should be realistic and challenging, but not daunting
- getting the pace right at the start takes skill
- assessment of progress is towards personally defined learning goals, not only towards external awards.

The following sheets illustrate half-termly learning plans and progress records.

Example 1 (continued)

Half-termly learning plan and progress record



At the beginning of each half term, teachers list the learner's short-term goals. They tick adjoining columns as appropriate.

Name of learner: *Richard* Sheet no.: 1
 Name of teacher: *Diana* 5 possible weeks

Goals for next half term	Achieved	To carry over to next half term
<p>Read more accurately By 1/2 term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> do at least 4 exercises on closely similar words successfully complete an exercise with 10 groups of similar words. 	<p>✓</p>	
<p>Read with better understanding By 1/2 term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> complete at least 4 practice gap (cloze) exercises (week before 1/2 term) successfully complete a gap exercise by reading on (context cueing). 	<p>P-----</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>-----✓</p>
<p>Spelling By 1/2 term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> learn and use Look, Say, Cover, Write, Check successfully learn 16 new words successfully write a dictated address set up a personal dictionary. 	<p>10 learned P</p> <p>✓-----</p> <p>✓-----</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>keep working on</p> <p>keep using</p>
<p>Writing By 1/2 term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> know how to set out a formal letter of application. 	<p>P-----</p>	<p>still using template</p>

Signature of learner..... Signature of Teacher.....



Example 1 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

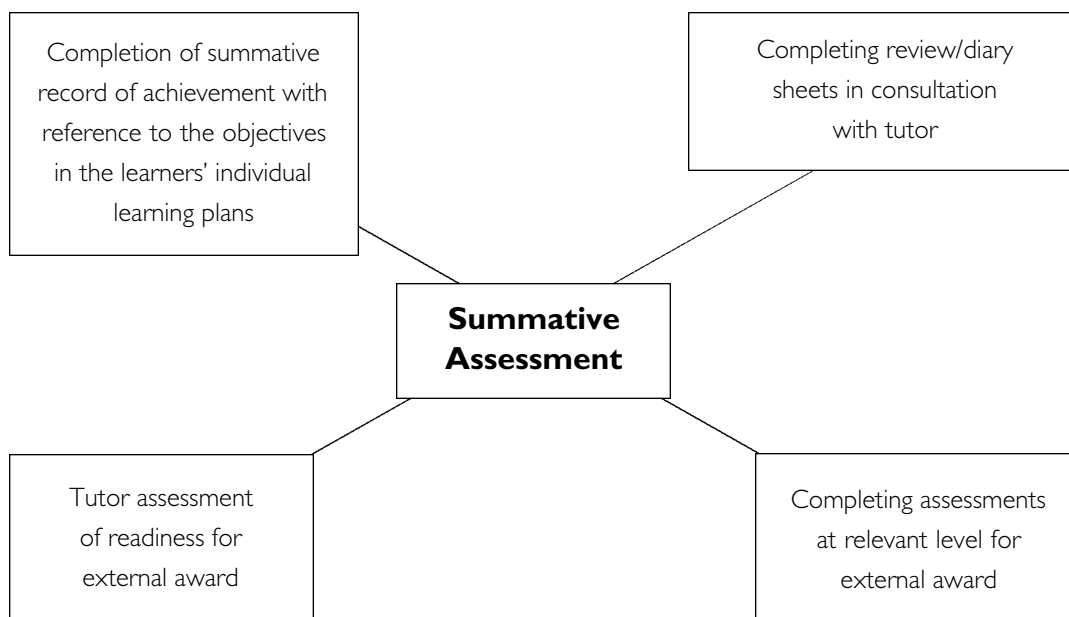
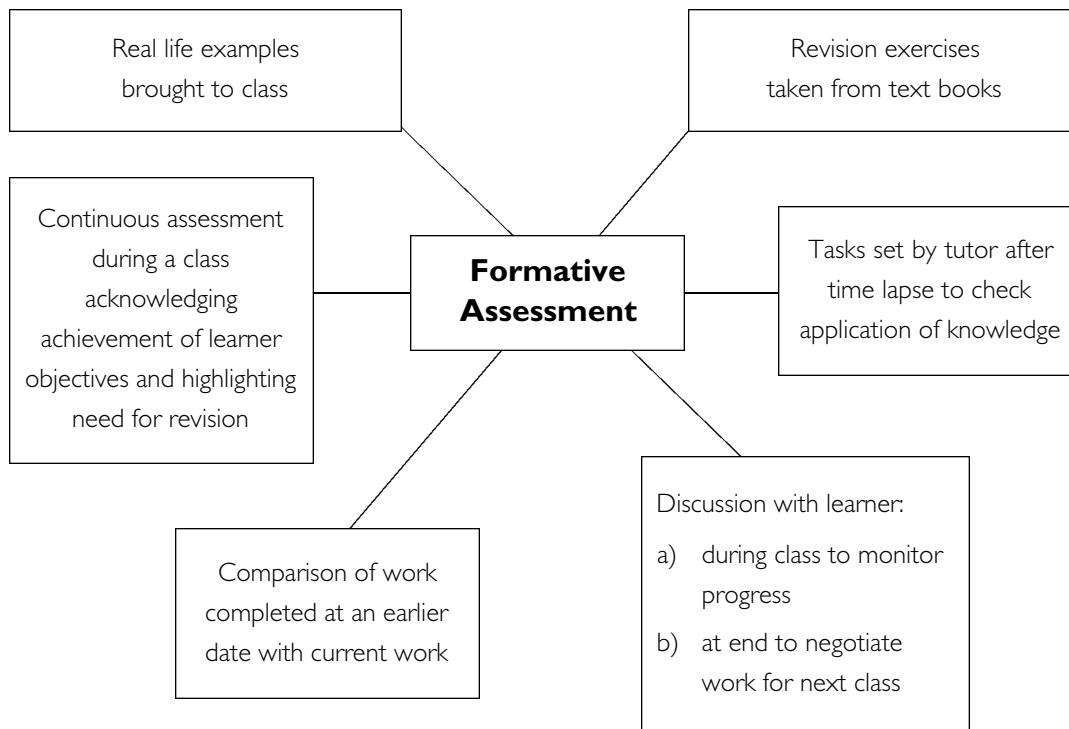
Name of learner: <i>Richard</i>		Sheet no.: 2
Name of tutor: <i>Diana</i>		7 possible weeks
Goals for next half term	Achieved	To carry over to next half term
<p>Read more accurately</p> <p>1. at least 5 exercises on choosing the right word)</p> <p>2. correctly complete a passage with at least 10 word choices.</p> <p>Spelling:</p> <p>3. have successfully learned an additional 12 words by the end of term</p> <p>4. add to personal dictionary and use as needed at work</p> <p>5. complete accurately two relevant forms.</p> <p>Writing:</p> <p>6. practise five formal letters using correct layout</p> <p>7. using a crib sheet be able to lay out a letter and write an open and closing sentence.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>P-----</p> <p>P-----</p>	<p>Would like to read aloud more</p> <p>✓ new set of words</p> <p>✓ move onto more complex forms</p> <p>3 only</p> <p>not yet enough on sentences</p>

Signature of learner..... Signature of tutor.....

Example 2



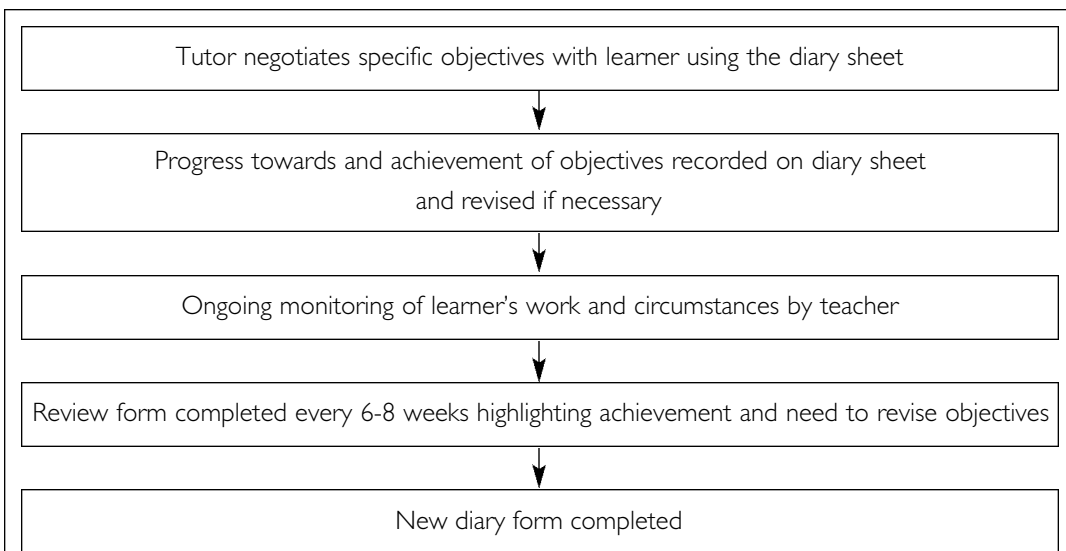
In one college, assessing and recording progress is summarised in the following way:





Example 3

In the same college, the following process is used to assess and record learning:



The college's core paperwork for measuring and recording learner progress is deliberately open-ended so it can be used differently according to learners' individual needs. The college uses the following forms to underpin and track the process:

- initial interview form
- learner diary sheet and individual learning plan.

The forms are designed to be simple to use, thereby encouraging staff to use them as they go along. To make sure the forms are used properly, the college has put various safeguards in place, including:

- use of the monitoring and review forms is an integral part of initial training of teachers and volunteers;
- on appointment, teachers are informed of expectations relating to their role and the principles guiding the use and administration of the forms;
- staff induction sessions and meetings are used to remind staff of these expectations which are set out in a staff handbook;
- copies of forms are held centrally by the basic skills co-ordinator for monitoring purposes. This ensures that:
 - the forms are being used by all teachers
 - the forms are being used appropriately to support the learning process
- returned forms are scanned by the co-ordinator who then follows up any possible concerns through discussion with staff or targeted lesson observation;
- regular lesson observation includes judging how well forms are used to support the delivery of individual learning programmes.

Example 3 (continued)



The college also provides for teachers the following checklist.

Initial interview form

The form provides the framework for most of the questions during initial interview.

Diary form and individual learning plan

These will normally be available for learner and tutor to consult at every lesson. The timescale for completion of the form varies according to learner needs and rates of work.

Learning objectives are described in the learning plan and tutors record learners' progression in relation to these. Therefore steps indicated may be very small and specific or may be more general encompassing whole concept areas.

Tutor's checklist for the diary and learning plan

- review initial interview sheet with learner (new learners only)
- review old diary sheet and learning plan (existing learners)
- transfer any incomplete objectives to new sheet
- agree short term objectives from the background given on the initial interview form, bearing in mind the long term learner aim (new learners only)
- agree a new set of objectives with the learner (existing learners only), bearing in mind any old objectives that need revision and comments made on the periodic review form
- check whether all objectives reflect long term aim of the learner
- check accreditation log is up to date (if appropriate)
- copy to learner/tutor/team leader.

Learner's check list for the diary and learning plan

Tutors should encourage learners to:

- look at their previous diary form. Check whether they have responded accurately to revision needs
- in view of this, transfer any incomplete objectives or objectives seeking revision onto the new diary sheet and learning plan
- discuss and agree new objectives with the tutor
- refer to any points made on the review form or the initial interview form as appropriate
- check that the new objectives are linked to their long term aims.



Example 3 (continued)

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Tutors should work through the process with learners.

Review Form

This form is completed normally by learner and tutor whenever a new diary sheet is required.

Tutor's checklist for the review form

- collect all diary sheets and the review forms
- discuss each objective with the learner
- agree new main objectives for next few weeks
- review main long term goals
- consider progression
- sign and date the document
- copy to learner/tutor/team leader.

Learner's checklist for the review form

Learners should:

- collect all diary sheets and review forms
- ensure that they understand the information in them
- review their main long term goals
- consider progression
- sign and date the form.

Tutors should work through the process with learners.

Note: These forms are produced in triplicate. The top copy is for the learner's own use, the second copy is held by the teacher. The third copy is sent to the basic skills co-ordinator for quality assurance and monitoring purposes.

Example 4



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

At a small specialist college for learners with learning and emotional difficulties, skilled observation by staff plays a key part in the assessment and recording process. Progress towards achieving competence in basic skills, and the application of these skills in everyday life, is continuously recorded by staff who live and work with the learners on a 24-hour basis. The record books are normally completed at the end of each term. The grading system is explained on the cover of the record book. There is space for five separate assessments affording the opportunity to see at a glance if progress is being made. The record book is used as a tool for monitoring progress; it is not used to decide what to teach.

The following sheets illustrate this approach.

Example 4 (continued)

Learner Name:

Date of Birth:

Date of Arrival:

Record book

Assessment of personal skills

Grading system for reports compiled in the House or Workshop

This system is designed so that an assessment can be made at any time. The appropriate grading of ability on a scale of 1 – 4, and that for effort on a scale of a–d, should be shown in the column boxes underneath the date of assessment. If it is desirable to show both ability and effort for the same activity, they can be shown as indicated below. In most cases, one assessment (say at the end of term) will suffice but the schedule allows for five dated assessments should that be necessary.

Progression in ability is marked on a scale of 1–4 as follows:

1. needs assistance
2. needs supervision
3. needs reminding
4. can complete the task or activity independently

Effort is indicated on a scale of a–d as follows:

- a. poor effort
- b. average effort
- c. good effort
- d. good sustained effort

Example

needs supervision	2	average effort	b
		needs supervision displays average effort	2



Assessment of Personal Skills

Activity	Date					Remarks
Communication						
Is able to make him/herself understood						
Is able to communicate wishes						
Can communicate personal feelings						
Can follow simple instructions						
Is able to follow complex instructions						
Communicates with clear sentences						
Can remember his/her address and telephone number						
Can use sign language						
Can understand and follow a personal timetable						

Example 4 (continued)

Activity	Date					Remarks
Reading and writing						
Is able to recognise the letters of the alphabet						
Identifies the sounds of the letters						
Can recognise important public signs (Fire, Danger, Exit)						
Can read mail, typewritten						
Can read magazines and newspapers						
Can read books and understand a simple story						
Can read books and understand a complex story						
Is able to read timetables						
Can write his/her own name						
Can write his/her own address and telephone number						
Can write by copying						
Can write from dictation						
Can write fluently						

Activity	Date				Remarks
Numeracy					
Recognises numbers					
Can count to ten					
Understands numbers over ten					
Can add numbers					
Can subtract numbers					
Can multiply and divide numbers					
Understanding money					
Knows what money is for					
Is able to differentiate between coins					
Is able to differentiate between notes					
Knows the equivalent value of coins and notes					
Is able to understand amounts of change					
Can handle small sums of allocated money					
Is able to handle his/her pocket money appropriately					

Example 4 (continued)

Activity	Date				Remarks
Understanding money (continued)					
Recognises numbers					
Is able to budget for his/her expenditure over a period					
Understands saving					
Understands the concept of the Post Office/Bank					
Deposits and withdraws money when necessary					
Understanding of time					
Has a concept of time using watch/timetable/calendar					
Understands the concept of past/present/future					
Knows the days of the week					
Knows the months of the year					
Can associate events with dates					
Reads the numbers on an analogue watch/clock					
Reads the numbers on a digital watch/clock					
Knows the hours					

Activity	Date				Remarks
Understanding of time (continued)					
Knows the half-hour					
Knows the quarter-hour					
Knows the minutes					
Telephone skills					
Can dial numbers correctly					
Can use a normal telephone to make calls					
Is able to use coin-box telephones					
Answers the telephone appropriately					
Is able to carry on a telephone conversation					
Keeps a book of telephone numbers					
Knows his/her home telephone number					
Can use a telephone directory					
Knows emergency phone numbers (e.g. police, enquiries)					



Example 5

The following is an example of a summative assessment record for a learner at the same residential college.

The right hand margin indicates each aspect of assessing and recording progress.

Michael was 16 when he arrived at college. His moderate learning difficulties were aggravated by severe epilepsy and a paralysis of his right side. Despite the paralysis Michael had managed to develop his gross motor skills to function adequately for

Aspect of assessing and recording progress

mobility and practical work. His initial difficulty appeared to be manipulative behaviour, where he used his epilepsy to attract attention and sympathy, whilst avoiding pressure or tasks which he felt challenging or not to his liking. To begin with, he had some 10 to 30 seizures a day. It became clear that many of these were connected to Michael's need for attention. All co-workers dealing with him were informed about possible triggers and the best ways of dealing with them.

Base-line assessment

The frequency of Michael's seizures varied depending on activities. His abilities in basic skills were very limited, though his potential was greater than the skills he demonstrated on arrival. Michael could not read when he arrived, nor could he write legibly even when copying text. However, he was extremely articulate and able to relate to symbolic representation. His number work was limited to addition and subtraction, but he was able to use money.

Basic skills assessment

Michael joined the writing sessions for general knowledge lessons. He was to work at his own pace and no pressure was applied to improve his skills for the first term. This allowed him to settle meaning that behaviour and learning difficulties could be better assessed and managed.

Settling in before further assessment

By the third term Michael's seizures had decreased dramatically. His participation and interest in general knowledge subjects had begun to show. He talked more and seemed increasingly interested.

Evidence of personal development

Work now began to improve Michael's handwriting skills. It was evident that some of his difficulties may have been related to improper management of his epilepsy. Michael's willingness to apply himself was further aided by a new awareness of his abilities in his mixed ability group. Positive reinforcement of what he was able to achieve without effort or pressure allowed him to accept and follow up suggestions. These focused on very elementary steps of letter formation.

Beginning of basic skills teaching

By drawing Michael's attention to the 'secret' that letters are entirely composed of combinations of straight and curved lines, he began to practise straight lines and curves. Eventually, actual letter formation exercises were given, concentrating on

Development of an individualised teaching strategy

similar letters (b,d,n,h etc.). Michael was very enthusiastic in taking up this work in his spare time.

In his second year, Michael began to be able to distinguish letters. No pressure was applied and Michael began to follow text whilst someone else read. He began reading in his own time and was clearly proud of his achievement.

Evidence of progress

By the time he left, Michael was able to read most simple texts, though his progress had been hampered in the last year by a worsening of his epilepsy. Michael continued to apply himself in order not to lose what he had gained, demonstrating remarkable determination and pride in his achievement.

Maintenance of skills despite set-back

Example 6

The following forms are used to record learners' progress.



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Record of work		
Name: James		
Date	Summary of work	Comments and reminder
23.10.00	Begin to set up learning plan	First goals identified
	Set up spelling programme	Only 2 words to learn this week – 'characteristics' 'encourage'. Although James wants to improve spelling, anxious at the moment to find ways of tackling course work first.
	Essay planning Using notes to set up a plan	James had brought notes for an essay. Didn't know how to pull them into a plan. James found this very useful. Will bring completed plan next time (half term next week)
6.11.00	Essay planning Essay titles brought in	Essay plan (above) handed in. James felt happy with it. Looked at how to approach 3 new essay titles. James to write out 'brainstorm' and then put into plan. James stated found this very useful.
	Review spelling	James correctly wrote 'encourage' and 'characteristics'. Had found highlighting chunks in words useful. Would rather spend more time on writing needs at the moment – will attend Spelling Techniques after Christmas.
	'What is a sentence?'	Worked together through the Runcom materials on what is a sentence? Could identify easily in exercises. Biggest problem is when to use a full stop and when to use commas, semi-colons, etc. Will bring exercises next week.
	Vocabulary work on poems	James had identified this as an area of need. Feels now far more important to keep up with his essays and learn how to 'write properly' in sentences and plan essays properly.



Example 6 (continued)

Termly evaluation

Name of learner: <i>James</i>		
Main programme title:		
Term:	School:	
Goals for term	Learner's and learning support tutor's comments on progress	Is further study necessary? Please tick
1. <i>Set up and maintain a spelling programme</i>	1. <i>A decision was made fairly quickly to postpone setting up a spelling programme until next term when I will attend the short course, 'Spelling Techniques'</i>	✓
2. <i>Analyse newspaper article for vocabulary and technical terms</i>	2. <i>As above some terms have been looked at but I will probably attend another course in the summer term</i>	✓
3. <i>Look at techniques for writing reports</i>	3. <i>Excellent materials from Access course have made this largely unnecessary, although we continue to work on this</i>	
4. <i>Learn structures of a sentence and key terms involved</i>	4. <i>Understands terms but wants more work on sentence structure</i>	
5. <i>Learn note-taking techniques to use in lectures</i>	5. <i>"I have developed techniques that I am happy with for note taking"</i>	
Comments on attendance: Excellent – James has attended every lesson		
Learning support tutor (print)		Leamer's signature

Example 7

The forms below show how learners are given feedback on their work.



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Assignment feedback sheet on Wordpower	
Name of candidate:	Terry
Assignment title:	Report of an accident at work
Unit: 305	Element: 2
a) Acceptable to City & Guilds standards Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
b) This piece cannot go in your Wordpower folder because: <i>You need to set it out more clearly and there are several spelling mistakes: e.g. name of the manager needs correcting.</i>	
c) Before you try another piece you will need to work on the following points: <i>Formats of reports: headings and subheadings;</i> <i>Spelling of key words;</i> <i>Proofreading.</i>	
Assessor: Ann	Date: 17.11.00



Example 7 (continued)

Key skills feedback sheet on Communications level 1

Name of candidate:	Jane	
Assignment title:	Letter to a friend	
Date: 20.10.00	Pass/Refer	
Formal letter		
Layout	Yes	No
Your address	✓	
The date	✓	
Greeting	✓	
Closing		✓
Signature/name	✓	
Paragraphs		✓
Content		✓
Spelling		✓
Punctuation		✓
Tone/style	✓	
Drafting/proof-reading		✓
Feedback		
<i>Plan what you are going to say first, then it will be in a better order.</i>		
<i>Revise work on when a sentence ends and when you should put a full stop. I will give you some work on this.</i>		
<i>You don't need to write Yours sincerely to a friend. We will work on endings to letters.</i>		
Assessor: Barry	Date: 20.10.00	

Involving Learners in the Assessing and Recording Process



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Effective teachers use the assessment and recording process as another important opportunity to involve learners in their own learning. These teachers work with learners to:

- reinforce earlier learning
- reflect on progress and the learning milestones achieved
- identify strengths
- set new learning goals
- agree relevant learning tasks.

They use the following to involve learners in the assessment and recording of progress:

- regular written feedback
- oral feedback
- marking work
- reviews of progress
- systematic observation and questioning.



Example 1

One provider ensures that basic skills learning support tutors go through a careful process to involve learners in assessing and recording their own learning:

<p>1. Involving learners in setting their own goals</p>	<p>Initial interview</p> <p>The learner is encouraged to state their own learning support needs and the help they may need to achieve their primary learning goal.</p>
	<p>First meeting with learning support tutor</p> <p>Learner and tutor together list goals for the term. The list can be added to as new needs arise and the learner grows more confident in expressing their needs.</p>
<p>2. Involving learners in recording and commenting on their weekly learning support work</p>	<p>A typical learning support lesson</p> <p>(Usual length is 45 minutes, 1 hour if assessment suggests more time is required). The learning support tutor will have prepared work linked to the learner's recorded learning support goals and in the context of his or her primary learning goal. The learner may have brought work that has caused difficulty in the preceding week. The learning support tutor must help the learner acquire the skills needed to achieve, and to manage their own learning.</p>
<p>3. Assessment of achievement at weekly tutor/learner meeting</p>	<p>Some areas are straightforward to evaluate, e.g.:</p> <p>Spelling.</p> <p>Spellings learned at home each week are checked by dictation of individual words and dictation of words in sentences, including words learned in previous weeks. Words learned and those revised are recorded. The learner's views are sought about the effectiveness of teaching strategies adopted by the tutor. Evidence of learning for some skills will become more apparent once the learner puts these skills into practice on their course. No assessment takes place in learning support lessons of course work needed for completion of the learner's primary learning goal.</p>
<p>4. Termly evaluation</p>	<p>Each term, the learner and tutor work together to review the learning plan and evaluate progress made against the goal identified at the start of term.</p> <p>Progress is recorded using the record of work, and a joint decision made on whether further work is needed. The learner signs agreement with the review form. A copy of the completed form is sent to the learner's personal tutor.</p>

Example 2



The reflections of some basic skills students on what they have learnt follow.

Students' reflections on the basic skills gained through their English Language Module

Mavis says:

'I have found the module both interesting and helpful. The parts that I found most interesting were adjectives and adverbs, the use of commas and punctuation. Also the importance of proof-reading, no matter how correct you may think your work is proof-reading inevitably highlights some mistakes. I am aware that I still need to improve, spelling included, hopefully now though I am better prepared to make these improvements.'

Jim says:

'I have learnt a lot from this module and I feel I have benefited from all aspects of this module. I believe it has helped me be more aware of my writing work as a whole. Particularly within my writing skills for other modules especially with my grammar and spelling. With my spelling it has helped me completing a spelling list each week this has helped me identify the words I continually spell wrong.

The piece of creative writing I complete I enjoyed as I have not really done any creative writing before, this has helped me draw together all the skills I have learnt in the English module. When I was writing my short story at the beginning I found it difficult to start and clarify a subject that I was going to write about. But by the end I found it hard to stay within the word limit that was set as I ran over this limit and was unable to reduce it to the required amount.

In conclusion I have found this module beneficial in all aspects of English language and I feel my writing skills have developed and improved a great deal since I started this module.'

Mita says:

'I found most of the techniques employed useful. In particular, I liked the vowel combinations. I also found useful report writing. The logic used when approaching the report makes it half the task it should be. I found as well, proof-reading to be a valuable tool.'



Example 2 (continued)

Other students reflect on their learning (original spelling)

Sandip says:

'By using the look, say, cover, write, check method and writing out the words, my spelling is improving. The spelling strategies and rules, e.g. changing 'y' to 'i' and doubling rules have been beneficial for me. I understand the rule much better now. The techniques I have been shown for planning a piece of written work has improved my finished standard. My vocabulary is expanding with the use of the word grid. I feel more confident about formal writing and taking notes in class. I feel my English is improving because I have a better understanding after taking the English Language module.'

Kevin says:

'The course has made it clearer when I should be using various forms of punctuation. I learned various skills to help me with strategies for learning to spell... We wrote a short piece of writing which helped me practice all the skills I had learned ... I feel improving my writing skills will help me at work. It will also help me teach my son... I took my son on the internet and shows him how to do it, we played a word game together.'

Joan says:

'I have learned many new things this weekend such as mnemonics which will help me immensely. Another practice I will use is words within words ... I feel fairly confident now in thinking I can write a proper sentence, which builds confidence so I can write a proper letter. This has been an excellent course with excellent tutoring. I feel ready for action!!'

Kim says:

'I was given information about various strategies for learning how to spell effectively... I learnt sentence structure, parts of speech, tenses and punctuation skills. I always thought spelling and punctuation was a minefield, and it can be. The tricks and strategies have helped to make the whole thing clearer... I have joined in the group which has improved my social skills. I have used the library and computer. I suffer very poor self-esteem and lack of confidence so I enjoyed the relaxation methods... I can use these in groups or at home.'

'The more I learn the more I want to keep learning. I would like to set specific goals for my future, but I know that writing is one of the areas I would like to get better at. I also am at a turning point in my life where I wish to change my outlook and train for a job working with people in the community.'



Chris says:

I have gained a little confidence in public speaking whilst working within the group, this will help me with my work as a committee member with my local Community Association. I have also learnt the importance of note-taking...I have learnt that you can if you try break the normal thinking patterns and start to think in different ways. This will help when spelling. We looked at different spelling strategies one of which was to use words within words to help with problem areas within the word. Also mnemonics were you use a verse or a rhyme. Also putting pictures into words can help. I think I could mstill improve myself in this area.'

Caroline says:

'The course has made me more aware of the mistakes I would normally make...Nobody is too old to learn and what you learn every day has got to be useful to you in some way...I have found that being in a group you are not alone and other people want to know as much as you do. They also want to achieve the same goals as everyone else.'

Martin says:

'Going back to the basics of language and then going into more detail...has changed my view that writing essays, stories or anything like that is now not as hard as I first thought. Also it has made things clearer for me in my other college course, it will make it easier for me now that I have gone into all the details of spelling strategies and sentence structure...I am a lot less likely to make as many mistakes as I did before.'

Tim says:

'I am not so afraid of putting oen to paper...I have realised that people whohave important well paid jobs also have problems with English and spelling...I enjoyed the story writing and I can see how you could use these skills to improve your English. The more you write the more you can improve your skills. The course has taught me to think in a more focused way.'



Prompt Questions for Element 1



How do you map, record and review the process for assessing and recording learners' progress in your provision?



How might you adapt some of the approaches in this element to improve what you do?



How do you ensure procedures for assessing and recording progress are not too complex and time consuming?



How do you decide what needs to be recorded?



How do basic skills teachers liaise with vocational and academic teachers to assess the impact that basic skills support is having on their progress in relation to their main programme?



What strategies do you use for helping learners to recognise what they have learned?



How do you know that learning has taken place?



What can a learner do at the end of a programme that he/she could not do at the start?



Recognising achievements that are not qualifications

Not all basic skills learners want or need an award. Some have short-term, specific personal learning goals; they achieve their piece of learning, go away and may or may not return. Other learners may not yet have the confidence to work towards an award. For some learners, an award is irrelevant to their real learning needs. This last group may include students with learning difficulties or severe emotional difficulties who are learning at an early conceptual level.

For many learners, having the confidence and self-esteem to use their basic skills learning in their everyday lives is more important than achieving an award. Achievement for these learners may include:

- increased self-esteem and confidence
- increased independence, e.g. shopping alone or travelling independently
- joining a local club or community group
- reading a newspaper for the first time
- voting for the first time
- gaining a promotion at work
- getting work after a period of unemployment
- having a story published by the centre or college
- having work displayed as part of an open day.

Providers use a variety of ways to recognise these important achievements. The examples which follow include different approaches and case studies illustrating the broader achievements of students.

Example 1

A large further education college uses presentation evenings as one of its strategies for recognising students' broader achievements. All students, including those who have received formal qualifications from external bodies, receive a college certificate. This certificate acts as a record of achievement. It lists, in an easy to read format, the skills which students have developed. The certificates are adapted to reflect individual achievements.

Each year, students and their guests are invited to a presentation evening. Certificates are presented by the college principal. The evening is also a social occasion with refreshments and opportunities for students to talk to staff and other students, as well as to show families and friends where they have been studying. Last year over 200 people attended the presentation evening.



Example 2

A large adult education basic skills service publishes students' own writing.

To celebrate Adult Learners' Week, the local Learning Festival and the start of Year of Reading, the Service invited all basic skills students to contribute to a publication. The editors soon had a total of twenty-nine entries to choose from. Many tutors had spent considerable time encouraging students to take part in this activity. One tutor commented:

'Jim was a reluctant writer. He desperately wanted to put pen to paper but it took him an age just to write a few words. The idea that his work may be included in a printed publication really inspired him. He started with an idea we discussed during a session. By the time he returned the following week, Jim had written a whole page. He was so proud of this and told me that this was the first time he felt really inspired to write. We went through his story together, made a few changes to spellings and then posted it off. When the finished booklet arrived he was absolutely thrilled and requested a further five copies for family and friends.'

All entrants received a letter thanking them for their contribution shortly after the closing date. Later, each received a free copy of the publication. Basic skills tutors were sent a copy for each of the groups they taught.

Example 3



This shows how one learner obtained employment in an area of her choice.

Sally is in her mid-50s and very lacking in confidence. Spelling difficulties meant Sally avoided writing anything unless her husband was able to correct it for her. She was unwilling to attend a group as she had previously been at a college and she had felt that her own needs were not being met.

Sally began working individually with a volunteer tutor. She progressed into a group where she worked on her own programme of spelling and writing. Eventually, Sally obtained a job that involved a considerable amount of written communication.

When she got the job, Sally telephoned all the tutors she had worked with to let them know she would not have got the job without their help.

Example 4

This shows how one learner increased her confidence and ability to do a job she had previously felt unable to do.

Moira is in her mid-30s. She enrolled on the ABE programme because she was afraid to take an offer of promotion that involved some writing and keeping time sheets for employees on the production line.

Moira's literacy skills were assessed as being at entry level. She never did any writing at home. Her husband did all the necessary written tasks, including the Christmas and birthday cards.

Moira worked irregular shifts and had two primary school-aged children. It was difficult for her to get to college at the same time each week. Maria was allocated a voluntary tutor and progressed from being able to write her home correspondence to taking on jobs which offered promotion at work.



Example 5

This examples provides a case study of a learner's progression in personal confidence and literacy skills in order to gain a vocational qualification.

Bob is in his late forties. He originally joined a Basic Skills class to improve his spelling. He has worked in engineering for most of his life and run his own haulage business. Bob has always had back problems and cannot return to physical work. He was looking for a career change and needed to improve his literacy skills in order to obtain employment. Bob is an experienced sailor, with navigation certificates and hopes to combine his boating and engineering skills in some future occupation.

A disrupted education with frequent family moves and his own history of poor health, meant that Bob left school with no qualifications and little confidence in his abilities. He was extremely nervous at the first few sessions of the community classes. Bob felt his reading was good enough for day-to-day purposes. He could cope with the local papers and only found the 'odd word' difficult. He had some problems with comprehension, having to re-read two or three times to get the meaning. His writing was his priority. Initial assessment showed his writing was at entry level with severe spelling and punctuation difficulties. Bob had many of the characteristics of dyslexia.

Bob attended a Basic Skills community class and negotiated with the tutor a learning plan incorporating a structured spelling programme. Bob soon discovered that, despite his spelling difficulties, he really enjoyed writing and brought a piece of descriptive writing to class each week. One of his stories won a county-wide writing competition. After a year, his confidence had increased and he decided to work towards a City and Guilds Wordpower Level 1 Certificate, achieving this in Spring 1999. At this point Bob wrote in his work record "I can now express myself with a pen. Something I have never been able to do".

Bob is now working towards a Level 2 award and is hoping to begin an Introduction to Office Skills course next term. He has compiled a C.V. and has had two part-time jobs but no full-time work. He has bought a computer and quickly become a proficient and enthusiastic user, 'e-mailing' friends abroad with descriptions of his boating holidays. In two years, he has progressed from writing a hesitant sentence to surfing the net with confidence.

Example 6



This shows how a learner progressed from part-time basic skills provision to full-time vocational education.

Denise is in her late forties and left school to work as a sewing machinist in the rag trade. She married and has four children, the third of whom was born with severe disabilities. She brought her children up on her own and her life revolved around caring for her daughter who required 24-hour care.

Three years ago, Denise's daughter went into long term care and her youngest son left school. Denise now had time to consider her own life.

To return to the job market Denise knew she needed to gain skills and confidence. After receiving guidance at a Basic Skills Coffee and Information morning, she enrolled on a Return to Office work course. On the course, Denise conquered her fear of computers and completed an OCR Return to Work certificate. She gained confidence and enjoyment from mixing with others and from her own achievements.

Although she enjoyed the course, Denise decided that the office environment was not for her and that she would prefer something more creative. She also wanted to brush up on her numeracy skills to improve her job prospects. After discussion with her tutor she joined 'Over the Garden Wall' a Basic Skills course.

The course introduced numeracy and literacy skills through a variety of countryside activities such as floristry, garden design, and bee keeping. During the course, Denise achieved a Numberpower certificate (Level 2) and found out more about the college. She decided to do an interior design course. Denise was concerned that it had been a long time since she had done any studying. She wanted to practise note taking and essay writing, and enrolled on a Basic Skills Return to Study course at the Learning Centre in the summer term.

Denise completed a one-year Interior Design course, achieving distinction in every assignment. She is now working on a two year BTEC HNC course in Interior Design and is aiming to set up her own business.

Denise says – “None of this would have happened without my basic skills courses ... I got fantastic support from the tutors, I found my confidence returning and I've never looked back”.



Example 7

This is a case study of a student who so increased her confidence by gaining a qualification that she was encouraged to go on and learn more.

Sandra is in her late forties. Twice a week, she attends a day centre for people with physical disabilities. The basic skills section of a nearby college runs a discrete English and Maths workshop at the centre. Sandra also attends a curriculum support workshop at another location.

Sandra has difficulties with handwriting so she often types or word-processes her work. She works quite slowly but is able to produce text and correct it herself. Her physical disability also affects her oral communication. She lacks personal confidence and doubts her ability to produce written work.

One of Sandra's long term aims is to gain qualifications in English. She feels that her physical disability held her back at school and prevented her gaining qualifications. Sandra lacks the confidence to take advantage of special arrangements for sitting exams such as additional time or amanuensis. However, she enjoys workshop learning where she can build a portfolio and complete assessments.

Since attending the curriculum support workshop, Sandra has gained City and Guilds Communication Skills (Wordpower) at Level 1. This enabled Sandra to work at her own pace on topics relevant to her everyday needs. She enjoyed working on a portfolio and gathering evidence to meet assessment criteria. Gaining a qualification has boosted her confidence.

Sandra would now like to gain further qualifications using a similar portfolio and workshop approach.

Individual Progression Routes



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

Students' confidence and self-esteem are often increased by the achievement of an award which can open up new life opportunities, as well as leading to further learning, as these examples of the progress made by individuals show.

1. Albert is in his mid-50s and has never achieved any qualifications before. He achieved Wordpower Level 1, then felt sufficiently confident with his writing to apply for a course in Ground Maintenance at the college. Albert succeeded on the course. He stayed in the same job but was given more responsibilities at work.
2. Myra is 35 with no previous qualifications. She achieved Level 1 Wordpower, then applied for a job as a care assistant. At interview Myra was asked to write a personal statement as to why she wanted the job. She wrote the statement and got the job.
3. Betty is in her 40s and has no previous qualifications. She passed Wordpower Levels 1 and 2 and then enrolled for an evening Access course and an ABE numeracy group to get support for numeracy. She passed the Access course. Betty is now enrolled on an NVQ caring course.
4. Joan is in her 30s with no previous qualifications. She achieved Wordpower Level 1 then passed OCR English and OCR Spelling Skills. Joan is now doing GCSE English.
5. Freda is in her mid-20s. She attended a school for children with learning difficulties. Freda achieved ABE Literacy, levels 1, 2 and 3 and Numberpower at Entry Level. Her improved confidence meant she felt able to apply for jobs and successfully obtained a job as a school crossing attendant.
6. Rosie is in her 30s and had always worked in caring jobs. She joined a numeracy group because her friend said it was "OK". Rosie achieved Level 3 City and Guilds numeracy which led to her re-thinking what she was capable of. Rosie then enrolled on an Access to social work course.



In the most effective basic skills provision, students can pursue their personal learning goals and, where appropriate, work towards an externally recognised award. They can also progress from one qualification to another as their learning needs and aspirations change.

Teachers need to work with learners to consider whether it is appropriate for them to study for a qualification and at what level.

Providers may wish to take account of advice provided by the FEFC inspectorate which states that awards are most effective when they:

- provide an appropriate curriculum framework and structure for organising learning
- define standards accurately and align them to national levels
- specify learning outcomes and performance criteria
- have assessment linked to standards
- ensure consistent application of standards through rigorous verification
- provide opportunities for dual accreditation of key skills and basic skills within the same scheme
- encourage the development of both functional and creative language, and both functional and conceptual numeracy
- allow some flexibility for teachers to match content, context and assessment mode to the learning needs of their students*

**Numeracy, Literacy and ESOL: Evaluation of Entry and Level 1 Awards: National report from the inspectorate, FEFC November 1999.*

Example 1



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

One adult education service gives the following advice to tutors.

Notes for tutors

Before offering guidance to students on the basic skills national qualification the tutor needs to know:

- levels within the qualification
- the assessment criteria for each level
- the underpinning skills required
- the range of possible progression routes within the national qualification framework.

Working together the student and tutor should aim to consider:

- short-, medium- and long-term goals
- attitude to learning
- interests
- the student's ability level
- previous learning experiences and qualifications
- expectations
- progression routes
- adaptability of assessment criteria to meet individual needs and interests
- relevance of the qualification to the student
- timeframe
- feasibility of home-study/independent learning
- study skills
- additional support requirements
- availability of appropriate provision
- financial implications – class fees
childcare
transport
registration charge
certification fees
course materials.



Example 2

Basic Skills Quality Initiative

A large college of further education advises its tutors that they should consider the following before suggesting a student works for an external award:

Question	Answer	In favour of offering basic skills assessment	Answer	Against offering basic skills award
1. Is my student already working for Key Skills accreditation?	No		Yes	
2. Is my student likely to achieve Key Skills accreditation?	No		Yes	
3. Will my student be overloaded by working for an additional qualification (i.e. basic skills)?	No		Yes	
4. Will the basic skills qualification be a useful additional qualification for my student?	Yes		No	

Example 3



Basic Skills Quality Initiative

The same college offers more specific step-by-step guidance in relation to the use of the Basic Skills National Qualification.

Step 1

Think about your student's personal learning goals. The list may include:

- improving my English
- reading a newspaper
- writing more legibly
- and so on.

Step 2

Now go through the units and elements in Basic Skills National Qualification mapping your student's personal learning goals against the elements.

Step 3

Now use the mapping outcomes to decide whether the student has personal goals that link to the relevant elements in the qualification.

Step 4

Consider the advantages of offering the opportunity to work for the qualification. Advantages might include:

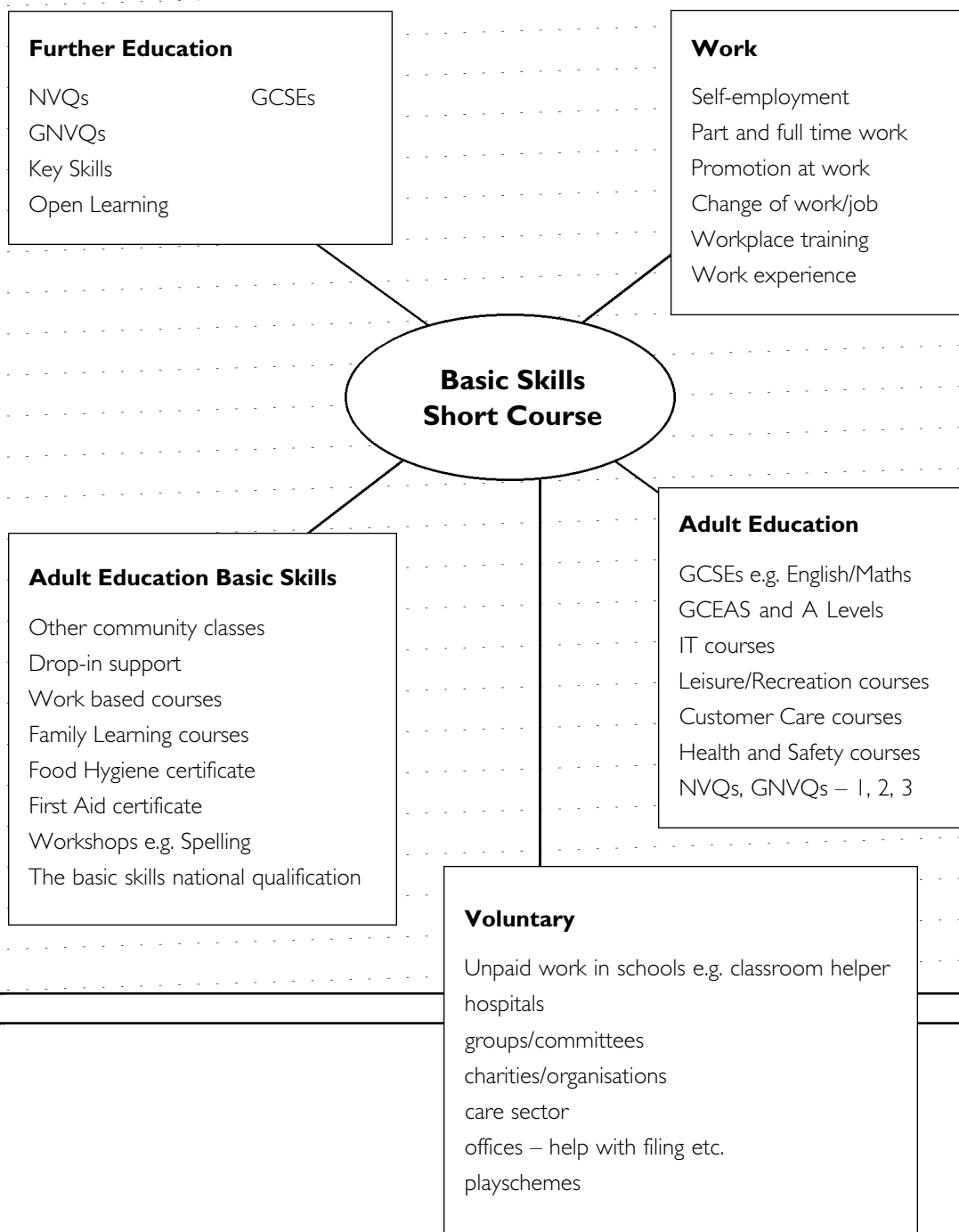
- a framework within which the student's personal learning goals can fit
- a step along a clearly defined and motivating progression route
- the student's learning achievements will be recorded using the national qualification.



Example 4

The following diagram of an adult education service charts the range of possible progression routes from its basic skills courses.

Chart of wider progression opportunities from a basic skills short course



■
What strategies do you use in your provision to recognise students' broader achievements?

■
What use do you make of case studies to summarise the progress students have made?

■
What guidance do you give to teachers about the use of the basic skills qualification?

■
How is information about progression provided for students?

■
What guidance do you give to staff to help them to construct the case studies?

■
How might you use the material in this element to develop a policy for the use of awards in your provision?

■

Blank page