

## **Providing opportunities for English, maths, ICT and wider skills**

### **This handout will cover:**

- Why provide opportunities for learners to practice these skills?
- Terminology
- How to provide opportunities for learners to practice their skills in:
  - English
  - Maths
  - ICT
  - Wider skills
  - British values
- Reading list
- Website list

### **Why provide opportunities for learners to practice these skills?**

- To help improve the skills of learners.
- To give learners confidence.
- To help learners to function confidently, effectively and independently in life and in work.

Whenever possible, it's best to find naturally occurring opportunities to embed the skills of English, maths, ICT and wider skills within your sessions. This will enable your learners to see them as part of the subject, not as a separate lesson.

You might feel your own skills in these areas need improving therefore you could partake in further training yourself. Helpful free websites are listed at the end of this handout.

If you are not competent in the skills yourself, you will not set a good example to your learners. For example, if you spell words wrongly in a handout, have difficulty making calculations or can't use a computer very well, your learners may lose confidence in you as a teacher.

When providing opportunities during sessions, they must be realistic and relevant to enable your learners to engage with real situations in their subject area. You can also encourage your learners to carry out activities in their own time to help them improve their skills. There might be free courses in your area or via the internet that learners could take. If there are library facilities locally, you could give your learners an activity to carry out some research there. They could then produce a short presentation, individually or in groups, and report back on their findings. If you upload materials to the cloud or a virtual learning environment (VLE), your learners

could access these to read at a later date, amend them to an appropriate font or size, and save or print them if they wish to access them again.

## **Terminology**

There are several terms for the skills, such as:

- Basic Skills
- Core Skills
- Essential Skills
- Functional Skills
- Key Skills
- Minimum Core
- Skills for Life

Whatever terms are used, they are all very similar and aim to improve the skills of learners.

## **How to provide opportunities for learners to practice their skills in:**

### ***English***

#### **Cookery in a classroom**

Reading recipes, researching healthy eating magazines and books, writing a list of ingredients, discussing recipes, asking questions, listening to others, word processing a menu.

#### **Plumbing in the workplace**

Reading trade leaflets and brochures, reading instruction leaflets, writing a list of items for a job or an order, discussing the requirements of jobs with customers, talking about ideas and plans, word processing an invoice.

#### **Fitness in a gym**

Reading fitness magazines, reading instructions on how to use the exercise machines, making notes regarding an exercise or fitness programme, writing targets and achievements, discussing how to keep fit and reach goals, talking about exercise programmes, debating ideas, giving presentations, keeping a diary i.e. reflective writing.

## **Maths**

### **Cookery in a classroom**

Calculating weights and costs of ingredients, measuring amounts, estimating calorific values, cooking times and temperatures.

### **Plumbing in the workplace**

Calculating measurements of areas, measuring pipes, calculating the costs of materials, estimating prices for jobs, estimating how long a job will take, working out the final price of labour and material costs.

### **Fitness in a gym**

Calculating body mass index and body weight, working out exercises to either increase or lose weight to a certain goal, estimating how long activities will take, calculating the costs of new equipment, drawing graphs of targets and achievements.

## ***Information and communication technology (ICT)***

### **Cookery in a classroom**

Using a word processor to type a menu, researching healthy eating websites, e-mailing other learners. Giving a presentation to peers using electronic whiteboards or Power Point, creating a podcast, taking photos of finished products and uploading them to a website or electronic portfolio.

### **Plumbing in the workplace**

Using a calculator to work out costs, using a word processor to type an invoice, researching products online, e-mailing other customers and suppliers, using a camera or smart phone to take pictures of jobs (before and after).

### **Fitness in a gym**

Using the technology within the equipment to set up an exercise programme, using a word processor to create and print notices, researching products online, communicating with others by e-mail, compiling music podcasts for different exercises/activities.

## Wider skills

*Wider skills* is the term used for the skills which are associated with education, employment and life in general. They include

- *Working with Others* which focuses on teamwork, planning, organising and carrying out work with other people.
- *Improving Own Learning and Performance* which focuses on recognising the skills of being an effective learner and the importance of reflection.
- *Problem Solving* which focuses on the skills of recognising problems and identifying, evaluating and seeing through possible solutions.

They are skills which can be transferred to different situations and contexts to help a learner progress further. They are often referred to as *transferable skills* or *personal, learning and thinking skills* (PLTS).

PLTS are skills that, together with the functional skills of English, maths and ICT are essential to success in learning, life and work.

There are six areas to PLTS which comprise of:

- independent enquirers
- creative thinkers
- reflective learners
- team workers
- self managers
- effective participators.

Ways to improve these skills with your learners include:

- Independent enquirers: planning and carrying out investigations and taking informed decisions.
- Creative thinkers: generating ideas, tackling problems and finding imaginative solutions.
- Reflective learners: setting goals for learning and work, monitoring performance and reviewing progress.
- Team workers: working collaboratively with other people, taking responsibility and resolving issues.
- Self-managers: being organised, showing enterprise and responding to new challenges.

- Effective participators: playing a full part in studies and the workplace or the wider community.

Your organisation might want you to integrate the above groups of skills with your learners during your sessions, if so, consider how you could use activities which could improve and develop them for your particular subject.

There are other areas in which you could promote skills, knowledge and understanding which also fall under the term of wider skills. Your organisation or the programme you are teaching might require you to incorporate some or all of these skills within your sessions.

For example:

- Citizenship – discussions based on nationality, politics and the state
- Employability – creating a curriculum vitae (CV) and applying for jobs
- Enterprise – setting up a small business, creating a website and online ordering system
- ICT - using smart phones, computers, tablets, laptops etc for e-mail, web-based research, social networking, viewing videos, word-processing assignments, and using presentation packages for projects
- Social responsibility - time keeping, personal development, behaviour and professionalism, confidence, health and well being
- Sustainability – how to recycle, reuse and reduce usage

### **British values**

If you work in education in Great Britain, you will need to consider how you can promote fundamental British values. If your organisation is inspected by Ofsted, they will be looking for evidence of this. However, perhaps it's not just about British values, it could be considered everyone's values.

British values are:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect
- tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith.

Learners will need to know about these, and to understand how they affect their role in society. They will need to know what is right and wrong, and how they should respect the law. They should also know how to accept responsibility for their actions, respect others, and understand how they can contribute to society in a positive way. If you get the opportunity, you could hold a discussion with your learners based

around the values. Some curriculum areas might include the values as a specific topic.

Ways to promote the values can include:

- discussing and researching how democracy and the law works in Britain, for example, comparing it to governments in other countries
- encouraging learners to make independent choices and express their views, with the knowledge that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment
- exploring with learners what it means to be British, and what they think the values mean
- holding discussions which give learners the opportunity to learn how to defend their points of view and respect others' views
- inviting guest speakers from different faiths and beliefs to talk to learners and answer any questions they have
- preparing learners for life and employment in a modern civilised society
- promoting democracy in action by encouraging learners to speak up, knowing they will be listened to
- using learning materials which represent all aspects of society
- enabling learners to vote for members to be on educational committees.

### **Reading list**

Campaign for Learning (2009) *State of the nation survey 2008* London Campaign for Learning

Gravells A (2014) *The Award in Education and Training (Revised)* London Learning Matters SAGE

Gravells A (2013) *Passing Assessments for the Award in Education and Training* London Learning Matters SAGE

Passey D (2013) *Inclusive Technology Enhanced Learning* Abingdon Routledge

Poore M (2013) *Using social media in the classroom: a best practice guide* London SAGE Publications Ltd

Salmon G (2011) *E-moderating* Abingdon: Routledge

Salmon G (2013) *E-tivities* (2<sup>nd</sup> Edn) Abingdon: Routledge

Starkey L (2012) *Teaching and learning in the digital age* Abingdon Routledge

White J (2015) *Digital Literacy Skills for FE Teachers* London SAGE Publications Ltd

## Website list

Citizen Maths - [www.citizenmaths.com](http://www.citizenmaths.com)

Free online English and maths support - [www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/0/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise/0/)

Free online initial assessment for using technology -  
<http://wip.exeter.ac.uk/collaborate/itest/>

Free online English audit - <http://sagepub.net/LM/audit/audeng.asp>

Free online maths audit - <http://sagepub.net/LM/audit/audmat.asp>

Functional skills resources - <https://tinyurl.com/qxsc9ov>

National Association for Numeracy and Mathematics in Colleges -  
[www.nanamic.org.uk](http://www.nanamic.org.uk)

Online free courses in various subjects - [www.vision2learn.net](http://www.vision2learn.net)

Online games - <http://www.npted.org/schools/sandfieldsComp/games/Pages/Game-Downloads.aspx>

Online presentations – [www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com)

Using computers and technology: free guides - <http://digitalunite.com/>

PLTS - <https://tinyurl.com/zcxkudz>

PSHE - <https://tinyurl.com/lz4wf97>

Promoting British values - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-fundamental-british-values-through-smsc>