

# Types of learners within the catering sector education essay

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Post compulsory education is considered as the learning beyond compulsory secondary education. Also known as further education (FE), it is accessible from a range of environments including specialist colleges; community colleges; secondary schools; worked based training providers; the prison service; NHS; and police academies (FLEMING, 2013). Hospitality and Catering courses are usually taught within community colleges or specialist colleges. FE is different to higher education (HE) which is taught within Universities. Colleges aim to inspire their students, communicating this message in the form of a mission statement that appeals to the learner's needs, and pledges to increase their potential e. g. 'to enhance learners skills to increase their employable value'. An example of a college mission statement and strategic objectives are shown in Appendix A. pxx. Learners within this setting include school leavers; adult learners; work based learners, and work based apprentices. Catering, as a career based skill set is found in the vocational setting (an example of an academic course would be mathematics). The Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) provides a framework to regulate vocational qualifications. The framework is made up of units, providing a step-by-step way in which students can gain qualifications. Sections have credit values which indicate the amount of credits that are rewarded when a unit is finished, one credit is equal to ten hours of learning and education (OFQUAL, 2013). There are three levels of QCF qualifications: Award: equal to one to twelve credits. Certificate: equal to thirteen to thirty-six credits. Diploma: minimum of thirty-seven credits. Previous relevant qualifications can be used towards the next qualification; units rewarded by other awarding organisations can also be used to build up

qualifications. Experience can also be mapped into the framework to gain entry onto a course. Accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) is a method used to map 'life experience' onto a course'. It enables all people; from all walks of life to receive formal recognition for the skills, experience and knowledge they have, and gain entry into higher education (this gives exemption from certain parts of the course or study (WILCOX & BROWN, 2013)). Ofqual are the non government ministerial body that regulate and set the standards of quality in curriculum and of assessment in qualifications. They maintain the standards and confidence in vocational and academic courses. There is a vast array of courses on the register, including level one to level three Hospitality and Catering, with many other courses in the sector (OFQUAL, 2013). Appendix B. PXX shows snapshot of catering qualification providers on the Ofqual register. Celebrity Chef Gordon Ramsey made comments about vocational qualifications, stating national vocational qualifications (NVQs) are a joke, standing for not very qualified 'they aren't preparing student chefs sufficiently; college lecturers are dinosaurs, out of touch with modern kitchen practices, churning out the same old stuff'. He felt he could do a better job (SIMS, 2009). Interestingly NVQs started to be phased out in 2010, favored by QCF mapped qualifications, designed to support learners meet the desires of perspective employers. Ofqual have worked closely with the Sector Skills Council to develop standards that meet the needs of employers in the hospitality sector and prepare learners to meet these needs (OFQUAL, 2013). Ofsted (Office for standards in Education) regulate and inspect services within adult learning (as well as for early years, child care and schools. The Learning and Improvement Skills Service (LSIS)

improve these standards to raise achievements in the learning and skills sector. LSIS work in partnership within the sector to increase and maintain self improvement (LSIS, 2013). Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) is a union for education professionals; they are recognised in the sector for using their experiences to influence educational policies. They work with the government and employers to defend pay, conditions and career development within the sector. Members consist of teachers, supply teachers, heads, lecturers, managers and support staff in maintained and independent sector schools and colleges (ATL, 2013). This is not a mandatory requirement but it is within teachers' interest to join.

## **RULES & REGULATIONS**

### **Code of Practice**

The Institute for Learning (IFL) Professional Code of Practice was created by the profession for teachers, trainee teachers, and tutors within FE colleges. The code provides assurance that its members are committed to the highest standards of practice and they meet the requirements of a professional teacher or trainee teacher. IFL's aims are to support its members and raise the standard of teaching. The institute for learning state: 'The institute for learning values and promotes the autonomy of learning practitioners whilst aiding their individual and collective development within a framework of integrity, honesty and professionalism' (IFL, 2008). There are six core principles Integrity, Respect, Care, Practice, Disclosure, Responsibility, Teacher's awareness of these key legislations and policies is vital in the lifelong learning sector.

## **Equality & Diversity**

The hospitality and catering sector understands that learners are individuals; they come from many backgrounds that should be regarded as equals and treated with respect. Learners irrespectively should not be labelled because of their race, colour, ethnicity, age, gender, sexual beliefs; disability etc.

Teachers should model behaviour that is responsible to meet the needs of all learners. FE colleges have procedures in place for discrimination, to promote equality and diversity by analysing learner's needs to identify key priorities to close the achievement gap. This adheres to the Equality Act 2010. An example of a college equality and diversity statement may be: 'To promote an ethos of inclusivity, equality and diversity ensuring every person is valued and supported'. Inclusive learning is important in meeting the needs of the individual learner by developing a tailor made curriculum in replacement of the existing programme; instead of learners fitting the needs of the framework inclusive learning means matching how the learners learn best and teaching them what they want to learn in order for successful learning to take place. This involves supporting specific needs, learning styles, providing relevant resources and giving them access to fair assessment. It is important inclusive learning approaches all adults (TOMILINSON, 1996).

## **Every Learner Matters (ELM)**

All teachers are accountable for their contribution to this policy. There are five key findings for well-being for all learners: Staying safe. Enjoying and achieving. Being healthy. Making a positive contribution. Achieving economic well being. Teachers are responsible for improving the outcome of learners.

Personalisation must be applied to learning and the learner's progression

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using a holistic approach to achieve the objectives; moving away from standard curriculum design (DUCKWORTH, 2008).’ ELM requires teachers to work with others to make a contribution to the well-being of learners for educational purposes. This is to help the learners to make their way through the educational system, finding opportunities that inturn suit their personal needs and meet aspirations’ (DUCKWORTH, et al., 2010)

## **Record Keeping & Assessment**

Record keeping is an important aspect of a teacher’s role, accountability is important for professional integrity. Failure to conform would be considered gross misconduct. It is essential to ensure learners are on the right course; learners take assessments and results are recorded; this supports and acts as evidence towards course funding agreements. Examples of record keeping: Registers. Lesson plans. Learners support documentation.

Disciplinary records.(DUCKWORTH, et al., 2010)Formative assessment is important to identity learning has taken place, it is also ongoing, and generates a selection of evidence, it also help a student to self-evaluate.

Summative assessment assesses overall learning; it determines success, differentiates between learners and predicts success at higher levels.

Various methods can be used to check learner’s progress. For example learners can be asked to answer questions or participate in short quiz activities, as well as practical sessions/exams, presentations, ongoing performance observation or the use of portfolios.

## **Health and safety (HS)**

Health and safety (HS) in hospitality and catering is required by law to provide information, instruction and training. HS is vital for avoiding accidents and ill health as a result of work. Training is effective in preparing learners to complete tasks safely, thus avoiding distress, ill health and accidents, or financial implications to future businesses when on placement or in future work related roles (HSE, 2013).

## **TYPES OF LEARNERS WITHIN THE CATERING SECTOR**

Learners come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds, and are of varied abilities (some with poor numeracy and literacy skills), often with poor previous attendance records. However they are generally motivated and enjoy their education. They pay particular attention to appearance, and attendance rates are higher than previous school records, and punctuality is better. Learner's academic skills tend to be poorer than their practical abilities; they are inclined to achieve at vocational skills (OFSTED, 2009). Kelly, 2007 described learners within the post compulsory setting as having particular preferences. He said: Post compulsory learners prefer surroundings which are relaxed and conducive to learning, with features such as comfortable chairs, good lighting and good use of information technology. Post compulsory learners prefer a setting which is non-threatening and encouraging. He noted that adult learners prefer lecturers that are: Content experts. Provide relevance. Will not waste time. Use clear learning (SMART) objectives. Modify and add to learning. Use problem solving techniques and active learning. Promote self directed learning

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though understanding individual learning needs. And noted the importance of the 3 R's with these types of learners: Respect, Relevance and Responsibility (KELLY, 2007).

## **Barriers to communication**

Communication barriers prevent effective communication to learning; different barriers are dependent on the teaching situation. Maslow's hierarchy of needs model shows people need to fulfil the basic needs in life before growth to the next level of developmental need. When the basic needs have been met, a person may be able to reach the next level of self actualisation. Every person is capable given the desire to move up the hierarchy towards a level of self-actualisation. Unfortunately, progression is often interrupted by failure to meet lower level needs. There are certain experiences in life that can affect this, for example, divorce and job loss. This may cause a person to fluctuate between levels of the hierarchy (KNOWLES, 1970). Appendix C. pxx shows diagrammatic representation of Maslow's hierarchy. This can interfere with a learner's availability to learn and act as a communication barrier. Other communication barriers for learners in hospitality and catering also include poor numeracy & literacy skills. Supplementary learning can be offered especially as numeracy and literacy is important i. e. is essential learning for costing menus etc.

## **Effective communication**

People learn best when: Understand when something is important. Have independence in learning. Learn by mistakes (experiential). The time is right for them to learn. The process is positive.(KNOWLES, 1970)Fleming (2013)



noted people have different learning styles which maintain focus and motivation. There are three learning preferences, these are: visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. Visual learners rely on pictures, illustrations and drawings. This type of learner will sit at the front of the class to avoid any obstruction when learning by visualisation, this type of learner learns by watching, with handouts, and writing on a board. Auditory learners rely on listening to the sound of clear voice, generally will participate in discussions and asking the learner questions ' what does that sound like to you'. Kinesthetic learners need to participate in a task to comprehend it. They will also offer as volunteers to help, this is a good way to communicate with them, allowing them to practice what they learn.(FLEMING, 2013)All three have their own aphorism: visual learners - ' show me'; auditory learners-' tell me'; kinesthetic learners-' let me do it'. Most learners use all three styles when learning but one style is always preferred (PETERSON, 2013). Kolb (1984) stated that learning resulted from interaction between theory and experience. He said learning takes place in four stages in a cycle that continues the more one learns. Appendix D. pxx shows diagrammatic representation of the Kolb's cycle. For complete learning to take place, a person must continue through all four parts of the cycle. Experience alone does not create experiential learning.' Learning comes from the thoughts and ideas created as a result of experience'(KOLB, 1984)Kolb discussed two dimensions to the way people understand and interpret experience. We understand experience by feeling/doing (concrete experience) and by thinking/theorising (abstract conceptualisation). We interpret know-how by watching/reflecting (observation reflection) and by doing/applying (active

experimentation). Diverger's understand experience by feeling/doing and interpret experience by watching/reflecting. A characteristic question of this learning type is 'Why?' Accommodator's also understand experience by feeling/doing but understand experience by doing/applying. This type of learner asks the question 'What?' Assimilator's experience by thinking / postulating. They change experience by observing /reflecting. This type of learner asks the question, 'What if?' Converger's recognise experience by thinking/ imagining. Convergents understand experience by doing/applying. This type of learner asks the question, 'How?' In everyday life we are faced learning situations. Amidst observing and reflecting we structure our own 'guidelines' about the world around us. These rules we test to prove or disprove what we have learned. In lifelong learning learners embrace this approach of discovery. Awareness of new situations, observation and reflection, allows the formation of new learning and then testing (COLVIN, 2006).

## **BASIC TEACHING PRINCIPLES FOR LEARNERS IN CATERING SECTOR**

Good learning techniques within college catering environments channel complex tasks to the more confident learners, and more targeted specific help for students that required further assistance, this is known as a differentiation technique (KELLY, 2007). Differentiation, more commonly known as 'mixed ability teaching', uses strategies that bring success in teaching by supporting a learners differences (PETTY, 2004). Differentiation techniques can reach out to all types of learners, they: Support learners to take ownership for their learning. Change learner view; a particular type of

learning does not suit all. Change direction, learners don't need to master all skills before they can be applied. Support the use of imaginative technology e. g. Power point/animoto presentations, social media etc. Show concern, support learners to pursue their interests, Assess learning; reflection of sessions supports learners to know where they are and where they need to go. Craft an ethos of thinking, questioning the learners with ' what do you think', ' do you have ideas'. Support peer learning from peers; teachers develop this network of learning. Centre on learning not labour. Give reasons for every learning experience. Support target setting and reflection; supporting learners to self evaluate, and reflect on learning.(SACKSON, 2012)Using college restaurants and kitchens can be used to embed practical skills effectively, providing opportunity for learners to experience skill practice within a working kitchen. This helps to link theory with skill and practice. (OFSTED, 2009). Learners within post compulsory settings learn better when able to relate learning to real life (KELLY, 2007). Using college facilities efficiently ensures all students are given every chance to succeed (HSE, 2013). Encouragement to enter local, regional and national catering competitions can support with learner engagement by offering a sense of achievement. The competition is beneficial to raise the standard of skills and to broaden the learner's imagination, and to extend the learners knowledge. It is important for colleges to work collaboratively with potential employers to offer learners a variety of work based experience. Careful attendance monitoring is particularly important to support learners stay on the course. Matching the learner to an employer supports this process. This is most effective when accounting for learner's individual needs, for example,

learners with disabilities are best placed with local business's that could support their needs. Confident learners are best placed in more demanding setting for them to use their own initiative. Good course management supports learners to develop vital skills so that they meet the employer's requirements (OFSTED, March 2009).

## **CONCLUSION**

It can be seen from this assignment that the hospitality and catering sector attracts a certain type of learner, who will respond to best to a personalised approach that accounts for their specialist needs, and past struggles within compulsory education, or previous job roles. Opportunities for teachers, support staff and managers to share the good practice would provide a valuable learning resource within the hospitality and catering setting (OFSTED, 2009). Catering colleges must make sure that objectives set in individual learning plans are specific to support learners improve their performance; information communication technology is encouraged to connect learners; and teachers are available to offer extra support for students with poor written and spoken English skills (OFSTED, 2009). Other areas particularly important for learners on catering courses are: Safe use of dangerous equipment e. g. ability to chop and cut with a knife properly without injuring one's self (HSE, 2013). Food hygiene regulations (FSA, 2013). Well written lesson plans and schemes of work linking practical based and theory lessons that are effective but not over-detailed; to engage with preferred learning styles. Use of materials. It is important to cater for all learning needs and types of learners i. e. to diversify learning and incorporate use of menu cards, recipes, checklists with concise instructions

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that fit assessment criteria (FINK, 1999). Provide learning with relevant and up-to-date skills required within hospitality and catering business's to prepare learners for the high standard of occupational skills needed for industry.