

Planning and enabling learning



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

PLANNING AND ENABLING LEARNING-THEORY ASSIGNMENT Hypothesis Should formal functional skills lessons be compulsory in vocational training or is an embedded approach the answer. Initial Research With my hypothesis always on my mind I started my research along the lines of; was there a need for functional skills within vocational training at all and if so how much and how to deliver it This led me to a report on the NRDC web site that raised some very interesting findings (http://www.nrdc.org.uk/publications_details.aspID=73#). One being that in all but a few instances where ??? super teachers??™ were involved, statistics showed that where all four subjects are delivered by one person achievement levels dropped regarding grading and success rates (Jupp, T. 2006: 22).

After this another report from the NRDC called ??? You wouldn??™t expect a maths teacher to teach plastering??? (<http://www.nrdc.org.uk/content.aspCategoryID=1109>). It highlights the fact that not all vocational trainers feel comfortable with delivering key skills (Jupp, T. Reflect magazine 2006: 10). With my mind leaning toward a blended approach I began researching the pros and cons of all three approaches.

Geoff Petty comments on how students find formal functional skills irksome and irrelevant to the main body of work covered in their vocational studies (Petty, J 2009: 505). After reading these reports I deduced that maybe one approach over the other was not the answer but a blended approach encompassing the good points and largely eliminating any bad ones. Primary Research To test any theories I have written about so far I decided to put together a survey Findings A lot of students were negative about formal classes and a few felt they didn??™t need any key skills training at all. After

students gave it a little more thought 27 students stated they wanted to move into management roles, a further 2 wanted to go into higher education leaving only one student completely happy that he/she didn't need any key skills at all. This proves a want and a need for key skills in general. A high number of students leaned towards the embedded approach in fact twenty out of thirty opting for a whole work shop experience over a formal approach. There were six learners who felt they would be happier with a blend of both leaving only one learner praising the classroom experience. With regard to students having the opportunity to change or alter their course structure and if they even wanted to my findings were mostly ??? No???, but I felt that given the same opportunity a month or so into their course that the finding would differ considerably.

After speaking to colleagues and reading reports and books about the subject I feel there may be a stronger argument for a blended style over the other approaches, statistics show a blended approach with two members of staff sharing the responsibility may be the answer, with one strong in key skills the other in the chosen vocation giving an all-round expertise.

Regarding the methods of integration within my subject area (painting and decorating) the only area we struggle to embed is I. C. T. It almost feels forced as very little computing is needed day to day for a painter and decorator so this in itself proves the point that we cannot disregard formal classes altogether when delivering key skills.

Maths and English are more straight-forward, measuring lengths and volumes, writing method statements and conclusions to practical assignments all lend well to an embedded learning approach. In conclusion I

feel after initial assessment and when screening results are collated, learners should be given the opportunity to negotiate an I. L. P (individual learning plan) discussing what they feel they need and to reflect on their initial assessment, given the choice , embedded, formal or a blend.

How they would they like their course to be structured Training should still be taken care of in a workshop setting, encompassing a strong focus on embedding, but not completely dismissing formal classes, with diversity in mind we should by all means focus on the experience of the less able learner but not diminish the experience for the more adept. I feel more heavily embedded courses would work better for learners with a more kinesthetic learning style, but that said the classroom setting needs to be in place as this not only lends itself perfectly to learners with a more cognitive learning style but also covers parts of the course that are more difficult in a workshop setting. With a more blended approach I believe retention figures would improve as all levels of learner would feel catered for leading to a more personal tailored experience.