

# Explain how to embed functional skills into your specialist area essay

[Education](#), [Teaching](#)



The specialist area within which I work is delivering Key and Functional Skills. Therefore, the main focus is on English and maths. The challenge I have is less about embedding Functional Skills, and more about encouraging learners to apply the skills they are learning within life, learning and work. The learners I work with are those who did not achieve grade C or above in their GCSE English and or maths, and many of them struggle with these subjects due to a lack of interest or due to low ability. Therefore, the challenge for me is to teach the skills they need in a way that is interesting and meaningful, so that they are able to learn and retain the skills and apply them beneficially. In order to enhance the learning experience, I try to pitch my teaching style so that it is different to what the learners have been used to previously at school. In my opinion, 'school-style' teaching methods have not worked for the majority of these learners, and so I need to try a different 'tactic.

Within my lessons, I use an informal style of teaching, and try to incorporate some fun into the lessons. I also look at what subject areas the learners are interested in, and what social interests they may have, and encourage them to apply the skills they are learning to these interests, so they can begin to see the value of learning maths and English skills. An example of embedding maths and English into Hairdressing and vice versa, is the use of measuring equipment and ratios. In Hairdressing, it is important that a stylist is able to follow the manufacturer's instructions on a tube of tint when colouring a client's hair. This involves reading and understanding the instructions properly, accurately measuring amounts of tint and peroxide, and also mixing them using the appropriate ratio, to achieve the desired result. In

teaching these maths skills, I would firstly try to sell the skills of measuring and using ratios by encouraging the learners to tell me when they might be used in life, learning or work. This then gives me a lever to use when interest is fading, by using the ideas that they themselves suggested at the beginning of the session. I would teach the skill using visual aids, for example, flipcharts, PowerPoint, handouts and worksheets, etc.

then when the learners had grasped the basis of the skill, I would allow them to attempt to apply it practically. In this example, I would use substitutes for tint and peroxide, usually different coloured water, and encourage learners to practice measuring out and mixing the liquids according to instructions stating different ratios. Learners have stated in the past that they find these types of activity “ fun” and also useful, as they have a point of reference to think back to when they are trying to apply the skill in reality in the workplace. I use this method of, ‘ sell, teach, apply, practice,’ when teaching both maths and English skills, and I find it to be extremely effective in most cases. It can be applied to the majority of subject areas, as maths and English skills are imperative in any area of life, learning and work.