

Developing Blended Learning Tools for NVQ Assessors

Developing Blended Learning Tools for NVQ Assessors and Developing Support for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities in Work-based Learning

This case study is one of a series written for practitioners in work-based learning, particularly NVQ assessors, who may be working with learners who have a learning difficulty, disability or difference. Each case study provides examples of approaches used to support learners with learning difficulties and disabilities in work-based learning, including information about learning programmes, how the provider has supported the learner effectively and the impact of the support.



CASE STUDY

Foxes Academy

Foxes Academy offers training in Independent Life Skills in the students' residential settings in Minehead, plus the opportunity to learn catering skills in the real environment of an operating hotel, where real functions take place and real guests stay all year round.

A training hotel and catering college for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Foxes Academy supports learners towards gaining their Life Skills Award and also NVQ Level 1 in housekeeping, food preparation, kitchen

portering, food and drink service, reception and foundation food hygiene. Independent Life Skills training includes personal hygiene, laundry, house cleaning, appropriate dressing, time keeping, adapting behaviour for different situations, accessing the community, budgeting handling money, shopping, cooking, relationships and keeping safe in the community. Embedded in all these structured sessions is Literacy, Numeracy, ICT and Communication.

Foxes Academy strives to ensure that young people become more independent in their own community, a key goal for many learners at Foxes where working 'in the real environment of an operating hotel' can be a daunting prospect. Sarah has impaired hearing and sometimes finds it difficult in the dining room because of high levels of background noise. Foxes realises that it is important to establish eye contact with her and give her reassurance during busy periods so that she recognises that the support is there and that she is part of a team, but at the same time working independently of others:

“I enjoy working as a team with everybody and also being able to do things independently of others, for example polishing cutlery, laying tables for breakfast so it looks nice for the guests, and also talking to the guests.”

Sarah; learner

Resources that learners have helped to develop are also used; for example one learner developed a sweet trolley tick list – having a hand in developing resources can make them easier to learn from.

“I used a diagram depicting a knife, fork, soup spoon and pudding spoon to help me lay the table but I do not need to use this anymore. I feel happy now to lay tables.”

Alice; learner

Housekeeping uses a housekeeping board. All of the jobs are listed in order of priority and a tick list tells each learner what colour duster they will need, what colour cloth, whether they need to use something dry or wet, whether they need to use polish or what chemical they need to use. The tick list takes the learner through the entire day and gives them the confidence to be just as able as other, more experienced learners:

“One thing that really helps us is the use of tick lists. These lists help us tick off all the things that we have completed on a day-to-day basis, and using the tick list has really helped me quite a lot.”

Frances; learner

Vision and hearing all play a part in how learners use the different resources available. For example, learners may prefer to use a digital photo book that breaks down the text on the housekeeping board into pictures: a photograph informing the learner to put a 'Cleaning in progress' sign on the door; a photograph depicting the act of putting on cleaning gloves. Words can also be added to the photographs depending on what works best for the learner.

Timekeeping resources help learners to understand the concept of time. For example, Foxes has created 'domino' cards with five dots on each card. Each dot represents one minute. A learner might be given four cards, a total allocation of twenty minutes, and after exactly five minutes one card is taken away from the learner and so on until the twenty

minutes are up. This helps the learner to understand the concept of time and allows them to do the job to time without panicking – a stop watch or alarm can put unnecessary pressure on the learner.

“As with all resources, one has to be consistent with learners on all levels as it is this consistency that embeds knowledge.”

Julie, staff (housekeeping)

Every week the learner has a tutorial which will include questions such as, ‘What have you learnt since your last tutorial?’; ‘Do we need to change the target or do we need to give different support?’

Daily events is another system where information is centrally recorded, for example how the learner is behaving or feeling; if extra care and consideration is needed – it could be anything that might affect a learner’s behaviour in the next session. Staff use Daily Events on a regular basis and both systems are quality assured ensuring effective communication and that the right support is put in place for the learner.

Sources of further information and support

Foxes is in the process of developing accessible careers advice and guidance materials as many careers materials in circulation are not easily accessible. Ideas include DVDs, podcasts, photographs with simplified information, materials that are motivational, for example information cards on where to find and contact Tesco within a learner’s local area so that the learner can write to Tesco and approach the company themselves; photographs of ex-learners in their work situation, or learners on work experience in different places highlighting the possibilities that are out there.