

# Case Study : Implementing WorkSkills



## Whickham School, Gateshead

Whickham School in Gateshead began delivering WorkSkills to a class of 50 learners in September 2008. To help these learners realise their full potential, the school has developed a highly effective model for delivering the BTEC Certificate in WorkSkills. The following case study offers a useful example of successful delivery.

## Original Rationale

To find a suitable qualification for a group of learners who were already on an alternative education programme and may not have achieved five GCSEs at grades A\* - C via a general qualification route. However, the group were likely to achieve the equivalent of four GCSEs at C grade or above via a BTEC route.

The school is only interested in delivering the BTEC Certificate in WorkSkills. The Award is not suited to their needs and they are unable to deliver the full Diploma (four GCSE equivalent).

The WorkSkills units offer a positive focus on what the learners can do rather than what they cannot or will not do. The school also identified that the evidence required to complete the learning outcomes for these units was naturally occurring within the current timetable and did not involve typical academic study.

# Delivery

Learners need 13 credits to achieve the BTEC Certificate in WorkSkills and the single 'B' grade GCSE equivalent.

## Stage 1 – Work Placement

All learners are given a WorkSkills Activator book to support their work experience. Completion of the Activator workbook fulfils three of the 13 credits, leaving a further 10 credits to complete.

The workbook acts as a:

- work experience diary
- record of evidence that the learning outcomes have been achieved
- chance for employers to join in/comment/testify/verify.

On return, the learners discuss their work experience in English lessons, which covers more of the Activator workbook and fulfils elements of the speaking and listening requirement for GCSE English coursework. English teachers assess the work that the learners have done in the Activator workbooks.



Costs = £4.99 for each Activator workbook

Disruption to staff/timetable = none as the learners and employers have provided the evidence

## Stage 2 - Enterprise

The school has contracted Big Ideas, an external enterprise company to deliver Unit 16 Working in a Team, Unit 28 Planning an Enterprise Activity and Unit 29 Running an Enterprise Activity to individual groups of 30. These three units add up to a total of five credits so the learners have now achieved a total of eight credits leaving just five credits to complete.

Big Ideas deliver units that fulfil the learners' entitlement to the Enterprise Agenda. They deliver these units by adapting Edexcel assignments and drawing up new ones. Big Ideas also assess and track the learners' work so there's no additional marking for teachers.

Disruption to staff/timetable = minimal as learners attend Big Ideas tutorials during December only. Staff are not required to do any marking or teaching.

## Stage 3 – PSHCE

To gain the BTEC Certificate in WorkSkills, the learners need to achieve a further five credits. The school found that these units can be incorporated into PSHCE lessons. Teachers found that delivering the WorkSkills units as part of PSHCE added focus to classes and made it easier to assess. The learners enjoyed the assessment because it represented a quantifiable and clearly defined outcome. The age-old worry of 'what is enough' is removed.

Cost = nothing

Disruption to staff/timetable = none as both the lessons and resources are already in place

# Outcomes to date

## Year 11

1. The learners engaged with it as it was at their level and involved them (Unit 8).
2. The learners suddenly 'discovered' skills which I knew they already had (spreadsheets) but in another setting/subject they would have claimed not to have had the ability.
3. There was huge security comfort in prescriptive work alongside the right outcome.
4. They could see how the work was relevant and helpful to them in the future.
5. Work is turned around in class and then collected in so there's no homework.  
This worked well.

## Year 10

1. The learners enjoyed the pre-set format of the Activator workbooks. The layout gave them the confidence to write more than they would have if they'd started with a blank page.
2. The opportunity to get out of school for the Enterprise and Work Placement components is very appealing to the learners.
3. Learners are highly motivated by the fact that they have achieved a GCSE.
4. "WorkSkills doesn't seem like work" has been a nice comment.

## Advice and contacts

- Support from Edexcel Curriculum Development Manager.
- WorkSkills Activator workbooks [www.heinemann.co.uk/workskills](http://www.heinemann.co.uk/workskills)
- Sample Assignments from Edexcel [www.edexcel.com/workskills](http://www.edexcel.com/workskills)
  
- Enterprise contacts:
  - **Big Ideas** (paper/activity based materials)  
Telephone : 0191 516 6075
  - **Bgroup** (web based materials)  
Telephone: 0191 261 1333

