

Case Study: ELEV8 @ Preston College



Preston College began delivering WorkSkills in January 2009. They have developed a tailored approach, offering flexible courses that meet the requirements and aspirations of their individual learners. Branded **ELEV8: Raising Aspirations**, this is an ESF/LSC funded project that is targeted at re-engaging and motivating 'at risk' and disengaged 14-19 year old NEET young people.

Original Rationale

- To find a qualification for disaffected learners that offered maximum flexibility. In particular it was essential that the start and end dates were flexible as many learners had chaotic and difficult personal circumstances that required an informal and personalised approach.
- The College needed a qualification that provided depth of qualification level and a range of units that could be applied to . The WorkSkills qualification seemed perfect as it would enable some learners to achieve an award (3 credits) and others the certificate (13 credits). Furthermore the scope of the units permitted the College to choose which would be appropriate for the different learners.
- It was also necessary that the qualification outcomes were sufficiently flexible to enable evidence to be produced/ developed by learners in a more individual and personalised sense, naturally, as part of a vocational option chosen by the learners. For example one cohort of learners are generating evidence and being assessed for their 'Conduct at Work' and 'Self Management Skills' in a range of settings e.g. by those taking a short course in hair & beauty, motor vehicle, painting & decorating, electrical, brickwork, early years care, fashion and retail, interactive multimedia, joinery, etc.

Delivery Model

- The project branded itself as ELEV8: 'Raising Aspirations'
- Potential learners were segmented into 3 different strands which differed in terms of difficulty and level of disengagement.
- Each strand has differentiated products to meet the specific requirements of different learner types

Strand 1

Learner profile:

Year 10 and year 11 (KS4) learners from local schools who were considered to be 'at risk'

Course specifics:

An initial 12 week vocational package was developed, whereby learners chose from a range of options (see rational above) on either a Wednesday or Friday afternoon for 3 hours.

Aim:

To achieve the BTEC Award in WorkSkills by successfully completing the Personal Education Plan booklet (PEP).*

Strand 2

Learner profile:

15-18/19 year old learners that are NEET but have a propensity to study, or have studied, in a large further education institute. Typically this cohort included learners who had dropped out of other colleges or courses for various reasons e.g. child birth, excluded, had not enjoyed their course choice, personal/social/ health reasons etc. but had ambitions to improve their qualifications.

Course specifics:

These learners would attend a vocational element in the same way as Strand 1 but they also have additional classes on Wednesday or Friday mornings that are specifically focused on teamwork, personal development, employability

Aim:

For full cohort to achieve a BTEC Certificate in WorkSkills.

The overall programme for strands 1 and 2 also includes attendance at an employability/progression fair, a graduation event and visits to relevant facilities and work places.

Strand 3

Learner profile:

15-18/19 year olds that are NEET but less inclined to attend a large further education institution.

Course specifics:

Because these learners were less likely to attend an FE college, community-based programmes were developed and are being delivered in youth and community centres, leisure centres and other suitable venues. These programmes have a focus towards specific vocational areas. For example, Introduction to Sports Coaching and Introduction to Radio and Media. These are short programmes lasting 8 to 12 weeks and delivery is limited to 2-3 hours per week.

Aims:

In addition to a vocationally-focused programme, learners will hope to achieve a BTEC Award in WorkSkills by completing the 'Working in a Team' unit which counts for 3 credits.

Strand 4

Learner profile:

Hard to reach, NEET learners

Course specifics:

Short taster courses and energisers have been developed for these.

Aims:

At this stage there is no intention for these learners to gain any formal accreditation but it is hoped that in time these learners may move towards Strand 3 opportunities.

Creating flexible, tailored programmes

Before beginning any programme every learner is interviewed by a member of the ELEV8 team to ascertain their personal preferences and occupational aspirations. A personalised programme can then developed which takes into account the learners' responses and the outcomes of the advice and guidance provided by the ELEV8 team. Learners have a Learning Mentor who will monitor their well-being and progress in a supportive, friendly and aspirational manner.

Assessment and Tracking

The Personal Education Plan (PEP)

The PEP booklet is used by Strands 1 and 2 as a learning log to record their weekly progress in a reflective manner. The booklet requires them to comment on what they have learnt and to identify their strengths and weaknesses by looking at areas of success and areas for improvement. The booklet also provides an opportunity for the tutor or supervisor to carry out an observation assessment which is linked to the learning outcomes for the 'Conduct at Work' and 'Self Management Skills' units at Entry Level 3. The booklet also has a series of blank pages which leave room for photographic and other supporting evidence to be attached.

*The PEP booklet has been designed by ELEV8 manager, Chris Gunn, working with the college's in-house Reprographics and Design team.

Community Projects

Other cohorts (Strand 3s) are undertaking community projects and/or organising events that will provide them with sufficient evidence to meet all of the learning outcomes for the Working in a Team units.

Outcomes to date

- Over 60 'at risk' KS4 learners were recruited on to the Strand 1 programme. Of these, approximately 97% have started the programme.
- There are currently nearly 60 learners still 'on programme' with all of these expected to complete.
- A very high proportion of those who complete are expected to achieve the BTEC Award based on an internal audit of progress and evidence in their PEP booklets.
- Approximately 18 learners were recruited on to Strand 2 of which approximately 13 will aim to achieve a Certificate, the others an Award, owing to their personalised learning programme.
- It is expected that all 13 Strand 2 'Certificate' learners will achieve that level and others will achieve the Award.

Feedback from learners

- It must be noted that learners find the notion of gaining a 'BTEC' extremely motivating and to date completion of evidence for their Award or Certificate is not proving problematic.
- Learners are enjoying their vocational programme and appreciative of the opportunity to gain a well recognised qualification in the process.

Advice and Contacts

ELEV8 Programme and Management

Chris Gunn
Preston College
01772 225392
cgunn@preston.ac.uk

ELEV8 Tutor and Trainer

Nick Harrison
Preston College
01772 225392

ELEV8 Learning Mentor

Craig Chapman
Preston College
01772 225392

Elev8 website: www.preston.ac.uk/elev8