

# Using Blended Learning to Deliver Functional Skills in Pre-Employment Provision

**Welcome!**



## **Using Blended Learning to Deliver Functional Skills in Pre-Employment Provision**

This webinar aims to provide an opportunity to examine the importance of functional skills and to consider how to use blended learning to support your provision.

In the webinar, we will cover three main points.

- The reasons for embedding functional skills in pre-employment provision.
- The different approaches to delivering functional skills.
- The background to using blended learning.

## How it works



- I'm Bev and I'll be guiding you through this webinar. If you want to contribute to the discussion, please 'raise your hand' or type a message.
- There will be time at the end for questions.
- There will be set points for you to consider your current practice and to begin planning how you can best work with learners.
- And please bear with us – we're piloting both the materials and the webinar platform!



## Why do we embed?



You will see a voting screen with three choices – decide which one is the current definition of functional skills.

### **Option A**

*“Functional skills are the vocational skills we need to be able to find a job, do a job and keep a job.”*

### **Option B**

*“Functional skills are the work and life skills we need to have in English and mathematics.”*

### **Option C**

*“Functional skills are the fundamental, applied skills in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) which help people to gain the most from life, learning and work.”*

## Talking to learners



Some learners may not recognise the term functional skills or understand how these skills support them in life and work.

Have a think about how you could explain the value of functional skills to a learner.

# The importance of Functional Skills



- Functional skills are important for a wide variety of reasons.
- They underpin the skills needed for work, life and learning.
  - Appropriate English, maths and ICT skills improve performance at work, now and in the future.
  - Being able to read, write, use number and access technology effectively are basic human rights in our society.
  - Some vocational qualifications and careers require a set standard of English, maths and ICT.

## Convincing learners



Some learners may not be convinced of the relevance of functional skills, particularly if they've had a bad experience at school.

Try some of these with learners.

- If you don't understand your payslip you can't check that you're being paid the right amount.
- If you can't read the Health and Safety notices you or someone else could get hurt.
- You need to be able to use FaceBook to make sure your children are safe on-line.

## Convincing learners...



### *Continued*

- People with English and maths qualifications earn more than people who haven't got them.
- If you go on a training course, you need to be able to understand the English and the maths they use so that you can do your job properly.
- Every job needs English and maths – for instance, if you're cleaning the floors you need to be able to read the warnings on the bottles of cleaner or if you're caring for people you need to be able to measure accurately any medicine you give them.



## What type of course?



Before designing a blended learning programme, you need to take three things into account.

- The starting point of the learner.
- Their vocational aspirations.
- The requirements of their chosen job.

# How do I know what to put in a course?



To decide on the materials and pedagogy for the course, you will need to:

- undertake a thorough initial and diagnostic assessment process with the learner to gauge their starting level, strengths and weaknesses;
- discuss with the learner any previous learning experiences that may positively or negatively affect the way they work through blended learning materials; and
- consider how to meet general employability and specific vocational requirements with the aspirations and skills of the learner.

## How do I deliver the course?



You will then need to consider whether the course should be delivered:

- face-to-face in groups;
- face-to-face with individuals; or
- using blended learning.

There is a fourth option based on remote learning. This is not a successful model for this type of learner as they need to have high level, independent learning skills before they start.

# What is blended learning?



Blended learning is increasingly being accepted as a key way of delivering learning opportunities in a range of settings. It can be defined in many ways but is generally defined as:

*“a blend of classroom teaching combined with online, independent learning.”*

## Who does it work well for?



Blended learning is often used with learners who are developing their skills at level one or two because:

- learners need to be fairly confident to learn without teacher-led activities;
- learners need to have good ICT skills to access online materials;
- learners need to be able to identify when they need help and to ask the teacher (in person or online); and
- learners need to be sufficiently self-motivated to undertake tasks outside the 'classroom.'

## Who does it work well for...



Blended learning can also work well for learners who:

- have difficulty attending formal classes;
- have a learning style which benefits from on-screen or online activities;
- need reinforcement activities to embed learning;
- have had negative experiences of teacher-led sessions;
- have difficulties interacting with other students; and
- have a disability which can be supported by online delivery.

## Some definitions



Let's have a look at some definitions through these YouTube clips.

Blended learning—the best of both worlds

Clive Shepherd's interview on blended learning (selected extract)

# Planning considerations



You may be using these approaches already but it is worth spending time considering the following.

- How much of the course needs to be delivered face-to-face?
- Do learners prefer online or face-to-face learning?
- What quality checks will you build in to the delivery of online materials?
- Can blended learning reduce the delivery costs?
- Can blended learning improve outcomes?
- What will you gain and lose by using blended learning?



**Vote now!**

Have you been a learner on a blended learning programme?

**Vote now!**

Can you think of an existing course that might be better as a blended learning programme?

# Barriers to using Blended Learning



A poor learning experience in relation to maths, English and ICT at school may set up barriers and misconceptions about functional skills. Do any of these comments sound familiar?

- I don't need any of that for the jobs I want.
- It was rubbish at school and it'll be rubbish again.
- My Dad got a job and he can't use a computer.
- It's boring.
- I just want to learn about the job.

## Overcoming barriers



Think back to the ideas we mentioned earlier. Can you see how some of these might help?

- If you don't understand your payslip you can't check that you're being paid the right amount.
- If you can't read the Health and Safety notices you or someone else could get hurt.
- You need to be able to use FaceBook to make sure your children are safe on-line.

## Overcoming barriers...



- People with English and maths qualifications earn more than people who haven't got them.
- If you go on a training course, you need to be able to understand the English and the maths they use so that you can do your job properly.
- Every job needs English and maths – for instance, if you're cleaning the floors you need to be able to read the warnings on the bottles of cleaner or if you're caring for people you need to be able to measure accurately any medicine you give them.

## Overcoming barriers - materials



You may want to design materials such as:

- example payslips that explain the words and calculations used;
- real Health and Safety notices linked to workshop layouts, images of Personal Protective Equipment and a risk assessment sheet;
- a hyperlink to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) website to show materials about staying safe online – use this to stimulate discussion or for an activity to design a safety poster for the workplace;

## Overcoming barriers – materials...



### *Continued*

- a quiz showing the different earning potential based on qualification levels and types;
- a case study of an employee who is unable to get promoted because she doesn't understand the English used in a training course;
- primary source examples, photographed/scanned and uploaded, for learners to discuss and identify where the maths, English and ICT skills are needed to use these in the workplace.

## The bottom line



Remember, for some jobs it is a requirement for the employee to have functional skills at a specific level.

This is why it is essential that you are clear with learners from the start exactly what will be needed for them in terms of functional skills.



## Getting positive outcomes



When e-learning and blended learning programmes suffer from poor completion rates, it is often due to:

- learner isolation;
- lack of personal feedback;
- technical problems; and
- lack of social interaction.

*Learner support reviewed (2007) Ufi / learndirect and Kineo*

Taken from the Move On E-tutor Guide

To maximise the impact of blended learning in pre-employment provision:

- provide face-to-face support for learners before they embark on online activities – it is much easier if they know who the person is on the other side of the screen and have met other learners who they can network with online;
- establish regular online contact backed up by telephone tutorials as necessary;
- remember to match the maths, English and ICT levels of the online materials with the learner;

## Maximising impact...



### *Continued*

- remember that functionality in maths, English and ICT should support the development of problem solving and transferable skills within a work context;
- use an online resource bank to tailor activities to the specific learning needs and vocational interests of learners – you can set up systems where learners choose activities based on their skills level and the career they are pursuing but you need to make sure that learners understand their progress and targets to do this effectively;
- use group sessions to reinforce online learning outcomes

### *Continued*

- encourage learners to network through an online learner forum;
- test out the technology before launching it and have a protocol for learners to follow if there are difficulties;
- integrate networking and learner feedback into the online activities;
- encourage learners to post their own ideas on forums or to use blogs as part of their learning activities and
- make it fun!

## Sources of information



The **Excellence Gateway** has a wide range of materials on functional skills and approaches to learning. Try some of these for materials.

- [www.move-on.org.uk](http://www.move-on.org.uk)
- <http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/18272>
- [www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk)
- [www.elearningnetwork.org](http://www.elearningnetwork.org)
- <http://archive.excellencegateway.org.uk/page.aspx?o=131207>

NB – some materials are archived

**Over to you**



We've got a little time left now to take comments or questions.