2: Planning and providing work experience for your learners

What's in this section?

2.1 Why work experience is important.

2.2 How work experience can support learning.

2.3 Introducing a framework for employability skills.

2.4 Planning a work experience programme to meet individual needs.

2.5 Taking account of individual needs: using learner profiles.

2.6 Activities for learners.

There are two learner activities in this section.

2.1 Why work experience is important

A successful work placement can give a massive boost to an E2E learner's confidence and self-esteem. When work experience is well-planned, well-supported and built on sound preparation, it motivates learners and can open up the adult world of work for the first time.

E2E learners enter the programme with different starting points and providers need to plan a varied programme of work-related experiences to meet different needs. Some learners may need to start gaining work experience in sheltered or simulated situations and then progress to vocational tasters. Whatever their starting point, it is the achievement of a sustainable work experience placement that marks success for E2E learners. It will help them move into an Apprenticeship, further education and training or employment.

The E2E entitlement curriculum[1] makes practical work related activities, such as work experience or simulation in a realistic working environment, compulsory. But it is not acceptable to consider 'any experience is good experience'. In fact, the opposite could be the case. An ill-timed or badly planned work experience could de-motivate and dishearten a learner and have an adverse effect on their learning programme. As the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) report:

"Too often planning of the vocational element is haphazard. Many providers offer a poor choice of vocational options. Others offer plenty of options but fail to accredit learners' vocational skills. Some providers do not place enough emphasis on learners getting real work experience. Opportunities are missed for learners to use evidence from work towards their national vocational qualification."[2]

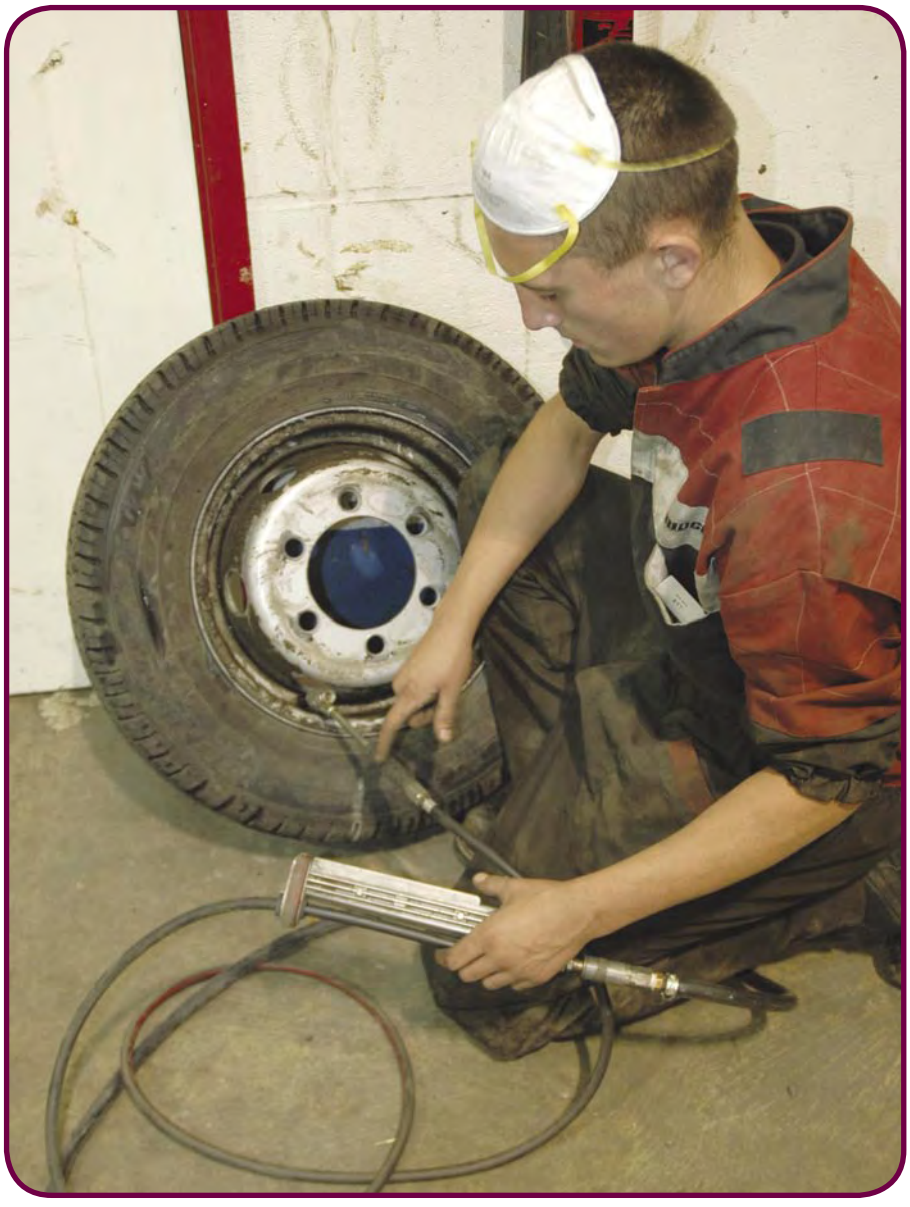
[1] The Learning and Skills Council, *The E2E Entitlement Curriculum*, 2004.

[2] The Adult Learning Inspectorate, *Entry to Employment: Looking back over the first year and forward to the future*, 2005.

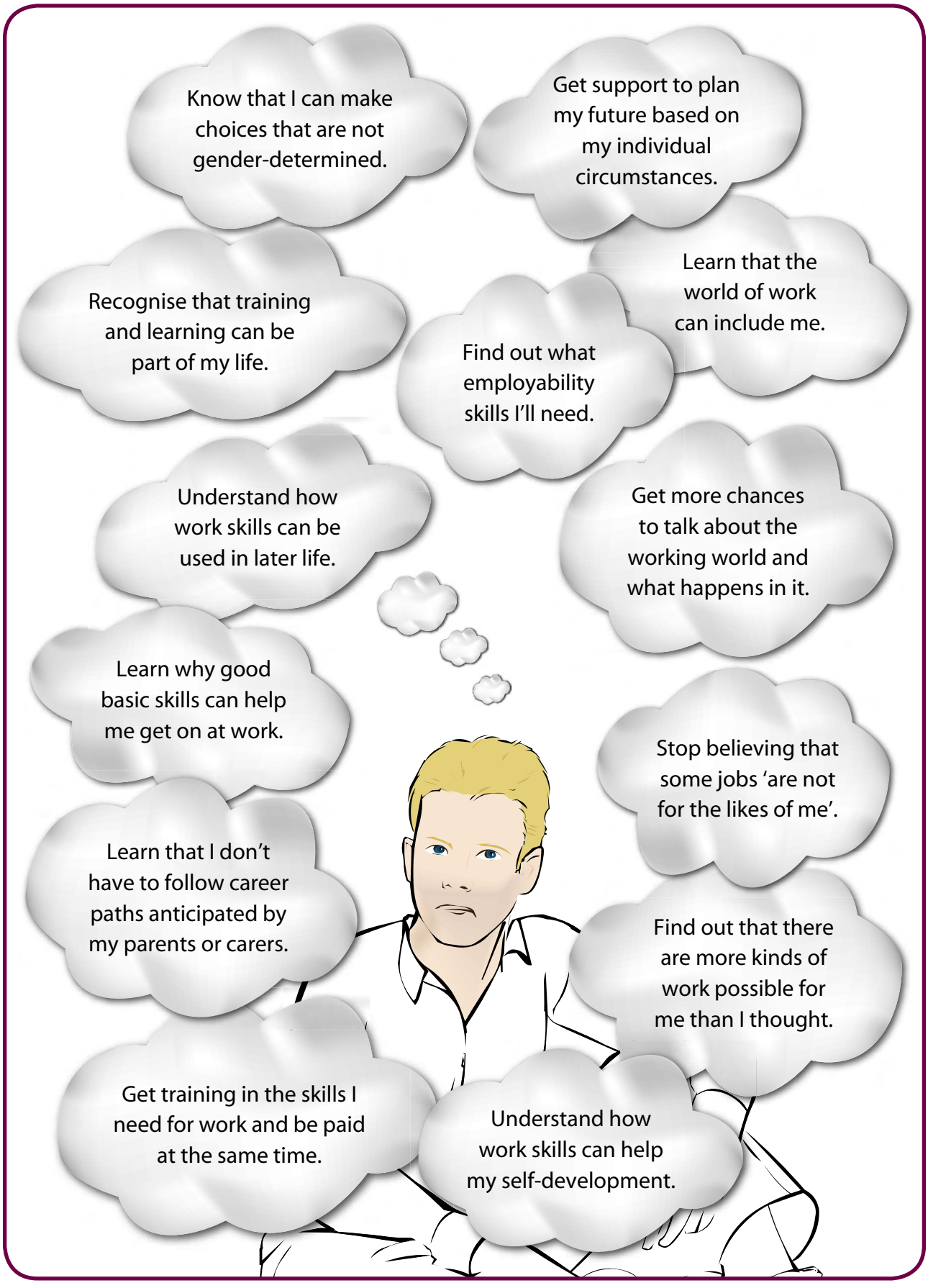
Work experience can open up new and challenging learning opportunities and help your learners appreciate the benefits to them. This is a useful starting point for your planning.

Consider the gains that work experience might offer on the next page. You can probably add more.

It is worth considering the potential impact of poor literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) skills on work experience. Learners with insecure skills in this area are likely to lack confidence and will certainly be aware of the potential that work experience offers to expose their difficulties in new and challenging situations. Discussing these issues openly and developing plans for support will help learners think about improving LLN skills as well as developing strategies to avoid possible disasters.



What can your learners get out of work experience?



2.2 How work experience can support learning

Your organisation will already have formal structures and procedures in place to check that work places are safe and supportive for your learners. But to exploit the workplace as a rich learning environment, you and your learners need to plan carefully what will be learnt at each stage.

As you work with colleagues to improve work-related learning in your organisation, find out where you are starting from. Take a look at the checklist below and grade yourself against each of the statements.

A = well developed practice.
B = practice which has some strengths but needs further development.
C = practice which needs much development and support.

As a tutor I know...	A	B	C	Comment
... my learners' individual strengths and needs (including in LLN), and their starting points.				
... the labour market in my area and what jobs are available.				
... the generic employability and LLN skills, that my learners need for work.				
... which vocational and occupational tasks interest and motivate my learners.				
... how to plan work experience programmes, including LLN, using Placement Learning Plans.				
... how to motivate learners to succeed.				
As a manager I...				
... engage, communicate and work with employers who are in a position to help learning take place at work.				
... work with my staff to plan a structured work experience programme with curriculum progression routes that motivate and support learners.				
... have planned opportunities for all tutors and partners to design the work experience programme so that each knows where and how they will contribute.				
... monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of our programme.				

Different ways of learning

Work experience programmes offer new or alternative learning opportunities to young people who may be poorly motivated or alienated by traditional classroom teaching.

The main and most obvious advantage is the relevance of the skills included in the E2E curriculum to everyday tasks and responsibilities at work. E2E learners may be making that connection for the first time. Tutors can exploit the **relevance of the E2E core curriculum** by making the link between skills and tasks explicit in a Placement Learning Plan:

- *Skills for Life* such as taking messages, speaking to customers and colleagues or telling the time;
- personal and social skills such as being responsible, managing relationships, being a team worker;
- vocational skills such as shampooing hair or preparing vegetables;
- transferable employability skills such as being punctual, following health and safety rules and using initiative;
- skills to ensure sustainable employment, both underpinning, generic skills as well as threshold skills specific to the occupation.

Learning through work experience encourages **experiential learning**[3], or learning by 'doing'. Your learners will gain from the chance to:

- try out new experiences and reflect on their progress at their own reviews;
- appreciate that receiving constructive feedback as part of the reflection process can help them improve their performance;
- understand that what people do, and how they do it, can be more important than what they know;
- realise that the learning process can be enjoyable, motivating and rewarding, and can lead to greater self-awareness.

Work experience can also offer **multi-sensory learning experiences** to young people who prefer to learn in practical and visual ways. For example, someone who has difficulty following written health and safety instructions in a classroom is likely to be more engaged by the relevance of a workplace safety induction including practical, oral and visual reinforcement in a real work context.

[3] Kolb D, *Experiential learning*, New Jersey, 1984, Prentice Hall.

Work experience and learner reviews

Successful E2E providers ensure strong links between work experience and **learner reviews.** Learners need help and practice to **reflect** and learn from their experiences. The review is a not just a means of recording what happened, but of learning from the experience itself by thinking **why** things happened: 'what went well and why?' and 'what didn't go so well and why?'

The review provides your learner with a place to reflect, a 'sounding board', and guidance on what direction to take and what support is available. You need feedback from learners to understand whether the work experience learning objectives are being met and if current approaches are working. If not, you and your learner will need to review and adjust the targets to take account of progress.

Work experience also stimulates other types of learning across the E2E curriculum. It can enhance:

- information seeking skills;
- organisational and time management skills;
- responsibility for own work and learning;
- ability to plan work in a given time-frame;
- self-assessment skills when reviewing achievements.

Placement Learning Plan (PLP)

A **Placement Learning Plan (PLP)** is a planning tool that draws together learning objectives from across the E2E core curriculum areas of:

- *Skills for Life*
- personal and social skills
- vocational skills, including specific occupational objectives.

You and your learners can use the PLP (outlined on the following pages) to help add value to the E2E Passport. It is illustrated in more detail by case studies here and in **Preparing learners for work experience.**

The purpose of the Placement Learning Plan is to:

- provide a structure for the essential steps a learner takes as they prepare for and carry out their work experience programme;
- help tutors and learners plan learning across the E2E core curriculum areas;

- help tutors and learners arrive at effective SMART[4] targets;
- help tutors and learners improve reviewing and action planning;
- provide a record of learning during the preparation stages of the work experience programme that can provide evidence for accreditation.

There are four 'steps' to the PLP:

1 What will I get out of work experience?

2 Skills and knowledge I can develop;

3 My placement;

4 My placement learning plan.

There is a template for each step on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM that learners can complete and print.

The activities in this resource support the steps in the PLP. But remember the PLP is a suggested framework that you can adapt for your learners and your organisation. Your learners may carry out more or fewer activities and you will need to make sure that they can record all their learning and that they recognise the skills they are using.

You can also use the structure to help you, your colleagues and partners plan the overall work experience programme for your organisation so that each professional understands where and how they should contribute to the plan. You can follow up these ideas in **Section 5, Messages for Subject Learning Coaches** in this ringbinder.

Providers now accredit achievement in *Skills for Life* and Key Skills through national awards. Some providers accredit achievement in personal, social and employability skills through awarding bodies, some of which also provide valuable additional learning materials[5]. Many learners, however, do not receive accreditation for progress in these skills and can lose the opportunity to show and record what they have achieved.

[4] SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound.

[5] The National Research and Development Centre, *Success factors in informal learning*, 2004. Several of the approaches developed by this project complement the approaches developed here. see www.nrdc.org.uk

From September 2005, E2E providers are using a new process to measure and record learning in areas such as personal and social development and some employability skills, that were previously unrecognised. The Recognising and Rewarding Progress and Achievement in Non-accredited Learning[6] (RARPA) 'Staged Process' will be used to track and record learning and an effective Placement Learning Plan can contribute to evidence of achievement.

[6] The Learning and Skills Council, *Recognising and Rewarding Progress and Achievement in Non-accredited Learning*, 2005.

Placement Learning Plan

ABOUT THE WORLD OF WORK

Step 1: What will I get out of work experience? How do I feel about work experience?

Skills for Life	Personal and social skills	Vocational and employability skills

Step 2: Skills and knowledge I can develop as I find out about the world of work

Skills for Life	Personal and social skills	Vocational and employability skills

GETTING READY FOR WORK

Step 3: My placement

What do I already know about the placement?	What will I be doing?
Health and safety issues	**Equality and diversity issues**

GOING TO WORK

Step 4: My Placement Learning Plan

What I will be doing	*Skills for Life*	Personal and social skills	Vocational and employability skills
Who will be responsible for providing and monitoring the learning?			
Who will be responsible for providing and monitoring the learning?			

2.3 Introducing a framework for employability skills

Developing employability skills will be a high priority for most of your learners. They need these generic, transferable skills to identify job opportunities, to project a positive image of themselves and to succeed in the complex and demanding environment of the modern labour market. Whether learners progress into employment, further education or Apprenticeships, it is vital that they are able to demonstrate strong employability skills. The E2E curriculum, with its three core strands, provides an excellent framework for developing them.

This section will help you to:

- identify the skills (including LLN) that E2E learners will need to develop as they seek to enter the labour market;
- understand how a framework of employability skills, which is embedded into the core E2E curriculum, can help you plan learning;
- demonstrate how work-related learning can be designed so that it helps learners acquire, develop and practise key employability skills.

Defining employability skills

The Learning and Skills Council's National Employers' Skills Survey[7] asked employers why they found it difficult to recruit to 'hard to fill' vacancies. Employers reported that, of applicants for jobs:

- 40% had poor communication skills;
- 36% had poor customer handling skills;
- 32% had poor team working skills;
- 29% were unable solve problems;
- 28% had poor literacy skills;
- 25% had poor numeracy skills;
- 14% did not have a sufficiently positive attitude;
- 16% lacked work experience;
- 14% lacked qualifications.

[7] The Learning and Skills Council, *National Employers Skills Survey 2004: key findings*, 2005.

So, although technical skills are important, they are by no means the only concern when learners enter the workforce. This is perhaps why a significant number of sector bodies actively promote the development of generic or employability skills through the Apprenticeship framework and in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). These are the skills that ensure a flexible workforce that can respond to changes at work.

"There is a significant departure from many of the traditional skill sets hitherto deployed in establishments; generic skills are increasingly being sought in combination with technical skills as a means of developing a labour force that can cope with changing skill requirements. Generic skills are closely allied to high-involvement work practices, and an increasingly complex, communication focused and customer-driven work environment."[8]

Generic or employability skills are described in the Employers' Skills Survey as:

- **Communication** – verbal, written, languages, client communication (e.g. selling, marketing), customer handling relations, relationship building, professional communication (for example, influencing and negotiating);
- **Improving own learning and performance** – independent thinking, self-reliance, self-development, personal effectiveness, willingness to learn, professionalism;
- **Information technology** – keyboarding, computing, word processing, spreadsheets, data handling, email, internet;
- **Management/supervisory** – people, performance, resource, change, project, contract and risk management;
- **Numeracy** – application of number, calculating;
- **Organisation of work** – administering, planning, forward thinking, scheduling, work process (e.g. work allocation), organisation, target setting, time management, efficiency;
- **Problem solving** – innovation, taking responsibility, flexibility, adaptability, ability to handle change or pressure, analytical thinking, judgement and critical thinking, decision making;

[8] *Generic Employability Skills – Aspiration, Provision and Perception*. Report by Nottingham University School of Education for Gloucestershire Learning and Skills Council, July 2004.

- **Team working** – ability to work with others, horizontal communication (e.g. people co-ordination), working collaboratively, motivational working.

The need for E2E learners to develop their personal and social skills has been well documented and many of these are the same skills that are needed for successful employment. If learners are to benefit from the opportunities of a growing economy, they must be able to adapt and develop skills in response to a rapidly changing technical environment.

Employability skills and *Skills for Life*

Literacy, language or numeracy skills underpin many employability skills. It is worth considering whether a learner has difficulties with aspects of employability skills because of insecurities with LLN skills rather than lack of experience or practice. If this is the case, direct teaching of specific LLN skills may be required to make sure the learner has the tools to develop sound and useful employability skills.

Communication – verbal

Client contacts require fairly sophisticated speaking and listening skills, usually at a minimum of Level 1. Work with a more significant aspect of direct client contact will require Level 2 skills. ESOL learners may need specific support in this area.

Communication – written

Much writing at work may be limited to messages and notes, likely to require writing skills at Level 1.

Information technology

Confident use of technology will usually require reading skills at least at Level 1. Some writing skills may also be required. Number and data handling skills and understanding may also be required, at least at Level 1.

Numeracy

Many jobs may require few numeracy skills, however Level 1 skills are essential for getting to work on time and for checking the payslip. For those jobs that have a strong numeracy requirement (e.g. construction) skills may be needed at least at Level 2 in some areas.

Team working

Good levels of speaking and listening skills, at least at Level 1, are required for effective working in a team, including contributing to team meetings. ESOL learners may need support to develop the language skills used in team work.

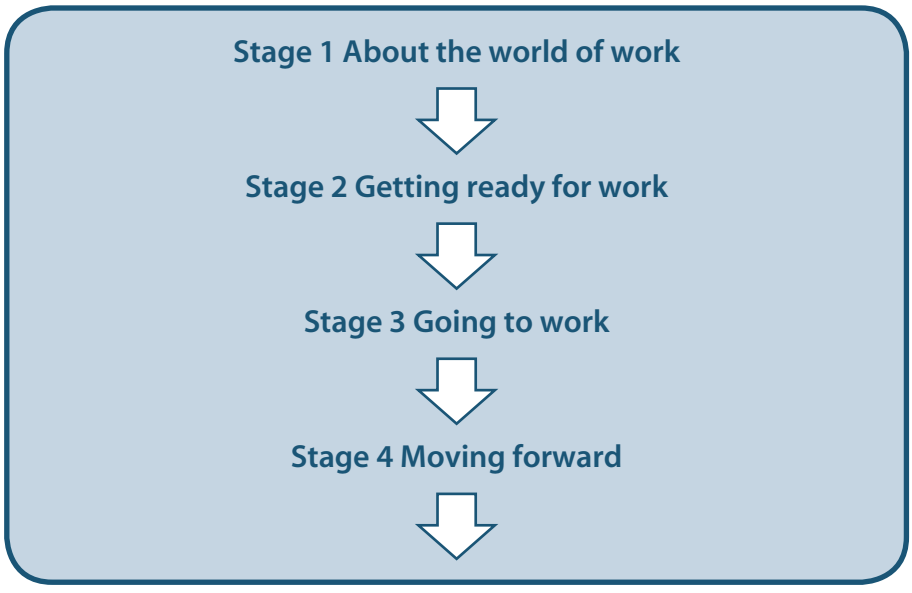
Clearly particular jobs will have a different pattern of priorities, but being able to identify these clearly will enable learners and teachers to focus skills development in the areas where learning is most required.

Work experience and employability skills

A work placement provides an excellent opportunity for learners to appreciate the relationship between personal and social skills and employability skills. It also allows learners to develop, practise and consolidate skills and to identify those they need to develop further.

In preparing for a placement, it is essential to help learners recognise the skills they might want to address on their placement and to include them in their Placement Learning Plan. It is much easier to do this if you and your colleagues have planned a framework for developing employability skills.

There are numerous, equally valid definitions of employability skills. Many providers will already have developed their own framework or will be working with frameworks provided by Key Skills or awarding bodies. If you do not already use a framework but would like to consider it, you may like to consult the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) Work Related Framework devised for Key Stage 4[9].



[9] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, *Work-related learning for Key Stage 4*, at www.wrl.org.uk

Here we offer a framework you can develop. It illustrates the learner's journey from initial hopes and fears about work and training to concluding a successful placement. We have used a four-stage scale of employability skills to help you plan.

Mapping employability skills into the E2E curriculum

When planning a learning programme to develop employability skills, it is important to make the links across the E2E curriculum. Employability skills are an integral part of the curriculum framework, not a 'bolt-on' element of the programme. The tables on the following pages give examples of some skills your learners may need at each stage in their journey. There is space for you to add others based on your own experience. This activity is explored in more detail in **Section 5, Messages for Subject Learning Coaches.**

You can use an employability skills framework to:

- provide a starting point for assessing employability skills, perhaps in conjunction with the framework for assessing personal and social skills on E2E programmes;
- form the basis of SMART individual learning targets in the Placement Learning Plan to integrate *Skills for Life*, personal and social skills and vocational skills;
- form a skills menu for learners to select from according to their personal needs and the needs of their chosen employment sector;
- provide a training and development agenda for tutors to support learners;
- enable the learner to **apply** their E2E learning programme to the world of work;
- plan an organisation-wide approach to curriculum development that supports skills for work experience.

Recognising achievement in employability skills: case study

Training 2000: case study

At Training 2000 learners can work towards an 'Employability Award'.

They undertake five units:

- personal development;
- how and where to find employment;
- personal and employability skills;
- self-effectiveness and presentation;
- work-based practices and procedures.

Employability characteristics are broadly defined as including:

Good attitude and behaviour
Hard-working
Good punctuality and attendance
Enthusiastic
Good presentation
Commitment
Politeness
Ability to team work
Effective communication
Problem-solving

Each unit contains detailed objectives and learners gather evidence as they prepare for and undertake work experience.

Worksheets support the learner in job search, letter writing and completing application forms, and there is an interview guide.

Developing an employability skills framework

Stage 1 About the world of work	*Skills for Life*	Personal and social skills	Vocational and employability skills
Learners acquire broad awareness and knowledge of the world of work and begin to find a focus. Developing these skills will enable learners to: • know about a range of occupational areas; • understand the different types of jobs in these occupational areas; • understand the different types of job available locally; • find out more about occupational areas that interest them; • find out what skills, including LLN, they already have; • find out what skills, including LLN, they need to develop.	Reading job adverts and information to find out what jobs are available locally.	Finding out which personal and social skills are needed for different jobs.	Finding how a work placement can help me learn about the world of work and what I'd like to do.
	Reading and understanding information about jobs in different sectors.	Practising interview skills: - looking tidy and well presented; - speaking confidently about myself; - being ready to ask questions about the job - smiling and being polite.	Finding out about jobs open to me in my occupational area with different levels of training and experience.

Stage 2

Getting ready for work

Learners make links between the skills needed for particular jobs and the skills that they have and need to acquire. They will work to develop these skills through their PLP.

Developing these skills will enable learners to:

- recognise the personal and social skills that are relevant for work;
- recognise the personal skills and qualities that employers expect from employees;
- recognise the *Skills for Life* required for work and expected by employers;
- know the activities involved in applying for a job.

Skills for Life	Personal and social skills	Vocational and employability skills
Reading and understanding instructions at work	Being clean and smart in appearance.	Working under pressure and meeting deadlines.
Understanding and sharing information using a variety of media.	Having respect for other people's views.	Understanding the needs of customers and clients.
Making a phone call to ask for details of a job and how to apply.	Knowing how to manage feelings and emotions.	Taking responsibility for doing the job properly.

Stage 3 Going to work	*Skills for Life*	Personal and social skills	Vocational and employability skills
The learner needs essential 'coping skills' for the work place, together with higher level employability skills that will help improve performance. Developing these skills will enable the learner to: • understand the need for health and safety at work; • understand the need for equal opportunities policies at work; • understand the responsibilities and rights of the employer and the employee at work.	Speaking to colleagues and customers. Asking for help when needed.	Asking for help when needed. Understanding and using appropriate body language.	Understanding that some jobs might be difficult to cope with, e.g. working long hours, working outdoors, dealing with stressful situations.
	Timekeeping.	Showing interest, initiative and effort.	Finding out why *Skills for Life* and personal and social skills are needed for work.
	Making sense of the pay slip.	Being aware of own responsibilities.	Working in way that is safe for the learner and others.
	Carrying out a range of calculations and measurements.		Weighing up solutions to problems and deciding which is the best option.

Stage 4 Moving forward	*Skills for Life*	Personal and social skills	Vocational and employability skills
Learners reflect on their achievements on programme, the opportunities that have opened up to them and the sort of job and training they intend to move on to next. Developing these skills will enable the learner to: • identify the additional skills needed to develop a career; • know about the training available to develop a career; • make plans for continuing to learn throughout their working life.	Communicating well with new employers and colleagues.	Presenting a positive image of self.	Understanding why lifelong learning is important and knowing how to find further training.
	Using IT to work more efficiently.	Identify other skills that need to be worked on and plan to improve them.	Being open to new ideas and techniques.

Introducing employability skills: case study

Leeds College of Building: case study

At Leeds College of Building, tutors Paul Chandler and Mike Morson introduced employability skills in a group session. Working in groups as 'employees' or 'employers', learners used cards to identify skills important to employees and to their employers, and put them into a priority order. They came up with a consensus of the skills that they needed to be effective at work. These included punctuality, teamwork, initiative, following instructions.

Tutors then introduced an Employability Skills Profile with a description of each skill at four different levels. Learners assessed themselves against each skill. A tutor then worked with each learner individually to discuss the profile and added his assessment. By using evidence of actual behaviour, learners learnt how to judge their level for each skill.

The profile gives learners two scores, their own self-assessment and their tutor's assessment, and a target for improvement is agreed jointly. Learners use the self-assessment document to prepare for reviews and, as it is a formative tool, the process has shaped their behaviour significantly. Learners try to improve their point score (and skills) each time and, after practice, are able to bring evidence with them of things they have done to justify their judgements. Their conclusion was that the activity was easy to use, it made them think and helped them identify which skill to prioritise next.

Learners said, "It was fun, helpful. There was lots of discussion. We'd not had jobs before so it was useful to work out what employers would want and what we've got to offer."

When asked which of the employability skills was most important to them, one learner replied, "Wanting to learn new things is the most important. The quicker you learn the quicker you'll get on. Then you get more confident. When you're more confident you get given better jobs and then you get more money."

Another said, "Getting on with other people at work is the most difficult for me. You wonder what it will be like and what you'll talk about. You have to make an effort to get on with people. Older people don't always understand young people."

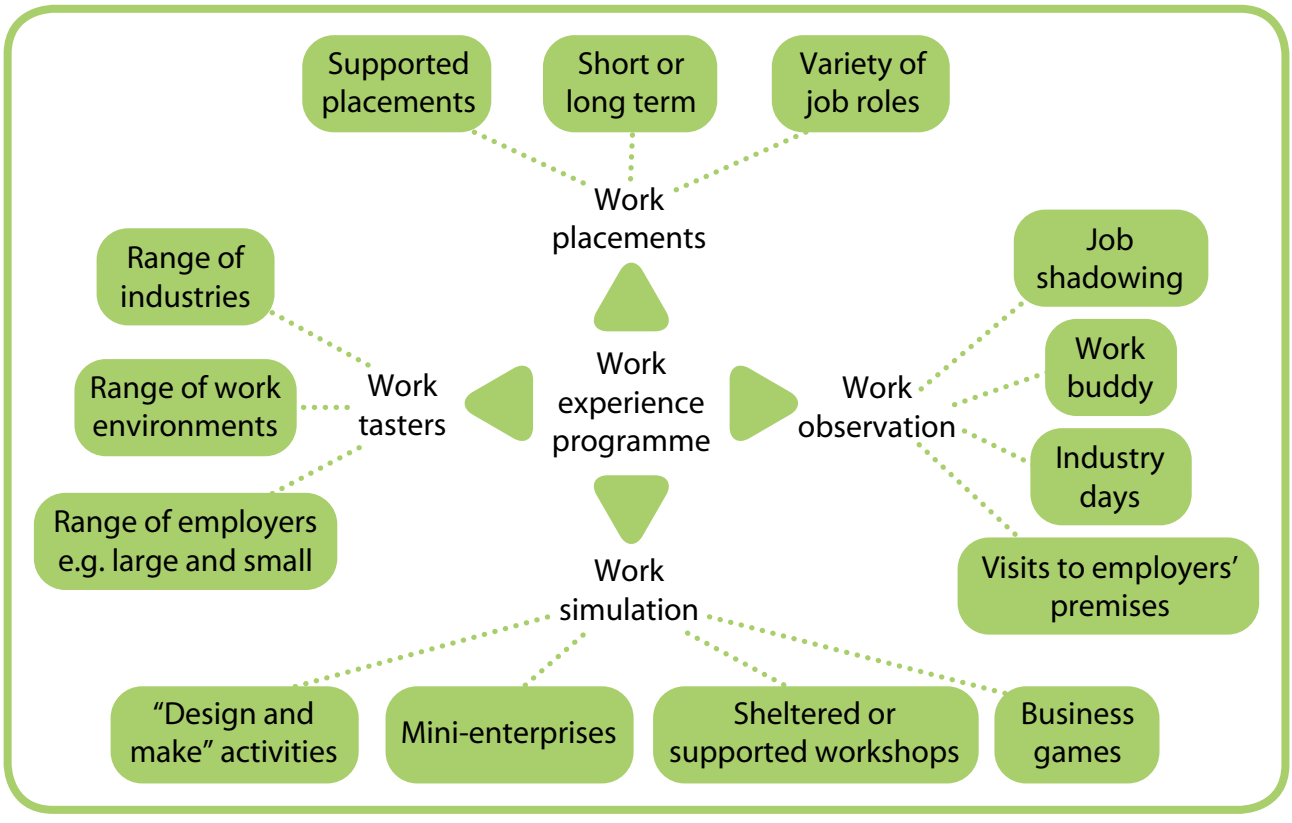
Another learner responded, "Using your initiative is important. If you see a job that needs doing, you might think it's a good idea to do it without asking. I cleared up once and the chap I was working with said, 'Don't do that because I've got more work to do there'. So now I ask before I do something that I think needs doing. Using your initiative shows your employer that you're keen to get on."

2.4 Planning a work experience programme to meet individual needs

Your work experience programme can be designed to provide a wide variety of work related learning opportunities. Effective E2E providers plan a varied menu of options for learners and offer different developmental pathways to work. You need to tailor the route into the workplace and any essential support package to take account of:

- prior experience;
- work readiness;
- level of skill development;
- level of confidence in LLN skills;
- motivation level;
- ability to face challenges.

The route into the workplace can be stepped or lateral to provide practice and to extend skills, and can include any of the following:



The report from the ALI describes examples of practices that can help or hinder the work-related learning experience:

"One provider has developed part of its E2E provision to encourage enterprise and develop business skills among its young learners. Learners can attend a business development course and then take part in projects, such as setting up and running a snack shop in a training centre. They are fully involved in every aspect of the business, from buying and pricing stock through to calculating profits, which they can use to pay for driving lessons.

Too many providers under-estimate the importance of the vocational element of E2E. There is a vast difference in the range of vocational 'tasters' offered by different providers. The best offer eight or more options, across the spectrum of vocational areas from construction to hairdressing and beauty therapy, and business administration to land-based industries. Others offer a poor choice for learners."[10]

A number of business partners and other organisations may be able to contribute to your work experience menu in order to offer a wider range of curriculum. Your organisation might consider working with:

- Education Business Partnerships;
- other training providers in a consortium;
- voluntary sector organisations;
- adult and community providers;
- local business organisations such as Chambers of Commerce;
- *Connexions*.

The **Section 5, Messages for Subject Learning Coaches** in this ringbinder has activities to help you review and plan how to improve your own work-related provision. It also includes a self-assessment checklist for managers to support this process.

[10] The Adult Learning Inspectorate, *Entry to Employment: Looking back over the first year and forward to the future*, 2004.

A whole-organisation approach to planning work-related learning: case study

Springboard, Islington: case study

Springboard Training is part of a national charity providing education and support to young people, often disaffected from mainstream education. Over the years, Springboard has developed a whole organisation approach to work placements that involves staff at all levels working with the young people both within the organisation and on the placement.

Springboard works with its host employers to determine the baseline requirements they have for entry for learners on work placements. These requirements are then discussed and refined in order to reach a workable solution and to clarify the expectations of the learner, removing any unrealistic expectations in the process.

Tutors at Springboard look at the profile of the young people and make a decision on the support package the learners need in order to undertake a successful placement and to meet the expectations of the employer. Tutors then work together to decide who is to provide the support and how it is to be provided.

To prepare for work, learners may need to develop skills from any or all components of the E2E curriculum. The initial assessment of personal and social skills and *Skills for Life*, and an assessment of the learner's level of vocational competence will identify what support is needed. This may lead to a package that concentrates, for example, on aspects of numeracy, measures and space and shape, timekeeping and personal presentation from the personal and social skills curriculum and a basic health and safety qualification from the vocational curriculum.

The tutors at Springboard recognise that employers are prepared to support their learners in an enjoyable and learning-rich work placement that can often lead to progression for learners. In turn they expect the learner to be able to add value to the organisation by making a contribution to the core operations of the business and putting in the effort that is expected.

2.5 Taking account of individual needs: using learner profiles[11]

Effective E2E providers recognise that the design of vocational programmes, support needs and progression rates will vary between individuals. Good curriculum planning begins with thoughtful initial and diagnostic assessment and translating this into individual learning plans. Learners need to experience a wide range of holistic assessment and self-assessment activities at entry and induction stages to demonstrate their strengths and needs. The assessment, planning, implementation and review (APIR)[12] framework used by *Connexions* contributes valuable information to this process. In effective practice, the *Connexions* Personal Advisor will work as a member of the E2E team to contribute resources, ideas and guidance to individual learning plans.

Using **learner profiles** can help you to plan work experience and support packages that take into account prior learning experience, motivation levels and proximity to the labour market. The purpose of learner profiles is not to stereotype or put learners into neat categories, as this would only serve to undermine the individual learning that is at the heart of E2E provision. But by modelling three broadly different types of learner you can begin to think about appropriate learning programmes. In particular how you can:

- improve work experience for different individual learners;
- improve reviews so that we plan programmes and targets;
- identify the skills you need to develop in your team to support individual work experience programmes. In the learner profile case studies that follow the three learners' assessment information is included. Remember that these are examples only. A learner's skill level may have nothing to do with their current vocational focus.

In this resource we use three case studies based on E2E learners, Naz, Gemma and Darren, to illustrate the three different learner profiles. They have different starting points and aspirations and their work based learning needs are very different, but please remember that not all learners will fall neatly into these three categories.

[11] Learning and Skills Development Agency, *Approaches to the delivery of E2E: focused progression*, 2004.

[12] The Learning and Skills Council, *A Guide for E2E providers and Local Learning and Skills Councils on the APIR Framework*, 2003.

MARTEC Training: case study

The project demonstrated the value of using the learner profiles to develop a global curriculum framework that is coherent and able to improve progression and achievement of learners whilst still being able to be responsive to the needs of each individual learner on the programme.

The reorganisation of the curriculum is helping the centre to improve their individualised approach to supporting learners and is helping them to think about the type of activities that are most appropriate to each learner given their current state of development.

The learning programme has been reconstituted around the E2E learner profiles featured in the pilot documentation.

Learner profile 1
Learners without a vocational focus

Example starting profile for learners without a vocational focus:

- Entry level or Level 1 skills;
- vocationally unfocused;
- multiple development needs;
- some basic and Key Skills development needs;
- intensive support and development needs.

Naz left school eight months ago and has since been out of education, training or employment. He has had a difficult time and is now living in a local authority care facility. He is working towards living independently. He has settled into E2E well and enjoys the course. His numeracy skills are strong, assessed at Level 1, but he finds literacy challenging in comparison. He is working at Entry Level 3 and is hoping to achieve Level 1 by the end of his programme.

Naz does not know what sort of job he would like. He is working with his key worker and *Connexions* adviser to 'find a focus'. He would like to work in the open air rather than being confined inside. He doesn't mind cold weather. He enjoys sport and plays football and basketball regularly.

When identifying vocational options, Naz expressed an interest in construction, horticulture and sports leadership. He is currently completing the Community Sports Leadership Award and has been very enthusiastic about the course, even though he found written aspects of the course challenging.

Naz has the chance of a work placement with the local authority Parks and Gardens Department. He would be able to sample job roles in the tennis booking office and garden maintenance, and help to organise sports events. He is keen to take up this offer and is preparing to see the works manager at a park close to where he lives.

Facilitating the learning journey

Stimulation

- Supportive and stimulating environment to encourage wish to learn.
- Learning environment which differs from anything experienced previously, such as school.
- Lively, relevant learning activities that encourage successful small steps.

Engagement

- Offering a range of choices empowers the learner and engages them in the learning process.
- Range of choices should be wide enough to enable the learner to choose a learning pathway in which they can achieve – although not all the choices may be viewed as positive by the learner.

Skills development

- Build on stimulation and engagement phases as learner will now have greater self confidence.
- Learner will be developing skills, including LLN skills, largely through integrated and embedded approaches.
- Build on preferred learning contexts and learning styles.

Focus

- Learner begins to make choices about what to do in the future.
- Choices will be informed by range of bite-sized and taster activities.
- Making choices about progression beyond E2E.
- Choices will inform the final phase of individual learning which should be focused around a particular occupational area.

Progression

- Moves to a positive destination, possibly to Apprenticeship Level 2 or equivalent employment.
- Be prepared to view progression to a programme at Level 1 or at Entry 3 level as positive for some learners.
- A Level 2 outcome may be desirable but should not be pursued at all costs.

Building self esteem

- By now the learner may be able to reflect upon a healthy set of learning experiences and achievements.
- Supportive tutors provide positive feedback and reinforce self-confidence and self esteem.
- Learner may be showing more independence, opting for activities such as work experience and feeling more confident about assessment of learning.

Learner profile 2
Ready to find a focus

Example starting profile for learners ready to find a focus:

- Entry 2 – Entry 3 Level;
- looking for a vocational focus within a specific vocational area;
- a range of skills development needs, including LLN;
- mixed achievements, spanning Entry Level 3 to Level 1;
- may have particular skills gaps if they 'switched off' at school (e.g. numeracy);
- may have little practical work experience but a strong inclination towards workplace learning.

Gemma has been on E2E for a month and is keen to find a work placement. She left school with few formal qualifications and applied for jobs in the retail sector. After receiving no replies, she met a *Connexions* adviser who suggested that an E2E programme would help to develop her skills and get the qualifications to equip her to get a job. Early observations of Gemma's personal and social skills reveal that she lacks self-confidence and feels she 'failed' at school.

Both Gemma and her tutors feel that a work placement is the best way to pursue her aim to find a job. Tutors have been looking for a suitable placement in the retail sector. Gemma does not mind what sort of area she works in, though she reports that all her job applications were to music and video stores. She enjoys listening to music and watching DVDs, though she doesn't like computer games.

Gemma's initial assessment reveals that her skills seem to be at a level higher than her qualifications suggest. She is confident in literacy and numeracy and is working towards Communications and Application of Number at Level 1. She does not want to do IT because she says she gets bored with computers and is frightened of losing her work. Gemma would like to complete an NVQ in Customer Care to enable her to work in the retail sector.

Gemma has heard of a large music store that is looking for a student to take on a work placement. She has been invited to an interview with the manager. She is excited at the prospect but nervous about going for an interview. She is not sure what to wear or how to make a good impression. She is working on her CV but feels she does not have much to say about herself.

Facilitating the learning journey

Engagement

- Encourage learners to identify their interests and begin to put together a menu of appropriate vocational tasters and work experiences.
- Design placements that have Entry 3, Level 1 or Level 2 learning goals to challenge and stimulate.
- Ensure the review process for work tasters or work placements is thorough enough for learners to explore all the positives and negatives of the vocational area.
- Learners may complete projects and reports to investigate the occupational sector more deeply.

Skills development

- Provide opportunities for integrated and embedded skills development that cover all components of the E2E curriculum framework.
- Use formative feedback during work tasters and work experience to target specific employability and LLN skills for development.
- Make sure the learner builds on strengths rather than focuses on weaknesses.
- Challenge the learner to achieve qualifications at higher levels where skills are strongest; for example, NVQ units.

Focus

- When a focus has been adopted, put strategies into place to maintain the momentum.
- Help identify progression routes.

Progression

- Define progression options and routes closely as the programme nears its close.
- Offer a range of progression options right up to the end of the programme.
- Learners' eventual choice may be better informed by the use of late placements, or transitional links with employers, colleges and training providers.
- Learner may need on-going support for the first part of a Level 2 programme.

Learner profile 3
Narrow focus

Example starting profile for learners with a narrow focus:

- Entry 3 – Level 1 skills;
- may be close to Level 1 achievement in many areas and ready to commit to demands of Level 2 programmes such as Apprenticeship;
- almost vocationally focused;
- specific skill development needs, possibly including LLN;
- likely to have clear idea of progression route or occupational area they want to pursue;
- may need work tasters to clarify preferred area of work.

Darren left school and enrolled on a Foundation Business course at college. He says he finds business boring but it was the only subject he did well in at school. Darren has a history of motor vehicle offending and was arrested soon after starting his college course. Thinking he was going to receive a custodial sentence, he dropped out of his course and hung around with friends instead.

Darren was put on an Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme for six months. Part of this included a commitment to education, training or employment and, after discussion with his YOT worker, Darren said he preferred to work in the construction industry rather than an office. He was referred to E2E and has made steady progress in the first few months. He has already had a placement with a plastering firm and received very good feedback. However, he found it very hard work and it was difficult getting on with his colleagues. He met a joinery apprentice on site and thinks he would prefer this work.

Darren has written to some joinery firms with his CV. He has had a positive reply from a small firm close to where he lives and has been invited to an interview. He sees this as a good opportunity and wants to prepare well for the meeting. He is trying to find out more about joinery but finds it difficult to uncover useful information on the Internet. Darren has already passed Key Skills Communications at Level 1 and has completed the Skills for Working Life Award. He was disappointed to fail the Numeracy National Test at Entry 3 but is prepared to work hard for this. He knows that there is a lot of numeracy in carpentry and joinery and is rather worried about that. He is positive about doing well on the placement and is hoping to be offered a job at the end of it.

Facilitating the learning journey

Confirming the focus

- Learners may need to 'fine tune' their progression route; for example, they might have a strong focus on construction or health and beauty sectors but are not sure which specialism they want to follow up.
- Early, focused tasters and structured work placements that allow them to try different job roles are helpful.
- Encourage the learner to follow up with projects about the sector and local job opportunities.
- Make sure that the programme is challenging enough to fully extend the learner. Motivate the learner to achieve additional and higher level qualifications.

Consolidation

- With an achievement profile spanning Entry 3 to Level 1 it is important to develop a 'consolidating' learning programme that prioritises development needs below Level 1, while providing challenging opportunities to achieve Level 1 and 2 units where possible, for example, in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) or Key Skills.
- Remember that the learner may have as yet unidentified barriers to learning that cause some problems and may deter the learner committing to the demands of a Level 2 programme for fear of failure.
- An early and effective diagnostic assessment of personal and social skills, using the approach described in the Standards Unit resources and in liaison with *Connexions* staff who may have undertaken an assessment, planning and implementation review (APIR) with the learner will be essential.
- When behavioural barriers to learning are identified, they should feature as a core element in the individual learning programme both in the centre and the work place.

2.6 Activities for learners

Using and adapting activities to prepare for work experience

In this ringbinder we provide an outline of the activities. You can find session plans for each learner activity on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM to use and adapt for your learners. The activities are in a sequence that encourages the learner to start from a broad base and refine their thinking so that they recognise:

- the type of placement programme that will suit them, for example, a series of tasters, short placements, or a longer work placement;
- the area of work that will suit their aspirations and skills;
- the skills and knowledge they can develop during this preparation stage.

Remember to promote a positive and optimistic outlook during the activities and encourage learners to take the opportunity to explore all the possibilities that may be open to them.

Starting points

Before learners can find a focus and move forward, they will need to explore how they feel about the world of work. Your role will be to draw out their hopes and fears and to help them to manage their expectations. While some learners will lack confidence, be nervous about meeting new situations and be wondering about their ability to cope, others may be over-confident, hasty and vulnerable to making mistakes.

You can use the two activities in this section to:

- introduce the idea of a framework for employability skills and the different skills learners will need at each stage;
- encourage learners to think about how they feel about work experience and what they want to get out of it;
- observe and record learners' starting points;
- identify potential support needs as you begin to plan individual work related programmes;
- begin to identify priority learning targets for the placement;
- introduce learners to different ways of thinking, using the PowerPoint presentation for Learner activity 1 on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM.

Teaching thinking skills

'Thinking skills' approaches to teaching have been found to improve learning in many areas of the curriculum. These approaches emphasise processes of thinking and learning that can be applied in a range of contexts. Thinking skills in the Schools' National Curriculum[13] include information processing, reasoning, enquiry, creative thinking and evaluation.

These abilities are essential to the Key Skill Problem Solving[14] where, at Level 1, learners show they can:

- confirm understanding of a problem and identify different ways of tackling it;
- decide how they will try to solve the problem and plan how to do it;
- check if the problem has been solved and evaluate their performance.

Many problems cannot be solved in your head, so these activities introduce and develop two different 'thinking tools', spidergrams or mind maps[15] and Six Thinking Hats™ (for more information on Edwards de Bono's concepts please contact dmcquaig@debono.com All rights reserved. Copyright The McQuaig group 1985). These tools encourage peer interaction, discussion and reasoning, which are essential to effective thinking. They also give learners a structure in which they can think and record their thoughts systematically. The tools are illustrated by some elements of the employability skills framework that will support E2E learners in their work experience.

Spidergrams or mind maps

The brain links key concepts but not necessarily in a linear way. By drawing a 'concept' map, or mind map, ideas can be generated and linked together creatively. This approach encourages learners with visual and tactile learning preferences to think laterally, record ideas spontaneously and to use graphics, colours or annotations to aid memory. It relies on key words, clustering and association.

The mind map works best for confident writers and the spidergram may be more accessible to learners with less developed literacy skills. The approach works well in classrooms where learners, working in groups, discuss an issue and identify ideas or solutions. You can encourage creativity initially by using coloured sticky notes to help learners record and organise their thoughts, find

[13] Department of Education and Skills: The Standards Site www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/thinkingskills/

[14] Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, www.qca.org.uk

[15] Tony Buzan, *Use your head*, 1995, BBC Books.

associations and generate questions logically. The final result can be transferred to paper. Peer evaluation and feedback can strengthen the final outcome if learners work in small groups.

Six Thinking Hats™

Edward de Bono's Six Thinking Hats™ is a powerful framework for parallel, focused thinking. There are six imaginary hats and each indicates a specific role in the thinking. Learners consider problems or ideas from six different perspectives. This approach forces you to move outside your normal thinking style to get a more rounded view of the issue.

Red hat	Emotions, feelings. Ask "how do I feel right now?" The feeling may be genuine but illogical.
White hat	Information, data, what we know or need to know. Neutral and objective. This might focus on facts or figures.
Black hat	Challenges weaknesses, downsides. Logical, careful and cautious,looks at problems defensively, e.g. 'What could go wrong? What might not work? Helps you look for fatal flaws in ideas and makes your plans more resilient.
Green hat	Ideas, opportunities, new thinking. This is often used to find solutions to 'black hat' problems.
Yellow hat	Benefits, value, what is working well. Logical and positive, the optimistic view that helps you think about the benefits of ideas.
Blue hat	Manages the thinking. Looks at the pros and cons of all the ideas. To resolve uncertainties, it may even suggest more creative thinking or fact-finding.

This approach works well where learners wear real (or imaginary!) coloured hats or badges in turn to look at problems from a range of viewpoints they may not have considered before. This can be done either in small groups or as a whole class.

Planning how to use the activities

The activities can be used with individuals or pairs, small or large groups and you will be able to think of many adaptations.

Use the PowerPoint slides on the **Tutor Resource** CD-ROM to introduce some different ways of thinking about other complex topics using spidergrams, mind maps and Six Thinking Hats™. The slides show learners how to create and use these tools, which are illustrated by thoughts and questions about work experience issues.

Learner Activity

Learner activity 1: What will I get out of work experience?

You can use this activity with a whole class, small group or pairs. It encourages learners to 'unpack' the benefits of work experience, to ask questions about what they could get out of work experience and to think about complex ideas in concrete and visual ways.

Learning objectives

When they have completed this activity learners will be able to:

- explain what is important to them about going on a work placement;
- decide what sort of things they would like to learn on a work placement;
- use a spidergram or a mind map and Six Thinking Hats™ as thinking tools.

What you will need

- Computer and data projector for whole class use;
- 'How do you think?' PowerPoint presentation;
- Placement Learning Plan Step 1;
- Sticky notes;
- Flipchart paper and coloured pens.

Running the session

During this activity ask your learners to reflect on the benefits of work experience for them. Here are some 'trigger ideas' overleaf to start discussion or you may prefer to create your own 'benefit list', or see the images on p. 4 in this section for more ideas.

Some good things about work experience

Find out more about my vocational area	Find out what employers expect from employees
Learn new skills	Find out what type of work I like best.
Get out of the Centre for a change	Help me decide my next step
Help me complete my E2E project work	Help me become more self-disciplined
Help me get a job	Improve my self-confidence
Find out what I'm good at	Meet new people

Use the PowerPoint presentation to prompt learners to:

- think about their own learning preferences;
- consider how they think about complex topics;
- consider ways of thinking about complex things visually or out loud, for example, using spidergrams or Six Thinking Hats™.

Introduce the idea of the four stages in getting ready for work, and the skills you need for each stage.

Encourage learners to try out both ways of thinking about other topics or problems. For example, the spidergram 'What can I get out of work experience?' on p. 41 shows two things they can learn on a work placement:

- find out more about my vocational area;
- find out what type of work I like best.

It also structures the sort of questions they need to ask. How else does the spidergram help them to think about these ideas? Can they find links between the ideas?

How does the Six Thinking Hats™ diagram for 'Improve my self-confidence' on p. 42 help us to think about problems, generate questions and find solutions?

Now your learners can consider other benefits of getting a work placement using ideas from the list above and using these two approaches. Ask them to work in pairs or groups:

a) To make up questions or comments about these ideas that would help them personally, and create a spidergram to organise their thoughts. Initially, to encourage creative and flexible thinking, learners might write their questions and ideas on coloured sticky notes and arrange them on a wall before transferring the structure to paper. Use colours and drawings where helpful.

b) To put on 'hats' and think about all sides of the problem in turn, finally creating a poster of their conclusions. Again, coloured sticky notes might be helpful to start with.

Ask learners to record at least three main things they would like to get out of work experience. These can be recorded in Step 1 of the Placement Learning Plan (PLP).

In discussion draw out the:

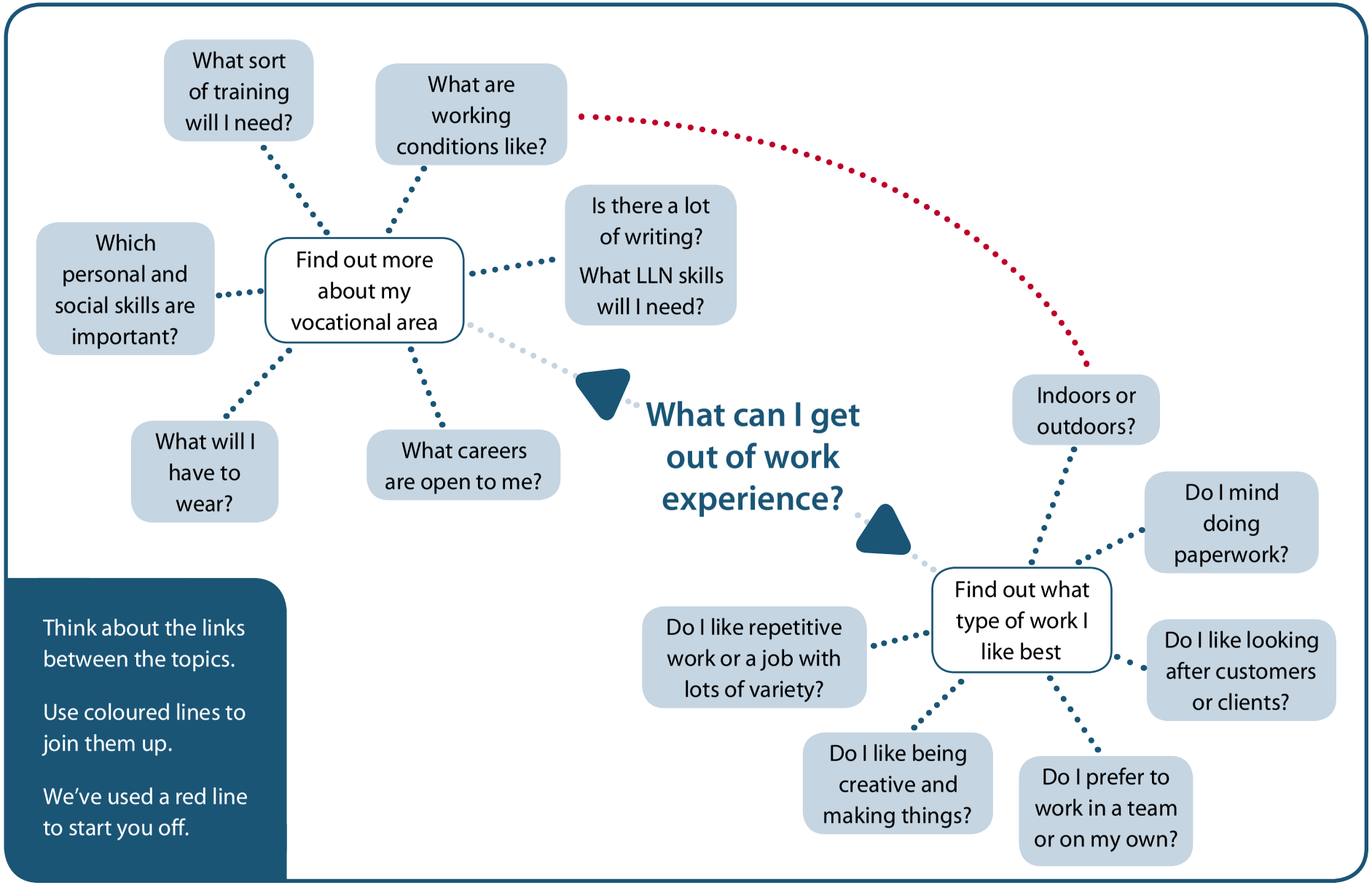
- benefits of a work placement to widen horizons and find a focus;
- need to plan in advance what to learn on work placement;
- sorts of questions learners need to be thinking about;
- advantages of thinking about problems in a structured and creative way.

To conclude, ask the groups to evaluate their ideas and the methods they used, in particular identifying:

- what went well and why;
- what was difficult and why;
- what they would change for next time.

There is a full session plan for this activity on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM.

Using a spidergram



Blue hat

Before I go on work experience I need to:

- find out what time I need to be there so I can plan my journey and be on time;
- get help with controlling my anger and practise this, so if things go wrong I can deal with them;
- tell them what I'm good at so they can allocate suitable work to me;
- tell them what skills I'd like to learn and improve on whilst I'm there;
- ask them what they will expect of me whilst I am there.

Black hat

If I don't plan my work experience carefully:

- I won't know what I have to do;
- I won't have brushed up the skills I'll need;
- I'll get in a mood if things go wrong.

White hat

I know:

- I need to prepare in order to be confident in my interview
- Employers are more interested in applicants with good communication skills
- I have experience that is relevant to the job.
- I need a qualification but can achieve this through on-the-job training.

Yellow hat

I can:

- be a good friend;
- dress tidily;
- listen carefully and follow instructions;
- be interested in jobs if they appeal to me.

Red hat

I feel:

- excited about trying something new;
- nervous they won't like me at work;
- worried I'll not cope with the job;
- anxious to get going.

Improve my self-confidence

Green hat

I could try:

- keeping my temper;
- asking questions about the job so they know I'm interested;
- using my initiative;
- asking questions if I'm not sure;
- getting to know one new person everyday.

Learner Activity

Learner activity 2: Where are the skills?

You can use this activity with a whole class, small group or pairs. It encourages learners to think about the skills for work they have got already and those they will need to develop. It also develops awareness of the generic skills that employees need.

Learning objectives

When they have completed this activity learners will be able to:

- list the skills they feel confident about;
- list the skills they need to work on to get ready for work experience.

What you will need

- 'Where are the skills?' cards, one set for each two or three learners;
- Placement Learning Plan Step 1.

'Where are the skills?' cards

There are 24 cards in the set, with example skills from the three core components of the E2E curriculum: *Skills for Life*, personal and social skills, vocational and employability skills. The cards are colour coded for easy identification. You can, of course, make additional skills cards of your own or ask learners to make up more during the activities.

You will need to plan the pairs or small groups to ensure that stronger readers are working alongside less confident readers.

Running the session: version A

Revisit the idea of the four stages in the development of employability skills on E2E p. 16–22:

- About the world of work;
- Getting ready for work;
- Going to work;
- Moving on.

The stages appear in the 'How do you think?' PowerPoint presentation on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM.

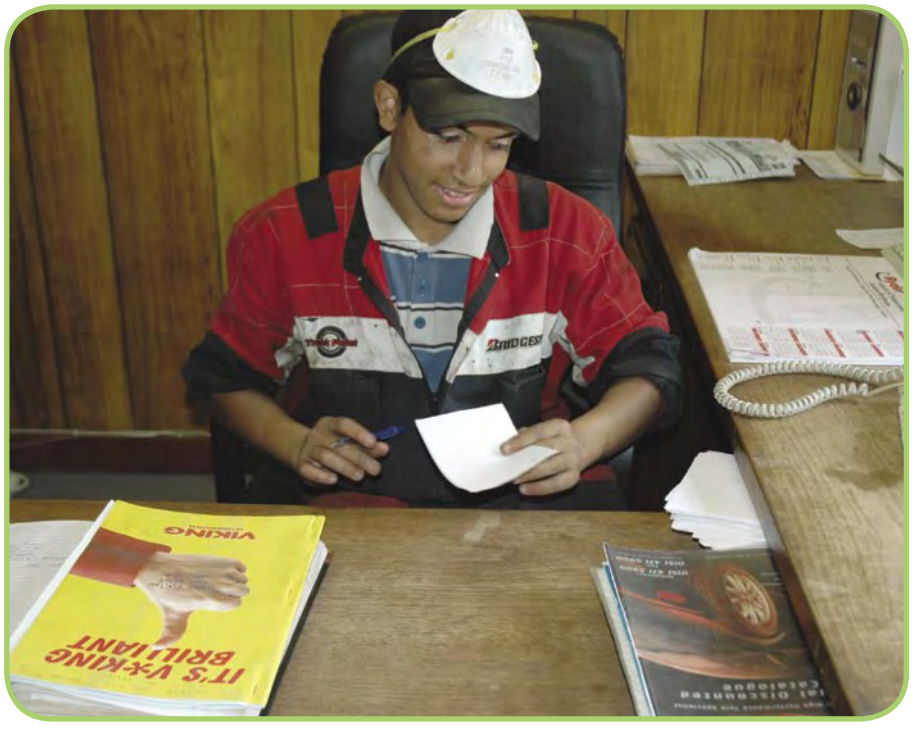
In pairs or small groups, learners share out the cards and discuss the skills on them to make sure they understand what they mean. They can check their understanding by talking about an example of each skill from real life.

Ask learners to lay out the header cards for the curriculum areas across their table.

Then ask learners to think for which stage of the work experience programme the skills would be most useful, and to lay them out in priority order. They can use the blank cards and dry wipe markers to add other important skills, for example, writing letters, making phone calls, preparing a CV, reading bus timetables. If it is helpful, you could offer learners the header cards for the four stages in the employability skills framework.

In discussion, draw out that:

- many of the skills are important at several stages in the job seeking process;
- there are many other skills that are essential for work.



Running the session: version B

Ask learners to look at the skills cards and to sort them under these headings:

Place the four stage cards down one side of the table to form a grid if this is helpful (see the example on p. 47).

It is useful if learners explain to each other why they have put the skills under each heading, giving examples of how they have used the skill before and what happened. Other learners (or tutors) could be invited to offer examples of occasions when the learner used the skill differently and, after reflection, the learner might re-classify the card.

Each learner then identifies some skills that are strengths and two or three others they need to work on as they get ready for work experience. Each time they must consider strengths and development needs from each curriculum component.

Learners can record their strengths and development needs for their portfolio and then complete Step 1 of the PLP.

There is a full session plan for this activity on the **Tutor resource** CD-ROM.

Extension activities

These learner activities can be complemented and enhanced by the *Skills for Life* Materials for Embedded Learning in Entry to Employment.

Module 1, 'Making choices', introduces learners to finding their starting points, discovering what skills and qualities they already have. This is essential knowledge as they begin to prepare their Placement Learning Plan (PLP).

Learner review point LR

At this stage you can ask your learner to prepare for a learner review. They can use the learner review template provided on the CD-ROM. You can ask them to reflect on Step 1 of their PLP identifying:

- what they want to get out of work experience;
- their strengths and development needs in each E2E curriculum area.

The outcome of this review might be to begin:

- planning more in-depth research about the world of work and the learner's place in it;
- preparing the Placement Learning Plan.

Example layout of cards for Activity 2: Where are the skills?

	Skills for Life	**Personal and social skills**	**Vocational and employability skills**
About the world of work	Reading job adverts to find out what jobs there are locally	Finding out which personal and social skills are needed for different jobs	Finding out how work placement can help me learn about the world of work
	Reading information about jobs in different sectors	Presenting myself well at interview	Thinking about the type of work I'd like to try
Getting ready for work	Practising reading and understanding instructions for work	Knowing how to act responsibly at work	Understanding the needs of customers and clients
	Practising how to communicate with other workers and managers	Learning how to respect other people's views	Understanding how to work under pressure and meet deadlines
Going to work	Good timekeeping	Asking for help when I need it	Following health and safety rules
	Making sense of my pay slip	Working well in a team	Looking out for problems and suggesting solutions
Moving forward	Planning to improve my literacy and numeracy skills when I move on	Being positive about my achievements at interview	Planning to have a go at more new skills
	Writing up my CV to include my E2E work placements	Understanding that learning is important throughout adult life	Getting more training to improve my career prospects