

Skills for Work CASE STUDY

Hairdressing Intermediate One

Inverness College, with its Lochaber, Alness and Longman Campuses involved, undertook this successful pilot in partnership with twenty-one Highland secondary schools.

Rationale

The college took part to strengthen the existing links with schools through the Vocational Pathways Programme (VPP).

The new course allowed pupils and lecturers to be more creative in the industry and involved rural schools without easy access to courses in their own areas.

One aim was to prepare candidates for the world of work through improving core skills related to the industry and to develop and build expressive, aesthetic skills that may not be so easily developed later in life.



Partnership Arrangements

The partners agreed a number of objectives and meetings are held as part of the VPP programme.

Attendance was emailed to schools on a weekly basis and any pupil issues or difficulties were discussed with the VPP school contact.

At the outset, pupils were taken through the individual college department's induction and received a Pupil Handbook to record progress and feedback. Pupils were also asked to sign up to a Pupil Responsibility agreement, showing them what is expected from the college - and from them - throughout the course.

Progress reports, completed every 12 weeks by lecturers indicated to schools the progress of pupils in areas such as timekeeping, relations with peers and staff, theory and practical work.

The single point of contact through the School/College Liaison Officer meant that concerns could be communicated and dealt with as well as providing guidance and support for the pupils, schools, partners and college lecturers.

Highland Council set up a purpose-built salon in Alness Academy and another salon was leased from Lochaber College, with ongoing material costs met by Inverness College.

Transport to college is funded through the Highland Councils 'Determined to Succeed' initiative and learning support requirements where appropriate are provided from school or college resources.

Delivery Approaches

Individual departments reviewed all applications and selected suitable candidates to attend a skills test/taster day and interview.

Schools received notification of the pupils being accepted onto the course and feedback was available as to why a pupil had been unsuccessful and put on to waiting lists.

As part of building employability skills, pupils integrated with students on higher level courses for practical salon activities, salon reception duties and working with clients where possible. This was structured to take place over their 36 week course and was very much based on practical and theory work during their day at college.

Assessment strategies included a checklist to gather course evidence to record progress and tracking of personal goals and so on. Pupils also have a range of support materials they could use such as SFEU support packs, SVQ1 textbooks and the SQA Creativity Unit DVD.

Visits to salons were arranged for pupils to interview staff about their roles, their experiences and responsibilities to find out what it takes to be a hairdresser.

Close links have been established with HABIA, the approved standards setting body for the industry. The curriculum team leader and two staff members attended the local HABIA Forum for Hairdressing and Beauty Therapy to keep abreast of key skills, industry changes and feedback for future changes to courses.

Four reviews in one year were regarded as demanding, time consuming, one-to-one work. This is to be re-scheduled.



Employability Skills

The topic of employability skills was introduced in the induction programme and developed throughout the course with monitoring to engage pupils in the top 10 of such skills.

Workplace experience, discussions on employer expectations, application of theory, attitudes and following instructions were assessed, discussed and monitored.

Regular personal reviews and the use of the daily log sheet – highlighted as good practice by SQA - allowed pupils to individually reflect and identify employability skills covered during practical/creativity sessions.

A questionnaire was issued to evaluate course benefits, value, employability skills and college experience.

Centre Evaluation

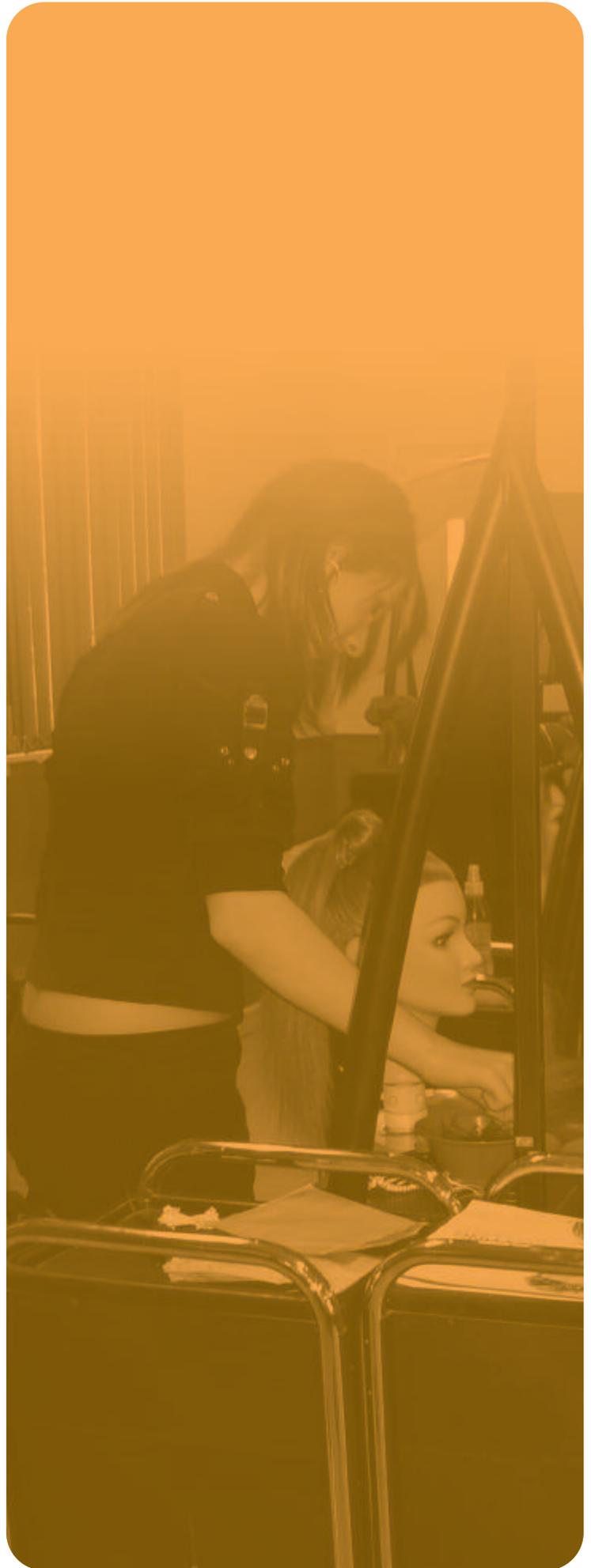
Methods included student, Unit and Course questionnaires and informal pupil discussions.

Tutor group summaries, course/unit evaluations fed into academic reviews and best practice meetings helped in the assessment process as well as a VPP newsletter with feedback from pupils, partners and college staff.



“ This is an interesting course, leading to self investigation of creative skills and talents. It also increases self confidence to help someone cope within the working environment. ”

View from lecturer, Wendy Rennie



Future Delivery Plans

Progression to SVQ Level 2 Hairdressing course, where applicable and dependent upon a pupil's age, is planned and a new Introduction to Beauty Care course – pupils will gain three SQA certified Units - is being piloted in Inverness and at Alness Academy.

As part of the pilot year, pupils taking part in the course ranged from S3 to S6 and this will continue in the future.

Advice

This is a good course with clear specifications and guidelines aided by SFEU support materials and the SQA's DVD.

The partners recommend that time is spent working out schedules and timetables to support assessment requirements. Funding for suitable PPE, art materials, tools and equipment - perhaps in the form of an individual kit - should be considered.

It is easier for this course to be run in the college environment where existing facilities are already in place. For delivery in schools or outreach centres, a simulated environment should be created which facilitates the learning process, rather than concentrating on the end product.

Staff development will benefit from attendance at all SFEU Skilled Up workshops and SQA conferences where networking with other providers can help focus on good practice or identified problems.

The course should be fun and enjoyable with pupils praised and rewarded for good behaviour.

“This course has helped me in many ways. I’ve made lots of new friends and in a hairdressing competition, I was awarded first place. I have more confidence in my abilities and I’m clearer in my mind about a future career in hairdressing.”

View from candidate, Toni Morgan

