

Skills for Work CASE STUDY

Hairdressing Intermediate One

West Lothian College in partnership with West Lothian Council Education and Cultural Services provides Skills for Work Courses for S3/S4 pupils in college and, in some circumstances, in school.

Rationale

The college has delivered courses to S3/S4 pupils for several years prior to the Skills for Work Courses being available. But the new material has extended provision, given greater focus to many transferable skills and the support provided has been extremely valuable and suitable for use with other groups of learners.

The courses are planned and delivered to develop the skills and personal attributes identified in the Curriculum for Excellence framework. Changes to the way the young people learn, including attending college, has given them a sense of belonging and wearing a workplace "uniform" with the college logo boosted their confidence and encouraged their attitudes towards being responsible citizens.



Partnership Arrangements

A college/schools development officer was appointed to work alongside school staff, pupils and parents/carers. The college organised a parents' evening and sends, bi-annually, an updated individual progress report to schools to be shared with guidance staff, pupils and parents/carers.

Transition forms were completed for each pupil and any additional support for learning needs were noted. Operational agreements covering transport arrangements, support assistant input, roles and responsibilities, delivery hours, course aims and outcomes were prepared with input from the partners. Individual agreements for each school were also prepared for outreach provision.

Where college staff worked in school they tried to follow the school system for break times, discipline and classroom management, provided this did not impact on the Skills for Work ethos. The college/school partnership team produced its own self-evaluation report with input from council education staff.

Delivery Approaches

Staff delivering to school pupils engaged in training relating to working with younger students. Full integration into a supportive environment was regarded as essential, allowing the young person to take measured risks in a new environment and to be successful in planning and managing their own learning.

College sector managers, college/schools development officer and key school staff jointly managed selection, induction, timetabling and staffing. One of the success factors involved pupils coming into college from a range of schools and merging effectively into the sector in which they are learning. Pleasingly, many new friendships have been formed.

Around 100 students sought places on the course. The college conducted interviews and students were selected in the same way as the college interviews for its own Level 1 courses, keeping in mind those prospective students were younger.

On arriving at college, students received a handbook and were given further information about the aims of the course and what they could expect. Levels of attendance for the Friday afternoon course were high, evidence of the learners' commitment.

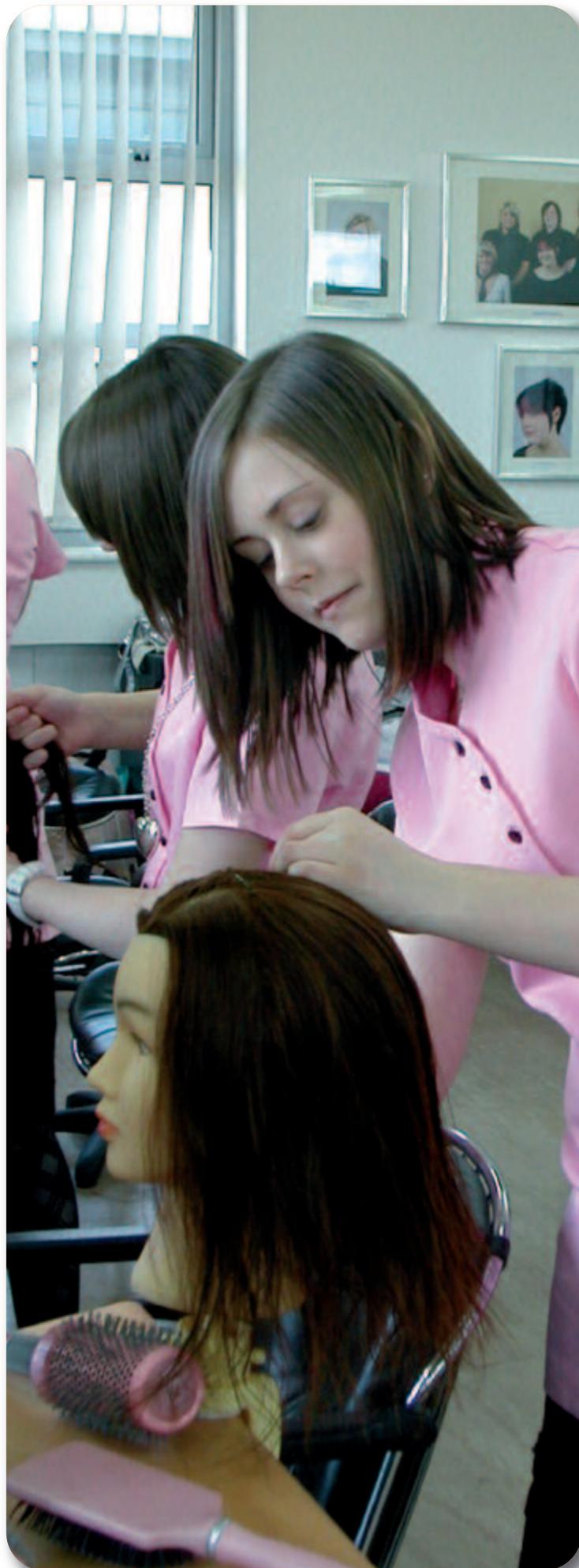
It was important that staff had experience of working with younger students at Level 1 as well as good industry experience so that the students saw the lecturer as a role model.

Formal assessment was not introduced until the students had developed a good understanding of how the salon worked and to allow time for them to bond as a team.

The support materials for the course were regarded as well written, easy to use and relevant to the learner.

And the course has made an impact as two students landed Saturday jobs with local employers. Students were able to talk to the local community about hair care and gain invaluable experience of working with the public.

All in all, the pilot ran very successfully and students were keen, willing, motivated and confident to try out new things learned.



Employability Skills

All students in college and as part of the course worked as a team, addressing issues when they arose. Building trust with this age group of student was paramount as they moved towards greater independence.

Working in a new environment with a new group of learners encouraged the development of "soft skills." Two assessments per year take place and progression/areas for improvement are addressed.

Integration of the students into the 2nd year group has been very successful. The students' confidence has increased and feedback from them has been very positive. They liked attending the college, where the environment offered a more mature approach to their learning.

Centre Evaluation

The college is committed to obtaining regular feedback. All students are invited to participate in the student on course evaluation (SOCE) that asks them to rate the college facilities, environment, learning and teaching and marketing literature.

Focus groups conducted by sector staff once a year also yielded feedback from students and addressed any concerns raised.

“ We just love being here (at college) and we wish we could be here every day ”

View from a student



Future Delivery Plans

Skills for Work Hairdressing will continue to be delivered at West Lothian College. The current student group will progress onto year 2 and a new cohort will commence in August 2007.

Advice

Any centre wishing to offer skills for work should put in place a robust interview and selection process – a major factor in the success of the scheme.

“This group of young women are inspirational and make my job rewarding”

View from a lecturer

