

Skills for Work CASE STUDY

Sport and Recreation Intermediate One

West Lothian College in partnership with West Lothian Council Education and Cultural Services offers Skills for Work Courses to S3/S4 pupils within West Lothian.

Skills for Work is available to eleven mainstream schools and two schools providing education for young people with emotional and behavioural needs.

The provision is offered either at college or within the school, depending on the individual course requirements – this one was run at Inveralmond Community High School and St Kentigerns Academy.

Rationale

The college has long recognised the need for a varied provision for S3/S4 pupils so the introduction of Skills for Work has allowed it to expand in this area while ensuring that a number of transferable skills required in the workplace are effectively incorporated. The support materials provided by SQA and SFEU offer valuable resources for all involved.



Partnership Arrangements

The college has taken a number of steps to ensure smooth and regular communication with all stakeholders. It appointed a college/schools Development Officer to co-ordinate the work and communication with school staff, pupils, parents and carers and enterprise staff. The college has also held a parents' evening, inviting parents and pupils to the college to speak to lecturing staff about their young person's progress and to find out about future opportunities. Bi-annually the college issues an updated report to all schools involved in the course to be shared with school guidance staff, pupils, parents and carers.

Transition forms are completed for each pupil attending the college and these clearly recorded any identified support needs. Additionally, the college Access and Support Service Leader liaises with schools to ensure that all support arrangements are in place prior to the course start date.

Operational agreements, produced annually by the college and the council, cover transport arrangements, support assistant input, roles and responsibilities, delivery hours and course aims and outcomes.

Delivery Approaches

Twenty seven students were pre-selected by the school - 13 in one class and 14 in the other.

The class at Inveralmond currently runs on a Wednesday from 11am - 1pm and the one at St Kentigern's on a Friday from 11am until 1pm and form part of the student's weekly timetable in school. Students from St Kentigern's spent some of their own time on work placement on a Friday afternoon.

Delivery at Inveralmond is undertaken by a member of college staff who is a qualified secondary teacher and at St Kentigern's by a member of college staff jointly with school staff. All college staff teaching the school pupils have had additional training relating to working with young people and have, or are working towards, a teaching qualification.

Assessments are integral to the course and materials prepared by SFEU have been well received by school and college as a useful starter. However, this young student group require additional materials and tasks as their attention span can be limited.



Additional support for delivery staff was offered by SQA and this provided a forum for questions to be answered and ideas shared. Appropriate and straightforward SQA information for parents/carers, parents' information evenings plus lecturers' feedback on students' progress were also available.

Communication is essential. Key staff have been identified in each school and in college with the College/Schools Development Officer having responsibility for all school provision. Students and staff were involved in evaluation both formally through the Student on Course Evaluation (SOCE) and informally.

A realistic work environment was essential for students to understand the link between theory and practice. As a result, students visited the Royal Bank of Scotland



Health Club at Gogar, Edinburgh and staff at Bannatyne's Gym in Livingston offered an explanation of roles involved in fitness instruction. The students were impressed by both venues and the range of employment opportunities surprised them.

Integration into the subject area in college allowed students to work together. School students worked with HN full time students as clients in the college gym and HNC students offered a supportive role during a theory class.

Delivery of this course in college, and not in school, gave a real working environment for students as this supported and improved the understanding of the world of work. For almost all students this was the first experience of employability encountered.

Staff had to be highly organised for each lesson and the content well structured to engage these young people and maintain attention and concentration.

It is beneficial if pupils are supported in finding a clear idea of what they are looking for in a career or their future learning and employment. It was important for the young people to realise that the course was not only to play sport but also to learn about what is needed for employment.

Employability Skills

At the heart of the course was the need for the pupils to develop good team working skills, to identify the benefits of working with others, to take ownership for their actions and see the clear link between actions and consequences.

Staff were regarded as good role models with a balance of industry and teaching experience to make the learning as realistic and effective as possible.

Centre Evaluation

The college is committed to gaining regular feedback from all stakeholders and approached this in a variety of ways. All students are asked to rate the college facilities, environment, learning and teaching and marketing literature.

Focus groups conducted by sector staff also produce feedback from students to address any concerns raised.



“ It’s good because it is different from school; you get to go to college and do a course you want to do. ”

View from a candidate



Future Delivery Plans

It is difficult for some schools in West Lothian to provide transport for college delivery. It is anticipated that some schools will deliver the Skills for Work in school with limited involvement from college but other courses will continue to be offered in college for pupils who are able to travel.

Advice

A robust selection process with interview was a major factor in the success of the scheme. Potential students need to be aware of the course content and advised that it differs from PE taught in school.

“ Teaching school pupils Skills for Work Courses in a school environment requires a different teaching style and staff must use innovative teaching methods to maintain interest and motivation. ”

View from a lecturer