Skills for Work
and DeskSpace Case Study

St. Luke's High School

About DeskSpace

The DeskSpace e-portfolio is available to all SQA Skills for Work candidates and is currently available to centres free of charge.

It allows candidates to record the evidence for their course online, keeping everything together and accessible to tutors even at more than one centre.

Work can be uploaded and submitted online and the user-friendly interface helps candidates structure their learning through the use of online templates. Materials are available for all Skills for Work courses, including the assessor and candidate checklists.

St Luke's High School, East Renfrewshire

St Luke's High School is situated in the Auchenback area of Barrhead, East Renfrewshire, in the Greater Glasgow area. In 2008 the school celebrated its 30th anniversary.

St Luke's offers a curriculum characterised by the highest standards of learning and teaching and by a search for continuous improvement.

They believe that the school's purpose is to help all students to fulfil their potential, their attributes and capabilities to the full.

The school is committed to developing in their students the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence*, ensuring that they become successful learners, independent individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Overview

St. Luke's decided to pilot SQA DeskSpace in two areas – S3 linking with Young Persons' Services and S5 linking with colleges and the Careers Service to explore opportunities for development and use across the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence* and for the recognition of wider achievement.

The school wanted to develop opportunities for learners to engage in the portfolio process to recognise and record their achievements within the context of *Curriculum for Excellence*.

Rationale

DeskSpace is being used to capture and record achievements, evaluations of work including feedback and feed forward and the reflections of learners in S3 during designated class time. Learners collate work for assessment and plan their personal development, moving towards a more flexible approach to qualifications and assessment.

The focus with the S3 group is to record their progress through the SQA personal development units under the headings of the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence* and to encourage learners to seek opportunities for recognising and recording their achievements both in terms of the specific course they are following and the potential for cross-curricular working.

The focus with the S5 group is in supporting the transition from school to work/college and therefore DeskSpace helps pupils recognise and record their achievements both in school and at college. It allows them to reflect on and consequently develop their employability. In addition, the portfolio system is contributing to the *More Choices More Chances* strategy in place within the school/authority.

The use of DeskSpace with both groups also supports further aspects of Core Skills including numeracy and literacy and *Curriculum for Excellence* skills for learning, skills for work and skills for life.

Practical Issues

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Benefits
Short and Long Term

St. Luke's sees that there is huge potential with DeskSpace in terms of both *Curriculum for Excellence* (especially for cross-curricular project working) and for recognising wider achievement.

The school's future plans for DeskSpace include developing existing practice towards opening up learning for all and extending e-portfolios for all, especially putting a focus on establishing e-portfolios during the transition from primary.

Advice For Other Potential Centres

Centres should include and consult with learners throughout the process as they have the potential to generate ideas, suggest links with other subjects/departments and therefore develop their own role in recognising wider achievement.

They should consider co-operative teaching to deliver ongoing training and support to learners and extend training to all school-based staff to raise awareness of the potential of DeskSpace.

It is essential to involve parents and partners throughout the process, identifying areas of strengths and potential supports which could be offered.

Comments

Patricia Scott the Head Teacher of St. Luke's has no doubt about the worth of using DeskSpace to Support Skills for Work Courses and *Curriculum for Excellence*.

"**DeskSpace is proving to be a valuable tool in supporting pupils to record their achievements, class work and assessments. It allows them to reflect on their progress and plan for improvement along with their teacher. This is a real step forward for pupils and staff opening up learning and learning together.**"

And Clare Creighton (PT Pupil Support) at St. Luke's is also a big fan of DeskSpace and *Curriculum for Excellence*.

"**The potential for the development of DeskSpace and e-portfolios is immeasurable. The introduction of *Curriculum for Excellence* and the focus on recognising (wider) achievement challenges teachers and learners to develop a new way of thinking and DeskSpace helps meet this challenge in an exciting and innovative way.**"

St. Luke's pupils have also been enthusiastic in their use of DeskSpace. Their comments include the following:

"**The e-portfolio helps me organise myself better. This way I don't lose anything which could evidence my progress.**"

Amy

"**DeskSpace keeps a record of my achievements and the comments of others in my group and my teacher. This way I can always look back and remind myself of what others have said and see what I need to do to improve.**"

Lauren

"**At first I didn't really like using DeskSpace – I'd had a few problems logging on so this put me off. Once these were fixed my confidence improved and now I look forward to using DeskSpace.**"

Nicole