

Skills for Work CASE STUDY

Construction Crafts Intermediate One

Motherwell College in partnership with North and South Lanarkshire Councils have successfully piloted the course with pupils from eight schools in North Lanarkshire and sixteen in South Lanarkshire.

Rationale

The college's construction section has had a positive, long-standing link with many schools including running vocational construction programmes for S3 and S4 school pupils both in college and in schools on an outreach basis.

It has embraced completely the widening of vocational training to improve pupils' craft skills and future employability.



Partnership Arrangements

In North Lanarkshire the course is delivered in individual schools on an outreach basis in designated construction rooms whereas South Lanarkshire pupils attend college one morning a week.

The communication between the college and both local authorities is excellent with two-way support to provide the best possible service to course students.

Delivery Approaches

At the outset parents' evenings and focus groups were organised while course information booklets for schools helped in the pupil selection process.

Induction for all classes covered information including Health and Safety and Employability Skills. Carefully planned timetabling ensured the best use of staff and maximised pupils' learning experiences.

All assessments, carried out using the NABS produced by SQA, were delivered on an ongoing basis with the emphasis on experiential learning and developing skills prior to assessments. The use of the SFEU support materials provided welcome underpinning knowledge to support the practical nature of the course.

S4 students have been able to sit the CITB selection test and in South Lanarkshire, students are guaranteed an interview for an apprenticeship at the end of their course. Class groups enjoyed visits to building sites to give them a greater insight into the nature of the construction industry.



Employability Skills

This is one of the key aspects of the course and fundamental to the ethos and aims of the programme in terms of helping school students prepare for the world of work.

Employability Skills, embedded within the delivery of the individual craft units, demonstrated to pupils that the two elements of their training complemented one another.

The construction lecturers used the SFEU support notes and shared their own work/life experiences to introduce students to key employability aspects such as timekeeping and attendance, following instructions, working with others, health and safety and stressed how fundamental these issues were regardless of the occupations pursued.

Reviews involved students grading themselves, follow-up grading by lecturers leading to joint discussions on Employability Skills and how improvements could be made through an agreed Action Plan Summary.

Student progress in Employability Skills was closely monitored in each craft subject giving lecturers the chance to facilitate improvements within different craft areas.

Due to the integrated way the Employability Skills unit is delivered across craft areas and over two academic sessions, accurate and meticulous recording of student progress is paramount. A number of checklists were designed to be passed from one craft lecturer to another as the classes moved from one practical subject to the next.

The college and its council partners have regular dialogue and meetings are held to ensure that the programmes are running as effectively as possible.



Centre Evaluation

Ongoing evaluation is a feature. For each of the two years a comprehensive course review took place that looked at all aspects of delivery, learning and teaching, course design, with some of this information fed back to SQA.

A systematic review of student/unit success rates was also conducted as part of Performance Indicator analysis, as was student retention on the programme. Evaluation questionnaires for students at various times in the programme have proved very useful and important in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the programme delivery from the students' point of view.

Overall the course has been a great success to date with high achievement rates. Students' feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with the vast majority enjoying the course and the range of subjects. Students felt that they were learning a broad range of worthwhile skills.

The delivery team believe the course is designed at the correct level for the age and ability of the participating students and they have warmed to the challenge of teaching students from a younger age group and working in schools.

Schools reported a greater level of maturity among pupils involved and, in some cases, this resulted in these students concentrating more on working better in their other subjects as well.

“ Skills for Work builds on what was already happening in schools but, crucially, provides an excellent, respected qualification and practical skills that sit alongside Standard Grade options. It is an integral part of how we prepare young people for future employability and fits clearly with Curriculum for Excellence objectives ”

**View from Moira Douglas,
School Liaison Officer, Motherwell College**



Future Delivery Plans

An Intermediate 2 has been developed and launched and the college anticipates demand for the delivery of this course as a means of progression for school students who move into 5th and 6th year rather than leaving school at the end of 4th year.

The college is fully committed to the continued development of the Construction Craft Skills: Skills For Work programmes and will continue to support all of its school and local authority partners to ensure that the young people of Lanarkshire have the opportunity take part in this type of vocational education and training.

Advice

Maintaining good working relations and regular dialogue with local authority partners and schools is a key element. The integration of the Employability Skills unit is also an important facet of a well-delivered course, rather than treating it as a separate entity.

Regular team meetings for lecturers delivering the course, plus reviews and updates, maintain a feeling of course ownership for all staff involved, especially for those delivering for a lot of the time on outreach in schools.

“ We are delighted with the progress made in the delivery of these courses to our S3/4 pupils. Pupils are enjoying the courses while parents and our own teaching staff very much appreciate the high level of commitment shown by our colleagues from Motherwell College and their first-class support ”

**View from Jim Welsh,
Asst Head Teacher, St Aidan's High, Wishaw**



Customer Contact Centre

T: 0845 279 1000 E: customer@sqa.org.uk W: www.sqa.org.uk
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