



Functional Skills Support Programme e-bulletin

Edition 6: January 2010



Happy New Year and welcome to the sixth edition of the Functional Skills Support Programme (FSSP) news bulletin for post-16 education and training providers. This month's bulletin includes:

- An update on programme news including new training modules and functional skills readiness tool
- A case study from the North West on using snooker to deliver functional skills
- News from across the sector which relates to functional skills

Programme updates

New training modules

In addition to the ten revised training modules currently available a further three brand new training modules are going to be released in February and one new module is available now. The new modules in English, ICT and mathematics focus on moving practitioners on in their journey from good to excellent delivery to learners. They take account of different pedagogical approaches to learning and new thinking around FS delivery and build on the previous modules. They develop practitioners who can develop functionality with their learners and can be prepared to support those with less experience in the future.

NEW MODULES

- Managing delivery in functional skills - Lessons from the pilot (available now)
- Supporting the Development of Functionality in English
- Supporting the Development of Functionality in ICT
- Supporting the Development of Functionality in Mathematics

Feedback from recent training participants

The trainers were flexible and adaptable to meet our needs & address the issues that were applicable to us

It was great to be able to look at our existing lesson plans and seeing where the three functional skills are already covered

It was really useful to discuss the similarities and differences between functional skills and key skills

Each module offers a unitised approach giving you the ability to pick and mix units across modules to develop training sessions related to your local needs and eliminating unnecessary duplication of content. Contact your regional centre using the details at the end of this bulletin to book a consultancy visit or training modules. These can be delivered on your premises and tailored to your organisation's needs. A full list of training modules is available on www.fssupport.org

Functional skills open sessions

FSSP has been running half-day open sessions across the country to deliver information on the **new regulatory criteria** published by Ofqual. Practitioners in the South West braved the snowy conditions earlier this month to attend the events and feedback shows that it was well worth the travel, with sessions providing an excellent insight into what the changes in new regulatory criteria mean for centres. There are also open sessions on functional skills for **work-based learning providers** and functional skills in the context of **Apprenticeships, Foundation Learning and Diplomas**. Details of forthcoming dates and venues for sessions and how to book are available on www.fssupport.org.

Functional skills readiness tool

The LSIS functional skills readiness tool is currently being trialled with post-16 providers across the country. The tool is a questionnaire cross-referenced to the Common Inspection Framework and asks providers to rate their planning/ delivery of functional skills. An improvement plan is developed from the self-assessment. The process involves pre-consultancy gathering of information and views regarding readiness across the organisation, a half-day consultancy visit involving a member of the senior management team and follow-up contact to agree/implement and monitor the improvement plan. Where necessary free bespoke training can be provided to support the improvement plan. Consultancy visits and support can be booked now by contacting your regional centre. A version of the readiness tool will also be available on-line next month at www.fssupport.org.

Network events

The next round of regional network events will be running in March (all dates can be found on www.fssupport.org/events). If you attended one of the last network events you will automatically receive an invitation. If you did not attend the last event and would like to attend please contact your regional centre using the details given at the end of this bulletin.

Programme updates (cont.)

Functional skills in the secure estate conferences

Last December three secure estate (SE) conferences took place in Leeds, Birmingham and London to launch the new FS in SE publication, gain an update on the QCDA evaluation and build SE networks across the country. The events were very well received and provided a valuable forum to review the opportunities and challenges of delivering FS in SE. Practitioners found it useful to get feedback from other prison establishments with similar problems and hear practical advice on how to tackle issues. The new SE publication can be ordered via the regional helplines.

Updates to www.fssupport.org

A new release of the programme's www.fssupport.org website is going to be online from next Friday 5 February. This release will introduce a number of new features and updates, including the facility to download a wide range of resources.

In the news

In the interests of parity across the UK, UCAS have agreed that, with immediate effect, each certificated level 2 functional skills qualification will attract 10 UCAS Tariff points. No changes are planned to tariff points allocations for other skills qualifications, and the intention remains that all level 2 (or equivalent) qualifications will be removed from the UCAS Tariff for entry to higher education from 2011 onwards. For more details, see the UCAS website www.ucas.ac.uk

14-19 workforce support

14-19 Workforce Support Information, advice and guidance (IAG)

If you're involved with young people aged 14-19 then you'll need to be able to support them through decisions and transitions. 14-19 Workforce Support can offer face-to-face support around IAG as well as IAG resources and an online forum. Read more at www.diploma-support.org/facetoface/iag

Foundation Learning

All schools involved in delivering Foundation Learning from September 2010 can access support for this. All support is fully funded and consists of two 2-hour modules tailored to your organisation's needs:

Module 1 – Preparing for Foundation Learning

Module 2 – Developing a Foundation Learning programme

Find out more and book your place at www.diploma-support.org/facetoface/foundation.

The FSSP can provide detailed help with functional skills in Foundation Learning.

Regional line of learning network meetings

Line of learning networks are available in every region for each of the 14 Diploma lines of learning. They are designed to allow practitioners to meet colleagues in the same area and share their experiences, ideas and resources reflecting on local needs. To find out more go to www.diploma-support.org/facetoface/networks.

East Midlands 14-19 conference, Nottingham, 4 February 2010

Nottinghamshire and the City of Nottingham local authorities and partners invite consortia in the East Midlands and beyond to participate in this wide-ranging conference. The aims are to share and debate both strategy and practice. Workshops will include a session on delivering functional skills. For a programme and booking form, contact dace.birzgalis-liegis@nottsc.gov.uk

Delivering functional skills to the Army

Functional skills training tailored to the forces

Last year Jane Williams (East of England regional facilitator) delivered functional skills CPD to combined audiences of military and civilian tutors at Number 18 Army Education Centre Colchester and the Army Training Regiment Bassingbourn. Following consultation, programmes were designed and delivered that were tailored to the specific needs of the tutors and the Army. All the post-course feedback reported by the participants has been positive and attendees felt the sessions were informative and pitched at the appropriate level.

Martin Rose Basic Skills Development Officer (Army) writes:

"I was impressed by the high quality of the LSIS delivery and especially, the flexibility in adjusting the programmes, content and styles often at short notice, during the CPD day to meet the mixed demands of the audience. It was conducted with much professionalism and obvious expertise."

"Thank you for organising the LSIS training support. It has formed a very useful part in preparing our staff to deliver the Army's FS pilot programmes."

Functional skills Case study: NW Functional Skills in Snooker Event

Using snooker to deliver functional skills

Last November functional skills teachers at the Accrington Academy worked with regional facilitator Barbara Calvert to run a functional skills development event themed around snooker. The initiative was developed by Chris Lovell at North Lancs Training Group and supported by previous snooker world champion Steve Davis. The events are not only for schools but have also been successful in keeping young people off the streets. Activities were split between the components of each of the functional skills of English and mathematics. These included speaking and listening, reading and writing in English and representing, analysing and interpreting in mathematics.

Each learner had a ten minute snooker activity and a ten minute functional skills activity which was contextualised into the snooker event. For example, in English all the reading documents were contextualised into snooker health and safety and rules and regulations. The activities were produced in a workbook with a reference to which of the functional skills standards had been covered. There were six stations with six functional skills specialists at each station. Three of these specialists were FS trainers on the FSSP and they were able to support teachers, who had come from different providers, in delivering the functional skills in a different context. Activities were delivered to groups of learners in a round robin format. Each learner had a workbook and each completed activity was signed off by the specialists. At the same time teachers from different schools were given the benefit of functional skills support and development.

Conclusions:

- ✓ The layout of the workbooks and the tutor notes proved invaluable. One activity per page meant they were very easy to use.
- ✓ Laptops were available for most learners and proved very useful for those learners with special needs.
- ✓ Learners saw the relevance of how mathematics and English could be used in different settings.



Barbara writes, "All in all a fantastic day all the specialist staff agreed that this was a wonderful experience for everyone involved. It brought functional skills to life and made them more exciting. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all concerned for what was a real experience for learners in seeing the benefits of skills development."

Support available

Regional helplines and email

Dedicated regional helplines and email addresses (listed below) are now live (please note some of the numbers have been updated since the last FSSP Bulletin). The regional teams are on hand to answer functional skills queries including requests for information, ordering publications and booking on to training and events.

Region	Number	E-mail Address	Regional facilitator name
North West	0127 065 4677	northwest@fssupport.org	Barbara Calvert
North East	0191 215 6800	northeast@fssupport.org	Joan Vallely
Yorkshire & Humberside	0148 447 8250	yorkshireandhumberside@fssupport.org	Gail Lydon
East of England	0148 040 9318	eastern@fssupport.org	Jane Williams
West Midlands	0121 678 7205	westmidlands@fssupport.org	Heather Frier
East Midlands	0115 854 1605	eastmidlands@fssupport.org	Howard Parker
South East	0182 336 5656	southeast@fssupport.org	Annette Welfare
South West	0182 336 5651	southwest@fssupport.org	Rosie Brooke
London	020 7612 6469	london@fssupport.org	Lorna Hunt-Jackson

(Open from 9am-5pm Monday-Friday, excluding Public Holidays)

Remember to also visit and register on www.fssupport.org for further information regarding the free support available from the FSSP.

Schools For further information about NS support for functional skills visit: <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk>