



## Functional Skills Support Programme e-bulletin

Edition 7: February 2010



Welcome to the February edition of the Functional Skills Support Programme (FSSP) news bulletin for post-16 education and training providers. This month's bulletin includes the regular programme updates and news from across the sector as well as a case study from Oldham College on functional skills delivery.

### Programme updates

#### New training modules

Three new training modules have been released and are available for delivery in your centre now. The new modules are **Supporting the Development of Functionality in English, ICT and mathematics**. They focus on moving practitioners on in their journey from good to excellent delivery to learners and take account of different pedagogical approaches to learning and new thinking around FS delivery. The modules will also help raise an awareness of the need to consider support mechanisms for vocational tutors. To book contact your regional centre using the details at the back of this bulletin or visit [www.fssupport.org/training-support](http://www.fssupport.org/training-support)

#### Functional skills readiness tool

The LSIS functional skills readiness tool is now available to download on [www.fssupport.org](http://www.fssupport.org) following trials with post-16 providers across the country. The tool is a questionnaire cross-referenced to the Common Inspection Framework and allows senior managers to evaluate the current position of functional skills provision in their centre. An improvement plan is developed from the self-assessment. Free readiness self-assessment consultancy visits and support can be booked now by contacting your regional centre (see contacts details at the end of this bulletin). See <http://www.fssupport.org/training-support/readiness-tool/post-16> for more details.

#### Network events

The next round of regional network events will be running in March and will include updates from the programme including development projects, regional speakers and information from QCDA. All dates can be found on [www.fssupport.org/events](http://www.fssupport.org/events). If you have not received an invitation to a network event and would like to attend please contact your regional centre using the details given at the end of this bulletin.

#### Functional skills open sessions

FSSP is running half-day open sessions across the country to deliver information on the new regulatory criteria published by Ofqual. 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/events](http://www.fssupport.org/events).

#### New functional skills publications

The team has been developing a number of new publications to support functional skills delivery. These will be available towards the end of March. They include:

- Functional English: Speaking, listening and communication:** Provides guidance to practitioners new to functional skills English, particularly the speaking, listening and communication component.
- Leading on FS in a Diploma Consortium:** Provides advice and guidance on how to deal with the challenges that those leading on FS in a Diploma consortium may face.
- Functional Skills in Work-Based learning:** Outlines the importance of functional skills for those involved with work-based learning.
- Functional Skills: Guidance on Assessment:** Exploring all three functional skills across all levels, this document explains the learning journey (initial assessment, assessment for learning, summative assessment).
- Functional Skills in Diploma lines:** Four publications will be published that provide a summary of approaches to the delivery of functional skills within the Diploma including retail, travel and tourism, public services and sport and leisure.

#### Functional Skills Support Programme - Impact Assessment Survey

As part of our commitment to improve our service, the FSSP team is contacting delegates that have attended training delivered by us since July 2009. We are asking people to tell us about the impact that training has had on their readiness to deliver functional skills. If you have attended training, you may receive an email from us regarding the survey in the coming weeks. We would ask you to follow the link contained in the email to complete a short questionnaire which should take you no longer than five minutes to complete.

## Programme updates (cont.)

### Updates to our website

**www.fssupport.org** is the official FSSP website, and has recently undergone a major revamp. The site has a number of useful new pages, including:

- The **'about'** section, which contain general information about functional skills and the FSSP
- A **resources area**, which contains FSSP resources and materials, as well as relevant resources created by other workforce support programmes. The resources can be easily searched and downloaded.
- A **community/forum**, which practitioners can use to ask questions pertaining to functional skills delivery, share ideas and best practice and share and download practitioner created resources.
- **Training and support information**, including all the information practitioners need to request face to face support, or ask a general question. This area also contains information about upcoming FSSP events.



The site is updated on a weekly basis, so please check back regularly to ensure you have access to the latest news and the full range of resources, materials and information on offer.

## Functional skills Case study: Oldham College

**Carol Severn, Functional Skills Manager at Oldham College, provides an update on the current functional skills pilot position of the college and details the groups involved, the teaching strategy and the findings so far.**

### The context

The Oldham College is a medium sized college of further education, with approximately 2,500 16 -19 year old full-time learners and 500 work-based learners. The college has always enabled and encouraged learners to undertake literacy and numeracy qualifications as key or basic skills and is fully committed to further developing learners' English, mathematics and ICT to enable them to operate effectively, both as students at the college and as they progress into HE or to the workplace.

### The Pilot:

The college has been piloting functional skills since 2007 and now has learners on a variety of programmes, including GCSEs, Diplomas and Foundation Learning . It is using three different awarding bodies. The reason for joining the pilot was threefold; to contribute to the development of the standards, to build capacity and experience within the delivery team and to identify teaching and learning strategies needed for learners and teachers to meet the new, more rigorous standards required by functional skills.

### Staffing

The college has a central team of staff responsible for direct delivery of the key, basic and functional skills. At least one functional skills teacher is based in each vocational area, who, over the years, has built knowledge of the vocational context and strong relationships with the subject teachers. In addition, subject specialists working in the community with adults and hard to reach learners to develop their literacy and numeracy, are also embarking on the pilot this academic year. In college, the functional skills team delivers the underpinning English, mathematics and ICT skills, starting within the vocational setting and moving out to wider contexts to ensure functionality. By being based in departments, they are also encouraging vocational teachers to enable learners to practice and develop their functional skills explicitly within the vocational area, thus linking theory, practice and securing.

### Findings from the pilot

- Successes vary by subject, level and group, with English for Diploma learners managing to achieve 82% success, compared to approximately 50% success in mathematics.
- Learners who already hold a GCSE at A\* - C in English, mathematics or ICT cannot be guaranteed a pass in the functional skill without some further development.
- Teaching and learning strategies still need further development to enable active, real-life and collaborative activities which encourage learner independence and meet the needs of the more rigorous assessments.
- Use initial, self and peer assessment to build confidence and to help learners identify the skills they have, where they need to develop, how to improve and provide reflection time to evaluate progress.
- Utilise the skills of others in your centre to develop a variety of relevant, interesting and current examples of presentations and discussions, to be shared in the centre learning environment.
- Collaboration between subject and vocational specialists to ensure consistency of approach in terms of skills development in discussions, presentations, written work and accuracy of calculations.
- Share experiences between teachers using online forums and standardisation meetings.

For further information about functional skills support in the North West please contact North West regional facilitator Barbara Calvert via the North West regional centre (see contact details at the end of the bulletin).

## In the news

### The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) release updated briefing on functional skills and Apprenticeships

BIS have provided updated briefing regarding functional skills and Apprenticeships. This includes information on Sector Skills Councils and Key Skills. To view the briefing see

<http://www.fssupport.org/about/news/functional-skills-and-apprenticeships-updated-briefing>

### LSC update on Functional Skills funding in 2010-11

On 13th January, DCSF and LSC published the statement of priorities and investment strategy in which it stated that providers are now expected to deliver functional skills qualification for young people where ever possible.

This means that it should no longer be necessary for learners to take the Certificates in Adult Literacy or Adult Numeracy and the number of young people taking those qualifications should reduce significantly in 2010-11. It is their intention (subject to confirmation by the JACQA Biennial Review) that adult literacy and numeracy qualifications will no longer be funded for young people after 2010-11. For the full statement on LSC's functional skills funding see <http://www.fssupport.org/about/news/lcs-update-functional-skills-funding-201011>. Also see the LSC website which provides a funding guidance update published on 24 February.

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/publications/latestdocuments/>

### What's new in the functional skills support offer for schools?

**The leadership module for functional skills** is a web-based resource which was released in February on the National Strategies (NS) section of the standards site. It supports subject leadership, senior leadership and leadership across a consortium.

**Modules 1 – 4** have been refreshed and were released last month along with a short module to support effective CPD.

**The 'Functional skills in subjects' series of 11 booklets** each with three practical planning examples illustrating how functional skills can support achievement in other subjects at key stages 3 and 4 is released in two batches this term:

- Batch 1: History; Modern languages; RE; Geography; Citizenship; Music – 12 February 2010
- Batch 2: D&T; PE; PSHE Education; Art and Design; Science – 12 March 2010

For the current e-learning modules for schools and the introductory overview go to:

<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary> and select functional skills.

### Functional Skills Awareness Events

A number of awarding organisations have announced they are running a range of functional skills events and courses during February through to May with the intention of developing practitioner knowledge in functional Maths, English and ICT. These sessions are designed to help practitioners familiarise themselves with the assessment requirements of the major awarding organisations, provide overviews of the functional skills standards, gain knowledge of best practice delivery and review the support available for those delivering functional skills when it is rolled out nationwide from September 2010.

For more details see <http://www.fssupport.org/about/news/functional-skills-awareness-events>

### Updates from Diploma Support

#### Mentoring – a problem-solving strategy to support innovation and change

A new mentoring resource is available from 14-19 Workforce Support. It will support you to use a mentoring approach to problem solving and improve your Diploma delivery.

See the resource at [www.diploma-support.org/resourcesandtools/mentoring](http://www.diploma-support.org/resourcesandtools/mentoring)

#### Coaching skills and techniques

If you are a team leader who is involved in implementing the 14-19 reforms, for example if you are a Diploma line lead or a curriculum manager with responsibility for motivating a team, you can access coaching skills and techniques support as a continuing professional development (CPD) opportunity. Find out more at

[www.diploma-support.org/facetoface/coaching](http://www.diploma-support.org/facetoface/coaching)

#### Inside the Workplace

Workshops in employer venues are available now across the country. All events are fully funded and will allow you to develop practical ideas for applied learning and employer engagement, discover ways to embed work-related learning into your Diploma delivery and create an exciting and inspiring programme for learners. Book your place now at [www.diploma-support.org/facetoface/workingwithemployers/27](http://www.diploma-support.org/facetoface/workingwithemployers/27)

#### Diploma regional network meetings – spring dates announced

New regional network meetings are available now to book across the country throughout the spring. The networks are line specific and are the ideal place for you to discuss experiences and learn more about your line of learning. Read more at [www.diploma-support.org/communities/networkmeeting](http://www.diploma-support.org/communities/networkmeeting)

## Support available

### Regional helplines and email

The FSSP regional teams are on hand to answer functional skills queries including:



- requests for information
- training enquiries and booking
- ordering publications
- general enquiries.

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](http://www.fssupport.org) for further information regarding the free support available from the FSSP.

### Schools

For further information about NS support for functional skills please email:  
[functionalskills@nationalstrategies.co.uk](mailto:functionalskills@nationalstrategies.co.uk) or [secondary@nationalstrategies.co.uk](mailto:secondary@nationalstrategies.co.uk)

Telephone: 0118 918 2820 or 0118 918 2830

Visit: <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk>