

## Case Study: Creating an accessible design brief for accredited qualifications, for those with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)

*'Assessment and learning: involving the learner.'* LSC funded project.

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### **The context:**

Thornbeck College is a part of the North East Autism Society and has recently been graded as an outstanding provision by Ofsted. It provides education specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC). The majority of the learners at Thornbeck College follow a two year educational programme funded by the Young Peoples Learning Agency (YPLA). During this time they work toward various accredited qualifications.

### **The challenge:**

As a part of the textiles sheltered employment lessons, the learners work towards accredited qualifications. The briefs layouts for these qualifications are set by the examining body and are simply inaccessible to the learners.

One learner in particular was faced with many barriers. Due to her autism she faced difficulties in trying new activities and when asked to do so can become anxious and sometimes display challenging behaviour. She has a fear of failing and will not attempt to use equipment, which she considers dangerous e.g., iron, and sewing machine. She will not access the textile room for the lesson and finds it extremely difficult to move from one particular room within the college. The learner also finds it difficult to understand that to gain the qualification may take some time and is required to complete more than one task before doing so.

### **What we did:**

- We focused on the learner's strengths; this learner has a real strength and enjoyment for drawing as well as health and safety knowledge.
- The design brief was broken down into more manageable tasks, which seem more achievable to the learner.
- The learner was asked to draw herself completing each specific outcome safely within the accredited qualification brief. This helped show the learner that the equipment in the textiles room can be used safely and therefore not dangerous.
- The learner's drawings were then scanned into a new, more personal design brief.
- The drawings introduced the new activities without asking her to physically complete them, this giving her the opportunity to process the idea.
- When the learner had achieved each outcome successfully she was encouraged to take a photograph as evidence and stick the photograph onto the design brief next to each particular task.

- This made the accredited certificate understandable. It also made it clear what was expected of her and what she must do to achieve the certificate. Also by adding personal photographs it encouraged the celebration of her success after completing the target.

**The outcomes:**

- An accessible design brief for the accredited certificate in Textiles.
- Reduced anxiety when attempting tasks for the first time.

**The Impact:**

- The learner enjoyed designing the new accessible design brief as it focused on her strength, which is art.
- The learner built upon her own strength of knowledge of health and safety.
- The learner was more motivated to complete tasks when she could physically see her photographs of success.
- The learner was less reluctant and more willing to try new textiles activities with support and reassurance.
- The learner fully understood the steps required to achieve the qualification.
- Improved confidence when working with textiles equipment.
- The learner was able to take ownership of the qualification.
- The learner was able to recognise and celebrate her achievements
- She had a visual picture of the progress she had made from beginning to end.
- This idea of individualising accredited qualifications will be implemented throughout the college within all courses.
- For example for a learner who has a visual impairment a multi-sensory brief will be implemented. Objects of reference and her own voice recordings will be used to replace words and pictures. This making the brief personal and understandable to her.

**Supporting documentation:**

- The original brief for 'Working safely in the textile room with assistance'
- The new brief created by the learner

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## The original AQA brief

AQA UNIT AWARD SCHEME

CODE NO: 74184

CENTRE  
NAME:

CENTRE NO:

UNIT TITLE: WORKING SAFELY IN THE TEXTILES ROOM WITH ASSISTANCE

CURRICULUM AREA(S): PRODUCTION

DATE OF VALIDATION:

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**UNIT DESCRIPTION:** In this practical unit the student will learn how to work safely in the textiles lesson.

S/he will handle all necessary equipment needed for textiles, displaying awareness to safety, including the iron, the sewing machine, inks, scissors and needles.

S/he will show how to behave in a safe manner in the textiles room.

S/he will learn through classroom based activity.

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**PROCEDURES FOR MAKING AND RECORDING ASSESSMENTS:** Assessed by the teacher through observation (1,2,4) and inspection of the set of images (3). All assessments recorded on an AQA Summary Sheet.

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**LEVEL:** Entry level

**NOTIONAL LEARNING TIME:** <10 hours

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### OUTCOMES TO BE ACCREDITED

In successfully completing this unit the student will have demonstrated the ability to

1. use the iron safely, by holding the iron appropriately by the handle and by un-plugging it after use and storing the cable in a safe place, following pictorial instructions;
2. use the sewing machine safely by holding the fabric in a safe distance from the needle and by un-plugging it after use and storing the cable in a safe place, following pictorial instructions;
3. use all inks safely and appropriately and ensure they wear an apron, following pictorial instructions;
4. use scissors safely by holding their hands in a safe way and by passing the scissors with the handles directed towards person, following pictorial instructions;
5. use needles safely when sewing by hand, following pictorial instructions;
6. behave safely and show consideration towards other people in the textiles room;
7. put all equipment away safely.

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### EVIDENCE TO BE OFFERED




Teacher checklist (1-7)





## The new brief created by the learner

You have already worked really hard in the textiles lessons at college, making bags for the Christmas market and Valentine's Day.

To get your AQA certificate you need to try these activities.

You can ask for help if you need it.

1	 <p>Use the scissors safely</p>	Stick a photo of you here when you have achieved this
2	 <p>Use a needle safely</p>	Stick a photo of you here when you have achieved this
3	 <p>Use the fabric paints safely</p>	Stick a photo of you here when you have achieved this

<p>4</p>	 <p>Behave safely and be nice to the other students in your group</p>	<p>Stick a photo of you here when you have achieved this</p>
<p>5</p>	 <p>Put all equipment away safely</p>	<p>Stick a photo of you here when you have achieved this</p>
<p>6</p>	 <p>Use the sewing machine safely</p>	<p>Stick a photo of you here when you have achieved this</p>
<p>7</p>	 <p>Use the iron safe</p>	<p>Stick a photo of you here when you have achieved this</p>