

Case Study: Developing the expert learner: exploring a range of strategies for self assessment

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

**The context:**

Committed to a policy of non rejection and meeting needs, Springboard is evolving a highly individualised approach to cater for the special training needs of both adults and young people. This includes provision of training and support for people with specific disabilities, those who are homeless or suffering from mental ill health or whom others have rejected.

The challenge:

We wanted to encourage the development of the expert learner so decided to explore a range of assessment tools which might support learners in the review and reflection of their learning and would also encourage and promote a culture of self assessment within the organisation.

What we did:

- A meeting of the Skills for Life team was called and a variety of assessment tools were chosen to trial with different groups of learners. Copies are attached.
- The tools were implemented over a period of six weeks with modifications being made as required by the tutors.
- A "pyramid" form was used with mixed 16-18 motor vehicle learners and an older group aged 30-40 of health care learners. Each group was asked to complete the five questions on the pyramid at the end of each session.
- A "spider web" assessment tool was tried with Level 1 and Entry 2 groups. An initial diagnostic was completed and the results were analysed with the learners with the information being transferred onto the form and referenced to an area of the curriculum that the learner needed to improve on. These were reviewed every 2 weeks and improvements drawn on creating a web effect and allowing learners to see their progress.
- A "smiley faces" tool was used with a mixed E2/E3 group. Learners were asked to self assess their performance at the end of each activity within the session and decide how well they had done by choosing one of the faces. Green signified completing the exercise well, yellow that the learner had some problems and red that the learner was unable to do it.
- A "Learner Reflection Sheet" containing five questions/areas to complete was used with a group made up of E2E childcare learners aged 16/17 studying Literacy at Level 1. The learners were given 5-10 minutes for reflection at the end of each session and then asked to complete the form.

The outcomes:

- As a result of this project we were able to assess the advantages and disadvantages of each tool.
- It was apparent that the way questions were worded impacted on how the learners responded. Both the pyramid and reflection sheet questions have the facility for amendment dependent on the groups involved and tutors will consider these before using them.

- Tutors realised that most learners did not possess the skills to be able to express themselves adequately using the written tools and so had to use verbal prompts or provide examples of appropriate vocabulary.
- The process did encourage a forum for discussion with some older learners; with others it became a learning process in itself - a structured way to get them to consider the session, encourage their speaking and thinking skills and to introduce more complicated vocabulary and spelling.
- The spider web tool, although visually arresting, was thought to be too complicated for some learners.
- The “smiley faces” tool engaged the learners and improved motivation. At first there were discrepancies between the learners’ assessment of performance and the tutor’s, with learners perhaps being subject to peer pressure when choosing the colours. This appeared to decrease as learners became more used to the process and their confidence/ ability to be self critical increased. It would be important for tutors to observe the learners carefully if using this tool.

The impact:

- The project enabled the Skills for Life team to focus on an activity which is an important part of the learning process, to experiment with different approaches and share experiences.
- It was agreed that all the tools had some merit but that some were more appropriate to particular groups and so the team is going to develop a bank of assessment tools for tutors to utilise as they feel appropriate.
- To further the process of developing a culture of self assessment, vocational tutors will be encouraged to use the tools as well.
- It was apparent with all the tools that learners would benefit from having self assessment techniques modelled for them in advance.
- Tutors recognise that learners need to develop their vocabulary in order to express themselves and will consider what activities could be developed to improve this.
- Tutors are going to build in more time for reflection in their lesson plans to encourage learners to view it as an important and integral part of the learning process.
- Tutors are going to ask learners for input into new assessment tools and try to incorporate this into activities on peer assessment.

Supporting documentation:

- Copies of all the assessment tools that were used are attached.

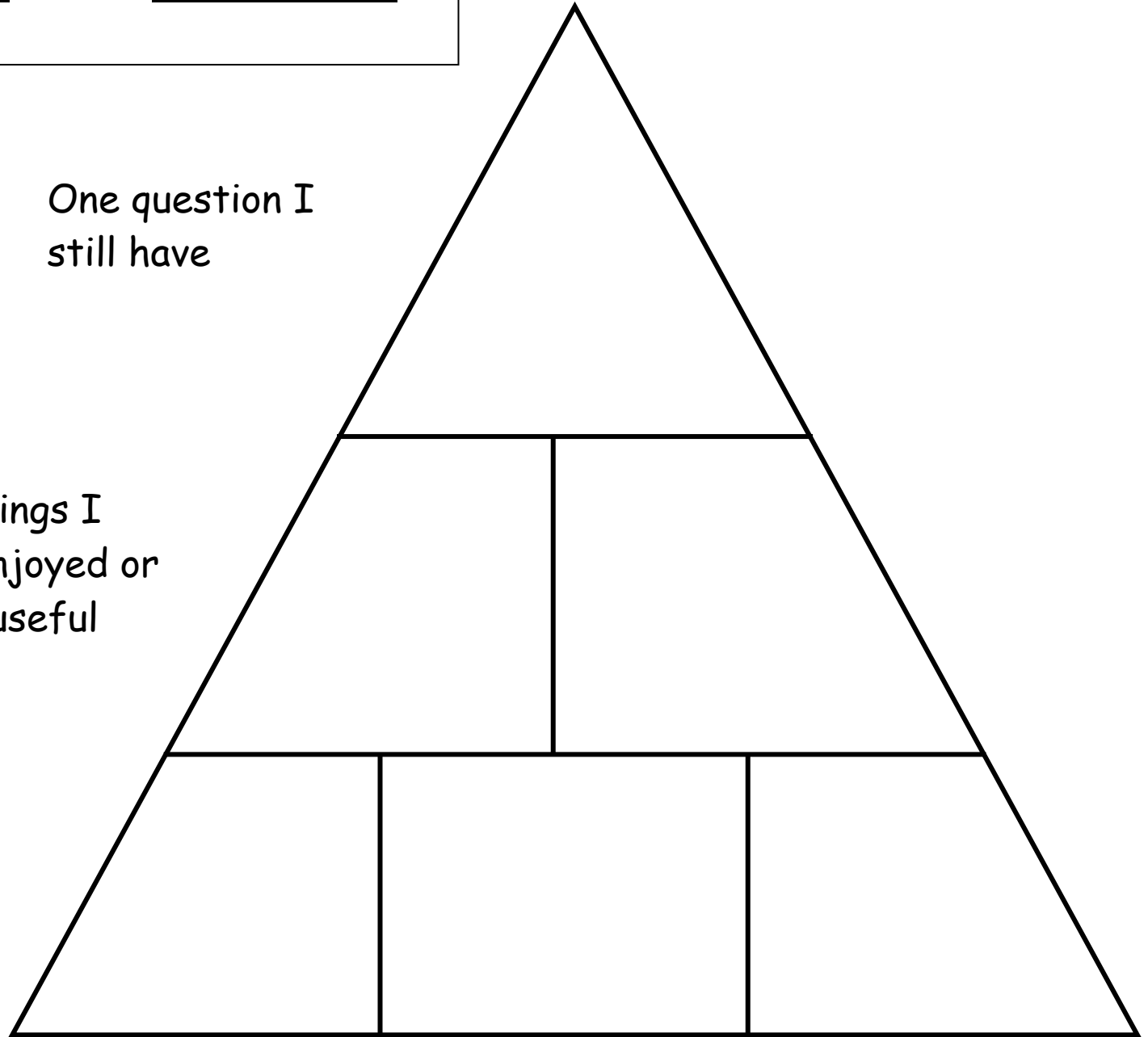
 <p>SPRINGBOARD SUNDERLAND</p>	<p>For further information contact:</p> <p>Laura Murrell: lmurrell@springboard-ne.org</p> <p>Anne Hopper: ahopper@springboard-ne.org</p> <p>Springboard Tel: 0191 515 5300</p>
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Name _____ Session _____

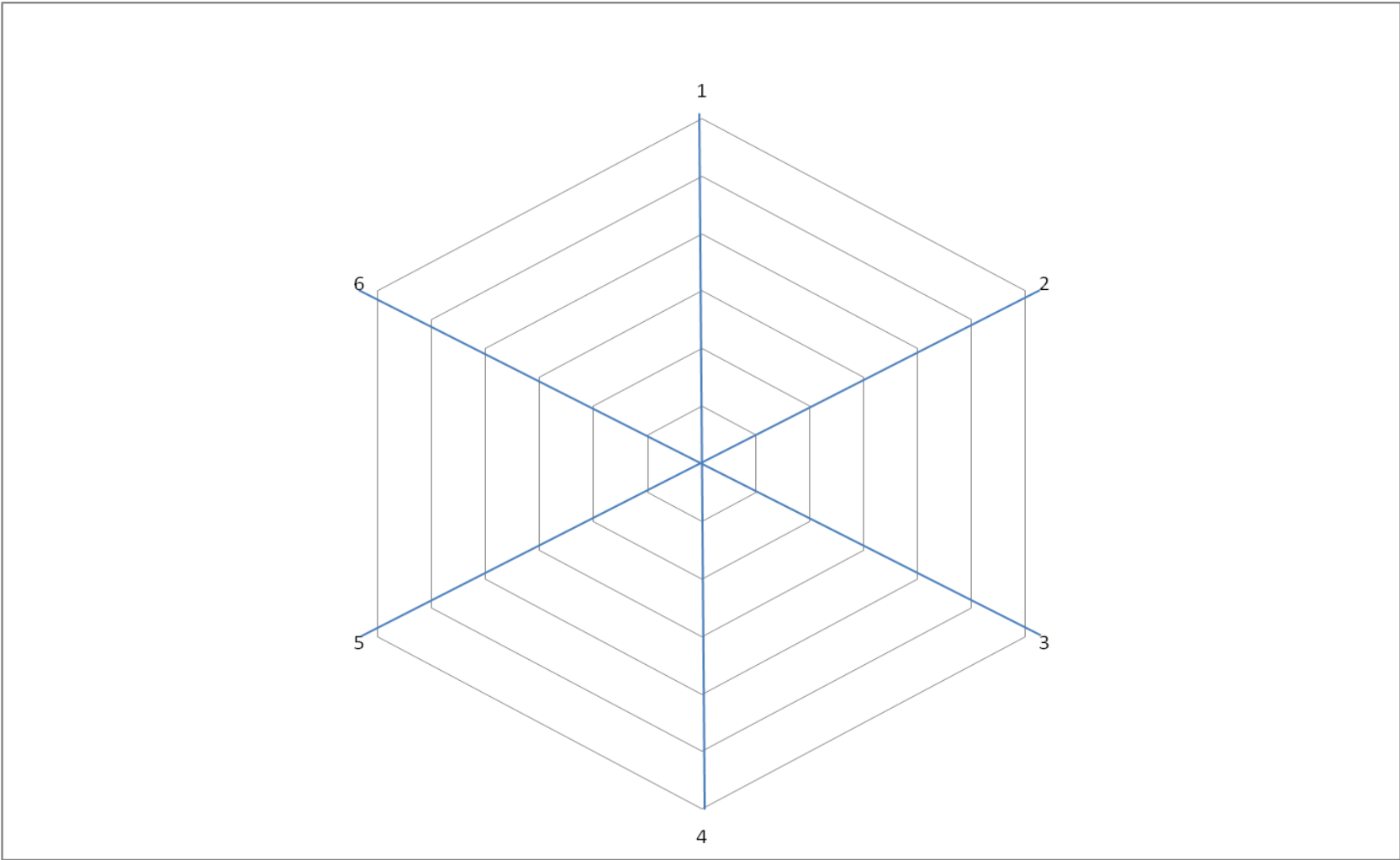
One question I
still have

Two things I
have enjoyed or
found useful

Three facts I
have learned



“Spider Web” Tool



What subject do you think you need to work on?	Why do you think you need to work on this subject?	What do you need to do before the next review? (05.11.09)	Do you think you will now be able to use the subject correctly? (26.11.09)

Learners Reflection Sheet

Name:.....Subject.....

Date	
Learning outcomes	
Key points I learned today	
Strengths I showed today	
Improvements I need to make	
Did I achieve the learning outcomes If yes- how If no-why not	

"Smiley Faces" Tool

Name Sarah

Targets to work on within the next sessions

Date	Aims and Objectives of Session SMART Targets	Curriculum Ref	Can't Do	Unsure	Can Do	Learner Comment	Tutor Comment	Emerging	Consolidating	Established
<u>1/10/09</u>	Estimating using rounding	N1/E2C		Y		I need a lot of practice on that.	Sarah needs a lot of support in recalling the numbers she is better when she works completely on her own though.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Signed Learner	S				Signed Tutor				
<u>8/10/09</u>	Read write and understand comm fractions	N2/E2.1				I do	Sarah volunteered the answer throughout the session. She is performing much better. Well done!			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Signed Learner					Signed Tutor				
<u>15/10/09</u>	Recognise and identify equivalent forms of fractions						Sarah showed good results on quizzes. Volunteered the answer. I would like her to be more confident when applying her skills.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Signed Learner	S				Signed Tutor				
<u>22/10/09</u>	make amounts of money up to £1 in different ways using 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 pence coins	M3.1				I would	Sarah did practice a lot with coins and notes today. I think she still not very sure about herself at all. Needs a lot of work to improve her confidence as she has shown a lot of skills to achieve			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Signed Learner	S				Signed Tutor				

Yes this is fully understood

I'm ok with it

Yes this is fully understood