

Case Study: Initial assessment of learners with LDD
'Assessment and Learning: involving the learner.' LSC funded project.



The context:

B-Skill are a training company which was set up in 2000 to support and train various qualifications including cleaning NVQ's, facilities management, BICS and 14-19 training. Based in the North, the company has offices nationally in London, Birmingham, South Shields, Newcastle and Northumberland.

The challenge:

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) have got the same right to access appropriate and engaging training, and understand the course content and expectations, as well as being aware of the relevant legislations and guidelines regarding training.

Although we have a full and in depth induction programme for the E2E courses we offer, we felt the induction process for LLDD could be further developed to ensure that all learners within this cohort were considered.

The challenge was to produce a full induction programme aimed specifically at LLDD learners with mild to moderate difficulties, ensuring all information was presented in a way that would be understood and engage the wide range of learners accessing the course.

The development of an LLDD induction programme is an ongoing process, but in this case study I am going to specifically focus on the development of an 'initial assessment' programme aimed at LLDD learners.

What we did:

- The first activity we carried out was to look at the existing initial assessment booklet and identify the information we needed to obtain which included;
 1. School experiences
 2. Work experience
 3. Progression choices
 4. Work learners would like to try.
 5. Learning style assessment.
- We then looked at the range of learning difficulties and disabilities we provide training for, and this included learners with communication difficulties, issues with literacy and numeracy, motor and cognitive difficulties.
- Keeping this in mind we then looked at different ways of presenting and obtaining information, including group activities, using flash cards and learners creating an all about me t-shirt or jigsaw piece that would be used to represent them throughout their learner journey. (See examples in supported documentation).
- We also consulted current LLDD learners with the ideas to allow them to give feedback on activities we were developing.

The outcomes:

As a result of the project

- Evaluated the current induction process and how we could develop upon this to accommodate LLDD.
- The Quality Manager and tutors have worked together to upscale our knowledge and implement this to further develop the induction process.
- Consulting the current LLDD learners has allowed for them to have a learner voice within programme development and how it could best fit their needs.
- The process of developing a new induction process for LLDD has also allowed for time to be spent researching a range of different teaching and presentation methods that could be used in training settings when dealing with LLDD, and also highlighted areas for staff development.

The impact:

The impact of this project was;

- The tutor finding out more information about learners starting the course as they felt more at ease with the process.
- Staff who did not deal with LLDD developing an understanding of new practices that would benefit them across a variety of teaching settings, leading to new and innovative classroom based sessions.
- Learners reported feeling more comfortable when beginning the course and their needs and experiences were more accurately recorded.
- There was an identification of skills gaps with tutors and this resulted in subsequent training being booked to address these gaps.

Supporting documentation:

- Pictures of resources for new activities.
- Current initial assessment booklet.

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Flash cards used in an activity to replace the 'my school experience' section of the initial assessment.

Learners were asked to look at the cards and sort them in to piles of what they studied and what they didn't and then they hung the posters on a washing line in order of preference, and then depending on level of communication skills within the group the learners would engage in a group discussion, allowing the tutor present to complete a checklist about the learner to include in their file as written evidence of assessment.