

Continuing professional development guide to Customer care resources

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Introduction

This continuing professional development (CPD) guide sets out how these resources support the Customer care cross-curricular theme. It explains why it is important and relevant to your learners.

The guide is divided into three areas.

- Part 1 introduces Customer care and explains its importance.
- Part 2 provides some tools, tips and hints for getting started with the resources.
- Part 3 explores the underpinning pedagogy approaches and why they have been used in this context.

We use 'teaching and learning' and 'teacher' as generic terms to include:

- teaching, training and learning
- teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in the further education (FE) system.

CPD requirements

Undertaking CPD provides you with opportunities to reflect on your practice. You can try out new ideas and evaluate their impact. CPD demonstrates your commitment to improving your professional practice and will benefit your current and future posts within the FE system.

These resources include CPD opportunities to help you develop your understanding of Customer care and to support you in teaching it.

With a requirement for all teachers to fulfil at least 30 hours of CPD each year, with reduced amounts for part-time teachers, CPD records will be an important and detailed source of evidence of your commitment to learn and progress.

The CPD resources suggest ways in which you can undertake and record your professional development activities.

Part 1: Why is Customer care important?

Customer care is an important aspect of the modern workplace. Learners' understanding of this theme will help enhance their employability prospects.

Understanding Customer care will help learners develop their appreciation of the world of work and the roles and responsibilities we have with respect to each other. The theme promotes learners' abilities to transfer understandings, attitudes and behaviours, and to expand their personal, learning and thinking skills. This will improve their capacity to adapt ways of working in unfamiliar situations. These same skills will also help learners with other parts of their subject or vocational area programme.

Customer care has a set of learning points that have directed the development of the resources. The learning points have been developed in consultation with national experts in Customer care.

The learning points

Customer care

- Describe what it means to be a customer and why customers are important.
- Identify the features and understand the implications of good and poor customer care.
- Identify the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to provide good customer care.
- Explore communication in the context of customer care.
- Identify the importance of effective questioning and active listening in the role of customer care.
- Highlight the importance of taking responsibility for meeting customers' needs.
- Demonstrate how to deal with customers who have concerns.
- Recognise the role of customer care in your occupational area and how good customer care can benefit organisations.

Introducing the resources

If you are a teacher, these resources will support your work with learners and colleagues in teaching Customer care. The resources have been designed to be used by non-specialist teachers, so you do not need to have in-depth knowledge of Customer care to use them.

The resources include a range of storyboards, video clips and practical activities that can be used with your learners to help explore the Customer care theme. They will spark thoughtful debate, develop understanding and help learners transfer learning to new situations.

A range of CPD resources are also included. These will support you as a teacher working with Customer care. They will help you develop your understanding of the theme and provide suggestions on how you can incorporate it into your teaching.

The resources can enhance learners’ employability potential by improving how they work independently and co-operatively with their peers and colleagues. These same skills contribute to a successful and growing economy, a safe and supportive community and the capacity to develop a successful career path.

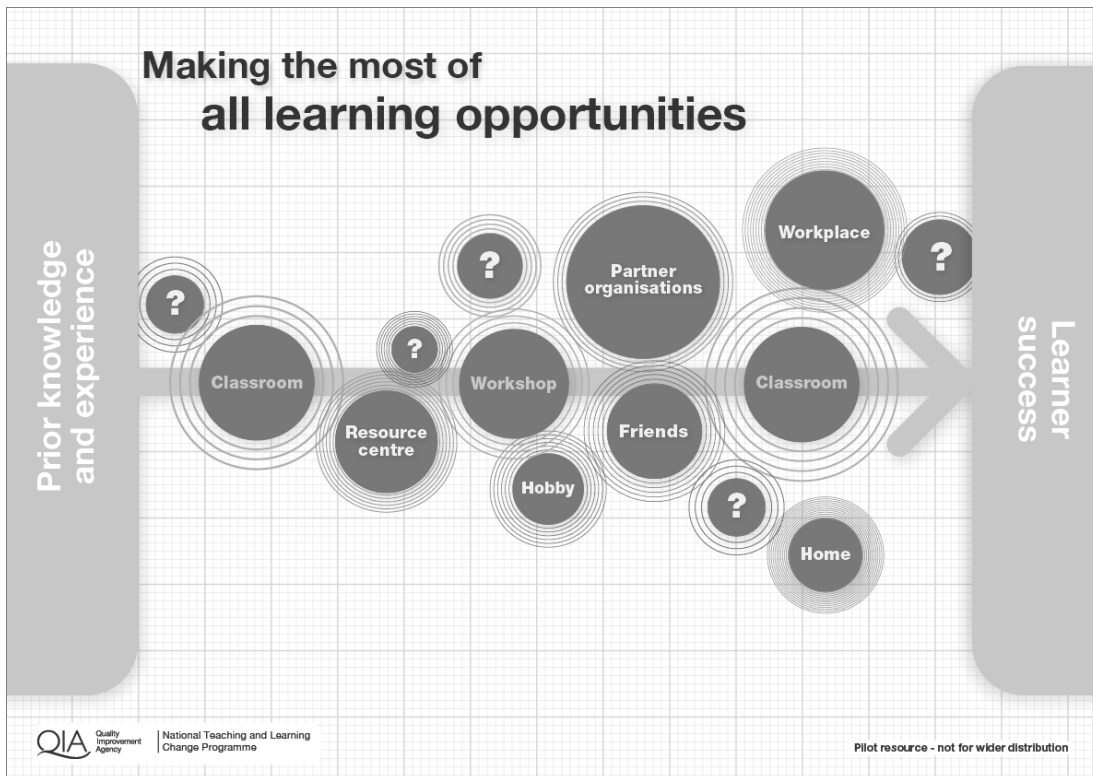
There are many existing resources at teachers’ disposal and these resources do not seek to duplicate content or approach. These resources are designed to embed the pedagogy approaches (described in Part 3 of this guide) in ways that are helpful to teachers and learners and that reflect the values and principles described in this guide.

More information regarding the resources is included in Part 2 of this guide.

Learning in multiple environments

Figure 1 illustrates some contexts in which learning inside and outside the classroom can provide stimulating, engaging and experiential learning opportunities.

Figure 1: Making the most of all learning opportunities



You can exploit these opportunities in your teaching by including:

- the use of business-based materials
- the use of case studies and simulations
- role play in, for example, job interviews or making phone calls
- analysis of local labour market information
- presentations from local employers
- use of material from trade magazines
- focused visits to industry
- work shadowing and work experience
- interviews with family members, friends or other members of the community
- interviews with previous learners who have moved into further education or employment
- analysis of local job advertisements
- creation of job descriptions.

As with all effective teaching and learning practice, knowing your learners' starting points will help both you and them. This could be their personal experience of good and poor customer care.

Whatever their prior experience and understanding, all learners need learning situations in which it is safe to make mistakes and to be able to learn from these mistakes in a constructive and trusting environment.

Part 2: Getting started

To develop the skills, behaviours and attitudes required for Customer care, these resources need to be used as an integral part of the overall subject or vocational curriculum, and contextualised effectively.

It is important that learners see the value of the themes in both generic and vocational terms and that they are given a high priority by teachers. They must not be seen as 'bolt-on' activities.

To achieve this parity of esteem with their subject or vocational studies, the cross-curricular themes promote the seven principles of learning adopted across the Teaching and Learning Programme.

Seven principles of learning after Petty (2006)

- Learners must see the value to them of the cross-curricular learning.
- Learners must believe they can do it.
- Learners need challenging goals.
- Learners need feedback and dialogue on their progress.
- Learning needs structuring to give it meaning to learners.
- Learning needs time and opportunities for repetition.
- Learning is about study and thinking skills as well as understanding of the cross-curricular content.

Overview of resources

This area provides an overview of the resources and a starting point for planning your route to using them effectively.

The **Getting familiar with Customer care** area offers a range of CPD resources that have been developed to support you as you work with Customer care.

- **Customer care booklet**, providing introductory information explaining the importance and relevance of Customer care and suggesting different ways to access the resources.
- **Customer care learning points**.
- **Using the Customer care resources** area, including CPD activities and tips and guidance on making the most of the resources.

The **Exploring Customer care** area provides storyboards, video clips and activities for you to use with learners. They explore the learning points in a general context that can be used with any subject or vocational area and are intended to build upon learners' real life experiences to spark thoughtful debate and help them develop a range of skills, attitudes and behaviours essential in the workplace.

The **Contextualising Customer care within...** resources have been devised in consultation with experts in five specific subject or vocational areas, and the Contextualising Customer care within your subject area resources can be used in any subject or vocational area.

Many of the resources illustrate experiential learning where learners become emotionally engaged with tasks and real life experiences, and work with peers and teachers to find solutions. In doing so, they practise skills such as discussion, reasoning, teamwork and problem solving.

Exploring Customer care with storyboards and video clips

Storyboards

The storyboards act as a stimulus and are part of a wider range of activities that will help learners engage with Customer care.

The aim of the storyboards is to introduce Customer care, Enterprise, and Health, safety and well-being in a general setting, which teachers can then link to their subject or vocational area.

The storyboards include ‘What happens next?’ break points to explore not only the issues relating to that cross-curricular theme, but learners’ beliefs and values in a work context. Separate digital assets for each storyboard have also been included. These consist of a range of images, audio clips and blank templates which can be used to adapt the storyboards provided, or create new ones.

It is anticipated that you will use the stimulus to generate conversations relating to not only the cross-curricular theme, but also to equality and diversity issues, including stereotyping.

Refer to the **Suggested approaches for using the storyboards** document located alongside each storyboard for more information on using the storyboards with your learners.

Video clips

A range of video clips are included to provide real-life context to the topics covered in the storyboards and activities.

In trials, this resource was used most effectively when supported by a whole group discussion and questions that elicited learners’ views, not only about the content, but also about their own and their peers’ beliefs and values.

Refer to the **Ideas for using the video clips** guidance notes located alongside each video for more information on using the image video clips with your learners.

Customer care activities

The general activities in the **Exploring Customer care** resources and the subject-specific activities in the **Contextualising Customer care within...** resources have been designed to help learners examine each theme in more detail. They use active learning approaches to develop the attitudes and positive behaviours covered by the learning points.

The activities include opportunities to discover learners' prior knowledge, to develop their understanding and awareness of the themes further and to encourage them to review their newly developed understanding of the themes.

Each activity provides teacher guidance notes, an explanation of the pedagogy approaches used and additional supporting materials where relevant.

Further detailed information of each pedagogy approach is included in Part 3 of this guide.

Refer to the **Customer care booklet** for further guidance on different ways into the Customer care resources.

Suggestions for using the Customer care resources

The following area includes suggestions for using the Customer care resources, and messages for Subject Learning Coaches.

If, when working with these cross-curricular themes, you are working outside your normal areas of experience, you may find some of the suggestions below useful.

- Prior to using these resources, you may wish to consider your own views and background in these themes and how this may affect your teaching. This is explored further in **Planning for challenges: trying something new** in **Using the Customer care resources**. You might consider discussing this in more depth with your Subject Learning Coach or another colleague.
- To increase vocational relevance and help learners understand the importance of Customer care and its link to the subject or vocational area, you may wish to introduce the theme in a separate dedicated session.
- In order to introduce Customer care, you may wish to use the storyboards first. However, you can use these resources flexibly with different starting points and stimuli to suit your learners' needs rather than as complete tasks and sessions.
- The resources are designed to encourage a shift in the relationship between teachers and learners. The emphasis is on promoting higher levels of learner involvement, with the teacher taking on the role as a facilitator of learning.
- Practise handing over some control of the session to your learners. You could, for example, ask them to organise the session themselves or generate a discussion activity between themselves.
- The activities are designed to encourage learners to re-examine any pre-conceived ideas, their values and beliefs. These activities work best when learners are allowed to explore these viewpoints, express them to their peers, and discuss and consider possibilities and implications of actions.
- The activities often include situations where there are no right or wrong answers. These work best when the teacher is comfortable with this concept and encourages the group to embrace uncertainty.
- To increase relevance, you should start and conclude sessions by making a link to what the learner already knows. For example, a learner who has taken part in an activity to explore customer care issues can relate this to their specific knowledge of their work placement and/or their product knowledge to consolidate their learning.

Messages for Subject Learning Coaches

If you are a Subject Learning Coach, this area is for you. Below are some suggestions you may wish to consider.

- Familiarise yourself with the content of this resource and in particular the CPD activities to support teachers.
- Work with other Subject Learning Coaches in your subject coaching network to share and develop practice.
- Consider how you will work with teachers who are initially reluctant to work on an unfamiliar theme, or who will not use all or some of the resources. You may find it useful to try one of the CPD activities to support colleagues.
- In particular, select the coaching approaches you will use and match them carefully to your colleagues' needs. For example, a group of teachers may raise concerns about their understanding of Customer care and you may select an active learning approach rather than individual peer coaching as the most appropriate method for the circumstances.
- Consider how you might work with colleagues on a one-to-one basis, or in larger groups.
- Colleagues may find it useful to discuss the outcomes of the CPD activities or self-study activity with you on an individual basis. You may wish to agree a dedicated time when you can review the outcomes and agree any forward action.
- A group of colleagues may wish to adapt the resources to meet their needs. As a Subject Learning Coach, you may be able to support them in this activity.
- Consider how you can share these resources across your organisation and how to demonstrate their relevance to other subject or vocational areas.
- Discuss these resources with your manager and agree how you will embed Customer care within the organisation, as part of your quality improvement activities.

Part 3: How to get the most from the Customer care resources

Guidance for teachers

A firm understanding of Customer care is an essential feature of every successful learner's employability skills profile.

Learners need specific knowledge and understanding of the theme as they prepare for the workplace. However, even more essential are the personal values, skills, attitudes and behaviours that underpin success in each of these themes.

Learners start programmes at different points and learning can be a daunting prospect, particularly if you are starting something new or difficult or if you have experienced failure in the past and believe that you lack the ability to succeed.

Many learners find that their personal and social skills present barriers for them and you may recognise some familiar behaviours that suggest this is the case for your own learners.

Some learners appear poorly motivated or find group work or discussion of personal topics difficult. This may be due to:

- a lack of confidence in their own knowledge and opinions
- an inability to express their thoughts and feelings
- a need to comply with peer pressure
- intimidation by others.

Other learners appear to be over-confident and may:

- adopt loud or aggressive behaviour to cover up insecurity or lack of understanding
- take control of group tasks, excluding less confident members from participation
- use their personal and social skills in inappropriate ways.

What does this mean for teaching and learning?

By starting with a clear focus on the outcomes you want your learners to achieve from a teaching session, you can then work backwards to determine the activities, assessment and delivery methods you will need to use to secure them.

Learning outcomes can be classified into groups called domains. Those learning outcomes that deal with attitudes, motivation, willingness to participate, valuing what is learned and incorporating values into a way of life all belong to the affective domain (Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, 1964). As successful learning in Customer care involves development of positive behaviours underpinned by personal, learning and thinking skills, these resources target the affective domain.

We often see this in action when learners deal with things emotionally, such as feelings, holding positive values and attitudes and taking personal responsibility.

Learning these behaviours takes time. The process involves several developmental stages that, ideally, need to be applied in a range of learning activities and situations. These are summarised in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Learning in the affective domain

Developmental stage	Example of what you want the learner to be able to do	What a learner might do to develop this ability
Receiving	Becomes aware of ideas and issues and is willing to listen and think about them.	Takes part in a session on health and safety at work and identifies the meanings of some safety signs.
Responding	Takes the ideas on board and becomes interested in learning more.	Joins in a group activity. Asks questions and is keen to identify some new signs. Contributes to a discussion about their meaning.
Valuing	Accepts new ideas and values and begins to apply them to problems. Is willing to share feelings with others.	Surveys signage at work. Notes that a fire escape is blocked by boxes. Reports this to supervisor.
Organisation	Prioritises personal values and resolves conflicts between new and old values or attitudes.	Realises own responsibility for safety of self and others. Explains to peers that to stay safe you should follow the safety rules.
Characterisation of values: internalisation	Develops positive and consistent values and attitudes.	Shows good judgement and self-reliance in relation to safety at work. Contributes to a group poster explaining safety signs. Persuades less committed peers of the case.

What does this mean for teaching Customer care?

The Customer care resources are designed to help learners develop attitudes and behaviours. You can look for opportunities to do this throughout your teaching. The subject-specific activities in the **Contextualising Customer care within...** resources will help you link the theme to learners’ interests.

The following suggestions can help you plan work, with learners beginning to develop new attitudes and behaviours.

- Make the instruction real, relevant and technically stimulating.

- Get learners involved emotionally by making the experience personal, with explicit reference to personal values and beliefs.
- Ensure the learning is related to the personal situation and interests of each individual learner.
- Involve learners in planning, producing and delivering the learning.
- Use active learning approaches.

The pedagogy approaches

This area considers the teaching and learning approaches that underpin these resources. The approaches are translated into techniques and embedded within the Customer care activities.

Assessment for learning

Understandably, teachers sometimes feel driven by the need to secure successful assessment outcomes for their learners. Teaching strategies and classroom processes are focused on it and assessment is used to confirm what learners know and what they can do. This approach is learning for assessment, or summative assessment.

To complement the above, assessment for learning is an approach that encourages learners to learn from a range of formal and informal assessments that occur throughout their course or programme. Learners get constructive feedback from a variety of sources – for example, from teachers, peers and employers – and they learn from it. It can tell them what they can or cannot do, as well as what they do or do not know. Assessment for learning is sometimes referred to as formative assessment.

Constructive feedback has a profound influence on learners' motivation and self-esteem and helps them understand how to learn more effectively. At its most basic level, assessment for learning gives learners feedback on their errors and provides evidence and opportunities for them to improve their work.

Assessment for learning is built into all successful learning activities. It is a process shared between teacher and learner, or learner and learner, that involves checking current learning, and generating and using feedback that informs subsequent learning. Learner self-assessment and peer review are particularly powerful strategies.

This is a potent process as it provides the foundation for truly personalised learning and places the learner in the role of partner in the process.

Assessment for learning becomes even richer when the learner and teacher are involved in a conversation about learning that enables the learner to identify where and how to focus their efforts. This process also helps the teacher to review the effectiveness of the learning they have delivered.

Techniques that teachers might use

- Co-create (or clarify) with learners the success criteria that define successful learning outcomes.
- Provide opportunities for learners to self-assess their progress against the success criteria.
- Build in peer review activities to group work.
- Build in frequent informal and formal checks on learning.

- Observe and listen to learners at work.
- Ask high-level questions that check surface and deep learning.
- Use a range of open questioning techniques.
- Use cue cards, sticky notes, mini-whiteboards and quizzes.

- Use 'medal and mission' feedback: focus on what has been achieved towards the task objectives (the 'medal') and then what the learner needs to improve, correct or work on (the 'mission'). The 'mission' should be forward-looking and positive.

For learners this might mean:

- being aware of the learning objectives and criteria for success – and being clear about how to achieve them
- checking understanding frequently with other learners
- developing self-assessment and peer review skills
- reflecting on what went well and what did not go so well – and why
- taking action on feedback.

Co-operative learning

Co-operative learning is a structured form of group learning. It involves learners with different strengths and experiences co-operating and working in small groups to develop their knowledge and understanding. Group members build their own learning as well as helping other group members to learn. The group works until all members successfully complete the tasks.

It is particularly useful as a framework for team project work. Its success depends on individuals understanding that their contribution is vital to the team of which they form a part.

A co-operative learning approach contains the following five elements.

- Positive interdependence – ‘we sink or swim together’.
- Individual and group accountability.
- Face-to-face interaction – or its electronic equivalent.
- Explicit learning of interpersonal and teamwork skills.
- Group processing – to evaluate team functioning and agree which behaviours to change.

Co-operative learning has been found to improve information acquisition, higher level thinking skills and interpersonal and communication skills. It can also encourage active citizenship and promote equality and diversity, for instance by breaking down barriers between learners.

With its emphasis on teamwork, interdependence and accountability, co-operative learning can model effective practices from the workplace.

As co-operative learning provides a framework for group reflection, self-assessment and evaluation of effectiveness, it is also a useful tool for developing effective learning skills. Peer review (see assessment for learning) is a particularly powerful strategy to use.

Techniques that teachers might use

- Group learners into small, heterogeneous groups to draw on a diverse range of experience.
- Co-create (or clarify) with learners the success criteria for ‘content’ and ‘team functioning’.
- Plan activities to help learners identify and allocate complementary roles within the group, such as facilitator, researcher, recorder and checker. Everyone must contribute to the team goal.
- Use activities to help learners agree ground rules in their groups.
- Include incentives for successful team completion, such as increased individual scores.

For learners this might mean:

- developing and using communication skills and teamwork that enable them to:
- coach or mentor peers
- give effective feedback to peers
- negotiate and reach consensus
- develop trust within the team.
- conducting self-assessment and peer review against agreed criteria
- reflecting on how well the group is functioning – what helps and what hinders?

Experiential learning

This approach involves engaging learners in authentic, first-hand experiences that allow them to make discoveries and experiment, to construct meaning and then develop understanding from what they do and experience. It is sometimes referred to more loosely as ‘learning by doing’ or ‘active learning’.

By becoming directly involved in the process, learners begin to develop in their own minds a possible model for the way something happens or works. They build their understanding based on what they know about a topic already. As their model takes shape, conflicts will naturally arise between what they know doesn’t fit with their developing model. This incongruity causes them to refine or revise their model until their new understanding sits comfortably with their old understanding. To achieve deep learning, the learner must reflect on what has been experienced.

Experiential learning can involve affective, behavioural and cognitive learning. It can be a powerful approach for developing empathy and changing attitudes.

Techniques that teachers might use

- Provide realistic, rich, open-ended case studies or scenarios that engage learners in problem solving and challenge existing beliefs and values.
- Use co-operative learning (see above) to create a structured, safe, social environment for thinking, reasoning and discussion.
- Use open questions and prompts to help learners think clearly and creatively about alternative solutions to problems.
- Plan opportunities for learners to explain how theory relates to practice.
- Make learning skills explicit and embed the use of a learning cycle (see Figure 3) within learning routines.

For learners this might mean:

- working in small groups with real-life problems – through case studies, scenarios or simulations
- using raw data, primary sources and artefacts or ‘props’ to provide a realistic context
- identifying and developing ideas, skills and values or attitudes through discussion or role play
- exploring the consequences of different solutions to a problem
- practising and applying skills in other contexts
- reflecting on what they have learned, how they learned it and where they can use the skills again.

Embedding literacy, language and numeracy (LLN)

The skills challenge set by the Leitch Review (2006) is real and demanding. Successful achievement of the 2020 targets will depend on development of the LLN skills of all learners to at least Level 2.

Research into embedded learning practice (Casey and others, 2006) has shown that:

- learners are better motivated to learn, practise and apply LLN skills if they are closely related to areas of personal interest and importance such as work, leisure or hobbies
- embedding LLN affects learning and achievement significantly; for example, a 15 per cent improvement in retention and achievement of vocational qualifications, with 26 per cent at Level 2
- the most effective practice occurs where vocational and LLN specialist teachers work closely together to plan LLN learning and create relevant and realistic activities
- a whole-organisation approach to embedding LLN is important, so that teachers are supported by a framework of values, policies and resources.

Techniques that teachers might use

Vocational and LLN specialists work in partnership to:

- carry out an audit to check skills required for success on the programme
- identify skills that learners already have and those they need to develop
- review the programme to identify specific skills learners need to develop and apply – and when
- identify learning opportunities and plan a delivery strategy, including opportunities inside and outside the classroom
- identify and/or create effective learning opportunities and resources, using a variety of multi-sensory stimuli
- consider team-teaching, using specialist and complementary skills
- give constructive feedback on individual progress.

For learners this might mean:

- identifying the skills they need to be successful on the programme, at work or in their everyday lives
- identifying the LLN skills they already have and those they need to develop
- devising and taking ownership of an individual learning plan with specific vocational and LLN targets
- finding out who can provide them with support
- identifying opportunities to practise and transfer the skills to achieve mastery
- reflecting on what they have learned, how they learned it and where they can use the skills again.

Embedding LLN: adult literacy and numeracy standards

In these resources we refer to the national standards for adult literacy and numeracy for guidance on how LLN skills might be embedded within learning activities. The standards describe adult literacy and numeracy as:

“The ability to read, write and speak in English and to use Mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general.”

The standards define the range of skills and capabilities that adults need to function and progress at work and in society. The adult literacy and numeracy core curriculum helps teachers select and teach skills appropriate to learners’ needs. The core curriculum can be downloaded from: www.dfes.gov.uk/curriculum_literacy/intro/ns/

Key skills standards

Teachers and learners following vocational programmes may be more familiar with key skills communication and application of number. The term ‘embedded’ or ‘integrated’ learning in a vocational context commonly refers to key skills. The key skills standards describe the skills learners need to develop in order to achieve the qualification. These can be downloaded from: www.qca.org.uk/qca_6455.aspx

The relationship between the two sets of standards

The two sets of standards are designed to complement and support each other. At Levels 1 and 2, the same communication and number skills and national tests are described in the adult literacy and numeracy standards and in Part A of the key skills standards for communication and application of number.

The adult literacy and numeracy standards amplify the knowledge, techniques and understanding needed to achieve the equivalent key skill. They act as flexible ‘building blocks’ for key skills (and functional skills) and are particularly helpful to vocational teachers as they describe very specifically the skills learners need to achieve at each level.

Functional skills

These are practical skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). They help you gain the most out of work, education and everyday life. The qualifications will be widely available following a three-year pilot programme, which begins in September 2007. The full qualifications will be introduced for teaching in 2010. During the pilot phase, it is likely that there will be changes made to the standards, so they cannot be used reliably for reference in activities in the short term.

Functional skills standards have been developed for English, mathematics and ICT. They determine the knowledge and skills proficiency required by a learner at each level. The draft standards can be found at: www.qca.org.uk/functionalskills/

Getting learners onside: making the learning skills explicit

The best learning situation is one in which teacher and learners share responsibility for its outcomes. If learners understand what is being asked of them and why they are being taught in a particular way, learning outcomes are secured more effectively and easily.

You are probably a very effective learner yourself. For example, you are likely to select and use:

- appropriate reading strategies for research such as skim, scan and read in depth
- sympathetic non-verbal communication when confronted with someone who is unhappy or seeks reassurance
- a range of approaches to learning that include visual, practical or kinaesthetic.

These form part of your learning skills 'toolkit'. Many learners have a limited learning skills toolkit and may not be able to recognise the skills that they have or will need in the future.

Many find it difficult to select an appropriate strategy for a task.

Learners need to know:

- which skills they possess
- which skills they need to develop
- when and how to use their skills
- why a set of skills is appropriate for a task
- how to apply their skills to achieve an outcome.

Effective teachers make learning strategies and generic learning skills explicit within their teaching. This gives learners an insight into the principles of learning, including how they develop understanding and an awareness of the styles of working and learning that work best for them as individuals. The process is important in terms of personalised learning and clearly promotes and supports independent learning.

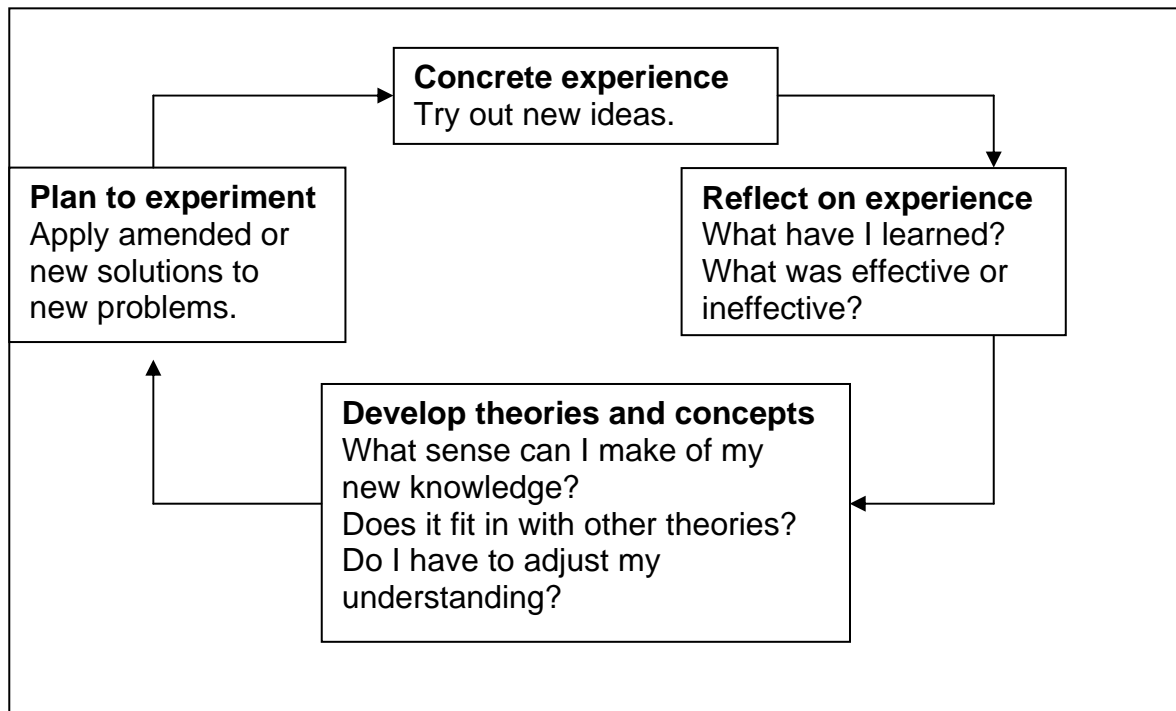
Effective teachers:

- plan learning and co-create (or clarify) 'success' learning outcomes with learners
- discuss the learning skills and learning techniques with learners
- share with learners the idea that a learning routine, a learning 'cycle', can be helpful to structure and make sense of their experiences.

Whatever our role as teachers or learners, the learning cycle (Figure 3) illustrates how we all learn effectively from experience. In everyday reality we may work through some of the sub-stages subconsciously, particularly if we are experienced learners.

There are several similar 'learning cycles' that describe the learning process, and you may already use one similar to Figure 3 with your learners.

Figure 3: A learning cycle



Based on Kolb, D.A. 1984. *Experiential Learning*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

For example, the process is embodied in:

- the key skill
- improving own learning and performance
- some personal, learning and thinking skills.

They all share a common feature: reflection.

Reflection is a skill that learners find difficult. But you can encourage reflection in many ways, for example by asking learners to:

- explain their new-found understanding or teach their peers
- summarise and express their thoughts diagrammatically; this will help bring structure to their understanding and provide valuable visual and tactile reinforcement (they could do this by creating graphic organisers or posters)
- use or sketch a diagram in an 'ideas' logbook to reflect on and summarise for homework
- include a 'voice bite' or a photograph to add a further dimension to written notes
- identify and validate what they have learned, how they learned it, what went well and why, what went less well and why, and where they could use the skills again
- set their learning in new contexts and ask them where they could use their skills and knowledge.

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