

Tool 6

PLANNING A COURSE

This will normally be handled by an experienced tutor or trainer that you ask to deliver your course. But if you are running something for the first time, locally, or with some one who needs help, you may find this information useful.

The principles of your plans should be:

- Everyone has equal access
- Everyone should be able to participate fully
- The learning should be relevant for them
- It should provide personal development for the learners
- It should offer progression to something else
- It should recognise what learners have achieved
- It should involve people reflecting on what they have learned.

Any course lasting several sessions will need some sort of SCHEME OF WORK. Some of it will need to be done, as a course outline, before you decide to opt for this particular course and before you start advertising it – otherwise you don't know what you are recruiting for.

By scheme of work, we mean you write out what you are planning to teach in each session and how it all hangs together. It may include points about:

- The overall aims and objectives of the programme
- The overall shape or content
- Who will run the various sessions
- What extra support* you may provide for learners at any point
- Facilities that you need at various points
- Information, Advice and Guidance opportunities to be built in
- Deadlines for any work done by learners to be completed
- Any requirements to accredit the course
- Any meetings of tutors or other that you want to build in
- How you will evaluate the course

For each session you run, you will need a SESSION PLAN. This sets out:

- What are the aims of the session?
- What do you want the learners to know or be able to do at the end? (Outcome or Learning Objective)
- What activities will you offer?
- How long will you allow for each one?
- How will they do these – in groups, altogether, working on their own?

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- What resources will you use for these – facilities, tools, materials, books etc?
- How will you check that learning has happened as planned, and get feedback on the success of the session?

*This could be special provision for people with disabilities, or language support, or support to help anyone struggling with the literacy and numeracy levels of the course, any transport needed to get people to the course, or child-care to enable some one to attend.

A major source of learning materials for community learning can be found on the website for National Learning Materials – nlm.ac.uk

SKILLS FOR LIFE

Help with Literacy or Numeracy is a key factor in enabling people with low educational achievement in the past, to progress to further learning, achieve recognition for their skills, and improve their jobs and careers.

As it is a key Government priority, there is a wealth of resources and advice to help with this, and mainstream learning providers can obtain significant funding if they can help people get through the National Tests in English and Maths which are easily available to anyone who can get to an internet-ready computer. Information and practice tests are on move-on.org.uk and dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus. This approach recognises achievement from Entry Level to Level 2 (equivalent to GCSE grades A-C) so it aims to help everyone with all sorts of ability profiles, rather than stigmatising those who cannot read at all (who form a tiny number in any case).

RECORDING ACHIEVEMENT

If you decide to accredit the learning, you need to use an established centre of an awarding body or Open College Network. If you want to provide ways or recognising achievement formally, but without external validation, there is advice from the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) on qualityaol.org.uk/quality/.

However, for a really short course or workshop, you may think that the most appropriate recognition is your own Certificate of Attendance or Completion.

The planned Credit Framework for qualifications ought to mean that learners can “bank” any short qualifications, or units, that they have been able to achieve through community learning, to “top up” to a full qualification later, perhaps in a college or university. However, we are not there yet.