



National Research and Development Centre
for adult literacy and numeracy

Evaluation Report

Putting good practice into practice: literacy, numeracy and key skills within apprenticeships

An evaluation of the LSDA development project

By Sue Cranmer and Natasha Kersh, with Karen Evans,
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Summary

Synopsis

This is an evaluation report of a development project which explored different models of delivering literacy, numeracy and other key skills within apprenticeships (formally known as Foundation and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships).

This project followed concern about unsatisfactory achievement in literacy, numeracy and other key skills within apprenticeships. Knowledge of existing practice amongst providers indicated that many centres had regarded literacy, numeracy and other key skills as 'a chore' and had been leaving them until late in the programme. Between May and December 2003, the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) led a development project which set out to try out ways of making such skills a higher and more integral priority from the beginning of programmes.

The project trialled a range of models in eight centres, chosen to cover a range of vocational areas and different geographical locations. Literacy, numeracy and other key skills were delivered pre-course, or early in the apprenticeship programme and all addressed activities such as: preparation of the trainers for key skills support; development of initial and diagnostic assessment and individual training plans; development of 'front-end' provision; and preparation of learners for test-based assessment and for their portfolios.

The NRDC evaluation of the LSDA project was carried out through semi-structured interviews, observation of classroom practice and interviews/focus groups with learners. The researchers also collected factual data on each project and quantitative data about each cohort of learners.

This evaluation report describes and analyses the key findings, looking at pedagogy, and its effect on retention and engagement, assessment approaches, the background and training of teachers, and last but not least the responses from learners. The report paints a picture of the issues involved in achieving a practical whole organisation commitment to literacy, numeracy, and other key skills being delivered as a significant and integral part of Modern Apprenticeship programmes.

"This was a textbook example of effective joint working to solve a pressing problem. Diagnosis by the ALI, proposing a way forward, followed up by the DfES, LSDA and keen providers, and authoritatively evaluated by researchers, is a pattern through which the creases in apprenticeships are being progressively ironed out."

David Sherlock, Chief Inspector of Adult Learning
'Talisman' November 2004

Key Findings

The evaluation study found that

- Learners improve their literacy, numeracy and other key skills when the whole organisation believes key skills are an essential underpinning for learning vocational skills and technical knowledge.

- The 'front-end' delivery model is an effective way of delivering literacy, numeracy and other key skills, as it prepares learners for the skills they need for their apprenticeship programme.
- The whole staff of the programme – vocational teachers and assessors as well as specialist basic and key skills staff, need to work as a team on literacy and numeracy. This requires planning time, contextualised materials and support and training for vocational teachers.
- Even learners who had qualifications on entering the programme, such as GCSE's at A*-C in English and maths, benefited from the literacy and numeracy support in completing their apprenticeships.
- Where employers were actively involved and supported learners' attendance, this had a crucial impact on learners motivation and engagement and on vocational teachers' commitment to literacy, numeracy and other key skills.
- Learning experiences have to be enjoyable and engaging and develop learners' self confidence: this needs committed, skilled and experienced teachers.
- The way in which teachers introduced literacy, numeracy and other key skills was crucial to the attitudes of learners towards them, particularly amongst low achieving youngsters. It is particularly important to constantly promote literacy, numeracy and other key skills to learners as relevant to the workplace and as essential to their vocational training and their future employment.
- Time needs to be available for individual feedback to learners, formal and informal.
- Most teachers were under-qualified for the roles they were carrying out
- In particular vocational teachers were teaching and assessing literacy and numeracy without appropriate training. It is important to develop collaboration between vocational teachers and literacy, numeracy and other key skills specialists within centres as well as providing appropriate staff development opportunities.
- Funding is needed to resource ILPs; support and develop the tracking system, and support initiatives such as morale boosting 'bite size' assessments. ILPs on MA's need to be made more accessible and easier to use for learners themselves.

Background and rationale of research

The purpose of the evaluation study was to draw out tentative recommendations for future practice and is addressed to providers, teachers and policy makers. As one of the researchers comments, 'This report provides insight into putting good practice into practice; it is not easy, but this project demonstrates its value for learners.'

Research team

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1. The project: its context, aims, organisation and evaluation

There has been widespread concern about unsatisfactory achievement in literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills within Modern Apprenticeships (MAs), both Foundation Modern Apprenticeships (FMAs) and Advanced Modern Apprenticeships (AMAs). One approach to improving performance has been to concentrate literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills support, either intensively at the beginning of MA frameworks, or on a pre-MA programme. These approaches are collectively described as *front-end delivery models* in contrast to programmes where key skills are introduced later on in programmes or are scarcely taught at all.

The project described and evaluated in this report aimed to explore the impact of using *front-end delivery models* to meet the literacy, numeracy and wider key skills needs of trainees. In order to be able to cope with the demands of the Technical Certificates and NVQs within the frameworks, it is essential that trainees have well established key/basic skills from the outset. The emphasis of this project was to offer early opportunities for trainees to improve these skills and access the key skills tests in Communication and Application of Number if appropriate. Early success for trainees has been described as being very motivational. For others who were less prepared for early testing, it was intended that they could be prepared for progression to Levels 1 and 2 in key skills through support by the literacy and numeracy curriculum at Entry Levels 1, 2 and 3. An early emphasis on key skills would also be expected to provide trainees with the opportunity to get off to a flying start with portfolio preparation.

Feedback from many providers would indicate that in order to make this a motivational experience for the student, front-end delivery must be strongly related to the work place. The challenge for the project was then to provide interesting experiences while at the same time preparing trainees for the tests and portfolio achievement in key/basic skills.

Knowledge of existing practice amongst providers indicated that many centres have regarded key skills as 'a chore', additional to the substance of the programme, and have been leaving formal attention to key skills until very late in the programme. Such a back-end delivery model can mean that many learners have no opportunity to develop the underpinning skills needed for their vocational study. In addition, these learners are often failing the tests and thus not completing the MA framework. The purpose of the project was to avoid this negative and 'bolt-on' approach to literacy, numeracy and wider key skills and to try out ways of making such skills effectively a higher and more integral priority from the beginning of programmes. This evaluation report describes the work of the centres in the project and examines the impact the project has had on teachers and teaching, learners and learning and the key skills results.

The project was managed and organised by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) and funded by the DfES. The project worked with eight centres. The centres represent a small sample, but the eight centres are a cross section of types of providers in different parts of the country and cover 13 occupational areas.

A summary of the eight case studies is set out in appendix one. The projects largely worked

with Foundation Modern Apprenticeships (FMAs) rather than with Advanced Modern Apprenticeships (AMAs). AMA learners were involved at Centres E and G and where the findings are distinctive they are reported. The project did not include learners with English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) needs so there are no specific findings about ESOL learners on MAs.

The project ran from May–December 2003. The period May–July was spent on preparatory work with the centres, particularly developing vocationally related learning materials with teachers. The period August–December was the period of front-end key skills teaching. It is important to note that the project did not cover the whole period of the learners' MA programmes or of their key skills work. This means there are no final key skills outcomes available as yet to judge the impact of the front-end approach on overall outcomes compared to previous cohorts. It is recommended that this is follow up work which should be done. However, analysis has been made of retention and achievement rates at the end of the project (December 2003) and where possible comparisons made with previous cohorts. This analysis is set out in appendix 2. Further detailed quantitative data, including information about proxy qualifications, for each centre cohort is set out in appendix 3.

There was no single imposed delivery model for this 'up-front' project. This would have been impractical given the varied circumstances of the centres and the need for a high level of commitment to key skills from the centres as organisations and from all teaching staff if real changes were to be effected. However, the common characteristic of the work at all the centres is that key skills was started from the beginning of the programme for the cohorts and had a degree of intensity with some continuation during the whole period. The actual delivery models varied: for example, centre D started with introducing key skills at a four day residential programme and then provided follow on key skills support; on the other hand, centre F provided regular classes throughout the 14 week pre-FMA course.

However, all the centres addressed the following common cycle of activities in their key skills front-end delivery:

- preparing trainers for key skills development with learners;
- initial and diagnostic assessment of learners;
- building of individual training plans through plan, do and review activities;
- development of front-end provision to teach underpinning skills of basic/key skills;
- use of formative assessment techniques to help develop learners' motivation and learning;
- preparation of learners for test based assessment and for their portfolios;
- assessment using online methods where appropriate and possible; and
- ensuring progression through the basic/key skills continuum.

This small scale evaluation study of the project in the eight centres has been undertaken by the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy. The researchers undertook the following data collection:

- semi-structured interviews with managers/ co-ordinators/ teachers*;
- observations of classroom practice;
- interviews/ focus groups with learners;

*For simplification and to preserve confidentiality the range of different centre personnel (trainers, tutors, instructors and teachers) have been grouped together as teachers.

- wider factual data on each project; and
- quantitative data about each centre cohort including learners' prior achievements, retention and outcomes (set out in appendices 2 and 3).

This report is the result of the evaluation study: it analyses the data collected and summarises the researchers' conclusions. The researchers' tentative recommendations for future practice have been drawn out and addressed to providers, teachers and policy makers for whom the report is intended.

The report paints a picture of the issues involved in achieving a practical whole organisation commitment to literacy, numeracy and wider key skills being delivered as a significant and integral part of MAs. Good practice may often be known about but not used due to organisational blocks, resource requirements, staff capacity and attitudes, and sometimes simply the weight of existing practice. This report provides insight into putting good practice into practice; it is not easy, but this project demonstrates its value for learners.

2. Implementation of the front-end delivery model

Perceptions of the project by teachers

The project initially involved some structural changes within FMA/AMA programmes in the participating centres. The degree of this change varies from centre to centre as some centres (e.g. centre C) have already had experiences in delivering key skills in a *front-end delivery model* for several years. However, for all centres the major changes have been concerned with putting more emphasis on and awareness of the importance of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills delivery within MA programmes. As noted by a tutor '... it's all about getting everybody thinking key skills now'. The issue of involving vocational teachers in both literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills teaching and assessment has been a significant development for some centres, including more active collaboration between vocational and key skills teachers. A number of vocational teachers undertook specific training (e.g. on the project Key Skills Support Programme).

Teachers within all centres were extremely positive about the project. In some cases, their level of enthusiasm seemed to be greater according to the level of frustration they had experienced with the previous arrangements for literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills. Most of the comments revolved around the effectiveness of 'tightening up' the organisation, planning and prioritising aspects of the programme such as initial assessment, particularly for identifying literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills and specific learning difficulties early on, proxy qualifications, registering for external tests and so on. One tutor commented that the project has totally changed her role within the centre. Whereas she had previously been re-active as a tutor, the introduction of the *front-end delivery model* had given her the opportunity to take charge and together with the centre manager, they had redeveloped the whole key skills provision.

The project has required more structured and purposeful integration of key skills into the MA framework. Key skills have been an important part of the whole course, focusing learners' attention on key skills from the very beginning of their programmes. The important components, such as induction, initial and diagnostic assessments, ongoing assessment, portfolio development, etc., were reviewed and either changed or improved to meet the requirements of individual learners. The front-end delivery allows learners to concentrate on the key skills, while they also undertake their vocational training.

Teachers believed that the learners very much benefited from the project because it provided them with the underpinning skills and confidence to enable them to learn and carry out their trade well. Teachers also talked of the benefits of introducing literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills at the stage where learners are 'keen and eager'. This was compared with previous models where literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills were addressed after learners had become accustomed to the work place and hardened against what they saw as 'extra' work.

One teacher noted that the literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills of the current cohort, who have undergone the *front-end delivery model*, are further developed than starters from the previous year:

They're very lucky I think because they've had more than any other group coming through the centre has had before which is great. Because what we've actually said, because we've all been very focused on this and have really pulled together as a team, that some of these lads who have only been in the centre eight weeks, are further forward than other lads who are out on site now that have been with us for 12 months. (Teacher, centre F).

Teachers reported that all learners, regardless of ability and prior educational achievement were benefiting from the project. Examples were given of a learner, with a B at GCSE in Maths at entry, who having done additional work about ratios felt his confidence in bricklaying had increased. This example demonstrates the point that although learners may have proxy qualifications at entry, they also will often need to develop these skills further. Obstacles given related to some learners' attitudinal and behavioural problems such as laziness, possibly underpinned by lack of motivation. It was also said that it was important not to refer to literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills as Maths and English as this alienated many learners. A minority of teachers were unconvinced of the benefits of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills particularly in the higher AMA levels.

The most common problems that affected the implementation of the *front-end delivery model* were:

- lack of time and resources;
- turnover of staff resulting in temporary lack of co-ordination; and
- pressure on both vocational and key skills teachers in terms of (1) undertaking new duties and responsibilities, (2) participating in various kinds of training.

The overall impression was that many challenges were encountered in the project, but these had diminished as the teachers saw the fruits of their efforts. Issues were often related to the shortage of time combined with the extra work involved in setting up templates for diagnostic assessment, writing new materials and getting everything ready in time. The lack

of ILT (Information and Learning Technology) resources had also been an issue in many of the centres where the *front-end delivery model* had been started prior to adequate equipment being available.

A further problem reported by two of the centres is related to the ongoing second and third year learners who were not included in the project at the centres. It has been difficult to resource the overlapping needs of these learners. This point is of particular significance in the quantitative data from the project where it makes comparisons in progress rates between the project cohort and the previous cohort impossible.

There were also negative attitudes from Trade Assessors (TAs) at one centre. One specialist tutor overcame the resistance from the TAs by working alongside them and mapping the literacy, numeracy and wider key skills delivery to the NVQ. For instance, if the TAs said that a particular skill, such as scale drawing, would be needed at week eight, she ensured that her learners were familiar with scale, measurement and number before then. As the TAs began to see the benefits of this for the trade, they began to work more collaboratively with the key skills tutor.

At centre G, a challenge for the AMA teachers was to convince the Roving Assessors (RAs) of the benefits of the project. They were convinced through involvement in training days. Key skills are now being introduced at the start of the course and written into the NVQ assignment to ensure completion. It's been especially important to develop the assignment in this way to avoid duplication of time and effort since employment in the work place is physically hard, the typical day is long (05:30 – 18:00) and may involve travel. Lack of computer access has been an issue in the past, which the centre is addressing through having laptops for the RAs to lend out to the AMAs.

There was widespread acceptance of the levels of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills in FMAs. Most of the centres also include ICT although it is not assessed as part of the framework. This was for a range of reasons:

- a requirement of the industry (hairdressing);
- a requirement for running a business;
- as a motivator;
- as a means of gathering evidence and preparing the portfolio; and
- as preparation for the AMA.

Teachers reported that taking and passing tests develops learners' 'sense of achievement'. One learner noted that with her previous low grades she never thought that she would ever pass the numeracy test. The fact that she did motivated her towards further learning. Another benefit was the development of so-called soft skills, such as confidence and self-assurance. Teachers note that classroom activities such as making presentations or participating in open discussions facilitate such soft outcomes. Learners feel more empowered as they learn how to design their CVs or write job application forms. In addition, undertaking units such as *Equal Opportunities* or *Health and Safety* develops their confidence at their workplaces. What is more, if learners are motivated and engaged at the start of their course, they are likely to benefit further from their key skills training.

Taking account of learners' backgrounds

The majority of learners are school leavers with a wide range of GCSE (or equivalent) results. Some centres offer different routes to the FMA depending on previous educational achievement and assessment at interview. Medium to high achieving hairdressing FMAs may be 'fast tracked' on an intensive full-time programme, whilst low achievers (below Level 1) may be encouraged to attend an evening only course where the pace is slower but leads to the same qualification.

For the AMAs, again a range of abilities is accepted. Centre E mainly accepts learners with a minimum of GCSE (C and above) in Mathematics, English and Sciences. However, centre G accepts learners who they assess as capable of achieving NVQ Level 3 Racehorse Care rather than by formal qualifications. The outcome of this can be that Level 2 Application of Number (AON) could be beyond their short term reach.

The extent to which teachers have opportunities and resources to take into account learners' backgrounds and previous experiences varies from centre to centre. For example, there was a wide disparity between the centres in terms of the group sizes and time available to spend with individual learners. There were cases where groups' sizes, for example, 25 learners, were too large for individual attention to be given although it was needed. There were other cases where smaller groups led to close personal attention. This is a matter of resource priorities.

Other important examples of the need to address individual learners include diagnosing dyslexia early in the programme and recruiting learners with very good practical experience but with low academic achievement as long as the centre is confident it can identify needs early in the *front-end delivery model* and provide extra support necessary for completion. Centres use initial and diagnostic assessment to identify these learners and then respond with a range of measures. For instance, in some centres the key skills tutor organises and teaches extra sessions for this group. In other centres, specialist companies are employed to work alongside the usual tutor and offer further support in literacy and numeracy.

Employers

The important observation made by teachers in some centres is that often employers do not show support for learners and have no interest in their ongoing assignments and projects because they are personally not involved in the process of assignment planning and development. To address these problems one centre is developing a new system of collaboration between learners, centre and employer. The system welcomes employers' involvement in the design, development and planning of assignments or projects for learners. The centre's teachers maintain that by working with the assignment set by the employer and the learner, the work produced will then allow the learner to gather the supporting evidence to complete the NVQ. Such an approach helps to contribute to employers' increased interest and responsibility for learners' training. Other centres have tried to get similar initiatives off the ground but found that employers are unable to give the time needed to be involved.

3. Pedagogy: strategies maintaining retention and engagement

Introducing key skills to learners

The ways of initially introducing the key skills to learners varied from centre to centre. However, there are some common strategies, which include induction sessions, MA framework awareness sessions and mock test papers in Communication and Application of Numbers followed by feedback. These initial sessions have a common aim which is to show the importance of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills for both the frameworks and workplaces. The message the centres attempt to transmit to learners is that the key skills training is an important part of their frameworks and if learners can improve their skills they are going to be more successful with their course. Some centres demonstrate transferability and flexibility of the key skills thus stressing the benefits for learners' development. Another centre introduces the wider key skills within an intensive four-day programme called 'key skills for fun', which also involves outward bound activities. The programme requires learners to participate in both classroom and outdoor activities where key skills are introduced/deployed in a variety of situations (e.g. beach rescue activities, night on the beach in bivouacs, swimming). Such an approach enables teachers to demonstrate how literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills could be used, deployed and developed not only in a classroom but also in real life situations. Learners who participate in this programme are engaged in a mix of vocational areas and this enables the learners to see that what they learn is transferable and could be applied in a variety of occupational areas. Learners feel highly motivated by this. Such an approach was popular with the learners who said it changed their attitudes to key skills at the outset. The Key Skills for Fun programme exemplifies a very successful way of introducing key skills, but cannot of course, entirely address the key skills needs of learners.

All teachers were aware of the importance of introducing and persuading learners of the relevance of key skills. Within one centre where learners were low achievers and yet surprisingly highly motivated towards key skills (in the focus group), the tutor constantly threaded the 'promotion' of key skills to the learners within every aspect of their learning, relating over and over again, the relevance of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills to their trade. It was noticeable that these learners were much more positive about literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills and much more convinced of their relevance to their trade, in the focus groups, than most other learners.

Contextualisation of key skills

The degree of contextualisation varies from centre to centre, but across all centres, key skills have been contextualised to a certain extent. A variety of factors may influence a higher (or lower) degree of contextualisation, such as the topic of a session, number of learners, qualifications/specialisation of teachers, learners' own initiatives, etc. In centres where the same teachers are responsible for both vocational and key skills/teaching, the extent of the contextualisation is higher, as it comes naturally with less effort from the

teachers. Observation of key skills sessions led to the conclusion that contextualisation of language and literacy enhances learners' motivation, engagement and learning outcomes.

All teachers emphasised the importance of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills being integrated with vocational subjects even within dedicated key skills sessions. Teachers worked in a range of ways to ensure this, for instance, a key skills tutor was learning trade specific language and examples from the learners themselves and by designing programmes with the help of the TAs. Other vocational teachers had developed their key skills in order that they could deliver both concurrently. Teachers said that integration ensured that learners could see the relevance of doing key skills for their trade, selling it to them as trade. The disadvantages given related to the time taken from the TA for the development of key skills, although the quality of learner progress has improved and should enable them to learn the trade better. For example, a hairdressing tutor described how she would draw out AON skills such as numeracy and more specifically, an understanding of ratios, when teaching the mixing of hair colour. Observation of the key skills class in this centre has indicated that learners' reactions to various references and links to their workplaces were very positive, their responses were lively and enthusiastic.

Learners' motivation and engagement

The degree of learners' motivation varies depending on a number of factors:

- the role/support of their employers and teachers;
- the relevance of the key skills to the workplace and to the learning of vocational skills; and
- the general environment at the centre.

Interviews with both trainers and trainees indicate that often learners come to their key skills/LLN classes with rather negative attitudes. They often resent the fact that time allocated for their literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training is 'borrowed', as they think, from their vocational training sessions. However, if they feel that what they are doing in the class is related to their own projects or their future profession in general, they gradually undergo a transition from resentment, to acceptance and involvement.

One centre reported a dramatic increase in retention rates so far for the project cohort. The centre said that this was due to the enthusiasm for literacy, numeracy and the wider skills that had been generated. Teachers ascribe this motivation to the keenness of the key skills tutor, the drive to get themselves a good trade, the tighter organisation of the programme and the extra support being provided for those in need. This was particularly apparent when compared to previous cohorts at the centre who were very resistant to key skills. Previous cohorts had undertaken a two week intensive programme towards the end of their courses without initial and diagnostic assessments being in place. The tutor said that having been brought in from outside to teach this course once, she would never agree to doing it like that again. Other centres also reported increased retention but ascribed this to other ongoing developments within literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills teaching rather than to the introduction of project model. One tutor said that they try to make it as much fun as possible, as straightforward as possible and portfolios as thin as they can. At centre E, retention on the AMA was already high (95 – 98 per cent). This was probably the result of mainly recruiting learners who had achieved C and above at GCSE, the fierce competition for places and the pay rises attached to each level of completion.

As already suggested, the relevance of early key skills training to learners' workplaces is one of the most crucial factors that may facilitate learners' motivation and engagement and this, ultimately, may result in higher achievement and retention rates. Across the chosen centres teachers maintain that the implementation of the *front-end delivery model* has contributed to raising awareness towards literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills as well as to perceiving the training as an essential part of the whole framework. In some centres, vocational teachers undertook specific training that enabled them to contribute to literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills teaching. One centre claims they find it very beneficial in this context, that the same tutor contributes to the teaching of both key skills and the vocational subject. Such conditions make it easier for the tutor to relate skills to learners' occupational areas.

A number of other activities and assignments have been used by teachers in various centres in order to make the links between key skills/LLN training and learners' workplaces more visible. These included:

- designing individual projects and assignments taking into account their relevance to learners' workplaces;
- providing regular feedback, where learners' achievements could be related and linked to their present or potential success at work;
- involving employers in developing learners' individual projects; and
- getting feedback from learners on whether they feel that their training is relevant (or how it could be made relevant) to their workplaces.

Another factor that may motivate learners has to do with transferability of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills. A tutor maintains that learners' attitudes become more positive if they consider the key skills to be *flexible* and *transferable*. The teachers insist that it is very important to make references and give examples of how their key skills could be used and employed in various occupational areas:

On the keys skills induction session we explain this. And because we have a mixture of different MAs, i.e. retail, healthcare and business administration ... they [the learners] can see that all six key skills are being used in every job.

Another important factor is that of influence of the teachers. One tutor notes that teachers' more positive attitudes towards key skills, which is facilitated by specific training, plays an important role in this context:

Because I am getting more educated with the key skills, I am feeding it back to them, and I think it's making them understand just how valuable the key skills are.

The centres emphasised the importance of employers' involvement in facilitating learners' motivation and engagement. Employers' unsupportive attitude towards learners' training has been named as one of the most negative factors that contributes to lowering learners' enthusiasm towards literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training and which ultimately leads to lower achievement or retention rates. At one centre, learners' portfolios (FMA in Retail) could not be completed on time because employers would not release them from their work to attend key skills sessions, especially around Christmas or the New Year. For some other learners (e.g. FMA in Health Care), working long hours on shifts prevented

them from attending sessions on the same day every week. What is more, they would not receive wages for the days they attended their key skills classes.

Another important approach is to ensure key skills classes are not reminiscent of school classes where learners may have failed. If learners feel that their key skills training is relevant to their workplaces, it makes the whole experience different from school and they perceive their whole training with a different attitude. Other features, such as stronger links with employers, more individualised work/vocationally oriented assignments and more regular feedback, have been developed within the *front-end delivery model* and have played an important role in making the experience different from learners' school experiences.

Teachers gave a range of responses to what they consider motivates learners; they stressed the importance of practical and authentic activities for learners and for them to have the opportunity of being 'out of their seat'. An example given was of learning to produce scale drawings by asking learners to price up a particular job: 'they love it because it's real', whereas 'teach them Maths and English and it's a real "turn off"'. Other centres found the environment could be important: for example, playing music and providing a 'nice warm computer room' compared with the harsher environment of the stable yard.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

Most of the teachers supported ILPs in principle as a useful tool for setting targets, focusing training and identifying extra support. The main objectives of ILPs are associated with developing more individualised learning. In most centres ILPs are introduced to the learners on their induction days. Most teachers maintain that ILPs provide a significant source of information for learners and their teachers. ILPs include detailed information on what kinds of assessments learners have had. The assessment results provide information about learners' specific problems and areas to be addressed. On the basis of this information ILPs describe what the learner is/should be working towards. Learners themselves claim that ILPs help them to define their targets and aims. ILPs are maintained and amended as learners progress with their tasks and assignments.

As well as assessment results, there are other factors that need to be taken into account in the process of designing and constructing ILPs. These include:

- learners' prior experiences;
- cultural backgrounds;
- learning difficulties and problems; and
- other individual needs and requirements.

In practice, learners may not be able to use ILPs effectively due to the cost and time they would need to spend filling them in. Some centres carry out their own similar processes to ILPs to ensure the same level of individualised planning and as a 'safety net' to ensure that learners' needs are addressed. In the hairdressing centre, for example, they prefer to use an 'appraisal' system in line with work-based practice. Other centres use action plans, progress reports and internal reviews. Some teachers said that they preferred to plan in shorter term targets than ILPs afford, other teachers said that they could not see how an ILP would be better for the learner than having a good tutorial. It is very important to ensure that targets set at the beginning of training are fully addressed and that specific problems of individual

learners are being tackled at every stage of their training. As noted by one centre, prior to the project, there was no action plan that would have enabled further tracking of learners' progression after their completion of their ten-week blocks. To address this problem the centre is currently in the process of developing an action plan that would ensure continuous monitoring of learners' progress.

Feedback on progress and on outcomes to learners

Interviews with both learners and teachers indicated the importance of feedback to the learners, whether written or oral. In most centres learners received informal oral (in rarer cases, written) feedback throughout the project. The regularity of such ongoing feedback varies from centre to centre and largely depends on tutor/learner ratios. Formal feedback takes the form of reviews, tutorials and progress reports ranging from once a week to up to every eight weeks in one centre. At the end of the project, programme learners were provided with a written report, where their achievements, problem areas and further targets were recorded and analysed by their tutor.

Only one tutor thought feedback had changed significantly as a result of the front-end delivery project. She said that it was much more structured now with the introduction of weekly course reviews and a mid-course review.

One tutor noted that it was particularly important to make low achievers (often with low self-esteem) understand that they did have a future here and also that some needed to know they would have to try harder if they were to stay. Another tutor said she thought it was important to have a formal review as people may be too busy in a large environment like this centre to say 'well done'. So it was important to ensure that they were updated on where they are, what they needed to do in order to maintain the learners' motivation. Teachers emphasise that they have to be very careful that negative feedback does not lower confidence and self-assurance, thus affecting their motivation and engagement.

Two of the teachers believed that feedback as a motivator paled into insignificance compared with the threat of their wages being withdrawn if they failed the tests.

Feedback from learners

In most centres, teachers admit that, at the present time, feedback from learners has not been fully used to improve the provision of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills. Teachers agree that getting regular feedback from learners would contribute to the improvement of the key skills programmes. In addition, this would have a positive impact on learners' motivation and engagement. One of the centres is planning to hold special sessions where learners will have an opportunity to provide feedback to teachers and managers on the delivery of key skills as well as to raise any other relevant issues.

Further support for learners throughout their apprenticeships

The centres stressed that developing and implementing schemes for monitoring learners' further progression towards apprenticeships or straight NVQ programmes should be the

next step once learners complete their key skills/LLN *front-end delivery model* training. The centres do their best to ensure that there will be further help and assistance for learners still working on their key skills/LLN tests and portfolios. In most centres, skills teachers will continue to work with those learners as part of the ongoing support. Another centre proposes to run key skills/LLN workshops to ensure continuous support for those learners who need additional help with their training. For some of the centres, this is quite easy to arrange. However, where learners have permanently left the centre and are geographically spread out, it poses a much bigger problem. The teachers said that they will be given as much support as they can by RAs, visitors, mentors, etc., but they're on their own. It's not believed that anyone in the work place will offer them support. If they come back to resit exams, there will be revision sessions given in the morning prior to the exam, but it's not possible to get them back to the centre for longer sessions.

Another approach to on-going support for key skills is to embed it in other events. Some units such as *Equal Opportunities* or *Health and Safety* provide an excellent opportunity to deliver key skills while engaging learners in the training required by their main frameworks. Centre B uses *Equal Opportunities* for facilitating learners' discussions and presentations within a group, thus contributing to sustaining learners' communication skills. Centre A uses the same approach with *Health and Safety* training.

4. Assessment of learners

Initial and diagnostic assessment

At the beginning of their programmes, the learners' levels in AON and communication are identified through the various types of initial and diagnostic assessments or mock tests (such as Genesys Assessment, BSA *Skills for Life* Diagnostic Assessment, Occupational Assessments, Key Skills Builder). The main objectives of the initial assessments are:

- to identify learners' skills against a level within the national standards;
- to get information about the learners' requirements and learning needs (including special educational needs); and
- to identify what the learners know within their chosen occupational areas.

In addition, the initial assessment could indicate that a learner is in need of extra help or support in specific areas (e.g. punctuation, spelling, grammar, etc.). The initial assessment could also be helpful in the early diagnosis of specific learning problems (e.g. dyslexia). Teachers support the view that initial and diagnostic helps to flag up a number of important issues associated with learners' specific problems and needs, thus contributing to the design of individual learning plans and approaches.

Teachers maintain that they do their best to ensure that the language is appropriate for the different levels of learners. Teachers cited a range of ways in which they ensured their language was appropriate, from knowing how to pitch it at the appropriate level for engaging

learners in open conversation when running groups, to asking them for feedback, to checking their understanding and encouraging them to query what they don't understand.

Teachers were experiencing different levels of success with online diagnostic assessment. Some centres had not yet been able to use the initial online assessment materials due to lack of computer resources and/or a decision on it had yet to be taken. Other centres reported it was a resounding success. One centre had adjusted their ILPs to fit the diagnoses produced by the '*Skills for Life*' CD-Rom and were now finding it 'really helpful'. Another centre was frustrated that the BSA initial diagnostic online assessment gave a detailed assessment but one which did not appear to feed into the ILP. The tutor had to go through by hand assessing the areas needing further support.

One centre is using the '*Skills for Life*' diagnostic CD-Rom whereas they previously used 'key skills builder' for initial assessment. They reported that it feeds into the ILP very well. At another centre, the tutor reported that she has introduced 'bitesize' assessment as a morale booster and for motivation. Other centres reported no change to their methods of assessment.

Ongoing assessment

Most centres are taking further steps to improve their assessment methods. One centre, for example, is in the process of replacing a standard ongoing assignment with more individualised ones, designed for every learner. When designing such assignments teachers take into account learners' specific problems, needs and abilities.

Comparing the efficiency of various assessment methods, one centre made the point that the portfolio is a 'piece of cake', it is the exams that cause the problems because they are so much more advanced.

Online assessment packages for external testing*

Where online packages are available, centres are finding them highly efficient. Teachers like the immediacy of being able to register a student with a maximum 48 hour wait before they can take the exam and the results being available right away subject to confirmation. Another centre said that it was highly popular with the learners', they found it attractive (colourful), and because it was different from the paper based tests at school. The main disadvantages are related to the lack of computers (and the high specifications needed) in each of the centres, but they are taking steps to improve this situation. Other centres are hoping to move to online assessment very soon.

There were no significant findings related to the impact of online assessment on learners' achievements. At one centre, they anticipate that the introduction of online assessment will improve pass rates. Learners will be registered for them when they're ready removing the need for the pre-booking of a large exam room and pre-exam nerves that cause some learners to absent themselves.

*"Online" is used in the centres to refer to both online and computer based software packages such as CD-Rom, etc.

Self-evaluation

Teachers support the view that the process of self-evaluation of learners' skills could facilitate their learning success. For example, in one centre, at the beginning of their training learners have to undertake a self-assessment exercise for literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills, which enables them to contribute to the design and development of their ILPs. In addition, teachers support the view that various methods could be employed to facilitate learners' self-evaluation processes. However, in most centres, self-evaluation was not carried out formally. An exception was in one centre, which used grading cards (grades 1 and 2) to self-assess. Learners then discussed this with the tutor and were usually pleased to find she assesses them at a higher level than their own. Other centres tended to ask for the learners' view of their progress within the tutorial or review.

5. Teachers

Skills and experience of teachers

Most of the teachers interviewed are vocational teachers who have engaged with literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills to integrate them into their teaching. Teachers possessed a wide range of qualifications and experience relating to key skills.

Other teachers were specialist key skills teachers learning about the trades of the FMAs they teach or working alongside vocational teachers to integrate their work.

Centres stressed that vocational teachers are involved in team meetings in addition to informal discussions about learners' progress. At some centres, the introduction of the front-end has meant that the literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills needs and specific learning difficulties are being picked up through initial assessment. These results are then passed to TAs whereas previously they may have only picked up on these if the learner 'confessed' and chose to highlight their own shortcomings. Now if a TA is struggling to deliver something to a particular learner or group of learners, it can be picked up and addressed within key skills sessions. An example of this arose when it became clear that learners were not confident using metres and tape measures.

Staff training for the front-end delivery project

The implementation of the project has been associated with changes in roles as well as in attitudes of teachers. Some vocational teachers and key skills teachers have undertaken specific training which includes in house training; IPD Certificate in Training Practice; BSA Diagnostic Assessment training and Key Skills Flexi Learning Course.

Teachers gave a range of responses to the training given. On the positive side, teachers appreciated the help, time and space given over to developing assignment packages and revision materials, networking with colleagues, problem-solving and reaffirming their

current practice. The courses were found particularly useful when training was tailored to the teachers needs and there were a small number (one or two) teachers present. Criticisms tended to relate to subjects where teachers already felt confident and found that the trainers were not willing to address their specific areas of concern.

As noted by managers and co-ordinators, much depends on teachers' commitment and enthusiasm. In some cases they have to undertake training in their own time and at their own expense. Many teachers would be happy to undertake further training, especially if they were supported financially.

Level 4 qualifications

The research has shown that in most cases the key skills teachers and the vocational teachers do not hold appropriate qualifications, either generic or specialist, to teach or assess literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills. The data indicate the following:

- some teachers involved in literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills teaching/assessing hold a generic teaching qualification, but do not have an appropriate LLN qualification;
- some teachers are working towards a generic teaching qualification, but do not have an appropriate LLN qualification;
- some teachers have completed some training towards a Cert Ed equivalent, but do not have an appropriate LLN qualification; and
- teachers who hold basic skills teaching qualifications, but do not hold a generic teaching qualification.

The fact that the centres are lacking qualified teachers of literacy and numeracy is significant. Some learners attended the project without ever having contact with a qualified specialist key skills/LLN tutor. This has implications for their programme, for example:

- difficulties in diagnosing specific educational needs and problems of individual learners; and
- difficulties in using and distinguishing between various types of assessments (e.g. screening, initial and diagnostic).

Support for tutors

In general, teachers feel well supported. Interestingly, two teachers in different centres said that if time was available (they are already studying for various qualifications on top of full-time jobs), they would like to develop their LLN training and their skills relating to specific learning difficulties. When they encountered learners unable to spell and so forth, they really did not feel confident about how to help them. Although both of these centres had extra support they could call on, they also wanted to develop expertise in these areas for themselves.

In all cases, staff interviewed had full-time permanent contracts. At one centre, literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills support teachers have short-term contracts but there is usually a shortage of teachers so they rarely feel that their jobs are threatened.

6. Learners

Attitudes to the *front-end delivery model*

Across the centres, the majority of learners are 16- to 18-year-old school leavers. Most of them relate their literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training to their recent school experiences which, for some of them, are associated with various negative factors. They want to acquire new skills to succeed in their chosen occupational areas.

Focus group discussions with learners have indicated that they may feel more motivated if their teachers encourage them towards literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills acquisition by:

- giving them assignments and projects related to their workplaces or occupational careers. Learners indicated that they feel highly motivated if their key skills tasks and assignments appear to be relevant to workplace or other real life settings;
- providing regular feedback; and
- treating them as 'adults' rather than 'children'. Most of the learners associate 'being treated as an adult' with opportunities to take more active involvement in designing their ILPs, having opportunities to provide feedback to teachers or to make suggestions about the *front-end delivery model* structure.

Focus group discussions have shown that the degree of motivation and engagement of learners may also depend on the tutor/learner ratios. In centres where teachers teach relatively small groups of learners (10–15), the motivation and engagement of learners are much higher than in those where one tutor teaches more than 25 learners. Working with smaller groups of learners enables teachers to develop a more individualised approach for each learner and to provide more regular feedback to learners as they progress on their programmes.

All of the focus groups shared the view that if you have to have key skills, it was good to get them out of the way at the beginning of the course via the *front-end delivery model*. The learners have been motivated by the fact that the project provides some of them with the opportunity to undertake their key skills training within one intensive programme, thus enabling them 'to move forward' fairly quickly within their frameworks.

Learners' assessment of their key skills learning was frequently related to their perceptions of relevance and repetition. They responded in a variety of ways on this point and it appeared to be related in some degree to their prior educational experience. For example, AMAs at centre E perceived key skills as mainly a waste of time. Most are recent achievers of C and above GCSEs and thus couldn't see the point of doing initial tests when they had just chosen a course to get away from this type of test. Conversely, low achieving GCSE learners perceived the key skills programmes as a 'second chance' to get up to scratch with what they had missed at school (a notion strongly impressed on them by their tutor). She has introduced key skills with the idea that they would not be judged on their prior achievement. This was a fresh chance for them to improve. This focus group were extremely enthusiastic about key skills which was surprising for a group identified as needing extra help to reach Level 1. The other two focus groups were situated at the middle of the spectrum in terms of

GCSE and equivalent grades and their reflections on key skills reflected their position at this mid-point. They thought that key skills could be relevant and had accepted they had to do them though they were not completely convinced of their relevance and found them a bit 'boring' particularly when they would rather be in the 'salon' or 'yard'.

The learners in all the focus groups had liked the online initial assessment mainly because it was much easier than having to write on paper. One of the low achievers also said that he thought the speech output would be helpful if your reading skills were weak. Learners say that online testing is 'less boring' than paper-based, provides quick results and can be taken at any time. The main disadvantage of online testing stressed by learners included lack of feedback. They say that simply getting their results is not enough – they would have liked to get more detailed feedback that would have explained their main mistakes.

The AMAs at centre E found the ILPs useful in helping them to understand what was expected of them. However, the other focus groups seemed a little vague on what the ILP was, compared to their reviews, appraisals, progress reports and action plans.

The focus group containing the lowest achievers at centre F were convinced that their confidence had improved as the result of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills whereas other centre learners did not think this was the case.

Unusually, the learners at one centre said that they enjoyed literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills because it was 'free afternoons off'. They appreciated sitting in a warm computer room compared with the hard physical graft of working in the yard.

Focus groups indicated that factors that may discourage learners include the following:

- insufficient tutor support. In most cases it happens on account of inadequate resources or staffing problems;
- insufficient employer support as well as their negative attitudes towards key skills training. Cases where employers would not release learners for their key skills sessions contribute to learners' perception of the literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills as unnecessary and needless; and
- financial circumstances. They relate to cases where learners are not being paid for the day they attend their literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

Our research findings suggest that the *front-end delivery model* – used in different ways in the eight centres of the project – has been a successful experience in terms of supporting outcomes with literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills in MAs. The degree of success varies from centre to centre depending on a variety of factors, for example, turnover of staff or problems related to funding and resources. However, all centres emphasised that the *front-end delivery model* has been a highly motivational experience for both teachers and learners, and resulted in a number of positive outcomes, for example, higher retention rates or increased motivation of learners.

In some of the centres, it was clear that the *front-end delivery model* had facilitated a change for the better particularly in the prioritising of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills, leading to the tightening up of organisational aspects. This, in turn, has encouraged good practice such as the carrying out of initial assessments, collecting of proxy qualifications, writing of ILPs much nearer the beginning of the course than in the previous models. The changes are particularly noticeable in centres where provision of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills were previously addressed in the closing stages of the apprenticeship by intensive short programmes. Prioritising of these skills, by including them within the core of the apprenticeship, also highlights their importance to learners.

Our research findings have allowed us to make the following tentative recommendations that are associated with best practice in the context of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills delivery. Future research and dissemination should seek to develop these models and points.

The whole organisation

Learners improve their key skills when the whole organisation believes key skills are an essential underpinning for learning vocational skills and technical knowledge and when organisational arrangements, the use of resources and staff attitudes reflect this sense of equal priority within the framework.

Key skills should be introduced and given status from the beginning of an MA programme – the *front-end delivery model* is an effective way of doing this – and resources should reflect this.

The whole staff of the programme i.e. vocational teachers and assessors as well as specialists, need to work as a team on key skills. This requires time for the team to plan and work together, suitable materials and support and training of vocational teachers.

The teaching group size for key skills should be a maximum of around 16 if teachers are to provide effective individual support and to relate their teaching to the vocational programmes and workplaces of learners.

The learning environment can motivate or demotivate learners. It needs to be of a high quality and quite different from school and from the work environment.

It needs to be acknowledged that even where learners have proxy qualifications when they enter the programmes, it is highly likely that the literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills will require further development for portfolio development and to successfully complete their programmes.

Employers' attitudes to key skills can have a crucial impact on learners' motivation and engagement and on vocational teachers' commitment to key skills. Centres should find ways of actively involving employers by their understanding and helping so that key skills can contribute to skills acquisition and effective work. Employers should support learners' attendance at key skills in the same way they support attendance at other parts of the framework.

Pedagogy

The individual contribution of teachers in terms of the commitment, skills, experience and personal qualities is crucial to the process of successful and efficient delivery of literacy, numeracy and wider key skills. Learning experiences have to be engaging and enjoyable and support the development of learners' self-esteem.

It was noted that the manner in which key skills are introduced appears to be crucial to the attitudes of learners towards them, particularly so amongst previous low achievers.

Our findings indicate that the relevance of the literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills teaching to learners' workplaces is a key point and future research into the significance of differences in contextualising and embedding would be useful.

Teachers' constant promotion of key skills as underpinning the training of the vocational subject had a major impact on learners (again, particularly amongst low-achieving youngsters).

Teachers' constant promotion of key skills as underpinning the learners' future employment/own businesses (not just the training for it as in the point above), had a major impact on learners (again, particularly amongst low-achieving youngsters).

Time must be available for individual feedback both informal and formal to learners.

Teachers

It is important to identify the training requirements of specialist key skills teachers, taking into account their roles and responsibilities within the centres. Most were found on this project to have inadequate qualifications. Funding and/or other types of support must be provided to enable the teachers to take up the available training opportunities.

In most cases, vocational teachers who teach/assess literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills do not have the appropriate qualifications to undertake such responsibilities. Therefore, it is important to ensure and/or develop further collaboration between vocational teachers and key skills specialists within the centres as well as providing appropriate staff development for them.

Assessment and tracking

Learners would prefer their initial assessment materials to relate to their chosen MA.

Teachers identified problems with feeding the BSA online diagnostic assessment into the ILP. This aspect should be developed and/or teachers given further training to more efficiently meet their needs.

One centre is unable to continue to maintain funding for the *front-end delivery model* in its current (assessed) mode so they are having to cut back on morale-boosting 'bite-sized' assessment. They report this as already impacting on the motivation of students, but the current regulations do not allow them to draw further funding for the pre-FMA .

It is important to maintain the efficient tracking system despite the current difficulties encountered by centres in resourcing ILPs. Consideration should be given to how to bridge the gap between current methods, such as action plans, progress reports, reviews and ILPs.

ILPs must be made more accessible and easier to use for learners themselves to facilitate both their current and further progress.

Definitions

There is some confusion created by the alternative terms 'Language, Literacy and Numeracy', '**Skills for Life**' and 'key skills' which may be leading to confusion for some learners with literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills needs. Clarification of the terms (and possibly the practice) could improve the ability for centres to address literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills needs more precisely. The teachers and learners understood the constituent elements as referring to the reality of learners needs, but were confused by the use of different terms.

Appendix 1. Summary case studies

Centre A

FMA/AMA titles

Administration AMA
Child Care FMA
Retail FMA

Number of learners

First *front-end delivery model* ten-week block (September 2003): 43 learners started;
Second *front-end delivery model* ten-week block (November 2003): 10 learners started.

Learners' backgrounds

The majority of the learners are school leavers with GCSE grades ranging from B to G. Some learners came with proxies that exempted them from taking external tests such as AON, Communication or IT (please see appendix 3 for the quantitative data table for data on proxy qualifications).

Front-end provision (ten-week blocks)

Centre A ran two consecutive ten-week *front-end delivery model* programmes in 2003/2004. Running these two programmes within a six-month period enabled the teachers to test and develop further various approaches to facilitate more effective delivery of the literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills. Prior to the introduction of the *front-end delivery model*, literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills were done at the end of the learners' programmes. As noted by the teachers, the *front-end delivery model* provided an opportunity to implement a more effective method of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills delivery within FMA/AMA frameworks. The essential parts of the *front-end delivery model* programmes include the following:

- initial and diagnostic assessment of learners;
- Individual Learning/Training Plans;
- MA Framework Awareness Session;
- paper-based and online tests; and
- use of proxy qualifications.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

At the beginning of the *front-end delivery model* blocks all learners undertake the Genesys test (psychometric computer-based test) to make sure that they are on the right programme. The BSA Initial Assessment (paper-based) is used to identify learners' levels of literacy and numeracy. Depending on the results of their initial assessments the learners undertake either the Key Skills Builder (West Notts) or Target Skills (for those below Level 1) diagnostic assessments. These assessments (computer-based) provide useful information

about learners' needs and requirements. As a part of their initial assessment, all learners also complete a self-assessment.

Portfolio and ongoing assessments

Ongoing assessments include portfolio development as well as formative assessment to ensure that the learner's progress is satisfactory. At this stage the centre is working towards replacing an old ongoing assignment with more individualised ones, designed for each learner. When designing such assignments teachers take into account learners' specific problems, needs and abilities.

Teachers note good progress made by learners with their portfolios within the ten-week programmes. However, the lack of portfolio building after the ten-week programme has been noted and commented on by teachers. A number of factors contribute to this problem, such as: lack of action planning, poorly defined targets and restrictions imposed by employers.

Online external testing

The learners and teachers in this centre support the introduction of online assessment. Online assessment has been described as an effective and efficient method of testing. However, it has been noted that the score report does not provide sufficient feedback as it does not allow the teachers to identify areas where the learner did particularly poor or well.

Individual Learning Plans

ILPs are introduced to the learners from the very beginning. Learners have one-to-one sessions with their teachers where the ILP is constructed and designed. ILPs would include qualifications learners already have, results from the initial assessments, dates of the progress reviews (eight-weekly or 12-weekly reviews at the workplace). In addition, learners take part in designing the ILPs by completing self-assessments at the beginning of the *front-end delivery model*. The ILP has been described as a working document that is being continually developed to reflect the learner's progress and new targets.

Soft outcomes

Helping learners to develop their confidence and self-assurance is considered to be of importance within the *front-end delivery model* programme. Activities such as making presentations and working in teams have been found to help learners to develop such soft outcomes. In addition, it has been noted that learning about *Equal Opportunities* or *Health and Safety* facilitates their confidence at their workplace.

Lessons from the *front-end delivery model* experience: early planning for next year, early achievements

Undertaking the two consecutive *front-end delivery model* programmes enabled the centre to learn from the experience of the first programme with the purpose of improving the delivery of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills within successive programmes. The quantitative data suggest that the retention rate is much higher within the second programme [first programme – 53 per cent (23 out of 43), second programme – 70 per cent

(seven out of ten)]. Within the second programme, three learners had proxies for Communication and seven learners had proxies for AON, whereas in the first programme only one learner had proxies for Communication, AON and IT. The progress measured by external testing showed higher achievements within the second cohort: eight external tests were taken and five were passed (success rate – 62 per cent). Within the first group 23 tests were taken and ten were passed (success rate – 43 per cent). As portfolio development is still in progress for both cohorts it is too early to comment on learners' progress as measured by portfolio development at this stage. However, as teachers indicate, the second group is more advanced with their portfolios compared with the first cohort.

Drawing on lessons and experiences from these two programmes, the centre made the following conclusions and recommendations:

- the centre emphasised the great importance of ensuring employers' support for learners' literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training. Problems that stemmed from employers' unsupportive attitudes resulted in cases of poor attendance and dropping out. In addition, it affected learners' progress with their portfolios as well as their preparation for the external tests. To overcome this problem the centre is trying to develop a scheme of more active employer involvement by encouraging the employers to contribute to assignment development;
- the centre emphasised the important role that is being played by the tutor to motivate learners. The success of the *front-end delivery model* has been ascribed to the commitment and enthusiasm of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills teachers;
- the centre stressed the importance of using as much evidence from the workplace as possible; and
- teachers should be encouraged to attend a wide range training courses.

Centre B

FMA/AMA titles

Hairdressing FMA
Light Vehicle Technician FMA

Learners' backgrounds

The majority are 16-year-old school leavers with GCSE results ranging from B to E (see appendix two for data on proxy qualifications).

Front-end delivery model provision

The implementation, aims and outcomes of the *front-end delivery model* approaches, as described by the staff, have been largely related to raising awareness of the literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills needs of the learners within the MA framework. Within this particular centre there has been great emphasis on involving vocational teachers in key skills teaching. A number of vocational teachers undertook literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training organised by the Key Skills Support Programmes and by the awarding bodies to update and develop their expertise.

To ensure intensive delivery of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills, the following activities have been integrated within *front-end delivery model* provision:

- initial and diagnostic assessment of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills;
- production of ILPs, preparation of learners for creating their portfolio; and
- development literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills during an extended period of intensive training of six weeks' duration.* The time allocated for basic/key skills development is one hour per week.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

At the beginning of their literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training all learners undertake the initial assessment and diagnostic assessment (West Notts Basic Key Skills Builder (BKSB)). The initial assessment (BKSB, part I) is used to identify the learner's levels for both Communication and AON. In addition, the initial assessment gives an indication of specific learning needs (e.g. if a student is likely to be dyslexic). The initial assessment is followed up by a more detailed diagnostic assessment (West Notts BKSB, part II), which tests Communication and AON at levels identified by the initial assessment for every student. The initial assessments indicated that the majority of the learners undertaking the FMA in Hairdressing and FMA in Light Vehicle Technician this year are operating at Level 1 for both Communication and AON.

Portfolio and ongoing assessments

Ongoing assessment is represented by a series of assignments developed internally by a key skills tutor. For hairdressing an assignment has been developed for their portfolios that is based on costing out some hairdressing products, which covers AON. For Communication they produce work from the NVQ in Hairdressing; within this assignment they have to do client consultations, presentations about some hairdressing products, etc. For Light Vehicle Technician learners a key skills specialist has developed a generic assignment that covers AON, Communication and IT. These assignments allow learners to work in class at their own pace. This is originally a paper-based assignment; however, learners have to use computers while completing these assignments. Feedback is given to learners by their key skills tutor every time they attend class. Creating, maintaining and developing a portfolio combines the collaborative efforts of a learner, an assessor (literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills tutor) and an internal verifier (vocational tutor).

Online testing

In hairdressing, of the 60 learners, 57 have a proxy qualification for communication Level 1. The other three took the online test for communication, but only one passed (see appendix two).

Individual Learning Plans

The diagnostic assessment assists in identifying learners needs, weaknesses and requirements in relation to literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills which helps in

*The period of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training has been extended beyond six weeks owing to the learners' needs to continue with their ongoing literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training.

constructing and developing their ILPs. Interviews with teachers indicated that they find the results of the initial/diagnostic assessments to be particularly helpful as they give 'ideas about additional help learners might need'. The ILP is used to set goals and targets and define what a learner needs to complete in order to achieve qualifications, etc.

Soft outcomes

It has been found that literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training has contributed to developing learners' 'soft outcomes', such as confidence and self-assurance. In hairdressing, teachers note that undertaking assignments such as making presentations and client consultations boosted learners' confidence, as they had an opportunity to deploy and develop their communication skills. Some learners admitted that initially they felt shy about presenting in front of other people, but with teachers' support and their own efforts they managed to overcome this.

Lessons from the *front-end delivery model* experience: early planning for next year

Our interviews indicated that teachers generally agree that this was a very useful experience that provided them with an opportunity to think ahead in order to improve and re-structure (where needed) *front-end delivery model* provision for next year. In particular, the following changes are planned introduction next year:

- to carry out the initial and diagnostic assessment prior to learners' commencement of their literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills training. This would ensure that any support for learners can be in place at the very beginning of their programmes;
- to introduce more literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills facilities through organising early evening key skills workshops. It is planned that some learners will be directed to such workshops to get additional support and help with their portfolios; and
- the other issue to be addressed is that of better and more efficient use of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills specialist support.

Early achievements

The *front-end delivery model* has been a successful experience in terms of raising awareness and recognising key skills as an important part of the framework. However, various problems (see next section) affected and slowed down the pace of the programme in spite of staff efforts and commitment. At the time of writing this report (January 2004) portfolios were still in production, however, much further forward this year compared with last year.

Specific problems affecting the *front-end delivery model* of Key skills and LLN delivery

- Staff changes.
- Staff leaves.
- Issues of insufficient funding and resources.

Centre C

FMA/AMA titles

Administration FMA
Child Care FMA

Number of learners

Three learners (all female). Initially 15 learners were selected but for various reasons the majority of them decided not to take the course.

Learners' backgrounds

Two of the learners are school leavers with GCSE results ranging from C to G. One learner is 18 years old with the same GCSE grades.

Front-end delivery model provision

The centre has already had around two years of experience of 'up-front' literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills provision within MA programmes (up to now, within nine frameworks, literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills were offered at the beginning). The centre is committed to offering literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills in a *front-end delivery module* as they firmly believe that it contributes to the learners' positive outcomes and facilitates as well as speeds up the completion of their frameworks. The essential parts of the *front-end delivery model* programmes include the following:

- initial and diagnostic assessment of learners;
- Individual Learning/Training Plans;
- underpinning of literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills;
- formative assessment;
- preparation for portfolio- and test-based assessments; and
- online methods of assessment.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

Learners were identified for the project following interviews that were conducted at schools at the end of the school year. At the very beginning of their programmes the learners' levels in AON and Communication is identified with the assistance of the Genesys Assessment, which is followed by BSA Diagnostic Assessment. As a part of their initial assessment the learners also have to take the Occupational Assessment (paper-based). The purpose of this assessment is to identify what the learners know within their chosen occupational areas.

Portfolio and ongoing assessments

Ongoing assessments include portfolio development as well as formative assessment with a second diagnostic. For their portfolios the learners undertake a number of projects and assignments with the support of the occupational expert and the basic skills expert. The learners are offered a selection of projects to choose from. The projects are developed in

such a way, that not only do they give learners the opportunity to demonstrate their literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills, but also are related to their occupational areas. Formative assessment involves continuous assessment of learners. The purposes of the continuous assessment are as follows:

- to ensure that the learner's progress is satisfactory;
- to set new targets and objectives; and
- to give the learners detailed feedback on their achievements.

Each week the learners are given the 'Skills Builders' test which enables training officers to meet these goals.

Online testing

Online testing became possible when the Awarding Body offered the centre the opportunity to take part in a continued Pilot. The centre identified many benefits associated with online testing such as timing, response for results and quicker feedback. Another positive feature is that, in contrast to paper-based assessment, the learners perceive online testing as being different from their school experiences and therefore, this facilitates their motivation. The learners took AON Level 1 and Communication Level 1 online.

Individual Learning Plans

ILPs are introduced to the learners on their induction day. The important feature of the ILPs is that they are adapted and tailored to specific learners' needs and specific requirements. ILPs include detailed information on what kinds of assessments learners have had and provide basic information about learners' backgrounds and experiences. The assessment results provide basic information about learners' specific problems and areas to be addressed. On the basis of this information ILPs describe what the learner is/should be working towards. ILPs are maintained and amended as learners' progress with their tasks and assignments.

Soft outcomes

It has been noted by the teachers that the learners' soft outcomes are being gradually developed as they progress on their FE programmes. The development of confidence and self-assurance are considered to be important in this respect. Because of the specific circumstances (see above) only three learners are currently undergoing this programme. Owing to the limited number of learners many of the literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills sessions are conducted as one-to-one tutorials. The teachers argue that such conditions are favourable for facilitating both soft and hard outcomes of the learners.

Lessons from the *front-end delivery model* experience: early planning for next year

Our interviews indicated that teachers generally agree that this was a very useful experience that provided them with an opportunity to think ahead in order to improve and re-structure (where needed) the *front-end delivery model* provision for next year. The important objectives are as follows:

- to continue with online testing as there is obvious benefit associated with this;

- to facilitate more active involvement of employers; and
- to provide more intensive training for the teachers.

Early achievements (see appendix 3 for the quantitative data table)

Two learners who took their AON Level 1 and Communication Level 1 were successful. One learner failed her tests. The learners made good progress with their portfolios, which are nearly completed.

Because of the small number of learners who are engaging in the *front-end delivery model* (only three learners) it is difficult to compare their results and achievements with previous cohorts.

Specific problems affecting the *front-end delivery model* of key skills and LLN delivery

The major problem is related to the insufficient number of learners as 15 learners were initially expected to take part in this programme.

The specific problem (dyslexia) of one of the learners slowed down her progress. The centre stressed the importance of a more efficient collaboration with the dyslexic specialist.

Centre D

Front-end delivery model provision

Centre D runs a four-day residential course based at the Skills for Fun centre in a holiday resort. This new programme combines the joint efforts of two colleges of further education, Outward Bound Organisation and the holiday resort staff. The main objective of the course is to develop learners' literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills. The programme also provides opportunities for learners to gain experience of being away from home and to expand their social skills. The programme combines both classroom and outdoor Outward Bound-led activities. Within this programme learners take external tests in Communication and AON. The centre so far has run two programmes in 2003/2004.

FMA's

First programme (September 2003)

Plumbing
Electrical
Construction/Building
Administration
Hairdressing
Beauty
Catering

Second programme (February 2004)

Catering
Plumbing
Electrical
Carpentry
Early Years
Administration
Motor Vehicle

Number of learners

First programme (September 2003): 12 learners;

Second programme (February 2004): 15 learners started, three of whom dropped out on the third day of the programme.

Learners' backgrounds

Learners are mainly school leavers with low GCSE grades. As a rule, the programme is aimed at learners who do not hold proxies in Communication, AON or IT.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

All learners complete initial and diagnostic assessments prior to attending the four-day programme. The results from these assessments provide primary information about the levels of their literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills. On the first day of their course learners undertake mock tests in Communication and AON to familiarise themselves with the tests and to assess their own performance.

The course structure and training

The course includes the following activities to facilitate literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills development:

- introduction, where learners are given an overview of the course, the objectives and targets;
- ice-breaker tasks, where learners are given initial tasks and assignments to facilitate teamwork activities;
- work on ILPs (see below);
- completing daily review sheets;
- outward bound-led activities that include a variety of outdoor exercises that aim to develop skills such as working with others, problem solving, improving learning and performance;
- classroom work that involves intensive training in Communication and AON; and
- presentations where learners are encouraged to talk about the programme, what they learnt and achieved and how this could be relevant to their occupational areas.

Online external testing

Both learners and teachers stressed the benefits of online testing. There were a few technical problems with online testing during the first programme. In the second programme all learners took their tests online.

Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

On the first day of the programme learners start completing their ILPs with the help of their teachers. The detailed plan includes information from the initial and diagnostic assessments as well as mock test results, and sets targets and objectives for each learner. Learners are also provided with daily review sheets where they are asked to write down the following:

- what they had learnt today; and
- what areas they still need to work on.

Soft outcomes

Teachers record huge success in developing learners' soft outcomes such as confidence and self-assurance. Outdoor outward bound-led activities play an important part in developing

such soft outcomes. Learners maintain that deploying their skills in 'real-life' tasks and assignments (for example, beach rescue exercise) makes them feel more confident.

Teachers note that they received very positive feedback from employers who commented on learners' increased confidence after they came back from the first programme.

Lessons from the *front-end delivery model* experience: early planning for next programme, early achievements

External testing results provide quantitative measures of the success of this programme. The first programme's success rate was 79 per cent (19 tests taken, 15 passed). The second programme's test results record an even higher success rate – 81 per cent (21 tests taken, 17 passed). These figures indicate the stable success of this intensive literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills delivery *front-end delivery model* programme.

Lessons from the first programme have been taken into account in constructing and delivering the second programme in order to make the *front-end delivery model* more effective and beneficial for learners. During the second programme the external tests in Communication and AON have been scheduled right after the relevant revision sessions. Learners' achievements in literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills have been emphasised more throughout the programme as it has been noted that this contributes to developing learners' soft outcomes.

Centre E

FMA/AMA titles

AMA in Heating and Ventilation

Learners' backgrounds

Centre E mainly accepts learners with a minimum of GCSE (C and above) in Mathematics, English and Sciences who can go straight to Level 2. The previous cohort included three learners with dyslexia compared with none within the present cohort. Mainly school leavers plus some with A-levels and some with work experience.

***Front-end delivery model* provision**

At centre E, the introduction of the *front-end delivery model* has been the focus on and development of key skills at a point much earlier to the beginning of the AMA course (all learners are registered straight onto the AMA). Whilst, it has not been possible to introduce key skills at the point of entry to the course in August (due to safety training and the company's requirements that they work 'on site'), their key skills are underway by November with four hours of key skills over 16 weeks being built into their programmes. The *front-end delivery model* has also represented the 'tightening up' of procedures allowing for better organisation. This has enabled clearer progression from the start of the course (initial assessment, checking of proxies, streaming and registering for tests where needed) to a position where most learners are on target to complete their key skills in May 2004.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

To a degree, diagnostic assessment appears to take place at the interview stage carried out by an external recruitment agency. The agency uses their own ability testing materials.

Initial testing is carried out at the centre using the **Skills for Life** CD-Rom. This has recently been used to replace Key Skills Builder. The teachers reported the new package to be 'excellent' and are finding it particularly useful for feeding into the ILP.

Individual Learning Plans – review of progress

Print out from **Skills for Life** CD-Rom really helpful, diagnoses what needs addressing. The tutor has changed the learning plan to match the information derived from it. He builds in what's identified as needing further support and has found it really helpful. This centre used to have an action plan for key skills and one for the NVQ but now have an ILP for each target date, December, March and so on.

In general, this centre finds the ILP useful to focus training, identify what training is needed particularly if there is a need for extra support, get the learner to agree to it. Learners are reviewed at least four times a year. Minimum of 12 reviews.

Online testing

This centre have not yet moved to online assessment. They will consider this when they have moved to their new larger building complete with computer suite.

Early achievements

- Retention: has remained at the same very high level (previous cohort 96.3 per cent, this cohort 100 per cent).
- Progress measured by external testing: awaiting results.
- Progress measured by portfolio submission: 'excellent start'.
- Soft outcomes: at the 12 weekly reviews, attendance, conduct, working relationships, timekeeping, quality of work, initiative and attitudes are reported on and discussed with the learner. The learner also adds their comments such as 'feel more confident', etc. No noticeable change from the introduction of the *front-end delivery model*.

Centre F

FMA/AMA titles

FMA/AMA in Bricklaying, Carpentry FMA (with pre-FMA programme of 14 weeks)

Learners' backgrounds

For the pre-FMA course, 82 per cent of learners exempted by GCSE proxies. 12 were statemented compared with two in the last cohort. Mostly didn't do well at school, small no. of A – C grades (maybe six out of 70), rest D – Gs, mostly Es and Fs. Probably got ten who will need the external tests. Quite poor, low academic achievements and didn't like school.

Front-end delivery model provision

At centre F, the *front-end delivery model* has been introduced within the 14 week pre-FMA course. Usual provision is half a day per week with learners being allocated further support with key skills as needed. The first pilot group have passed through initial assessment to streaming by week four and given short term (bitesized) assessments to track progress and improve motivation.

Practitioners are now engaged in a further pilot (mid-November intake) providing the same level of KS training but without key skills assessment. This is to trial the different schemes so that all three cohorts can be compared: 1) prior to *front-end delivery model*; 2) *front-end delivery model* with assessment; and 3) *front-end delivery model* without assessment. Also, the team are currently engaged in key skills training for cohort 1) who have re-entered the centre. Their key skills needs must be addressed now, in accordance with the previous model of assessment being left until the end of the course.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

BSA online version plus paper-based assessment given at interview in 2003. From 2004, one computerised assessment will be done at the interview stage to remove need for initial assessment when they start the course.

BSA initial online assessment gave a detailed assessment but which didn't appear to feed into the ILP. The tutor had to go through by hand assessing the areas needing further support. So whatever assessment you've set up for the learner in the outset and whether they got them right or wrong, all of those tasks would appear on the ILP. The tutors had to print out the assessment form, look through what they've done, go through the ILP crossing out where it says, skills appeared to be sound in this area. Tutor is hoping they can get this sorted.

The learners liked it, preferred it because it was different and because it was not paper based (which they hated).

Individual Learning Plans – review of progress

Tutor very keen on ILPs particularly when combined with the assessor report (see above). Each learner has an individual ILP.

Online testing

They're finding online testing much more efficient. They register the learners online up to 24 hours in advance, download the test to the computer, (is locked by password), unlocked on day of test, networked so learner can sit test at any pc, download to C & G, get result instantly, marks it immediately, can tell them their result. Accredited in about ten days. In max of 48 hours they can have a test and the results. Much less of security risk, can't get lost in the post, no waiting for results, etc.

Early achievements

- Retention: sharp improvement: increased from 57 per cent to 96 per cent at this point in the course.

- Specific learning difficulties: stated learners have increased from 2 to 12, this is the result of the key skills tutor's confidence to support them impacting on the recruitment process.
- Progress measured by external testing: this is impossible to measure at this point, due the previous model of leaving key skills to the end of the programme, the learners in the earlier cohort are yet to be assessed. 9 per cent of the current cohort have been externally assessed and have passed.
- Progress measured by portfolio submission: again, it was reported that this is too early a point to compare. Portfolio submission by pre-FMA learners is not compulsory.
- Soft outcomes: monitored this for a range of reasons, one was nominating tutor for C & G medal of excellence. They gathered an A4 sheet of paper from each learner asking how this particular tutor is helping them. What shows through is the confidence they have gained themselves. Review at seven/eight week stage includes key skills progress and there is discussion formally of feelings of confidence and so on.

AMAs – data not supplied to present cohort have not begun key skills yet. (see appendix 2 for further details).

Centre G

FMA/AMA titles

FMA in Racehorse Care (standard nine week residential group)
 FMA in Racehorse Care (exceptional employer referrals seven – ten days)
 AMA in Racehorse Care and Management

Learners' backgrounds

FMA in Racehorse Care (standard nine week residential group)
 FMA in Racehorse Care (exceptional employer referrals seven – ten days)
 AMA in Racehorse Care and Management

For the FMAs (standard nine week residential group) , they don't aim for full sets of proxies. Rough level of entry based on experience with racehorses, take lots of people from pony club but without racehorse experience. Not people who have excelled at school. Scraped enough at GCSEs not to have to sit external assessments. Not particularly interested in academic achievement.

EERs usually been with horses all their lives, neglected school, have low academic achievement results, now staying on for exams.

For the AMAs, they often don't have minimum criteria of five GCSEs of A – C as many centres do as they believe that there are many people capable of NVQ 3 in Racehorse Care, in responsible jobs, have worked with horses all their lives but cannot do Level 2 AON however many resources are pumped into them.

Front-end delivery model provision

Centre G has always been committed to achieving key skills at the *front-end delivery model*

of the FMA. The course begins with a nine week full-time, residential, pre-employment training course (PET) at the centre. The organisation of the course is being tightened up to include initial and diagnostic assessment at the interview stage. This will enable learners with basic skills needs or specific learning difficulties to be flagged up at an earlier stage (previously it emerged during portfolio preparation which started around week four).

The *front-end delivery model* has also changed provision for the exceptional employer referrals (EERs). These are learners with extensive horse care experience who previously gained their NVQ solely within the work place. In April 2003, a residential component was introduced where they spend seven – ten days at the school at the beginning of their programmes, up to seven days are taken up with preparation of the portfolio with up to a further three days if they need to sit external exams. Previously, it was very difficult to collect their proxies but the school have made it compulsory to provide GCSE (or equivalent) results before they are admitted.

The AMA route has also been redesigned. As with the EERs, the main part of the training is on-the-job working for a racehorse trainer where learners have little free time. Resources have been increased in the last year to give more support to AMAs in the work place and review of the entire programme. The Modern Apprenticeships Literacy, Numeracy, Application of Number and Communication (MALNAC) project has assisted in developing assignments which are far more relevant in combining NVQ and Technical Certificate work which can be completed more easily in the work place. Key skills will now be introduced at the start of the AMA rather than tagged on at the end – the previous model. It is possible that a week long residential course may be introduced at a later stage. In future, the employer and the learner will sign a contract with the school spelling out what is required of them.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

Initial assessment takes place at the interview stage where a one-to-one interview is held, written application form, asked to produce their record of achievement and GCSE results. If they think they have specific learning difficulties or basic skills needs, a further test is required. This method is ensuring that issues are being identified much earlier whereas they were previously only recognised during the preparation of the portfolio.

Individual Learning Plans – review of progress

This centre has ILPs to identify extra support learners may need.

Online testing

This centre has not yet moved to online assessment.

Early achievements

Centre G (FMA) standard nine week residential group

- Retention: this has increased from 82.4 per cent to 88.2 per cent but this could be due to comparing an earlier stage in the course of the present (*front-end delivery model*) cohort to the end of the previous course.
- Progress measured by external testing: two failures in present (*front-end delivery model*) cohort compared with one in previous year.

- Progress measured by portfolio submission: compared with this point on the course, there is a slight decrease of one in the *front-end delivery model* cohort compared with the previous cohort.

Centre G (FMA) exceptional employer referrals

- Retention: previous cohort, 100 per cent completed the course (attendance not required at the centre) but six achieved nothing. Current (*front-end delivery model*) cohort, on target for 100 per cent Framework.
- Progress measured by external testing: one out of 17 took the tests last year compared with zero needing them in the current cohort.
- Progress measured by portfolio submission: too early to draw conclusions, but present cohort on target for 100 per cent framework completion.
- The complexity of the data on the previous cohort (non-residential within the centre) makes it very difficult to compare the cohorts.

Centre G: (AMA) (see appendix 2 for explanation and pass rates)

- Soft outcomes: they think confidence is enormously important, they mention it on all end of course reports. Continuous reports would also mention it. One of the teachers commented that it is particularly important for those learners who've not done so well at school, perhaps they've been the 'thick kid at the back', by nurturing confidence and particularly because they find they can do something well like ride a horse, 'you can make a totally different person at the end of nine weeks, it never fails to astonish me'.

Centre H

FMA/AMA titles

FMA in Painting and Decorating

FMA/AMA in Hairdressing

FMA in Carpentry (part of the project but this department not visited by project team)

FMA in Plumbing (not part of the project)

Learners' backgrounds

The hairdressing learners mainly have their proxies (GCSEs). They're usually school leavers with low – mid academic achievement.

Front-end provision

The move towards the *front-end delivery model* has been supported by the MALNAC project though, as a natural progression, it was being established prior to the project. In this centre, key skills have been introduced early in the first year of the painting and decorating full-time pre-FMA programme. Key skills are offered as discrete sessions because previous attempts to track them whilst embedded through the NVQ were impractical due to the high numbers of learners. For the hairdressing FMA, key skills are delivered alongside the NVQ with discrete delivery and integrated assignments. For carpentry, key skills are delivered one day a week through contextualised assignments (the carpentry department not visited by project

team). Whilst the move to *front-end delivery model* was already underway, the project provided resources which have enabled:

- time for assessors to meet and share issues;
- time for planning;
- regular meetings with those involved with MAs;
- useful staff development by external experts; and
- esteem building through involvement in a national project' (Programme Manager).

Within this centre, for both the FMA and AMA changes have taken the form of a gradual tightening up of key skills' organisation and the priority given to them. As the course has evolved into a *front-end delivery model* over several years, not as the result of the project, it's inappropriate to claim any changes above, are as the direct result of the *front-end delivery model*. However, it may be established high success rates are the result of the *front-end delivery model*.

Initial and diagnostic assessment

For all FMAs, key skills department administer Skills for Life Strategy Unit (SfLSU), formally known as Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit (ABSSU) version two which is a screen plus paper-based test. Teachers reported that learners respond well to this in terms of liking the screen version.

Individual Learning Plans – review of progress

Some reservations due to shortage of time and good examples. Are involved in Action Research Project with LSDA about target setting. Key skills tutor believes that they should be looking for an assessment plan rather than an ILP. This is because it's for the whole group. He also argues that he cannot see the advantages of an ILP above that of a good tutorial.

Online testing

Not yet available at this centre but due to be launched soon.

Early achievements

Centre H (AMA)

- Retention: the previous cohort achieved 85 per cent over the whole course compared with 100 per cent since September 2003 (four-five months).
- Soft outcomes: painting and decorating learners are responding well to log books they've developed through the additional support mechanism.

Appendix 2.

Retention and achievement notes

Retention and achievement rates

- 1 The quantitative data provided by the centres allowed only tentative conclusions to be drawn regarding current year *front-end delivery model* learners' retention and achievement rates in comparison with previous cohorts. The following factors do not allow us to make any definite conclusions and, as well, they make analysis of the quantitative data difficult:
 - not all of the *front-end delivery model* learners have taken all of their external exams. Some are planning to take exams later this year. This factor makes it difficult to comment on pass rates in comparison with previous groups;
 - within some centres, the cohort prior to the *front-end delivery model* have not yet undertaken Key skills training and/or assessment in line with previous models; and
 - the majority of the *front-end delivery model* learners are still in the process of completing their portfolios (either Communication or AON).

Centres A–D: analysis of quantitative data

- 2 Comparable data from the previous cohorts not undergoing the *front-end delivery model* cannot be presented for all centres. For example, for centre A, difficulties have arisen in comparing the achievements of learners in the current year with those of the previous year because of the flexible start dates. For example, in the period from August 2001 to September 2002:
 - 28 learners started but the majority have not yet completed their programmes;
 - 11 frameworks have been achieved but these learners did not start in the same year; and
 - 31 learners dropped out, some of who may have started up to 15 months prior to their dropping out.

Centre A ran two consecutive ten-week *front-end delivery model* programmes in 2003/2004 which enables us to compare learners' achievements between two ***front-end delivery model*** cohorts in this centre. The quantitative data suggest that the **retention rate** is much higher within the second *front-end delivery model* programme [first programme – 53 per cent (23 out of 43), second programme – 70 per cent (seven out of ten)]. Within the second programme, three learners had proxies for Communication and seven learners had proxies for AON, whereas in the first programme only one learner had proxies for Communication, AON and IT. The progress measured by external testing showed higher achievements within the second cohort: eight external tests were taken and five were passed (success rate – 62 per cent). Within the first group 23 tests were taken and ten were passed (success rate – 43 per cent). As portfolio development is still in progress for both cohorts it is too early to comment on learners' progress as measured by portfolio development at this stage. However, as teachers indicate, the second group is more advanced with their portfolios compared with the first cohort.

- 3** Comparable data from the previous cohorts not undergoing the *front-end delivery model* cannot be presented for centre D. Centre D's *front-end delivery model* programme is a new initiative of several partners started in September 2003. Centre D's learners were selected from two separate colleges and they undertake up to seven different FMAs. For this reason, it was not possible for the centre to provide data regarding previous cohorts' achievements, as there is no predecessor cohort for these learners. However, centre D run two *front-end delivery model* programmes in 2003/04 which enables us to compare learners' achievements between two *front-end delivery model* cohorts in this centre. External testing results provide quantitative measures of the success of this programme. The first *front-end delivery model* programme's success rate was 79 per cent (19 tests taken, 15 passed). The second programme's test results record an even higher success rate – 81 per cent (21 tests taken, 17 passed). These figures indicate the stable success of this intensive literacy, numeracy and the wider key skills delivery *front-end delivery model* programme.
- 4** The quantitative data provided by other centres suggest that the retention rates of the current groups undergoing the *front-end delivery model* are satisfactory (see appendix 2). The quantitative data from centre B suggest that the retention rate is higher within the current front-end's delivery model cohorts than in the predecessors to the *front-end delivery model* (e.g. front-end's delivery model cohort (hairdressing) – 92 per cent, previous cohort – 61 per cent, see appendix two for further details). However, there are factors that make it difficult to compare retention rates as well as achievements of the learners undergoing the *front-end delivery model* with those of the previous groups. For example, in centre C only two learners started the *front-end delivery model* training (FMA in Child Care) this year. Last year 28 learners started the FMA in Child Care of whom only eight stayed to the end of the *front-end delivery model*. Such great differences in the number of learners who started their FMAs in two consecutive years make it difficult to compare retention and pass rates of the two cohorts.

Centres E–H: analysis of quantitative data

- 5** As detailed above, straight-forward comparisons of the previous cohort with the present front-ended delivery model cohort are problematic and often, meaningless. However, at the mid-February 2004 point, the digest of data by centre provides the following:
- 6** Centre E (AMA)
- Retention: has remained at the same very high level (previous cohort 96.3 per cent, this cohort 100 per cent).
 - Proxies: mainly GCSEs are accepted (the numbers of proxies for the current and previous cohorts are very similar).
 - Specific learning difficulties: the previous cohort included three learners with dyslexia compared with none within the present cohort.
 - Progress measured by portfolio submission: 'excellent start' reported by centre staff.
- 7** Centre F (pre-FMA)
- Retention: sharp improvement: increased from 57 per cent to 96 per cent at this point in the course.
 - Proxies: GCSE proxies, no differences between the cohorts.

- Specific learning difficulties: stated learners have increased from two to 12, this is the result of the literacy, numeracy and wider key skills teachers' confidence to support them impacting on the recruitment process.
- Progress measured by external testing. A comparison with the previous cohorts is impossible at this point, due the previous model of leaving key skills to the end of the programme, the learners in the earlier cohort are yet to be assessed.
- 9 per cent of the current cohort have been externally assessed and have passed.
- Progress measured by portfolio submission: again, it was reported that this is too early a point to compare. Portfolio submission by pre-FMA learners is not compulsory.
- AMAs – data not supplied as present cohort have not begun key skills yet.

8 Centre G (FMA) standard nine week residential group

- Retention: this has increased from 82.4 per cent to 88.2 per cent but this could be due to comparing an earlier stage in the course of the present (*front-end delivery model*) cohort to the end of the previous course.
- Proxies: less proxies in the current (*front-end delivery model*) cohort than the previous cohort (13 down to nine both AON and Communication).
- Specific learning difficulties: an increase of one (zero to one) from previous to current cohorts.
- Progress measured by external testing: two failures in present (*front-end delivery model*) cohort compared with one in previous year.
- Progress measured by portfolio submission: compared with this point on the course, there is a slight decrease of one in the *front-end delivery model* cohort compared with the previous cohort.

9 Centre G (FMA) exceptional employer referrals

- Retention: previous cohort, 100 per cent completed the course. (attendance not required at the centre) but six achieved nothing. Current (*front-end delivery model*) cohort, on target for 100 per cent Framework.
- Proxies: the number of learners with proxies has doubled in the present intake.
- Specific learning difficulties: remained at zero.
- Progress measured by external testing: one out of 17 took the tests last year compared with zero needing them in the current cohort.
- Progress measured by portfolio submission: too early to draw conclusions, but present cohort on target for 100 per cent framework completion.

The complexity of the data on the previous cohort (non-residential at the centre) makes it very difficult to compare the two cohorts.

10 Centre H (FMA)*

- Retention: the previous cohort achieved 74 per cent over the whole course compared with 97 per cent since September 2003 (four/five months).
- Proxies: proxies remain the same.
- Specific learning difficulties: zero both cohorts.
- Progress measured by external testing: information not yet available.
- Progress measured by portfolio submission: information not yet available.

11 Centre H (AMA)*

- Retention: the previous cohort achieved 85 per cent over the whole course compared with 100 per cent since September 2003 (four/five months).
- Proxies: proxies remain the same, they nearly all have them (GCSEs).
- Specific learning difficulties: zero both cohorts.
- Progress measured by external testing: information not yet available.
- Progress measured by portfolio submission: information not yet available.

Within this centre, for both the FMA and AMA changes have taken the form of a gradual tightening up of key skills' organisation and the priority given to them. As the course has evolved a *front-end delivery model* over several years, not as the result of the project, it's inappropriate to claim any changes above, are as the direct result of the *front-end delivery model*. However, it may be that established high success rates are the result of the *front-end delivery model*. The only safe conclusion that can be drawn is that retention is better than in the predecessors to the *front-end delivery model*. The quantitative data should be revisited after May when retention and completion of portfolio and exam results would hopefully be clearer.

Portfolio development

- 12 Once again, we can only make tentative conclusions regarding the progress on portfolio development when comparing the progress of the current cohort undertaking the *front-end delivery model* with previous cohorts. The learners undertaking the *front-end delivery model* are still in the process of either completing or starting their key skills portfolios. There are some quantitative measures indicating that the group currently undergoing the *front-end delivery model* are more advanced with their portfolio development. Centre B indicates, for example, that 25 per cent of the current *front-end delivery model* cohort (59 learners, FMA in Hairdressing) have yet completed their communication portfolios. The data from the previous year indicate that none of the 35 learners has completed the Communication portfolio. Similarly, one-third of the current *front-end delivery model* cohort (17 learners, FMA Light Vehicle Technician) had completed their communication portfolios. The centre reported that the previous cohort has made no progress at the same point in developing their Communication portfolios. The data provided by centre C also suggests that the learners (FMA Administration, FMA Child Care) are making better progress with their portfolio in comparison with the previous cohort. Centre A reports that five (out of 23) learners have already completed their portfolios (communication or AON); the rest of the learners are making good progress with their portfolios; centre E reports that learners have made an 'excellent start'; centre F (pre-FMA) have not started portfolios yet; in centre G, there appears to be a decrease of one in terms of portfolio submission at this point for those learners who have attended the standard nine week course. Within the exceptional employer referrals, it is too early to draw conclusions; for centre H, information is not yet available.

Appendix 3. Quantitative data

Centre A: FMA/AMA title: FMA Retail, FMA Health Care, AMA Administration			
Date: February 2004			
	Key skills with level	NVQs with level	
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?	FMA Retail: AON 1, COMMS1, WW02, JOLP2; AMA Administration: AON2, IT3, COMMS 3	Retail NVQ Level 2; Health Care Level 2, Level 3; Administration Level 2, Level 3.	
Comparison with previous cohorts			
	Previous front-end cohort	Current front-end cohort	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	September, 2003	November, 2003	
How many learners started?	43	10	
	<i>Completed to the end of the course?</i>	<i>Still on the course at this point?</i>	
No. of learners?	23	7	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	1	7	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication.	GCSE grades	GCSE grades	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	1	3	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON.	GCSE grades	GCSE grades	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for IT?	1	2	
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the two cohorts compare at this point in the course?	Success rate 43% (23 tests taken, 10 passed)	Success rate 62% (8 tests taken, 5 passed)	
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the two cohorts compare at this point in the course?	5 portfolios completed	In progress	
How do retention rates compare between the two cohorts at this point in the course?	53%	70%	

Centre B: FMA/AMA title: FMA in Hairdressing

Date: December 2003

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?	Application of number Level 1, Communication Level 1	Hairdressing NVQ 2

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous cohort	Current cohort not undergoing the front-end (where this exists)	Current cohort (or 1st group to engage in front-end)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	15 September and 24 October, 2002	N/A	15 September and 24 October	
How many learners started?	57		64	
No. of learners?	Completed to the end of the course?	Still on the course at this point?	Still on the course at this point?	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	35		59	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication.	28 GCSE grades		50 GCSE grades	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	21		52	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	GCSE grades		GCSE grades	
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the two cohorts compare at this point in the course?	None taken		4 have sat a test, 1 has passed	
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the two cohorts compare at this point in the course?	Communication portfolio started but not finished		25% of cohort have completed communication portfolio; most of the rest have almost completed, AON not started yet.	
How do retention rates compare between the two cohorts at this point in the course?	61%		92%	

Centre B: FMA/AMA title: Light Vehicle Technician FMA IMI

Date: 22nd December 2003

Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Application of number Level 1, Communication Level 1 IT Level 1	Light Vehicle Technician NVQ 2

Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous cohort	Current cohort not undergoing the front-end (where this exists)	Current cohort (or 1st group to engage in front-end)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	September, 2002		September, 2003	
How many learners started?	17		17	
	<i>Completed to the end of the course?</i>	<i>Still on the course at this point?</i>	<i>Still on the course at this point?</i>	
No. of learners?	12		17	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?				Information on proxies is not yet available
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication.				
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?				
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON				
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the two cohorts compare at this point in the course?	No tests taken at this point		No tests taken at this point	
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the two cohorts compare at this point in the course?	No progress made at this point		Considerable progress made: IT portfolio half complete, Communication portfolio one third complete	Changes in staffing have had the biggest impact. Last year there were no key skills staff available to work with the group, this year specialist staff have been appointed.
How do retention rates compare between the two cohorts at this point in the course?	70%		100%	

Centre C FMA Administration

Date: January 2003

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?	AON Level 1 Communication Level 2	Administration Level 2

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous cohort	Current cohort not undergoing the front-end (where this exists)	Current cohort (or 1st group to engage in front-end)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	July–October 2002	August–October 2003	September, 2003	
How many learners started?	25	10	1	
No. of learners?	<i>Completed to the end of the course?</i> 18	<i>Still on the course at this point?</i> 10	<i>Still on the course at this point?</i> 1	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	3	10	0	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication?	GCSE A-C	GCSE A-C	GCSE D-G OR LESS	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	3	10	0	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	GCSE A-G	GCSE A-C	GCSE D-G OR LESS	
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	10 AON AND 10 COMM passed Success rate 66%	1 COMM L2 passed	L1 AON AND L1 COMM passed Success rate 100%	Such great differences in the number of learners who started their FMAs in two consecutive years makes it difficult to compare retention rates of the two cohorts
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?				The previous cohort only completed Key Skills towards the middle to end of programme, current co-hort working on projects currently, front-end portfolio almost completed
How do retention rates compare between the three cohorts at this point in the course?	72%	100%	100%	Such great differences in the number of learners who started their FMAs in two consecutive years makes it difficult to compare retention rates of the two cohorts

Centre C FMA Title Child Care

Date: November 2003

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level	
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?	AON L 1 COMM L 1	CHILD CARE L2	
Do your learners take any extra Key Skills beyond the required ones?	Up grade to Level 2 either AON or Comm		

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous cohort	Current cohort not undergoing the front-end (where this exists)	Current cohort (or 1st group to engage in front-end)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	August-October 2002	August-October 2003	September, 2003	
How many learners started?	28	12	2	
No. of learners?	8	12	2	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	8	12	0	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication	GCSE A-C	GCSE A-C		
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	10	12	0	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	GCSE A-G	GCSE A-G		
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	See above for proxies	See above for proxies	2have sat tests L1 AON AND L1 COMM 1passed , 1 failed	
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?				The previous cohort only completed Key Skills towards the middle to end of programme, current co-hort working on projects currently, front-end portfolio almost completed
How do retention rates compare between the three cohorts at this point in the course?	29%	100%	100%	Such great differences in the number of learners who started their FMAs in two consecutive years makes it difficult to compare retention rates of the two cohorts

Centre D: FMA/AMA title: FMA (up to 7 different FMAs, please see Centre D Case Study)

Date: February 2004

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?	AON (Level 1 or 2 depending on FMA) COMMS (Level 1 or 2, depending on FMA)	Mixture of NVQs (see Summary Case Studies) Level 2

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous front-end cohort	Current front-end cohort	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	September, 2003	February, 2004	
How many learners started?	12	15	
No. of learners?	Completed to the end of the course?	Completed the course	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	12	12	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication	N/A	N/A	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	N/A	N/A	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	N/A	N/A	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for IT?	N/A	N/A	
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the two cohorts compare at this point in the course?	Success rate 79% (19 tests taken, 15 passed)	Success rate 81% (21 tests taken, 17 passed)	
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the two cohorts compare at this point in the course?			There were no portfolios completed; the progress cannot be measured at this stage.
How do retention rates compare between the two cohorts at this point in the course?	1	0.8	

Centre E : Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in Heating and Ventilation

Date: 28th January 2004

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMs/AMAs?	Com L2 AofN L2 and IT L1	Level 2 and Level 3 in Heating and Ventilation
Do your learners take any extra Key Skills beyond the required ones?	No not at present	No not at present

Comparison with previous cohorts				
	Previous cohort	Current cohort not undergoing the front-end (where this exists)	Current cohort (or 1st group to engage in front-end)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	1st August 2002	N/A	1st August 2003	
How many learners started?	27	N/A	18	
No. of learners?	26 still on course	N/A	18	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	13	N/A	10	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	GCSE (Mainly)	N/A	GCSE (Mainly)	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication	GCSE (Mainly)	N/A	GCSE (Mainly)	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	8	N/A	9	
How many of the learners have specific learning difficulties?	3 dyslexic	N/A	None	
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	Only 1 group sat test	N/A	Awaiting results	All other candidates registered for tests where needed.
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	Majority completed	N/A	Excellent start	Awaiting results, portfolios developed earlier
How do retention rates compare between the three cohorts at this point in the course as a percentage?	96.3%	N/A	100%	At a normal rate for this centre.

Centre F: FMA/AMA title Bricklaying, Carpentry FMA (With pre-FMA Programme of 14 weeks)

Date: January 2004

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?	AON and Comm level 1	Level 2 Carpentry and Bricklaying (level 1 done as faster in pre-programme). No key skill requirement within 14 week pre-FMA programme
Do your learners take any extra key skills beyond the required ones?	IT	

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous cohort without FE	Current cohort with FE with assessment End (where this exists)	Current cohort with FE without assessment (will be assessed in next 12 months)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	August 2002–November 2002	August–November 2003	Mid–November 2003–March 2004	Trialling 3 different schemes. (See ** below)
How many learners started?	105	60	45	
No. of learners?	Completed to the end of the course? 60	54	Still on the course at this point?	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	80–85%	82%	Not yet checked.	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	GCSE	GCSE	Not yet checked.	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	80–85%	82%	Not yet checked.	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication	GCSE	GCSE	Not yet checked.	
How many of the learners have specific learning difficulties?	2 stated	12 stated	In process of diagnosing.	
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	Not yet ks assessed.	9% have taken external tests and passed.	None, too early.	
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	None yet.	56% completed portfolios with full completion of ks.	None, too early.	
How do retention rates compare between the three cohorts at this point in the course?	57%	90%	96%	

NB: **This centre are trialling 3 different schemes: a) prior to FE b) FE including assessment c) FE without assessment

AMA: Explanation from centre: This information would be too distorted to be of any use to the project, as the last group of AMAs left last September, before the project started and the present cohort have yet to start key skills as they are not due to complete the qualification until 2005. For our purposes there are no great changes to the number with proxies, and the changes that I can see so far are due to better trade teaching techniques rather than the introduction or delivery of key skills.

Centre G: FMA/AMA title Modern Apprenticeship in Racehorse Care (FMA) standard nine week residential group
Date: 18th December 2003

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMA/AMAs?	AON Level 1 COMM Level 1 WVO Level 1 IT prior to 01/11/02	NVQ Level 2 in Racehorse Care
Do your learners take any extra key skills beyond the required ones?	Since 01/11/02 IT	

Comparison with previous cohorts			
	Previous cohort	Current cohort (or 1st group to engage in front-end)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	29/7/02	21/7/03	
How many learners started?	17	17	
No. of learners?	Completed to the end of the course?	Still on the course at this point?	
	14 KS 12 NVQ	15 remain	An easier Framework came in from 01/11/02
	2 dropped out before KS – week 4	2 dropped out before Key Skills – Wk 4	2 of the previous cohort changed framework to the new easier one in order to get their FMA
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	13	9	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	1 A-C, 12 D-G	4 A-C 5 D-G GCSE	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication	1 A-C, 12 D-G GCSE	4 A-C 5 D-G GCSE	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	13	9	
How many of the learners have specific learning difficulties?	0	1	
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	1 failure	2 failures	
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	14 have Key Skills	13 have Key Skills	
How do retention rates compare between the three cohorts at this point in the course?	82.4%	88.2%	In 2002 cohort, 12 completed FMA

Centre G: FMA title Modern Apprenticeship in Racehorse Care – exceptional employer referrals

Date: 15th December 2003

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?	AON, COMM, and WWO Level 1 2002 cohort had IT compulsory and no WWO	Level 2 Racehorse Care
Do your learners take any extra key skills beyond the required ones?	IT Portfolio	

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous cohort	Current cohort	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	2002 calendar year	2003 calendar year	
How many learners started?	21	10	
No. of learners?	<i>Completed to the end of the course?</i> 5 completed everything 10 completed NVQ 6 achieved nothing	<i>Still on the course at this point?</i> 1 has completed everything 6 have completed p'folio 3 are completing portfolios	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	4/5 who completed everything were exempt from portfolio and exam	10 exempt from exam	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	3 had GCSEs A-C, 1 had KS	GCSEs A-G	
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication	3 had GCSEs A-C, 1 had KS	GCSEs A-G	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	4/5 who completed everything were exempt from portfolio and exam	10 exempt from exam	
How many of the learners have specific learning difficulties?	0	0	
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	1/17 who needed external tests took the tests	No-one has needed tests	
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	1/17 who needed portfolios completed them	7/10 have completed the portfolio	
How do retention rates compare between the three cohorts at this point in the course?	100% completed the nine weeks (but 6 achieved nothing by the end of the course)	Should be 100% NVQ and Framework	

Centre G: Advanced Modern Apprenticeship in Racehorse Care and Management

Level 3 Exams

Month	Application Of Number		Communication	
	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass
Jan-04	1	4		2
Dec-03		1		1
Nov-03	1	2		2
Oct-03	2	2		4
Aug-03	4		1	3
Jul-03	1	1		2
Jun-03		1		1
May-03	1		1	
Apr-03	3	1	1	2
Mar-03		1		1
Feb-03	1		1	
Dec-02	3	1		4
Oct-02	1		1	
	18	14	5	22

AMAs: Explanation from centre

I have attached a spreadsheet indicating our AON successes over the last year and a bit rather than complete your paperwork.

The reason I have done this is because any improvement is very recent, purely anecdotal and is not statistically significant. We did have a good month but some of these are resits and with the failures in 20 August, 2003 I don't think there has been a great improvement since this project was instigated. It is also worth noting that we have always had fine achievements in Communication, we just suffer because our candidates aren't very good at Maths as it has no link with their employment. The Key Skills Project has now been re-written in line with the new mandatory technical certificate and registration has only now started up again having ended in 20 August, 2003. For those outside the centre we are not envisaging them sitting their key skills exams until they have racked up close to 100 hours. Guided Learning Hours to fit in with the Tech Cert requirements so they only have to attend here once.

The spreadsheet lists most of the AMAs who have actually sat the exams since their inception for new starts from September 2001 as attendance and collation of results was poor until Autumn 2002. It would also be very difficult to pick a cohort as people sit their exams any time during the two year duration of the AMA and only needed to sit them if they started after September 2001.

Centre H: Hairdressing FMA

Date: 27th January 2004

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMAs/AMAs?	AON 1, Comm 1	Hairdressing level 2
Do your learners take any extra key skills beyond the required ones?	IT 1	

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous cohort	Current cohort not undergoing the front-end (where this exists)	Current cohort (or 1st group to engage in front-end)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	September 2002	September 2003		
How many learners started?	31	34		
No. of learners?	Completed to the end of the course?	Still on the course at this point?	Still on the course at this point?	
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	est 23	33		
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON.	all	all		
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication	GCSE results	GCSE results		
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	all	32		
How many of the learners have specific learning difficulties?	GCSE results	GCSE results		
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?	0	0		
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?				
How do retention rates compare between the three cohorts at this point in the course?	74%	97%		

Centre H: Hairdressing AMA

Date: 27th January 2004

	Key skills with level	NVQs with level
Which key skills and NVQs does the framework require for each of the above FMs/AMAs?	AON 2, Comm 2	Hairdressing level 3
Do your learners take any extra key skills beyond the required ones?		

Comparison with previous cohorts

	Previous cohort	Current cohort not undergoing the front-end (where this exists)	Current cohort for 1st group to engage in front-end)	Comments*
Starting dates for the learners?	September 2002	September 2003		
How many learners started?	7	10		
	<i>Completed to the end of the course?</i>	<i>Still on the course at this point?</i>		<i>Still on the course at this point?</i>
No. of learners?	est 6	10		
How many of these had proxy qualifications for AON?	2	2		
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for AON	GCSE results	GCSE results		
Please indicate the nature of the proxies for Communication	2	2		
How many of these had proxy qualifications for Communication?	GCSE results	GCSE results		
How many of the learners have specific learning difficulties?	0	0		
How does progress (measured by external testing) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?				
How does progress (measured by portfolio submission and/or results) between the three cohorts compare at this point in the course?				
How do retention rates compare between the three cohorts at this point in the course?	85%	100%		

Glossary

ABSSU	Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit
AMA	Advanced Modern Apprenticeship
AON	Application of Number
BSA	Basic Skills Agency
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FMA	Foundation Modern Apprenticeship
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
ILT	Information and Learning Technology
IPD	Institute of Personnel and Development
IT	Information Technology
KS	Key skills
LLN	Language, Literacy and Numeracy
LSDA	The Learning and Skills Development Agency
MALNAC	Modern Apprenticeships Literacy, Numeracy, Application of number and Communication
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
RA	Roving Assessor
TA	Trade Assessor



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