SOUTHPORT COLLEGE

The Model for Learning at Southport College

Introduction

1   This paper sets out some key elements of a model for teaching and learning and is aimed at all staff who are involved with delivery of learning and the learning experience. The model is not suggested as something new or original: for most staff the elements will be very familiar and indeed part of their accepted professional practice. The purpose of this document is to:

- make these key elements absolutely explicit by documenting them
- identify the core beliefs that underpin them
- stimulate consideration of how they can be translated consistently into continuous practice across the College
- build on best practice and make best use of resources
- encourage innovative practice

2   Whilst the paper focuses on the role of the tutor the model takes a broad view of learning and has direct implications for all staff, either directly through their work with learners, or indirectly for those who support tutors. In this sense the model should be seen as a whole College approach to learning.

3   For learning to occur there must be a change for the learner(s) in one or more of the following areas: understanding, practices, capability, behaviour, skills, attitudes or values. Consequently, simply acquiring facts with no change in the learner in any of these ways cannot constitute learning in the fullest sense.

4   It follows that if learning is to take place then it cannot be a passive activity. Learning cannot be 'passed onto' or 'delivered' to the learner. The learner must be engaged and active in order to learn. It is a short step from this to the notion that the greater the level of engagement and activity on the part of the learner the greater the potential for learning.

5   For learning to take place activity needs to be purposeful not simply activity for its own sake. Moreover activity can equally apply to mental activity as well as physical activity.

6   Learners are expected to be 'Ready to Learn' so that when they enter the learning environment they are prepared, focussed & attentive. This attitude to Learning is important and underpins the whole Learning ethos.

7   The bedrock for learning is a welcoming, and orderly environment with a climate of mutual respect and tolerance where all learners feel safe and secure and can thrive. The individual needs and capabilities of learners need to be recognised and planned for within the model. This provides the platform for equality & diversity and activities that widen the awareness of learners, allowing the opportunity to challenge or question themselves and build a better understanding of others.

Setting the Scene

8   The variety of settings in which learning takes place can be related to this model of learning. Learners will learn in the classroom, laboratory or workshop in a tutor planned and closely structured activity; they will learn in the Library Learning Centres (LLC) with staff support but with greater independence; and they will learn independently either in the library, at places around the college or at home. Apprenticeship learners will have a further extended opportunity to learn in work settings. The same principles of engagement, activity and ownership need to be common to all.

9   The arrangement of the physical environment should reflect and support this active, engaged model of learning and should support peer learning and maximise student communication. Consequently, classrooms are more likely to be set out in such a way that learners can interact with one another and not just with the tutor. This will extend to a furniture arrangement which supports peer group learning and group work. Through considering the type of learning, where it will take place and the resources needed, planning should ensure a variety of learning opportunities and how to prepare the student to know how to learn from each activity.

10 The workplace is an important setting for learning both for apprenticeships and those undertaking placements or work experience. The active engagement of employers as a partner within this model is essential to ensure that opportunities to learn through on the job experience are maximised.

11 Within the learning environment Safeguarding and Health & Safety are essential when planning and delivering activities, staff and learners and where appropriate employers must be aware of their responsibilities & adhere to college policies & procedures.

The role of the tutor

12 Learning can take place, of course, without a tutor. However, the role of the tutor is to organise, facilitate, structure and manage the learning and assessment and to foster a love of learning and an environment where learners are engaged and ready to learn.
     Tutors are encouraged to develop innovative approaches when planning learning which may include: Self-Organised Learning Environment, Blended Learning and Flipped Learning which are all current developments that encourage learner driven learning.

13 The tutor's expertise is important as is their enthusiasm and commitment to their subject as this can be infectious and motivational, however it is not enough that a tutor knows their subject and needs to pass on information. The tutor's primary focus is to create and manage an environment which enables learners to learn. This may well focus initially on creating a highly structured and disciplined working environment.

14 The model then needs to be based on a whole College approach to managing student behaviour where there are high expectations of learners which are upheld by all staff. The creation and maintenance of an orderly and respectful environment is an essential prerequisite for learning although it is not an end in itself.

15 The purpose of teaching then, based on learning as change and the need for student engagement and activity, is to maximise opportunities for positive and purposeful activity by the learners. In general terms, then, it can be said that the more engaged and active the learners, the more effective the teaching.

16 Learners who are taught how to learn have greater potential to engage in a meaningful way and therefore a greater capacity to learn. It is a key role of the tutor therefore to encourage learners to take responsibility for and ownership of their own learning. This will involve helping them develop the skills to do so. It is for this reason that equipping learners with study skills, including English and Maths, is the responsibility of every tutor rather than one that can be solely undertaken by specialists.

17 Learners must be regarded as active partners in their learning rather than simple recipients of the tutors' expertise. Dialogue between tutor and learners becomes crucial not just in the classroom or workshop but elsewhere, for instance, through Learner Voice activities. Opportunities to stretch and challenge learners should be a key feature of this partnership.

18 Advances in information and communications technology and in particular the increase in access to information through the internet provide a huge potential resource to support learning. It is essential that the student learns how to make best use of this resource and it is the responsibility of the tutor to develop the learners' facility to do this.

19 It is clear that 'teaching' when learner centred may come from a variety of sources, for example, peers, family, and employers. The role of student facing support staff including Learning Support Assistants, Facilitators and Technicians and Library Learning Resource staff is particularly important. The tutor in conjunction with the student will have the overview and ultimate responsibility for the management of learners' learning.

20 Staff are encouraged to reflect and evaluate personal performance by analysing what takes place in the learning environment, this can be achieved in many ways, ranging from individual reflection about lesson delivery, sharing of best practice to peer evaluation. It is important that the outcomes of these reflections are used to bring about improvement in teaching strategies, allowing for personal CPD. This reflective teaching underpins change and brings about development in practice improving the experiences of the learners and the standards they attain.

English and Maths

21 The goal of developing learners' ability to learn is underpinned by the development of learners' core skills in English and Maths. The development of these skills is key components of 16-18 Study Programmes and Apprenticeship Programmes and should be embedded and opportunities to apply them seized, for example in the setting and management of practical tasks.

Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL)

22 The application of TEL to learning is a key part of this model and should directly support the goals and approaches set out here. A holistic approach to TEL to support learning and encourage individualised learning should be adopted. The use of new technologies should not be an end in itself. TEL should be deployed alongside face to face classroom activities as a component of blended learning to develop engagement in a valuable manner, and not simply to deliver facts more efficiently. The VLE as an aspect of TEL should be used to support independent learning, research, project work and extension tasks.

Assessment

23 Assessment is an opportunity to make the learner active rather than being the passive recipient of a tutor's judgement. It should be seen as a powerful aid to learning. Feedback to learners is vital and clear and constructive comments, which stimulate a response from the student, are crucial. Regular feedback helps

motivate learners as well as allowing them to track progress and personal progression. Student involvement through peer and self - assessment if managed effectively, with clear guidelines and boundaries, will be a key part of helping learners learn how to learn.

Reviews and Tutorial Activity

24 Tutorial activities and curriculum reviews must also be placed within this model. The pastoral elements of the tutorial system whilst focussed on the welfare of learners should also encourage the development of learners' ability to self-manage and problem solve. The course specific student reviews undertaken by tutors with individual learners is pivotal to this model. It is through this that aspirational and challenging targets can be set, and monitored through individual learning plans. This element of the tutorial system is central to helping develop the student's ownership of their learning. Tutorial support should recognise the whole student journey including the opportunities to progress and achieve their potential in educational, social and employability skills

Praise and Reinforcement

25 All staff involved the learning process should be aware of the benefits of on-going praise and re-enforcement. In addition formal and informal recognition of student achievement planned in a timely fashion is rewarding to both student and staff. Distance travelled is recognised through progress and attainment of learner's achievements by the end of the course and values a range of additional skills.

Support for Learning

26 Within this model, the larger goal of learning support is to assist the learner to become active, engaged and self-directed as far as possible and to develop the generic skills to support this, enabling learning in more locations and more continuously learning how to learn. There is a particular challenge here in that the support should avoid dependency, encourage reflection and self-evaluation which is at odds with this model of learning. The tutor needs to work closely with support staff to ensure that learners develop their study skills.

Employability and Enrichment

27 To recognise, encourage and provide opportunities for learners to enhance their employability through vocationally relevant work related enrichment which may include work placements, visits, visiting speakers, enterprise activities and commissioned projects. This is an integral part of the model and learners should develop their ability to present themselves positively and industry related expectations and standards should be applied and re-enforced in the classroom. High expectations are needed with boundaries set to establish good working practices.

Conclusion

28 The Southport College model of teaching and learning is based on the **active purposeful engagement** of learners. It encourages the development of **independent** learners whom are able to take **responsibility and ownership** for their learning. The challenge is to achieve consistency whilst addressing the needs of individual learners and developing their aspirations and potential. In meeting this challenge the emphasis must be on ensuring that as far as possible learners become independent learners in all situations.

Annex A.

The list below is not an exhaustive list & must be used appropriately with learners/groups in mind as it will not always be appropriate for all aspects of learning.

i) *Types of learning*

- presentation/ chalk & talk
- questioning
- group assignments/collaboration/task
- self-assessment
- peer assessment
- research
- simulation
- note making
- practical work
- performances
- observations
- discussion/debate
- games
- coaching(1:1)
- mentoring (1:1)
- review (1:1)
- lecture
- seminar

ii) *Locations for learning*

- classroom
- salon
- workshop
- library/learning resource centre
- work place
- trip or visit
- home
- mock up –e.g. crime scene
- studio
- gym/sports field
- refectory
- residential centre
- gallery
- student guidance

iii) *Resources for learning*

- staff(expertise/knowledge),
- TEL
- VLE
- work placements
- other learners
- clients
- books /ebooks
- videos/dvds
- displays
- speakers
- DVD /online videos
- Journals
- Application

Annex B.

- New Approaches to Learning and Key Aspects of Learning

Self-Organised Learning Environment (SOLE)
1. Self-Organised Learning Environment is where an environment is created where teachers support students as they engage in student-driven learning. Curiosity is explored using a BIG QUESTION and allowing students to use the internet and enabling them to work together. An example of a BIG Question is- **Is life on earth sustainable?**

Blended Learning
2. Blended Learning combines technology with traditional teaching. It requires the right mix of face-to -face instruction with technology-mediated activities.

Flipped Learning
3. Flipped Learning refers to moving aspects of teaching out of the classroom and into the homework space. With the advent of new technologies, specifically the ability to record instructional videos has become a common medium in the flipped classroom. Although not limited to videos, a flipped classroom most often harnesses different forms of instructional video published online for students. The classroom space was then used for critical thinking and group problem solving.

Presentation
4. The presentation of information should be done with the intention of stimulating engagement and activity or as the essential introduction to activity. Clearly, the simple presentation of information at length and particularly orally, presents challenges in a learning model based on active engagement. For example the use of lectures may not result in learning unless learners are equipped with the relevant study skills in note taking.

Questioning
5. Questioning by the tutor when done expertly and in order to stimulate thinking and response by the learners is clearly a key method in this model. Tutors can stretch and challenge learners through effective questioning. So, however, is questioning by learners who are then active and engaged. Consequently, appropriate questioning by learners both of the tutor and of one another can be seen as positive engagement.

Peer Interaction
6. The aim of teaching should be to stimulate significant amounts of relevant learner communication not just to the tutor but also to one another. Interaction between learners, who can learn from and teach one another, is a key strategy in the classroom. So, methods such as paired or group work and peer marking and review are important in generating engagement and activity and in enhancing the level of ownership and student communication. In high quality teaching and learning, the learners would do more communicating and the tutor less.

Problem and Task Based
7. Problem solving and task based learning, particularly where learners have some element of negotiation or self-selection of the activities supports this active model. It will enhance commitment and engagement and student activity. A wider application of this can be considered linked to learners on Work Based Learning or Work Experience programmes where the tasks and problem solving can be an integral part of developing learners' employability.