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### NEW VIDEO OPENS DOORS TO LEARNING

A new training video, "Opening Doors", in which adult learners talk about their experiences in improving their literacy and numeracy skills, is being made available to all basic skills practitioners across the country.

A joint project by the Workplace Basic Skills Network at Lancaster University and the Learning and Skills Council of Greater Merseyside, the basic skills training video showcases the views and opinions of adult learners.

"I hope that the demonstrated achievements of the learners will encourage more employees to take up training and employers to provide the chance for employees to undergo training," said Sue Batt, the Network's Director of Regional Development. "It is one of the few projects the Network has been involved in that focuses on learners rather than providers."

"Opening Doors", which lasts 11 minutes, was filmed at a learners' forum on Merseyside and features interviews with six students, four tutors, a human resources manager, and a union learning representative. It falls into different sections, with titles such as "What Have You Got Out Of It?", "How Did You Get Started?", "What Was It Like?", "What Do The Employers Need To Do?". The video, which has been put on to CD Rom, comes with an accompanying booklet containing the learners' writings.

"The video shows the great achievements made by the learners through their determination to complete the tasks," said Sonia Cross of LSC Merseyside. "It also shows how their confidence has grown, both in the workplace and in day-to-day life."

The students testify to their increased ability to handle money, understand orders and communicate with customers better. A vital part of the project is the role played by the union learning representative, who acts as a bridge between management and employees.

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Following the training, most learners said they felt more valued as employees, morale within the workplace had improved, and they resolved to stay within the company to continue learning. Others had their sights raised to such an extent that they wanted to find more challenging work elsewhere. In all cases, however, the experience had been a positive one.

The tutors said workplace basic skills training within the Merseyside region was growing fast, but that it was still difficult to get employers to see the benefits of basic skills training for staff.

Sue Batt said "Opening Doors" was a useful resource for tutors setting up workplace basic skills programmes and for practitioners promoting basic skills to employers.

"Opening Doors" is available from: Stacy O'Brien, Workplace Basic Skills Network, CSET, Cartmel College, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YI; tel: 01524 592719; email: [stacy.obrien@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:stacy.obrien@lancaster.ac.uk). An order form is available on the Network website: [www.lancs.ac.uk/wbsnet](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/wbsnet). Video and transcript cost £10, CD Rom £10, Learner writings £3 and the full set costs £23.

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**Note to editors:**

The Workplace Basic Skills Network, based at Lancaster University, is a national membership organisation dedicated to workplace language, literacy and numeracy provision. Founded in 1993, it supports "Skills for Life", the government's adult literacy and numeracy strategy. The Network builds professional capacity in workplace basic skills through sharing and dissemination of good practice and continuing professional development, supporting basic skills professionals to meet the language, literacy and numeracy needs of today's changing workplace. Address: Workplace Basic Skills Network, CSET, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YL; tel: 01524 593405; website: [www.lancaster.ac.uk/wbsnet](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/wbsnet)

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