



Literacy, Language and Numeracy in the Construction Industry

Final Report

December 2004



Commissioned by the Learning and Skills Council Black Country
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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BACKGROUND

Introduction

The Learning and Skills Council Black Country commissioned the Workplace Basic Skills Network, Lancaster University to conduct an action research project into literacy, language and numeracy support in construction. The aim of the project was to carry out action research that would lead to an improvement of literacy, language and numeracy learning within construction provision delivered by Black Country learning providers. It was intended that this project would contribute to the achievement of the Black Country's literacy, language and numeracy targets. The support of literacy, language and numeracy within vocational courses is also important for the national Skills for Life strategy and the national skills strategy.

The scope of the project was to establish a benchmark of current best practice in embedded delivery. It intended to:

- investigate the needs of learners and their employers
- to establish current embedded literacy, language and numeracy local practice and capacity and areas for improvement on construction courses
- to share best practice and different models of embedded literacy, language and numeracy delivery with the local provider network
- to working with up to 6 local employers to establish and meet their literacy, language and numeracy needs through a range of customised methodologies
- to track the medium and long-term learning outcomes for individual learners and where necessary, providing support for local providers to develop their capacity for embedded provision.

The project had a three-year plan that is included in Appendix 2.

The research has adopted the NIACE (March 2003) working definition of embedded literacy, language and numeracy:

“Embedded literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) means learning these skills in the context of another course/activity. The course/activity must include appropriate teaching and learning activities which build on an individual’s existing skills, are set against the framework of national standards for literacy and/or numeracy, aim to develop sustainable, transferable skills. The balance of LLN in relation to the other subject(s) will vary and may alter as the course/activity progresses. The course/activity promotion may or may not identify the LLN element but within the course/activity, learners will develop an awareness of their progress in these skills. Individual assessment will identify LLN needs at an appropriate point before or during the course. Learning plans will identify LLN learning goals and targets to be achieved and progress made”.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Learning and Skills Council Black Country commissioned the Workplace Basic Skills Network, Lancaster University to conduct an action research project into literacy, language and numeracy support in construction. The aim of the project was to carry out action research that would lead to an improvement of literacy, language and numeracy learning within construction provision delivered by Black Country learning providers. It was intended that this project would contribute to the achievement of the Black Country's literacy, language and numeracy targets. The support of literacy, language and numeracy within vocational courses is also important for the national Skills for Life strategy and the national skills strategy. The scope of the project was to establish a benchmark of current best practice in embedded delivery.

Methodology

The initial research consisted of consultation with appropriate regional, national and international agencies to establish existence of existing resources. Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with providers and employers outside the region to obtain further examples of best practice. An additional survey about embedding literacy, language and numeracy in construction courses was developed and circulated to the membership of the Workplace Literacy, language and numeracy Network. A steering group was established to provide guidance and direction. A working group of local providers was formed from December 2003 to December 2004. The working group decided the terms of reference and priority actions for the coming months. Meetings were held on a regular basis to progress activities. The research methodology and analysis has been predominantly qualitative rather than quantitative. This was an informed decision to ensure that the maximum opportunities of identifying best practice and benchmarking could be obtained.

Findings

Provider Perspective

- *Literacy, language and numeracy needs*

Providers estimated that between 20%-90% of construction learners (i.e. those on foundation and intermediate construction courses) had literacy, language and numeracy needs. The extent varied across providers and the highest level of need occurred amongst providers that attracted learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. The majority of learners undertaking training on construction programmes were under 25 and automatically accessed initial assessment. A range of commercial (e.g. Basic Skills Agency Initial Assessment) and in-house assessment materials were used. It was identified most local providers were not assessing learners over 19 on part-time courses for literacy, language and numeracy development needs. One of the providers provided support during the evening theory sessions. At the time of research no provider was delivering literacy, language or numeracy to local construction employers. The project had intended to research a variety of delivery models within construction companies but this was not possible.

- Literacy, language and numeracy delivery

Many of the vocational representatives interviewed did not perceive a difference between literacy, language and numeracy and Key Skills. This indicated a need for awareness raising to ensure that the relationship between the two is understood. This is particularly relevant in the light of the planned convergence and the move towards embedding delivery of literacy, language and numeracy within the main curriculum. At the time of the initial research it was found that many providers were in the process of evaluating the most appropriate delivery methods for their learners.

- Key Skills

The initial research found that some providers were working towards the allocation of Key Skills tutors and sometimes Basic Skills Tutors within curriculum areas to develop contextualised learning. Six out of the seven providers had developed contextualised Key Skills assignments and customised worksheets. All providers and learners preferred this approach. However, there was one disadvantage expressed: students found it difficult to sit an end test that did not have any vocational relevance. This is an issue that is also relevant for embedding literacy, language and numeracy provision as the same Key Skills test is taken.

- *Literacy, language and numeracy support*

Literacy, language and numeracy support in the theory sessions usually took the form of discreet support to the whole group so that individual learners were not singled out for attention. This was seen to correspond to the nature and culture of the student groups. However, such a delivery method does not guarantee that individual needs are being met or that progress in literacy, language and numeracy is being recorded. Co-tutoring i.e. where the vocational tutor and the literacy, language and numeracy tutor deliver the sessions as a team was being developed at one of the colleges but it had not been implemented long-enough to evaluate its effectiveness. All of the providers gave portfolio support and this was viewed as essential for the completion of the Key Skills portfolio. Discrete support was also offered by some providers and was found to be effective.

- Literacy, language and numeracy support staff

Some providers felt that the support tutor needed to be a literacy, language and numeracy specialist but vocationally aware whilst others advocated that the support tutor needed to be or have been a vocational tutor but trained in literacy, language and numeracy support. There are practical and management implications for each of these approaches and further continuing professional development training would be needed to ensure that tutors have

appropriate vocational and subject specialist knowledge. Although providers evidenced awareness of literacy, language and numeracy issues it was reported that in practice some vocational tutors had difficulties accepting the need for literacy, language and numeracy support on construction courses.

Employer perspective

All employers interviewed had experience of staff with literacy, language and numeracy development needs. Each employer was aware of individual cases but the size of the need within each organisation had not been quantified. None of the employers believed that this was an issue that employers were responsible for addressing. A small sample of telephone interviews revealed a reluctance to discuss the issue, which through discussion with experts in the field, was seen as reflective of the attitude within the sector. This highlighted the need to develop literacy, language and numeracy awareness amongst local construction companies.

Learner perspective

Three out of twenty learners interviewed found that literacy, language and numeracy support had been beneficial. All learners were happy with the quality of the support that they received although some wouldn't have completed their Key Skills portfolio by choice. There were no indications that a particular mode of delivery was more effective than another. A learner tracking survey was conducted a year after the initial interviews. Two learners participated in a telephone interview and one learner returned a written questionnaire. The results of the learner tracking suggested that the perception of the benefits of literacy, language and numeracy change over time.

Resources

At the time of the initial research (January 2003) there were few resources to support literacy, language and numeracy within construction courses. A limited

amount of industry based resources were available but these tended to be written for Key Skills support rather than for literacy, language and numeracy. Since the survey the Adult Literacy, Language and Numeracy Strategy Unit, DfES have published embedded resources for Trowel Trades (August 2004) and more are planned.

Action Research Working Group

An action research working group of literacy, language and numeracy representatives was formed to participate in a range of research activities to explore the most effective ways of supporting learners with Skills for Life needs within the construction programme area. The group identified its terms of reference and two meetings per term were agreed. Priority activities were identified as the development of a construction screening tool for learners over 24, the development of materials and approaches to prepare construction learners for the level 2 national test and the contextualisation of course materials. During the life of the working group a draft screening assessment tool was developed but there were difficulties in implementing all of the aims of the working group because of pressures that various member organisations were experiencing.

Conclusion and recommendations

- Only one provider assessed learners over 19 who were attending evening provision. It is recommended that initial assessment for all part-time evening class learners be introduced, to ensure that an appropriate learning programme is planned.
- A range of embedded literacy, language and numeracy models was identified during the research. It is recommended that providers implement good practice identified in the publication of the NRDC embedded literacy, language and numeracy research project when it is published.

- Many providers have moved towards full-time Key Skills staff attached to the vocational area and one provider is recruiting a full-time literacy, language and numeracy support tutor for construction. It is recommended that the capacity for literacy, language and numeracy support continue to be strengthened.
- Almost all providers offered some form of literacy, language and numeracy support in the theory sessions but only one provider offered support in practical sessions. It is recommended that providers consider the benefits literacy, language and numeracy support in practical sessions of construction programmes.
- Similarly, only one provider offered literacy, language and numeracy support to part-time evening learners. It is recommended that the need for literacy, language and numeracy support be considered for part time evening learners in accordance with initial assessment results and the learners' individual learning plans.
- There is a need to develop and build capacity of literacy, language and numeracy staff who can teach in a vocational context and are able to develop effective contextualised provision. It is recommended that CPD training activities are developed to build capacity and to strengthen embedded delivery.
- It was generally believed that vocational tutors would benefit from continuing professional development in literacy, language and numeracy awareness and training in working as a team with literacy, language and numeracy staff. It is recommended that vocational tutors receive Skills for Life awareness training as part of the Skills for Life Quality Initiative strategic whole organisational approach. It is also recommended that joint team building/embedded delivery training be developed for vocational tutors and literacy, language and numeracy practitioners.
- Literacy, language and numeracy skills were not seen as a dominating issue with the employers interviewed. Some employers were reluctant to discuss

or admit that poor literacy, language and numeracy skills existed amongst the workforce. It is recommended that a series of employer awareness raising activities be developed to promote understanding of the issues.

- The action research Working Group model was effective in enabling local colleges to share good practice and to consider common approaches. However, a difficulty encountered during the life of the project was securing the time to develop the screening tool.

METHODOLOGY

The initial research consisted of consultation with appropriate regional, national and international agencies to establish existence of existing resources. A desktop review of relevant existing research and materials was conducted. Appendix 5 contains a list of construction related literacy, language and numeracy resources. Individual and group interviews with nine local provider organisations (nineteen members of staff), eight employers and twenty learners took place to establish their perspectives and issues to be addressed. Individual learners were interviewed from three provider organisations and their permission to participate in tracking the medium and longer-term learning outcomes was obtained. In addition, face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with providers and employers outside the region to obtain further examples of best practice.

An additional survey about embedding literacy, language and numeracy in construction courses was developed and circulated to the membership of the Workplace Literacy, language and numeracy Network. In addition, a detailed assessment questionnaire was sent to all local providers (Dudley College, Dudley Future Skills, Sandwell College, Sandwell Future Skills, Sandwell New Horizons, Walcat, Wolverhampton City College). The information requested related to the academic year 2002/3. The information from Dudley Future Skills related to the period January – July 2003.

The action research nature of the project enabled additional lines of enquiry to be followed up. One of these was the extent to which the Health and Safety Test, part of the Construction Scheme Certification System (CSCS) award, would highlight literacy, language and numeracy skills needs of construction employees. Participant observation was employed in this aspect of the project. By the end of 2004 all employees on new build sites will have to carry a

Construction Scheme Certification award. Many practitioners within the industry believe that this is a positive development but the literacy, language and numeracy implications of the introduction of the CSCS card have yet to be explored. One aspect of CSCS scheme that was of immediate interest to the project was the possibility that the Health and Safety test might indicate potential literacy, language and numeracy needs of students. This was investigated by a combination of telephone interviews with CITB staff, providers, employers and completion of the test.

A second feature of the action research has been to establish a steering group to provide guidance and direction. Members of the steering group are from a range of construction industry interested backgrounds i.e. Black Country Business Link, LSC Black Country, Carillion Training, the regional CoVE, a national CoVE and the CITB. The Steering Group have met approximately every six to eight weeks.

A third feature of the action research was the creation of a working group from December 2003 to December 2004. During the second half of the project representatives from local colleges were invited to participate in a working group. The working group decided its terms of reference and priority actions for the coming months. Meetings were held on a regular basis to progress activities.

The research methodology and analysis has been predominantly qualitative rather than quantitative. This was an informed decision to ensure that the maximum opportunities of identifying best practice and benchmarking could be obtained. It was thought at the beginning of the project that a series of employer case studies (outlining literacy, language and numeracy needs of employees, identifying and implementing possible solutions) would be possible. Results of the initial research indicated that this was not a suitable or feasible

method and alternative methods of obtaining employer feedback were applied.

Although the scope of the project was focused on literacy, language and numeracy, it was decided to include Key Skills findings because of the inclusion of Key Skills in the FMA (Foundation Modern Apprentices) framework the close relationship between literacy, language and numeracy and key skills. Many research interviewees referred to key skills when asked about literacy, language and numeracy. (It is anticipated that the DfES commissioned convergence project of literacy, language and numeracy and key skills will develop strategies to address combined effective delivery).

PART ONE: INITIAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Headline Industry Statistics

The industry consists of six different sectors (civil engineering, commercial, facilities, housing, industrial and refurbishment; each has its own characteristics and economic fortunes. The Construction Trends Survey (2002) reports that contractors are optimistic about the long-term output growth over the next twelve months but are less positive about the current climate that they are experiencing. Regional statistics are available only at West Midlands level (the DFES report that smaller breakdown of statistics would affect the reliability of the data) and it is necessary to be aware of the limitations of the data given the mobile and temporary nature of contractors within the industry. For example, a company might be registered in the West Midlands but may work locally and nationally for varying time periods depending on the task. Similarly, contractors from anywhere in the country could undertake new orders that are recorded in the local area.

However, it is worth noting some regional facts and trends to illustrate the size of the sector in the region. It is reported in the Construction Industry Annual Statistics 2002 that there has been a steady increase in new work reported by contractors by region for the West Midlands over the last ten years (£1.7 million in 1991 to £2.6 million in 2001). The most significant growth sectors during this time were private industrial and private commercial. The statistical breakdown of the latest records is presented in the table below.

| 2002 | Contractors output £million in the West Midlands |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| New Housing – Public | 75 |
| New Housing – Private | 1,005 |
| New Housing – Infrastructure | 639 |
| Other New Work – Public | 573 |
| Other New Work – Private industrial | 473 |
| Other New Work – Private Commercial | 1,094 |
| Repair and maintenance – Housing | 1,425 |
| Repair and maintenance – Public | 838 |
| Repair and maintenance – Private | 930 |
| All Work | 7,051 |

In 2001 there were 14,916 firms registered in the West Midlands. The number has remained relatively stable since 1997 when 14,656 companies were registered. The local sector is seen relatively buoyant with an increasing amount of output.

Provider Perspectives

- *Literacy, language and numeracy needs*

Providers estimated that between 20%-90% of construction learners had literacy, language and numeracy needs. The completed questionnaires suggest that there is a wide range of literacy, language and numeracy needs amongst learners. However, the extent of the need can be seen to reflect the learner groups on the programmes. The highest levels of literacy, language and numeracy needs were recorded for those learners who are from disadvantaged backgrounds e.g. Sandwell New Horizons and Future Skills Dudley. At Future Skills Dudley, a provider where the programmes are aimed at those who have been unemployed, 90% of all the full and part-time learners had literacy, language and numeracy needs. Sandwell New Horizons offers programs to learners who are similarly disadvantaged. All of the learners on the painting and decorating and woodcraft course needed literacy, language and numeracy support.

There is evidence to suggest that some of the learners are referred or are unsuccessful with providers who are offering higher level courses e.g. FMA but are accepted by other providers who offer foundation or intermediate courses. This is likely to account for the 100% literacy, language and numeracy need at Sandwell New Horizons. Sandwell New Horizons have a local catchment area and are a main provider for Job Centre Plus. At Dudley College the 37.5% of all learners on Construction courses (full-time Trowel Trades – 44% and Carpentry 33% and evening carpentry – 33%) were assessed as having literacy, language and numeracy needs.

- *What is the age profile of those affected?*

The results suggest that the majority of the learners undertaking training on construction programmes with poor literacy, language and numeracy are under 25. This is reflective of the age profile of the courses generally. At Dudley College 83% of those needing literacy, language and numeracy support were aged between 16-18, 5.6% were aged 26-34 and 11.1% were between 35-44. At

Future Skills – Dudley 78% of those needing literacy, language and numeracy support were between 19-25, 13.6% were between 26-34 and 2.7% were between 35-44 and 5.5% were over 45 years old. At Sandwell New Horizons all of the learners needing literacy, language and numeracy support were aged between 16- 18 years old. At Sandwell College it is estimated that between 50-60% of 16-18 year old full-time learners on construction courses and between 10-20% of adult learners have literacy, language and numeracy needs.

- *How many are working in construction?*

None of the learners requiring literacy, language and numeracy support at Dudley College or at Future Skills Dudley were employed in construction but at Sandwell New Horizons 70% of them were part-time students employed in construction. Given the small sample, it is difficult to assess the impact of low literacy, language and numeracy on the local industry.

- *Assessment*

Providers interviewed assess most full-time students at the beginning of the academic year. A range of assessments is used with 16-18 years olds: the BSA assessment, Target Skills, Key Skills level and in-house tools. By contrast, students over 19 are informally assessed and their literacy, language and numeracy needs are not identified unless this becomes apparent during the course. The decision to complete Key Skills accreditation for those learners over 19 is encouraged but tends to be optional amongst providers. An analysis of the assessment packages in use is detailed below. Many providers use a combination of assessment packages. Some commented that they have begun to implement the Diagnostic Assessment package (2003).

| | BSA | Target Skills | Key Skills | In-house |
|-------------------------|-----|---------------|------------|----------|
| Dudley College | | | √ | √ |
| Future Skills Dudley | | | √ | √ |
| Sandwell College | | | √ | |
| Sandwell New Horizons | √ | | | |
| Sandwell NHS | | √ | √ | |
| Smethwick Future Skills | | | √ | |
| Stourbridge College | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Walsall College | | | √ | √ |
| Wolverhampton College | √ | | √ | |

It is appropriate that most providers use both literacy, language and numeracy and Key Skills assessments as there is a need to assess both areas of skill. However, a gap in the assessment of learners who are 19+ exists. Although it could be understood why Key Skills assessments may be viewed as not appropriate for those learners over 18 there is still a benefit in assessing for literacy, language, and numeracy, particularly in the light of retention and achievement. The Ofsted and ALI inspection report for Literacy, numeracy and English for Speakers of other languages: a survey of current practice in post-16 and adult provision (2003) highlights the importance of this:

“Retention, achievement, success and progression rates must be carefully monitored against realistic but ambitious targets. There is a need for simple but effective systems to assess the effect of learning and language support on learners’ achievements in their main programme of study.”

At present, literacy, language and numeracy needs amongst the 19+ group of learners tends to be identified on an informal and ad hoc basis. An early assessment would help providers to quantify the scale and nature of support required at the beginning of the courses.

| Name of Assessment | Providers Reasons for Use |
|---|--|
| Skills Builder | User Friendly on CD rom Results analysed to show strengths and weaknesses in Key Skills |
| Interview and application form | Initial indications of literacy, language and numeracy needs, to assess learner self-confidence and to provide early talking points informing the learner profile. |
| BSA Initial Assessment | Required on contract Mapped to the national curriculum |
| Target Skills 2003-4 | User friendly, on CD ROM |
| BSA diagnostic assessment tool (slightly in-house customised) | Used normally as a back-up to determine nature of problem in relation to specific course elements |

The Initial Assessment of Learning Support Needs and Planning Learning to meet Needs in the Good Practice Series, DfEE (2001) endorses the use of a range of assessment tools. It suggests application forms, references, interviews and formal tests for collecting literacy, language and numeracy assessment information. In practice, most providers are using a mixture of assessment tools and all use the interview and application form as part of the assessment process. The Common Inspection Framework also focuses on whether the provider's " initial assessment provides an accurate basis on which to plan an appropriate programme of work." The importance of the accuracy of initial assessment is demonstrated in the recent Ofsted and ALL report of Literacy, numeracy and ESOL: a survey of current practice in post-16 and adult provision (2003):

“In colleges and work-based provision, there is a need for courses for vocational tutors to learn how to assess and teach the literacy and numeracy skills integral to the vocational curriculum.”

However, in one organisation there is the use of a key skills assessment tool to screen for literacy, language and numeracy needs. The Key Skillsbuilder, produced by West Nottinghamshire College, is designed for the initial assessment of Key Skills and has 22 workbooks to support learners with their individual needs. This suggests that Key Skills and Literacy, language and numeracy are seen as similar if not the same amongst many providers. This is a finding that also emerges in relation to literacy, language and numeracy support.

- *Key Skills Tutors*

Five of the seven providers interviewed, who delivered Key Skills to a group of students on the same course, were moving towards having a Key Skills/Literacy, Language and Numeracy tutor dedicated to delivering key skills and literacy, language and numeracy support to construction courses. One provider delivered Key Skills to a mixed group of learners because of the number of construction learners involved (two apprentices). In this instance, additional support in both Key Skills and Literacy, Language and Numeracy was given to the two learners on a 1:1 and small group (of two) basis.

Many providers expressed the desire for a tutor who is allocated full-time to service the construction department (one provider was currently recruiting for such a tutor). Some providers (6/7) are in the position of having a Key Skills Tutor who is allocated to some construction courses but the tutor is not a formal member of the curriculum staff. Many providers reported that Key Skills had been managed originally from a central department in the organisation but there was a movement towards individual departments managing this aspect of

the intermediate construction awards and foundation modern apprenticeships. The current thinking amongst providers is that Key Skills can be delivered in a more relevant and effective way for the learners if it is vocationally contextualised. (Such a perception is endorsed by the learners interviewed and is described in more detailed in the Learner Perspective section of the report).

- *Health and Safety Test*

The issue of whether the Health and Safety Test would provide an indication of literacy, language and numeracy needs was raised at an early stage in the project. Nine different Health and Safety Tests are offered by CITB, depending on the construction specialism and expertise (e.g. demo and plant, plumbing), have been in use since 2000. Each test is has between 35-40 questions and the candidate is given 45 minutes to complete. It has been found that in practice, most candidates usually complete in 20 minutes. There is a 15 minutes practice session. It is expected that individuals book the tests.

It can be arranged for the test to speak the questions via a voice over or reader recorder but this needs to be requested in advance and a letter from doctor, employer or training centre is required. Currently (2003), if a candidate fails a test a report that highlights weak areas can be requested. The CITB are developing the test for use over the Internet. It is already in use for overseas test centres. The Health and Safety test needs to be taken within 6 months after the expiry of the card.

The onscreen test uses colour well and has an easy touch screen. The language used in the test questions undertaken by the research suggests that this could be problematic for candidates with low levels of reading. It is estimated that the sentence construction and vocabulary is approximately E2/3. Understandably, there is a heavy use of context specific multi-syllabic words. The sentence construction was regularly over 10 words per sentence in questions.

Throughout the test the time taken so far is recorded at the top left hand part of the screen. This could potentially be off putting to someone who is struggling to make sense of what is written on the screen. An inexperienced reader would need familiarity with context to help understand words. The use of multi-choice is beneficial as could help some candidates attempt a question. Although a candidate could guess the answers knowledge of Health and Safety is required. It is possible that a poor reader could cope by keyword recognition and readability but this could be problematic as only words are used in the test. There are no visual cues (e.g. illustrations or pictures) provided.

It is not possible to evaluate fully whether the test would identify candidates with literacy, language and numeracy needs because of the many factors that could contribute to a poor test score. For example, the candidate could have difficulty with language and individual words, there could be difficulties using computers or the answers might not be known. Similarly, the use of multi-choice could enable a candidate to use common sense and/or contextual knowledge to work out an answer.

- *Key Skills Tasks and Assignments*

Almost all providers (6/7) have developed Key Skills assignments that are contextualised and have customised worksheets to support the delivery of numeracy, literacy and IT for construction courses. Similarly, any Key Skills support work is linked to the trade subject. Most providers have mapped the Key Skills criteria to the main vocational course and use evidence for Key Skills assignments from the main course where possible. Additional vocational Key Skills assignments are developed to ensure that all the remaining criteria are met. All providers believed that this was a much better approach than the previous one of generic task and assignments. The learners interviewed also seemed to agree with this. The integration of Key Skills learning with the

vocational area is effective. It also ensures a certain amount of consolidation, possible transfer of skills and a more affective contextual application.

- *Key Skills Test*

Many providers commented that students found it difficult to sit an end text that does not have any vocational relevance. This is particularly poignant when the key skills sessions are contextualized to retain interest and motivation. Some providers stated that they initially believed that vocationally relevant Key Skills tests were planned. There does appear to be an anomaly between the contextualised Key Skills session and the generic Key Skills Tests. Although it is good practice not to teach to an assessment there is a need to ensure that learners are able to relate to the questions they are expected to answer. In order to prepare learners and address this to an extent many providers gave students practice tests and exam preparation. The action research working group identified the need to develop preparation training for learners.

- *Where does literacy, language and numeracy fit in?*

Some providers have recognised the need to link literacy, language and numeracy and key skills. There does appear to be a need to be flexible and responsive in addressing literacy, language and numeracy and Key Skills needs of the learners. One provider is planning to deliver literacy, language and numeracy training before key skills training in the next academic year (2003-4). This is a useful approach as it will begin to develop learners literacy, language and numeracy before they have to apply their skills. Such an attitude is encouraged by the QCA definition of the relationship between adult literacy, language and numeracy and key skills: "The skills comprising adult literacy and numeracy underpin and provide progression into the key communication and application of number." It also suggests that short intensive blocks of literacy, language and numeracy training would be a productive and effective approach.

Interestingly, most construction providers interviewed were not aware of the difference between the literacy, language and numeracy and key skills but did perceive that both Key and literacy, language and numeracy addressed the same, if not similar, areas e.g. English and Maths skills. The perception of the close relationship became apparent as many providers described provision for both subjects simultaneously. Key Skills and literacy, language and numeracy are understood to address similar root problems.

- *Literacy, language and numeracy support*

Support in theory sessions:

Where it was recognised that literacy, language and numeracy support was needed in the theory sessions it usually took the form of a support tutor who discretely supports each learner in the group. All of the providers interviewed gave additional portfolio support to the students if needed. This usually took the form of a 1:1 or small groups and was discretionary. One provider commented that some of their learners would not be able to achieve the main qualification without portfolio support.

Many providers interviewed have an established strategy for supporting literacy, language and numeracy during theory sessions. The vocational tutor teaches the theory and the literacy, language and numeracy tutors supports all students in the group) as and when required. Some literacy, language and numeracy tutors are “shared” between groups. Discrete provision to the whole group rather than an individual learner is a favourite approach with many providers. The reason given for this was does not single out individuals for attention. Providers are able to fund this by additional supported being required by one of the learners. It was acknowledged that the whole group benefit and that this kind of support is in keeping with the nature and culture of the student group. In practice, there is a mixed response to this delivery method. Some providers

commented that other learners find this support useful but one provider perceptively observed “those requesting help are not always the ones requiring it.” This approach can be problematic as it does not guarantee individual needs are being met or monitoring of literacy, language and numeracy learning is taking place.

An alternative proposal is the introduction of co-tutoring where the vocational tutor teaches the vocational aspects of the course and the literacy, language and numeracy tutor teaches at literacy, language or numeracy point in the session. There appears to be two main advantages: tutors have an equal standing and there is no separation between literacy, language and numeracy and the vocational content of the course. Three of the local providers are developing a team teaching method of providing literacy, language and numeracy support during theory sessions. This approach has not been implemented long enough for providers to evaluate its effectiveness.

Both methods of supporting the theory sessions can be seen to have benefits and perhaps the best option would be a flexible combination of approaches. This would ensure both high quality individual support combined with contextualised literacy, language and numeracy group teaching.

- *Separate group literacy, language and numeracy support*

An alternative is where a small group of students receive, sometimes short intensive, literacy, language and numeracy support separate from the course teaching. Two providers have offered this in the past. It was seen to be useful in that teaching was customised to the vocational group and was able to address specific problems.

An alternative to pre-established group support was the flexibility of setting up literacy, language and numeracy support to a group of learners need when

needed. If a whole group has problems extra support can be set up for the group. This is a method of literacy, language and numeracy delivery that is highly responsive to learner needs. An example of this occurred recently for a plumbing course. Such an approach has the advantage of being learner centred but has the possibility practical implementation issues e.g. teaching staff. However, it is reactive rather than a proactive approach and does not ensure that relevant needs are met. The recent Ofsted/ALI report Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages: a survey of current practice in post-16 and adult provision (2003) reports that there is a need to develop the “embedding” of literacy, language and numeracy within the context:

“In all provision, specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL tutors need to pay greater attention to ensuring that what they teach is relevant to learners’ vocational needs and their broader interests... Greater attention should be paid to improving the literacy and numeracy of young people employed in construction work...”

- *Literacy, language and numeracy staff*

The development of strategies to address literacy, language and numeracy needs of construction course learners requires staffing and continuing professional development. In some instances amongst local providers, this has resulted in a different way of deploying literacy, language and numeracy staff. For example, one provider is in the process of implementing two full-time literacy, language and numeracy tutor posts to support the vocational division. There are two schools of thought about the background and experience required for literacy, language and numeracy tutors operating in a vocational context.

During the research of this project both options were reported to be successful. One is that the tutor needs to be a literacy, language and numeracy specialist

but must be vocationally aware i.e. have some knowledge of the subject that is being taught by the vocational tutor. This is seen as particularly important for relating to the students and in relating literacy, language and numeracy to detailed aspects of the course. Some providers endorsed this attitude and cited effective examples. Similarly, Leeds College of Building also reported the effectiveness of this approach. Where a tutor did not have vocational awareness, some providers gave the opportunity to attend taster sessions. Providers in the Black Country reported that this had been more successful than employing a tutor with no vocational subject awareness. The Black Country LSC Vocational Core Curriculum Training dissemination event held in Oldbury in January 2003 endorsed this perception.

The second approach is that the literacy, language or numeracy tutor needs to be or have been a vocational tutor but is also literacy, language and numeracy trained. The latter is not the vocational tutor in this context but has a detailed knowledge of the subject. A similar perspective was held by one of the seminar leaders at the NIACE Embedding Literacy, language and numeracy dissemination event held in Coventry in March 2003. The more general issue is the degree of subject specialism that is perceived to be required. There are also practical and wider implications of requiring all literacy, language and numeracy tutors to have experience teaching a vocational subject, particularly given the range of courses taught within the construction curriculum.

- *Vocational tutor training*

The question of whether literacy, language and numeracy training (a minimum of some form of literacy, language and numeracy awareness) is needed for vocational tutors is valid. Although providers evidenced awareness of literacy, language and numeracy issues it was reported that, in practice, some vocational tutors still have difficulties accepting the need for literacy, language and numeracy support on construction courses. There appears to be some

scope for continued professional development in awareness and understanding about literacy, language and numeracy and team teaching amongst vocational tutors. A provider who had been developing many innovative approaches reported still experiencing resistance from one of the vocational tutors. Vocational tutor awareness is an aspect of “embedding literacy, language and numeracy” which needs further development.

One of the providers out of the region (Leeds College of Building) is considering encouraging all vocational tutors to train in literacy, language and numeracy through the TPI initiative (2003). The intention is that vocational tutors will be literacy, language and numeracy aware. An added advantage is that course tutors would be able to identify students who are struggling and decide on an appropriate action. A further advantage was identified by The Black Country LSC Vocational Core Curriculum Training dissemination event. It was suggested that ideally literacy, language and numeracy-aware vocational tutors would be able to modify course materials and teaching styles to ensure the students with low literacy, language and numeracy are not disadvantaged.

- *Embedding language, literacy and numeracy in course design*

Two providers expressed the desire for literacy, language and numeracy to be an integral part of the course. One provider felt strongly that the key to this approach was the integration of literacy, language and numeracy into the design of the syllabus. It could be argued that this would enable literacy, language and numeracy to be delivered as a natural and highly contextual part of the course. This would not solve any general literacy, language and numeracy needs that students have but it would enable the course needs to be addressed in a highly specific way.

However, there could be several implications of such an option. The time constraints needed to deliver such a course could be a problem. Many

providers already report difficulties ensuring that students complete within the existing timescale so it is likely that additional literacy, language and numeracy and/or key skills content would place a further burden on the timescale of portfolio completion. It also raises the issue of the purpose of embedding literacy, language and numeracy: is to deal with the wider aspects of literacy, language and numeracy needs? or is it to address highly contextualised skills? There are further questions of course management, staffing, funding and timescales which would need to be considered. The NRDC Embedding Literacy, language and numeracy project is exploring best practice in this area.

- *Literacy, language and numeracy support to part-time evening students*

Whilst offering an extensive range of literacy, language and numeracy and key skills support to full and part-time day students only one provider offered similar options to evening students. One of the main reasons for this is the focus on Key Skills acquisition and literacy, language and numeracy support for 16-18 year olds. It was generally believed that learners over 18 were likely to have addressed any literacy, language and numeracy needs and were able to access support if they requested it. However, there does seem to be an argument that learners on part-time evening courses should be given similar opportunities to daytime students. Two fundamental reasons for this would be providing equal opportunities and the potential literacy, language and numeracy need of students aged over 25. None of the providers interviewed had quantified the extent of literacy, language and numeracy needs of learners on courses delivered in the evening.

One regional provider reported that it had dedicated literacy, language and numeracy and IT tutors for evening sessions. The sessions are staffed with a vocational tutor and either a literacy, language and numeracy or IT tutor. Learners have responded to this well. A further ingredient of success has been the consistency of allocated staff over a few academic years. The same

member of staff has worked with different course groups within construction. Staff/learner relationships and rapport with different course groups have developed.

- *Literacy, language and numeracy support in practical sessions*

Whilst most providers are aware of the need to support literacy, language and numeracy in the theory sessions of construction courses the practical sessions are not supported. Providers did not report that this was an area of difficulty but one provider had just begun to offer support in practical sessions that was proving effective. This seems an area of developing literacy, language and numeracy support that could be explored to ensure that the needs of learners are met in all learning situations.

- *Construction Literacy, language and numeracy/Key skills Centres*

One provider operates literacy, language and numeracy/key skills support from a centre for construction students. The existing centre offers 1:1 tuition and up to 2 x2 hour sessions a week if needed. Individually customised literacy, language and numeracy support is offered. It has proved very popular with the learners and has been able to respond flexibly to learners needs. Such an approach to literacy, language and numeracy support tends to deal with the literacy, language and numeracy needs of the whole person rather than those required in completing a section of the course.

In some cases, the provider had secured additional ESF funding has been secured so that the learner can develop their literacy, language and numeracy to complete the course. However, this was not always feasible and it was reported that the learners sometimes left courses because of funding issues rather than course completion or literacy, language and numeracy acquisition. Appendix 4 contains an analysis of current funding streams (2003) for additional

learning support above the entitlement threshold of a full-time course that was explored during the initial research phase of the project.

Another provider expressed the desire to establish a literacy, language and numeracy support centre on the same site as the delivery of construction course. Another provider has a study centre in the same area as the construction sessions. The location of such centres within the curriculum teaching rooms has practical advantages for learners. Many construction learners are more likely to drop in for assistance at an in-house centre rather than to make a special journey to one that is an unfamiliar and remote part of the college.

Employer Perspective

- *Is there a literacy, language and numeracy problem amongst construction workers?*

All employers interviewed had experience of staff who had literacy, language and numeracy problems. No employer interviewed had quantified the extent of the problem in their own company or were aware size of the problem at sector level but several were able to recount anecdotal examples. They were aware of the impact of individual cases on their work and company and cited their active involvement in resolving the issues

- *Attitude towards literacy, language and numeracy skills*

All of the employers interviewed in person believed strongly that employees are unlikely to admit that they have literacy, language and numeracy needs. They reasoned that this is partly because of the culture of the industry and partly because many people develop working practices that avoid the formal application of literacy, language and numeracy. Local and national employers were aware and could give examples of the coping mechanisms adopted. This raises the question of the extent that literacy, language and numeracy is recognised as an issue within the industry. A small sample of telephone interviews revealed a reluctance to discuss the question and a denial that there was a problem amongst employees. This suggests the need to develop literacy, language and numeracy awareness amongst local construction companies.

- *Recruitment policy and language, numeracy and ESOL needs*

For some of the employers the issue of employees having literacy, language and numeracy needs could be traced back to the need for appropriate recruitment policies within companies. For example, one employer stated that he would not recruit someone with literacy, language and numeracy problems if they were over 25. This would suggest the need to address such needs prior to seeking a job and as early as possible after leaving school. Indeed, many

employers believed that literacy, language and numeracy needs should be addressed before the employee is 25. It was seen that the employee rather than the employer should address this problem.

Another company previously had many employees who had language, literacy and numeracy problems (over the years the work involved more documentation). This issue was solved over time. Some years ago many of these employees took voluntary redundancy or gradually left due to natural wastage. Currently, there is not a problem of employees having literacy, language and numeracy needs as the recruitment policy was changed. Each of the apprentices is required to have GCSE grade C or higher in English and Maths. In effect, literacy, language and numeracy needs are screened out of the organisation at recruitment.

- *What is the employers' solution to literacy, language and numeracy needs?*

The general attitude of employers was that employees should address their literacy, literacy and numeracy needs either during vocational training at college or by individual private tuition/college teaching. They believed that this was the best solution because employees would not have to admit their weaknesses in the workplace. The general consensus was that if poor literacy, language or numeracy skills surface at work the employers believe that the solution is individual and should be addressed as and when it arises.

One employer, in particular, commented that he was aware that Key Skills is offered as part of the FMA and believed that this should address the issue. It was perceived that colleges offer effective support as two employers had experienced having a dyslexic employee who was given extra support as part of his training. Such a response highlights the close relationship of literacy, language and numeracy and key skills that is perceived by employers. To an extent, this perspective has links with the way in which providers respond to key

and literacy, language and numeracy skills. It is an area that will be addressed over the next two years as part of the national convergence project commissioned by the DfES.

All employers interviewed rejected the feasibility of onsite literacy, language and numeracy training. However, there are mixed experiences outside the region. A provider outside the region (in Wales) reported on the difficulty of establishing a programme on site; it took several months of careful negotiation, planning and materials development. Unfortunately, the targeted employees were made redundant before the programme was implemented. By contrast, Nuttal (CTRL) has delivered level 1 language programme to a group of thirty employees who need to complete their NVQ. The ten sessions lasted for two hours a week and the training took place after work but the employees were paid an extra £15 for attendance. The programme was delivered onsite at Kings Cross Station. Another example of onsite literacy, language and numeracy training for construction employees has taken place at Canary Wharf. The programme was developed by UCATT and Lewisham College. Employees were encouraged to visit the learning centre to access the IT facilities but it is intended to begin a language programme for up to eight employees in the near future.

Some employers believe that the introduction of the CSCS card will highlight the literacy, language and numeracy needs. It is felt strongly that onsite literacy, language and numeracy training would be not be feasible as employers are aware that it can be difficult enough trying to get employees to attend college. The employers interviewed anticipated resistance to literacy, language and numeracy training particularly as they knew that their employees had developed their own coping strategies at work. This opinion was supported by the observation that most employers believe that their employees learn

effectively on the job. Such a perspective places the onus on employers to ensure that an employee is working as effectively as possible.

Generally, the employers interviewed during the research believed that the ideal solution is seen to be where the course syllabus addresses and builds in literacy, language and numeracy learning. It is believed that poor literacy, language and numeracy skills should be addressed at an early age to prevent the learners from feeling negative about this aspect of their life. This is a perspective that concurs with that of some of the providers.

Learner Perspectives

Eighteen of the twenty learners interviewed were completing their Key Skills portfolio because it was a requirement of their vocational course. One student interviewed was not taking Key Skills as he was over 18 and had GCSE's in English and Maths. Another believed that he did not need to improve his literacy, language and numeracy because he could "use the tricks of the trade." Six strongly expressed the feeling that they wouldn't complete Key Skills by choice and only one of the six had found it useful for his main area of study. Three learners had found the additional learning of language, literacy and numeracy directly useful for their vocational study. The skills identified were practical and vocationally relevant e.g. speaking with the tenants, learning technical terms and language skills.

Only eight learners believed that the additional literacy, language and numeracy support had been beneficial. Each had come to a personal realisation of the need to improve their literacy, language and numeracy to help them to complete the course and to improve their quality of life generally. All learners were happy with the kind of key skills and literacy, language and numeracy support they received. There was no preference for a particular kind of literacy, language and numeracy support. Those who experienced support for the theory and practical had found this useful. Similarly, those learners who received 1:1 support at the vocational Literacy, language and numeracy/Key Skills Centre had found this effective.

Resources

The resource list is included in the appendix 5. From amongst providers interviewed and research commissioned by the Workplace Literacy, language and numeracy Network it was discovered that there are few resources available to support literacy, numeracy and ESOL within construction courses. Currently, there is a limited amount of industry specific resources available and the majority has been developed for Key Skills. Most providers have produced customised worksheets as and when required. For example, Carillion Training Ltd has a workbook which integrates the vocational area and Key Skills. Although originally created for Key Skills tutors, it is now used by the vocational tutors as course material. Construction industry related material for literacy, language and numeracy delivery support is an area that is currently being developed by the Adult Literacy, language and numeracy Strategy Unit.

PART TWO: ACTION RESEARCH

Working Group Activities

The managers of the literacy, language and numeracy departments and the Construction departments of local colleges within the Black Country were invited to take part in a working group in December 2003. A smaller group of literacy, language and numeracy representatives met to develop the terms of reference for the group within the remaining timescale of the project (i.e. April to December 2004). The aims of the group were to participate in a range of research activities to explore the most effective ways of supporting learners with literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs within the construction programme area.

The objectives were agreed as:

- To identify best practice in literacy, numeracy and ESOL support
- To embed best practice in literacy, numeracy and ESOL delivery to all construction learners
- To develop literacy, numeracy and ESOL awareness amongst all construction staff

The outcomes of the Working Group were identified as follows:

- To evidence best practice delivery models in literacy, numeracy and ESOL support.
- The implementation of best practice delivery models to all construction learners.
- The implementation of literacy, numeracy and ESOL continuing professional development to all construction staff.

It was agreed that an average of two Working Group meetings per term would take place. Forthcoming priorities consisted of the development of a Construction Screening tool aimed at over 24 year old part-time students, the development and delivery of awareness raising training for lecturers in

Construction departments, the development of materials and approaches to prepare Construction learners for the level 2 national test and the contextualisation of course materials. The Working Group prioritised the development of the screening tool and work was begun on this during the summer term. Existing practice was researched and suitable subject areas were decided. It was agreed that the screening tool would contain comprehensive guidelines.

Each member of the Working Group developed a section of the screening tool. It was decided that the tool would consist of five sections. The first two: an assessment of learning styles and spatial awareness and an assessment of written language were compulsory whilst one of the remaining three sections was selected according to the learner's intended course. The three sections developed were electrical trades, wood trades and painting and decorating. The selection process was based on local research and identification of needs. The screening tool consisted of multiple choice questions and an answer sheet was developed. A draft version of the tool was developed but this was not finalised because of time pressures upon group members during the autumn term. Unfortunately, the screening tool was not developed beyond a draft form and could not be included in this report. The working group was unable to achieve all of its priorities within the timescale.

The Working Group demonstrated that a collaborative approach to the development of literacy, language and numeracy support was possible. However, there were difficulties in implementing the aims of the group because of organisational pressures. Throughout the life of the working group all members remained committed to the project.

Tracking of Learners

Twenty construction learners were interviewed in person from three local providers between March and May 2003. At the time of the first interview all twenty consented to participate in a written survey. The learners were invited to participate in a telephone interview a year later and three consented to this. One of the learners has been unobtainable via the telephone. A further written survey was sent to the remaining interviewees and one returned the completed questionnaire.

▪ *The Findings*

- Case study A:

A is no longer on the Intermediate Construction Award Level 2. He was over 24 at the time of interview and established in his profession. His reason for returning to study was to obtain the CSCS card. During his face-to-face interview he had reported that the study skills support was the most useful i.e. how to phrase sentences particularly as he had been out of learning for a while. He had obtained poor qualifications whilst at school and when he left he began working in the family business. A is now the sole trader of that business as his father died a few years ago. The telephone interview revealed that he left the course as it was so tedious. He had started the course to obtain the qualification rather than the skills as he already has the working knowledge. The course itself was useful in that it intended to provide him with the qualification that he needed.

In retrospect, he would have preferred to be assessed for his skills on site rather than attend a course. He already had the construction skills that were being taught and he already had adequate literacy and numeracy skills for the course and for everyday living. He felt that he did not benefit from the literacy and numeracy sessions. A intends to contact the provider to find out whether he can obtain the qualifications by accrediting his working experience. He left

the course unclear about where to go next but does intend to contact the provider again to find out if he could gain the qualifications without attending the course.

- Case study B:

B has completed the Modern Apprenticeship in Carpentry Level 2. During his face-to-face interview he mentioned the shortage of lecturing staff in both the vocational area and sometimes for literacy support. The telephone interview revealed that B did find the literacy and numeracy support useful but he felt that he did not receive sufficient support. There were two other learners in the group and they seemed to take up most of the time available for support in the sessions. At the time of the first interview B had identified the need for more help, particularly on a Monday when sometimes there was no support available. He handed in his portfolio but is awaiting the results. He has been told that he can not begin the Level 3 but has been waiting three weeks to clarify his position. His apprenticeship with a local employer is complete but he has not obtained the level 3 qualification within the timescale required.

During the face-to-face interview B expressed concern about how he would be able to complete the literacy aspects of his job when he was on his own. The telephone interview confirmed that this has been a difficult area for him. The literacy and numeracy support received during the course did not prepare him for his work. Since coming out of his apprenticeship B has found the paperwork a struggle. He received some guidance from his supervisor but on the whole has had to work it out for himself. The paper work is still hard for him to complete. There have been additional difficulties (i.e. lack of a code book) that have made this harder for him in completing the paperwork. B's employer had been interviewed during the initial research phase and at that time had found that the support that B was receiving for literacy and numeracy was very useful.

- Case study C (Survey questionnaire)

C has completed his course (NVQ Level 1 in Brickwork) and is now working for a maintenance company. He did not find the construction course useful for his present employment. During the course he found that the numeracy support built his confidence but has not found the literacy and numeracy support beneficial for his current work. In hindsight, he thinks he would have benefited from working for an employer and having a one-day release course.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Providers assess 16-18 year olds at the beginning of their course but there is no formal mechanism for assessing those who are over 19 and those who attend evening provision (apart from one provider). Initial assessment for all would identify the extent of literacy, language and numeracy need and would assist in the planning of appropriate support. It is recommended that initial assessment for all part-time evening class learners be introduced to ensure that an appropriate learning programme is planned.
- A range of embedded literacy, language and numeracy models was identified during the research. These are described in Appendix 1. Flexibility and responsiveness of the provision was seen to be the key to effective literacy, language and numeracy support whilst initial assessment is important for retention and achievement. It is recommended that providers implement good practice identified in the publication of the NRDC embedded literacy, language and numeracy research project when it is published.
- Many providers have moved towards full-time Key Skills staff attached to the vocational area and one provider is recruiting a full-time literacy, language and numeracy support tutor for construction. It is recommended that the capacity for literacy, language and numeracy support continue to be strengthened.
- The Health and Safety test could be problematic for some employees because of its frequent use of multi-syllabic words and long sentence construction. Further research would be needed to investigate this.
- Almost all providers offered some form of literacy, language and numeracy support in the theory sessions but only one provider offered support in

practical sessions. This is an area for development of capacity and it is recommended that providers consider the benefits literacy, language and numeracy support in practical sessions of construction programmes.

- Similarly, only one provider offered literacy, language and numeracy support to part-time evening learners (33% had the need). It is recommended that the need for literacy, language and numeracy support be considered in relation to initial assessment and the learner's individual learning plan.
- There is a need to develop and build capacity of literacy, language and numeracy staff who can teach in a vocational context and to develop contextualised provision. It is recommended that CPD training activities are developed to local build capacity and to strengthen embedded delivery.
- It was generally believed that vocational tutors would benefit from continuing professional development in literacy, language and numeracy awareness and training in working as a team with literacy, language and numeracy staff. This is an area of development. The recent Ofsted and ALL report of Literacy, numeracy and ESOL: a survey of current practice in post-16 and adult provision (2003) also identifies an additional training need: "Some vocational tutors also need to develop their own literacy and/or numeracy skills." It is recommended that vocational tutors literacy, language and numeracy receive awareness training and vocational and Skills for Life practitioners attend joint team-building/embedded delivery training.
- Literacy, language and numeracy skills was not seen as a dominating issue with the employers interviewed. Alternative ways of dealing with literacy, language and numeracy needs had been developed. Some employers were reluctant to discuss or admit that poor literacy, language and

numeracy skills existed amongst the workforce. This suggests the need to develop awareness of the potential of workplace literacy, language and numeracy amongst employers. It is recommended that a series of employer awareness raising activities be developed to promote understanding of the issues.

- The action research Working Group model was effective in enabling local colleges to share good practice and to consider common approaches. However, a difficulty encountered during the life of the project was securing time to develop the screening tool. This model has potential to be developed further.
- The results of the learner tracking suggested that the perception of the benefits of literacy, language and numeracy changed over time. The learners commented that the literacy and numeracy support was useful in different ways at the first interview but this perception changed by the time of second contact. There seems to be no direct correlation between literacy and numeracy support and its helpfulness in equipping the learners with the literacy and numeracy skills required for employment.

APPENDIX 1

Models of Literacy, language and numeracy support

- *Model A*

This consists of ICA (Intermediate construction award)/FMA (Framework of modern apprenticeship) course and separate key skills sessions. There were some variations to this e.g. keys skills delivered either with other students or construction course students. The assignments are either generic or integrated with the construction course. Literacy, language and numeracy portfolio building support is given.

- *Model B*

As Model B - ICA/MA course, key skills sessions plus additional learning support option. Additional support is identified by formal assessment before and informal assessment during programme. The support takes the form of 1:1 either in the session or separately.

- *Model C*

This consists of the ICA/MA course, key skills sessions and literacy, language and numeracy support in theory sessions. The support is usually discrete and offered to each member of the group as required. Sometimes the literacy, language and numeracy practitioner teaches literacy, language and numeracy part of the theory session.

- *Model D*

This consists of ICA/MA course, key skills and literacy, language and numeracy support in practical sessions. Discrete support is given to students within group as required.

- *Model E*

This consists of ICA/MA course, key skills sessions plus literacy, language and numeracy support in a workshop/drop-in centre. Optional or statutory support is given on an individual basis. Drop-in centre is either generic or attached to construction courses.

- *Model F*

Literacy, language and numeracy support is delivered in company as part of NVQ assessment training but literacy, language and numeracy/IT sessions are separate from NVQ delivery. Literacy, language and numeracy is offered with IT around shifts on a drop-in basis.

APPENDIX 2

Project Schedule: Milestones, Timescales, Output, Phases

Year 1: 2002/3

| Date | Activity | Outcome |
|--------------------|---|--|
| Jan 03 | Steering Group appointed | Membership agreed |
| Feb 03 | 1 st Meeting of Steering Group to finalise project strategy | Minutes of meeting (showing any amendments to project strategy) and future dates |
| Jan 03 – Mar 03 | Consultation with appropriate agencies to establish existence of existing resources and referral to any leading experts in the field | Informing interim report, and capacity building activities |
| | Desk research: review of relevant existing research and materials to establish a benchmark | |
| | Interviews with local colleges and providers to establish current local practice and areas of improvement | |
| Feb 03 - Mar 03 | Identify and approach up to 6 employers to participate in research | Meeting summary report detailing employer needs, long or short term |
| Mar 03 | Interviews or focus groups with employers, employed learners and employees to establish customised initial assessment methodologies, client perspectives and any issues to be addressed | Brief summary of findings, including existing good practice |
| | Identify and gain appropriate permissions for learner cohorts to participate tracking exercise. | Signed agreement with and home contact details of learners from a range of companies / backgrounds |

| Date | Activity | Outcome |
|--------------------|--|--|
| April 03 – July 03 | Identify costs and funding streams to be utilised by providers for literacy, language and numeracy support | Details of costs and funding streams |
| | Support provider with the assessment of employees and planning of the learning | Provider support (through customised consultancy and guidance) |
| | First brief interim report detailing findings of desktop research and work to date issued to Steering Group for consideration | Interim report |
| | Integrate Steering Group recommendations into revised project plan | Revised project plan |
| | Tracking learners, interviews with learners | Tracking reports |
| Sept 03 - Dec 03 | Analysis of findings: preparation of second interim report in agreed format, including headline industry statistics, key issues, proven strategies for addressing employers' and employed learners' needs, etc. and any recommendations to inform national and local policy. Delivery of second interim report to Steering Group | |
| | Consultation/dissemination workshop for vocational and literacy, language and numeracy staff from target providers | |
| | Steering Group meeting: recommendations for ongoing work requiring national funding | (Minutes): Review and agreement of Phase Two |
| Dec 03 – Mar 04 | Dissemination activities: Write article/s for local press, LSC publication and web site. Establish project web site. Establish and use email lists. | Copies and records of dissemination activity |
| | Two workshops for providers to share good practice | Dissemination of good practice |
| | Support employers to identify appropriate providers and method(s) of initial assessment | Appropriate providers and methodology identified |

Year 3: 2004/5

| Date | Activity | Outcome |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| April 04 - July 04 | Tracking learners, interviews with learners from up to five employer literacy, language and numeracy programmes | |
| | Learner forum (Learner voices heard in safe environment) | Summary of findings |
| | Two workshops for providers to share good practice | Dissemination of good practice |
| Oct 04 - Dec 04 | Analysis and writing of final report | |
| | Steering Group meeting to review findings and feed recommendations into future work | Minutes of meeting. Recommendations incorporated into final report |
| | Final report | Delivery and dissemination of final report |

APPENDIX 3

| Type of support | Reason |
|---|---|
| Literacy and Numeracy – group support | <p>All of the learners need literacy, language and numeracy support. Key Skills and literacy, language and numeracy are supported together</p> <p>Reports between literacy, language and numeracy and vocational tutors to ensure that additional learning support is effective and is having an impact. Use alternative ways of collecting evidence for vocational course.</p> |
| In class support Literacy and numeracy for theory and practice | <p>Provides opportunity for all the learners to receive support. Tutors rotate around the group and support any individual that requests it. Supports learner during the theory and practice sessions. Support is given to full-time, part-time and evening programmes.</p> |
| One to one or group work as deemed appropriate after initial assessments in literacy, language and numeracy workshop. Choice of OCN or NOCN or work on personal Core Curriculum level following Diagnostic Assessment | <p>Used more systematically with trainees opting for progress within the BSNCC levels rather than work towards a recognised award.</p> <p>Currently about 38% of trainees receive one-to-one help. The remainder join small groups averaging max. 6 to a group.</p> |

APPENDIX 4

Funding Streams for Embedded Literacy, language and numeracy

All of the providers assessed using a Key Skills assessment at the beginning of the course. Some also used literacy, language and numeracy assessments, which could be a mechanism for identifying whether a learner requires additional support or to be placed on a literacy, language and numeracy programme. Additional support funding could be used to provide “assessment and review pre-entry, on-programme and on exit where this involves specialist inputs or a higher level of input than that provider on the learner’s learning programme”.¹

Model A

ICA/MA course the needs of the full-time 16-18 year old learner is funded at a flat rate (£1000). Additional and separate Key Skills sessions.

An entitlement programme of key skills, enrichment activity and tutorial support appropriate to support funding is not possible unless “provision additional to the entitlement has been delivered” or if they are eligible for disadvantage uplift. If the 16-18 year old learner is on a part-time programme and the Key Skills Qualifications of Communications and Application of Number meet the literacy, language and numeracy needs, this qualifies for the 1.4 programme weighting.

Model B

ICA/MA course and separate Key Skills plus additional support. Additional support for main vocational course. Additional support is defined as:

“Any activity that provides direct support for learning to individual learners, over and above that which is normally provided in a standard learning programme which leads to their primary learning goal. The

¹ DfES – Skills for Life Directory of Funding Sources for adult Literacy and Numeracy provision 2001-2

“learner’s additional support is required to help learners gain access to, progress towards and successfully achieve their learning goals. The need for additional support may arise from a learning difficulty or disability, or from literacy, numeracy or language support requirements”.²

In this instance, the primary learning goal is a construction course but additional help is provided to the learner.

“Additional funding units may be claimed where an institution provides additional support to a learner and the extra costs of doing so are above a threshold level”.³ A provider can claim if costs of additional support are over £170 per student for a part-time learner, and £501 for a full-time learner. The claim for additional funding can be made “based on the needs of the individual student and the clear demonstration by the institution that these needs can only be met by spending over and above what they have been allocated for the learning programme”.⁴

Key Skills achievement draws funding as described in Model A.

N.B. Notionally offered to a named individual but in practice is delivered to anyone in the group who requests help because of the culture of the learners and the need to support all the group. This support is not needed by the majority of the group – probably only needed by the named individual, but because of the dynamics of the group the named individual prefers not to be identified as having a need and may not accept or acknowledge the need, whereas others in the group may not have a justifiable need for support but may request help if available.

Model C

ICA/MA course, key skills sessions and literacy, language and numeracy support in theory sessions. Key Skills achievement draws funding as described in Model A.

² DfES – Skills for Life Directory of Funding Sources for adult Literacy and Numeracy Provision 2001-2

³ DfES – Skills for Life Directory of Funding Sources for adult Literacy and Numeracy Provision 2001-2

⁴ DfES Adult Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL A Guide to Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Funding 2003/3

Literacy, language and numeracy support in theory sessions. This does not draw additional funding as it is offered on a group basis:

“Where the majority of learners in a group appear to require additional help to succeed on their learning programme, this should be addressed within the design and delivery of the main learning programme...”⁵

N.B. One of the providers has a literacy, language and numeracy practitioner who ‘floats’ between two groups that are being taught at the same time. The fact that the providers have to absorb this added value teaching and learning may account for this practice.

Model D

ICA/MA course and literacy, language and numeracy support in practical sessions.

Key Skills achievement draws funding as described in Model A.

Literacy, language and numeracy support in practical sessions. This does not draw additional funding as it is offered on a group basis:

“Where the majority of learners in a group appear to require additional help to succeed on their learning programme, this should be addressed within the design and delivery of the main learning programme...”⁶

Model E

ICA/MA course and key skills sessions plus literacy, language and numeracy support in workshop/drop-in centre.

Key Skills achievement draws funding as described in Model A.

The funding would depend on the learner’s use of the centre. One provider delivered Key Skills and literacy, language and numeracy in the centre, whereas another provider delivered Key Skills in discrete groups and the drop-in centre was for literacy, language and numeracy or individual additional support.

⁵ DfES – Skills for Life Directory of Funding Sources for adult Literacy and Numeracy Provision 2001-2

⁶ DfES – Skills for Life Directory of Funding Sources for adult Literacy and Numeracy Provision 2001-2

Where literacy, language and numeracy in a workshop or drop-in centre is delivered through the additional support route as:

“...additional support where the programme has a primary learning goal which is not literacy, numeracy or English for speakers of other languages, but where additional help in any of these areas is provided to the learner”⁷

Additional support funding is claimed where the cost of the funding is over £501. One of the providers used this option.

Entitlement funding

Many providers absorb the costs of extra portfolio development sessions within the threshold entitlement.

ESF

Only one provider was able to manage to fund extensions and this was through 6 month ESF funding. The provider was not at college and was working in an area of social and economic deprivation and many of the students were young and had been unemployed, which made them eligible for such funding.

⁷ DfES – Skills for Life Directory of Funding Sources for adult Literacy and Numeracy Provision 2001-2

APPENDIX 5

Screening/Assessment

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|----------|-------------------|---|
| Title | <u>Initial Assessment</u> | Literacy | Yes | * Short initial screening assessment to determine learners' initial literacy, language and numeracy standard. Mix of multiple choice and open response questions. * Assessment widely used with construction industry trainees. * Intended to be followed with further diagnostic assessment. |
| Supplier | Literacy, language and numeracy Agency | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Trade focus | None | Paper | Yes | |
| URL | www.basic-skills.co.uk | CD Rom | Yes | |
| Cost | £17 | | | |
| Date | 2002 | Levels | Pre E1,2,3, E, L1 | * Mapped to the national standards |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|----------|---|
| Title | <u>Target Skills</u> | Literacy | Yes | * Used by many providers with FMAs and AMAs * Gives an accurate assessment of literacy, language and numeracy level * Questions adapt to learner's performance as they go along |
| Author | BSA, CTAD and ASE | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Supplier | CTAD | CD Rom | Yes | |
| Trade focus | None | Interactive | Yes | |
| URL | www.targetskills.net | | | |
| Cost | Priced according to size of organisation | | | |
| Date | 2001 | Levels | E, L1,L2 | * Mapped to the national standards |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|----------|---|
| Title | <u>Basic and keySkillbuilder Assessment</u> | Literacy | Yes | * Initial assessments from Entry level 1,2 and 3 to Literacy, language and numeracy levels 1,2 (B1 and B2 in interactive form, in addition to paper * Results generate a learning plan. * Assessment widely used with construction industry trainees. |
| Author | West Nottinghamshire College | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Supplier | West Nottinghamshire College | Paper | Yes | |
| Trade focus | None | CD Rom | Yes | |
| URL | www.keyskillbuilder.ac.uk | Interactive | Yes | |
| Cost | Priced according to size of organisation | | | |
| Date | 2001 | Levels | E, L1,L2 | * Mapped to the national standards |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|-------|---|
| Title | <u>Mindset 2000</u> | Literacy | Yes | * Diagnostic tests to profile key skills and literacy, language and numeracy at levels 1 and 2. * Used by some training providers with construction MAs. |
| Supplier | Mindset 2000 | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Trade focus | None | CD Rom | Yes | |
| URL | www.mindset2000.com | Interactive | Yes | |
| Cost | £250 stand alone - £1,000 network | | | |
| Date | 2001 | Levels | L1,L2 | * Loosely matched to the national standards |

Screening/Assessment

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|---------|---|
| Title | <u>Literacy, language and numeracy Screener</u> | Literacy | Yes | * 15 minute, easy to use assessments in literacy (reading and writing) and numeracy. Each assessment consists of 24 questions. * On screen feedback can be customised to meet the needs of the local provider. |
| Author | CTAD | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Supplier | CTAD | CD Rom | Yes | |
| Trade focus | None | Interactive | Yes | |
| URL | www.ctad.co.uk | | | |
| Cost | Priced according to size of organisation | | | |
| Date | 2002 | Levels | E,L1,L2 | * Mapped to the national standards |

Entry level materials

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|----------|----------|---|
| Title | <u>Making Numbers Count</u> | Numeracy | Yes | Entry Level: E1,E2,E3 for weaker learners preparing to work in the construction industry. Four rules, graphs etc. linked to construction based situations. Can be used 1:1 or in small groups. Underpinning knowledge in 'teach, try, apply' format. |
| Author | Barking College with Old Ford Housing | Paper | Yes | |
| Supplier | Barking College/Old Ford Housing | CD Rom | Yes | |
| Trade focus | Construction | | | |
| Tel: | Barking College 01708 766841(Pam Wright) | | | |
| Cost | Free - Pam will arrange to have a CD copied for you. | | | |
| Date | 2003 | Levels | E1,E2,E3 | * mapped to Entry Level curriculum |

Barking College and Old Ford Housing are working on a Literacy resource for issue in September 2003

Literacy and Numeracy

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|-----|---|
| Title | <u>Skillswise</u> | Literacy | Yes | * Although not trade specific the Skillswise site is the most frequently cited resource to be used with construction trainees! * Users say that it is particularly good for group work where it is used on an interactive whiteboard. * The 'In The News' section is useful for Key Skills test preparation * Formative and summative assessment |
| Supplier | e BBC | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Trade focus | General interest | Paper | Yes | |
| URL | www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise | Web based | Yes | |
| | | Interactive | Yes | |
| Date | Updated regularly | Level | L1 | * Mapped to the national standards |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|--------|--|
| Title | <u>Practice National Tests</u> | Literacy | Yes | * Practice for the National Tests in Literacy and Numeracy at Levels 1 and 2. * Includes feedback and marking * Appropriate for all MAs preparing for Key Skills tests |
| Supplier | Read Write Plus | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Trade focus | None | Web based | Yes | |
| URL | www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Learning | Interactive | Yes | |
| Date | 2002 | Levels | L1, L2 | Directly related to the national standards (Basic and Key Skills) |

| | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|-----|--|
| Title | <u>essential skills FOR WORK</u> | Literacy | Yes | Trades listed: Bricklayer, Plasterer, Renderer, Scaffolder, Steeplejack, Carpenter, Plumber, Demolition operative, Construction operative(steel fitter), Roof sheeter and cladder, Electrician, Builder's labourer * Well presented and extensive. For trainees to work through on their own. Do use the audio if possible. Underpinning knowledge and assessment. Use in conjunction with an Individual Learning Plan to keep trainees focussed. *Equally suitable for adults |
| Author | BE Consultancy | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Supplier | TUC/learndirect | Web based | Yes | |
| Trade focus | Construction | CD | Yes | |
| | | Interactive | Yes | |
| This is a significant resource which will be well used. At the time of writing it is at advanced testing stage please check with BE on 01691- 624634 for release date. | | | | |
| Date | 2003 | Levels | L1 | * Mapped to the Level 1 curriculum |

Literacy and Numeracy

| | | | | |
|-----------------|--|-------------|-----|--|
| Title | <u>SkillITEST</u> | Literacy | Yes | *Automatic testing; 1200 multiple choice questions; feedback and revision;portfolio evidence;student centred; database and reporting system; images by the 100s (think key skills!) * Incorporates learn or test modes * Although not designed for literacy, language and numeracy the material is excellent and worth looking at - recommended by users |
| Descriptor | ICA and NVQ knowledge testing | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Supplier | Dale Software | CD Rom | Yes | |
| Trade focus URL | Brickwork trades www.dalesoftware.co.uk | Interactive | Yes | |
| Cost | Site licence £245 + £3.50 p&p | | | |
| Date | 2002 | Levels | L 2 | * compatible with all brickwork trade schemes for NVQ and ICA |

| | | | | |
|-----------------|--|----------|-------|--|
| Title | <u>Industry Information Pack - Construction</u> | Literacy | Yes | * Section 3: Statistics and Facts consists of tables and graphs, mostly to 1998. |
| Supplier | Learning and Skills Development Agency | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Trade focus URL | Construction www.lsda.org.uk | CD Rom | Yes | |
| Cost | Free: Download and order form from the lsda website | | | * Source material for making your own resources. |
| Date | 2002 | Levels | L1,L2 | * Data source only |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|----------|-----|---|
| Title | <u>Trowel Occupations</u> | Literacy | Yes | Produced with input from the CITB and extensively trialled with employers. Glossy, full colour production. |
| Author | Literacy, language and numeracy Agency | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Supplier | Literacy, language and numeracy Agency | Paper | Yes | Pack is a starting point only, not a full set of materials. |
| Trade focus | Construction; Trowel Occupations L2 Focuses on units MR07, MR08, MR09, MR186, PR07, MR188 | | | Best used by a trainer with a trainee, or group of trainees, in a situation where support can be given and extension activities can be provided to practise the skills in the pack. For tutors: The pack highlights key issues and common problems that you need to be aware of during training sessions. |
| Tel: | 0870 6002400 Order no: A1397 | | | |
| Date | 2003 (include also as staff development resource) | | | |
| Cost | Pay only for p & p £5.30 | Levels | L2 | * Literacy, language and numeracy curricula mapped to the occupational standards |

Other web based resources

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|-------|---|
| Title | Resource Discovery Network | Literacy | Yes | <p>* A teach yourself tutorial about using the Internet - contextualised to the construction industry.</p> <p>* The 'tour' links to some construction sites and provides practice in search techniques, reading, judging sites and practice in underpinning IT Key Skills.</p> <p>* Clear language, instruction and explanation</p> |
| Author | University of Bristol | IT | Yes | |
| Trade focus | Construction | Web based | Yes | |
| URL | www.vts.rdn.ac.uk/tutorial/ | Interactive | Yes | |
| Cost | Free for non commercial use | | | |
| Date | 2000 | Levels | L1,L2 | |

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|-----|--|
| Title | Skillplan | Literacy | Yes | <p>* Canadian organisation to improve the essential skills of people working in the unionised industry of British Columbia and the Yukon territories. Connects the context of construction with learning</p> <p>* Document literacy - texts and forms used. Sample on website</p> <p>* Concrete words - strategies for learning technical language</p> |
| Author | British Columbia Construction Industry Skills Improvement Council | Web based | Yes | |
| Trade focus | Construction | | | |
| URL | www.skillplan.ca | | | |
| Cost | Free for non commercial use | | | |
| Date | Current | Levels | L2 | Possible stimulus material for embedded literacy, language and numeracy |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-----------|-----|---|
| Title | Painting and Decorating on the net | Literacy | Yes | * Paperhanging basics includes a 'ready reckoner' on how to measure up wallpaper for walls, ceilings and stairs. * Could do with a bit more explanation for the calculations |
| Supplier | Bozzle | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Trade focus | Paper hanging | Web based | Yes | |
| URL | www.bozzle.com | | | |
| Cost | Free for non commercial use | | | |
| Date | Current | Levels | L2 | Possible stimulus material for embedded literacy, language and numeracy |

| | | | | |
|-------------|---|-----------|-----|--|
| Title | Bob's Plumbing Advice | Literacy | Yes | * Offers advice on tools, repairs, DIY projects such as pipes, joints, central heating and FAQs. * Visual appeal: some diagrams and an enthusiast's touch |
| Supplier | Bob Barley | Numeracy | Yes | |
| Trade focus | Plumbing | Web based | Yes | |
| URL | http://freespace.virgin.net | | | |
| Cost | Free for non commercial use | | | |
| Date | Current | Levels | L2 | Possible stimulus material for embedded literacy, language and numeracy |