

Case Study 2

Wade Training – Lurgan

Wade Training Ltd has offices in Lurgan, Portadown, Armagh and Newry. We provide free transport from the other offices to Lurgan, where the majority of the education and training takes place.

Our aim at Wade Training is to provide high quality training for all our learners, enhancing the occupational skills within the community through the delivery of Training for Success and Apprentice NI, while remaining a caring organisation. We deliver a variety of vocational areas such as Hairdressing, Childcare, Retail and Business/Administration. We also offer Essential Skills and personal and social qualifications to enhance trainees' employment prospects.

Training for Success (TfS) is available to young people aged 16–18 (or up to 24 for those requiring additional support). It provides training to give them the tools and skills they need to enter employment.

Blending Progress File into the Training Programme

Wade Training provides young people with the relevant qualifications as well as personal and behavioural skills to progress into work, using Progress File, Employability and Business Enterprise classes for this. We also encourage the development of learners' career management skills, helping them to develop attributes that they will need to progress and succeed in their chosen career.

However, from feedback we knew that trainees were reluctant to engage with the work on their Progress File. They had completed something similar at their previous school, further education college or training organisation, and they looked on it as a chore – not seeing any potential benefits to completing it.

As a result, we developed a scheme of work to integrate the Progress File and Widening Horizons materials into trainees' induction period, Employability and Business Enterprise classes, as well as embedding it into their vocational and Essential Skills lessons. With this programme, completing the Progress File has become more fluid and trainees have been engaged in the learning process.

Implementing a Blended Progress File

Induction period – TfS trainees complete an intense twelve week induction carried out by Vocational tutors, Essential Skills tutors and Development Officers. During this period the trainees settle in to their new environment and explore how they learn best.

We use Widening Horizons materials during this settling in period, and we find it best to emphasise the importance of skills development. We want to make the trainees feel that they are an integral part of Wade Training, their peer group and society as a whole, by developing their skills as volunteers who contribute to their community.

The trainees keep all work from the induction as extra inserts in their Widening Horizons resource and store these with their Progress File.

Employability Skills – TfS trainees are allocated one hour a week to work on their employability skills. The Vocational tutors follow a generic Employability scheme of work for this, making vocational links during the lesson. Evidence is stored at the back of trainees' vocational folders.

Trainees also follow Widening Horizons materials during these Employability lessons. We have found that certain sections are best delivered by Vocational tutors: learning about the importance of action planning, CV writing and making career plans is essential in guiding trainees in their chosen career path.

We also tie Widening Horizons in closely with our delivery of Literacy and ICT skills, embedding it into Essential Skills teaching. For example, trainees complete a first draft CV in an Employability lesson, proofread it in Literacy and word process it in ICT. They keep a final copy in the folders for all of these, as well as in their Progress File.

Business Enterprise – One key skill in Widening Horizons is the ability to make context-appropriate presentations. We embedded this skill into Business Enterprise lessons in a 'Dragons' Den' style. Trainees create a PowerPoint detailing a business plan to start their own business, for example a hairdresser would present a business plan about opening a new salon. This ties in well with ICT skills and allows trainees to learn, in a fun and constructive way, the importance of making presentations.

Reviewing the Implementation

On reflection, our integrated scheme of work – embedding Progress File and Widening Horizons materials into Employability, Business Enterprise and Essential Skills – has been a huge success. By examining our existing delivery and identifying where we could build on Progress File, we have strengthened our practices. This has allowed trainees to take ownership of their qualifications and encouraged self-assessment, making them more self-aware and building confidence to achieve and gain employment.