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<td>Research has found that learners benefit from being taught by teams of staff that include both LLN specialists and subject or vocational specialists. Collaboration works best when staff share goals and work closely together to plan the curriculum. Look for naturally occurring opportunities to embed LLN skills.</td>
<td><strong>Embedding literacy, language and numeracy (LLN)</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;&lt;b&gt;Building blocks&lt;/b&gt;&lt;br&gt;LLN skills are building blocks – an integral part of learning, not something bolted on. Treat LLN needs exactly the same as any other learning need. Highlight the practical benefits of LLN skills and how they are the key to progressing in any job or field of study.</td>
<td>You may work alone and not have access to an LLN specialist. However, there are many web-based resources to help you. You can also join networks, online groups and forums to get support and share resources for embedding LLN.</td>
<td>We are all on a steep learning curve when trying to embed LLN. Feedback from learners can help us find out what is working and what is not. Before embarking on an activity that requires a particular LLN skill, make the need for the skill explicit and allow learners to identify if they need a warm-up task to practise the skill before they start on the main activity.</td>
<td>In sessions where LLN skills are embedded, identify vocational and LLN learning objectives with learners. Making the LLN learning explicit helps them to see the relationship between vocational practice and LLN skills. However, remember that the vocational curriculum should not be distorted to include all the LLN skills that learners need to acquire to pass national tests. This will disengage them. Additional LLN sessions may well be necessary for many learners.</td>
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<td><strong>Mapping the LLN territory</strong>&lt;br&gt;The adult literacy and numeracy core curricula are invaluable, not least because they provide the concepts and language that enable teachers to crystallise their thinking and develop a shared understanding of LLN. They are also useful when mapping LLN skills to the vocational specification and they provide ideas for lively activities to use in subject or vocational area sessions.</td>
<td><strong>Spiky profiles</strong>&lt;br&gt;Any group of learners is likely to have a very 'spiky profile'. One learner may speak little English, another may be weak at numeracy, and so on. Individual learners are likely to have spiky profiles too, with a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. A strong focus on ongoing assessment and differentiation of the learning can help to address these diverse needs.</td>
<td><strong>LLN learning objectives</strong>&lt;br&gt;Learners need to know what they are trying to achieve in terms of LLN; but LLN objectives should not be bolted on. They should drop out of an analysis of which LLN skills will enable the learner to achieve their vocational objectives. The LLN objectives must support the vocational objectives.</td>
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Embedding literacy, language and numeracy

The Leitch Review of Skills (2006) highlighted the important role played by literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) skills in the development of a skilled workforce. In response, the government has set out ambitious targets for skills achievement. By 2020:

- 95% of adults should have functional literacy skills at Level 1 and functional numeracy skills at Entry Level 3
- over 90% of adults should be qualified to at least Level 2.

Programmes that embed literacy, language and numeracy will have a major role to play in meeting these targets. The term ‘embedding’ is interpreted in a number of ways, but the concept of integrating LLN teaching within a subject or vocational area is central to all.

“Embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language and numeracy with vocational and other skills. The skills acquired provide learners with the confidence, competence and motivation necessary for them to succeed in qualifications, in life and in work.”

DfES/The National Research and Development Centre (NRDC) (2004)

Research evidence from the National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy (NRDC) (Casey and others, 2006) points firmly towards embedding LLN teaching within the occupational context as essential to success. Where programmes are presented to learners as an integrated whole, incorporating two or more learning aims, there are:

- higher retention rates
- improved success rates for vocational qualifications
- higher achievement of literacy and numeracy qualifications
- more positive learner attitudes and higher motivation.

The research concluded that a simple definition of ‘embedding’ was not possible as a range of effective models were found. However, four main groups of key features emerged where LLN was fully embedded into courses.

- **Organisational structures**: management policies and structures to support embedding in principle and in practice.
- **Team work**: partnership between vocational and subject area teachers and LLN teachers* sharing formal and informal planning time, team building and often, team teaching. Effective timetabling was a critical feature.
- **Attitudes and beliefs**: teachers with shared understanding and values. Positive attitudes can be fostered through experiential continuing professional development (CPD) which can help to challenge staff attitudes.
- **Teaching and learning**: effective curriculum planning, resources and learning activities that develop subject content and LLN skills.
* We use ‘teaching and learning’ and ‘teacher’ as generic terms to include:

- teaching, training and learning
- teachers, tutors, trainers, lecturers and instructors in the further education (FE) system.

Learners were less likely to gain literacy and numeracy qualifications when their teacher was asked to take dual responsibility for teaching vocational skills and LLN. Learners benefited from being taught by teams of staff, each with different areas of expertise, working closely together.

To learn more about how to embed LLN in your teaching and learning look at the Embedding LLN CPD builder and the references below.

Look at: Skills for Life, basic skills, key skills, functional skills – what’s the difference? to find out how the term ‘LLN’ is defined in these resources.

References


Quality Improvement Agency Excellence Gateway Skills for Life website.

Whole Organisation Approaches for Delivering Skills for Life Project. (2007) One of a suite of projects designed to embed Skills for Life across post compulsory education. Includes case studies of pathfinder projects illustrating a wide variety of delivery models and approaches that can work well.

You will find links that exemplify embedding literacy, language and numeracy in the Teaching and Learning Programme resources.