

## Family Man and Fathers Inside

The success of the Skills for Life strategy depends on partnership between all the stakeholders who contribute to improving adult teaching and learning. The prison and probation service is one of the key stakeholders in the strategy. Family Man and Fathers Inside make an excellent contribution towards the success of the Skills for Life strategy.

The Basic Skills Agency has three priorities linked to raising standards. These are:

- Improving speaking and listening skills
- Supporting basic skills at transition points
- Engaging people disengaged from learning.

Family Man and Fathers Inside focus strongly on improving speaking listening and responding skills.

Prison is a transition point in the life of a prisoner and his/her family. Many prisoners have poor experiences of school and may be reluctant to undertake any further learning.

The 'drilled down' priorities of the basic Skills agency relevant to the Family Man and Fathers Inside courses are:

- Young parents

Many fathers will be in their early twenties and have several children, possibly with different partners.

- Challenging neighbourhoods

They may have lived in challenging neighbourhoods and will return to the same area when they are released. Their partners and children are likely to remain near friends and family.

- Parents of 0-3yr olds

Many prisoners will have children aged 0-3 years.

- Grandparents

Many prisoners in their thirties will be grand parents.

The Moser Report, 'A Fresh Start,' details the increased levels of depression, anxiety, poverty, morbidity and mortality that are linked to poor educational achievement and the large numbers of prisoners who have poor basic skills.

Family Man and Fathers Inside are heavily focused on the development of speaking and listening, skills linked to self-awareness and consideration for others. Developing competence in speaking, listening and responding builds self-confidence and prepares students for improving their reading and writing skills. The teaching and learning materials in both courses aim to build self-confidence and encourage participation in the learning process.

Both courses recognise that anxiety and lack of confidence are powerful barriers to learning. Adults with poor basic skills are reluctant to read and write and may develop their verbal skills in order to avoid discovery. The courses build on existing strengths and encourage the self-confidence that is essential for further learning.

Adult learners respond to teaching and learning that has relevance to their life experiences. Families, however they are defined, are where learners recognise the significance and complexity of relationships. Possessing vocabulary to voice thoughts and feelings and the confidence to speak, listen and respond is essential to the teaching and learning relationship. Fathers Inside and Family Man focus on active involvement in learning with outcomes that are personal to the learner and support their return to their families and the community.

The teaching materials are detailed, well laid out and enable the tutor to plan, implement, observe and evaluate every lesson. The tutor notes are comprehensive and the schedules support course planning. The materials are generic but relate to real life contexts for the students. The lessons raise issues aimed at provoking thought and discussion about communication skills, parenting and family roles, needs and responsibilities. There are opportunities for group discussion, small group discussion and one to one discussions.

The skills required for the cell work are discussed and practised during the lesson so that students are able to succeed at their individual levels of ability.

Both courses focus on group learning and thinking and reasoning skills that can be referenced to the Speaking, Listening and Responding standards of the Adult Basic Skills Literacy Curriculum ranging from Entry 1 to Level 1.

The materials provide a range of differentiated activities that are appropriate for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners. Kinaesthetic learners would benefit from handling and discussing objects, such as a children's toys or household equipment.

The focus of each lesson is on concentrating, preparing and completing a task. Time for personal reflection and evaluation are included in every session. The courses encourage the students to consider outcomes and consequences.

An essential part of the Skills for Life strategy is the right of every adult learner to participate in individual screening and assessment prior to negotiating an Individual Learning Plan. The screening and assessment tools enable the tutor and the learner to identify the strengths and weaknesses of an adult 'spiky' learning profile in accordance with national teaching and learning standards.

Diagnostic assessment for learning difficulties may also be appropriate after an initial assessment has taken place.

The use of initial screening, assessment and diagnostic assessment tools would ensure that tutors and learners are basing the teaching and learning on Skills for Life standards.

Many basic skills students have learning difficulties linked to dyslexia. The colour of paper, style of font and page layout of the journals and portfolios used by the learners on both courses are in accordance with good practice .

The course materials are produced on cream paper and the font is appropriate for all learners. Good practice in working with students on the dyslexia continuum is the same as good practice for all students.

The information booklet has all the glossary words listed in capital letters. Learners who are dyslexic may find words written in capital letters easier to access but also writing the words in lower case letters would assist learners who are developing an awareness of using capital letters for proper nouns and the beginning of sentences.

Individual initial assessments at the beginning of the courses and an assessment when the courses are completed would have enabled learners progress to be monitored. The courses are based on group learning but a more individual focus would be in accordance with the Skills for Life strategy.

Both courses identify key vocabulary words that students need to understand in order to participate in the lessons. Some of the words and definitions are complex and many of the words are polysyllabic which increases difficulty for Entry 1 and Entry 2 learners.

Enabling students to gain verbal competency in using correct terminology during the lessons is excellent preparation for more focused work at 'sentence' and 'word' level in grammar and spelling. The key words provide relevant material for teaching spelling strategies based on syllables or the Look, Cover Write Check strategy that is based on hand and eye coordination and handwriting. This would support students at Entry 3 who may consider working towards the Level I National Literacy Test.

#### Summary

Family Man and Fathers Inside are courses that support the Skills for Life strategy. They are focused on Speaking, Listening and Responding skills and link very closely with the National Literacy Standards.

## Marketing

The unique selling points of both of these courses are that they focus on Speaking, Listening. Learning providers and distance learning providers have produced a great deal of material aimed at enabling learners to succeed at National Tests Level 1 & 2 but high quality Speaking and Listening material underpins all aspects of teaching and learning. Enabling students to gain confidence in Speaking, Listening and Responding is an essential first step in their learning journey. Without this approach many adults with poor basic skills would not return to learning.

Skills for Life providers within Local Authorities and Colleges of Further Education would find the material relevant to groups of young parents in the community. The partners of men in prison often feel isolated and unsupported. If the men on the course knew their partners were considering similar issues the impact of the courses could be increased.

There is the possibility of some of the material being adapted for distance learning so that partners can become involved by accessing ICT equipment at home or at their local library

Skills for Life providers could link with Sure Start. The Step in to Learning programme has trained Sure Start staff in signposting parents towards learning and Sure Start staff are aware of FE and LEA Wider Family Learning and Family Language, Literacy and Numeracy (FLLN) budgets. The teaching and learning objectives of the courses meets the government commitment that 'Every child matters.'

Charities such as the Ormiston Trust and Parents First! work with young parents and children who experience loss and bereavement. The Ormiston Trust works with Sure Start, The Prison Service and a wide range of other agencies.

Young parents in the army often have poor basic skills. Difficulties involving domestic violence and/or child protection take up a great deal of time for Family Officers and welfare staff. Both courses offer the opportunity for reflection and discussion about issues that may improve family relationships and encourage further learning. Role play, empathy and discussion about needs and responsibilities may enable families to solve problems without verbal/physical violence.

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April 2005

Health services are becoming increasingly concerned about children's lack of communication skills. In many areas of the country referrals to Speech and Language Therapists are very high and there is increasing focus on preventative work in order to reduce referrals.

Parents attending Fathers Inside and Family Man courses learn a great deal about verbal and nonverbal communication skills. These skills are essential for learning and children learn them best from parents and family.

Social Services currently offer courses in parenting to families who ask for support. Focusing these courses on Speaking, Listening may be an approach that supports parents with basic skills needs who are invited to attend these courses.

## Funding Embedded Basic Skills Provision.

Embedded teaching and learning combines the development of literacy, language and numeracy with vocational and other skills. .

Embedding basic skills is an approach to curriculum delivery and involves at least one vocational learning aim and one basic skills learning aim. The teaching and learning of both the vocational and the basic skills learning aim should be acknowledged and recorded.

For funding purposes an embedded approach requires two or more learning aims to be in place - one for the vocational programme and the other for the additional literacy, language or numeracy programme.

Learners will be enrolled on both of these learning aims and funding will be drawn down accordingly. Only the basic skills learning aim will be eligible for the 1.4 programme weighting uplift. The vocational learning aim will be paid at the usual programme weight for that subject. Each learning aim receives its related programme weighting and the 1.4 weighting uplift would not apply to the whole course.

(LSC Briefing Note on Embedded Basic Skills - April 2005)

## The Percentage of Fathers Inside and Family Man course activities that are Linked to the National Standards for Literacy- based on spreadsheet cross referencing.

<b>Fathers Inside</b>			
	S&L	Reading	Writing
Entry 1	63%	12%	11%
Entry 2	52%	28%	18%
Entry 3	50%	34%	21%
Level 1	11%	11%	3%

197 course activities- 63 % of course activities relate to E1 standard for

5% of course activities relate to E1 standard for Reading

11% of course activities relate to E1 standard for Writing

An increased focus on key words would increase the % of activities related to E1, E2, E3 and Level 1 standards in Reading and Writing.

<b>Family Man</b>			
	<b>S&amp;L</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>
Entry 1	46%	5%	6%
Entry 2	57%	42%	19%
Entry 3	64%	52%	29%
Level 1	52%	30%	29%

183 activities- 46% of course activities relate to E1 standard for SpLan&R

5% of course activities relate to E1 standard for Reading

6% of course activities relate to E1 standard for Writing

An increased focus on key words would increase the % of activities related to E1, E2, E3 and Level 1 standards in Reading and Writing.