

Learning ^{FOR} Work SERIES

Tutor/Mentor Guide

About this series

This series is made up of nineteen booklets and a guide for trainers/supervisors/mentors, who support people using the booklets. The series was specially written to provide employees and prospective employees with the key skills they will need to operate effectively within a working environment. Booklets are aimed at non-managerial workers, although in some instances managerial workers may find specific booklets useful, to help them brush up on particular skills.

Booklet topics cover the key areas of workforce development, for example, communication, IT, number, study and learning skills. The booklets can be used separately or form an integrated programme of learning and skills development. The series is not intended to be worked through sequentially or in its entirety. However, you may wish to do this if it meets the needs of the learner to do so.

These booklets are ideal for use by workers and prospective workers in a whole range of sectors, for example, care, production, leisure, community services, retail, administration and distribution.

The series can meet a variety of needs, including those of:

- individuals wanting to broaden their skills or gain a qualification
- learning & development and human resource specialists wanting to improve workplace skills
- small and medium sized businesses wanting to improve organisational performance
- trainers and lecturers wanting to use the materials as part of existing programmes.

The aims of the series

These are to provide:

- cost effective development in the key skills necessary for effective performance at work
- medium to long-term development for non-managerial workers
- easily accessible materials which can be used to suit the learner's personal circumstances and at the learner's own pace
- materials which do not require long periods away from work
- motivation to those who have become switched off from learning.

Your role as Tutor/Mentor

The booklets are designed to be a self-standing method of development. Nevertheless, the learning process will be very much enhanced if there is an organisational or team champion to make sure that systems are in place to support learners.

You may be a:

- supervisor
- development officer
- union learning representative

- librarian
- college lecturer running workplace programmes.

The booklets can be used anywhere, not just at work. Therefore you may be a friend, relative or neighbour who has been asked to support someone using the booklets. If this is the case you need only concentrate on the aspects of the role, which are to do with giving advice, feedback and support.

You may also be a college tutor and in this role you may want to use the booklets as part of another course or training programme. The booklets can support workplace based training, GNVQs, NVQs or key skills. It is important to use an integrated approach.

Advising learners on choice of booklet

Some learners will be clear about what it is they need to learn; others will need more support. The best way of offering advice about choosing a booklet is to talk to the learners about themselves, e.g. what job they do, what they find difficult/easy, what they would like to improve and what skills they would like to learn.

After discussing one or more of these areas you will probably end up with several skills which the learner would like to develop. If the list is very long it may be necessary to discuss which are the most important.

The next stage is to match these skills with the topic areas in the booklets. You may need to offer the learner further help by identifying which parts of the booklet meet their learning needs. This can be easily done by completing the questionnaire and learning plan in the introductory section of each of the booklets.

Example of a questionnaire

	How often do you need this information/do this in your job?				How confident do you feel?		
	A	B	C	D	1	2	3
	not at all	not very often	fairly often	fre- quently	not at all	fairly	very
SECTION 1: Understand why we have meetings							
Use techniques to help meetings to be more successful							
Understand the differences between informal and formal meetings							
Write an agenda							
SECTION 2: Increase your confidence at meetings							
SECTION 3: Lead a small team meeting							
SECTION 4: Write up notes during and after the meeting							

Example of a completed learning plan.

Example: My learning plan for making effective presentations to group.

I need to go through the following areas to make sure that I am getting them right:

1. Deciding what information to include and leave out (Section 1)
2. Using visual aids (Section 3)

I need to increase my confidence and spend the most time on these areas:

3. Making myself more relaxed about giving a presentation (Section 3)
4. Coping with difficult people (Section 3)

Introducing students to the system of learning

You can introduce learners to the booklets in a number of ways; by talking to a small group of learners, talking to individual learners, sending out an interesting leaflet, with you as a point of contact. They can also be introduced as part of an initial interview for enrolment or planning a learning programme within a College-based framework.

It is important to know your learners. Some will be able to take the booklets and get started straight away. Others, e.g. those with bad experiences at school, little experience of learning, personal difficulties and reading and writing difficulties will need a lot more help and support.

Providing support and encouragement

You will find that many learners in the target group for these booklets, lack confidence about their abilities. They will need a lot of support and encouragement to overcome barriers such as fear of written work, which they have built up over the years.

Many of the learners will also be sensitive and easily put down. It is important to give lots of praise and to be informal and friendly.

Giving feedback on activities or advising as to where to obtain the best feedback

The tone of your comments, either written or verbal, is very important. Comments such as, 'What else could you say about the meeting?', 'Do you think you could include your experience in managing a family budget?' helps build confidence and motivation. It is better to comment by asking questions and getting the learner to think about the activity in a different way.

Learners who lack confidence need a lot of praise and encouragement. Try to give a lot of specific feedback, e.g. 'you have identified all the right points in that question'. General feedback such as 'that's fine' is encouraging but it does not help the learner identify what he/she is doing right. It is important to build in moments of reflection when learners can take stock of their progress.

Integrating and customising the booklets

If you are a tutor or college lecturer try to customise the booklets to the learner's working environment or aspiring work area. Encourage examples from places of work and use workplace information as well.

*Monitoring learner progress
and identifying difficulties*

It is all too easy for learners to take away the booklets and forget about them. Encourage learners to keep a ring binder with their work in it and to log the date they did their work and what their thoughts were at the time.

You will need to have a system for contacting learners if you have not heard from them for a while.

*Being a point of contact and advising
learners of the best way forward*

It is useful for them to have you as a point of contact. You may find that a learner will have a number of difficulties. For example: difficulty with an activity, not seeing the relevance to their work, getting behind with their training plan.

A supervisor or colleague may be a better source of help. However, it is very important to have you as a safe point of contact.

Keeping records of student progress

Whether you are a Supervisor, Trainer or a Project Supervisor, you need to keep a learner log of the following:

- learner's name and the booklets being worked on and start date
- a brief note of advice and support given
- follow-up on learner's progress.

What is available?

There are nineteen titles in the Learning for Work Series:

WORKING WITH PEOPLE

27. Brushing Up on Customer Care
23. Effective Team Working
31. Leading Team Meetings and Briefings
25. Improving Telephone Skills

DEVELOPING WRITING SKILLS

1. Introducing Writing Skills
3. Writing Letters at Work
5. Writing Better Reports
4. Improving Form Filling

IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

2. Sending Memos and Messages
26. Making Better Presentations
32. Developing Interview Skills
24. Contributing to Meetings

DEVELOPING ESSENTIAL SKILLS

39. Developing Better Ways of Studying
21. Getting Started on the Internet
18. Using Microsoft Access Database
19. Using Microsoft Excel Spreadsheets
20. Using E-mail
17. Using Microsoft Word for Word Processing
33. Writing a CV

If you require further information
contact .:

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FOR LEARNING**