

Sustainable Numeracy – Skills for life Innovation

Somerset College



Project Synopsis

To provide a flexible e-numeracy course that has clear benefits for both adult learners and business organisations, specifically those in sustainable industries.

Project Aims

- 1) To produce a numeracy resource that will enable learners to achieve a National Test in maths at Level 1 through studying contextualised resources made available through the college's VLE (Scoodle).
- 2) To improve the quality of life for adult learners through the attainment of improved skills in numeracy and informed participation in sustainable development.
- 3) To demonstrate how a flexible approach to employee learning, numeracy embedded in sustainable development, can also improve the capacity of businesses.

About Somerset College and Sustainable Development

Somerset College in Taunton enjoys a location where the County's aim is to progress as part of the 'Green Economy' - sustainable development is a key priority. To this end, Somerset College has pursued a number of sustainable development initiatives highlighted by its award winning Genesis Building, a showcase in sustainable construction on campus.

Other College initiatives in sustainability have made significant impacts such as in recycling and travel. Course provision in sustainable development has also increased with a wide range of learners from school children, to adult learners and business.

Consequently, the Project Team felt that embedding a Numeracy course in Sustainable Development was a natural choice for Somerset College.

Project delivery

Initial Research

Initially, we undertook a review of current embedded numeracy provision and identified a niche that the College was particularly expert to fill - Sustainable Development. An internet search of key numeracy and sustainable development sites followed and a trial Sustainable Development glossary was drafted.

Assembly of Core Project Team

A Skills for Life numeracy lecturer and a Sustainable Development lecturer were identified to champion the Project initiative throughout the College. In addition, the core project team included the Project Manager.

Drafting of 20 Week - 10 Modular Course

To produce a draft embedded numeracy course, the Sustainable Development Lecturer provided the initial content, listing key themes and issues in sustainability. The numeracy lecturer then embedded relevant numeracy topics and tasks.

It was agreed amongst the Project Team that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) should become the cornerstone of our Modular e-Numeracy Course. Keen to emphasise both the commitment required from employers and the benefits they stood to enjoy, CSR was seen as a useful introduction to the Sustainable Development agenda – particularly for learning in the workplace.

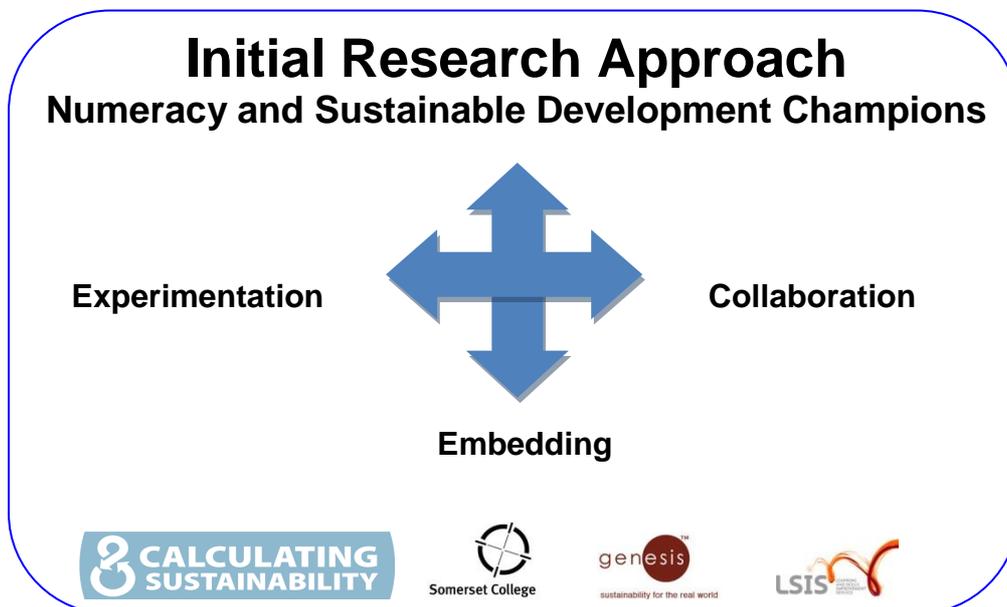
Media Design and Learning Technology Support

Once a hard copy draft was complete, the core Project Team sought relevant IT expertise from within the College to translate the resource into an effective e- resource accessed via the College's Moodle – 'Scoodle.'

Enlisting the help of a Media Designer and the Scoodle Administrator, the overall ascetic design was developed and Modules 1 to 10 templates took shape.

Collaboration across College

As Calculating Sustainability developed, collaboration with other areas of the College increased. In this way, dissemination of Project activity also increased as staff became interested in Sustainable Development embedding for their own specialist learning areas such as Functional Skills and the need to develop an e-learning course which embedded literacy into sustainability became apparent. This is now in the design stage but will be called Communicating Sustainability as the team's view was that the two courses could work in parallel to each other and the course title followed the same theme. The Calculating Sustainability e-course and, when completed, the Communicating Sustainability e-course could support the teaching of all three Functional Skills, maths, English and ICT very effectively in some vocational areas.



Production of Modules 1-10

Through our initial experimentation and collaboration with Media Design and Information Technology Support, draft Modules 1-10 were uploaded into the 'Scoodle' templates and the course piloted by six adult learners. Access to the course was restricted at this point to the six pilot learners, numeracy lecturer, sustainability lecturer, 'Scoodle' administrator and the project manager.

Key Features of Calculating Sustainability Modules include:

- Modular Numeracy e-course embedded in Sustainable Development
- Flexible learning via College VLE - 'Scoodle'
- Expert Numeracy/Sustainable Development tuition
- Ongoing student progress monitoring and support via 'Scoodle' reporting and e-mail
- Student Forum, Blog and Glossary
- Link to www.move-on.org.uk for Level 1 test practice
- Links to a wide range of Sustainable Development e-literature
- Interactive learner questionnaire and quizzes
- Virtual tour of showcase Genesis building and expertise in sustainability

Pilot Research: Learners

During the development of Modules 1-10, 6 adult learners participated in evaluating the embedded nature and functionality of our new resource. Pilot learners reviewed and fed back directly to the amendment process of Modules 1-10, working closely with the Numeracy champion and the Project Manager and changes were made accordingly.

Pilot Research: Employers

The Project team produced a leaflet as a means to promoting the *Calculating Sustainability* pilot study. This was e-mailed to target employers.

Our lead question 'Do you have a CSR plan?' not only reflected the cornerstone module of our planned 10 module numeracy embedded in sustainable development course but, also, represented the lever by which we might attract business commitment to this type of course provision for employees.

It is our intention to continue to research businesses that have Corporate Social Responsibility Plans as a means to the future development of this course.

Final Amendments to Modules 1-10

Following our piloting activity with learners, the Project Team worked closely with the Learning Technology Hub to make further amendments to improve course content and delivery.

Project Outcomes

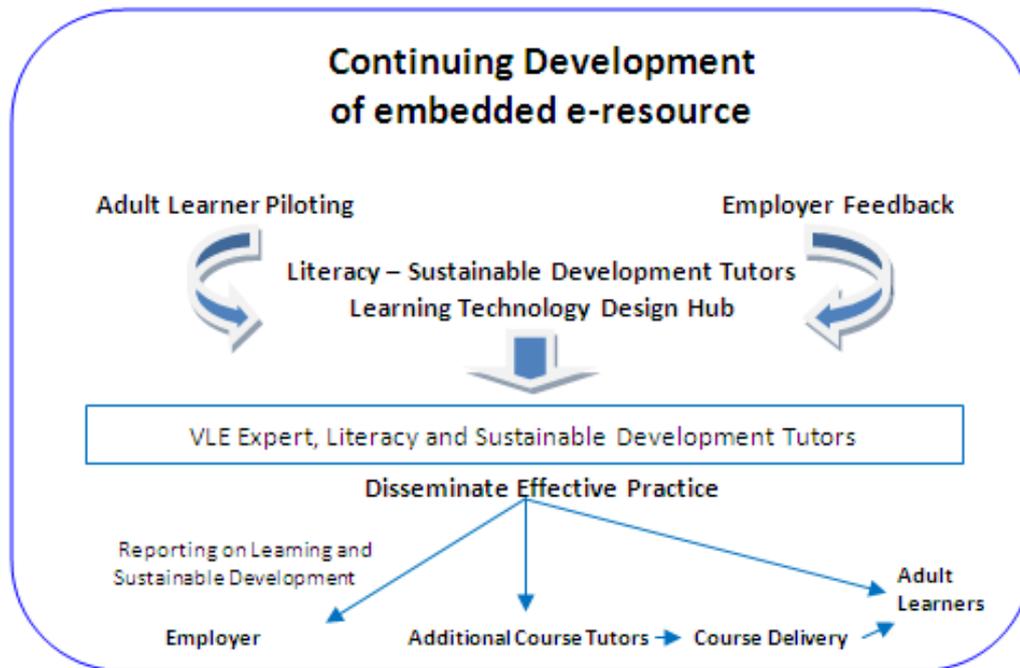
Evaluation

Inevitably, lessons have been learned en route: eg: the need to be mindful of limitations to resource development due to time constraints, academic calendar, current economic climate affecting staffing within the College and staff teaching commitments. However, successes have also been achieved.

Successes

- The finished production of Calculating Sustainability Modules 1-10
- Collaborative work with staff across College; Lecturers, Media and Learning Technology Hub
- Revised research model for the continuing development of the embedded e-resource

Sharing of Project Findings



- The application of sustainable development embedding to other courses eg ESOL
- The crucial role of Media Design and Learning Technology support, evidenced by this Project, influences the development and delivery of e-course provision and is integral to our Teacher Education at Somerset College
- Increased engagement with learners and their employers about the benefits of
- 'Calculating Sustainability'
- Calculating Sustainability will be hosted on the Genesis website allowing access to the wider sector eg., University of Plymouth learners and apprenticeship schemes
- CfBT Education Trust have approached the College to become a Lead Provider and share some expert practitioner input at a numeracy specific Peer Exchange Group on embedding numeracy into sustainability using on-line resources such as our Calculating Sustainability course.

Marketing Strategy

Target Audience: Employers and their employees from companies within the low carbon industry or companies who have a vested interest in sustainability.

Segmentation: South West of England. As student would have to come into college for introductory session, it stands to reason that they would need to be close enough to travel within half a day.

- Somerset
- Devon
- Cornwall
- Bristol
- Dorset

Unique Selling Point:

- Free of charge
- E-learning course with tutor support – apart from first session
- Nationally recognised L1/2 qualification in numeracy
- College certificate for the sustainability aspect of the course
- Unique offering

Marketing:

- E-Flyer shots to database of selected employers
- Postal flyer campaign (direct mail) to employers
- Website to be updated – to be included in 'news' section
- Publicity to be sent to local and regional media (on this unique course)



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