ACHIEVING YOUR DIPLOMA *in* EDUCATION *and* TRAINING

2nd Edition

Jim Gould and Jodi Roffey-Barentsen

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NEW TO SECOND EDITION

The primary updates to this new edition of *Achieving your Diploma in Education and Training* include new reflective activities placed throughout each chapter, these tasks challenge you to engage critically with the topics and points raised in the text and will help to develop your thinking on key issues.

Also new to this edition is new content on employability skills, which has been incorporated into Chapter 1 as well as a Further Reading feature which has been added to each chapter in order to direct you toward other literature in the field.

Alongside these updates, the book has been revised more generally to reflect major developments in Further Education and Skills Sector education and training that have taken place since the publication of the first edition.

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1

EDUCATION AND TRAINING: THE TEACHER'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This chapter sets the scene for those who are working, or are intending to work, within Education and Training. It looks at what teachers actually do and what is expected of them by examining the different aspects of the teaching role, the associated responsibilities and boundaries of practice. Issues of diversity, inclusion, differentiation and equality figure largely in this mix and the different terms are defined and their implications for practice explained. Ways of setting ground rules which contribute to an inclusive approach to teaching are explored before the chapter finishes with a discussion of the importance of functional skills and the part that teachers play in supporting the needs of learners in this respect.

When you have completed this chapter you will be able to:

- categorise the different roles fulfilled by the teacher in the Further Education and Skills sector and give examples of these roles
- describe the specific responsibilities associated with the teaching role
- define the following terms: diversity, inclusion, differentiation, equality
- state the different aspects of diversity exhibited by learners within Education and Training

(Continued)

- recognise that different learners have different preferences in learning style
- list different strategies employed in providing a differentiated learning environment
- identify different aspects of equality and how these impact on practice
- evaluate different approaches to the setting of ground rules, identifying which would be appropriate within your own teaching context
- define the terms 'minimum core' and 'functional skills'
- describe what is meant by the term 'embedding functional skills'
- identify when employability skills are embedded within the session
- differentiate between activities that fall within and outside of the role of the teacher.

TEACHING IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Teaching qualifications within the Further Education and Skills sector have undergone several changes in the last few years. The Level 5 Diploma in Education and Training was introduced in 2013 replacing the previous Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS), as a consequence of the findings of the 2012 Lingfield report (BIS, 2012) into professionalisation within the sector. The new diploma is part of a suite of qualifications (including the Level 3 Award and the Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training) introduced with the intention of simplifying the overall qualification structure and bringing it into line with the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The diploma is built up by combining a number of units. These are divided into two groups. Group A contains a number of mandatory units at Levels 4 and 5, which will be taken by everyone who is enrolled for the diploma. They are:

Teaching, learning and assessment in education and training (20 credits, Level 4)

Developing teaching, learning and assessment in education and training (20 credits, Level 5)

Theories, principles and models in education and training (20 credits, Level 5)

Wider professional practice and development in education and training (15 credits, Level 5)

The remaining 45 credits at Levels 4 and 5 required to complete the diploma are taken from a list of optional units contained in Group B.

Although there is some overlap with various optional units, the chapters in this book primarily address the requirements of the mandatory units. The 'fit' between chapters and units can be found in the mapping document in Appendix 1 at the end of the book.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

When we think about a 'role', we consider the duties or activities we associate with a given job or position. If you take on the role of a lorry driver, for instance, your role is to drive a lorry. If you are a dancer, you dance; if you are a cleaner, you clean. Logically then, if you are a teacher, you teach. Is this the full story of the role of the teacher though? Certainly, teaching will constitute a large proportion of what you do, but unlike the other examples above, being a teacher involves much more than the 'core' role that the name of the occupation suggests.

ACTIVITY 1.1

Take a moment to reflect on everything that you do in a working day. Keep a brief log for a week of all the activities in which you engage during your working day to get an idea of the scope of the job that you are doing. For example:

Monday

9.00 Answer emails – two course enquiries.....

Activity 1.1 illustrates that although it is reasonable to assume that passing on knowledge or skills to learners is the main activity in which teachers are involved, a good proportion of the working day is spent on other pursuits. Your analysis of your daily work pattern will have identified a number of sub-roles, many of which will appear in Figure 1.1. The initial impression given by the results of this exercise is that the list is scarily long and one is tempted to wonder how we can possibly fulfil all of these functions within the hours allocated – but somehow we do!

An analysis of the overall role that we fulfil helps in coming to a conscious recognition of all that we do. This recognition can help us in managing and organising our time. For this purpose, it can be helpful to consider the various roles as falling into discrete categories. For example:

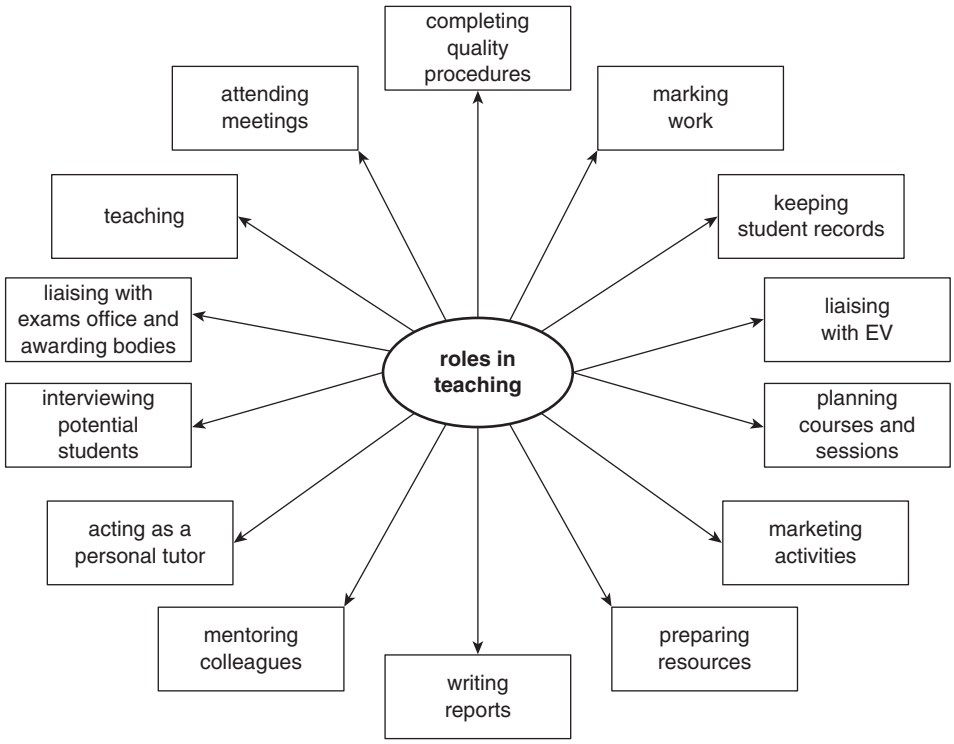

Figure 1.1 Roles of the teacher

TEACHING-RELATED ROLES

Writing schemes of work and session plans; preparing resources; preparing and delivering teaching sessions; marking work; giving feedback to learners; acting as an internal verifier; taking part in course development.

ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES

Writing reports; marking registers; keeping learners' records; implementing quality procedures; corresponding with parents, employers and examining bodies.

INSTITUTIONAL ROLES

Attending parents'/open evenings; preparing prospectus entries; dealing with course enquiries; acting as a mentor to new colleagues; attending meetings; providing data.

PASTORAL ROLES

Acting as a personal tutor; chasing absences; dealing with lateness or discipline problems.

Once identified, the various sub-roles can be prioritised, enabling them to be more effectively and efficiently managed. Tensions can still arise, however, as various roles compete for our time and difficult decisions often have to be made. A further complication arises in that considerations of what constitutes a priority can depend on the viewpoint taken. Others may put pressure on us to engage in what we consider to be less important tasks at the expense of what we see as more important tasks. Your view and your line manager's view, for instance, may differ as to whether thorough preparation of tomorrow's teaching session is more important than completing those employer feedback forms that have been lying around for some time now. If both have to be completed for the next day and there is only sufficient time to tackle one properly, which will it be?

An awareness of all that is asked of us also means that we are better able to identify which aspects of our role we feel uncertain about so we can plan our CPD opportunities accordingly. Whilst we may feel reasonably confident in the performance of the main duties we have to carry out, we sometimes have to take on a role with which we feel less comfortable. You may have been asked to take on a tutoring role, although you feel you do not have the necessary experience or preparation, especially if having to teach aspects of social and personal education are included in this. This could be raised as a developmental issue at appraisal or you could enquire at an earlier stage about the possibilities of shadowing a more experienced colleague who was in this role.

REFLECTIVE TASK 1.1

Take a moment to consider the different sub-roles that you are expected to fulfil during your everyday working life. Which of these do you consider to be your core 'professional roles'? Can you identify any tensions between any of these roles – if so, how can you resolve these?

RESPONSIBILITIES

As we have seen, a lorry driver has a narrower and more easily definable role than a teacher. Within that narrower role, however, there are a number of responsibilities. There is an expectation that the lorry will be driven in a safe manner showing due respect for other road users and with regard to any speed restrictions that might apply. The lorry driver will be expected to keep up to date with relevant legislation, such as the number of hours that can be spent driving in a 24-hour time period; to check the roadworthiness of their vehicle and ensure that it is securely loaded before venturing onto the road. Lorry drivers are not unique in this respect, and, over and above the defining of tasks or duties associated with the specific role to be filled, *all* jobs are accompanied by an associated set of responsibilities. As well as carrying out all of the duties associated with the teaching role we are to fulfil, there is also an expectation that we do a 'proper job', subscribing to what is considered 'good practice', carrying out the role in a professional manner. But what exactly does this mean?

For a start, we are expected, like our lorry driver, to be aware of and keep up to date with the various bits of legislation that apply to our role.

ACTIVITY 1.2

Whilst some legislation is at least in part subject-related, there is a considerable body of legislation that applies within the Further Education and Skills sector as a whole. List as many examples as you can of legislation which must be adhered to in the performance of the teaching role.

You may be surprised by the amount of legislation you have identified and by the range of activity it covers. To help make sense of it all, we can consider it as falling into the following categories:

- Legislation relating to health and safety – the responsibility to provide a safe environment, both physical and psychological:
  - Health & Safety at Work Act (1974)
  - Manual Handling Operations Regulations (1992)
  - RIDDOR – Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995)
  - Management of the Health & Safety at Work Act (1999)
  - COSHH – Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (2002).

- Legislation relating to equality – the responsibility to treat others with due respect and ensure equality of opportunity for all:
  - DDA – Disability & Discrimination Act (1995)
  - SENDA – Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)
  - Sex Discrimination Act (1975)
  - Race Relations Act (1976, amended 2000)
  - Human Rights Act (1998)
  - Equal Opportunities Act (2004)
  - Most of the above have now been subsumed into and replaced by the Equality Act of 2010.
- Legislation of a more general nature – including the responsibility to safeguard learners and their rights:
  - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
  - Data Protection Act (1998)
  - Copyright Designs and Patents Act (1998)
  - Computer Misuse Act (1990)
  - Protection from Harassment Act (1997).

The range of legislation is vast and is subject to periodic change. Fortunately, the institution that you work in will have responded to the vast majority of the legislation listed above and will have translated it, through a variety of different committees, into institutional policy. You will, for example, have to undergo a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service – formed through a merging of the Criminal Records Bureau [CRB] and the Independent Safeguarding Authority [ISA]) check before you can take up a placement or enter into employment in most institutions in the sector. New staff will be informed of institutional policy as part of their induction programme and all staff will be informed of policy updates and changes. By following institutional policy, you will therefore generally be complying with the appropriate legislation. You still need to be aware of any particular legislative requirements related to your subject specialism, however, and follow the procedures these demand (e.g. filling in risk assessments before taking students off-site or wearing appropriate personal protection equipment in workshop environments) in a responsible manner.

There is also a more general responsibility to comply with a Code of Conduct. A new professional body for the sector – The Education and Training Foundation (originally proposed as the Further Education Guild) – came into being in 2013 and part of its remit was to promote professionalism in the sector, which included the setting of professional standards and code of conduct. This replaced the Code of Conduct originally provided by the Institute for Learning (IfL) which covered Integrity, Respect,

Care, Practice, Disclosure and Responsibility. The current professional standards can be found at www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/support-practitioners/professional-standards/

Alongside this runs the 'doing a good job' or 'exemplifying good practice' element and this is more difficult to pin down. Sometimes, it can be difficult to identify 'good practice' as it leads to a smooth-running process. It is often better to start with a consideration of 'bad practice', which is easier to identify as its results are more easily recognisable.

REFLECTIVE TASK 1.2

Drawing on your own experiences of being taught, make a list of what you consider to be 'bad practice' in teaching and use it to construct a 'good practice' list. What does this list tell you about the responsibilities associated with the teacher's role? Use this list as a framework to reflect upon your own practice – how does it compare?

You might like to check your list against the points made in the following chapters, but in the meantime use it as a checklist against which to compare your own 'good practice'.

The next section looks at another major responsibility associated with teaching within the sector and relates to differences in learners and their implications for the way we go about teaching.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

ACTIVITY 1.3

You will come across the terms diversity, inclusion, equality and differentiation frequently in your reading around practice in the sector and in your conversations with colleagues. Before you read the next section, think about what these terms mean to you. When you have finished this chapter, you may want to come back and revisit these thoughts. Imagine you are at a social gathering and are taking part in a conversation with a reasonably large group of friends and acquaintances. The topic of conversation is quite contentious

but involves something that everyone in the group has some familiarity with, although the level of knowledge is quite varied. You know quite a lot about the topic and know most of the group but not all of them. How would you participate in the conversation? Would you talk to everyone in the same way? Would you use the same tone of familiarity and the same level of vocabulary with everyone? Would you talk to some of the group and not to others? Would you treat all contributions to the conversation with the same respect?

The above is quite a common situation and we normally call on a variety of social skills when engaging in such a conversation. We may explain a point or express a view in a different way depending on who we are talking to; we would probably smile encouragingly or ask a straightforward question of someone who seemed to be struggling to take part in the conversation so that they wouldn't feel left out. Although we disagreed with some of the points made, we would still acknowledge the right of others to hold and express their own opinions. We would probably do all of these things intuitively without even thinking about them. In short, we would recognise the differences in the various people in the group and respond accordingly, allowing effective communication with everyone and making them all feel part of the conversation.

When we teach, we are faced with a similar situation. Any group that we meet will contain a rich mix of learners with their own particular backgrounds, capabilities, previous experience and confidence levels. The term we use for this variety in learner characteristics is *diversity*. We will, however, want to ensure that, regardless of difference, all learners participate fully in and feel part of the sessions we deliver. We will want our sessions to be *inclusive* of all learners in the same way that we would want everyone to feel part of the conversation described above. We would want to demonstrate 'inclusive practice', engaging in 'an approach to teaching and learning that endeavours to encourage the fullest participation of learners and that recognises and respects equality and diversity' (Duckworth and Tummons, 2010: 21).

In conversation, we achieve this through tailoring our exchanges with others in a way that we think is appropriate to that particular individual. To achieve this in a teaching situation, we would need to recognise the differences in our learners and respond to these through the use of *differentiation* strategies, an approach which 'both recognises the individuality of learners and also informs ways of planning for learning and teaching that take these individualities into consideration' (Duckworth and Tummons, 2010: 21).

Just as we would be respectful of others and their views in a social setting, we would also have to ensure that all learners felt their contributions would be valued and opinions respected, encouraging them to participate fully in the teaching session. This would form part of the *equality* policy that operated during our sessions.

In normal life, we deal with all of these quite naturally, using the social skills we have built up over the years. In our teaching life, we need to develop an equivalent set of teaching skills to manage the same issues when we meet them within the learning environment.

We will consider the issue of diversity first.

REFLECTIVE TASK 1.3

We have defined diversity as the range of different characteristics displayed by learners. What differences have you noticed in learners you have met? Do you think you have responded to these and if so, in what way?

When we are born, we have no experience of the outside world – we are essentially a blank page waiting to be written on, and so early on in life the diversity within a group is relatively limited. As we progress through life, we begin to form a sense of our own identity which is shaped by the experiences we have. As we grow older and gain further experience, this sense of identity, or who we are, gradually becomes more clearly defined but also more complex. By the time learners reach the stage of young adults, this process is fairly well advanced and so groups of learners within the sector tend to exhibit a far greater range of diversity than, for instance, the schools sector. Diversity in learners is thus more prevalent in the Further Education and Skills sector and needs to be recognised and taken account of.

Diversity can be viewed in different ways. It can be considered as a further complication to be taken account of in teaching – a problem to be solved. Alternatively, it can be regarded as a characteristic which enriches, rather than complicates, the learning environment. Diversity can be thought of as introducing new ideas and ways of looking at things – it can broaden horizons and become a resource for learning. It is this latter view of valuing or 'celebrating' diversity that leads to the positive inclusive learning environment that we would wish to create.

ASPECTS OF DIVERSITY

What form does this diversity take?

The 2010 Equality Act describes diversity in terms of nine protected characteristics:

- age
- disability

- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

Definitions of these can be found at www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics

The issues raised by these characteristics will largely be addressed through institutional policy, and our view of diversity needs to be wider ranging and consider all aspects of diversity which have a direct impact on learning. When we first meet a group of learners, some aspects of diversity are fairly evident, others less so. The analogy that is often used to illustrate this point is that of an iceberg. When we see an iceberg, what is visible to us is that part of the iceberg which protrudes above the surface of the sea. The vast bulk of the iceberg, however, lies beneath the surface. To obtain an accurate picture of the whole of it, we would have to explore beneath the surface as well as above it; similarly with the learners we meet. They display a physical presence that we can see, but if we wish to understand them as a whole, we need to probe beneath the surface to see what is hidden there. Some of the characteristics we might come across are illustrated in Figure 1.2, along with their relative visibilities.

How do we get to know our learners? How do we begin to find out what lies beneath their various surfaces? The first steps in this process may be taken before the course itself actually commences. *Initial assessment* can provide a preliminary picture, and has two principle functions:

1. To ensure that learners are placed on the appropriate course or programme of study.
2. To identify any form of additional support that will be required in order for learners to be successful on their chosen course.

The first of these functions is normally met through some form of interview process and we may make contact with our prospective learners at this point. The interview process should answer questions such as:

- Does the learner fulfil any entry requirements that exist?
- Is this course a natural progression from qualifications already held?
- Is the course pitched at an appropriate level?
- Is the course compatible with learner aspirations and career goals?

Its purpose lies in ensuring that learners are placed on the most appropriate course in the first place. Retention has a major impact on funding and we wish to ensure that

Figure 1.2 The diversity iceberg

Source: © istockphoto.com/ultra_generic

once accepted onto a course learners will 'stay the distance'. Having arrived at an appropriate choice of course, will learners require any additional support in order to ensure a successful outcome? We would not want to set anyone up to fail, and wish to avoid the consequences for funding of lack of achievement on the part of learners. Initial assessment normally includes, therefore, a number of tests relating to capability in numeracy, literacy and ICT, as well as a possible identification of learning styles. So it is possible, depending on our level of involvement and the rigour of the initial assessment process, that we will have some advance knowledge of our learners, but at a minimum we should be aware of the results of the tests they have taken as part of the initial assessment process.

Once we meet learners as a group in the learning environment, we gradually get what is colloquially termed 'a feel for' both the group and the individual learners

within it through the work they produce, the comments they make and the conversations we have with them, either on an informal basis or as part of a tutorial function; in short, by doing all of the things we normally do in the process of getting to know people.

DIVERSITY AND LEARNING

Given that any mature group we meet in everyday life will exhibit a range of individual differences, why is it of particular concern to us as a teacher within the sector? The simple answer is that the differences identified above have an effect on the way in which people engage in the learning process.

ACTIVITY 1.4

Look at the characteristics in the 'diversity iceberg'. Pick out three characteristics and identify the effect each might have on a person's learning. How might you respond to each characteristic in your teaching? Use a grid like the one below to structure your response. An example entry has been provided.

Table 1.1

Aspect of diversity	Effect on learning	Teaching response
Self-concept	If poor, might lead to lack of confidence	Set work which results in successful outcomes, increasing confidence

LEARNING STYLES: AN EXAMPLE OF DIVERSITY

Ginnis (2002: 23) suggests that teachers may feel overwhelmed when faced with the diversity referred to above, but suggests that models of learning styles provide some relief in that they 'simplify the complexity and enable us to manage the territory'.

Many definitions of learning styles have been put forward but, for our purposes, we will turn to that suggested by Tennant (2006: 81), who defines learning style as 'an individual's characteristic and consistent approach to organising and processing information'. Similarly, there are numerous models which try and explain this process by identifying what the different 'approach(es) to organising and processing information' are. Perhaps the most well-known models are those of Kolb (Converger, Diverger,

Assimilator, Accommodator) and Honey and Mumford (Activist, Theorist, Pragmatist and Reflector), but this section focuses on the model proposed by Gregorc, as described in Ginnis (2002), which suggests that a learning style has two parts to it:

1. Taking information in.
2. Processing the information.

Taking information in

Before you can use a piece of furniture you have bought in the form of a flat pack, your first job, on arriving home, is to assemble it. How do you approach this task?

Some people will start by tipping all of the bits onto the floor and picking out various parts and starting to put them together in a fairly experimental manner until finally all the bits are used (hopefully) and the piece of furniture is fully assembled. Others will take the pieces out and lay them out on the floor in a systematic manner, first checking what they have against the parts list before following the instructions in a step-by-step manner until the job is completed. Others will start off by looking at the diagrams which are included as part of the instructions and identify the appropriate pieces and assemble them as the diagram suggests. Each approach will work but different individuals may well have a preference for one or the other – they will feel more at home tackling the task in one particular way. What happens, however, if someone's preference is the 'get on with it' approach, but half way through they find they have more bits left than they thought and can't work out where they go? One solution is to just throw it all out and resolve never to buy flat-pack furniture again. A cheaper option, however, is to either look at the diagrams and try to make sense of where they have got to, or start reading the instructions on the recommended method of assembly and see if that can resolve the dilemma. The point is that although individually we have a preference for one approach, it does not mean we are incapable of doing it any other way. We can adopt any of the three approaches described above but have a preference for one. Similarly, with accessing information in a learning situation, we are capable of using all approaches but have a preference for one or another. We can all take in information by listening, looking or engaging with it in a more practical manner but have our own particular preferences. For some of us these preferences are strong, for others less so.

Whatever approach we finally take, initially information is taken in through the five senses – sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Sonbuchner (2008: 3) suggests that the use of different combinations of the senses, equates to the use of different 'learning channels'. These are the visual channel, the auditory channel and the kinaesthetic channel and relate principally to seeing, hearing and doing respectively. This approach to categorising learning styles has its roots in neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and is commonly referred to as the VAK model. Learners' preferences in these areas are

often identified as part of the initial assessment process. Ginnis (2002: 40) suggests that, statistically, the combination of learners found in any group we encounter will span the VAK range and so, as far as possible, the 'minimum requirement is to check that all lessons have sufficient elements of all three modalities'. So, the way in which we prefer to take in information when we learn is an aspect of diversity, and Ginnis suggests that when we teach we should include elements of listening, looking and doing within a session to take account of this.

Gregorc uses the terms 'concrete' and 'abstract' to describe how we take in and make sense of information. Concrete refers to things which are 'real' and can be accessed through the senses – not unlike the kinaesthetic or 'doing' approach described above. 'Abstract' refers to information presented in a more intangible or conceptual form such as words, which would suit an auditory or 'hearing' approach. The VAK model can be related to Gregorc's categories of concrete and abstract, as shown in Figure 1.3. The visual approach can be thought of as occupying a central position as a picture or a diagram, for instance, whilst not real (concrete) is less conceptual than a verbal description (abstract).

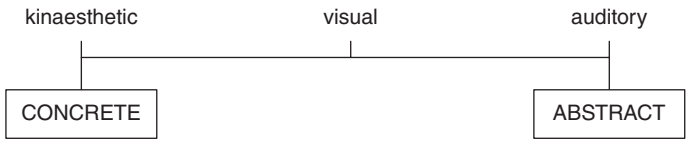

Figure 1.3 VAK and Gregorc

Processing the information

Gregorc next considers the way in which this information is organised and arranged. He suggests that some learners like to organise (and therefore receive) information in a linear, step-by-step manner following a logical train of thought. He called this a 'sequential' approach. Others prefer to take a 'random' approach, organising information in chunks in no particular order and then making their own particular sense out of it.

GREGORC'S MODEL OF LEARNING STYLES

The different combinations of these four characteristics lead to four different learning styles, as demonstrated in Figure 1.4. You can identify your own preferred 'Gregorc style' at www.thelearningweb.net/personalthink.html

As in the VAK model, learners can access all of the different styles, but will have their own particular preferences to some degree or another. The table in Figure 1.5 shows how the different styles might influence approaches to learning.

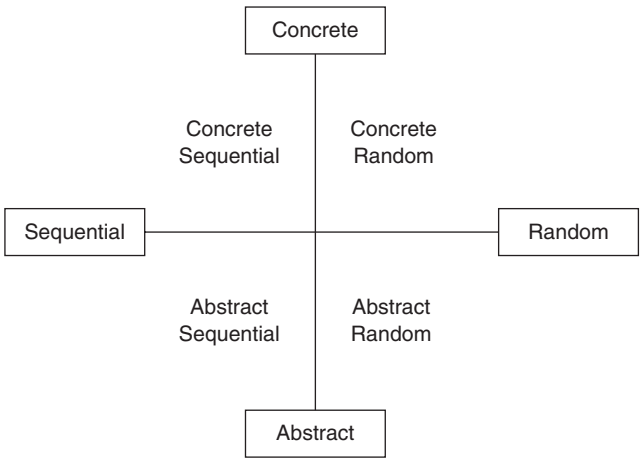

Figure 1.4 Gregorc's learning styles

Style	Like	Learn best from
Concrete Sequential	An ordered, structured, practical hands-on approach	Practical activities, structured workshops, using checklists
Concrete Random	An independent, experimental, investigative approach	Games and simulations, practical problem-solving activities
Abstract Sequential	A logical, academic, intellectual, structured approach	Lectures, independent research, reading
Abstract Random	An imaginative, flexible, deep, sensitive approach	Group discussion, role play, short lectures

Figure 1.5 Learning styles and learning preferences

Although it should not be taken too literally, Gregorc's model gives us some ideas about an appropriate range and mix of teaching strategies which can be used to accommodate the diverse ways in which people learn. Coffield et al. (2004) suggest that this should probably be the limit of our use of learning styles as serious question marks exist over the accuracy of the tests used to identify them. A systematic matching of teaching styles and learning styles is, he suggests, unrealistic and, in any case, the tendency to label people with one learning style or another is unhelpful. Generally, however, the view taken is that different people learn best in different ways, and Coffield et al. agree that the concept of learning styles gives teachers and learners a language with which to discuss these. A copy of Coffield et al.'s report can be found at http://sxills.nl/lerenlerennu/bronnen/Learning%20styles%20by%20Coffield%20e.a.pdf

This particular aspect of diversity suggests, therefore, that learners have different preferences in the way in which they access and process information, and learn best from particular activities. We would respond to this by trying to include a balance of learning activities in the sessions we deliver to accommodate the mix of different learning styles, thus creating an inclusive learning environment.

REFLECTIVE TASK 1.4

What is your own preferred approach to learning? At a simple level, are you more visual, aural or kinaesthetic? If you do not know, try the exercise at: www.personal.psu.edu/bxb11/LSI/LSI.htm. Often, we teach in a way that is similar to our preferred style of learning. Do you think your teaching style is determined by your preferred learning style or is it sufficiently varied to accommodate all the preferences for learning exhibited by your learners?

DIFFERENTIATION IN LEARNING

The approach outlined above, where the diverse learning styles within a group are taken account of when teaching, is an example of a *differentiated* approach. As teachers, we are aware of this aspect of diversity and try to respond to it in our teaching. Petty (2009: 587) defines differentiation as 'adopting strategies that ensure success in learning for all, by accommodating individual differences of any kind'. In your response to Activity 1.4, you identified first an area of diversity and then by considering its effect on learning, arrived at a way of responding to it in your teaching. You identified a differentiation strategy appropriate to that particular aspect of diversity.

One of the most common aspects of diversity encountered in the groups we teach is the difference in previous knowledge and experience learners may bring with them and the aptitude they possess for the subject. Put simply, some learners may pick up on the ideas and concepts within the subject we teach more easily and quickly than others or engage with the subject matter at a deeper level. This can result in situations where, for instance, some learners or groups finish an exercise that has been set whilst others are still some way off completing it. How can a differentiated approach be used to take account of this particular aspect of diversity, whilst still maintaining the momentum of the group as a whole? Some possibilities include:

- Having an extra task ready for those that complete early. This task should be slightly more difficult to stretch learners that bit further as it is evident they can complete tasks of the original level of difficulty. For this reason, it is known as an 'extension' task as it extends learners that bit more.

- Using worksheets in which the questions or exercises gradually increase in complexity and difficulty. Each person completes as many of the questions or exercises as they can.
- Having stronger learners 'buddy up' with and help weaker learners. This is beneficial to both parties as one is receiving extra support whilst the other has to think hard and deep about the subject in order to provide that support.
- When questioning, nominating who is to answer and matching the difficulty of the question to the level at which the learner is working.
- Within reason, spending extra one-to-one time with those that need it most.
- Setting individualised objectives which demand different levels of achievement around the same learning, thus stretching stronger learners whilst providing a more achievable goal for weaker learners. Typically, this might involve three levels of objective. An 'all will' basic objective, a 'some will' objective and 'a few might' objective. This approach needs to be managed carefully, however, and Ginnis (2002: 234–45) gives an excellent explanation of how to go about this.

Generally, the more open an activity, the more control learners have. Learning becomes self-regulated and is therefore more likely to occur at a level which is manageable but challenging for each individual. It can be argued that, given the opportunity, learners themselves manage differentiation more effectively than teachers.

EQUALITY

Consider the following extract from a conversation between Jeremy Paxman and Tony Blair from the BBC programme *Newsnight* (BBC, 2002):

> By definition, a meritocracy is not the same as equality in our economic circumstances. (Jeremy Paxman)

> It depends how you define 'equality'. If you want to define 'equality' as equality of outcome then I agree. If you don't define 'equality' as a quality of an outcome, if you define it, well I call it equal worth actually, because I think it is more than just equality of opportunity, but certainly it includes equality of opportunity, then that's exactly what a meritocracy is. (Tony Blair) (BBC, 2002)

As long ago as 1952, Tawney (p. 35) suggested that 'equality possesses more than one meaning'. What does equality mean to you? Try Activity 1.5 before reading on.

ACTIVITY 1.5

Does equality mean we should treat all learners in the same manner or differently? What examples can you provide to support your answer?

Perhaps the way we treat learners depends on the type of equality we are thinking of but, generally, within a learning context, equality is considered to embody:

- an expectation of fair treatment
- an opportunity to participate on equal terms.

In your response to Activity 1.5, you will probably have cited examples of treating learners with equal respect. In this sense, we would treat learners in the same way and they would expect to be treated fairly and consistently, 'without fear or favour'. This requires us to be non-judgemental and accept that others see the world differently to us, recognising others have a right to their own viewpoint. We would doubtless all claim to do this, but it is inevitable that our views of learners will be subject to some bias – we are only human after all. Recognition that learners have a right to their own point of view, however, does not mean that we have to agree with all of the opinions they express, and we may well wish to challenge and debate some of them. We would certainly wish to challenge attitudes, behaviour or language exhibited by learners that is at odds with this particular view of equality.

Recognising diversity means that we may have to treat learners differently, however, if they are all to 'participate on equal terms'. Some learners may have issues relating to access or opportunity due to their personal circumstances. For this reason, institutions may provide additional support such as crèche facilities for learners with a need for childcare, bursaries for those for whom finance represents a barrier to access, and ramps and lifts for learners with a physical disability. Within a teaching session, other barriers may exist – access to resources, access to the teacher's time and support, for instance – and we need to be aware of these.

Initial assessment may have identified learners who require additional support with areas such as literacy or numeracy. Most institutions will provide such support either on an individual or group basis, as well as offering a number of other kinds of support designed to allow all learners to participate on equal terms. It can be seen that issues of diversity, equality and inclusion permeate the teaching and learning process and operate at different levels, and addressing these is another responsibility inherent in the role of the teacher.

INCLUSION

Inclusion operates at many different levels and in many different contexts. Tomlinson (1996: 26) defined inclusion as 'the greatest degree of match or fit between individual learning requirements and provision'. His main concern was the inclusion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities into mainstream college provision, but from a more general viewpoint we can consider inclusive teaching as that which allows *all* learners to potentially benefit and learn from any aspect of a teaching session. Inclusion is both about planning so that all learners are included and about learners *feeling* included. Taking account of the issues outlined above relating to diversity, differentiation and equality help us to create a truly inclusive learning environment.

SETTING GROUND RULES

When a group comes together for the first time, it enters an initial period of uncertainty when its new members are unsure both of each other and of what is expected of them. To help overcome this, we would normally establish some ground rules which provide a structure within which the group can function effectively, setting the scene for the ways of working and the relationships which are to follow. Establishing a climate for learning in this manner is another of the responsibilities associated with the teaching role. Figure 1.6 illustrates a number of ways in which this can be achieved.

Which of these approaches is adopted will depend on a number of practical considerations such as:

- the nature of your subject
- the level of maturity displayed by your learners
- the confidence that you have in yourself and your ability to control or influence the group.

Normally, rules will be in place at an institutional level which cover areas such as mobile phones, eating and drinking in class. Similarly, rules which cover health and safety legislation within various learning environments such as workshops will exist. Ground rules are more to do with the day-to-day organisation and practices and procedures within the group which will lead to the best environment in which to learn. Whichever of the ways below of establishing ground rules is adopted, the process should begin with a reminder of the existing institutional and safety rules and an explanation of the purpose of and necessity for ground rules.

Generally, ground rules would be set by the teacher if the group was not considered mature enough to either take the process seriously or contribute sensibly, although despite impressions to the contrary, such groups can respond well to being

given some responsibility. The sector is often viewed as a 'second chance' for many and taking this more authoritarian route can serve to reinforce some of the messages received by learners as part of their previous educational experience. Nonetheless, it may well be appropriate to adopt this approach in some situations and it leads to a clear and precise understanding of expectations. It should be recognised, however, that ground rules are 'owned' by those that set them and who are therefore responsible for ensuring they are followed. If, on the other hand, the rules are set by the learners, ownership passes to them and it is their responsibility to ensure that they are adhered to. Responsibility for formulating ground rules should not be given to learners, however, unless the teacher is prepared to accept the conclusions reached. A certain level of trust has been placed in the group to carry out this task and this trust must be maintained. Perhaps for this reason, the approach most often adopted is one which is nearer to the middle of the diagram in Figure 1.6. If so, ground rules become an agreed and shared responsibility, although this may lie more heavily with one party than the other, depending on the exact position chosen on the continuum.

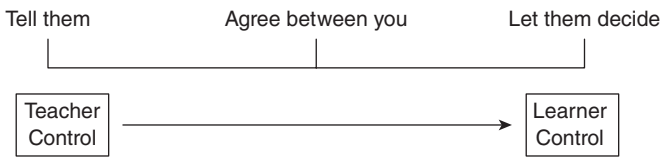

Figure 1.6 Approaches to setting ground rules

Source: Francis and Gould, 2013: 19

Do you have a set of ground rules that has been established within your diploma group? Adult groups will sometimes feel that they are sufficiently mature to operate without the benefit of ground rules. Experience suggests that this is not necessarily the case. In some circumstances, however, it can be agreed that ground rules are not established at the outset but are agreed on and built up during the course in response to events as they occur.

ACTIVITY 1.6

Ground rules need to be as few in number as possible but it is always a good idea to have in mind those that are important to you before entering into any negotiation or agreement. Identify THREE ground rules that you think are essential to the orderly running of a group of learners.

FUNCTIONAL SKILLS AND MINIMUM CORE: THE BACKGROUND

There has been a longstanding concern in this country with the standards of literacy and numeracy of the population. The 1992 DES discussion paper on 'Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools' stated that 'to function effectively in the 21st century, our children will need higher standards of literacy and numeracy than ever before' (DES, 1992: 11), and led to the introduction of the 'literacy hour' and the 'numeracy hour' in schools in 1998 and the establishment of the teaching assistant role in an attempt to raise standards of literacy and numeracy.

In 1998, a working group looking at the basic skills of the post-school population was set up under Sir Claus Moser and concluded that 'Something like one adult in five in this country is not functionally literate and far more people have problems with numeracy' (Moser, 1999: 1). It identified the consequences of this situation as low economic productivity at a national level and potential social exclusion at an individual level, and resulted in the setting up of the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit and subsequent launch of the Skills for Life programme (the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy) in 2001.

This focus on adult literacy and numeracy skills didn't, however, include the population of younger learners who were engaged in full- or part-time education on both vocational and academic routes within the Further Education (FE) system. Concerns had been expressed by employers concerning the literacy and numeracy capabilities of this group, and on the recommendation of the Dearing Review of 1996 Key Skills qualifications were introduced with the intention of equipping learners with the skills regarded as essential to succeed not only in education and employment but also their own lifelong learning and personal development.

The Key Skills programme received a mixed reception, however, and was not as successful as perhaps the government had hoped and anticipated, suffering from 'an image and publicity problem from the day it was introduced' (Peart in Wallace, 2010: 46–7).

A number of different approaches existed then to the raising of literacy and numeracy levels amongst the population at large. In 2010, these began to be brought together under the generic title of 'functional skills'. Functional skills are now defined as those skills required for competence in the use of English, maths and ICT and it is considered essential that young people and adults possess these in order to participate in life, learning and work. Functional skills are not just about knowledge in English, maths and ICT, however; they are also about knowing when and how to use that knowledge in real-life situations. Functional skills are therefore considered to include:

- identifying a problem or engaging in a task
- selecting the appropriate skills required
- using these skills, or knowing where to access them if we don't already possess them, to arrive at a solution.

Functional skills now form a core part of all four of the different qualification routes open to young people – GCSE/A-Level, Foundation, Diploma and Apprenticeship, as well as being stand-alone qualifications in their own right at Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2.

As with most things in the sector, the role and nature of functional skills is currently under review and liable to change. There has been an increased emphasis on maths and English in recent government thinking and the Education Funding Agency (EFA) introduced new funding rules in 2014 (updated 2016) for post 16 education with respect to maths and English, stating that:

> All students aged 16 to 18 starting or who have already started a new study programme of 150 hours or more on or after 1 August 2014 and who do not hold a GCSE grade A* to C, new GCSE 9 to 4 or equivalent qualification in maths and/or in English, are required to be studying these subjects as part of their study programme in each academic year. (EFA, 2016)

Compulsory maths and English thus became part of the study programme of post 16 students in the 2014/15 academic year and alongside the new numerical grading systems introduced for GCSE qualifications, which places a 'good pass' at a more challenging level than the current grade C, placed FE colleges under some considerable strain in staffing and managing this extra load. There has subsequently been some debate concerning the relationship between English/maths, functional skills and the appropriateness of each to the workplace prompting the government to commission a review of the issue in 2014, carried out by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and entitled 'Making maths and English work for all: The review of what employers and learners need from the maths and English qualifications taken by young people and adults'. This review, published in 2015, found that functional skills qualifications were favoured by employers who were aware of their nature, whilst accepting that steps could still be taken to improve the relevance and content of Functional Skills, as well as improve their recognition and credibility in the eyes of employers in general.

The ETF's recommendations are currently being considered by the government, and it is expected that new Functional Skills qualifications will be introduced in 2019 (ETF, 2017) which will be more robust and greater credibility when placed alongside GCSE Maths and English qualifications.

Whilst the exact form that functional skills will take in the future is currently under debate, it is evident that the sector is being required to take on considerable responsibility in the upskilling of students in this area and we as teachers within the sector are expected to share heavily in that responsibility.

A related concept is that of the Minimum Core. The Minimum Core identifies two requirements placed on teachers working within the sector. The first of these requires teachers to recognise the ways in which low levels of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills might constitute a barrier to the learning of their students. Within the teaching of their

own particular subject specialism, teachers should be able to support learners in these areas, which leads to the second requirement that they themselves must possess a minimum level of personal skills in these areas, currently set at Level 2.

DELIVERING FUNCTIONAL SKILLS AS PART OF THE MINIMUM CORE

The proposals for reform in the 14–19 sector suggest that the teaching and learning of functional skills can be achieved through a number of different approaches ranging from discrete lessons through to fully embedding them within subject delivery. The Excellence Gateway (n.d.) defines embedding as 'teaching and learning [which] combines the development of literacy, language, numeracy with vocational and other skills' and suggests that 'the skills acquired provide learners with the confidence, competence and motivation necessary for them to succeed in qualifications, in life and at work'. Embedding, then, seeks to integrate the teaching of subject and functional skills, taking advantage of naturally occurring circumstances in which the two come together. A study conducted by Casey et al. (2006) into the embedding of literacy and numeracy into vocational courses, in which literacy and numeracy specialists worked alongside subject teachers, found that the approach produced extensive benefits for learners:

- increased retention and success rates, particularly on Level 2 programmes
- learners more likely to achieve literacy, language and numeracy qualifications
- learners' belief that they were better prepared for work in the future.

This type of approach is quite resource-intensive, however, and although it is expected that in the long-term functional skills will remain the responsibility of specialists in this area, it is anticipated that they will be reinforced throughout the rest of the curriculum in all sessions (DCSF, 2009: 6).

The issue was felt sufficiently important for the LLUK to suggest, in 2007, that all initial teacher training courses 'must prepare trainee teachers to teach their own learning programmes in ways that take account of the language, literacy, numeracy and ICT needs of their learners' and that 'all teachers need to be confident in working with colleagues to ensure the development of the language, literacy, numeracy and ICT needs of their learners' (LLUK, 2007: 2).

It is evident that, at some level, there is a responsibility on teachers within the sector to be alert to and address the functional skills needs that learners experience within the subject they are studying. This does not mean that as teachers of history, hairdressing or whatever our subject specialism is, we also become functional skills teachers. For one thing, we lack the necessary expertise and, for another, as a participant in the Casey study remarked, 'You wouldn't expect a maths teacher to teach plastering'. What *is* required is the following:

- We should be able to provide support for individual learners we teach, when a lack of some aspect of a functional skill proves a stumbling block to further progress.
- On the basis that functional skills are developed through practice, we should identify opportunities that may exist within our teaching where such practice can be accommodated without distracting from the main purpose of the session.

Naturally, this entails our own functional skills being at a level sufficient to allow us to do this, hence the second requirement of the Minimum Core.

REFLECTIVE TASK 1.5

Reflecting upon your own practice, how successful do you think you are in embedding functional skills within your planning and teaching? Identify at least three specific examples of ways in which you can improve upon this area of your practice.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

Embedding employability remains a key priority of the Government, universities and colleges, and of employers, as it will 'bring both significant private and public benefit, demonstrating higher education's broader role in contributing to economic growth as well as its vital role in social and cultural development' (HEFCE, 2011: 5). Defining employability, however, is a challenging task as it is seen as a 'contentious concept, with a plethora of micro-interpretations' (Harvey, 2003: 3). Even so, many definitions do exist, such as:

> Employability concerns the extent to which people possess the skills and other attributes to find and stay in work of the kind they want. It is thought by many to be a key goal for individuals to aim for in managing their careers, and for organisations to foster in workforces. (Rothwell and Arnold, 2007, abstract)

> Employability is not just about getting a job. Conversely, just because a student is on a vocational course does not mean that somehow employability is automatic. Employability is more than about developing attributes, techniques or experience just to enable a student to get a job, or to progress within a current career. It is about learning and the emphasis is less on 'employ' and more on 'ability'. In essence, the emphasis is on developing critical, reflective abilities, with a view to empowering and enhancing the learner. (Harvey, 2003: 3)

Employability, then, is more than finding employment; it is something to continue to develop throughout one's career. Bridgstock (2009) has created a model of career management for maximum employability, which she sees as:

> an ongoing process of engaging in reflective, evaluative and decision-making processes using skills for self-management and career building, based on certain underlying traits and dispositional factors, to effectively acquire, exhibit and use generic and discipline-specific skills in the world of work. (Bridgstock, 2009: 35)

From the above, it appears that the emphasis is on the 'softer' skills of an applicant or employee. In collaboration with British businesses, the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) (2009: 8) have defined employability skills as 'a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy'. Employability skills, therefore, identified by the CBI (ibid.) include the softer skills as well as some more specific ones such as functional skills:

- Self-management – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning.
- Teamworking – respecting others, co-operating, negotiating/ persuading, contributing to discussions, and awareness of interdependence with others.
- Business and customer awareness – basic understanding of the key drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks – and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty.
- Problem solving – analysing facts and situations and applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions.
- Communication and literacy – application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structured written work and oral literacy – including listening and questioning.
- Application of numeracy – manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (e.g. measuring, weighing, estimating and applying formulae).
- Application of information technology – basic IT skills, including familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines.

They continue that 'underpinning all these attributes, the key foundation, must be a positive attitude: a "can-do" approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make these happen' (ibid.). So, how can you ensure your students acquire all those skills? How can you 'integrate and balance different ways of teaching and learning that promote both effective learning and employability for students?' (Pegg, et al., 2012: 4)

Fortunately, you do not have to do this all by yourself….it is important to collaborate, thus using your own employability skills (!), with other Schools or departments. Most educational institutions will have a Careers Department or equivalent, where students can seek advice on making the best career choice. It may be helpful for them to complete a SWOT analysis to identify their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to gain employment. Once they have identified their best career option they then need to put a plan together to make it happen. This may include designing a Gantt chart, in which activities are mapped within a timeframe. Having an effective solid career plan is crucial to achieving their ambitions. It may also be helpful for students to engage in mentoring, volunteering or work experience. This can be as part of their programme of study or in their free/spare time. These activities need to be captured and recorded. Therefore, students may need guidance on how to build a good CV. The next step is advice on job hunting. Students need to understand different job search methods and also understand the importance of networking to aid job hunting. There may also be opportunities for students to engage in mock interviews, introducing different types of interviews, such as: competency, motivational and scenario based.

Some of the employability skills, however, are likely to be embedded within your teaching. It is important to highlight these skills within the planning of your sessions and share this with the students. For instance, if you are planning for students to do a presentation as part of an assessment, it should be noted that by presenting, students also develop employability skills, such as self- and time management. If it is a group presentation, they need to engage in teamwork, communication and maybe problem solving skills as well. Not all students like doing a presentation, however, but if they are aware of the other skills they develop alongside, they may be more willing to engage. Further, allow students to be reflective and evaluative; again, they may already do this in the form of a 'reflective journal or log' as part of your programme. Remember to differentiate your sessions appropriately and to support students where necessary. A 'can-do' attitude, after all, may be easily damaged by consistent failure. Finally, as a teacher, you are a role model; therefore, your own attitude is highly important. Try to be enthusiastic, positive and professional in your attitude.

BOUNDARIES OF PRACTICE

The list of responsibilities discussed so far is extensive and rather daunting, but in reality it does not take long for many of these responsibilities to become second nature. As well as knowing the extent of the job in which we engage, however, it is equally important to know its limits, and it is these boundaries of practice that we turn to next.

In many jobs which involve contact with other people, particularly if in a caring or supportive role, it is considered important to preserve a degree of 'professional distance'. There is a need to remember the relationship such jobs involve, what it is intended to achieve and act accordingly. Take nursing as an example. Without the maintenance of professional distance, an attachment to a patient can be formed, making it difficult to remain objective about their condition and their treatment. Similarly, it is important to maintain objectivity in teaching.

A second aspect of boundaries of practice relates to the limits of our expertise. Most people come into teaching because they have an enthusiasm for their subject that they wish to pass on to others. This is generally accompanied by a desire to be supportive and helpful to those they teach. Learners sometimes feel we are the only ones they can come to for help and advice about a particular issue, but no matter how well intentioned, being supportive and helpful can cause more problems than it solves if it concerns matters outside of our knowledge, skills and expertise.

ACTIVITY 1.7

Which of the following issues do you consider to fall within the role and responsibilities of a teacher in the Further Education and Skills sector?

1 Bereavement
2 Study skills
3 Family problems
4 Depression
5 Prolonged absence
6 Consistently low test marks
7 Bullying
8 Stress

Items 2, 5 and 6 are directly related to learning and 7, if taking place on the premises, contravenes an institutional policy. All of these would fall within the remit of the job and we would address them accordingly. However, 1, 3, 4 and 8 fall outside of the boundaries of our practice. Whilst we might concern ourselves with the ways in which they affected learning, we do not have the necessary expertise to deal with the root causes. Rather than leave learners 'hanging' though, we need to be aware of the different internal and external agencies that are equipped to deal with such issues so we can refer learners on.

ACTIVITY 1.8

Make a list of the different points of referral that exist within your own institution for future reference.

This chapter has set the scene for teaching within the sector by outlining what the job involves and the context within which it is carried out. The next chapters concern the 'how' of teaching and look at the knowledge and skills that guide our practice.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

In this chapter, we have looked at the context of teaching within the Further Education and Skills sector, identifying the different roles taken on by teachers and the responsibilities associated with these. The notion of diversity within learners in the sector was explored, along with a consideration of the issues of differentiation, equality and inclusion this raises. An inclusive environment is encouraged by the setting of appropriate ground rules and the different ways of going about this were explored. Functional skills are an important issue at both a national and individual level and the notion of embedding these within the teaching we do was explored next. Finally, the extent and limits of the teaching role were investigated.

The key points in this chapter are:

- Teaching in the sector involves a number of roles such as teaching, administration, institutional and pastoral duties.
- Diversity refers to the individual differences that are evident in learners.
- An aspect of diversity likely to be met in most groups is that different learners have different preferred styles of learning.
- Differentiation strategies are used by teachers to accommodate the differences in their learners.
- Equality can be interpreted in different ways. All learners are treated the same in that they are afforded equal respect, but are treated differently, dependent on their individual needs, so they can participate on equal terms.

(Continued)

- Inclusion means that all learners participate in and feel part of a teaching session.
- Ground rules establish the ways in which a group can work most effectively and can be established by the teacher, the group, or jointly between the two. The approach used determines the responsibility of each party in ensuring compliance.
- Functional skills and the Minimum Core are important at both a national and individual level and are best delivered by being embedded within the subject matter being taught.
- It is important to recognise the limits of our responsibilities and expertise and to refer learners on to the appropriate people or agencies when the issues they bring to us fall outside the boundaries of our practice.

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FURTHER READING

Sharrock, T. (2016) Embedding English and Maths: Practical strategies for FE and Post-16 tutors. Northwich: Critical Publishing.

This book starts off with a discussion around the meaning of embedding, the importance of English and maths skills before exploring the barriers to learning that might be encountered

within these subjects. The remainder of the book is devoted to practical activities that can be used, mainly within vocational subjects, to achieve embedding. Each activity includes explanatory notes as well as ways in which to make links to employability skills.

Spenceley, L. (2014) *Inclusion in Further Education*. Northwich: Critical Publishing.
A thought provoking book, looks at inclusion from the perspectives of theory, policy and practice before discussing implementation in a variety of different contexts and settings. An excellent read if you wish to think more deeply about inclusion and your own attitudes and practice.