



The Current Delivery of Functional Skills

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Nature of Research /Objectives

- Interested in Functional Skills qualifications – their structure, spirit and my personal ethos
- How do colleges deliver Functional Skills; what good practice can we share?
- Ofsted inspection/reports – not our **primary** concern
- How do colleges **manage** students and their learning?
- Oxford/Birmingham universities, 41 FE colleges, questionnaire and survey, interviews with staff, 2018-2019, publication – late 2020

Functional Skills and Curriculum

- FS is inserted into the curriculum like an appendix (it should be the main component of learners' programme – avoid graveyard slots)
- Inconsistency in the contact teaching/training hours (centres offer anything from 1 – 5 hrs)
- Mainstream teachers/trainers regard the teaching of Functional Skills as an inconvenience
- Most qualified/experienced English and Maths staff should be encouraged to teach FS

Course Management

- Overly prescriptive schemes of work
- Over-emphasis on assessments (9 weeks 'roll-on-roll-off' programmes are offered by some colleges and providers)
- Different levels being taught in the same class – these are **workshops** not classes
- Too much emphasis on marked assessed work/homework

Learners' Attitudes to Functional Skills

- Learners lack motivation/engagement in both Maths/English
- Education is a reminder of their failure or learners don't see the relevance of skills/knowledge
- Attendance/behaviour of learners (particularly those at risk) need be **managed** not just **monitored**
- Teachers/trainers' lack of empathy and understanding
- Sharing of good practice amongst providers

What makes an *outstanding* FS teacher/trainer?

We are mortal, temporal creatures but **education** is steadfast and will outlast us all. It possesses both youth and immortality and will continue far beyond Time and Space. It will surpass all we value rich or rare. It is the eye to the universe, our modest attempt to make sense of this world – this bright, dazzling chaos.