



THE  
JUBILEE CENTRE  
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Insight Series

## Entry Level English and Character-Led Teaching

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## Entry Level English and Character-Led Teaching:

A summary report written by Helen Redman (Inclusion Lead) on behalf of Rathbone Training

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## Purpose of the report

This report seeks to explore the impact on individual learners who were the recipients of character-led teaching during English lessons.

During the project, a number of teaching resources and session plans were developed and rolled out to all tutors taking part. Staff training took place via webinars to ensure that there was a consistent approach and mutual understanding of the concept and intention behind the topics.

In addition to teaching resources, bespoke Individual Learning Plans and Student Log Sheets were developed to track the topics covered for both tutors and the learners.

The overall effectiveness of these resources in engaging learners to consider character and values during the teaching of English will be discussed. Qualitative information and testimonials from tutors will be provided during the course of the project review.

The report is based on the experience of one tutor and his learners who participated in the project.

## Background

Rathbone Training is a national provider of education and work-based learning for young people. It is a charitable provision which focuses on providing opportunities for young people who may have been marginalised in education, or who would benefit from education delivered in a non-classroom setting.

As such, the 'Flourishing from the Margins' project presented Rathbone Training with the perfect opportunity to introduce a new curriculum based on citizenship and developing personal qualities. The organisation is committed to developing confident, well-rounded young people rather than focusing solely on employability and work-based skills. The Character-Led English project explores ways in which personal qualities and citizenship could be embedded in the curriculum. The purpose is to provide young people with the prospect to reflect on their own personalities and qualities which could enhance their lives, not only in the workplace, but in wider society.

It was intended that tutors would also have the opportunity to reflect on differing ways to teach core English skills. The embedding of themes relating to character qualities and values would hopefully encourage dynamic classroom discussions and activities – additionally providing professional development for staff.

The organisation, tutors and learners were committed to the venture, however it should be noted that participants were faced with various barriers during the course of the project. It is widely acknowledged that the very nature of many young people enrolling with organisations such as Rathbone Training may have difficulty with attendance and maintaining a place on a training course which had an impact on the retention rates of participants. Traineeships and apprenticeships operate on a 'roll-on, roll-off' basis which also made accurate tracking of the impact of a project such as this more difficult. Additionally, Rathbone Training underwent business development restructures, meaning that some of the tutors originally involved with the project were no longer employed in a relevant role.

Despite these setbacks, there is evidence of the work which took place to embed character-led teaching, as well as individual testimonials from tutors. One tutor in particular seized this opportunity to carry out a compare and contrast activity to explore how learners with a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome would access a curriculum with a heavy emphasis on emotion and self-reflection. The character-led teaching carried out by Rathbone Training is presented in this report to provide a review, feedback and recommendations.

## Methodology

Tutors took part in face-to-face and online training about the delivery of the resources and curriculum materials which had been provided by The University of Birmingham.

In the first instance, 10 young people were identified as potential candidates for participation in the project. These learners were enrolled on a 'roll-on, roll-off' qualification, though it was intended that they would still be able to complete the necessary parts of the Character-Led curriculum during their time with Rathbone Training. The learners were from a range of backgrounds and abilities.

The tutors used the resources during English lessons with the identified group of students. They monitored learner engagement and interactions during the lessons and provided feedback to colleagues on a regular basis.

### **Curriculum Delivery:**

- At induction, learners studied the session on virtues before commencing the programme
- The programme was delivered over 20 weeks in 2 x 1 hour sessions per week delivered on the same day with a break in between.
- Delivery took place in classroom-based sessions, group sessions and in 1:1 tutorials.
- Extra sessions of 1-2 hours were made available to learners with additional requirements.

Learner progress was recorded via Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) (See Appendix 1) and Learner Log sheets (See Appendix 2) so that both students and tutors could monitor achievements, English skills used and next steps. Tutors also had access to a document which cross-referenced elements of functional skills English with each of the character-led curriculum units (See Appendix 3 for an example unit). Staff and student reviews took place every 4 weeks.

Evaluation of the impact of the project has been limited to the personal experiences of one individual tutor and his cohort of learners.

## Findings

The findings from the project were obtained via a telephone interview and are the personal opinions of a tutor who took part in the project. The content of the interview is summarised below:

### **Student Cohort**

- Of the initial 10 learners, 6 actually took part in the character-led education sessions, and two completed the whole programme.
- One of the learners completing the whole programme had a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome.

### **Resources**

- The resources were of a very high quality, were extremely comprehensive and covered a range of delivery styles.
- The resources were interactive – encouraging hands-on and learner-led activities.
- The resources worked in terms of embedded aspects of character into learning.

### **Tutor Experience**

- The tutor felt he had personally benefitted from learning a new model and style of teaching.
- The tutor enjoyed teaching the topics and using the resources to embed themes.
- It was sometimes difficult to find a start/end to an activity or topic.
- Incorporating a humanistic approach was initially difficult but did come with time.

### **Student Experience**

- This was a new approach for students, and students appeared to enjoy the experience
- Students appeared to open up and begin to understand alternative views and ways of thinking about a topic. They “...saw the other side to things”.
- Students were able to lead discussions and explore the opinions of each other.
- Students actively engaged with all aspects of the teaching and curriculum.
- Tutor observations noted that students enjoyed all the sessions and topics covered.

The tutor made particular reference to the learner who has a diagnosis of Asperger's Syndrome. Due to the nature of the condition, this individual was accessing the curriculum using only a logical approach and could not understand why there should be any emotion linked to his learning. Despite this, the nature of the teaching and resources meant that this programme was completely accessible to this individual and he was able to complete the whole course – which is a real achievement for all involved.

### **Conclusion**

The tutor felt that overall the project had been a success for those who took part and completed the entire scheme of work. Students were engaged in all the topics and there was no doubt that they had benefitted as individuals from the study of character traits alongside their development of literacy skills. In addition, a student who would be potentially marginalised due to having additional needs was able to fully participate in the same learning as his peers without feeling isolated.

The tutor also reaped the benefits of having engaged learners actively participating in sessions, and could see the potential in continuing to use the resources with learners in the future.

Overall, taking part in the project was a positive experience for all participants.

### Recommendations

The following are ideas to potentially expand on the project:

1. An exploration of how the Character-Led curriculum could be used to aid a broad range of learners with additional needs in the improvement of Functional Skills English.
2. The incorporation of relevant aspects of the curriculum into British Values and Prevent sessions and online tutorials. E.g. Justice, Generosity, Compassion and 'Why do good people do bad things' units (including 'The Bystander Effect' resources from the 'What's Stopping You?' unit).
3. The promotion of positive mental health, motivation and self-care strategies via the 'What's Stopping You?' unit.

### Acknowledgements

Many thanks to **David Bates** – Tutor for Rathbone Training at the Birmingham and Walsall offices for taking part in the interview and providing example resources.



**Character Education  
Individual Learning Plan**

<b>Learner Name</b>		<b>City &amp; Guilds Registration Number</b>							
<b>Start Date</b>		<b>Planned End Date</b>							
<b>Prior English Achievement</b>		<b>Functional English Diagnostic working towards (Please circle)</b>	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">E1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">E2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">E3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">L1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">L2</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	E1	E2	E3	L1	L2	
E1	E2	E3							
L1	L2								

**Steps to completion**

Date	Activity	Learner signature	Tutor Signature
	Introduction to virtues		
	Compassion		
	Courage		
	Curiosity		
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Review</b>		
	Honesty		
	Humour		
	Justice		
	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Review</b>		
	<b>Learner Focus Group Feedback</b>		
	Caring for the body		
	Generosity		
	Stress		
	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Review</b>		
	What's stopping you?		
	Why do good people do bad things?		
	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Review</b>		
	Reading Assessment		
	Writing Assessment		
	Re-vision/Re-sits		





## Functional English SMART targets and feedback

Target	How have I achieved this? (Link to session title)	Confident? √ √√ √√√	Student signature

Unit	Session Titles	What English skills have I used in this unit?	Learner signature and date on completion
<b>Introduction to virtues</b>	What is a Good Life? What does it mean to be a good person? Virtue Dominos & Matching Game Eulogy Virtues Candidate Lives Complete Individual Learning Plan		
<b>1- Compassion</b>	Introduction to compassion Compassion and charities		

<p><b>2 - Courage</b></p>	<p>Introduction to Courage</p> <p>Trying new things</p> <p>Courage: A Case Study</p> <p>Extension activities</p>		
<p><b>3 - Curiosity</b></p>	<p>Curiosity Introduction</p> <p>I hate school because</p> <p>I learn best when</p> <p>Courage: A Case Study</p> <p>Extension activities</p>		

<b>4 - Review</b>			
<b>5 - Honesty</b>	Honesty bingo Introduction to honesty Honesty debate		

<b>6 - Humour</b>	Introduction to Humour When is it appropriate Humour self-evaluation		
<b>7 - Justice</b>	Bus game Introduction to justice and fairness Justice and the law Consequences		

<b>8 - Review</b>			
<b>9 - Caring for the body</b>	Fuel Rest Exercise		

<b>10 - Generosity</b>	Generosity Introduction Generosity Scale Generosity pledge		
<b>11 - Stress</b>	Introduction to Stress Performance virtues and stress		

<b>12 - Review</b>			
<b>13 - What's stopping you?</b>	The bystander effect What do you want to do? What do you want to be?		



<b>14 - Why do good people do bad things?</b>	Following orders Deciding well The UK riots		
<b>15 - Review</b>			

**Compassion unit:**

**Introduction to Compassion and Empathy**

Point	Activities
1	Magazine and newspaper charity adverts or junk mail flyers: E3 – identify purpose of adverts and look at use and purpose of organisational features e.g. headings, tables and images. Identify meaning of any images and graphs. E3.2a-d Levels 1/2 – what features and techniques are used to make the advert easy to read and persuasive e.g. use of bold print, images and captions, persuasive and emotive language, case studies, quotes etc. L1.2a-e L2.2a-d
2	Hot Seat Scenario cards: Levels 1/2 – identify apostrophes in texts and explain why they are being used. L1.3e L2.3e

**Compassion and Empathy – Charities**

Point	Activities
3	Research into charities (if completed): E3 – obtain specific information (see separate sheet) from Information about Charities sheet E3.2b-d. L1 – obtain specific information about charities (see separate sheet) from given websites L1.2a-c L2 – decide on information required and identify sources L2.2a-b
4	Charities Information sheet: E3 – identify capital letters used for proper nouns and collate. Explain reasons for use. Alternatively, the texts could be presented without capital letters and the learner could add where required. E3.3d L1 – look at use of commas to separate items in a list (Red Nose Day) and revision of use of capitals for proper nouns and acronyms (see E3). L1.3e L2 – look at use of commas within sentences – explain reasons for use (e.g. Water Aid). Are the commas correct and are there any missing? L2.3d+e
5	Setting up own charity: E3 – support in collating information. Create a leaflet or poster about the charity and how it raises funds. Check work for accuracy – spelling, punctuation and grammar. Use appropriate organisational features e.g. those identified in adverts above. E3.3a-d L1 – create newsletter article or radio advert for new charity. Check written copy for accuracy (SPAG). Use paragraphs appropriately. L1.3a-f L2 – create speech or presentation about new charity using persuasive techniques (e.g. emotive language, images, supporting statistics). Use paragraphs appropriately and check written work for SPAG. L2.3a-f
6	Discussion about Kids Company charity and own experiences:

All – go through requirements for discussions i.e. turn taking, listening, use of appropriate language.

E3 – respond to specific questions about charity (see Activity 3 Part 2). Listen to others' points of view and give own. (Encourage learners to clarify and confirm understanding e.g. through questions, repeating points, nodding etc.) E3.1a-c,e

L1 – give own thoughts and opinions clearly, listen and respond to others

L1.1a,c,d

L2 – carry out more research on Kids Company? Give own ideas and opinions and back up with supporting evidence. Help to keep the discussion moving.

L2.1a-d



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*The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues or The University of Birmingham.*

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