

Aim:

Improving the transition and progression potential for students studying vocational programmes as well as those undertaking maths and English GCSE/Functional skills qualifications as part of their study programme. This statement covers all ESFA classroom-funded learners. The College will provide our students with additional coaching sessions that have been personalised to meet their diagnosed gaps in learning, and to support them with growth mindset, confidence and aspirations.

Background:

We hold regular drop-in workshops and surgeries, and the additional support has shown to be very beneficial in building student confidence and developing a growth mindset, as well as having a positive impact on student outcomes.

At the start of their programme of study all students will undertake a BKSB initial assessment and a subsequent diagnostic assessment to highlight their strengths and weaknesses in English and maths. which will also support other elements of their study programme. In addition, a vocational assessment will take place and students who are assessed as appropriate will be entitled to additional vocational coaching sessions to support the catch up of lost learning and enable them to be successful in their aspirational next steps. Substantial investment in a new ILP will include individual skills scans to capture career aspirations and goals and potential barriers around personal development. This will also support the identification of gaps in knowledge and skills.

Additionally, at key points in the year, all maths and English learners will complete an inhouse-developed diagnostic test, this will assess student confidence and self-efficacy. They will undergo three assessments focusing on maths/English knowledge/ability three key points of the year to assess maths/English knowledge/ability (IA, two x mocks). These will be completed in September, December and February/March. This will be replicated as appropriate within vocational areas.

Each student will receive a minimum of three hours of additional coaching between September 2021 and March 2022 split into 30-minute sessions, combining one-to-one tutoring and small group (max 5) coaching. The sessions will support diagnosed gaps in maths and English knowledge, but also involve a pastoral aspect of confidence, motivation and aspiration building.

The key principle focus will be “Fostering a can-do attitude/growth mindset (by setting short term goals, monitoring progress, recognising success)”.

By focusing on developing a growth mindset within these sessions, alongside academic development in the core areas, we hope to see measurable improvements against the attainment gap for our disadvantaged learners.^[1]

Approaching the new normal:

Our coaching programme can be delivered online or onsite via socially distanced group sessions and one-to-one tutoring. Coach contact will be essential in these times of change for new students to ensure they are able to access support and guidance throughout their learning journey.

For students at risk of severe anxiety, the coaching will aim to enhance student experience and develop their resilience and confidence, alongside building their digital and soft skills.

City College Plymouth is an inner city campus, with the student demographic reflecting this in respect to deprivation, access to services and resources. Due to the conditions of funding for post-16 maths education, many students are retaking their qualifications, and there are often high levels of subject-related anxiety within the cohorts - particularly with maths. Factors that can lead to maths anxiety include “unrealistic expectations of students; gender bias; giving poor explanations; hostility, anger or intimidation; embarrassing students in front of peers if a concept is not understood; and, an insensitive or uncaring attitude”.^[2]

Currently throughout all key stages, pupils in Plymouth are performing below the national achievement rate in mathematics, and organisations within Plymouth are working together to overcome “The Plymouth Challenge”, which is focusing on secondary school standards. “The percentage of pupils achieving ‘the basics’ in Plymouth is 58.8%, which is below the national average of 59.4% and statistical neighbour average of 61.5%. By the end of KS4, the progress made by Plymouth pupils is below that made by similar pupils within the statistical neighbour group. The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is below that of non-disadvantaged pupils at the end of KS4.” (Plymouth City Council, 2019). A high percentage of our students will be in this KS4 category, as our FE College is one of the main providers for 16 to 18 learners in

Plymouth and the surrounding area. Students in Plymouth have had their learning further impacted by the pandemic and therefore the College intends to support bridging the gap and providing accessible learning opportunities.

As a College we are student-focused, and we are developing individualised approaches for maths and English students that will enhance their learning experience. The South West is a hub for STEM industries, meaning these skills are vital for a wide range of employment opportunities and career development in the region. At City College, we are expecting up to a 30% increase in the number of maths learners due to current circumstances (approx 900 - 1,000 GCSE students, and 1,300+ FS learners).

Objectives:

1. To understand current mathematics/English practice in diagnosing student gaps in knowledge, and developing a process to fully assess learners starting point with maths/english and level of confidence/self-efficacy.
2. To develop an effective end-to-end process for teachers to capture gaps in knowledge and apply them to learning.
3. To design and deliver a range of coaching sessions on a one-to-one and/or small group basis, and analyse their effectiveness measured through regular student, tutor and coach feedback.
4. To investigate whether there are differences in engagement by learner characteristics (age, gender, SEN, previous attainment, vocation)
5. To analyse the progress made by those students who have had access to maths/English coaching.
6. To assess and explain ways in which growth mindset and interest-based activities can support mastery in delivery and close the attainment gap.
7. To share results and, if possible effective approaches, with teachers locally and nationally.

[¹] Gouédard, P. (2021), "Can a growth mindset help disadvantaged students close the gap?", PISA in Focus, No. 112, OECD Publishing, Paris

[²] Shields, D.J. (2005). Teachers have the power to alleviate math anxiety. *Academic exchange quarterly*, Vol. 9, pp 326-331.