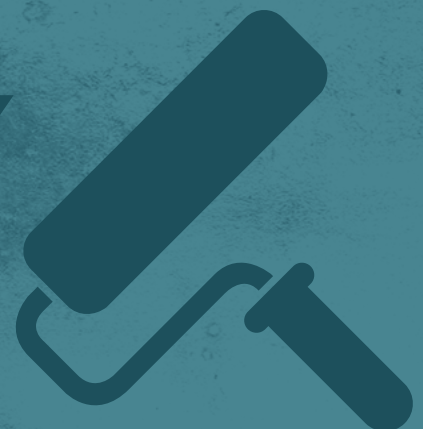


# APPRENTICESHIP CATCH-UP TOOLKIT

PLANNING CLASSROOM DELIVERY  
COGNITIVE LOAD THEORY  
SEQUENCING KNOWLEDGE WITH SKILLS  
EMPLOYER PARTICIPATION  
STAFFING SOLUTIONS

## A GUIDE FOR EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS



## Introduction to the Toolkit

The Covid-19 pandemic has, across all sectors, impacted the progress and achievement of apprentices and other students in achieving their apprenticeship or qualifications. This has been acute in some sector areas, such as Healthcare, where the continual wave of infections puts a strain on these employers to release apprentices for their off the job training.

The Apprenticeship Catch-up workstream was part of the College Collaboration Fund project for Weston College, City College Plymouth and the National Centre for Advanced Transport Infrastructure (NCATI). The project used four strategies to rapidly improve the progress of apprentices that were due to complete in the previous academic year, but who did not achieve in 20/21 as profiled. This toolkit combines the resources used and the thinking behind the methods of delivery to catch up lost learning.

The four strategies employed were:



1. Apprentice 1:1 Sessions to Review Progress, Set Targets and support additional individualised learning



2. Classroom catch-up sessions (including mental health support)



3. Employer re-engagement sessions

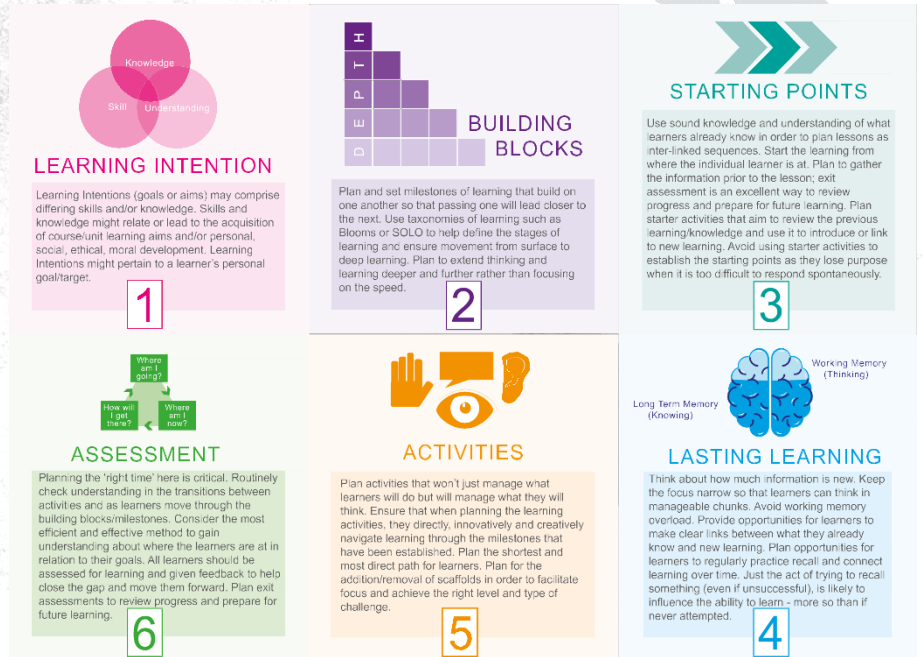


4. Staffing

# Developing Effective Classroom Sessions

When developing the Catch-up workstream, the partner Colleges had anticipated that 1:1 apprenticeship support would be the most effective method of quickly progressing the apprentices. This turned out to be incorrect, and in fact, it was the classroom sessions that had the most impact on the development and progress of apprentices.

The project used a 'Planning for Learning' tool to develop classroom activities that would have the most impact. Additional information on planning for learning can be found on an article in TES [here](#) by Mark Enser



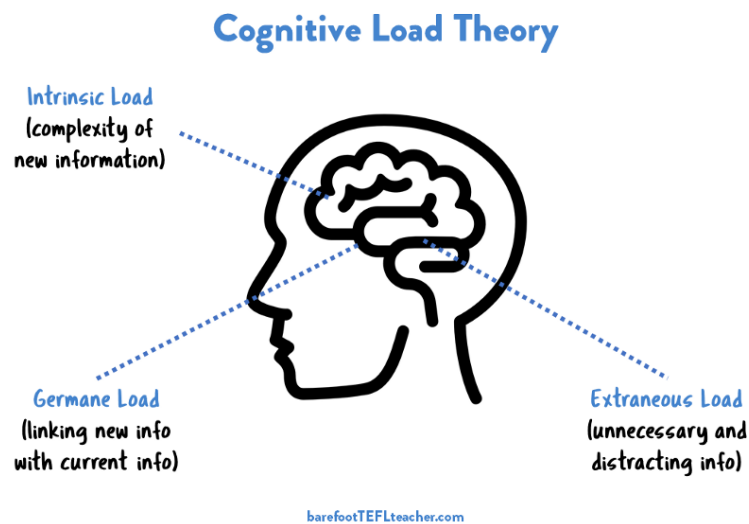
Scheme of Learning						
Programme details - Business Services						
Faculty and Division: Programme / Course Title:			Tutor(s): Day and Location: Duration:			
Scheme of Work Overview (A sequential overview of the key learning aims/outcomes/assessment etc. for this scheme of learning)						
Session Number & Date	Learning Intention and Building Blocks			Prior Knowledge and Starting Points (Learning to be re-called, re-visited, built upon, established)	Planned Assessment (Formative and Summative assessment points, exit assessment in preparation for future sessions)	Notes/Ideas (Topics, resources, activities, speakers, equipment, environment)
	<b>Core Subject</b> (Knowledge, skills & understanding related to subject curriculum & assessment)	<b>PD Skills</b> (Personal Development, English, Maths, Digital & Employability)	<b>Wider Learning</b> (Our values; ethical, social and moral issues; behaviours; attitudes; safety and wellbeing)			
	•					
	•					
	•					

Using the six building blocks above, staff were able to build a scheme of learning and lesson plans that supported the effective delivery of classroom teaching, but only for the remaining skills, knowledge, and behaviours required. The 'Planning for Learning' tool and example 'Scheme of Learning' can be found in the appendices. (Click the images for Planning for Learning and Scheme of Learning resources)

# Cognitive Load Theory

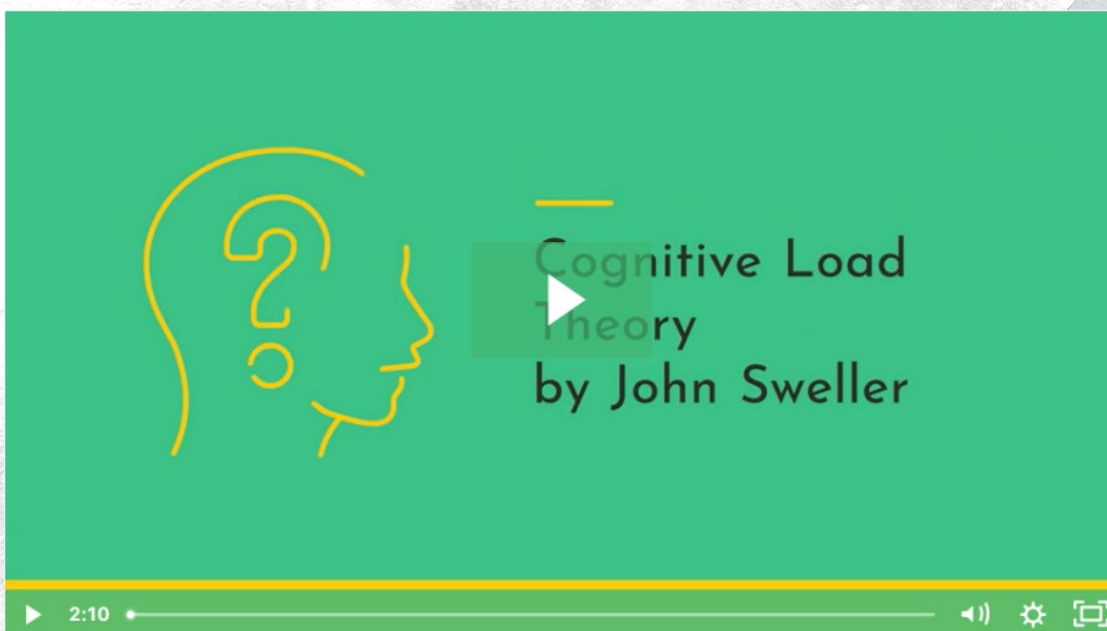
To enable staff to understand how to integrate the six building blocks and produce an effective scheme of learning, staff were also provided with training on Cognitive Load Theory (CLT). CLT identifies there is a crucial balance between making rapid progress with apprentices and overloading the teaching and learning given to the apprentices to reduce the risk of lost learning. Each apprentice will be different but rushing ahead too quickly will result in extraneous load, leading to lost learning and confusion.

Cognitive load theory explains how we process and remember information and how too much (or too complex) information is harmful to learning. CLT is attributed to John Sweller from problem-solving research in the 1980s. Sweller noted that cognitive load types fall into three broad types:



CLT was used to ensure the lessons and knowledge and skills transfer in those lessons were effective and provided the apprentice with an opportunity to progress as quickly as their cognition would allow. David Weller explains CLT further in his blog. (click the image to find out more).

An explanation of CLT can also be viewed via this short animated video hosted on IdolCourses.com:



Ofsted has also published a blog on how they used CLT when developing the Education Inspection Framework. While Ofsted stated they *'have not based either our evidence review or the inspection framework on CLT'*. Ofsted did confirm that the theory *'does form a valuable part of the evidence base on effective practices in education. It is a well-established theory, with over 30 years of research behind it, making it one of the best supported theoretical frameworks in education.'* The Ofsted blog on Cognitive Load Theory can be found on their website (click the image to view the blog).

## Developing the education inspection framework: how we used cognitive load theory

[Daniel Mujs, 13 February 2019 - Education inspection framework, Research and evaluation](#)



## Sequencing Knowledge and Skills

The next stage in improving the progress of the apprentices behind target is the development of a plan that combines the teaching and learning in the College against the activities that are needed in the workplace to ensure the apprentice moves to End Point Assessment (EPA)

This is achieved by developing an individualised plan using, in this case, an Excel spreadsheet. The plan links the classroom-based teaching with the required activities needed in the workplace to bring together the development of skills and teaching of theory simultaneously. This is provided to employers and apprentices so all parties are clear on the requirements and timescales. Below is an example of the plan for an actual carpentry learner (name has been anonymised):

Learner Name:		C. Fund			
Destination:		Progress to an Advanced Apprenticeship In Site Carpentry			
		Total OTJ Hours:		95	
Month	Standard Criteria / Framework unit or Activity	Employer Based Training (on the Job training)	College Session plan	Off the Job Training connected with the activity	OTJ Hours
Month 4	EPA Preparation	Understanding design specifications and job cards Employer to set work relevant to required timescales and tolerances	Mock knowledge tests mock EPA assessment Feedback from Mock EPA Remedial work on failed elements	Classroom exam preparation	4
				Classroom based exam	1
				Practice EPA practical test	6
Month 3	Measure, mark out, position, and fit side hung doors, mouldings and ironmongery	measure and cut architrave & linings and for correct door installation Shadow colleagues to fit architrave, linings and side hung doors. Install ironmongery.	Practical workshop session installing doors, linings and architrave. Meeting tolerances and measurements. Relating exercise to EPA. Undertaking EPA mock test	Workshop college session for practical development	18
				EPA preparation session	6
Month 2	Position, Fixing and Installation of Staircase	Workplace shadowing of staircase installation Assist and support the installation of at least 3 staircases Position, fix and install staircase until competence confirmed	Practical workshop session installing staircase using correct tools and equipment and within tolerances. Setting an end practical test for	Workshop college session for practical development	18
				EPA preparation session	6
Month 1	1st Fix Knowledge and Skills	Shadow trademan installing frames and linings Support the installation of frames and linings Install frames and linings Effective teamwork & logical thinking	Knowledge covering tool selection, characteristics of materials used, including adhesives Practical workshop measuring, fixing and installing frames and linings	Classroom session for development of knowledge	12
				Workshop college session for practical development	18
				Workplace shadowing	6

This plan identifies exactly what needs to be completed in the workplace and supports the discussion with the employer to ensure they are offering the required training at the right time. The plan also supports the timescales involved and the off the job hours needed to complete the development of KSBs.

The plan is used as a quick reference document for all parties to refer to, and because of this, the excel workbook also includes a template for recording a Progress Review. This Progress Review template is basic, but provides clarity on the progress made with links to the individualised plan by confirming which skills and knowledge have been completed.

	Standard Criteria / Framework unit or Activity	Employer Based Training (on the Job training)	College Session plan	Other Apprenticeship Development	Changes made to the Employer Plan
Month 5					
Month 4					
Month 3					
Month 2					
Month 1					
Formal Review	List the skills, knowledge or behaviours set in the plan	Review workplace training and the Impact on employer. Include any employer comments	Review of development of knowledge and skills in College sessions. Review personal development	Review the Apprentice's Personal Development	Detail any amendments made to the plan

Finally, the plan also includes a separate sheet to track the development of behaviours to determine when the apprentice is ready to move to EPA:

Insert Behaviours from Standard Below:	Stage 1 Date:		Stage 2 Date:		Stage 3 Date:	
Effective Communication		10		10		10
Effective Teamwork		10		10		10
Independent Working		10		10		10
Logical Thinking		10		10		10
Working Effectively		10		10		10
Time Management		10		10		10
Adaptability		10		10		10
Resilience		10		10		10

## Employer Participation

Improving the progress of any apprentice relies significantly on the employer supporting the apprentices, ensuring the range of work is available at the right time and driving the development of skills in the workplace. The individualised plan supports the employer participation in two ways:

1. It identifies the training that is required enabling the employer to plan the work ready for the development activities
2. It shows the amount of time required for the off the job training, again enabling the employer to plan and schedule this in

Employer Based Training (on the Job training)	OTJ Hours
Understanding design specifications and job cards	4
Employer to set work relevant to required timescales and tolerances	1
	6
measure and cut architrave & linings and for correct door installation	18
Shadow colleagues to fit architrave, linings and side hung doors. Install ironmongery.	6
Workplace shadowing of staircase installation	18
Assist and support the installation of at least 3 staircases	6
Position, fix and install staircase until competence confirmed	
Shadow trademan installing frames and linings	12
Support the installation of frames and linings	
Install frames and linings	18
Effective teamwork & logical thinking	

## Staffing

To support the catch-up of lost learning, all Colleges were provided with funding for additional staffing. The funding was allocated to enable the Colleges to employ Development Coaches to support the apprentice, and employer and to track progress. These Development Coaches were not necessarily occupationally competent but instead were experienced in developing personal skills such as communication, decision making, timekeeping, target setting and employer engagement. The Development Coaches worked with the Vocational Coaches/Assessors and Teachers to regularly identify new targets and check progress towards existing targets.

The person specification used for the recruitment included the following requirements:

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Five GCSEs at grade 4 / C or above (or equivalent), including English and Mathematics.	✓	
Experience of working with learners and/or employer on delivering learning programmes		✓
Assessors Awards: TAQA or A award.		✓
Vocational Internal Verifier Award TAQA or V1.		✓
Knowledge of Further Education curriculum, especially work-based learning and apprenticeship provision.		✓
Knowledge and experience of using remote learning platforms such as MS Teams to support the progress of learners when not attending	✓	
College To be able to work unsupervised demonstrating self-management in demanding situations.	✓	
Computer Literacy and good administrative skills.	✓	
Highly motivated with the ability to respond positively to change.	✓	
Excellent organisational skills.	✓	
Excellent interpersonal skills.	✓	
Ability to work as part of a team.	✓	
Excellent communication skills.	✓	
Full driver's licence and own transport.	✓	



The Job descriptions included the following duties:

- Manage a caseload of learners and conduct regular review meetings with employers and learners.
- Monitor learner progress and achievement throughout, updating their e-portfolio and individual plan
- Preparing and coordinating learners for End Point Assessment
- Ensuring 'at risk' learners are identified and strategies are put in place to improve progress
- Ensuring employers are engaged in their apprenticeship programmes
- Identify and support learners to achieve destination outcomes at the end of their programme
- Support the development of maths and English skills
- Signposting learners to address specific welfare, counselling, and additional learning support matters

## Staffing Evaluation

The added intervention of the Development Coaches helped improve the progress of apprentices, with some in this project seeing very rapid improvements. There are several benefits of employing someone in a role such as this, but it did result in some issues that will need to be thought about carefully to reduce any impact on the training provider & employer relationship. The staff employed in this role supported over 400 apprentices to achieve until the project concluded in March 2022.

### Advantages:

- Improved planning and linkages of the off and on the job training
- Communication between all parties improved significantly, especially with the employers
- Survey feedback resulted in satisfaction rates being higher for this cohort of learners compared to those not supported by the CCF project by 6%
- More support is provided to 'at risk' learners or those that are behind progress
- This role is more cost-effective than using a qualified Vocational Coach/Assessor
- The role does not require vocational competence
- Assessors can be allocated higher caseloads as a result of the reduction in workload
- Meetings can be conducted via online platforms such as MS Teams, further reducing costs of travel.

### Disadvantages/Issues:

- For some learners there were too many staff involved, which led to some confusion between the apprentice and the employer. Specifically, this has to be managed carefully where the learner has an identified LDD
- Retention of staff can be an issue where it is an applicant's job market
- It is not appropriate in some sectors, especially those that are not trade-related, such as Business and Management, due to the way these apprenticeships are delivered
- Vocational Coaches/Assessors recruited under this model are less likely to be able to offer effective support if a Development Coach leaves their role before a replacement is found

## Conclusion

The Development Coaches used as part of the project were very effective in driving progress and achievement. However, as identified in the disadvantages, this approach cannot be used uniformly across all apprenticeship delivery and provision due to different delivery styles, even within the same organisation.

It is very effective in sectors that have recruitment issues and where there is a shortage of skilled staff. Using the Development Coaches improves communication with employers, one of the main reasons for employer dissatisfaction, and supports an improved financial position, which could allow for funds to be used elsewhere. This role can also be used as a feeder role for Vocational Coaches/Assessors, allowing organisations to invest in CPD for these staff to develop their own skills and knowledge, offering internal progression opportunities.

The Development Coaches were not employed to complete progress reviews, this was still a responsibility of the Vocational Coach/Assessor, but instead complete these in partnership with the Vocational Coach/Assessor. The main responsibility of the Development Coach was to support the apprentice's Personal Development, which some Vocational Coaches/Assessors find difficult to support, develop and implement.

Overall, this role was very effective for the apprentices that were part of the CCF project.

## Sources & References

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