

Liverpool Invest to Change 2009 – 2010

Case Study 2

Work Experience in Motor Vehicle Vocational Training

Context

Two sixth form students diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) from a Liverpool special school attended a 10 day Motor Vehicle Engineering work experience placement at Rocket Training, a Work Based Learning Provider based in Liverpool. Both students had shown an interest in this vocational area when as part of a larger school group they had attended an introductory day into motor vehicle engineering hosted by Rocket Training earlier this year. This is the first time students have been placed with a provider in smaller groups to gain qualifications.

Student M is a complex individual. He can have behavioural issues with authority, and does not like following rules if they stop him from doing what he wants to do. However he is maturing and becoming more responsible and incidents involving misbehaviour are becoming less frequent.

M is an extremely talented musician and aims to study music at college. He is also interested in engines and machinery, especially remote controlled helicopters, and is ICT literate.

M finds writing difficult and has trouble maintaining attention during lessons. He will often require 1:1 support to keep him on task. M has made great leaps in his self reliance, becoming an independent traveller and using public transport on his own during and outside of school. This has allowed M to socialise more and develop as a person.

Student D is an able young man. D is good at sports and is usually eager to take part in football or gym lessons. D will often spend his free time playing football and attends training in school through Liverpool FC. When he applies himself he can produce good quality work with a degree of independence.

D is able to travel on public transport with staff support, but D is not yet at "Level 6 Independent Transport" due to his behaviour in school and at home. It is hoped that in time this will be at a level that allows him to start independent travel training. On gym trips D purchases and eats his lunch in a busy food court in the city centre. D prefers to type his work and is ICT literate.

D needs staff support to face other people and be in large groups. D has had difficulties with his behaviour over the last year. He can be misleading to staff about incidents and often takes himself away from the class without permission and hides to be on his own, or avoid work. However he has been placed on a behaviour contract that has seen his behaviour improve markedly.

Planning

In planning the work experience it was really helpful that staff from Rocket Training met to plan the activities before the work experience had begun. The initial visit from the school had introduced students to the tutors and their surroundings which meant that both M & D knew what would be expected of them whilst on the work experience programme.

Another added bonus was that the lead Motor Vehicle tutor from Rocket Training had previous experience in working with special schools and was aware of the need to plan each activity on an individual basis. A short practical initial assessment was undertaken with M & D to identify any particular individual training styles and assess any practical skills.

The training planned was to carry out a range of practical activities that included dismantling engine parts without using written information as an aide memoir (as undertaken with full time learners). Lessons planned encompassed short achievable tasks broken down into smaller elements to be delivered in a practical setting. No written work was undertaken by either of the students whilst on work experience.

“At Rocket Training the staff are friendly and they make me feel welcome and created a comfortable environment. The course was very enjoyable and interesting. It was also adapted to meet my specific learning needs” Student M

Delivery

Both M & D worked towards units of accreditation from the “ABC Level 1 Award in Motor Vehicle Engineering”. Unit 0.1 Health & Safety was the main element of the work experience and each area of this unit was woven into the practical activities undertaken by both students. Although no written work was produced and all tasks were completed on a practical level, there was a small element of classroom based work. This was based around a question and answer quiz designed to build up the students’ confidence by being asked to shout out answers when asked.

“I have been getting used to working with different types of tools and which tools and different parts. The differences between Rocket Training and school is at rocket Training it is Hands-on and in school it is more writing work”
Student D

All tasks were built on as the weeks went by. Both M & D felt that they had been accommodated well and their best ways of working had been utilised by all staff at Rocket Training. Practical tasks undertaken included:

- Changing tyres
- Replacing front brakes

- Taking out and replacing car seats
- Changing a gasket
- Stripping down an engine
- Taking out and replacing a radiator

“The things I have enjoyed about Rocket Training is taking the parts of the cars out and learning how they work. Also I have enjoyed being set challenges to complete which builds up your confidence and makes you use your own initiative” Student D

Achievements

Both students worked extremely well on all tasks as a team and as individuals during their work experience placement. Both M & D showed a great deal of initiative and communicated well to each other and to the tutors. Their confidence grew as the weeks went by and towards the end of their work experience placement they were being timed by the tutors in respect of completing specific tasks.

In particular it was noted that both students demonstrated that they had shown enough competence to undertake and pass a tyre fitting course. Rocket Training felt that this qualification would be able to be achieved by both students with little extra support.

“I would recommend this course to anybody that has an interest in mechanics and I think anybody would benefit from the understanding and helpful staff”
Student M

“This course was an interesting course. The staff at the course were helpful and polite. It was a suitable course for me. It is a good environment”
Student D

Plans for the future

“From this course I have found that I want to pursue a career in motor vehicle and want to do more of these courses, now my interests in mechanics has grown. In the future I would like to become a car mechanic and work with my dad in Nationwide Crash Repair Centre working with cars” Student D.

The school is examining the possibility of further work experience for D

“From this course I have found I have a keen interest in motor vehicle mechanics and I have applied and been accepted on a mechanics college course” Student M

Student M has been accepted on a course at Liverpool Community College based at the Vauxhall Road Campus.

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