



Career Development Framework

Case study: Harton Academy

In the survey you said that you would be willing to provide a case study about the way that you address the **Balance life and work** learning area.

This learning area is concerned with engaging learners in

- Considering work-life balance
- Attending to physical and mental wellbeing
- Planning and managing personal finances
- Considering how to be involved in family and community
- Understanding different life stages and life roles
- Being aware of rights and responsibilities in the workplace and in society
- Dealing with prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination

Your case study does not have to address all of these components, but it should address at least one.

You can write as much as you need to explain your case study. The initial use of the case study will be as a short summary in a handbook for schools, but we may reuse in other resources.

Case study

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School/college/institution: Harton Academy

Would you /the institution like to be anonymous: No

How are you meeting this learning area?

How to Ace Your A Levels Programme

During their first term of 6th form, all year 12 students complete a study skills programme. The aim of this programme is to encourage students to develop effective study habits, routines and minsets and revision techniques, to not only maximise their academic success but improve their time management, productivity, work-life balance and mental wellbeing. Much of what we do is based on the VESPA system, developed by Steve Oakes and Martin Griffin.

The programme is delivered through a series of weekly assemblies where topics are explored, we try to include a summary of some of the research behind the strategies or theories we discuss. Follow up discussion and activities are then completed by students with their tutors.

The following themes are covered throughout the programme:

- What makes an A level student successful – the importance of vision, effort, systems, practice and attitude to their success.
- Organisation and effective time management – how to plan a realistic study schedule to ensure a good work life balance. We look at strategies for reviewing progress on a regular basis, setting targets and how to write effective to do lists as well as ways to avoid procrastination.
- The science of learning – an introduction to cognitive science, retrieval practice, spaced and interleaved practice and dual coding. Students look at study techniques they have used in the past, and reflect on how effective they were. We then have a detailed look at variety of different study and revision techniques and why they work.
- The importance of vision and motivation for success. We tie this in with researching future career plans and resources they can use as well as looking at the importance of work experience, and how to find placements.
- Resilience, dealing with change and the importance of failure in our success.

How does this fit into your school, college or institutions' wider activities?

Students complete the study skills and effective study habits activities within a wider careers and personal development programme that encourages students to consider their future plans and supports students so they can make progress towards their future goals. We cover sessions on the importance of work experience, supercurricular and extracurricular activities. All students are asked to undertake a work experience placement during year 12 and the school runs a variety of different enrichment activities every week. We offer university visits during the Summer term to different Universities. We invite in a range of different HE and apprenticeship providers to talk to students as well as representatives from a number of different widening participation programmes including:

- FutureMe (NECOP)
- Sunderland First Choice
- Sutton Trust
- Social Mobility Foundation
- Raising Aspirations
- Durham Supported Entry
- Newcastle Partners
- Sunderland First Choice
- Sunderland University Medicine
- HE+ and Cambridge University
- Oxford University

How does it connect to the Gatsby Benchmarks?

This programme contributes towards Gatsby Benchmarks 1 and 3.

What resources, partners or support have been useful in delivering this (provide web links if possible)?

Lots of the ideas for the programme are based on research summarised in the following books:

- The A Level Mindset by Steve Oakes and Martin Griffin <https://www.vespamindset.com/the-mindset-books>
- The Student Mindset by Steve Oakes and Martin Griffin <https://www.vespamindset.com/the-mindset-books>

- The Study Skills Handbook by Stella Cottrell
<https://www.macmillanihe.com/page/detail/The-Study-Skills-Handbook/?K=9781137610874>
- Powerful Teaching: Unleash the Science of Learning by Pooja K, Agarwal and Patrice M. Bain
<https://www.retrievalpractice.org/why-it-works>
- Dual Coding With Teachers by Oliver Caviglioli <https://www.olicav.com>

How do you assess that learning has taken place?

Attendance at assembly and completion of follow up tasks with tutors.

What are the main challenges in running this activity?

These activities would work best if delivered as full lessons in smaller groups. We introduce the theories in assemblies due to curriculum time constraints, to ensure consistency of delivery and so that the sessions are covered by the person that has put together the programme. Tutors need to attend the assemblies so they know what was covered in the assembly to deliver the follow up activities with the students.

What advice would you give if someone wanted to run something similar?

If possible provide training to your tutor team so they feel confident delivering these sessions in smaller groups. Make sure you have a clear week by week plan and a booklet to work through to help support tutors deliver the follow up activities. Revisit the activities later on in the year and into year 13 if possible. I have found revisiting these ideas and techniques in subject based intervention has been helpful, if students aren't making expected levels of progress in their A level subjects.