**Level 5 example**

***Relevant learning outcomes:***

1. analyse an aspect of current educational policy in the LL sector, considering the context and background which has produced the policy
2. discuss critically a selection of the key changes which have taken place in your working context, and how your organisation has managed these changes.
3. evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies you have adopted for managing these changes in your teaching
4. propose actions which would benefit learners and improve provision

**Extract from assignment**

In my previous teaching post I taught xxxx (as a main subject) together with xxxx and key skills xxxx. xxxx were seen as being of particular relevance to xxxx learners. For personnel to progress to Senior NCO (non-commissioned officer) status, the xxxx insisted on a minimum pass at Grade C. Teaching in a Military environment presented me with a number of unique challenges, not least of which was the unavoidable fact of education always having to take second place to operational requirements! In addition:

1. changes were introduced to the indigenous system that the xxxx use to assess LLN
2. I personally endeavoured to introduce specific changes intended to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

At this point in time the Royal Navy, Army and RAF were finally being considered, for training and educational purposes at least, as tri-partite; they were in the process of adopting a common policy, to be applied by a centralised resource, to which all Service Arms would ultimately defer. The implications of this change were extensive and far reaching.

An LSDA (Feb 2006) e-briefing suggested the following approach to key skills provision:

1. Develop a key skills policy that explains why key skills are important, how they will be taught, how they will be assessed and what resources will be provided.
2. Have a clear rationale for key skills and sell this to students. Get support from colleagues, senior management, employers and universities.
3. Vary teaching and learning styles. Focus on skills and their application in contexts rather than as stand-alone subjects.
4. Take advantage of free staff development. Use the free training sessions run by LSDA (continuing under LSDA’s successor organisation the Learning and Skills Network) and the awarding bodies. Use key skills resources to help deliver in-house training.
5. Establish clear procedures for assessment, internal verification, moderation of portfolios and managing the external tests.

Looking at this framework as a whole I felt at the time that it encompassed many of the changes I wanted to bring about. The lack of a clear and concise key skills policy was a major problem that needed to be addressed as was the need for getting support from senior management who were often unwilling to release personnel for Sfl or IGCSE instruction. Both of these points were subsequently addressed. The one area where problems were clearly going to be experienced was that of teaching skills in context. None of the subject matter available for Sfl was contextualised and that, again, represented a clear difficulty that was never fully resolved.

In order to address the first two points of this framework the xxxx and the xxxx established a partnership with the University for Industry (Ufi)and set up a relationship with Learndirect[[1]](#footnote-1). The following extract (www.trainingfoundation.com/press release) gives an overview of how the arrangement was expected to work:

*“The Torch Hub [[2]](#footnote-2) includes over 120 xxxx on-line Learning Centres where military and civilian personnel, and their families, can undertake Learndirecttm courses world-wide. Every course is supported by a Personal Tutor based at the Learning Centre and in some cases by an external subject specialist on-line tutor depending on the type of course. The range of courses is very wide and includes Skills for Life; Computer skills including the European Computer Driving Licence; Specialist IT Courses; and Business and Management which can all lead to nationally and internationally recognised qualifications. In the Academic Year 2004/2005 over 18,000 learners completed over 37,000 courses which exceeded the previous academic year.

Learning centre staff need to have the necessary knowledge and skills to support every learner as effectively as possible whatever their skill or ability level and whether they learn from home, in the work place, in the Learning Centre or elsewhere.”*
It went on to state that:

*”The initiative adopted by the Torch Hub fulfils the University for Industry (Ufi) Qualification Strategy target for staff charged with supporting Learndirecttm learners. At least 50% of staff who support learners must have achieved a Level 3 Learner Support qualification and the other 50% must be working towards that goal.”*

This represents a significant change in that Learning Centre staff are clearly expected to be more than simply administrators as was the case in the past. They are now expected to have specific skills such as will be of direct benefit to the learner.

The xxxx in general and the xxxx in particular, are clearly taking the issue of Sfl seriously. It had long been recognised that the old LLN assessment system -. NAMET (xxxx Maths & English testing) – had some serious failings, chief of which was its unwieldy structure of 9 separate evaluation levels. NAMET meant that promotion to the higher echelons of Military service was only achievable by way of a score of zero which was mapped to a C grade at IGCSE. NAMET wasn’t recognised outside of the Service. Because of these failings a decisions was made phase out NAMET and replace it with Key Skills testing at levels 1 and 2. This represented a positive and much needed change. Having taught NAMET English for a couple of years I know that it is largely an academic exercise with little practical value to the learner. In curriculum terms it was heavily based on product.

NAMET was gradually replaced by LANTERN. Showing their usual regrettable obsession with acronyms, the xxxx decided to call the new system’ Literacy And Numeracy, Training and Education in the xxxx which some might regard as being about as catchy a title as an entry in the Eurovision Song Contest. Changeover was finally effected in September 2006; one benefit of the Learndirect partnership was that they provided Basic Skills tutors in some establishments together with on-line and paper based Literacy and Numeracy testing.

As mentioned earlier this approach met the first two LSDA recommendations. Where it fell over was in its approach to point number three. The one-size-fits-all approach adopted by Learndirect fell short because of the lack of differentiation in the teaching material and resources. In a classroom based environment one would expect to see scaffolded learning with activities clearly mapped to less-able and more-able. With the PC based, interactive learning this didn’t happen because the activities were not designed to be computer adaptive.

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1. an external, Government funded, provider of interactive and skills-based training [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. a new name for Service learning centres [↑](#footnote-ref-2)