

JISC

Effective Practice with e-Learning

An abstract, artistic composition featuring a blue and white color palette. In the center, a pen is positioned diagonally, with its tip pointing towards the bottom right. Surrounding the pen are several playing cards, including the Ace of Hearts and the Ace of Clubs, which are partially visible and slightly out of focus. The overall effect is a sense of motion and depth, with light rays and soft shadows creating a dynamic atmosphere.

# Case Studies

Negotiate learning goals

Newcastle United Football Club Learning Centre

### Negotiate learning goals

#### What is the intended outcome?

Learners are able to agree some or all of their learning goals in negotiation with tutors.

#### What is established practice?

- Initial assessment of learners' needs and preferred learning styles takes place before courses start
- Learners are matched to the most suitable level and type of course
- A supportive and respectful relationship between learner and practitioner enables the setting of agreed and achievable learning goals

#### What advantages can e-learning bring?

- Access to differentiated online resources can open up a more extensive and appropriate range of options for learners
- Self-directed learning through online simulations and tutorials can build learners' confidence to take up formal learning opportunities
- Learning matches learners' lifestyles

## Extending opportunities for learning

Newcastle United Football Club Learning Centre

### Background

Located in St James' Park, the home of Newcastle United Football Club, the NUFC Learning Centre is a purpose-built learning facility equipped to deliver a wide range of learning opportunities. The Centre deals with over 1,000 learners every week, offering courses in partnership with Newcastle College, University of Northumbria and Newcastle University.

### The challenge

From the start, Phil McBride, the NUFC Learning Centre Manager, had recognised that the powerful draw of the football club could be harnessed to promote learning. The challenge was to create an informal, relaxed and inclusive atmosphere in which adults, as well as younger learners, could improve their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills with the help of the latest technology.

### The e-learning advantage

The Learning Centre provides accredited programmes leading to nationally recognised qualifications in literacy and numeracy, but in a context of learning for fun. Courses are built around a mixture of online in-house and commercially produced materials with a strongly learner-centred approach. There are no formal or set teaching sessions – instead adult learners, with their families, are encouraged to select activities from an extensive range of learning programmes, formal and informal. Although there are no

For learners, the buzz surrounding the Centre is an added attraction. This is often enhanced by football celebrities such as Alan Shearer dropping in for a chat!

taught sessions as such, a team of 40 tutors is available throughout each week to support individuals' learning.

All adult courses are offered on a drop-in basis in three hour slots throughout each week. As part of the process of negotiating and defining learning goals, the Centre Manager personally meets every learner on their initial visit in order to put them at ease and discuss their options. These include interactive tutorials in basic skills, in which learners' actions influence the outcomes, and simulations which allow learners to apply knowledge in the context of real life experiences.

Whilst the adult learners at the Centre are completely free to select their activities, many move on to accredited programmes once they have used the Centre for a substantial period of time. Progression opportunities to further and higher education come through the partnership organisations.

### Key points for effective practice

- By providing a range of learning packages, a flexible learning menu is on offer. Self-directed online study in digestible chunks helps everyone to progress at his or her own pace.
- Lack of a clear strategy for the development of e-learning is a real barrier to success according to Phil McBride. From the beginning, the NUFC Learning Centre mapped out a clear vision of how e-learning should develop. A key component was the drive towards creating a paperless environment with all learning online. This was an ambitious aim which was perfected with a schools-based initiative before branching out into adult learning.

### Final word

**Returning to learn can be daunting for many adults, even in the exciting surroundings that exist at Newcastle United Football Club. Phil McBride believes that success comes from empowering adult learners to set their own learning goals and this is best done in a relaxed, informal setting.**

