Functional Skills

Many of the Functional Skills materials in this publication have not been endorsed by the exam boards.

It is essential that practitioners refer to their specific exam board syllabus to ensure that they are covering all of the required skills to the necessary level.
RSC-NW are here to help...

- by identifying free...
  - Functional English;
  - Functional ICT; and
  - Functional Maths
  ... resources to enhance the delivery of Functional Skills within Work-based Learning, Adult & Community Learning and other FE and Skills Learning Environments.

- by raising awareness on...
  - how to devise resources;
  - how to digitise existing resources;
  - how to engage with learners, in particular those in work placements, using various technologies such as video conferencing;

- by establishing on-line collaborative forums / curation sites for supported Learning Providers to share finds, apps, best practice etc.

- by raising awareness of communication channels that may enhance current practice.

- by highlighting / 'raising awareness' of advice from various stakeholders, examiners, funding bodies, Ofqual etc.
Here are five questions that Learning Providers should check out, when reviewing their current Functional Skills offer...

1: Is it practical?

Is the functionalskills program, currently offered, dynamic, current, and engaging? Do the Functiona Skills English, ICT and Maths courses meet your learners' educational goals by helping them get the skills, information, and strategies needed in the 21st Century? Do learners enjoy all the new ideas and projects brought into their learning environments? Does the Functional Skills program energize your practitioners and are their students, as a result, beneficiaries?

2: Is it relevant?

Have the Functional Skills courses been designed to prepare learners for the real world or, are they delivered for the world that their practitioners grew-up in? Technology won't replace practitioners but those who don't use it may lose their jobs.

3: Is it flexible?

Whether learners are looking to start a plumbing program or a catering program, does the Instructional Program for Functional Skills offer an exciting collection of resources, with content that is appropriate for the 21st Century and available at different levels?

4: Is it online?

We know how busy practitioners and their learners are so the flexibility of blended learning, with 24/7 access to online resources helps. Have you considered the "Flipped Work-Placement" approach? i.e. (a) are there Instructional Media Resources and are they fully online? (b) Do learners use the Instructional media Resources to learn, revisit, engage, at their own pace, so that they can apply what they have learned in the work-placement and/or learning environments?

5: Does it go beyond the paper-based exercises and textbooks?

Do the Functional Skills courses focus on good instructional practices and the many ways practitioners can integrate digital media and technology to support their goals? and/or Do all learners on a Functional Skills program get access other services to help them progress? e.g. Communication Channels, Video conferencing, Webinars, FAQs using VYOU or eyejot etc.

Considering the answers to those five questions...

Should Learning Providers be looking to engage with the use of technology for the delivery of Functional Skills?
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http://www.ofqual.gov.uk/qualifications-assessments/89-articles/238-functional-skills-criteria

1.1 Functional Skills qualification criteria

January 2012


1.2 Functional Skills subject criteria

September 2011


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1.3 Functional Skills controlled assessment regulations

September 2011


2 Questions

2.1 What's good about Functional Skills?

- Employers want and need workers with good Functional Skills.
- With functional skills, learners will be able to draw on a bank of transferable skills that they need to succeed in all areas of life.

The ability to use English, Maths and ICT skills...

- in practical contexts
- to suit different situations

...means that Functional Skills underpins every aspect of learning, work and life.

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2.2 Why do functional skills?

To engage with learners, showing them that the Functional Skills have genuine applications in life and work.

1. Give Practitioners the freedom to link skills to real-life.

2.3 Any Drawbacks?

1. Important to enter learners for the stand-alone examinations at the right level
2. Difficult to revise in the 'traditional sense' - need to...
   - learn
   - practice, practice, practice skills
   ...until they are mastered; Revisiting skills regularly, in different "real-life" situations, helps.
   "The more you do the easier it becomes"
3. "Jargon" - need to help learners understand how maths terms relate to "real-World" Terms and vice versa.

2.4 Any Good News?

Practitioners can...

1. tailor content to learner needs and interest;
2. for subjects other than...
   - English,
   - ICT and
   - Maths
   ...use case studies and projects to show real-life applications.
3 Awarding Bodies Plus

3.1 DfE
   [http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/functionalskills](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/qualifications/functionalskills)

3.2 Foundation Learning Support
   [http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning](http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/foundationlearning)

3.3 Functional Skills Support Programmes

3.4 Exam Feedback +
   General

   - Areas examiners feel Learning providers should address...
     1: **Enter candidates at appropriate levels**: changes from Key Skills to Functional Skills has resulted in learners being entered for levels that are not appropriate;
     2: **Basic Exam Techniques need to be taught**: (a) importance of reading questions careful and ensuring they answer the questions. (b) spending appropriate time, based on marks available, on questions - too much time spent on questions with low marks, not leaving enough time for questions worth far more marks.
     3: **Presentation**: A relatively small but consistent problem; obvious but, learners need to realise *if examiners can't read it, they can't mark it*. (part of Functional English me thinks)
     4: **Checking**: for accuracy or sense; little evidence learners have a "rough idea" of the expected answer and/or have checked to see if it is realistic.

3.4.1 Functional English

Reading...

   - Candidates should use information provided, rather than from their own experience, when answering questions.

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General...

- Candidates shouldn't copy verbatim from source documents; they should be encouraged to use their own words. Learners need opportunities to practice the "skill of selection", rather than quoting extensively from documents.
- Candidates need practice "planning their time"; need sufficient time at the end of assessments for proof-reading and corrections;
- Attention to spelling, grammar and in particular punctuation important; candidates lose significant marks at Levels 1 & 2.

3.4.2 Functional ICT

3.4.3 Functional Maths

General...

- Candidates need training on...
  - identifying (by highlighting, underlining etc.) key information given in tasks;
  - answering open questions and communicating their solutions to others (EyeJot?)
  - the importance of showing all their working and how they have arrived at their answer, so that all possible credit can be given;
- Functional Maths is assessed on the three interrelated process skills...
  - Representing;
  - Analysing (only one that requires candidates to process and use maths) and
  - Interpreting
  Important candidates show reasons, justifications and explanations for their answers.

3.4.4 MoveOn: Test Preparation

http://www.move-on.org.uk/practicetests.asp

3.4.5 Online Practice Tests

3.4.5.1 City and Guilds

http://fssamplettests.smartscreen.co.uk/

3.4.5.2 Edexcel: Onscreen, on-demand testing

3.4.5.3 Functional Skills 4U

http://www.functionalskills4u.com/

3.4.5.4 Pearson: Initial Assessment Tool

http://www.pearsonschoolsandfecolleges.co.uk/demos/InitialAssessmentToolFeb11new/start.html

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4 Tools-Apps-Web2.0-etc.

4.1 Communication

4.1.1 Audio Linking

4.1.1.1 QuicklyChat

Push-to-talk video chats for coworkers.

With QuicklyChat, users can instantly start up conversations as if they are standing shoulder-to-shoulder. QuicklyChat is a simple chat program which, based on your availability, automatically answers any incoming calls.

The application controls a user availability status by looking at which programs are currently running.

This way, users can still get work done and not be interrupted (or interrupt anyone else who’s doing the same). When done, they simply hang up.

FREE while in Beta - Available for Windows and Mac OS X; Based on Adobe Air; Extremely simple.

4.1.1.2  uWhisp

Breaking the silence uWhisp is really new and some of the links on the main page are not up and running yet.

For practitioners that keep a Facebook page for their learners or a Twitter feed, uWhisp, a site currently in Beta, allows users to record audio that can then be played back within their web browser. It currently requires practitioners to use Firefox, Safari, or Google Chrome and to add the plug-in.

Note: The plug-in also places a button in the text boxes of the social networks that are used.

A potential look into the future of how text based Social Media is heading towards being vocally social.

https://uwhisp.com/home

4.1.1.3  SpeakIt! - Chrome Web Store

Speak It, not a perfect text to speech app, but it is adequate for having webpages read to learners and it's FREE.

For learners that need to hear a word pronounced or needs a sentence read to him or her for clarification, Speak It could be a handy extension to have installed in Google Chrome.

Speak It, a Google Chrome extension, enables the text on most webpages to be read to users. Highlight the text - right-click to activate Speak It - click the play button. The voice is very digitized, but it is clear.

https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/pgeolalilifpodheeocdmbhehgnkbbak?ct=recommended

4.1.1.4  SpeakPipe

When installed on a Learning Provider's website SpeakPipe provides a good way for stakeholders, prospects, etc., to leave voicemail messages without picking up a phone.

SpeakPipe messages can be downloaded to a computer so if practitioners need a simple way for learners to record their voices for use in a multimedia project, SpeakPipe might be handy to have on a VLE/classroom blog/web presence. Note: with SpeakPipe installed anyone can click on the "send voicemail" button and leave a message.

- When a visitor clicks the "leave voicemail" button they will be prompted to allow access to their computer.
- the visitor can start recording a message for you.
- Visitors can, but don't have to, enter their names and email addresses for you.

Learning Providers can listen to and download the messages left for them in their SpeakPipe inbox.

4.1.2 Offline Linking

4.1.2.1 5 Ways to Read a Website(s) Offline

Many practitioners and their learners are on the move, and in the process of travelling, they often can't get Wi-Fi connections or 3G.

They definitely won't be able to access any website from their mobile, tablet or laptop.

This post looks at one potential answer, making materials accessible even when users are offline.

This quick guide, looks at 5 ways users can access webpages offline...

http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/read-website-offline/

4.1.3 Online Linking

4.1.3.1 Pagefin

Pagefin is a web page and web site sharing service that allows practitioners and/or learners to easily create, link and share their web pages and web sites. No account is required!

To create a webpage with Pagefin...

- click "create and share,"
- add a title for the page,
- add tags,
- enter the captcha code, and
- start designing your webpage.

Users can add text boxes, images, and videos to their webpages. When complete...

- click on the share button to have a URL generated for the page.

Note: The share button will also provide you with an editing link (don't share that one).

http://pagefin.appspot.com/

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4.1.3.2 Sync Files on USB/Thumb Drive With DropboxPortableAHK

DropboxPortableAHK, as the name suggests is a portable version of Dropbox implemented using AutoHotkey.

It allows you to run Dropbox's client program from a USB Flash drive and sync files contained on the USB drive to your Dropbox account, regardless of which computer you are using.

This enables you to carry your files around with you and at the same time have them sync seamlessly with your Dropbox storage.

DropboxPortableAHK is especially great when you do not have permission to install the program on the computer, or if you work on multiple shared computers and do not want to hassle with Dropbox's web interface.

There are plenty of other scenarios where DropboxPortableAHK can be useful.


4.1.3.3 Zoho Sites

Free Website Builder - Zoho Sites lets users build professional looking websites easily.

Zoho Sites...

- is a new addition Zoho's suite of services.
- appears to be trying to address two frequently-noted shortcomings of Google Sites by offering...
  - visually impressive themes and
  - by automatically making the sites mobile-friendly.

To create a site on Zoho Sites users can sign-in using a Zoho account, Google account, or Facebook account.

Looking to build a new course website that is mobile friendly, then Zoho Sites is worth a closer look.

http://www.zoho.com/sites/index.html

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ScreenLeap shares a user's actual screen in real-time by letting recipients (learners) join a live session.

Just...

- go to ScreenLeap and click on “Share my screen”.
- a unique session code will be provided that users can send to anybody.
- once they enter the code on ScreenLeap, they can join the session and see exactly what you are seeing or doing on your computer.

The best part about ScreenLeap...

- no software to download,
- no extensions to install and
- no signups to do.

All that's required is a browser (Firefox works well) with updated Java plugin.

This allows ScreenLeap to be used on computers, tablets, smartphones and any other device with a web browsing capability.

P.S. Learners can share their screens with assessors :-)
### 4.1.4.2 TeamViewer

**Share your Whiteboard Screen on Learner iPads/Androids with TeamViewer.**

Basically a practitioner installs the free TeamViewer client on their computer and starts a meeting. Learners runs the free TeamViewer for Meeting app on their iPad/Android and then enters the meeting room code the Practitioner gives them. They can see the computer screen, and zoom and pan around it. But importantly, not interfere with what the practitioner is doing.

Great potential for WBL learners etc.


### 4.1.5 Text Linking

#### 4.1.5.1 Chat For Google

**Chat With Your Gmail & Google+ Contacts From Anywhere [Chrome]**

"Google Chat is awesome", but if you close your Gmail window it also disappears.

Chat For Google is an official extension from Google that fixes that by giving you a chat box irrespective of the website you are browsing.


#### 4.1.5.2 Feed 2 Email

**Your favourite RSS feeds by email!**

Convert RSS to email. An easy way to get RSS feeds sent to an email inbox.

**Encourage your learners to keep up-to-date with the course blog, website and/or other web presences by using feed2email.net**

[http://feed2email.net/](http://feed2email.net/)

[Return to contents page.](#)
4.1.5.3 WikiTouch

For those who like using a Wiki and have iPhones etc., this is for you...

WikiTouch puts a wiki on the iPhone.

Will Kelly provides this post on how to create a mobile wiki.

Synchronisation across multiple iPhones, iPads, PCs and the cloud makes this application another tool Assessors/Verifiers etc. may consider.

Learners, many of whom are glued to their phones, will also find WikiTouch a useful tool especially as they can export their notes/coursework etc., as Adobe PDF files, without needing another app (and it's all FREE)

http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/smartphones/create-a-wiki-on-your-iphone-with-wikitouch/5205

4.1.5.4 swabr

Swabr allows practioners to create their own private microblogging system that only people they authorize can join.

Swabr is like Twitter except it is closed off to everyone except those people you really want to interact with.

Some learning providers are using Swabr as a bulletin board; it could also be used by practitioners and/or learners to create discussion groups and study groups.

http://www.swabr.com/

4.1.5.5 TalkTyper

Looking for an easy to use, on-line, affordable Speech to text dictation software application?

Talk Typer, with its simple interface, is an option worth a closer look.

Just...

- click on the microphone icon to input your voice
- watch as the application translates it into text.
- copy the text to the clipboard, or print it directly, or e-mail, or share to Twitter.

For the language learners and practitioners, it also links to Google Translate for quick translations. **Note:-** best used with Google Chrome since this browser has the best support for voice dictation.

http://talktyper.com/

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4.1.6 Video Linking

4.1.6.1 meetingl

Free web video conference solution for up to 8 persons and for any browser.

If you need a simple implementation that runs straight from a browser, then you should check out Meetingl. This flash web application offers a free and easy way to start video meetings from the browser without any extra download or user registration required.

Potential users can start using Meetingl by creating a new room.

Each meeting has a unique room number that you can use to invite friends.

Participants can activate their webcams for all to see, adjust volumes of other participants and if required, enlarge individuals to fill the whole screen.

Meeting admins can also mute/unmute participants.

Finally, you have a chat interface below, which is very handy if you need to spell out what you are saying

Meetingl is a nice simple for anyone who need to organize video meetings without the fuss of unnecessary registration and plugin downloads.

NOTE: With two screens I was able to share one screen via Screenleap and still see and communicate with the other participants on the second screen.

http://meetingl.com/

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4.1.6.2 Meetings.io

Simple online meetings...

Video conferencing is becoming an increasingly common form of communication within business, learning and within our day to day social lives.

So what are you doing to help learners get to grips with this important medium and to help them communicate effectively with video conferencing tools?

Meetings.io is a free and very quick and easy tool to help practitioners create a video conferencing chat room that they can use with their learners.

P.S. look at the bottom of the screen, when in the room, where users can open a note pad to take notes during meetings - file sharing and screen sharing are coming soon.

http://meetings.io/

4.1.6.3 Plizy

Plizy changes the way learners and/or practitioners discover and share videos and makes video-watching a more personalized and social experience.

Plizy allows users to also create a custom channel, which grants them more control over what is watched; the Pandora-like recommendation system is based on the videos users watch and the ones you don’t. This allows Plizy to curate content that it knows users will like.

It also has a convenient tab where practitioners can communicate with learners based on the videos being watched.

https://plizy.com/

4.1.6.4 Vialogues: Meaningful discussions around video

Vialogues(Video+Dialogues) is an asynchronous Video discussion tool which can be used for leveraging digital videos for learning by adding group interaction as part of the online video experience.

If practitioners have a video clip that they want learners to respond to at their own pace, posting a Vialogue could be one way to accomplish that goal.

Users can...

- upload videos to Vialogues or use YouTube videos as the centerpieces of their conversations.
- post poll questions and add comments that are tied to points in the video.
- make their Vialogue public or private.

Note:- Public Vialogue's can be embedded into a blog, VLE or website.

https://vialogues.com/
4.1.6.5  VidCaster

Online Video Platform & Video Site Builder

VidCaster is a service designed to give users a place to build their own video website.

At its most basic free level, VidCaster is a dressed-up background for their YouTube video uploads.

Users can connect their YouTube account to their VidCaster account to display all or some of the videos that they have uploaded to YouTube.

VidCaster provides users with a nice selection of display templates as well as tool for creating categories of videos on the VidCaster site.

Take a look at my first effort at http://acljohn.vidcaster.com/

http://www.vidcaster.com/

4.1.6.6  VIDquik

If you're looking for a free and easy-to-use alternative to Skype, give VIDquik a try.

VIDquik is another video calling system that does not require users to install any special software (they will need to make sure that Flash is up to date on their computer).

To make a video call with VIDquik just click "video conf" on the homepage, enter your email address, and enter the email address of the person you wish to video call.

VIDquik connect youthe conference as soon as the other person receives the email.

VIDquik does give users the option to text chat while video calling.

http://www.vidquik.com/

Return to contents page.
4.2 CPD

4.2.1 5 Ways to Use Google Sites in Teaching & Learning

Although this post refers to "Schools" it is a post from the USA so therefore has a different meaning than we would use in the UK.

I particularly like the use of the new page-level permissions options, allowing learners to only edit Google Sites pages that practitioners grant them access to.

The 5 ways are...

- As a wiki;
- As a digital portfolio;
- As a digital file cabinet;
- As a blog;
- As a website.

All skills learners need in the "real world" - potential for use in functional skills especially as learners & practitioners have 24/7 access.

Google docs are also ideal for peer assessment and review.

http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2012/07/5-ways-to-use-google-sites-in-schools.html

4.2.2 10 New Ways Twitter Is Changing The College Lecture

This post, published by Edudemic looks at the ways Twitter is causing the current "lecture model" (engagement with learners) to evolve. Especially online...

So how exactly is Twitter changing the college lecture as we know it?

http://edudemic.com/2012/07/twitter-college-lecture/

Return to contents page.
4.2.3 Beginner’s Guide To: Producing Their First Youtube Tutorial

This post provides a tutorial that will show readers how to produce high quality YouTube tutorial without the use of a studio or even a video camera.

Users will make a How-to video tutorial, or product introduction with voice over and subtitles.

YouTube has a function to translate the captions so that viewers from all over the world can understand what is in the video.

Subtitles also make YouTube tutorials text searchable so people can find them easily. It’s best to keep the length of the video in under 6 minutes – people don’t like to watch a video if it is too long.

http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/youtube-tutorial-for-beginners/

4.2.4 Gmail for Beginners - A Video Tutorial

My Google Drive and Google Sites guides both mention how to create Google accounts, but it doesn’t cover how to use one of the most fundamental parts of Google accounts, Gmail.

The video does a nice job of showing you the basics of using Gmail. I wish the video was zoomed-in a bit more, but otherwise it's a good primer for the first-time Gmail users.

http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2012/09/gmail-for-beginners-video-tutorial.html#.UE3pNMFlR1J

4.2.5 How To Create A Google+ Page

It should be clear by now that Google+ is definitely not going anywhere.

It’s gaining in popularity and is a great complement or alternative to Facebook.

If you’re already set up on Google+ (for hang-outs perhaps), learning providers might want to look into adding a Google+ page for raising awareness and/or self-promotion/marketing etc.

Setting up one or more pages is easy, but Learning providers/practitioners/etc. should of course put some thought into how to make it distinctive.

This makeuseof posting will help...

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/how-to-create-a-google-page-for-a-businessclubor-yourself/

4.2.6 How To Easily Childproof Your iPad

A How-To post that may help learning providers "Learner Proof" iPads.

Prevent App deletion, In-App Purchases and more.

Well worth a closer look.

4.2.7  JISC Digital Media

A guide for people interested in finding out how digital media can be used in teaching and learning.

It explores...

- what digital media is,
- where it can be used to support teaching and learning and
- what the key opportunities and challenges are.

http://www.jiscdigitalmedia.ac.uk/guide/using-digital-media-for-teaching-and-learning

4.2.8  Pedagogical Quickies

Every couple of months or so, Marc-André publishes a quick pedagogical clip that presents an educational issue along with solutions often inspired by technology.

Marc-André’s YouTube channel is aimed at dealing with educational issues ranging from content creation to professional development.

Ideal resources for stall development and/or as great conversation starters for "forward planning" meetings etc.

http://www.youtube.com/user/lalandema

4.2.9  The 60-Second Guide To Texting In The Classroom

Although the idea of permitting students to text in class may appear problematic at first, with the appropriate supports, practitioners can take advantage of the technology and, in turn, create more meaningful and engaging learning experiences.

This post provides a few examples as to how practitioners can utilize text message technology in their classrooms and increase learner engagement and content mastery:

Content includes...

- Group Texting - currently, links to tools tend to be USA only;
- Silent In-Class Discussion;
- Live Polling - including links to tools


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4.2.10 What Students Can Actually DO With An iPad (Android or other device)

"Start with the end goal in mind, the inspiration, the challenge and then determine if an iPad (or similar devices) can be used to effectively, not to teach new content to students, but to allow them to achieve the end goal. To demonstrate their learning and share that understanding with their peers, a broader audience and even potentially the world."

Rather than ask what the iPad can do, ask what your students can demonstrate, explain, represent, communicate, visualize, DO with the iPad (or similar devices).

http://edudemic.com/2012/10/students-ipad/

4.3 General

4.3.1 5 Ways to Read Your Favourite Website(s) Offline

Many practitioners and their learners are on the move, and in the process of travelling, they often can’t get Wi-Fi connections or 3G.

They definitely won’t be able to access any website from their mobile, tablet or laptop.

This post looks at one potential answer, making materials accessible even when users are offline.

This quick guide, looks at 5 ways users can access webpages offline...

http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/read-website-offline/

4.3.2 How To Easily Childproof Your iPad

A How-To post that may help learning providers "Learner Proof" iPads.

Prevent App deletion, In-App Purchases and more.

Well worth a closer look.

http://edudemic.com/2012/08/how-to-easily-childproof-your-ipad/

Return to contents page.
4.3.3 How To Make Your Own eBooks And Publish Them On Amazon

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/ebooks-publish-amazon/

4.3.4 JISC TechDis Toolbox

The TechDis Toolbox TBX has a large number of resources to help individuals to work smarter, quicker and more efficiently.

- **Using technology section** contains a large number of ideas to help adapt the technology used everyday; covers both Windows and Mac computers as well as using mobile devices and tablets.
- **Planning and organisation section** help users set priorities, focus on tasks and manage their time.
- **Communicating section** or getting your message across is an essential part of working life.
- **Teamworking section** making it easier to connect with others.
- **Different Needs section** provides a range of technologies that can help different users.

http://www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/tbx/#skipto

4.3.5 Language Labs - Translator Bookmarklet

The Microsoft Translator Bookmarklet is a simple little tool for translating the content of any webpage.

**Ideal for learners to translate webpages into their own language.**

To use the Microsoft Translator Bookmarklet users need to specify the language they want content to be translated into and then install the bookmarklet onto their own PC.

Whenever they're viewing a webpage they can click on the browser bookmarklet to translate the page.

Installing the bookmarklet is a simple drag and drop process.

**Note: translations provided by Microsoft Translator may not be perfect but they can help 'learner understanding' of the content - which isn't in their native tongue.**

http://labs.microsofttranslator.com/bookmarklet/

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4.3.6 SoundGecko

SoundGecko is a service that let’s users listen to any article on the web, on the go, anywhere.

Many learners/practitioners etc., commute to their learning environment and back every day, spending up to 40 minutes or more on the bus/train etc.

SoundGecko provides an easier way to catch up/keep up with web content, without squinting at the tiny text on their mobile - they just listen.

There’s three different ways of sending articles to SoundGecko: website, email or a browser (Chrome) plugin.

In a matter of seconds, SoundGecko will send users an email with a link to the MP3 file that they can listen to, on any device.

Users can do all of this for free, without downloading an app and without registration.

If users do register, they get to use the iPhone app and also Google Drive/Dropbox sync that lets them listen to all your articles easily.

http://soundgecko.com/

4.3.7 SplitCam

SplitCam - Free webcam effects software and live video streaming software

- Use a webcam with multiple programs at the same time.
- Apply cool effects to your webcam.
- Use 3D masks to replace your entire head.
- Supports all popular chat services.
- Streams to most of the popular websites.

Latest version of SplitCam webcam software download for free.

http://splitcamera.com/

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4.3.8 Video Grabber

Video Grabber is the free online application to help users grab videos from online video sites like vimeo, blip.tv, YouTube etc, you only need to copy and paste video URL address, the video will be grabbed automatically in FLV, MP4, WMV format.

http://www.videograbber.net/

4.4 Media Authoring

4.4.1 Audio

4.4.1.1 10 Creative Uses For Audacity

Audacity, as many of you are already aware, is a free cross-platform application for recording and mixing audio, which also happens to be incredibly powerful and versatile.

Many practitioners and/or learners use Audacity for podcasts or music mixing, but that's not all it's good for.

There are so many fantastic things you can do with a program as versatile as Audacity.

This post takes readers through some of the best ideas and provides a few pointers on how to get started doing them themself.

Download Audacity and let's get started with...

- Multi-Track Music Recording
- Podcasting & Radio
- Record Speeches, Audition Material, Adverts & Voice-Overs
- Recording Audio From Applications
- Practise Foreign Languages And Record Yourself
- Create Audiobooks For Kids Or For Project Gutenberg
- Create Karaoke Backing Tracks
- Record Your Brainwaves
- Make Cool Ringtones
- Improve Reading Skills & Speech By Recording Kids Reading

4.4.1.2 TinyVox

Record your voice notes and share them instantly

TinyVox takes a tape recorder, from many of our pasts, and turns it into a digital format app for the very popular devices, iOS and Android.

_The app can be quickly used to make notes, record quotes from a tutor or just make an audio log to share and promote with your peers._

One of the best features of TinyVox is that not only does it allow users to record audio notes, but it also gives users the ability to add text to the files. The app is a must-have for practitioners, learners, assessors, verifiers, etc.

Using the app is as easy. Just open Tinyvox, tape your recording, play back and preview your Vox.

After the recording is complete, add a title and message to it and then share it with your colleagues/peers/tutors etc via Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, etc.


4.4.2 Images

4.4.2.1 4 Tools to Watermark Images

Many practitioners and/or learners may wish to watermark their images, as it is a great way to protect their images.

It can also be a way to...

- indicate ownership, when permission has been provided for the use of images owned by others;
- indicate any creative commons licence that may apply to the image use;
- raise awareness of the learning provider and/or individuals.

It is basically the process of adding a chunk of text or image to a photo to claim its ownership.

Many stock photograph websites use watermarks to prevent the theft of their images but with the introduction of web 2.0 technologies, anyone now can easily add watermarks to their photos using tools that do not even require software installation.

This post provides a list of some of the existing tools that can be used to watermark images.


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4.4.2.2 Create infographics | infogr.am

Create infographics and interactive online charts. It's free and easy...

- pick a theme/style for the infographic;
- upload the data to display, including videos (YouTube and Vimeo) & maps;
- publish the resulting infographic.

Infogr.am could be a great tool for learners to use to create displays of data that they have gathered.

http://infogr.am/

4.4.2.3 Free Posters - Poster-Street

Download and print high-quality, custom-illustrated free posters for learning environments, work and/or home! No registration required!

Posters provide viewers with, from whatever they are engaged in, a journey, no matter how long or short it is, into the world of meditation and contemplation.

Two thinking strategies that benefit our learners; isn't it the ultimate goal of education to bring up critical thinkers who will be ready to process information before taking it in rather than rote memorizing information?

Posters can help as long as they are changed regularly; that will give life to the purposes for which they are being used.

http://www.poster-street.com/

4.4.2.4 Generate iPhone text message chat screenshots

With a variety of options including carrier, time and message type, this iPhone text message screenshot generator creates pixel perfect images which are impossible to tell apart from a real chat conversation.

iPhone Text Generator is a free to use web service that lets users create fake/imaginary iPhone text conversations.

By default, four lines of messages are shown but you can add more by clicking on the “Add Message” button.

When the image is generated, users can...

- view it in their browser;
- download the image in PNG file format;
- share the image on Facebook and/or Twitter.

http://www.iphonetextgenerator.com/ Return to contents page.
4.4.2.5 *OpenClipArt*

[Open Clipart library](http://openclipart.org) - The largest online repository for high quality public domain vector graphics on the Internet. **Free vector images.**

You can edit the graphics and adapt them before use. Brilliant!

*Thanks to @xlearn for this.*

4.4.2.6 *Pictogram tool - create fun images, stickers*

This web tool will create fun image with pictogram and text that you can customize.

**Pictotool** is a tool for creating images by combining pictograms and text.

Once the images have been created, they can be downloaded and used for personal and/or commercial use.


4.4.2.7 *Picture to People - Online Graphic Effects*

**Free online professional photo effects and free online realistic text effects.**

Most learners (and many practitioners) have social networking accounts and or web presences that may benefit from adding special effects to images; adding to the visual appeal.

Online applications to add these effects, for this purpose, are preferred since they do not require any installation; we all know how difficult it is to get software added to Learning Provider PCs.

These applications can also be used on any computer with internet access.

Although convenient, not all online image effects websites offer a wide range of filters and images.

**Check out “PicturetoPeople” if you are looking for an excellent website that offers not only a wide range of image effects but text effects as well.**

Picture to People offers its users an invaluable source of image and text effects; the website’s use being free makes it even more special.


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### 4.4.2.8 Share As Image

Share As Image (previously called Pin A Quote) is a service that allows users to highlight text on the Internet and share it in the form of an image.

Available in free and Pro versions, Share As Image is a bookmarklet that can be installed on any browser.

The free version is very basic, offering a single font and no choice of colour. The Pro version, on the other hand, provides users with a range of colours as well as font types and sizes.

Once created, users can share the image on Pinterest, Facebook or Twitter.

*As with most images on the web, a right-click allows viewers to copy and/or save the resulting image.*

http://shareasimage.com/

### 4.4.2.9 Storyboard That

Storyboard That is a tool for learners and/or practitioners to use to...

- create simple cartoon stories
- create outlines for longer creative writing projects or
- script videos they're producing.

The free plan, users do have to register to save, allows users to save three projects per day.

Storyboard That provides users with 3-frame and 6-frame templates in which they can create their story.

Storyboard That provides dozens of...

- scenes,
- characters, and
- text bubbles

...to fill the storyboard frames.

Each element dragged onto a storyboard's frame has its own layer that can be...

- moved nearer or further back,
- flipped or mirrored
- resized,
- rotated, and
- repositioned.

http://www.storyboardthat.com/
4.4.2.10 The Image Language

Every word we search online is represented by the first image that Google Image shows. By using the most popular online search engine, we are able to turn the images into a new language.

The Image Language, a free to use online tool that codes sentences using Google Images, lets users translate words in their sentences into images.

The site can be used in fun ways to encode sentences with images. The converted text can be saved to a gallery or shared on Facebook with colleagues/learners etc.

http://writewithimages.com/index.php

4.4.2.11 ThingLink

Make Your Images Interactive -

ThingLink makes your images interactive...

ThingLink lets users add interactive links to any photo/image and turn it into a fun web experience that engages learners/practitioners/stakeholders.

ThingLink’s exclusive Rich Media Tags feature popular media players and apps from YouTube, Vimeo, SoundCloud, Google Maps, Spotify, Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Amazon, eBay, BestBuy, iTunes, Etsy, Mailchimp and FanBridge.

I feel this has huge potential in the world of education and beyond!

http://www.thinglink.com/

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4.4.3 Video

4.4.3.1 PowToon

PowToon is a brand new presentation tool that allows you to create animated presentations and cartoon style videos just by dragging and dropping.

An ideal tool for learners to develop visual communication skills.

The possibilities are endless, Learners can use PowToon to...

- share ideas;
- explain complex concepts;
- reflect on their learning;
- teach peers;
- explain processes;
- present their research.

...and they will will come up with hundreds of other creative uses.

Practitioners will find PowToon a great way to create animations for learners; presenting new information and/or ideas.

**Note:** Take time to work through the PowToon Interactive Tour and How to Create series before creating any animations.


4.5 Presentation Tools

4.5.1 A Cleaner Internet

If you want to show YouTube videos in your classroom but you're afraid of what might appear around the video, install A Cleaner Internet.

*A Cleaner Internet is an extension for Chrome, Safari, and Firefox.* The extension allows users to search YouTube and view YouTube videos without viewing the "related" content, advertisements, and comments that appear on YouTube.

4.5.2 Active Presenter

ActivePresenter's free edition can do practically everything that the Standard and Pro edition can do; the only difference is that the commercial editions can export to a few more formats.

For most practical purposes, the free edition is more than satisfactory.

What does it do?

ActivePresenter allows users to screen capture, cut, slice, join, draw, annotate and do all kinds of editing that is required to produce engaging tutorials and/or demonstrations without touching any other video editing software.

Mouse clicks, cursor path and movement, keyboard key presses, drag and drop actions, and more, can all be shown; the editing library lets users add texts, graphics, pre-built shapes such as arrows, circles etc., spotlights, zoom-in and zoom-out, slide transitions, and other embellishments.

Record audio from a microphone or add an audio track from file.

Add closed captions/subtitles, and yes ActivePresenter has an image editor included as well.

Got to be worth a closer look!


4.5.3 AnyMeeting

Free Web Conferencing Software, Free Online Meetings, Free Webinar Service Providers

Free Web Conferencing & Webinar Service. No time limits or restrictions. Up to 200 attendees per meeting, screen sharing, conference calling and more - all completely free!

AnyMeeting is available for free, letting users invite up to 200 people to be part of the same web conference.

Users can chat, broadcast videos, display images and also have your whole screen shared with all the invited delegates / colleagues / learners / stakeholders etc.

Live meetings can be recorded, and posted onto a blog, VLE or other web presences, to promote any future conference users arrange.

Reports, analytics, booking forms and surveying tools are also included.

http://www.anymeeting.com/

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4.5.4 Empressr

An Online Rich Media Presentation Application

Empressr, a browser based rich media presentation and storytelling tool.

Empressr is an online slide show/presentation tool; a creation and sharing service.

Empressr has a couple of features differentiating it from its competitors...

- the option of embedding video from multiple sources into your slide show.
- Empressr’s editor allows users to draw, create, or edit images inside their slides.

Oh yes! Empressr slideshows can also be embedded anywhere.

*An excellent way for students to summarize their learning, share their what they’ve learned, and to share their ideas.*

http://www.empressr.com/

4.5.5 HelloSlide

Bring your slides to life

When used correctly, slides are useful in helping people convey a message.

The problem with most slide presentations is that there needs to be a speaker's voice attached to them to make them meaningful.

**Hello Slide is a tool that people can use to add voice narration to slides that they display online.**

Hello Slide is different from many other services because instead of recording a voice over users type what they want the narrator to say.

Hello Slide creates the audio and narrates slides for users.

*The voice is slightly robotic, but it is much much better than most text to speech services.*

To use Hello Slide, register for a free account, upload a PDF, then type the narration.

Hello Slide could also be used as a tool for simple digital storytelling projects.

http://www.helloslide.com/

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4.5.6 **PDFrizator - Easily create PDF presentations!**

The PDFrizator is a Freeware tool to create PDF presentations.

Create PDF presentations, setting up page transition effects, automatic page advance time and a presentation background music/audio track.

The one thing I found useful was the option to install in portable mode. Works well but I found it needs Adobe Reader 9.5 for the audio and transitions to work.

http://www.rttsoftware.com/pdfrizator.html

4.5.7 **Pecha Kucha presentations with Google Apps:**

The Pecha Kucha presentation format can be a great way, for both practitioners and learners to provide an overview of a topic and/or focus their delivery.

Pecha Kucha presentations consist of 20 slides shown for 20 seconds each. This tends to produce a high-energy, fast-paced presentation. The format forces presenters to leave out the parts of their presentation that listeners wish you would skip.


4.5.8 **PowToon**

PowToon is a brand new presentation tool that allows you to create animated presentations and cartoon style videos just by dragging and dropping.

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...and they will will come up with hundreds of other creative uses.

Practitioners will find PowToon a great way to create animations for learners; presenting new information and/or ideas.

**Note:** Take time to work through the PowToon Interactive Tour and How to Create series before creating any animations.

4.5.9 Presentista

PowerPoint may be the industry standard for presentations, it does not mean it’s not worth looking around for something that can make presentations stand out above the rest.

Presentista is a new way to create presentations, and it works right from a user’s web browser.

When users are creating in Presentista, everything is on one screen. Add content and create a flow, which are akin to slides.

Links in the flow are how Presentista determines which section to jump to next.

Like any presentation, users can include...

- text and graphics;
- YouTube videos,
- Google Images and
- photos from Flickr.

http://presentista.com/

4.5.10 Present.me

Present.Me is a really easy way to record and share your presentations using your webcam...

Present.me allows users to sync their recorded audio and video to their slides then publish everything as one complete package.

Using Present.me...

- to record a presentation and posting it online could be helpful for learners who are absent on the day that practitioners give a short lecture.
- could also be helpful for learners who need some accessible review materials.
- could be a great tool for practitioners trying out the flipped classroom model.

Record & Share your Ideas using the Free Option: - 3 presentations per month; 15 mins per presentation; 1 private presentation per month; to evaluate if it meets your needs.

http://present.me/

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4.5.11 Qwiki - Show what you know

Qwiki has launched a creation tool that allows users to create their own multimedia Qwikis; short narrated story that includes images, videos, and text.

Creating the basics of a Qwiki is very easy.

uploading content (or linking to hosted content like a Flickr image),

recording narration, and

caption content.

Be warned:

- the order in which users upload content is the order in which it they appear in the resulting Qwiki.
- Voice recordings are limited to 20 seconds

Users can also record with their webcam and have a video of themself appear in their Qwiki.

Qwiki Creator is another tool for students to use to create short multimedia stories or short introductory narratives about topics that they're studying in their classes.

http://www.qwiki.com/creator

4.5.12 SlideShark

SlideShark allows practitioners & Learners to share/view MS PowerPoint presentations on iPads while preserving original animations, fonts, graphics and colours of the presentation.

- Sign up for an account on SlideShark
- upload PowerPoint files onto the SlideShark private secure servers
- Use the SlideShark app on an iPad to download and view the PowerPoint presentation

Share the presentation file right from your iPad to anyone who wishes to see the file. No need to connect to your PC or whatsoever, everything is done from the iPad.

Note: A free account on SlideShark provides 100MB storage space. Any more and users will need to buy storage space or get a premium account.

https://www.slideshark.com/default.aspx

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4.5.13 STAMP: Subtitling Add-In for PowerPoint

The Subtitling Add-In for Microsoft PowerPoint (STAMP) helps Microsoft PowerPoint 2010 users add closed captions to the video and audio files included in their presentations, which boosts their impact for those with hearing.

http://sourceforge.net/projects/stamp-addin/

4.5.14 Storyboard That

Storyboard That is a tool for learners and/or practitioners to use to...

- create simple cartoon stories
- create outlines for longer creative writing projects or
- script videos they're producing.

The free plan, users do have to register to save, allows users to save three projects per day.

Storyboard That provides users with 3-frame and 6-frame templates in which they can create their story.

Storyboard That provides dozens of...

- scenes,
- characters, and
- text bubbles

...to fill the storyboard frames.

Each element dragged onto a storyboard's frame has its own layer that can be...

- moved nearer or further back,
- flipped or mirrored
- resized,
- rotated, and
- repositioned.

http://www.storyboardthat.com/

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4.5.15 TechTalks.tv

Share content by publishing educational presentations and videos.

TechTalks.tv is making it very easy to publish, search and learn from slide-based videos; all this enables learning providers to share educational content on the web.

TechTalks.tv is a new service that is designed for publishing slides that are synchronized with videos.

Judging from the demonstrations on the site, TechTalks.tv is ideal for matching video of a live presenter (learner or practitioner) with the presenter’s slides. On one side of the screen viewers (learners, colleagues etc.) can watch the video and on the other side they can view the slides with the same timing they would have experienced had they been there for a live presentation.

Users can also fast-forward through the slides if they wish.

http://techtalks.tv/

5 Audience Response

5.1 infuselearning

Infuse Learning...

- is a free student response system that works with any Internet-connected device including iPads and Android tablets.
- allows practitioners to push questions, prompts, and quizzes out to learner devices in private virtual learning environments.
- has great potential as a Learner response system.
- is similar to Socrative but with some added accessibility and management components that practitioners should find very useful.
- offers audio narration and translation, becoming accessible to a part of the learner population that can’t use some other learner response systems.

5.2  Mentimeter

Interact with your audience - Free of charge and without registration!

Mentimeter allows 'presenters' to pose a question to their audience and get instant feedback on that question through cell phones, tablets, and any other Internet-connected device.

Mentimeter is free and very easy to use.

If your organisation has been considering purchasing one of those expensive clicker response systems give Mentimeter a try before making a purchase.

http://mentimeter.com/

5.3  Ofsted Learner View

Learners given a voice to rate...

- their learning provider's quality of teaching and
- whether courses are preparing them for the demands of university or the workplace.

Learner View asks for their opinion on a range of 10 aspects: from whether the lessons/training sessions are well taught to if you would recommend the provider to a friend.

The information provided will be taken into consideration when Ofsted make decisions about which providers to inspect, and when.

By sharing their views, it is felt that they'll be helping their provider to improve. Learners will also be able to see what other learners have said about their provider.

Collected data will be used by the education watchdog as part of the official inspections process and could lead to colleges or training providers being marked down.

Note: All students using this new-style “Learner View” site will remain completely anonymous but there is a requirement to provide an email address before logging on.

http://www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk/

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5.4 TodaysMeet

Learner response is often what is going on in the room that isn't coming from the practitioner.

It's where learners ask each other questions, pass notes, get distracted, and give practitioners the most immediate feedback they'll ever get.

Instead of ignoring this learner response, TodaysMeet helps practitioners leverage its power.

Tapping into the learner response, using TodaysMeet, lets practitioners tailor and direct their presentation to the learners in front of them, and unifying the learner response means the learners can share insights, questions and answers like never before.

TodaysMeet has lots of possibilities in a learning environment.

Possible uses include:

- Providing a 'room' during meetings so that colleagues may ask questions or insert comments as each agenda item is covered. This could be accomplished by staff members using their own smart phones.
- Learners could use the same site to take notes during a lecture. The teacher would be able to see the question in real time as well as quickly identify what students are taking down as important points. This might also give a voice to the "quiet/shy" learner.

Basically TodaysMeet provides...

- a currently free service, they may offer paid upgrades for advanced features in the future.
- a service that is designed to allow open and uncensored discussion, encouraging users to express themself freely and, at the same time, be responsible in what they say.

http://todaysmeet.com/

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5.5 Understoodit

Understoodit is...

- a new web app;
- a tool for quickly getting anonymous feedback from learners.

The option to see the timing of when learners vote for "confused" or "understand" can be a great way to quickly determine which topics or what content to practitioners need to repeat.

Practitioners, just...

- open their account (it's still in beta by invitation only)
- open the simple poll of "understand" or "confused."

Learners...

- vote using any internet-connected device.
- vote whenever practitioners have the poll open.
- can vote multiple times; e.g. if they are confused at the beginning of class, but understand ten minutes later they can change their votes.

https://www.mindmeister.com/193728160

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6 Useful URLs

6.1 General

6.1.1 5 Ways to Use Google Sites in Teaching & Learning

Although this post refers to "Schools" it is a post from the USA so therefore has a different meaning than we would use in the UK.

I particularly like the use of the new page-level permissions options, allowing learners to only edit Google Sites pages that practitioners grant them access to.

The 5 ways are...

- As a wiki;
- As a digital portfolio;
- As a digital file cabinet;
- As a blog;
- As a website.

All skills learners need in the "real world" - potential for use in functional skills especially as learners & practitioners have 24/7 access.

Google docs are also ideal for peer assessment and review.

http://www.freetech4teachers.com/2012/07/5-ways-to-use-google-sites-in-schools.html

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6.1.2  6 Basic Tech Skills Anyone Should Have

6.1.3  BBC Skillswise

Factsheets, worksheets, quizzes and games to help improve Functional Skills.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise

6.1.4  ALISON

ALISON—Advance Learning Interactive Systems ONline—provides free online courses in job-friendly skills.

Ranging from the basic but essential (Fundamentals of Google Docs or Touch Type Training) to the more specialized (Programming in Adobe Flash) as well as those that could be useful for anybody, job seeking or not (e.g. Protect Yourself From Identity Theft).

Of the 400+ available courses, the most popular is also one of the most comprehensive. ABC IT is a 15-20 hour comprehensive introduction to IT literacy. It integrates basic concepts of computing, Microsoft Office applications and touch type training, as well as wider-picture discussion of how computing can be an everyday feature of life and work.

http://alison.com/course/

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6.1.5 CV creator - CV Maker

CV Maker gives users the ability to create stylish and free resumes in minutes.

Users do not have to sign up for an account to create their resume. However, if an account is created, the resume can be saved and edited or updated later. Once users click on the “Create a CV now”, they will be required to enter the required data and fill in all the fields to create their CV. At any time, users can click on the “Preview” button to see what the resume looks like in different templates.

Six tabs need to be entered...

- Basic,
- Information,
- Experience,
- Education,
- Reference, and
- Interests.

Note: The position of each can be changed at any time.

Once the resume is complete, users can download it as either a PDF or in HTML format for offline use.

https://cvmkr.com/

6.1.6 Dangers in the Kitchen

Looking for some Safety in the Home Resources for Key Skills, Functional Skills, Learners with Learning Difficulties, Family Learning etc? Then take a look at this Blog Post.

Some resources that will be useful for the areas mentioned and much more.


6.1.7 Excellence Gateway Skills for Life

LSIS are pleased to announce that all the materials from the ReadWritePlus site, which has now been closed, have been moved to the Excellence Gateway. LSIS have changed how the content is organised and presented so that it’s easier for users to find what they are looking for.

The materials, if you have not looked at them in the past, will be of interest to a wide range of practitioners in all settings, including...

- Skills for Life;
- Functional Skills; and
- Key Skills.

http://rwp.excellencegateway.org.uk/Home/

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6.1.8 Find Anyone’s Email Address - Free SEO Tool from BuzzStream

Buzz Stream’s email research tool is great for Learning providers hunting down the contact details of a person or website.

With Buzz Stream the only information users need to know is the website address, name or company.

Fill out any of these details and hit ‘Generate Searches’ and you are presented with a variety of Google search operators that will scour the site for email links and contact forms.

It’s lightweight and easy to use, perfect for when you need to find the contact details of a single site.

Also useful for those engaged in Digital Literacy as it provides the range of Google search operators used.

http://tools.buzzstream.com/link-building-email-research

6.1.9 Free Online Learning at GCFLearnFree.org

GCFLearnFree.org - Resources for Functional Skills.

GCFLearnFree.org is an online platform for courses that cover...

- technology,
- online literacy, and
- maths skills.

Approximately 750 lessons designed for basic and intermediate levels.

Ideal for adults, courses are interactive and supported with articles, videos, and animation.

http://www.gcflearnfree.org/

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6.1.10 Functional Skills Starter Kit

This starter kit aims to support providers in their delivery of functional skills by providing practical guidance and resources.

It brings together existing nationally developed resources from the Functional Skills Support Programme, and the Being functional site, as well as some provider-developed resources produced through the LSIS Skills for Life Support and Support for Literacy, Language and Numeracy programmes.

http://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/node/20280

6.1.11 NLN Materials

http://www.nln.ac.uk/

6.1.12 Noun Project

The Noun Project collects, organizes and adds to the highly recognizable symbols that form the world's visual language, so we may share them in a fun and meaningful way.

The aim is to produce a simple graphic for every noun in the English language.

Images are posted as high-quality vector files that can be imported, resized, and modified by any photo editing software.

The images are in the public domain or shared with Creative Commons licenses.

The possible uses for these images, by educators, are endless: bulletin boards, signs, learner projects/assignments, labels are a few ideas that come to mind without much effort.

http://thenounproject.com/

6.1.13 Pearson: Work Based Learning resources

http://www.edexcel.com/quals/func-skills/wbl-resources/Pages/default.aspx

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6.1.14 Quick Currency Converter & Exchange Rate Calculator

You'll find a simple currency converter, a multi-currency converter, current live exchange rates, historical exchange rates, and an encyclopedia that will educate you on all of the different types of currency used around the world.

A resource for Functional Maths - Money; Preparing learners for the real world.

Preparing learners for when they travel abroad, work or holidays, and/or purchase items on the internet from other countries. There are many real-life situations when there is a need to convert money into other currencies.

Currency Converter is an on-line tool that provides information on currencies and the updated exchange rates.

http://currencyconvert.co/

6.1.15 Skills Workshop

Looking for...

- Literacy;
- Numeracy;
- Pre-Entry;
- ESOL/EFL/ESL...;
- ICT;
- General; and/or
- Contextual

...Functional Skills Resources?

Well Skills Workshop may well be what you are looking for.

1500+ Free resources and, although most are pdf (paper) based, digitising them would be fairly straightforward. Well worth a closer look.

http://www.skillsworkshop.org/

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6.1.16 SOPHIA

SOPHIA...

- is a social teaching and learning network. It's where users can teach what they know and learn what they don’t.
- is one of a number of places for practitioners to share what they know.
- makes it easy for them to share their knowledge and make it available to anyone, anywhere, at anytime.

Educators Use SOPHIA to...

- Flip the Classroom
- Provide remedial and/or advanced instruction to support what is covered in the learning environment.
- Provide Blended Instruction
- Publish multimedia tutorials to further engage students in a meaningful way.

There is also a useful tool to "Learn how you Learn" http://www.sophia.org/learning-preferences-assessment.

http://www.sophia.org/

6.1.17 SoundCloud - Share Your Sounds

Create, record and share the sounds recorded, with peers, practitioners etc., with SoundCloud, the world's largest community of sound creators.

Sound Cloud has many uses including languages courses.

Learners can record spoken tracks on Sound Cloud and share them their practitioner/teacher/assessor.

The practitioner/teacher/assessor uses the comment feature to provide feedback that is tied directly to each learner’s recording.

The comments can be tied to the exact second at which a practitioner/teacher/assessor wishes to provide formative feedback.

Note: SoundCloud allows users to have up to two hours of recordings stored in their account at one time. After that they will need to either delete old recordings or upgrade to a paid plan.

http://soundcloud.com/

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6.1.18 Storyboard That

Storyboard That is a tool for learners and/or practitioners to use to...

- create simple cartoon stories
- create outlines for longer creative writing projects or
- script videos they’re producing.

The free plan, users do have to register to save, allows users to save three projects per day. Storyboard That provides users with 3-frame and 6-frame templates in which they can create their story.

Storyboard That provides dozens of...

- scenes,
- characters, and
- text bubbles

...to fill the storyboard frames. Each element dragged onto a storyboard’s frame has its own layer that can be...

- moved nearer or further back,
- flipped or mirrored
- resized,
- rotated, and
- repositioned.

http://www.storyboardthat.com/

6.1.19 StudyChamps

Interactive Activities and Online Quizzes for Maths, English, Science and Social Studies. Challenge learner knowledge with quizzes.

StudyChamps is a free to use web service that offers practitioners educational worksheets and Flash tools for learners.

Start using this part of the website by clicking on the relevant subject and then clicking on the SWF tool that learners can use for interactive learning.

Other things offered by the site include flipbook tutorials, free worksheets and learning activities such as printable games.

Sheets can be downloaded as PDF files directly off the site.

http://www.studychamps.com/interactive-activities/#.UGBblLJIR1J  Return to contents page.
6.1.20  **subtangent**

Maths - Games - Numbers & Letters

Subtangent is a website well worth a visit; it provides several flash games including a few which mimic the letters and the numbers rounds from the Countdown TV show.

The Subtangent website was produced by Duncan Keith, a Maths teacher here in England (UK).

For...

- Literacy lessons – choose a mixture of vowels and consonants and then see who can make the longest word from the letters provided.
- Maths lessons – see who can get the closest to the target number using combinations of numbers provided. This is a great mental warm up activity.

Games, like this can be played online or downloaded for offline use.

Note: There are other games on the Subtangent site – however some can now only be played offline to reduce site traffic – but they are easy to download and play.


6.1.21  **TES iboard**

The TESiboard collection is a purpose built library of visual, dynamic, interactive resources.

TESiboard resources are primarily open-ended tools that enable practitioners to engage their students in a learning dialogue around the resources.

The resources are designed for use on interactive whiteboards.

The TESiboard materials are all available for free.

*Current development is focused on KS2 Literacy and Numeracy materials.*

[http://www.iboard.co.uk/curriculum.htm#maths-year1numstrategy_yearreception](http://www.iboard.co.uk/curriculum.htm#maths-year1numstrategy_yearreception)

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6.1.22 Tucoola

Tucoola is a great site for parents and children with great content for the family and an information center with details regarding the development progress of their children.

If Family Learning Practitioners are looking for some basic skills practice activities it's worth bookmarking Tucoola.

The site has a section of single user activities for younger learners and section of two user activities for parents to play with their children.

Activities include things like simple jigsaw puzzles, checkers, and basic number games. The site can be used without registration, but the option to access activity reports for their children might be an appealing feature for parents; such parents will need to register themselves.

http://www.tucoola.com/

6.1.23 VoiceThread

Transforming media into collaborative spaces with video, voice, and text commenting.

The very popular digital media discussion service VoiceThread has launched a new accessibility option called VoiceThread Universal.

VoiceThread Universal...

- is designed for those who use screen-readers to access online media.
- removes extraneous visual and text elements;
- concentrates on providing clear and concise information;
- makes it possible for more learners and more practitioners to participate in online conversations about media.

Note: VoiceThread is popular with educators because it allows learners to have conversations about media and it allows practitioners to deliver virtual instruction.

http://voicethread.com/universal/

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### 6.2 English

The term ‘functional’ should be considered in the broad sense of...

- providing learners with the skills and abilities they need to take an active and responsible role in...
  - their communities,
  - everyday life,
  - the workplace and
  - educational settings.

**Functional English requires learners to...**

- communicate in ways that make them effective and involved as citizens,
- operate confidently and to convey their ideas and opinions clearly.

**The aim of the English standards is to encourage learners to demonstrate their...**

- speaking and listening,
- reading and writing skills

...in a range of contexts and for various purposes.

They are essentially concerned with developing and recognising the ability of learners to apply and transfer skills in ways that are appropriate to their situation.

They are flexible enough to be interpreted in a variety of circumstances, for example in workplace settings, by a range of users. **They provide the framework for assessment, rather than the detail.**

**Overview of Contents...**

- ESOL, ESL, EFL, etc.
- Reading
- Spelling
- Websites
- White Board Resources (Interactive)


[Return to contents page.](#)
6.2.1  10 tips for using spell check more efficiently

Spell check is a powerful and flexible feature that helps you reduce the number of typos and grammatical errors in your Office documents.

It won't catch everything - you still have to proof your work. But spell check will reduce the time and effort you put into that process. Now, most everyone knows how to use spell check, but these 10 tips will help you use this feature more efficiently.

Note that not every tip applies to every Office app. And while these tips are written for Office apps, many will apply to spell check features in other applications.

http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/10things/10-tips-for-using-spell-check-more-efficiently/3405

6.2.2  BoomWriter

BoomWriter blends creative writing and social media technology, providing a competitive writing platform that can be used in many ways.

Learning Providers have a more engaging creative writing process, practitioners have a tool that focuses their learners on creative writing techniques and learners have fun in the process.

BoomWriter can be used to encourage learners to share what they know about a specific topic and/or course module. Each learner adding chapters about what has been learned; essentially creating their own collaborative textbook.

Help learners understand writing with purpose and audience in mind; it's also helpful to get learners to...

- think critically about their own writing and
- evaluate other's writing.

http://www.boomwriter.com/home/schools/

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6.2.3 ESOL Materials for Migrant Workers

These teaching and learning materials were developed as a result of a project commissioned by LSIS in March 2008.

The reading, writing and speaking and listening modules will support migrant workers from Entry 1 – Level 1 in seven occupational sectors:

- Agriculture,
- Catering,
- Cleaning and facilities management,
- Construction,
- Health and social care,
- Manufacturing, and
- Transport and aviation.

Guidance for practitioners on using the Speaking and Listening materials has also been developed.

NOTE: These have been archived and may be removed at a later date.


6.2.4 Great Questions List

English, Social Studies and/or Functional (Key) Skills practitioners often encourage learners to interview a parent, grandparent, or community member as part of their communication skills learning. The Story Corps Great Questions List could provide learners with a framework of questions for those interviews.

The StoryCorps questions are suggestions for getting a good conversation going. Users are encouraged to use the ones they like and to come up with their own.

Categories include...

- Great questions for anyone; Friends and Colleagues; Grandparents; Raising Children; Parents; Growing Up; School; Love & Relationships; Marriage & Partnerships; Working; Religion; Serious Illness; Family Heritage; War; and Remembering a loved one.

http://storycorps.org/record-your-story/question-generator/list/

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6.2.5 Irregular Verb Wheel Game

The Irregular Verb Wheel Game is fun to play and could be a fun way for learners to practice identifying the irregular forms of commonly-used verbs.

Played by spinning the wheel then identifying the past, present, and future tenses of the word that the wheel stops on.

Players earn points for correctly identifying each form of the verb in the time allotted.

http://www.macmillandictionary.com/verb-wheel/

6.2.6 Lend Me Your Literacy

Lendmeyourliteracy.org is an interesting online resource base for practitioners and learners of Literacy.

Billed as a one stop website for examples of good pieces of literacy work written by children, Practitioners can also upload examples of everyday literacy such as application forms, personal statements and letters to support Skills for Employment for Adults.

An interesting idea, and if Key/Functional Skills Practitioners are looking for some new ideas for teaching literacy, it’s well worth taking some time to look at the resources.

http://lendmeyourliteracy.org/

6.2.7 Knowmia

Knowmia...

- offers a collection of curated videos that have been vetted by teachers for quality and accuracy;
- has launched with 7,000 videos organized under the main headings of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Technology, and World Languages.

Users are encouraged to contribute so I expect that the collection will grow rapidly.

Most of the content is drawn from Youtube and Vimeo.

There is also a free iPad app, with effective tutorial support, that appears to be a powerful and extremely flexible tool for creating video lessons for upload to knowmia’s collection (Requires iOS 5.0 or later). Hopefully, an Android option will be available soon.

http://www.knowmia.com/

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6.2.8  lettrs

In their "real World", Learners are being encouraged – conditioned in fact – by many social platforms to...

- like,
- comment,
- tweet,
- text, or
- send at communication speeds that are more akin to a reflex rather than a well-composed expression of thought and ideas.

Such accelerated communication creates new challenges in both literacy and attention.

Not everything in the life of a learner should be done faster, especially when taking the time to write a meaningful or thoughtful letter.

But technology has let students down here.

The communication of many learners has become wildly fragmented, thoughtlessly fast, with social communication and mobile platforms seeking quantity instead of quality.

lettrs (all lower-case), a platform for “slower communications”, brings old letters back from the past as important social and learning objects, to inspire 'learner letters' to be written in the process.

http://lettrs.com/#intro

6.2.9  Merriam-Webster's Word Central Games

Interactive word games, from the Merriam-Webster website, that are great for an Interactive White Board (IWB)...

Alpha-bot - has an engaging method for spelling words, challenging spellers of all ages. Listen to the audio then drag, drop and click your way to success!

Robo-Bee - Learners control the flight of the Robo-Bee through a garden of synonyms, antonyms, spelling, and usage puzzles! This one works much better on Internet Explorer.

Bigbot - ideal for the younger learner; word-automated machines with an appetite! Challenges learners to find the antonym or synonym for different words - fun for the kids.

Jumble Kids - has potential as a fun lesson starter. The game has 10-12 Jumbles to choose from and seems they have a new Jumble each week.

http://www.wordcentral.com/games.html

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6.2.10 Phonetizer

Add phonetic transcription to any English text with Phonetizer

Phonetizer is a really easy to use tool users...

- just cut and paste or type in the text they want to use in the left hand side,
- click on 'Transcribe' and...

...the text appears on the right with the phonetic writing underneath each line.

Users can then cut and paste to a document if they want to save it.

Phonetizer is a great tool to add pronunciation support to any reading text and help learners to develop their pronunciation as they read.

http://www.phonetizer.com/

6.2.11 Reading Bear

Reading Bear is a collection of free, well-made, multimedia phonics presentations.

Reading Bear, a project of WatchKnowLearn.org, is a free program online to teach beginning readers vocabulary and concepts while systematically introducing all the main phonetic patterns of written English, all using innovative rich media.

How does it work?

In each presentation—playable either as a video or as an interactive slide show— one or a few related phonics rules are introduced.

Reading Bear and WatchKnowLearn are free, ad-free, non-profit projects of the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi.

http://www.readingbear.org/

6.2.12 Road To Grammar

As well as the resources that learners can use individually, Road to Grammar offers some downloadable resources for practitioners.

Practitioners will find a collection of eight downloads that offer discussion starters for English/Functional Skills lessons, lesson warm-up activities, and some worksheets.

http://www.roadtogrammar.com/

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6.2.13 Spelling help-tests-games

English spelling online course to help older students, teenage to adult, learn and improve their spelling. This spelling course uses lists, games, tests to teaches English spelling rules to help students and adults learn spelling.

http://www.spellzone.com/index.cfm

6.2.14 Story Wheel

Story Wheel is a cooperative story creation application for the iPhone and iPad, that will help learners create stories, improve learners' cognitive abilities and most importantly, have fun!

Ideal for Family Learning, Functional Skills, Modern Language, ESOL/ESL/EfL and I'm sure many other practitioners.

Get your learners...

- inventing stories together.
- thinking, creating and speaking.

Story Wheel, for the iPhone and iPad, is now available in the app store

http://www.storywheelapp.com/

6.2.15 Telescopic Text

TelescopicText is primarily a set of tools...

- for creating expanding texts showing how a simple sentence can be elaborated to become rich in detail;
- for helping functional skills/key skills learners develop more complex sentences

http://www.telescopictext.org/

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6.2.16 Textivate

Textivate enables users to create instant interactivity using almost any text.

All users need to do is copy and paste their text into the Textivate window and click on 'textivate now'.

A range of different exercise types are provided. Click on one of the squares and instantly an interactive activity is produced.

Most of the first row options divide the text into 'tiles' each of which have a portion of the text on. Learners put the text in the correct order by dragging and dropping them (Note: the columns work horizontally rather than vertically.)

There are also options to have the text 'tiles' arranged vertically so that learners drag and drop the parts into position.

Some of my favourite task types Textivate creates are...

- the cloze passage activities and
- the text reconstruction activity.

If practitioners register and log in, they'll find a 'Share' button on their activities and get either a URL or an embed code to add these to blogs, Moodle sites or other online presences.

http://www.textivate.com/

6.2.17 The Literacy Shed

A website for practitioners filled with ideas for literacy teaching using visual resources such as film, animation, photographs, picture books along with accompanying ideas for educational activities.

All of the information on the site is clearly organised into different themes, e.g. Fantasy, Poetry, Other Cultures...

http://www.literacyshed.com/index.html

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6.2.18 Vocabulary

Find out how strong your vocabulary is and learn new words at Vocabulary.com.

Vocabulary.com helps you learn new words, play games that improve your vocabulary, and explore language.

Whether learners are posting a quick tweet or applying for a job, when they communicate on or offline, vocabulary and the quality of the writing are a key part of the impressions made. It’s important, to learners, to be able to communicate clearly and come across as intelligent human beings.

This free website - Vocabulary.com - claims it can help users improve their vocabulary by figuring out which words they don’t know, and then concentrating of teaching them (without spending time on stuff users already know).

The first step is a multiple-choice test aimed to assess current vocabulary.

http://www.vocabulary.com/

6.2.19 Vocabulary SpellingCity App

SpellingCity, that I included in the Functional Skills eMagazine Supplement some time ago, has recently launched a free iPad and iPhone app for learners.

The app gives learners access to the same vocabulary lists that they use on the SpellingCity website.

SpellingCity's list of words for learners exceeds 42,000.

Learners and practitioners who register for accounts can create custom word lists (Note, new lists have to be made online. Through the app you can only access existing lists).

If learners don't register they can simply choose from the many suggested word lists created by SpellingCity.

The SpellingCity app offers six types of practice activities. The activities are...

- Teach Me,
- Test Me,
- Match It,
- Word Unscramble,
- Hang Mouse, and
- Which Word.

http://www.spellingcity.com/app/

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6.2.20 What speed do you read?

Compare your reading speed to the USA national average.

Have you ever wanted to compare your reading speed and comprehension to others?

Well with this handy test you can find out how fast you read, compared to the USA national average.

The test presents users with a page from a piece of classic literature and tell them to read it at their natural reading speed.

Reading it at a normal pace is important, because there will be a test after to make sure they did not just skim through the text.

The questions on the test are not overly hard, they are just designed to make sure readers actually absorbed what they read.

Once users finish and pass the test, it will give their results, and how they compare to the rest of the world.


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6.3 ICT

Get your computer

Research shows that everything practitioners do to inspire and encourage learners – providing them the right skills to go online – will gradually slip away if there is no PC at home to keep the excitement alive and provide easy, instant access to the internet.

For many learners, engaged with ACL/PCDL/IAL/WBL and other Learning Providers, and others within the communities they support, the last significant barrier to getting people connected is the cost of a PC in the home.

It’s not enough for them to go online while attending taster or longer courses – the goal is to make it possible for them to stay online – and to feel the wonderful benefits of...

- using Skype with friends and family;
- unlimited video calls to any part of the world;
- finding information just when they need it;
- making the most of learning opportunities and develop their particular passions.

Help your community and current learners overcome this final barrier by pointing them towards GetOnline@Home website – the best place to buy a no-nonsense, affordable computer, which will give them a chance to stay online for good and to enjoy all the benefits that many take for granted.

http://www.getonlineathome.org/default.aspx

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6.3.1 3 tips for rounding Excel time values

Summing Excel date and time values is easy; rounding requires a bit of function help. This CPD for Excel users looks at Excel from an Administrators point of view, concentrating on payroll, timesheets etc. including...

- MROUND()
- CEILING()
- FLOOR()

Excel worksheets for these tips are also available

http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/window-on-windows/three-tips-for-rounding-excel-time-values/6479

6.3.2 6 Basic Tech Skills Anyone Should Have

Let’s face it: in today’s world, technology is no longer just for geeks.

Most of us are just normal users, who simply want to get along.

If you consider yourself a geek, and have good control over your computer and other devices, this might not be for you.

If, however, you or your learners are still finding your way in the computer world, or know someone who is, these basic skills are absolute must-haves.

While computers and phones will work for them even without these basic tech skills, having them will ensure...

- privacy,
- security, and
- make their day-to-day experience as smooth as it can be.

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/6-basic-tech-skills-geek/

6.3.3 9 Ways to Prevent Identity Theft From Your Online Activities

If you have ever experienced identity theft yourself or even know someone who has, you know the experience can be a harrowing one. the only perfect way to protect yourself online and prevent identity theft is to not use it at all! The "Inspectors", under the Common Inspection Framework, won't accept that as an option.

Learning providers have a responsibility to ensure learners are aware of how to use technology safely and that includes the Internet.


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6.3.4 10 Excel defaults you can customise

You don’t have to adjust every Excel workbook to meet your needs.

This cpd post deals with some of the more common settings that users customise. Making the changes covered can make all workbooks automatically conform to the preferences selected.

Ideal for Basic ICT courses, Functional Skills ICT, etc.

http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/10things/10-excel-defaults-you-can-customize-to-work-the-way-you-want/3338

6.3.5 10 Word defaults

...you can customize to work the way YOU want

Change a few key default settings in Word and you won’t have to make the same tweaks over and over.

http://www.techrepublic.com/blog/10things/10-word-defaults-you-can-customize-to-work-the-way-you-want/3281

6.3.6 BBC - Connect - Campaigns : First Click

The BBC First Click campaign aims to help the 9.2 million people in the UK who do not currently use the internet get online.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/connect/campaigns/first_click.shtml

6.3.7 ChartGizmo

ChartGizmo - online charts builder. Creating charts and place them on your website in minutes. useful for visualize financial, scientific or other type of data.

Chart Gizmo allows users to create bar and line graphs, pie charts and seven other types of charts and graphs for summarizing data.

Import data directly from an Excel spreadsheet to save having to manually enter your data.

Choose a way to publish your chart, such as...

- on its own page,
- on a webpage or
- saved as an image file to insert directly into documents.

Others will be impressed by the time and effort it appears users put into your data presentation.

http://chartgizmo.com/

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6.3.8  Computer Viruses and Threats  
Explained by Common Craft

Are you looking for a good explanation to share with students as to why they shouldn’t open suspicious files or links?

If so, Computer Viruses and Threats Explained by Common Craft is the video for you.

http://commoncraft.com/virus-video

6.3.9  CoreDogs

CoreDogs is a set of online texts and lessons that practitioners and/or learners can use to learn how the web works, how to build websites, and how to build simple web applications.

Users can navigate through the lessons in order or skip to parts that are of the most interest to them.

The CoreDogs lessons can be used by learners who want to learn coding on their own.

CoreDogs also allows users to re-use and redistribute the lessons to use in learning environment instruction (just make sure to credit CoreDogs).

I would suggest this could be an essential part of Functional Skills ICT; preparing learners for the "real world".

http://coredogs.com/

6.3.10 Differences Between Capacitive & Resistive Touchscreens

It might not fully register, but we all know there are two types of touchscreens.

Ideal resource for ICT courses, functional skills ICT etc.

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/differences-capacitive-resistive-touchscreens-si/

6.3.11 GetNetWise

You're one click away

The GetNetWise coalition wants Internet users to be only "one click away" from the resources they need to make informed decisions about their family's use of the Internet.

http://www.getnetwise.org/

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6.3.12  HP Learning Center

...free online classes for home, home office, business and IT

HP.com offers free, instructor-led, online business, technology and IT online classes, and quick lessons; all available 24/7.

The HP Learning Center classes (with 2 to 6 lessons) are easy to follow, learners can pick up pointers on how to go about with a digital lifestyle. Ideal for CPD; I've enjoyed the classes I've completed.

Users need to do a free registration before they pick a class to start off.

Classes include two to six lessons and may also include interactive demos, quizzes and assignments.

For quick sessions check out the 5-minute how-to videos or short lessons.


6.3.13  ICT Planning

Ian Addison has created this guide to ICT - with sections on...

- Blogging & Working Online;
- Research;
- Digital Literacy;
- ICT in Maths;
- Animation and Video;
- Art & Image Editing;
- Presentations;
- Sound & Music;
- Modelling & Simulations;
- Control, Programming & Game Design;
- ESafety; and
- Early Years.

Also includes information, web links and suggested resources within each section and references to expected levels/benchmarks, for Family Learning Practitioners, that children should aim to reach at different ages.

https://sites.google.com/a/stjohnsapps.co.uk/ict-planning/

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6.3.14 Internet Buttons

艏 Set up a personalised page of buttons, ideal for someone you know who is new to the internet.

The buttons click through to favourite sites or services.

http://internetbuttons.org/

6.3.15 Juice Labs - Chart Chooser

艏 Want to improve Excel and PowerPoint with HTML5 goodness?

Trying to showcase trends?

Compare the composition of sets?

Show distributions and trends together?

Users, by selecting what they’re trying to highlight, automatically narrows the pool of chart types, available in Chart Chooser, to show which chart would effectively achieve their end.

Users can then download templates, Excel or PowerPoint, and insert their data.

Follow the link to take Chart Chooser for a spin and if nothing else grab some free templates.

http://labs.juiceanalytics.com/chartchooser.html

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6.3.16 Kingsoft Office Suite Free 2012: an alternative for Microsoft Office

Kingsoft Office Suite Free 2012 is a completely free office productivity suite, which includes three programs that reflect the different purposes and tasks required in any educational / working / personal environment.

These are:

- **Writer** - fully equipped modern word processor;
- **Presentation** - create effective multimedia presentations;
- **Spreadsheets** - handle all your data processing and analysis requirements.

Kingsoft Office Free is a revolutionary office suite with a small size of only 36.4MB. It is quite stable and reliable.

It is also available for Android OS.

Although it is a free suite, Kingsoft Office comes with many innovative features, including a paragraph adjustment tool, and multiple tabbed feature. It also has Office to PDF converter, automatic spell checking and word count features.

Ideal for those who can't afford alternatives.


6.3.17 Knowmia

Knowmia...

- offers a collection of curated videos that have been vetted by teachers for quality and accuracy;
- has launched with 7,000 videos organized under the main headings of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Technology, and World Languages.

Users are encouraged to contribute so I expect that the collection will grow rapidly.

Most of the content is drawn from Youtube and Vimeo.

*There is also a free iPad app, with effective tutorial support, that appears to be a powerful and extremely flexible tool for creating video lessons for upload to knowmia’s collection (Requires iOS 5.0 or later).* Hopefully, an Android option will be available soon.

http://www.knowmia.com/

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6.3.18 Know the net

Knowthenet has the reliable advice and top tips learners and/or practitioners will need to make the most of the internet.

Whatever their experience they should...

- test themselves to see if their online know-how is up to date,
- browse the Knowledge Centre for the latest guidelines and insights on cybercrime, online safety, e-commerce and much more.

http://www.knowthenet.org.uk/

6.3.19 MouseProgram

Practice Using The Mouse on The Computer

Practice using the mouse on your computer. Learn clicking, double clicking, moving, and dragging.

http://www.mouseprogram.com/

6.3.20 officevideos - YouTube

The official Microsoft Office channel for great video content on Office products and services.

Having posted a JiTT (Just in Time Tutorial) for OneNote via The FE Blog (News and views from the Microsoft UK Education Team) I've located the YouTube Office Videos Channel.

Great support resources for a "Flipped Classroom" approach to Teaching & Learning with Business, ICT, Functional Skills, and many more learners.

http://www.youtube.com/user/officevideos

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6.3.21 Outlook: Add Grid Lines Between Emails

In Outlook, emails are displayed on a white background without any line separators between them.

This makes finding and managing emails difficult.

Fortunately, by changing Outlook’s default settings, you can enable the grid lines option. This will improve visibility by allowing you to differentiate between email items more easily.

Please note that the screenshots from this tutorial are for Outlook 2013. However, the steps will also work for previous versions of Outlook.


6.3.22 Skillfulsenior

One for ACL Providers - Skillful Senior is a computer skills site for the older beginner/learners to learn the IT/ICT skills they need.

The site has interactive animated tutorials that teach...

- a bit about ergonomics (how to use your computer in a way that won’t result in pain)
- how to use a mouse,
- the arrow keys on the keyboard,
- how to email their grandchildren
- get medical information on the Internet and
- touch typing.

Each tutorial is helped along with a voiceover by a digital character. They CAN do it all!

http://www.skillfulsenior.com/

6.3.23 teach-ict

Because the majority of the resources are subscription only, this links to a few FREE examples of the type of resources provided...

http://www.teach-ict.com/functional_skills_home.html

6.3.24 Teaching Themes - Staying Safe Online

Find educational ideas, resources, videos and links, all linked to e-safety and the Internet.

http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/themes/stayingsafeonline/

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6.3.25 The History of Digital Storage [Infographic]

From punch cards to hard drives to cloud based storage, how we stash our data away has changed quite a bit in the last century.

An ideal resource for Functional ICT and/or ICT and/or History

http://www.howtogeek.com/124814/the-history-of-digital-storage-infographic/

6.3.26 The laptop at home

The use of mobile devices for leisure or work can bring great benefits; adopt healthy habits when using them, such as correct posture, regular breaks and a correct adjustment of the equipment.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbV5dGvJWyo

6.3.27 TIPP10

Today, learning to touch type is a no-brainer, it's almost an essential survival skill in the digital jungle. Improving productivity and potentially increasing the money earned, within the limited hours available. Learners just need to be methodical with their practice.

TIPP10 is a free touch typing tutor for Windows, Mac OS and Linux.

The ingenious thing about the software is its intelligence feature. Characters that are mistyped are repeated more frequently.


6.3.28 Typing Club

Free Touch Typing Software

"Master touch typing using this free game / training program."

Typing Club is a popular website offering free online touch typing lessons for learners of all ages.

Typing Club is available as a Google Chrome Web App. The Web App functions the same way as the website.

As you type users are given instant real-time feedback about their accuracy and speed.

Unlike other typing resources, that make you wait until an activity is completed, Typing Club calculates accuracy and speed with each keystroke.

http://typingclub.com/

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6.3.29 Typing Speed Monitor

There are plenty of online programs that learners can use to practice typing skills, test their typing speed, and test their typing accuracy. They don't however evaluate typing skills while users are going about their daily web browsing or word processing activities.

Typing Speed Monitor is a Google Chrome extension that will track how fast users type and what keys they use most frequently.

If users do a lot of writing online, Typing Speed Monitor is one way to get accurate feedback on their typing proficiency in real-world settings.

Typing Speed Monitor could be a good way to find out how well learners actually type in realistic scenarios - as part of their ICT functional skills.

https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/plchfdecdelajngfdcgibffdohhfkofp?hl=en-UK#

6.3.30 WebToTheRescue

WebToTheRescue.com is a resource for those who want to launch some kind of business by themselves, and/or a non-profit venture.

WebToTheRescue...

- is free,
- provides information for those who want to...
- be independent workers,
- add some extra income to their regular earnings.
  - provides articles with information and guidance on...
- how to start a business,
- funding options,
- lists of mentoring programs, among many other resources.
  - also includes tips on how to balance work and private life.

WebToTheRescue is not a place to just get information, it's more where users can learn about how to create their own business.

NOTE: some content is USA specific and further research may be needed in other countries.

http://www.webtotherescue.com/

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6.3.31 What Browser?

What Browser tells you which web browser you're using and helps you get the most out of your browser. It is an ideal resource for Functional Skills, Functional ICT, ICT and other courses.

My browser of choice is Google Chrome.

Chrome automatically updates and because users can synchronize tabs across all of the computers and tablets they use, it currently stands out from the rest.

Whichever browser individuals use, they should ensure they update it when new updates are available. Updates generally improve the speed and functionality of the browser of choice.

More importantly many browser updates are made to improve the security of their computer.

Keeping browsers up to date is an easy step in maintaining a computer's security.

http://www.whatbrowser.org/en-gb/
6.4 Mathematics

6.4.1 3-D Shapes

The Shapes Resource on the Birmingham Grid For Learning website is an Interactive site for reviewing both 2D and 3D shapes.

The site does a good job defining and introducing 2D shapes and, the 3D shape section, is one of the best resources for understanding 3D shapes.

Investigation of 3D shapes includes an interactive 3D model of each of the 3D shapes that learners can control by touching on the control buttons. In addition, each 3D shape has an accompanying net that practitioners or learners can print out and construct individual 3D shapes.

This is a great resource to share with other functional skills/functional maths practitioners.


6.4.2 7puzzle blog

7Puzzle blog is a new website offering daily Maths challenges.

Created by Paul Godding, a mathematician who delivers maths days in schools in the UK.

The Maths puzzles are organised into different levels of difficulty.

7Puzzle blog is already growing into a great resource after only a few weeks online.

http://7puzzleblog.com/

6.4.3 101 questions

What is the first question that comes to your mind? For any practitioner seeking to engage maths learners, Dan Meyer’s 101 questions site, is a resource that is worth a closer look!

Images and videos are posted on the website, and registered users are invited to pose questions, using 140 characters or less. After asking a question, users can check to see what others have asked.

I’ve had fun browsing the website, and I’m pretty sure there’s potential here for engaging maths learners.

http://101qs.com/

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6.4.4 A+ Click

A+ Click is a collection of math problems, puzzles, and brain teasers on numbers, geometry, algebra, data analysis, probability, and word problems.

Practice Mathematics!

Looking for some good practice activities for your learners to use in the "Flipped Classroom"/ in their own time?

A+ Click could be the answer.

Learners receive instant feedback on questions and when learners answer enough questions correctly they are asked if they want to move up to the harder level or stay at the same level.

A+ Click is a free site full of online mathematics games for students at all grade levels.

Just...

- select a grade level, then
- select a topic.

OR

- select just a topic (or just a grade level) and browse through all of the games.

Learners don't need to register in order to play the games.

http://www.aplusclick.com/index.html

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6.4.5  Algebra Lab

Algebra Lab visually speaking, isn't much to look at but, the resources are worth a closer look.

**Algebra Lab** is another resource for maths (and non-maths) practitioners.

Algebra Lab includes...

- lessons,
- activities,
- practice pages (online),
- study aids,
- a glossary, and
- word problems

...all helping learners understand the connections of how algebra is used in a practical sense.

The website is **ideal for learners to explore on their own or with guidance from a practitioner**.

Learners can directly access the site, and/or practitioners can pull ideas out to use within any other teaching they are doing.

[http://www.algebralab.org/default.aspx](http://www.algebralab.org/default.aspx)

6.4.6  Arithmetic Today!

**Arithmetic Today!** is a collection of pdf maths worksheets.

These worksheets are completely free and the links for download are also provided.

If you are teaching using iPad in the classroom then you should consider looking at these documents.

Each one of them has over 200 students worksheets with 200 accompanying teacher answer sheets.

They are also sorted into categories according to their level of difficulty.

**neu.Annotate** and **Remarks** work especially well for learners completing and/or emailing sheets using an **iPad** and **Nitro Reader** for those using **Microsoft PCs**.

[http://about.me/arithmetictoday](http://about.me/arithmetictoday)

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6.4.7 Bad Maths Pool

The Bad Maths Flickr group...

- contains lots of examples of bad mathematics found in shops and other public places.
- could be a good place to find some images that contain simple mathematics problems for learners to solve.

Yes I know that a number of them are $ rather than £ but, in the real world, learners do travel!

A good resource for Functional Skills, among other things.

Why not...

- take some more images, that don’t have errors, and produce a - which image has the error tasks? OR
- set a challenge to learners to find examples of Bad Maths and to take pictures of them, creating your own Bad Maths Archive.

http://www.flickr.com/groups/badmaths/pool/

6.4.8 Conversion guides - How to cook - BBC Good Food

BBC GoodFood highlights some functional skills opportunities within catering courses.

As well as the usual measurement converter, users have access to a guide on oven temperatures, cake tin sizes, and sugar temperature guide.

The metric to imperial converters are a good aid for those learners.

http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/content/knowhow/conversion/

6.4.9 Free Maths Animations

Clear explanations in professional-quality animations perfect for the interactive whiteboard or data projector.

Number topics include: decimals, fractions, base ten blocks, ratios. Algebra topics include: equations, simplification.

Functional/Key Skills Practitioners might like to take a look at SeeMath.com, a free website with simple Flash animations of various maths concepts, designed by maths teacher Tal Greengard.

SeeMath has a range of different animations, with new animations being added regularly. These animations are useful as an alternative way of demonstrating some maths concepts.

http://www.seemath.com/

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6.4.10 Get the Math

Looking for some contextual challenges for your learners?

Well 'Get the Math' is a multimedia project about algebra in the real world.

See how professionals working in...

- fashion,
- videogame design, and
- music production...

use algebraic thinking.

Get the Math also provides interactive challenges related to those careers - e.g. after watching the Math in Fashion video learners have to design a shirt to match a specific price point.


6.4.11 Google Search Interface Now Sports Scientific Calculator

Although you’ve long been able to punch simple calculations into Google—like 12*100—now **you can** access a full scientific calculator right from the search interface.

Just...

- Open Google Search
- Type calculator
- press enter key

The new calculator appears automatically.


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6.4.12 Knowmia

Knowmia...

- offers a collection of curated videos that have been vetted by teachers for quality and accuracy;
- has launched with 7,000 videos organized under the main headings of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Technology, and World Languages.

Users are encouraged to contribute so I expect that the collection will grow rapidly.

Most of the content is drawn from Youtube and Vimeo.

*There is also a free iPad app, with effective tutorial support, that appears to be a powerful and extremely flexible tool for creating video lessons for upload to knowmia’s collection (Requires iOS 5.0 or later).* Hopefully, an Android option will be available soon.

http://www.knowmia.com/

6.4.13 Learners TV

Many learners have access to books and notes but prefer watching online video lectures about the topics they are preparing for. A source for such lectures is a website called LearnersTV.

LearnersTV provides Free video lectures, Free Animations, Free Lecture Notes, Free Online Tests.

Subjects include biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, statistics, computer science, medicine, dentistry, engineering, accounting, and management.


6.4.14 Math-Aids

Math-Aids provides free resources for practitioners, learners, etc.

The math worksheets are randomly and dynamically generated by the maths worksheet generators.

This allows users to make an unlimited number of printable maths worksheets to their specifications instantly.

http://www.math-aid.com/

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6.4.15 Math Buddy Online - Sample Activities
Sample lessons from Math Buddy help learners get their heads around maths concepts through interactive activities and manipulatives.

Despite the popularity of Androids and Apple devices like iPads, the demand for 'tools' that can be used at times that suit the learners, regardless of device, will lead to many more web-based education applications.

Mathbuddy Online is one of such tools and, although aimed at younger learners, the sample activities have potential uses in Functional Maths classes; they are very interactive and learner friendly.

http://www.mathbuddyonline.com/common/samplelesson.html

6.4.16 Math Dictionary

The Math Dictionary is a glossary of important terms that Functional Skills learners need to know to be successful in their Functional Mathematics classes.

The dictionary includes diagrams when appropriate.

For learners who struggle with the vocabulary of mathematics, Wili the Word Wizard's Math Dictionary could be a useful resource.

http://www.webquest.hawaii.edu/kahihi/mathdictionary/

6.4.17 Mathematical equations

Looking to provide learners with options for doing math work in a word processor?

Google Docs has a built in equation editor.

The Equation Editor in Google Docs means that anyone, with a computer that can go online, is able to do their maths/science work in a word processor.

The built in equation editor is easy to use, and offers a convenient way of inserting mathematical notation and maths symbols into a document.

In a Google document, the equation editor is accessed by Clicking on the Insert menu in a document and then selecting Equation.

http://support.google.com/docs/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=160749

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6.4.18 Maths Lesson Starters

Free primary maths lesson starters for interactive whiteboard, times table, multiplication, number bonds, addition, subtraction, division.

A quick post to share a free set of maths/key skills/functional skills lesson starters from Learning Clip.

Practitioners can quickly generate some mental mathematics questions to start their numeracy lessons and/or learners can use to practice their mathematics skills.

Note: clicking the full screen button hides the word Primary which may otherwise be a barrier for some learners.

http://www.learningclip.co.uk/Primary-Maths-Lesson-Starters.htm

6.4.19 Metric Conversion

Metric Conversion calculators, tables and formulas for temperature, length, area, volume and weight metric conversions.

Ideal for Functional Maths, STEM subjects and more.

Includes...

- Mobile phone converter (coming soon)
- Metric conversion tables (Interactive)
- Online calculator; providing code to embed a specific conversion calculator into a website/VLE/Blog/etc.

http://www.metric-conversions.org/

6.4.20 Metric Food Measurement Converter for Recipe Ingredients

Convert Dry & Liquid Food Ingredients for Use in Cooking Recipes from Metric Measurement Units on Epicurious.com.

Epicurious is a recipe search and food site.

The food measurement chart shows users the multiplication factors for all metric equivalents, whether they are using imperial units or measuring with a teaspoon and cup.

An ideal tool not just for catering; it also provides an opportunity to include functional skills within the curriculum.

http://www.epicurious.com/tools/conversions/metric

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6.4.21 Money matters to me

Money matters to me, helps learners to understand the different aspects of personal and practical 'day to day' finance.

Money matters to me...

- can help learners to understand financial matters that are relevant to them and to take control of their money on a day to day basis.
- has a wide range of information and different approaches to using the site that may be more relevant at different times.

The site includes...

- Online banking simulator
- Where to keep your money and
- a Tax section

http://www.moneymatterstome.co.uk/default.htm

6.4.22 Next Vista for Learning

nextVista.org believes learning is stronger when it starts with an engaging introduction of each topic. With practitioners and learners from all over the world contributing content, it will get easier and easier to find the presentation a learner needs to say, "I get it."

The library resources are available for free to anyone at any time, learners are able to learn when they are most ready to do so.

For practitioners, the available videos can be used in the classroom to generate discussion, or even when planning lessons to generate ideas.

Subject areas include...

- Careers
- Health and Fitness
- History and Culture
- Inspiration and Creativity
- Literature and Writing
- Maths
- Performing Arts
- Science
- Technology
- Visual Arts
- World Languages

http://www.nextvista.org/ Return to contents page.
6.4.23 Problem Attic

Problem Attic is a free service that allows practitioners to quickly create practice tests and flashcards for...

- social studies,
- language arts,
- mathematics, and
- science.

Although Problem Attic, an American website, has a collection of more than 45,000 questions from past New York Regents exams it has potential, in particular, for UK Maths and Science Practitioners.

To create practice tests on Problem Attic simply...

- create a new document
- browse through questions and pin them to the document.
- arrange the order in which questions appear in the document.
- choose and set the page formatting
- print as pdf

http://www.problem-attic.com/

6.4.24 Quick Currency Converter & Exchange Rate Calculator

You’ll find a simple currency converter, a multi-currency converter, current live exchange rates, historical exchange rates, and an encyclopedia that will educate you on all of the different types of currency used around the world.

A resource for Functional Maths - Money; Preparing learners for the realworld.

Preparing learners for when they travel abroad, work or holidays, and/or purchase items on the internet from other countries. There are many real-life situations when there is a need to convert money into other currencies.

Currency Converter is an on-line tool that provides information on currencies and the updated exchange rates.

http://currencyconvert.co/

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6.4.25 Raytheon’s MathMovesU

Raytheon's MathMovesU program is an innovative initiative designed to engage learners in maths by illustrating the connection between maths, their passions and interests and 'cool' careers.

Math Moves U has three levels of difficulty;

- grade 6 or lower,
- grade 7, and
- grade 8 or higher.

To play the games learners...

- first choose from one of eight customizable characters to be in the game.
- walk through scenery, along the way they are confronted by math games that appear before them.

Points are earned by answering math questions correctly.

Math Moves U could be a fun way to get Functional Skills Learners hooked on practicing and developing mathematics skills.

If practitioners get their learners to register for an optional account, they can track their progress by keeping a running record of point totals.

http://www.mathmovesu.com/#/home

6.4.26 StudyJams

For many learners, Study Jams could be an engaging way for them to independently review topics or learn about new topics. Study Jams is designed to help learners review maths and science information through songs and videos.

To use Study Jams...

- learners search for and select a topic in the maths or science category.
- short tutorials, on the selected topic are provided in the form of...
  - a video,
  - a slideshow, or
  - a song; when there is a song available it is presented in a karaoke format for learners to sing along with (if they like).

To extend these activities Maths, Science and Family Learning Practitioners could challenge learners...

- to write an additional verse for karaoke tunes; Or
- to create their own Study Jam when one doesn't exist for a topic they are studying.

6.4.27 Talk Money, Talk Maths

Talk Money, Talk Maths uses four real life scenarios that will support Mathematics learning and teaching while raising awareness of financial issues for young people.


6.4.28 Time Zones

Need to quickly find out what the local time is in another part of the world compared to your current location?

Yes! Then ‘Every Time Zone’ is the perfect site to visit!

Compare current location (shown in green) to one you are looking for (shown in blue) to check the current time and/or use the grey areas for non-current times.

http://everytimezone.com/#2012-5-15,360,6be

6.4.29 Thinking Blocks

Model and Solve Math Word Problems

Learn how to model and solve word problems in mathematics. Ideal for Functional Skills (Key Skills) Learners.

Using brightly coloured blocks, learners model mathematical relationships and identify known and unknown quantities. The model provides learners with a powerful image that organises information and simplifies the problem solving process. By modeling increasingly complex word problems, learners develop strong reasoning skills which will facilitate the transition from arithmetic to algebra.

This tool has great potential for use on an Interactive White Board. Practitioners need to spend some time familiarising themselves with everything Thinking Blocks has to offer.

http://thinkingblocks.com/index.html

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A number of the Functional Skills materials in this publication have not been endorsed by the awarding bodies / exam boards.

It is essential that practitioners refer to their specific exam board syllabus to ensure that they are covering all of the required skills to the necessary level.

mailto:jd@rsc-northwest.ac.uk

7.1 Audio Feedback

Do send me some audio feedback at...

https://www.speakpipe.com/acjjohn

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