

East Midlands Regional Skills for Life Conference

13th March 2009

Eastwood Hall, Nottinghamshire

Evaluation Report

Hosted by:

Derbyshire's Employment and Skills Board

– Skills for Life and Work Theme Group.

On behalf of the LSC - East Midlands.

Introduction

Conference Aims

The 2009 East Midlands Regional Conference aimed to provide all those engaged with the Literacy, Language and Numeracy (LLN) curriculum - Practitioners, Curriculum Managers, Team Leaders and Teacher Trainers in the East Midlands - with an opportunity to think about the issues around why barriers to numeracy, or maths learning, develop and discover ways to widen participation – not just within numeracy provision but across a variety of contexts.

The conference aimed to be of interest to all those working in Literacy, ESOL, Numeracy, Family Learning, Train to Gain, E2E, across all of the adult learning sector including:- Voluntary Sector, Adult Community Learning, Work-based Learning, FE and Offender Learning.

The conference focused on:

- Skills for Life policy changes and future direction
- How barriers to numeracy develop and how to overcome them
- Promoting good practice in numeracy teaching within a variety of contexts

Work done

Planning began in October 2008 after Lisa Armitage from the LSC approached the Derbyshire Employment and Skills Board – Skills for Life and Work Theme Group to host a Regional SfL conference for 2009, on behalf of the LSC-East Midlands.

A small (regional) working group met to bring together their local knowledge and ideas. Members of the group provided suggestions and contacts for possible keynote speakers; workshop topics and facilitators to lead them and organisations to invite to exhibit on the day. The working group agreed that they would like to see practical activity based workshops and the opportunity for delegates to attend 3 workshops during the day or 2 workshops and an extra keynote speech/ activity in the main conference hall.

Derbyshire has successfully hosted a local SfL conference for the last 7 years, the format of which has usually included a post lunch energiser and end of day raffle draw to encourage people to stay until the end and complete their evaluation form. The working group wished to ensure that a fair representation of organisations from across the region should be achieved and so it was agreed that allocation of places would be subject to a quota for each county and a limit per organisation. The www.eastmidlandscpd.co.uk (emcpd) website would be used to ask people to register their interest on-line, and support administering the allocation of places.

As 200 delegates would be attending, 12 workshops were agreed upon to keep workshop sizes manageable for the facilitators. All delegates were given 4 choices upon registration and an attempt was made to give as many delegates as possible their 1st and 2nd choices, however due to the overwhelming popularity of both the 'Functional skills' and 'Regional strategy' workshops and the sizes of syndicate suites available at the hotel (limiting some workshops to a maximum of 10 delegates), many people were given their 3rd and 4th choices.

The conference was promoted via email through the various network groups linked with the Regional Working Group, including the membership of the emcpd website. The emails were sent out 4th February 2009 and registration of interest closed on 23rd February 2009. All correspondence and information about the conference was provided via the conference pages on the website and copies of presentations and workshop notes were made available on the website after the event. (A screen print of the webpages and email sent out are provided in Appendix I)

The final Itinerary and list of contributors for the day is shown over:-

The final Itinerary for Friday 13th March was as follows:-

9.30 am	Registration (Coffee & Stalls)
10.00	Welcome Lisa Armitage, Skills Development Manager (Skills for Life), for the East Midlands LSC
10.05	Keynote Speech by Jane Peacock, Skills Development Director (Strategy), for the East Midlands LSC
10.30	Keynote Speech by Norma Honey, Assistant Director - FE, NCETM
11.00	Coffee & Stalls
11.30	Workshops
12.45 pm	Lunch and opportunity to visit stalls
1.45	Post Lunch Energiser
2.20	Workshops
3.35	BBC Raw Money demonstration in the main hall
3.50	Closing remarks and Raffle
4.00	Conference Ends

Raffle prizes included:-

Collaborative Learning in Mathematics by Malcolm Swan; 1 set of Quick Reads; 2 sets of The Numbers Game – a family learning resource; Mathematics dominoes; Write on – wipe off dice and 2 Niace books - Discovering Potential and Signalling Success.

Contributors included:-

Conference Chair: Lisa Armitage, Skills Development Manager (Skills for Life), for the East Midlands LSC
Keynote Speaker: Jane Peacock, Skills Development Director (Strategy), for the East Midlands LSC
Keynote Speaker: Norma Honey, Assistant Director (FE) for the National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics
Lunchtime Energiser: John White – “Henry VIII”, Tutbury Castle
BBC Raw Presentation: Sophia Ramcharan, Learning Project Manager, BBC

Workshop Facilitators

1. Louise Lowe and David Howden, WNC - Functional Skills – Making Learning Functional
2. Steve Pardoe, Consultant for LLCLP - Boosting Capacity for Numeracy Delivery: Training Literacy & ESOL Tutors
3. Stewart Smith, Move On Advisor - Teaching Maths at Entry 3
4. Fiona Plackett, Derbyshire County Council ACL - Almost, No paper Numeracy
5. Colleen Molloy, Judith Winter and Sally Wan, Leicestershire County Council ACL - Teaching Numeracy to ESOL Learners: Dissemination of an action research project funded by the NCETM
6. Brenda Ainsley, NIACE - Count Me In
7. Alison Wedgbury and Elaine Scott, SflIP - Training to Teach /Support Numeracy and CPD Surgery
8. Ray Sutton, Regional Coordinator - NCETM: An Active Resource for Numeracy Teachers
9. Lisa Armitage, LSC - Regional Skills for Life Strategy
10. Rachel Stone and Jackie Ashton, LLU+ Numeracy Teacher Trainer Consultants - Can't Learn Maths – Won't Learn Maths: Barriers to Numeracy for Adult Learners
11. Chris Toon, Diana Smith, Sharon Hawkins and Katie Stafford, Derby College - Embedding Maths in Different Contexts
12. Lesley Way, Numeracy Consultant - The 4 Rules Well two of them anyway!

Exhibitors

1. East Midlands LSC – Skills Accounts
2. The National Centre for Excellence in the Teaching of Mathematics (NCETM)
3. National Research and Development Centre for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (NRDC)
4. NIACE - National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
5. LLUK – Lifelong Learning UK
6. EMCETT – East Midlands Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training
7. NANAMIC – National Association of Numeracy and Mathematics in Colleges
8. Get-On
9. Move-On
10. Skills for Life Improvement Programme (SflIP)
11. Campaign for Learning
12. BKS B
13. LLU+ at London South Bank University
14. Avanti Books Limited

A copy of the information provided in the delegate pack has been included in the Appendix II.

Attendance at the Conference

Registration closed on 23rd February and 231 people had registered their interest.

73 Derbyshire, 20 Lincolnshire & Rutland, 45 Leicestershire, 11 Northamptonshire, 82 Nottinghamshire

All those people who registered from Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire were confirmed a place and the remaining places were divided between Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire.

200 people were confirmed a place by email on the 25th.

In the run up to the event:

An additional 12 people contacted the conference organisers after the closing date to ask if a place might be available.

49 people cancelled in advance (some only the day before making it impossible to fill the spaces) and a further 13 people did not attend on the day.

181 delegates attended the conference

Of these the breakdown by county was:

66 Derbyshire, 21 Lincolnshire & Rutland, 33 Leicestershire, 11 Northamptonshire, 68 Nottinghamshire.

Of these the breakdown by sector was:

107 Public Sector (of which 15 work in Offender Learning), 37 Voluntary Sector, 37 Private Sector.

Delegate Feedback

81% of the evaluations were returned, 147 responses out of a possible 181 and in addition to this further comments have been received by email in follow up to the event.

An analysis of the responses provided follow below:-

(To see a blank copy of the evaluation form, see Appendix III.)

About the day

Delegates were asked:-

What were the outcomes you hoped to gain by attending this conference? and Do you feel these were met?

Chart 1 over the page shows a summary of the responses given by delegates with regard to the outcomes they hoped to gain. (The full list of comments given can be found in Appendix IV). The most popular outcome stated or reason given for attending was for an update on government policy/SfL strategy. Gaining practical ideas for teaching practice either generally or in relation to a specific area of work was the next most popular reason given.

Did the delegates feel their outcomes were met:-

135 answered **Yes** they felt that these were met

6 answered **No** and

6 had **No View**.

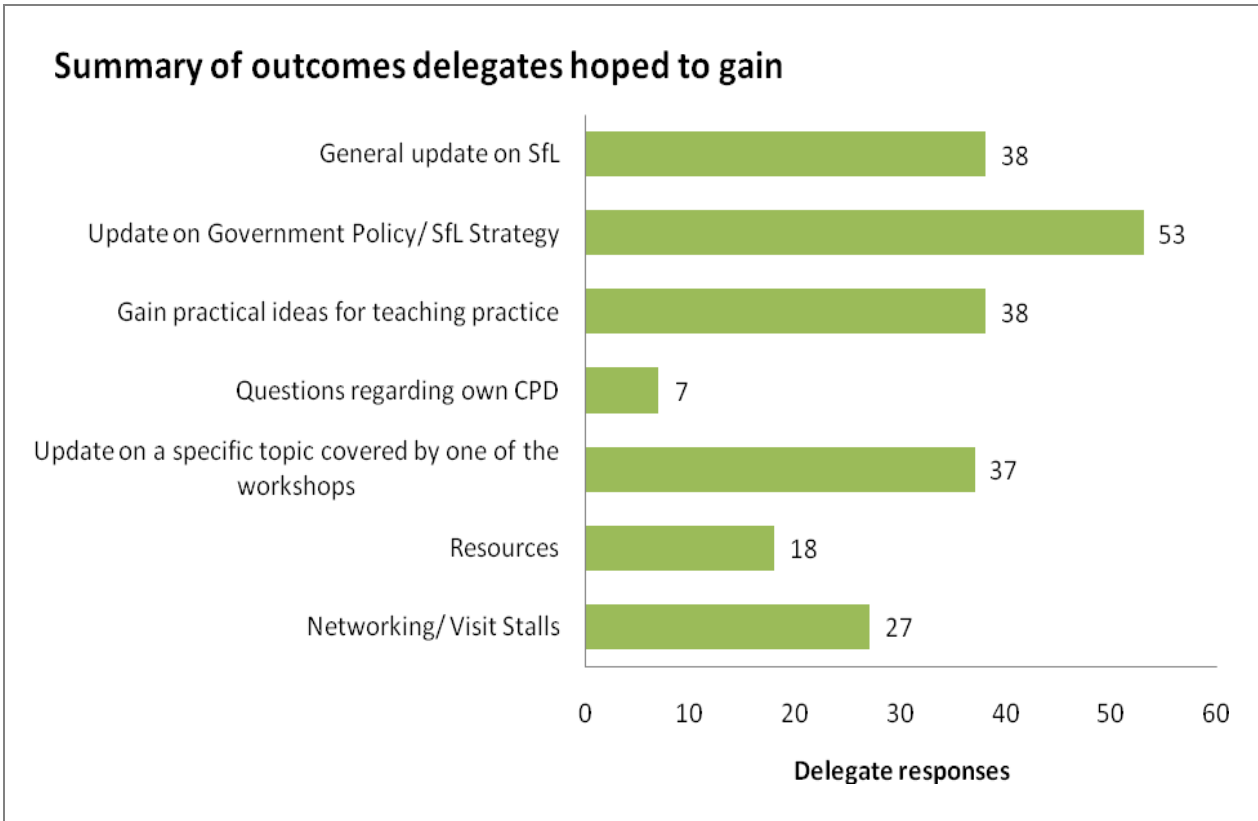


Chart 1

Delegates were asked:-

**What attracted you to the conference? and
Do you feel you have benefited from attending?**

- 43 said they were attracted to the conference for the Speakers
- 123 said they were attracted to the conference for the Workshops
- 55 said they were attracted to the conference for the Free place and
- 18 said Other

- 112 said they had benefited from attending the conference overall
- 112 said they had benefited from attending the workshops and
- 95 said they had benefited from attending for the networking

Overall delegates rated the content of the conference as:

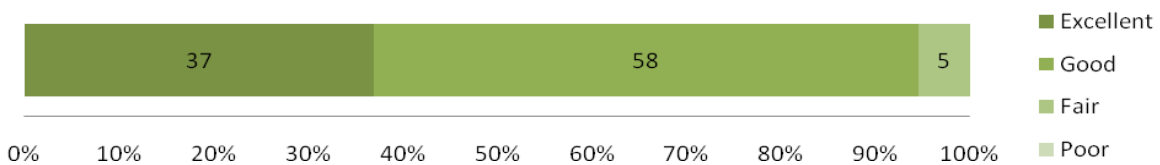


Chart 2

About the Workshops

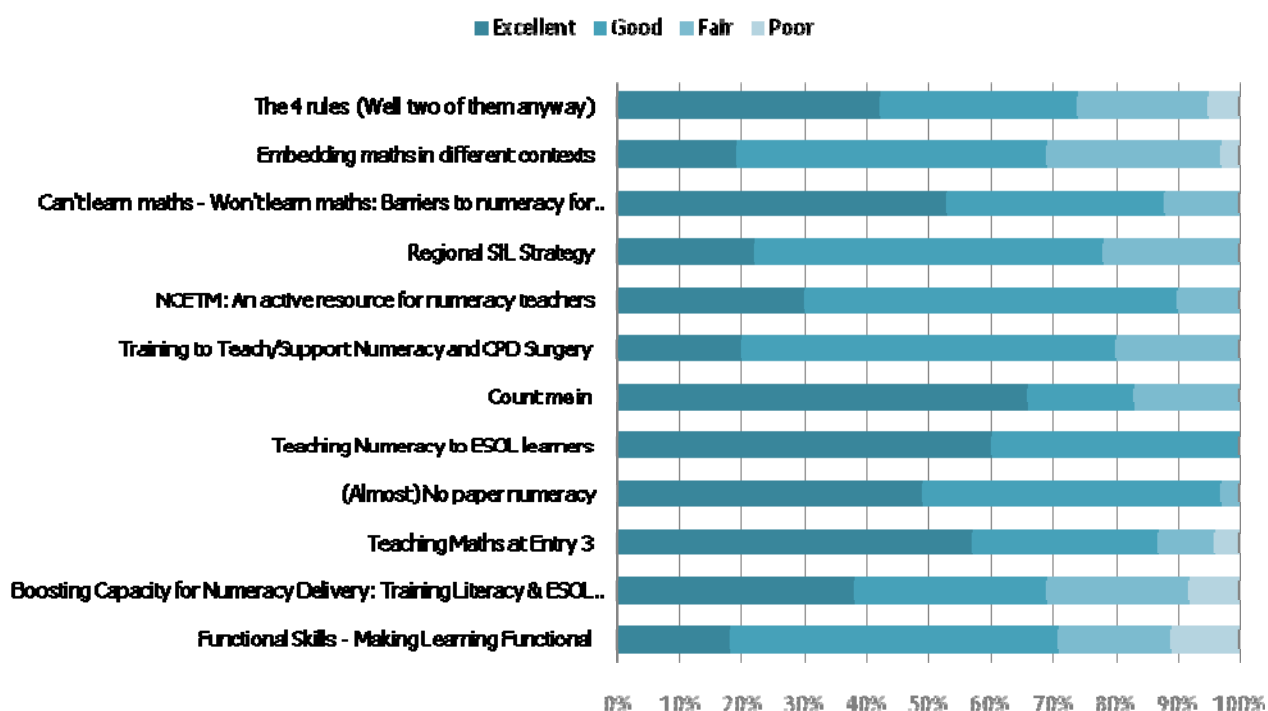
Delegates were asked to rate the workshops that they attended.

The table below shows the total number of delegates expected to attend each workshop and the number of evaluation responses received for each. (Not all of the delegates who returned an evaluation form rated the workshops they attended and although delegates had the opportunity to attend two workshops during the day, some chose to rate only one.)

<u>WORKSHOPS</u>	N ^o delegates expected to attend	N ^o evaluation responses
Functional Skills - Making Learning Functional	48	45
Boosting Capacity for Numeracy Delivery: Training Literacy & ESOL Tutors	29	13
Teaching Maths at Entry 3	32	23
(Almost) No paper numeracy	48	35
Teaching Numeracy to ESOL learners	20	10
Count me in	20	6
Training to Teach/Support Numeracy and CPD Surgery	20	15
NCETM: An active resource for numeracy teachers	20	10
Regional SfL Strategy	45	37
Can't learn maths - Won't learn maths: Barriers to numeracy for adult learners	33	26
Embedding maths in different contexts	40	32
The 4 rules (Well two of them anyway)	26	19

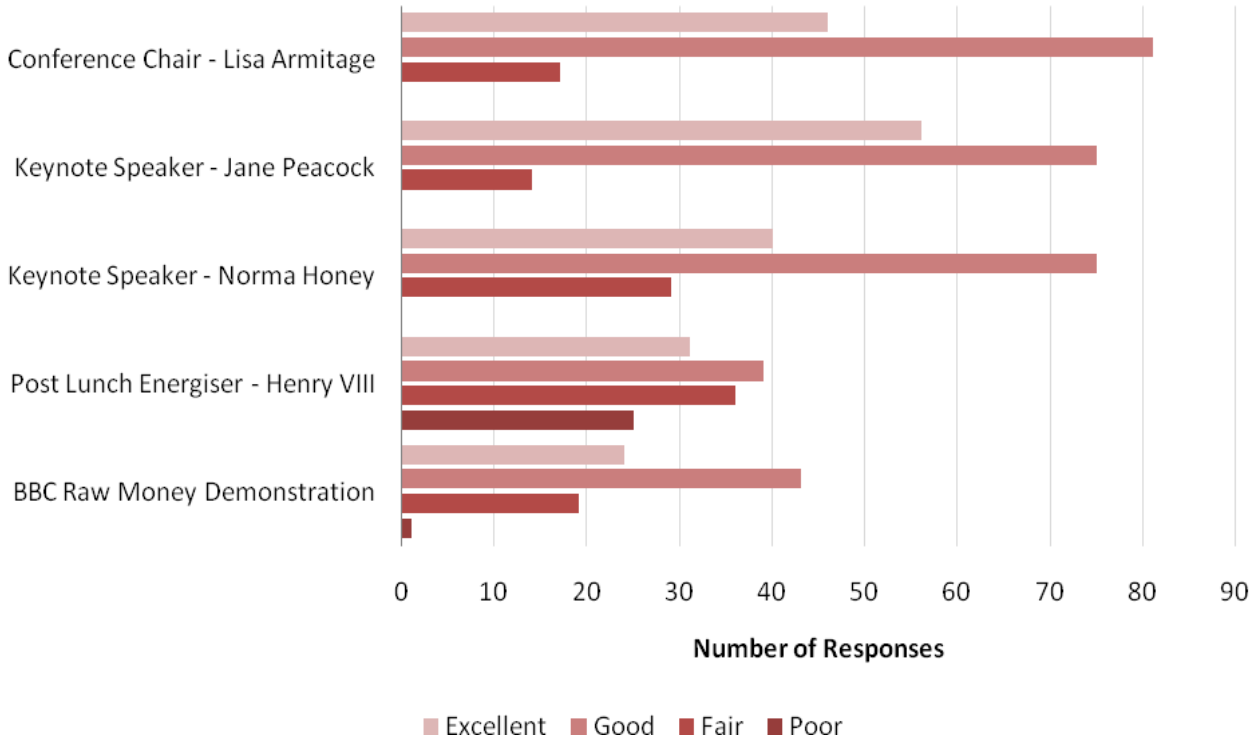
WORKSHOP RATINGS

Chart 3 below shows ratings for each workshop as a percentage bar. The ratings from excellent to poor are shown as a percentage of the total responses received for each individual workshop.



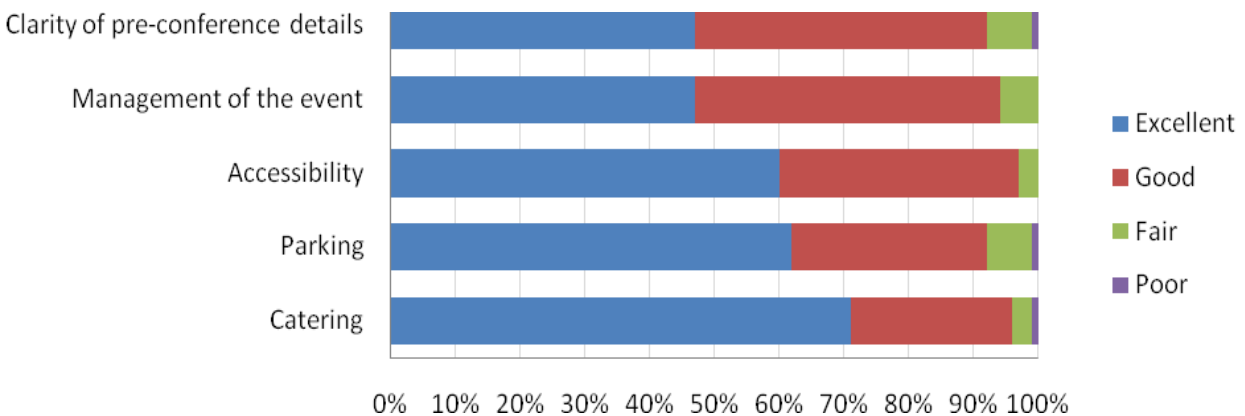
About the Keynote Speeches and Presentations

Delegates were asked to rate the Keynote Speeches and presentations provided in the main conference hall. Chart 4, the bar chart below shows the total number of responses given to each rating.



About the Management of the Event

Delegates were asked to rate their experience of the administration for the event and management of the venue. Chart 5 below shows ratings for each aspect asked about as a percentage bar. The ratings from excellent to poor are shown as a percentage of the total responses given for each aspect.



Comments received from delegates

Overall the conference was a success; delegates enjoyed the day and found it to be worthwhile. As the delegate feedback shows the main features of the day, the workshops and keynotes, received good ratings and the management of the event was also rated well. 95% of those who responded rated the conference as Good to Excellent, (See Chart 2). Some comments given on the evaluation forms include “This was a fantastic event and well worth attending.” “I really enjoyed the conference and hope it is one of many. Great networking and sharing of information opportunity” “An excellent day, well planned and excellent content very well worthwhile” “Overall informative and useful in terms of awareness of resources, having stands –great!” “I will recommend that we attend each year.”

(A full list of all comments provided can be found in Appendix V.)

A number of comments received were about the post lunch energiser. Disappointingly this part of the day did not achieve its objective of providing a short opportunity for people to be reinvigorated after their meal before attending their next workshop. Many delegates commented that they could not see the relevance of Henry VIII to Skills for Life or Numeracy, although this probably would not have been an issue to the audience if the act had energised. In addition to this the slot overran which caused the timings for the workshop and demonstration that followed to be rushed and this was a cause of disappointment for many people. (For a full list of all comments provided, see Appendix V.)

Because so many delegates chose to comment on the energiser there were hardly any comments about the main aspects of the conference – the speakers, workshops and exhibitors. Although when asked if the outcomes they hoped to gain by attending the conference were met (pages 4 & 5) - 92% of delegates said yes they felt that they were met, 76% specifying that they had benefited from attending the workshops; 76% specifying that they benefited from attending the conference overall and 65% specifying that they had benefited from attending for the networking. In addition to this the ratings given for the Workshops and Keynotes/Presentations (illustrated in charts 3 & 4) show a high response rate of *Excellent* and *Good* against all the items asked about. However it is worth noting that the actual number of delegates providing a response for each item varies. This is because a number of delegates left the conference early and so did not provide a rating for both the workshops they attended and there were far fewer ratings for the BBC RaW demonstration than there were for the Energiser.

To try to gain a more rounded view as to how the conference had benefited those who attended an email (see Appendix VI) was sent out to a random selection of delegates (approximately 2 weeks after the event) asking them if they would like to add some reflective comments about their experience.

They were asked:

- *What have you gained or learnt from attending?*
- *On reflection, what have you followed up on or will you follow up on to develop your teaching practice?*

(A copy of the email sent is given in Appendix VI.)

The delegates who responded to the email said that, overall the conference was an excellent day: The information provided by exhibitors; The opportunity to network; The opportunity to gain fresh teaching ideas and resources; were all mentioned as key benefits that they felt they gained from attending.

The reflections received are given below:-

Family Learning Development Tutor

"The most useful thing that I gained from the conference was finding out about the NCETM web site. I have discovered a lot of helpful resources and information via the site and have bookmarked lots of info to return to. After following one or two links I even ended up watching a Mr Duey deliver an amusing 'fraction action rap' on Youtube. (A fun way to integrate maths and literacy?) I do not doubt that I will return to the NCETM site frequently even though maths is not my specialism.

It is always helpful to have the opportunity to learn from other practitioners and obtain a snapshot of different delivery methods etc. The demonstrated 'jumper' method for teaching ratio at E3/L1 level looked to be worth trying out.

The quality of info on the majority of stands was very good. It is always nice to flick through the books/materials on the Avanti stand. I also picked up free copies of several interesting articles and promotional leaflets regarding strategic approaches to the promotion and delivery of family learning, in particular the financial capability strand. The Niace topic papers 4&5 contained info that will help with the marketing of FLLN courses.

I thought that Henry VIII was a bit boring. He made me feel sleepy.

Smoothly run day- very worthwhile especially for a new member of staff who was meeting colleagues for the first time."

SfL Programme Coordinator

"Overall I found the conference to be extremely useful although some aspects were better than others.

The venue was excellent, so too was the overall management of the event. I found the stalls to be extremely useful and picked up some valuable resources and contacts. This will form the main basis of my follow up for the next few weeks to enable me to track down useful teaching resources for my tutors.

I got most out of the workshops on updates on current Skills for Life Strategy. I found the Functional Skills presentation to be poorly presented and poorly managed. I felt the Henry VIII presentation to be out of place and took time from the presentation from the BBC which was more beneficial. However since the event I find myself watching the new Simon Sharma series on Henry VIII and saying 'I know that', 'Henry told me that'.

Overall it was excellent."

Sessional Tutor

"Conference provided a source of inspiration at a time of the academic year where it is easy to become disillusioned because of the need to prepare students for exams / certificates etc.

- A reminder of sources, ideas etc to be followed up.
- The Almost No paper workshop provided ideas for new resources / ways to use them.
- Hoping to set up a pilot based on some of the ideas from the ESOL and Numeracy workshop.
- Chance to meet and talk to different people."

SfL Coordinator

"Overall, I thought that the East Midlands conference was an excellent day with two items being particularly useful:

- 1) I have used the information on the Leitch targets in meetings with senior managers and staff team meetings to raise awareness of the importance of L1 literacy and E3 numeracy.
- 2) 'How tall is Fred?' was part of the no-paper maths workshop. I have used this concept for teaching scale with model Mini cars and double-decker buses. I also introduced it at the NCETM maths network meeting last week (mentioning thanks to Fiona).

My evaluation sheet on the day gave my thoughts on Henry the eighth."

Skills Development and Employability Coordinator

"First of all, may I say how well organised the conference was - I really enjoyed it (and I don't say that about many conferences!). I particularly enjoyed one of the workshops I attended about embedding Skills and now have a much better idea of the variety of ways in which this can be done.

However, the session I attended in the afternoon with the LSC regarding strategy was disappointing in that there was no specific information regarding Probation - I understand that there is a new core curriculum for prisons but no-one seemed to know if this includes Probation; also no details regarding funding in probation (although it seems pretty clear there will be some in prisons)."

Skills for Life Lecturer

"I thought it was extremely well organised and an excellent venue. Housekeeping arrangements were excellent.

I attended a workshop to do with embedding numeracy and picked up some good resource ideas. However, a large part of the workshop seemed to focus on ESOL and I did not see the relevance of ESOL in this particular workshop.

It was an excellent opportunity to network and I was pleased to meet Stewart from the Move On campaign who proved an interesting person to chat with.

Finally, may I just point out that the directions to the Hall were not accurate. I spent around 20 minutes trying to find my way after following the directions and realising I was being led in the wrong direction!

Once again, I thought it was very well organised and enjoyable."

Senior Basic Skills Tutor - Probation

"I am the Snr Basic Skills Tutor for PALS, the education section of the Notts Probation Service, and along with a colleague I attended the conference.

Between us we attended 4 different workshops but I'm not sure of the titles of the ones that my colleague attended. I do know however that she was disappointed with the first one she attended as she felt the group was being asked to 'put together' a course rather than being instructed/learning about the subject. I've been to events where this has happened and understand how frustrated she felt after doing it. You hope, at these events, to learn something. Not to instruct yourself. She enjoyed the 2nd w/shop she went to.

I loved both w/shops I went to - Almost no paperwork numeracy and long x and division. Both excellent! Loads of ideas and examples to try in the first one and clear instructions on various methods (including the latest being taught in schools), which I'd seen before but not had much idea how they worked. Looking forward to simplifying long division with my students.

I thoroughly enjoyed the Henry VIII interlude, but felt with the time constraints that always happen on such events, it was rather pointless. It needed more time so as to not intrude on workshop time. Dare I say - if you are putting a similarly light session in, drop one of the speakers. Sacrilege I know, but the only way to make it feasible in the future.

One small point about the venue - the only problem with this was at lunchtime when you had to queue so long before getting it. I know that is the system the venue has and it is out of your hands but it was very slow.

Otherwise excellent."