

A college success story:

Somerset College

Somerset College achieves 92% success rate with vision2learn e-learning



Online learning has ‘engaged a much wider range of learners’ at Somerset College says Distance Learning Co-ordinator, Jane Roberts (above, right).

With a thriving student community and reputation for excellence and innovation, the college has offered vocational distance learning with vision2learn e-learning courses. Achieving an outstanding 92% success rate with vision2learn in the last academic year, Somerset College looks forward to continued success with its e-learning offering this year.

Jane Roberts says: *“Our partnership with vision2learn has been very successful. We’ve reached a large number of learners – over 1000 last year. It’s enabled a wide range of people to enhance their learning. Not everyone wants to go to college to gain a qualification, or undertake a paper-based course. It’s a great way for people to learn at home in their own time.”*

At the beginning

Getting the e-learning courses up and running was a hassle-free process for the college and they’ve appreciated vision2learn’s flexibility and ease of use. *“The initial set-up with vision2learn was excellent,”*

says Jane Roberts. *“Before we started working with vision2learn we didn’t offer online provision. When we first started working with vision2learn in December 2009, they visited the College and went through absolutely everything with our senior managers. The e-learning platform is really efficient and easy to use. We were able to get started easily and everything has run very smoothly.”*

Ongoing support from vision2learn has been a real plus point.

“If we have any queries, someone from vision2learn is always available to help us out,” Jane added. *“We appreciate the flexibility – it’s like they respond to our needs in particular. If we want a visit, someone will come to see us. If we need help, or we want a particular report, it isn’t a problem.”*

What do learners think?

The online courses have been a hit with learners too. People from all walks of life have signed up to study online – all you need is access to an internet-connected PC. As vision2learn courses are government funded, learners can study for free. Twenty five year-old Kathleen Fantham from Bridgwater completed a vision2learn online course with Somerset College. She says, *“I loved being able to work at my own pace. I would definitely recommend a vision2learn course for people who are short of time. It’s so rewarding to refresh your memory of a particular subject and to learn new things. When you pass the course and you receive that certificate through the post, you feel so proud of your achievements.”*

Sixty year-old Ian Cox from Winscombe was made redundant from his role as an Industrial Chemist in 2007. Ian has completed two vision2learn online courses with the college, including the Essential IT Skills Level 2 programme and hopes to become self employed in the near future. *“I enjoyed having the flexibility to progress at a pace I was comfortable with,”* says Ian. *“Studying online with vision2learn was a convenient way of gaining additional qualifications, working in my spare time as necessary.”*

Jane Roberts comments, *“Vision2learn has worked very well with learners and we’ve had some really positive feedback. Learners have worked through the courses without any problems.*

“Vision2learn carry out an eligibility check before a learner gets started on a course. This is very comprehensive and checks the learner’s basic IT skills and whether they have the programmes that they will need on their PC and so on. The technical team at vision2learn are always available to help with questions. Any issues are picked up straight away.”

Flexible learning

Vision2learn e-learning at Somerset College has opened up learning opportunities to a wide range of people throughout England’s South West. *“We’ve engaged with learners that we wouldn’t normally have been able to reach,”* says Jane. *“It’s enabled us to reach a wider range of people. Many of our learners live in rural areas and it’s unlikely that they would make the journey to College to complete a course. Everyone needs to gain qualifications to compete in the job market these days and the flexibility of vision2learn means that learning is opened up to a wider audience. At the end of the day, the flexibility is key.”*

Somerset College is currently running vision2learn’s Essential IT Skills Level 2 course, which has proved a popular choice with learners. It provides them with practical IT skills that they can use in a work environment. Completion of the course leads to the new Information Technology Qualification ITQ in IT User Skills at Level 2. Jane Roberts says, *“We put 131 learners through on the Essential IT Skills Level 2 course last year and we already have 221 enrolled for this year. I’ve actually enrolled myself on the course. As well as improving my IT skills, I wanted to get a clearer idea of what the learner goes through. The materials and resources for this course are excellent.”*

Online tutor support

Every vision2learn learner is supported by an online tutor. As well as working with tutors provided by vision2learn, Somerset College also employs its own tutors to support vision2learn courses. Jane Roberts comments, *“Getting to grips with supporting learners online has been a whole new world for our tutors,”* says Jane Roberts. *“But, vision2learn have carried out training as and when they needed it. The vision2learn tutors have really helped our tutors to get to grips with everything. Our tutors, who are currently working to support the Essential IT Skills Level 2 course, absolutely love the process of tutoring online”.*

Helping to meet funding targets

Vision2learn e-learning has helped Somerset College to meet its Adult Learner Responsive funding targets for Level 2. Jane added, *“It has been key in this area. We’ve been able to reach a large number of adult learners in a very cost-effective way.”*

More about vision2learn

Vision2learn is a web-based e-learning service, which can be used to deliver, support and administer nationally recognised, vocational qualifications fundable by the Skills Funding Agency.

Vision2learn e-learning programmes are ideal for use as distance learning for learners at home or work or as the major part of a blended learning approach for attending learners. It also supports other initiatives, such as full-cost provision with local employers and community learning with ‘hard-to-reach’ groups.

Vision2learn works with centres nationally, providing online qualifications to more than 65,000 learners.

Somerset College

- Providing education and training in Somerset for more than 150 years
- All courses are designed to meet employer’s needs and to provide skills and knowledge relevant to work and employment
- Believes in developing innovative teaching and learning practices for its students and staff
- The Somerset Centre for Enterprise provides a wide range of training to employers in Somerset and beyond.

“This is a good college... Achievements and standards are good. Success rates, particularly on vocational courses, have increased significantly since the last Inspection. The college provides an inclusive and safe environment. A rich range of activities promotes equality and diversity across the college. The college provides productive and responsive partnerships for the benefit of learners and the community.” Ofsted, February 2007

Contact us

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