

TEACH TOO ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

A case study on the Teach Too organisational development project at Bury College





Project overview

Bury College has a strategic aim to ensure their curriculum matches the needs of both students and employers. The Teach Too project explored how the use of the college's Individual Professional Academic Development (IPAD) policy can be developed for a more joined up organisational approach to curriculum development with employers, specifically refining the college IPAD policy to support the development, piloting and evaluation of a new model where at least one IPAD day for each member of teaching staff is aligned to Teach Too activities.

Department leads from the Engineering, Childcare, IT and Travel and Tourism departments undertook a round of industrial updating, which they then cascaded to colleagues within their department and across the wider college. This helped to share lessons learned, reflections and other feedback in support of wider take-up and adoption across the whole organisation to become standard practice, thereby improving involvement with employers on curriculum design and delivery.

Case studies have been produced by each department.

Engineering

Project management is a key skill for Engineers both as learners and in employment. Engineers are required to agree a specific project, plan and monitor it, implement a project plan and present an outcome. The current BTEC Level 3 Engineering curriculum expects all students to undertake this process to produce an engineering product, device, service or process, yet does not embed a deep understanding of the project life-cycle used in industry. Bury College Engineering department is now moving to the RQF BTEC Level 3 which focuses more on project management processes.

Bury College Engineering team collaborated with three employers to develop and adapt the current Level 3 Engineering Project unit. The aim was to align the unit with employer project planning processes to inform future planning and delivery of the new Level 3 Engineering Project Unit. Although the Engineering tutors have the experience of developing

delivery plans, they have used the Teach Too Project to co-design a curriculum, working closely with employers to develop an enhanced delivery model that embeds project planning skills that local employers require and value.

The local employers worked with Bury College by providing work experience days, individual mentoring and the delivery of masterclasses. The upskilling of staff has allowed the college to have an insight into the methods and physical resources used by employers to plan their own projects. One employer arranged meetings with several of the different departments involved in project management including quality, sales and estimating and manufacturing to show how these linked together. This was then followed up by a site visit to Manchester Airport to show progress on a major installation project.

Childcare

The Teach Too Project has enabled Bury College tutors to work in partnership with local employers to develop our combined knowledge and experience of the Forest School Learning model, an initiative that seeks to maximise the benefits of learning outdoors for children and support co-delivery of the curriculum. Collaboration has proved effective as teaching staff were able to upskill local employers and work together to build their combined confidence and experience in Forest School learning. Bury College staff, in turn, were given the opportunity to see the curriculum and its application in practical terms.

The Forest School curriculum has become more embedded within college delivery, including better contextualisation of activities and broadening provision. This includes practical activities in the workplace, which have now been brought to life as part of course delivery. Development has also covered risk assessment and health and safety to ensure all activities are carefully monitored for the children, students and staff involved.

IT

The key focus of the project in the Digital, IT department at Bury College was to engage with local digital employers and to provide opportunities for professional staff updating. The employers engaged with through the project allowed staff an insight in to the workings of a game's development studio and the design and planning of large-scale network installations. There was an additional focus on building links back to the classroom and encouraging employers to deliver masterclass sessions, which allowed employers to give the students insight into professional working practices. Collaboration will continue post project to develop these relationships, so student visits and work experience placements become normal practice.

Travel and Tourism

The project involved the development of new partnerships with key employers within the Travel, Tourism and Hospitality industries. Through collaborative arrangements, employers were taught their industry skills to teaching staff and contributed to curriculum development.

The partnerships were initially developed by travel teaching staff who were able to share previous personal travel industry contacts. Specific units from the new RQF curriculum were shared with the employers as a starting point for the collaboration. Participating staff initially determined their own key areas of development, commonly in areas they felt they lacked u-to-date industry knowledge, identified through performance reviews. Following consultation between college staff and the employer, the aims and objectives of the visits were established. Each placement encompassed a focus on internal practises and procedures such as the IT booking systems and how the organisation had to adapt their current working practises to meet with regulation changes.

Some employers were able to offer suggestions to support the curriculum area of choice. Other employers were able to suggest further colleagues or areas of the business for the teaching staff to visit. On one placement, a tutor was able to shadow various employees. This provided varied opportunities during the visit to up-skill their industry knowledge and current practice in different departments.

Positive outcomes and impact

Teaching staff at Bury College have been very positive about their involvement in the project and are motivated through more meaningful collaboration with employers.

“The experience at Hargreaves has been extremely worthwhile. It has allowed me to identify lots of new lessons and activities that can be used both in my existing practice as well as in the planning and delivery of new engineering qualifications.”

Lee Moffatt, Lecturer in Engineering, Bury College

There have been significant positive impacts on teaching staff from the IT department. The team are now much more focused delivering the skills for careers where there is high local and national demand. The project has prompted teaching staff to realign and reconsider which qualification units they deliver to students to give them the best career opportunities.

Employers across the project felt that having the opportunity to influence and contribute to curriculum resourcing enabled them to help adapt and align the curriculum with industry practice, resulting in

student skills being tailored to support progression into work.

Students have also directly benefited from the experience. As a result of collaboration with Childcare employers, one student has been offered a work placement with a nursery for the remainder of the course, with a view to employment opportunities once qualified.

Future activity

The Bury College IPAD programme supports staff in developing and updating professional, academic and vocational competence; the Teach Too principles will be embedded in this process moving forward. The IPAD programme entitles staff to five days of CPD per academic year. CPD activities must have direct relevance to an individual's current role and used to update vocational expertise so that the curriculum and teaching practice is always up-to-date and in line with industry standards.

Bury College will continue to collaborate with employers to help co-design curricula, providing the expertise needed to support the introduction of technical education reforms, and T Levels. A part of this will be a raised awareness of the resources (physical, IT and human) industry use to manage and deliver projects.

Through improved employer relationships, students will be mentored both in college and in an employer setting with a view to improving achievement and developing outstanding industry skills. They will also benefit from guest speakers and live-briefs, as these relationships are sustained and become well-established.

Recommendations for developing collaborative arrangements

Historically, some departments at Bury College worked with a relatively low number of employers on an ad-hoc basis. It can then be difficult to build relationships with these employers on a more meaningful level as partnerships take time to develop. It is important to identify key employers who are willing to collaborate on a meaningful level and have a vested interest in the curriculum and student skill development.

Bury College plan to develop a model where a tutor is the 'account-holder' linked to one employer and be the key contact in a specific sector. This will allow joined up employer engagement for the college's business development team.

Have a flexible approach to business needs and be willing and able to be adaptable to personalise each partnership arrangement to suit each partners' specific needs.

Further Information

Teach Too Case Study Video Link – Engineering - Bury College

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1KenmHq_yN8

Teach Too Case Study Video Link – Childcare - Bury College

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNBV2I4nq20>

Teach Too Case Study Video Link – IT - Bury College

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e44EEnPivo4>

Teach Too Case Study Video Link – Travel and Tourism - Bury College

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqvUJ3yGEw>