Teach Too

'Teach too' in a fast moving technology sector

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Introduction to Teach Too

Teach Too is an ETF-funded project delivered in partnership by UCL Institute of Education and the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP). Deriving from a key recommendation of the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) Report in 2013, it sets out to explore and evaluate different models of collaborative activity between employers and providers at practitioner level, in the co-design, delivery and assessment of vocational education and training programmes. Project findings show that these collaborative partnerships have produced significant short and medium-term benefits for employers, providers and learners, and enrich and strengthen local economies and communities.

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Project aims

> To evaluate and revise the web and social media curriculum to reflect industry needs

> To update the knowledge and skills of web development tutors

> To develop a sustainable partnership, which is able to respond to industry needs as they develop

> To improve vocational education and training for learners.

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Project description

The project involved collaboration between an IT training organisation and a web development company. The project involved 19+ learners from disadvantaged neighbourhoods who facilitated the company's aim to support and provide opportunities for local unemployed individuals.

Learners were assessed for suitability in terms of soft skills, ambitions and technical capacity. Learners then attended various workshops run by the employer on web development which considered the effective use of digital media via a range of platforms. Learners had the opportunity to build their portfolio for future work opportunities while gaining valuable skills and experience of working in the digital industry environment. Employees at the partner employer assessed learners throughout the learning activities and provided feedback to the learners.

As part of the project, several learners also participated in a skill swap network; learners provided their skills in exchange for the skills of others in the network. This further developed learners' confidence, self-esteem, independence and employment prospects.

A Teach Too conference was also run as part of the project and over 100 learners attended. At this conference employers from different sectors ran 10 workshops where they presented the career opportunities in their sector, There were also workshops on business start-up skills, business administration and ESOL input.

Positive impacts

> Learners had the opportunity to build their portfolio for future work and gained valuable skills and experience specific to the working environment within this industry

> Several learners from the project were subsequently employed by the partner employer and all learners who completed the training successfully have been registered on the partner employer's freelance register

> Staff up-skilling of industrial knowledge and skills gave them increased confidence in using new technologies. There was also enhanced motivation and enthusiasm to look at different ways of delivery in all aspects of their subject, including the use of new online resources and platforms

> The Web curriculum is now improved to reflect industry needs and provide a clear line of sight to relevant employment

> The employer has been able to successfully recruit individuals from one of its target groups and also increase the number on it's freelance register.

Key learning points

> The content of qualifications within this area do not provide adequate coverage of the technologies used in website design. As technology is fast moving in this industry, it is very difficult for Awarding Organisations to keep pace with change

> The curriculum has to change to reflect current practices and some business skills need to be integrated with the technical training i.e. business planning, real time projects and peer assessment.

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Recommendations for developing employer partnerships

› Tangible, short and long-term rewards for both parties are essential, particularly to incentivise SME employers to give their time and expertise. In this project, the funding gave the employer time to develop and deliver workshops that benefited the company's business by providing a supply of freelancers to meet the web development needs of their clients. The provider benefitted from a wide range of development outcomes for learners, staff and the organisation.

› A successful partnership will inevitably reveal gaps in the skills and knowledge provided by 'off the shelf' qualifications against the needs of employers. The partnership needs to develop flexible ways to address these.

Links and contact details

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