

# TEACH TOO ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

A case study on the Teach Too organisational development projects at Walsall College



## **Project overview**

Walsall College have embraced a whole College approach to technical teaching and employer-led learning by using the Teach Too principles within five local projects:

- Engaging employers in the preparation for T Level implementation in Construction.
- Engaging employers in the preparation for T Level implementation in Digital.
- Engaging employers in the preparation for T Level implementation in Early Years.
- Employer led employability skills in tutorial
- Employer led competencies for our Walsall College Graduate

All five projects included in our organisational Teach Too project are integral to Our Corporate Strategy and support the delivery of our strategic ambitions.

## **Project aims**

The project aimed to encourage employers to engage with subject areas and enhance the students' learning experience. The College objective was to open up opportunities for teachers to collaborate with industry and develop sustainable relationships that continue after the life of the project.

Four of the five projects have been established and proven successful, for example, both construction and digital have established excellent relationships with their employers with exciting plans for the future. Likewise, the College's Tutorial Coordinator has increased the employer, student interaction within tutorial, which has been a catalyst for employer engagement plans beyond this project.

## **Positive impact and expected outcomes**

Our construction project has enhanced the reputation of both the Bell Group who have set up a training academy within Walsall College, and the College. Equipment and learning activities that would not be included in the study programme, due to access and high costs, can take place because of this partnership. A construction student said *"...I have used new advanced equipment [used] in industry...it has given me more confidence knowing that I have experienced working [on] MEWP equipment"*

Our digital project has engaged multiple employers to offer a digital enterprise week to all computing students. Week commencing 26 November students attended sessions held by a range of employers and agencies including West Midlands Cyber Crime Division, PLANit Global, Zonefox, Yellowstone, Cisco and the Open University. These

employer-led activities have allowed students to benefit directly from the technical expertise and professionalism within the sector. Moreover, teachers have benefited from working with these industry experts, and our teachers within computing are forming meaningful relationships. In particular, the College is working with Cisco and the Open University to expand our Cisco Academy to become a regional Cisco Hub. Our Computing Curriculum Manager is helping and developing other schools and colleges to become Cisco Academies. On the 10 April we will be holding a '*Girls in Digital*' evening where our guest speaker will be a successful woman software entrepreneur.

Tutorial and Personal Development activities touch all students across the College. Our Tutorial Coordinator has engaged with Employability UK who delivered a masterclass in confidence, interpersonal skills and learning the qualities needed in industry by connecting with the employer. The session was video recorded and is currently being included in employability personal development tutorial for all students. Although the Employability UK activity was well received by students, the networking activity has led to very positive outcomes. A second delivery masterclass with local employers (Directors) including Business Network International and Coca Cola is arranged and will discuss the need for positive body language, networking, confidence and equality and diversity.

In the College, students assess themselves against a set of employability Walsall College Graduate (WCG) competencies as a reflective activity when preparing for employment. This local project has engaged employers to define competencies they would like students to possess. The benefit to the student will be assessing themselves against a set of employer-led meaningful competencies.

### **Future activity**

Our strategic positioning with employers has been strengthened because of purposeful and structured projects. As a result, a number of initiatives have emerged:

- Encourage more employers to work with the College by using the Teach Too Framework.
- Strengthen our strategic relationship with the Open University and Cisco to develop a Cisco Hub in the region.
- '*Girls in Digital*' event on the 10 April.
- Strengthen our strategic relationship with the Bell Group and run more masterclasses including those specialising in coatings and applications, contract vinyl and the use of social media in promoting businesses.
- For tutorial we have arranged a masterclass with local employers (Directors) and Coca Cola about the need for positive body language, networking, confidence and equality and diversity.

## **Recommendations for developing collaborative arrangements**

For this Teach Too project, the College has worked with a diverse range of employers at subject level. Collaboration between employers and teachers has been most positively achieved when the professionalism and expertise have a direct benefit for the student. All projects have exceeded the original expectations and are continuing with further planned activity.

A common challenge across the project was finding and engaging with an employer who is enthusiastic and passionate about training and truly believes in playing a part in developing young people for a vibrant, diverse and exciting industry. Often employers do not feel they have the time or other priorities take prominence. The College was very fortunate to work with a diverse range of employers who were very enthusiastic. *“When the employers do engage and come through, the resource is the best students can experience.”* (Tutorial Coordinator – Walsall College)