

Teach Too

Employer led curriculum development and implementation in Digital and Creative



Oldham College

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LEAD CONTACT

Joanne Manship

EMPLOYERS

UK Fast
Building Blocks
Play
SpaceportX
Capital Relations

Sopra Steria
The E-word
Clock Creative
Proximote & SLM Connect
Book of the Future

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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.

Jay Derrick Director of Teacher Education (post-compulsory), UCL, Institute of Education

Project aims

- To develop a curriculum that is relevant to employers and which reflects current practice within the sector
- To improve student experience whilst undertaking a study programme, including improving their understanding of the sector, job roles with the sector, entry requirements and how to develop employability skills
- To update staff skills and knowledge on current and emerging practices within the sector
- To engage employers in learner activities and teaching sessions within College.



Student feedback

‘Knowing that personality is a major factor makes me feel more comfortable and I could act like myself in an interview’

Project description

A strategic priority for Oldham College is to engage with employers and develop a curriculum offer that is aligned to the labour market and employer needs and enables learners to progress. With strong support from local industry, Oldham College launched into a new paradigm of how it engages with employers including the development of an Employer Advisory Board (EAB).

Employers were invited to attend a curriculum shaping workshop, so they could first learn about the curriculum that was on offer and then have a direct say in what this offer should be. They were also invited to provide input on the content of new and existing courses, and suggest how the teaching, learning and assessment could be made to reflect current working practices and be as up to date as possible.

Events were held that provided opportunities for students to work collaboratively with employees from a range of organisations. An example of this was a conference where students actively engaged with employers and collaboratively presented on the issue of sustainability.

Employers were also directly involved with students through critiques of assignments and through interviewing for a range of opportunities, such as apprenticeships and internships which EAB members agreed to offer. Plans are also in place for employers to support students in CV writing through a series of workshops.

Students have completed visits to EAB organisations, with more visits planned. These visits have been of great benefit to students, as they have seen first hand the day-to-day activities within these companies, discussed job roles with staff and progression opportunities, as well as experiencing the new technologies that are in use.



9 employers observed teaching sessions in Digital and Creative within the College. The employees then provided feedback and supportive comments on the subject and content of the session, with advice on how this could reflect current working practices more and/or how the session could be improved further in light of new developments within the sector. This provided valuable updating of knowledge and skills for College staff.

Employers from the EAB are working with the College training team to plan a training programme that will further support their roles as trainers within their own organisations and also support their work with the College in areas such as the delivery of master classes for students

Positive impacts

- A new curriculum has been agreed, through the work of the curriculum shaping workshops, which includes a new Digital Marketing course
- Students' understanding of the sector has been greatly enhanced and their employability skills have developed, particularly communication skills
- Students are demonstrating improved motivation for staying on the programme and achieving higher grades
- Curriculum staff have up-skilled their sector knowledge and current practice; this has improved staff confidence in the delivery of particular content
- The project has provided networking opportunities for employers through the meeting of the EAB
- Employers have the opportunity to have a direct influence on the educational offer and to be able to identify future talented individuals to work within their company.



Student feedback

‘It has made me think about my future and who I want to work for.’

Key learning points

- Do not make promises for activity that cannot be met. Colleges need to deliver everything they have promised to ensure the relationship with partners is positive
- If new units or qualifications are to be introduced as a result of employer input into the curriculum offer, ensure that staff are provided with appropriate training to be able to deliver it
- Make use of technologies such as survey monkey or a similar on-line tool to communicate with employers. This was a great tool for getting employers to vote for the best combination of units to deliver.



Student feedback

‘I feel that I now know what I need to aim for. I know what sort of company I want to work for and has shown me more options other than university.’

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Recommendations for developing employer partnerships

- Make the ways of working within the partnership fit your industry in its style of communication, timing etc
- Do not overload an employer with expectations, but do try to get some commitment from them
- Curriculum staff visits for up-skilling do not have to be full days. They can be short 1-2 hour sessions to fit in with what the employer can offer
- Link specific tutors to a specific employer, to enable them to develop a relationship with their lead in the business
- Run employer board meetings on each other's premises – it keeps it interesting, and creates an atmosphere of networking and sharing between employers
- Offer plenty of press opportunities, advertising the partner's involvement
- Plan out a year into sections with a series of agendas to enable the board to build its involvement from board room to students.



Links and contact details

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