

TEACH TOO PHASE 3: GATESHEAD COLLEGE

Lead contact: Joanne Mills

Employers: Enigma Interactive, DevAcademy, Nutshell Apps and Hedgehog Labs.



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TEACH TOO PHASE 3

Teach Too Phase 3 was commissioned and funded by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) and managed by the Association of Colleges (AoC), working in partnership with the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP) and HOLEX, the lead body for adult community education and learning.

Phase 3 of Teach Too built on the principles identified in earlier phases and, to give an indication of the scale of work undertaken, the 12 projects involved 675 learners, 120 provider staff and 100 employer staff.

The concept of Teach Too is identified by the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) in its 2013 report as one of the ways to secure excellent vocational teaching and learning.

THE PROJECT

This project represented a dynamic partnership between staff and employers in the digital sector. This translated into a collaborative approach to refocus curriculum content, planning, delivery and enhancement within the learner experience, providing a clear line of sight into work.



Project aims

- Strengthening the collaboration between Gateshead College and four employers making different contributions to the digital sector.
- Improving curriculum design and delivery to provide a clear line of sight to work with learners.
- Supporting teaching staff in updating their industry knowledge.
- Enhancing learner induction through employer-led networking events.

Project description

Gateshead College worked in collaboration with Enigma Interactive, DevAcademy, Nutshell Apps and Hedgehog Labs, and four local SMEs in the digital technology sector, to re-align its curriculum to the latest industry techniques and create a programme that supports learners to progress into employment. Employer staff from each business collaborated with the college to review the information technology course, updating each unit with the latest standards, and supporting staff to teach in a way more suited to industry practice.

The partnership ensured that learners were exposed to a variety of industry practice and business needs, increasing their opportunities for employment. Each employer had an opportunity to shape learning according to their business needs and gain access to a share in the future workforce.

Teaching staff from the college also spent time with their occupational partners in the workplace. This, provided additional insight into current practice and allowed them to further develop their pedagogy.

There were 35 learners who participated in the project up to 31 August 2017. It is expected that this will grow to over 100 in the year from September 2017. The project involved seven teaching staff from the college. An additional 10 opportunities will arise in 2017/18. Four employers were initially involved and approximately 10 further employers will participate from September 2017.

Positive impacts

- Teachers gained a detailed understanding of current industry resources, standards and expectations. This included the implications of the rapidly moving nature of the digital and computing sectors as well as an appreciation of the need for transferable skills.
- Employers gained coaching and mentoring skills through working



Anyone can get a qualification. What matters is what sets them apart, and it's normally their life experience, their experience in a work placement that counts.

MARC DU LAUNAY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
ARCUS ANIMATION STUDIOS



The digital industry is fast-paced, and ever evolving with new technologies, software, applications, and frameworks. How we work has to be of a very dynamic nature and this needs to be mirrored in the curriculum.

KATHRYN WATSON
DIGITAL PROGRAMME
MANAGER
ENIGMA INTERACTIVE



with teachers and learners with differing abilities.

- Employer-led briefs and inputs improved learner retention and led to the achievement of higher grades. The use of live projects incorporated agile methodologies, which is regular practice in the software industry.
- Using the Teach Too principles took employer engagement to new levels. This included coordination of work and event calendars to incorporate enhancement activities.
- The understanding of the local sector and business requirements was enhanced. This included the enhanced potential for local employment opportunities for learners.
- Industry members have undertaken work shadowing opportunities in the classroom. This has led to further considerations being given to methodologies and pedagogies including the implications of awarding body requirements. One employer is now teaching on college courses.
- Employers are being offered a better pool of talent for the future.

Key learning points and recommendations for developing employer partnerships

- Keep an open mind and explore ideas. For example, employers participated in panels that allowed learners to 'pitch' their project solutions to them in real world settings.
- Agree how success is measured and celebrate that success. Opportunities to participate in live projects were a key part of this success and allowed for stretch and challenge for learners. Success was centred on the shared understanding to secure high-quality teaching and learning with an impact on learner outcomes.
- It is not a given that employers have prior knowledge of the education sector and/or curriculum. The curriculum may not be keeping pace with the rapidly changing needs of the sector.
- Look to the future and the sustainability of the initiative.

Recommendations for developing Teach Too partnerships

- Ensure that there is buy-in from all parties and there is an ambition to influence change. Engagement at senior levels in all partners is important. The involvement of more than one member of staff in partner organisations is also crucial.
- Communication is very important. Encouraging engagement between employers, learners and teaching staff to form a



The difference between what is taught, and what skills and competencies are required for the job at times has been quite vast.

Can we create an effective collaborative engagement tool that enhances teaching strategy and practice, and provides continued support from employers?

KATHRYN WATSON
DIGITAL PROGRAMME
MANAGER
ENIGMA INTERACTIVE



Don't underestimate the size of the challenge in making Teach Too partnerships work, including the time required – don't ever give up

JOANNE MILLS
LEAD PRACTITIONER
GATESHEAD COLLEGE



collaborative digital environment is the biggest challenge.

- Remember that you are working towards a common goal. In this case the employer time commitment was significant; however, there was an understanding that they were contributing to the success of the industry.

Links and contact details

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 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLG4oR1dRRo&t=2s>

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