

Case Study: Implementing WorkSkills

The Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership

'Passport to Employability' project

Original rationale

WorkSkills has been introduced in line with the national priority to up-skill the British workforce, and a local priority, in Tower Hamlets, to bridge the gap between the large number of skilled jobs in the Borough (particularly in Canary Wharf) and the very high youth unemployment rates in the area.

What is the Passport to Employability Project?

The Passport to Employability project has been introduced to formalise and grow the employability programme already in place in the area. The programme has been designed to help secondary school students in Tower Hamlets to gain the necessary soft skills in order to compete successfully for jobs in the City and Docklands. Passport to Employability is a Borough-wide initiative that has arisen from a partnership between the London Borough of Tower Hamlets 14 to 19 Education Improvement Partnership, and the Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership.

The critical features of the project include:

- Individual assessment of pupils at the start of the programme, to inform their choice and track their progress
- A menu of development activities to meet personal needs - mapped to a set of learning outcomes under 4 different strands: *Personal Effectiveness, Understanding the Work Environment, Understanding the Sector Environment, Self Presentation*
- A national qualification to recognise progress and development of employability skills

Passport to Employability provides classroom activities and work-related skills workshops to prepare young people for the workplace. Many of the sessions are run by business and industry volunteers who help young people understand what it takes to succeed in the workplace.



The delivery model

The model supports schools in achieving the *BTEC Certificate in WorkSkills* (13 credits) by looking at what they are currently delivering as part of the alternative curriculum (PSHE, citizenship, work experience etc) and cross referencing this with the WorkSkills units.

- The Tower Hamlets Education Business Partnership has core activities that all schools complete, including; *Getting Ahead* (Employability workshops), *Head to Head* (interview practice) as well as standard work experience programmes.
- The WorkSkills units are run alongside these existing programmes giving the learners the opportunity to get recognition for their achievements with the Level 2 WorkSkills qualification.
- The successful implementation of the WorkSkills qualifications owes much to the close working relationship between the schools' WorkSkills Programme Leader and the Passport to Employability Project Manager.

How do the students benefit from this project?

- Opportunity to develop the vital soft skills that employers are looking for
- Recognition of valuable skills and work experience with a BTEC qualification
- Opportunity to gain an additional GCSE (Level 2 Certificate in WorkSkills)
- Access to 'mentors' from industry and business these relationships often lead to successful work placement opportunities

Outcomes to date

- Eight schools/centres have signed up to the WorkSkills programme to date
- Development of a teacher toolkit to support delivery
- Up-skilling Tower Hamlets' teachers on the successful delivery of employability skills
- Developing employability soft skills for young people in the Borough
- 824 students from Tower Hamlets' schools are registered on the programme
- Working in partnership with key local and national businesses to deliver valuable and meaningful courses

Feedback from learners

Year 10 student, Sarah Chipperfield, from George Green School in Tower Hamlets said:

"Ever since I was little, I have always wanted to become a teacher but now I've seen this, I'm actually quite interested in the Army. They've told me you can do any job you like in the Army except for childcare, hair and beauty and politics."

Advice and contacts

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