

Time Well Spent

Title	Time Well Spent
Coverage	United Kingdom
Organization/enterprise	Confederation of British Industry (CBI)
Topic	Work experience
Target group and outreach	Employers, schools and students aged 14 to19
Purpose	The aim of this report was to gather evidence that would help employers provide young people with meaningful work experience placements. This report aims at helping employers and students to improve the impact of employability training during the work placement.
Key features	<p>(1) Includes suggestions for employers on how to build employability development into work experience programmes</p> <p>(2) Includes a checklist that students can use to identify competencies that might be important at work, to keep a record of tasks undertaken during a work experience programme and to rate their own abilities</p>
Strategy and approach	<p>Developing employability should be central to the design and content of all work experience practices.</p> <p>The CBI defines employability as “a set of attributes, skills and knowledge that all labour market participants should possess to ensure they have the capability of being effective in the workplace – to the benefit of themselves, their employer and the wider economy.”</p> <p>About 95 per cent of students undertake work experience placements. Some of them are disenchanted with formal education, so engaging in work provides them with a chance to make a connection between the skills they can acquire at school and the competencies needed at work.</p> <p>The research report outlines competencies that make someone employable and ideas for employers on how to develop employability during work experience.</p> <p>A positive attitude is the key foundation of employability. This can be summed up as a ‘can do’ approach, a readiness to take part and contribute, openness to new ideas and a drive to make those ideas happen. An attitude of this kind is crucial to the success of the following seven-point framework for employability:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Self-management – readiness to accept responsibility, flexibility, resilience, self-starting, appropriate assertiveness, time management, readiness to improve own performance based on feedback/reflective learning 2. Team working – respecting others, cooperating, negotiating/persuading, contributing to discussions, awareness of interdependence with others 3. Business and customer awareness – basic understanding of the key drivers for business success – including the importance of innovation and taking calculated risks – and the need to provide customer satisfaction and build customer loyalty 4. Problem solving – analysing facts and circumstances and

	<p>applying creative thinking to develop appropriate solutions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Communication and literacy – application of literacy, ability to produce clear, structured written work and oral literacy, including listening and questioning 6. Application of numeracy – manipulation of numbers, general mathematical awareness and its application in practical contexts (e.g. measuring, weighing, estimating and applying formulae) 7. Application of information technology – basic IT skills, including familiarity with word processing, spreadsheets, file management and use of internet search engines <p>Extensive research among employers was carried out. The results give some ideas on how employers can build the development of employability into work experience programmes. Work experience has a great role to play in raising young people’s aspirations but students must be shown the link between what they learn in the classroom and how it can be applied in the world of work. For the high achievers, this will help hone the skills needed to land the jobs they want. And for the disengaged, there is a chance they will go back to the classroom with a bit more interest and enthusiasm.</p> <p>The report includes a checklist that students can use to think about how competencies might be important at work, to keep a record of tasks undertaken during work experience, and ultimately to rate their own abilities. The aim is to help the students identify priority areas for self-development.</p> <p>Finally, the report highlights good practice examples with 12 detailed case studies from British companies.</p>
Partners	CBI and member companies
Major achievements	<p>The report was published in March 2007; the impact will have to be analysed at a later stage.</p> <p>However, the research in the report already points to some interesting findings. Students interviewed remarked that generally they did not mind doing menial tasks as long as these were mixed with more interesting work as well, and as long as someone explained how the tasks fitted into the greater whole.</p> <p>The research also shows that the vast majority of employers engage in work experience programmes with schools in order to enhance their company’s reputation in the community and also to advertise opportunities available in the sector. Work experience also offers an excellent opportunity to develop existing staff by giving them experience of mentoring a student or of organizing the work experience programme.</p> <p>The report also identifies findings that may be relevant to raising the quality of work experience: 40 per cent of employers and students said that regular feedback was not a feature of their placements. Less than two in five employers (and students) had goals/objectives for their placements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 per cent of employers said that they did not hold an exit/leaving interview (90 per cent of students reported that they had no exit interview) • Over 70 per cent of students had discussions about the skills needed for a particular task, at least to some extent, but many had few discussions or none

Additional information	CBI. 2005. <i>Companies and Classrooms</i> . 12 pages (PDF).
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