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Work-related learning and enterprise education: Wembley High Technology College

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Brief description

Wembley High demonstrates how developing and accrediting work-related learning and employability skills across the curriculum from Year 7 to Year 13 increases students' confidence, enhances their learning and supports their high achievement.

Overview – the school's message



'Wembley High Technology School has always provided work-related learning, but we realised that it was not as well coordinated as it should have been, and there were no tangible outcomes for the students. We therefore decided to make enterprise and employability skills a foundation of learning and use accreditation to give every student a sense of achievement at an early stage and then throughout their time with us. This was relatively easy because, when you get down to it, every curriculum subject can be linked to practical everyday and work-related skills and settings. As a result, all students, including those in the sixth form, increase their knowledge, skills and confidence in enterprise and financial capabilities and gain a qualification, at an appropriate level, to prove it to themselves and to future employers.

My advice to other schools would be to take time to map out the work-related provision in all areas including pastoral, vocational and subject areas. Have a strong strategic overview with respect to the curriculum, staffing, budget and outcomes.

We will continue to give work-related learning a high priority as it gives the school an additional dimension to its work. Students and staff are proud of what is achieved and students value highly the outcomes which support their future development.'

Gill Bal, Headteacher

The good practice in detail

The school sees work-related learning and the development of employability skills as entitlements for all students. It ensures that all staff are involved, so that every curriculum area provides opportunities for students to develop related skills, and demonstrates and celebrates achievement. This is supplemented by a programme of assemblies, tutor periods and extra-curricular activities and underpinned by an overarching work-related learning policy, important elements of which are indicated below:

1. How learning is related to the world of work

Provision for all students includes opportunities and activities that will allow them to:

- relate their own abilities and achievement to career intentions, making informed choices about a complete and balanced understanding of available options
- recognise, develop and apply their skills for enterprise and employability
- develop their awareness of the extent and diversity of opportunities in learning and work
- use their experiences of work to extend their understanding of careers and work
- learn from contact with people from the world of work
- learn about how and why businesses operate
- learn about working practices and environments
- undertake tasks and activities set in work contexts
- engage with ideas, challenges and applications from the business world.

2. Mapping work-related learning and employability skills into the curriculum

Mapping work-related learning and employability skills into the curriculum involves identifying how each curriculum area (such as, [ICT](#), [mathematics](#), [wider key skills](#), [pastoral time](#)) contributes to specific work-related themes including enterprise capability and financial capability.

The school's advice to others who want to map work-related learning across the curriculum is:

- start small – select core subjects first or perhaps pastoral time
- ensure that the mapping covers all key stages, so that the entitlement is implemented across the school

‘Our students need these employability skills to support their academic studies; we have never seen them as just an “add-on”.’

Alison Hathi

Deputy Headteacher

- focus on knowledge, skills and the practical application of work-related learning
- select activities that are not contrived, but fit in with each subject naturally
- ensure learning and assessment activities are purposeful to students, so that they recognise how the learning contributes to their wider development and not just to achieve a qualification
- select activities and contexts that are motivating for the staff as well as the students and include interesting resources
- invest in development time to ensure that each activity is planned well, including an assessment or plenary with the students to evaluate their learning and the effectiveness of the activity
- provide training for staff and opportunities to build on their own ideas and expertise
- ensure that all staff have training about awarding body processes and requirements.

3. Providing national recognition through external accreditation



Learn to Earn: Year 8 students engaged in tasks relating to recruitment, job interviews, financial planning and budgeting.

A significant aspect of the school's philosophy is that every student should achieve early on. External accreditation provides national recognition of their achievement. Assessment and accreditation are therefore integrated systematically into the mapping process.

The range of accredited courses, to develop work-related learning and employability skills for all students in each year group, is extensive and includes:

- Year 7 ASDAN module: Working with others
- Year 8 ASDAN module: Problem solving
- Year 9 OCR National Short Course Award in ICT (Level 2), much of which is business-related
- Year 10 (as Year 9) OCR ICT plus ASDAN modules that contribute to the Certificate in Personal Effectiveness (Level 2)
- Year 11 GCSE Citizenship, which includes elements of economic and business understanding
- Year 12 ASDAN Wider Skills modules at Level 3; some do Edexcel Award in Money and Finance (Level 2); and all of this provision comes under the sixth form's personal development programme.

The links below show how the school uses the OCR National Short Course Award in ICT at Level 2. This module builds on the other accreditation relating to employability skills described above. In



Year 7 pupils planning their 'Working With Others' project for Enterprise Week

addition, it supports learning in health and safety at work, time management and working to deadlines, all of which can be applied to other areas at a later stage in students' development.

- [Scheme of work Module 1: ICT in Business Student Handbook extract](#)
- [Extract of example of a student's work](#)
- [Example of student tracking sheet](#)
- [Example of feedback to students through the school's Virtual Learning Environment](#)

4. Extra-curricular activities



Charity stall: Year 7 pupils demonstrating their enterprise initiative as part of 'Working With Others'

A wide variety of extra-curricular activities provides the students with excellent opportunities to develop their skills in very different and challenging contexts and to increase their confidence in working with different people and in new situations.

The school has established strong relationships with local businesses. A wide range of trips and visits are arranged to ensure that students have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and a greater understanding of the working world.

Recent extra-curricular activities that the school has arranged with external agencies and businesses include:

- Key Stage 3 - Business competition: 'Musical Futures' involved a group of Year 9 students forming their own music company, including identifying roles and responsibilities; students worked with Brent Music Service to compete with other musicians on the scheme.
- Sixth form - Volunteer Programme with Young Enterprise: Thirty sixth-form students worked with 180 students from feeder primary schools on a wide range of topics; they undertook a preparation training course.
- Key Stages 3 and 4 - BP Enterprise Trading Challenge: A work-related learning game that offers students the opportunity to put enterprise, maths and business skills into action through a simulated trading game. They develop their understanding of trading through participation in tasks, buying and selling commodities.

5. So how do the students benefit?

Students from across the year groups identified the following work-related and employability skills that they

‘Having the opportunity to gain so many certificates broadens our horizons and gets us thinking about what we can do outside the school.’

Year 10 student

have developed through their subject learning, pastoral time and extra-curricular activities:

- team working
- problem solving
- organisation; from themselves, their time and their money to individual projects, activities, subject tasks and coursework
- reflecting on what they read and using the information – ‘instead of just copying things down’
- extending their vocabulary and their understanding of business-related concepts
- making presentations attractive to watch, easy to listen to, motivating and informative
- improving communication skills, especially when dealing with students from different year groups, senior members of staff, visitors to the schools and all the people they meet on external activities.

‘The school has operated a flexible personalised curriculum for over eight years; students work towards a qualification when it is right for them and not just when it suits us.’

Gill Bal, Headteacher

One student summarised: ‘We are prepared for work experience very well and the work we do in companies is real work. It gives us such a good chance to practise all the skills we have learnt throughout the school.’

The school’s background

Wembley High Technology School is in the London Borough of Brent, North London. It is a much larger than average secondary school, with approximately 1400 students. Almost 95% of students are of minority ethnic heritage, with no single predominant group and just under 5% of students are at the early stages of English language acquisition. The school has technology specialist status and it is a training school for teachers.

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We’d welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch [here](#).

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