

# connect learning gazette

Issue nine | July 2009

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*An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.*  
**Benjamin Franklin**

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Welcome to the ninth edition of Connect Learning Gazette – learning and development resource dedicated to Union Learning Reps.

As you know, the June edition was the last edition to be prepared by Sasha. This edition is the first that will be prepared by Kacie. We hope you will find this issue just as exciting as previous ones. Please remember that from now on, if you come across any interesting snippets of information that you would like to pass on to the others, or have any feedback please e-mail Kacie Ashford [kacie@connectuk.org](mailto:kacie@connectuk.org)

## What's New?

### **Barriers and motivations to skills development report published**

Employee Demand for Skills: A review of Evidence & Policy gathers evidence from research on what encourages and prevents individuals from developing their skills, and identifying the most effective skill development policies. The report has been published by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES).

This report incorporates a broad range of formal and informal learning activities, delivered in a range of institutional settings and through different media, including work-based, classroom based, distance learning and community based learning. A key focus for the research was the barriers and factors affecting access to skills development opportunities among lower skilled and lower qualified people. The role of the Union Learning Reps is recognised as a positive factor in engaging people in skills development in the workplace. Interestingly, also line managers' role was deemed crucial in lowering the barriers to learning.

A copy of the report can be downloaded from <http://www.ukces.org.uk/tags/employee-demand-for-skills-a-review-of-evidence-and-policy> or for a hard copy please email [communications@ukces.org.uk](mailto:communications@ukces.org.uk) and provide a full postal address.

### **Adult Participation in Learning**

The proportion of adults currently engaged in learning is at its lowest level since the Labour Government was elected in 1997. This is one of the key messages from the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education's (NIACE) latest survey of adult participation in learning, which covers the UK with a weighted sample of just under 5,000. The findings, which are reported in a recent edition of *Adults Learning*, show a growing learning gap between educational haves and have-nots as those who already have qualifications are more likely to be engaged in learning than those who

do not. The article notes some positive findings of the survey with adult participation in learning not in decline and an increase in the number of people gaining their first level 2 or level 3 qualifications.

However, the widening learning divide is evident not just in terms of previously held qualifications but also between the employed and unemployed and the young and the old. People in work are more likely to report current or recent participation in learning than those not in paid employment and 21-24 year-olds are twice as likely as 55-64 year-olds to take part in learning. The survey also showed that there has been a decline in adult learning since 2000 (with a slight upturn in 2008) in spite of



evidence from the National Employer Skills Surveys in England that employers are spending more money on training. It is suggested that this means that more money is being spent on fewer people. Furthermore, the article states that public investment in learning (particularly in England) has shifted from courses for all comers to those targeted at workers lacking formal qualifications.

For more go to: <http://www.niace.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/publications/AL-May09-sample-article.pdf>

### **Government boosts support for e-learning**

The Open University is to receive an extra £12 million in funding to develop its role as a national leader in distance learning, the Prime Minister has said. This week the Government announced a £20 million Open Learning Innovation fund to promote creative online learning, and a taskforce of experts to examine how to expand e-learning and access to online course materials.

For more see: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page19776>

### **Train to Gain's value for money questioned**

A report published on 21 July 2009 by the NAO (Train to Gain: Developing the skills of the workforce) suggests that the government's £1.47 billion flagship scheme to change the culture of learning at work is not providing value for money.

To find out more go to: <http://www.niace.org.uk/train-to-gain%E2%80%99s-value-for-money-questioned>. To view the *Train to Gain: Developing the skills of the workforce* report, go to: [http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/train\\_to\\_gain.aspx](http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0809/train_to_gain.aspx)

## **On the Couch with e-skills UK**

### **e-skills UK rated 'outstanding' in re-licensing assessment**

Lord Mandelson announced today that e skills UK will be re-licensed, following the recent review of all Sector Skills Councils by the National Audit Office.

e-skills UK was rated as 'outstanding', reflecting the high regard in which it is held by employers, educators and government. We believe that it is of particular importance that our sector has the strongest possible Sector Skills Council, given the central role of the digital industries in driving the UK out of recession and in underpinning competitiveness in every industry. We are delighted that our work has been recognised in this way, and thank the many partners who work with us to make sure the UK has the technology skills it needs.

The re-licensing review noted the impact e-skills UK has achieved, highlighting in particular our breadth and depth of employer involvement; strategic vision; excellence in research; innovation in

standards and qualifications; and the pioneering programmes we lead to address the most important IT skills issues facing the UK.

We will continue to build on our work to date, working with our partners in industry, education and government to ensure the UK has the technology skills it needs to compete in the global economy.

The review of e-skills UK was conducted on behalf of the Commission for Employment and Skills. The full press release and the National Audit Office report are available at [www.e-skills.com/naoreport](http://www.e-skills.com/naoreport).

### **Success for the ICT sector at the National Apprenticeship Awards**

The ICT sector had a successful night at this year's National Apprenticeship Awards, with BT being named the first ever Macro Employer of the Year at last night's ceremony in London.

This is the second time BT has won an employer apprenticeship award, having been named Large Employer of the Year 2007.

Dave Walsh, Head of Apprenticeships at BT said: "We really believe in Apprenticeships and take our programme above and beyond the basic requirements. We are constantly increasing the types of Apprenticeships on offer and activities available to our apprentices, as we recognise the true value of the programme to our business."

For more information on IT & Telecoms Apprenticeships, go to [www.e-skills.com/apprenticeships](http://www.e-skills.com/apprenticeships).

For further details on the 2009 National Apprenticeship Awards, visit [www.apprenticeships.gov.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.gov.uk).

## **Dates for the Diary**

Connect Union Learning Reps have an opportunity to join an Asking Coaching Type Questions training day to boost their professional development in the ULR role. This event will be taking place on 18 September 2009, 9:00 – 16:30.

For more information please email [Kirsi.kekki@connectuk.org](mailto:Kirsi.kekki@connectuk.org). To request a booking form, please email [kacie.ashford@connectuk.org](mailto:kacie.ashford@connectuk.org).

**Course title:** Effective speaking in groups

**Training provider:** City lit

**Course date/s:** 07 May 2010

**Course cost:** £49.00

**Course summary:**

This course is about providing you with a model for speaking more confidently to groups and to give you the opportunity to practise speaking to groups. It is ideal if you want to develop your confidence speaking in a range of situations including presentations, meetings and interviews.

The course will be held in London. To find out more go to:

[http://www.citylit.ac.uk/courses/Speech\\_therapy/Workshops\\_for\\_people\\_who\\_stammer/Effective\\_speaking\\_in\\_groups/XS204](http://www.citylit.ac.uk/courses/Speech_therapy/Workshops_for_people_who_stammer/Effective_speaking_in_groups/XS204)

**Course title:** Sculpture – Origami in metal

**Training provider:** City lit

**Course date/s:** 29 November 2009

**Course cost:** £56.00

**Course summary:**



Learn origami techniques by practising with paper and then select or create a design to make in sheet metal. The course will be held in London. To find out more go to:

[http://www.citylit.ac.uk/courses/Visual\\_arts/Sculpture/Sculpture:\\_origami\\_in\\_metal/VU826](http://www.citylit.ac.uk/courses/Visual_arts/Sculpture/Sculpture:_origami_in_metal/VU826)

## Money to Learn

### **Professional and Career Development Loans – Investing in your future**

A Professional and Career Development Loan is a deferred repayment bank loan set at a competitive fixed interest rate that can be used to support learning that improves your career and salary prospects – whether it's to protect your current career in times of job insecurity, to gain a qualification to improve your longer term career prospects or re-skilling to start a new career.

You can borrow any amount between £300 and £10,000 from a participating bank and use it to fund the course of your choice. Like any loan, you need to repay the money you borrow, but with a Professional and Career Development Loan, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) will pay the interest on the loan while you are learning and for up to one month afterwards.

To find out more, go to: <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/initiatives/learn-2955-f0.cfm>

## Beyond Learning

### **Understanding the Brain Drain**

The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has published a report that analyses the issue of highly skilled people migrating abroad and thus impeding their home country's development. It examines the findings of surveys from various countries in order to develop a typology of factors that drive this so-called 'brain drain'. Five categories of common factors to different groups of skilled migrants are presented:

- Wage differentials between countries.
- Employment opportunities.
- Professional development.
- Social and professional networks.
- Difficult socio-economic and political conditions.

The study also considers how people decide whether or not to return to their home country, stating that substantial changes at home are often necessary to entice people back. Finally, implications for policy makers are considered. It advises that countries seek to retain or encourage the return of their highly skilled workers by offering more professional development such as training or mentoring. Furthermore, it is suggested that governments could encourage potential migrants to stay by stressing the positive role they could play in their countries' development and the social costs of a skills shortage.

Full details here: <http://www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=666>

### **Well-being and Happiness thematic report from NIACE**

The mindless pursuit of growth will not continue, and the choice is between different ways of judging the value and desirability of a range of policies and lifestyle choices. The question then is whether we can imagine a system for lifelong learning that sees well-being not as an incidental (if desirable) by-product, but instead situates well-being as one of its core goals and values.

View more online at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/IFLL-wellbeing.pdf>

### **Discover your true potential**

Get an insight into how you appear from the other side of the employment interview table by looking at the profiles for your subject area.

<http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/advice/learn-2957-f0.cfm>

### **Job of a lifetime on offer to lead a rural revival**

The search is on for individuals with the skills and passion to help transform rural Britain. Six 'champions' are required to work with a village to drive a successful and sustainable business venture. The biggest barrier to starting up a business is access to finance, but with the Village SOS project Village Champions are paid a salary of £30,000 and the business will be given up to £400,000 funding to get the idea off the ground.

Village SOS is an exciting new initiative from the Big Lottery Fund (BIG), the BBC and Make Your Mark. It is searching for six UK villages with a great business idea and six enterprising individuals to act as Village Champions and help them achieve their ambitions.

Together they will create a brand new venture that will bring new life and energy to the village with funding of between £100,000 and £400,000 from BIG.

The journey of the six successful villages and their Village Champions will be filmed for a major prime time BBC One series in winter 2010.

As part of the **Village SOS** initiative, candidates will live for a year in the village they are striving to revitalise. Candidates with a track record of running any kind of business or project are encouraged to apply.

The deadline for all applications is 12 noon, 14 August. Further information can be found at: [www.makeyourmark.org.uk/villagesos](http://www.makeyourmark.org.uk/villagesos) or [www.bbc.co.uk/villagesos](http://www.bbc.co.uk/villagesos).

