
Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.
William Butler Yeats

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

As always we value your feedback. If you do have any feedback and/or you come across any interesting information that you would like to pass on, please email kacie.ashford@connectuk.org.

What's New?

Festival of learning

Informal adult learning will be a major focus of attention in October when the national Festival of Learning gets underway. All kinds of organisations, from colleges, libraries and local employers to reading groups, sports clubs and community organisations, will host a multitude of informal activities like story telling, local history slide shows, health checks, cookery demonstrations and sports taster sessions. Others will open up their rooms, halls, or IT suites so that groups of people can get together to share their skills and learn new things.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is supporting a wide range of organisations to come up with creative ideas that will make October a really exciting month. It's also funding a promotional programme, including a festival pack, festival website and enquiry line, which will be available in the coming weeks to help organisations promote their activity. The Festival provides a unique platform for collaboration between the public, community and business sectors and marks another leap forward for the informal learning movement sparked by the Government's Learning Revolution White Paper.



Further details about the Festival will follow and to find out more about other Learning Revolution developments, go to www.dius.gov.uk/informaladultlearning.

Leaders in Learning Publication

Leaders in Learning is a new unionlearn publication setting out how management and union learning partnerships can pay major dividends to businesses and organisations, not only by improving shop floor morale but by directly boosting the bottom line.

Leaders in Learning also contains ten case studies of a wide variety of organisations who have developed successful workplace learning partnerships, including Boots Logistics, Fletchers Bakery, JCB, BVT Surface Fleet and the Crown Prosecution Service.

The publication contains important endorsements by employers on working with trade unions. It also features interviews with TUC Deputy General Secretary, Frances O'Grady, and outgoing unionlearn Director, Liz Smith, that underpin the union commitment to cooperating with employers on skills.



This publication will be of interest to all trade unionists as well as employers and union partners and stakeholders. Every Member of Parliament has already received a copy. Copies for distribution are free and can be ordered through:

www.unionlearn.org.uk/leaders.

Benefits of further education to employment and future prospects

This Government study shows that most college learners believe their course played an important role in getting a job.

Go online to see the report: <http://www.wired-gov.net/wg/wg-news-1.nsf/lfi/405784>.

Making skills matter: The 2008-09 Annual Report from the LSC

This report reviews LSC's work and progress and also addresses some of the more controversial occurrences through the year. There's a foreword from the new Chief Executive, Geoff Russell.

Visit: <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/news/latestnews/news-22-7-09.htm> for more.

Funding lifelong learning: a working paper

This working paper is designed to stimulate discussion and to help the Inquiry to clarify the policy options on this. It has been produced following an expert seminar and discussion with key informants.

To view the paper, go online:

<http://www.niace.org.uk/lifelonglearninginquiry/docs/funding-lifelong-learning.pdf>

Using e-learning to support management training

The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) has introduced a new programme delivery method for management qualifications.

Find out how this prompted Cardiff City Council to re-think the delivery of its ILM Level 3 qualification in management to its students.

Visit: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelD=11309358>

Employers' Higher Level Skills Needs in England

Policy Analysts CFE (formerly the Centre for Enterprise) have published findings of research that examined the extent and nature of demand for higher level skills training in three English regions. Over 1300 businesses were surveyed in the East and West Midlands and Yorkshire and the Humber and CFE's report compares findings for the three regions and draws out key lessons to inform higher education (HE) providers' employer engagement strategies.

Findings are presented in terms of the businesses that have undertaken higher levels skills training (33 per cent) in the previous 12 months and those that have not (67 per cent). These include:

- The more employees a business has, the more likely it is to undertake higher level skills training.
- There is greater demand for professional qualifications than there is for academic or vocational qualifications.
- Choosing a training provider is increasingly being influenced by the issue of cost.
- While higher level skills training is considered to have a positive impact on most businesses, it is considered to be most effective when it is part of an organisation's wider business strategy.
- Those businesses that choose not to undertake higher level skills training usually do so in the absence of a clear business case to invest.
- Perceptions of the HE sector are often outdated and sometimes there is only superficial awareness of the services a university can offer.

The key lessons that are offered for HE providers include investing in market research; ensuring delivery is responsive to the needs of employers; focussing on the professional and vocational training markets; and accepting that not all businesses will invest in higher level skills.

For more go to: <http://www.cfe.org.uk/page.php?p=225>.

Number Crunching

Latest e-skills Bulletin shows impact of recession on IT and Telecoms labour market

e-skills UK has published the latest issue of the e-skills Bulletin, the definitive source of information about changes in the demand/supply of ICT labour and skills in the UK.



The Bulletin shows that the first quarter of 2009 was a challenging time for ICT employers, but even more so for individuals seeking ICT positions. Overall however, employment levels in the ICT sector remained at a historically high level and unemployment levels for ICT professionals are still well below the UK average. Remuneration levels also remained well above the UK average, illustrating that although demand may be significantly down on previous years, ICT continues to be a desirable and well-rewarded occupation.

Key findings for Q1.09 include:

- Demand for IT/Telecoms staff continued to decline, with the number of advertisements for permanent and contract staff falling by 27% and 32% respectively over the quarter (to 72,000 and 15,000) – the largest decrease recorded for a year.
- There was increased demand for Web authors/editors, with vacancy numbers for all other occupational groups down on Q4.08.
- Unemployment rates for ICT staff – including ICT professionals – reached a five year high in Q4.08-Q1.09, increasing from 3.7% to 4.8% for all ICT staff, and from 2.4% to 3.4% for ICT professionals. This compares with an increase of 6.4% to 7.3% for the UK workforce as a whole.
- However, the number of ICT staff in employment was still 4% higher than the equivalent quarter of 2008, and compares well against a 1% fall for the UK workforce as a whole.
- Salaries for full-time ICT staff increased to £730 per week – an increase of around 1% on the previous quarter and 4% compared with the previous year. This compares to an annual increase of just 3% amongst UK workers more generally.
- Around 5% of ICT professionals received some form of bonus payment during Q1.09 compared to 3% of the workforce more generally.
- The incidence of education and training amongst ICT staff and ICT sector workers continued to fall relative to other occupations/sectors.

To enable us to continue providing the Bulletin as a free service and to help us to better understand your information requirements, please take time to answer our short 3-question survey at www.e-skills.com/bulletinsurvey.

To download the Bulletin and subscribe to future issues, go to www.e-skills.com/bulletin.

Beyond Learning

BBC's My Story project

The BBC will be launching My Story, a project designed to gather the nation's true stories and publish them online, in the coming weeks. My Story will be led by well-know BBC faces and is, at its heart, a storytelling and creative writing initiative.

People will be asked to tell a true, personal story and send it to the My Story website to share with others as a way of inspiring the nation to get reading and writing. The site, which goes live in early September, will feature videos and interactive tools to help people plan and structure their stories as well as providing tips on writing styles and skills.

Links will also be made to the raw project, the BBC's basic skills project.



The project will be launched in September on the One Show which will be followed by road shows in major cities, each complemented by activity from the BBC's regional network. A free My Story magazine will also be published to encourage people to write up their experiences.

For further information on this, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/raw/partners/tutors/mystory.shtml>.

Three quarters of the nation are planning a career change

Three quarters (74 per cent) of the population are planning to change their career, however one in four (25 per cent) suspect they never will as they are unsure about what they really want, the Careers Advice Service has revealed.

In research released earlier this month, 71 per cent think the best way to keep their career moving forward is through gaining a new qualification. Reasons for people wanting to change career include a desire to learn new things (60 per cent) and earn more money (47 per cent). One in three (36 per cent) claim that they are unsure of their career goals and aspirations.

For adults looking for advice on their jobs, the Learning and Skills Council is launching a travelling Careers Advice booth. The booth has Careers Advice Service and nextstep advisers on hand to help passers-by identify their career goals, get advice on training, help with finding out about funding options and ways to get started in a new career.

The travelling Careers Advice booth will be visiting a number of towns across England over the summer.

For more information go to:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/news/latestnews/THREE+QUARTERS+OF+THE+NATION+ARE+PLANNING+A+CAREER+CHANGE.htm>