L&W LEARNING AND WORK INSTITUTE

J.P.Morgan

Skills development on pre-apprenticeship programmes:
a provider resource

Introduction

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Skills development on pre-apprenticeship programmes: a provider resource

Pre-apprenticeship programmes aim to help young people aged 16-24 to develop the skills they need to progress to an apprenticeship. Some programmes are explicitly called 'pre-apprenticeships' whilst others have specific brand names. Such programmes typically prepare young people for apprenticeships by providing a combination of vocational training and hands-on experience, however, the components vary by individual programme.

Learning and Work Institute (L&W) is an independent policy and research organisation dedicated to lifelong learning, full employment, and inclusion.
With the support of J.P. Morgan, L&W is undertaking work to share best practice in ways in which organisations can design and deliver inclusive and high-quality pre-apprenticeship programmes that provide a pathway to apprenticeships for young people, across Europe and other parts of the world.

Labour markets across the world are constantly changing and young people need a wide range of skills in order to build sustainable, successful and rewarding careers. This resource has been developed for pre-apprenticeship providers who wish to develop and enhance their programme to ensure that young people are equipped with the key skills they need for an apprenticeship and their future career. This resource is divided into the following sections.

Contents

Overview

L&W's pre-apprenticeship resources for providers

This interactive resource is part of a wider suite of resources, produced by L&W, to enable pre-apprenticeship providers to review and improve the design and delivery of their programmes. The resources are designed to enable providers to gain insight into best practice, apply this to their own programmes and, ultimately, to improve outcomes for young people.

This resource complements the other resources by focussing in-depth on the four key skills outlined above. It can either be used as a step by step guide, or providers can select one or two sections of the resource, relevant to a particular aspect of their programme that they wish to improve or develop. Throughout the resource there are links to other information and our wider resources.

The full suite of resources, which include case studies, films, provider guides and 'top tips' can be found on our website.
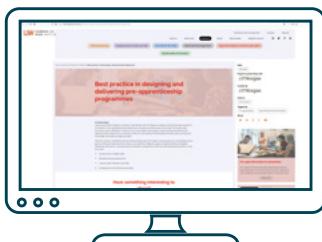
Each section of this resource includes:

• An overview of why opportunities to develop these skills are an important element of effective pre-apprenticeship programmes and how they contribute to successful outcomes.

• Case study examples from effective pre-apprenticeship programmes.

• Factors to consider when making decisions about how to build this skills development into a programme.

• Top Tips based on best practice.

The resource is accompanied by a set of case studies and films which demonstrate effective practice in specific aspects of the design and delivery of pre-apprenticeship programmes

• Read the case studies

• Read the key findings report

• Watch the short films

• Read the Top Tips

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Transversal skills are non-technical skills that are extremely valuable because they can be transferred to almost every industry, they are sometimes referred to as transferable skills or soft skills. Transversal skills are relevant to a broad range of occupations and sectors and are the building blocks for the development of the "hard" skills and competences required to succeed in the labour market.

Communication, team-working, problem solving, learning, planning and organisation skills are considered important by most employers. Transversal skills such as these typically have high transferability across different jobs and sectors.

Learn to learn is a concept closely linked to transversal skills, it involves supporting young people to develop the skills and qualities required to adapt to a constantly changing labour market. For some programmes, learn to learn is about helping young people to re-integrate into the learning environment, perhaps following negative experiences of compulsory education. Learn to learn is also about supporting young people to develop a 'growth mindset', the ability to reflect and the belief that they can learn and develop new skills.

This section of the resource offers advice and guidance to pre-apprenticeship providers about effective practice in supporting young people to deliver the key transversal and learn-to-learn skills needed for an apprenticeship and future employment.

Defining transversal skills for your pre-apprenticeship programme

The first stage in developing or enhancing how you support young people to develop good transversal skills is to define which specific skills you aim to develop, and why. One way to do this could be to undertake a scoping exercise to help build a comprehensive picture of what transversal skills your programme aims to develop amongst young people, identify how your programme currently achieves this and any gaps in your provision.

The types of questions you might want to consider include:

- What transversal skills do the target group need to develop to progress to an apprenticeship?

- What skills are hiring employers looking for?

- What skills are young people already developing as a result of the pre-apprenticeship?

Useful links

Whether you are approaching this for the first time, or are more experienced with the development of transversal skills on pre-apprenticeship programmes, it is a good idea to keep up to date. The following web pages contain useful, evidence based, information on frameworks for transversal skills and competencies.

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Initial and ongoing assessment of transversal skills

A key stage in your approach to transversal skills development is to undertake an assessment of young people's transversal skills. This could be done during the recruitment or induction stage of your pre-apprenticeship, for example.

Transversal skills can be more difficult to measure than "hard" or technical skills as they are more subjective and often occur through interactions.

You should consider ways to assess transversal skills development on an ongoing basis to measure young people's progress. When developing your assessment for transversal skills, you may wish to draw upon evidence-based outcome measures and frameworks.

The Assessment of Transversal Skills project (ATS2020) has developed a transversal skills framework, collating evidence based outcome and assessment measures for transversal skills. The resources are provided in multiple languages and can be tailored to different educational contexts.

In addition to using outcome-based measures, practical ways to assess young people's transversal skills include using individual portfolios, observation sheets and other specific methods such as feedback from local employers who are involved in transversal skills development.

TOP TIP

Be flexible: whichever skills you choose to focus on, you should always aim to adapt your model to respond to any changes, such as young people's needs, the local labour market, including any changes in the skills requirements of apprenticeship programmes you are targeting. This ensures that your programme remains relevant and effective.

CASE STUDY

Access to Apprenticeship, *TUD*

On the Access to Apprenticeship programme, weekly reflections are an important part of the programme in enabling young people to review their experience of different apprenticeship sectors, to look at the range of skills they have developed (both traversal and 'hard' skills) and to make plans for the subsequent week. This level of reflection also provides one way for young people to think about their preferred apprenticeship area.

Each participant records their reflections in a portfolio which is assessed again at the end of the programme. Weekly reflections are built into the programme to give young people a sense of the assessment and feedback processes in an apprenticeship. In Ireland, apprentices are continuously assessed using online portfolios throughout the course of their apprenticeship, rather than through formal testing

TOP TIP

Think about creative ways to measure transversal skills amongst young people on your pre-apprenticeship programme. For example, you could use activities where young people are encouraged to participate in teams or groups, such as contests for business plans. This approach will allow you to assess transversal skills across the team/group, as well as at the individual level.

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Delivery of transversal and learn to learn skills

Pre-apprenticeship programmes are very well placed to provide young people with opportunities to develop transversal and learn to learn skills. One of the main ways in which programmes do so is through experiential learning. This is where young people learn primarily through experience – the development of transversal and 'learn to learn' skills occurs through the feedback, reflection and learning that results from this experience.

Your programme should provide young people with opportunities to practice and apply transversal skills in everyday situations and in meaningful work-focussed contexts, so that they are able to see the value and the practical application of these skills.

Examine the different components of your programme and think about how and when you can build in natural opportunities for transversal skills development, such as team problem-solving activities, presentations, workshops and interactive classroom lessons. Such activities can be delivered as part of your regular content-based sessions and activities.

Effective practice in delivering transversal skills includes:

- Phased learning approaches.

- Embedding transversal skills.

- Project based learning approaches.

- Workplace learning.

CASE STUDY

Integration pre-apprenticeship, *Switzerland*

The Integration pre-apprenticeship in Switzerland is made up of four key stages with ongoing intensive support to advance language and communication skills alongside other learning. The programme can be designed to match any occupational field or sector in which companies need to recruit staff.

Once participants have completed the introductory module on working in Switzerland, they progress to stage two which is focused on providing participants with key transversal, social and personal skills to support their progression to an apprenticeship. Participants are supported to develop these skills in a way that is contextualised to their sector of interest and participate in classroom based and work-based training to develop these skills. For example, participants who are working towards an apprenticeship in the hospitality sector will engage in classroom-based learning focused on communication, teamwork and other transversal skills linked to the expectations of employers in the hospitality sector.

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Phased learning approaches

Most pre-apprenticeship programmes focus on developing young people's transversal and 'learn to learn' skills, as well as their technical or vocational skills, before they move on to work placements.

Taking a phased approach will enable young people on your pre-apprenticeship programme to learn "for work" by providing technical and transversal skills development before entering the workplace, and "from work" by providing them with the opportunity to build on these skills in the workplace.

By giving young people ample opportunities to learn new concepts and skills over time and through practice, you will support young people to grow in confidence and ensure that the learning of skills is authentic. This type of learning takes place over time, rather than at one discrete point in a programme.

Taking a phased approach to the delivery of your programme, combined with giving learners a sense of autonomy and control over the content, can be an effective way of allowing young people to integrate into the learning environment after a period of not being in education or employment. Providing opportunities for young people on your programme to choose subject areas that they are interested in, or work placement opportunities, will help to foster motivation.

TOP TIP

Transversal skills development should be a regular fixture of your programme, offering young people the opportunity to apply and develop their skills over time, ensuring continuous development so that they are as skilled as possible when they begin engaging with employers and applying for apprenticeships.

CASE STUDY

Second Chance School, Savoie, *France*

E2C73 use holistic information collected from an initial assessment to develop a learning and development plan for each young person, which ensures their time on the programme is tailored to their individual needs. This ensures that each young person can address their individual barriers to gaining an apprenticeship and entering the labour market, maximising the prospect of a successful outcome. There is a strong focus upon the importance of transversal skills and how these can be developed. By building in regular 'learn to learn' activities, this process is designed to be empowering for young people. This, in turn, enables them to develop a strong sense of commitment to the programme and confidence that they can succeed.

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Embedded delivery

Where possible you should combine, rather than separate, transversal skills development and other technical or employability skills development, as this helps young people to see the real-life value of these types of skills.

You could consider ways to take an 'integrative approach' to developing transversal skills, which incorporates elements of transversal skills into wider learning, instead of creating modules that are specific to transversal skills.

The benefit of taking this approach is highlighted by INVEST 2 below, who recognise that embedding transversal skills development within digital skills delivery ensures that participants understand the importance of developing these skills for successful progression to work.

TOP TIP

It is important that you discuss the value of transversal skills with young people, not only within an educational context but also within the changing world of work. Transversal skills learning can seem arbitrary to young people, so regardless of the methods you have in place, it will be really important to spend some time helping them to understand the significance of these skills.

CASE STUDY

In-Vest 2, *Ireland*

During the pilot programme, the first group of learners found the soft skills sessions challenging as they felt the delivery method was more rooted in therapeutic practices than a 'world of work' approach. Based on this feedback, for subsequent programmes soft skills, development was embedded within the ICT lessons so that they would be more contextualised for the tech sector environment. For example, the importance of effective communication with colleagues, if undertaking an IT support role.

The strong focus on soft skills and integration with ICT skills ensures that the learning of soft skills is contextualised, and participants understand the importance of developing these skills for successful progression into the workplace in a sector that they are keen to work in.

As part of your role as a provider, it is important that you help young people to understand the importance of transversal skills for the modern labour market. By creating a stronger awareness amongst young people of the importance of transversal skills, you will help them to understand the added value and pro-actively make use of the opportunities available to them.

Designing and delivering pre-apprenticeships

IN-VEST 2: Integrated Vocational Employability Skills Training Ireland

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Tomillo Foundation, *Spain*

During year two of the programme at Tomillo Foundation, young people develop the key professional skills needed for their chosen vocational subject. This phase is delivered using Project Based Learning, a method specifically designed to be engaging and effective at motivating the target group of young people. Young people work as part of a group to design and develop a team project relevant to their chosen subject. In computer science for example, young people could be tasked with designing a prototype that meets a certain objective, e.g. designing a household composter which helps to dispose of waste in an environmentally friendly manner.

You could think about existing opportunities to facilitate project-based learning in your organisation, to allow young people to develop meaningful professional and employability related skills for their chosen career. For example, you might set up a simulation that resembles that of a real-life office environment to give young people the opportunity to gain insight into different administrative job roles.

Project based learning

Project-based learning (PBL) amongst young people is an effective way of developing a range of transversal skills, including social skills, communication and teamwork. This is whereby young people on a pre-apprenticeship work together in small teams on an assigned problem or task.

Consider the different approaches to project-based learning that you can put in place. This will help to engage young people on your programme in solving relevant, real-world problems, building motivation and autonomy in the process.

On project-based learning, young people can work on a specific project over an extended period of time, which could last from a week up to a full semester/term – that engages them in solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. Each stage is carefully designed to facilitate the development of vital transversal skills. Young people can demonstrate their acquired knowledge and skills by either developing a product or a presentation for a real audience.

Young people on your pre-apprenticeship programme will engage best with project based learning that it is tailored to match a particular sector that your pre-apprenticeship is geared to, or it could be more specific to the interests that your learners have, such as high profile current affairs.

Visit the PBL Works website for detailed guidance and frameworks for delivering project based learning.

Example:

Young people on a pre-apprenticeship geared to the hospitality sector, are tasked with a group project. They need to work together as a team to design and test a brand-new vegetarian menu for a local restaurant in line with changing consumer trends, and environmental change campaigns. The first stage that young people go through is to define the roles and responsibilities of individual team members, e.g. one young person takes on the role of the project manager, another two young people are tasked with undertaking consumer research and another is responsible for creating and designing the menu. This stage alone encourages young people to think about their own transversal skills, interests, and strengths, and encourages the development of teamwork skills.

Transversal and learn to learn skills

TOP TIP

Tailor the content of project-based learning activities to meet the interests of individual young people where possible. This will help young people to develop their individual skills, as well as keep them engaged and motivated.

TOP TIP

Incorporate reflective practices by combining opportunities for young people to practice skills with opportunities to pause and reflect on their progress.

Reflection & Feedback

These case studies highlight how project-based learning methods help to promote the autonomy of young people as well as providing a way for them to develop the range of transversal skills needed for an apprenticeship, such as teamwork and decision making. These methods are particularly important in preparing young people to enter the work placement stage of a pre-apprenticeship.

Reflection and feedback are key to project-based learning and are important 'learn to learn' skills. You should aim to include a comprehensive process for this within your programme. For example, you could build in presentations or feedback sessions as part of the process, whereby the young people on your programme are encouraged to think about and discuss how they used their communication, teamwork and leadership skills throughout the project.

Feeding back experiences to peers is an effective way of enabling young people to reflect upon their learning. This is important in enabling them to think about their future development and to critically assess their experiences in an open and constructive way.

You may wish to develop a 'teach back' approach – for example, following a work placement, support participants to come back together and present their experiences and reflections to the group. Not only will this support the development of effective 'learn to learn' strategies, it will also enable participants to practise other important skills around planning and communication.

CASE STUDY

In-Vest 2, *Ireland*

he key focus of the INVEST-2 programme in Ireland, is the development of project management skills for the workplace. This includes planning, organising and identifying resources, alongside understanding one's own role in a team, leadership skills, communication and time management. These skills are developed through participation in a variety of individual and group projects.

During the project activities, tutors allow time for participants to discuss and identify solutions to any challenges they encounter, for example in communication between team members. Following the activity, young people are supported to present the project to other course participants. This helps to develop both technical skills, for example word processing and PowerPoint, which are part of the accredited ICT module, as well as building soft skills such as communication, initiative and teamworking.

The project-based approach allows tutors to tailor activities to the needs, skills and interests of individual participants. One learner for example, whose career goals included teaching IT and media skills, described how the tutor encouraged and supported her to design and deliver a session on coding skills to other participants and how this had boosted her self-belief.

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Work based learning

The work-based learning nature of all pre-apprenticeships mean that they are well placed to enable young people to develop key transversal skills. The young people on your pre-apprenticeship should not only engage with learning in the classroom, but they should be exposed to real-life work activities outside the classroom.

Work placements are not only an opportunity for young people on your pre-apprenticeship to develop technical skills, it's also a great opportunity for them to build their skills in communication, teamwork, timekeeping, personal presentation and other transversal skills.

You should ensure that workplace experiences are promoted and recognised as a way to help young people consolidate their transversal skills development. Consider briefing employers about the importance of providing clear feedback to young people about improvements in transversal skills. For example, this could be through one to one review meetings, or through informal 'on the job' feedback when a young person demonstrates good transversal skills, e.g. – good communication with a customer, showing initiative in solving a problem, or working well with other colleagues.

TOP TIP

Make sure that there are clear links between transversal skills learning in the classroom and learning that takes place in the work environment. You can do this by creating individual learning plans for young people and working with them to reflect upon what they have learnt.

CASE STUDY

Formare, Fundação Iochpe, *Latin America*

Fundação Iochpe work with each employer to design a Formare programme which is entirely focused on career entry and progression for young people. This ensures that each Formare unit meets the hiring needs of employers, and also guarantees that young people who participate in the programme have opportunities to start an apprenticeship or another role within the company.

The most distinctive feature of the delivery model at Formare is the full immersion of young people into the workplace. This has substantial benefits to both young people, participating companies and their employees. During the final phase of the programme, the technological base, young people put key transversal and technical competencies into practice through practical and project-based learning activities. Staff emphasise the value of young people putting their learning into practice, making mistakes and learning from these mistakes. For example, young people could be tasked with developing and presenting a financial plan for the company, receiving feedback from volunteer educators and peers, and learning from this feedback.

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Working with employers

It is important that you work with employers to review and plan the content of the work placement offer, to map out the transversal skills that they require and can support young people to develop. Employers have a key responsibility to support the development and recognition of transversal skills, and they should be encouraged to participate in conversations that shape the content of your programme as well as to support the development of young people.

Mentoring in the workplace can be particularly important in programmes which specifically target young people with specific barriers to employment, to help them to develop 'learn-to-learn' skills and overcome challenges. Consider the different ways you can work with young people who have had, for example, negative educational experiences, to address emotional barriers that might hamper their progress. For example, you may wish to use tutors as mentors to address issues that act as barriers to programme completion. Or you may decide to recruit specialist mentors, for example, people with experience in a specific sector or job role, or people from particular backgrounds who can identify with your learners and the challenges they face.

TOP TIP

It is a good idea to hold regular feedback meetings with employers and young people which focus on reviewing young people's progress during the work placement. These feedback sessions will not only be an opportunity for young people to gain feedback on their learning and skills development, it is an opportunity for you as a provider to gain insight to the skills that employers are looking for on an ongoing basis.

CASE STUDY

La Rueca, *Spain*

La Rueca work with a range of employers to offer work placements for their young people. A key employer partner, Rockbotik[1], provide integrated work placements in the form of training alongside work experience. Rockbotik undertake a personal interview before the placement starts to get to know the young person. When selecting participants, the company looks for the same skills and capabilities that they would be looking for when recruiting their own employees. In addition to feedback from the employer following the initial interview, the young person receives an assessment of their progress at the end of the work placement. The employer may also provide feedback early in the placement, where needed, to help the young person to improve in their role and ensure they make progress in the placement.

[1]   https://rockbotic.com

Transversal and learn to learn skills

Work-based learning can also be an opportunity for young people on your pre-apprenticeship to develop 'learn to learn' skills, by engaging in meaningful learning experiences that can increase their long-term aspirations. In practice, this could include providing young people with opportunities to undertake work placements at local charity organisations that they are passionate about, or to practice new skills in the community.

Factors to consider when planning your transversal skills provision

- How could you integrate transversal skills learning with other subjects or curriculum areas within the programme, e.g. employability, or sector specific training?

- How will you ensure that there are clear links between transversal skills learning in the classroom and learning that takes place in the work environment?

- How will you assess transversal skills amongst young people; and then use this information to track their progress and development in this area?

- How do you encourage learn-to-learn skills and qualities amongst young people, and how could you further develop this aspect of your provision?

CASE STUDY

Joblinge, *Germany*

In addition to the individual support provided by JOBLINGE staff, from week 2 each participant is matched with their own personal volunteer mentor. Mentors share their professional and life experience, acting as a role model and source of support to the young person for the duration of the pre-apprenticeship programme.

Mentors meet weekly with participants, providing encouragement as they progress through each stage of the programme. This helps to motivate young people, and reduce the chances of them dropping out, in the face of any challenges they encounter at home, in their wider lives or during an internship, for example. The mentor acts as confidant, coach and role model guiding the participant through the programme and helping to deal with any issues that arise. Having access to someone who cares and listens is often a new experience for the participants, and these personal relationships are crucial as they strive to understand and overcome their past struggles.

CASE STUDY

Tomillo Foundtion, *Spain*

Tomillo Foundation believe that a key factor in effective pre-apprenticeship training lies in providing young people with new experiences to expand their vision of the world around them. Young people are trained by a local company in methods to improve the energy efficiency of households in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. Once they have successfully completed year one of the programme, young people visit local households and teach residents ways in which to improve their household efficiency. This has benefits for both young people and the communities involved. Through this experience, young people are positively integrated with the local community, and importantly, have the chance to put into practice the soft skills they have developed over the course of the pre-apprenticeship, such as communication, interpersonal skills, empathy and teamwork.

Basic skills

Initial and ongoing assessment of basic skills

To understand the skills levels and capabilities of young people on your programme you should ensure that there are robust systems in place to accurately assess levels of literacy and numeracy on programme entry.

Delivery of basic skills should be responsive and flexible to individual needs. Effective initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills levels and capabilities is therefore crucial to ensure that appropriate support is available. It will also enable you to develop a personalised and motivating learning plan for each young person, which will improve their chances of achievement.

Most pre-apprenticeship programmes involve some form of basic skills assessment as part of the initial assessment process. For example, at the Second Chance School (E2C73) pre-apprenticeship in France, once a young person has joined the programme, they attend an induction interview which includes an assessment designed to measure their level of basic skills, as well as competencies relating to personal and social development

Many programmes use online diagnostic assessment tools, such as **BKSB** or **SkillsBuilder**, to provide a baseline assessment of each young person's skills. These assessments are usually repeated at the end, and sometimes during the programme, to monitor young people's progression in basic skills.

As well as undertaking a baseline assessment, spending time really getting to know the individual young person and working with them to explore and understand any concerns they might have around literacy and numeracy, and to unpick their strengths and weaknesses in specific areas, is equally valuable. Many young people have 'spikey profiles' in terms of their literacy and numeracy skills – it is important to have a clear understanding of the skills that they need to develop, so that you can focus their learning in these areas, whilst helping them to recognise their strengths.

The initial assessment is also the starting point for planning additional support for learners who have a Learning Difficulty and/or Disability to help them to access and benefit from basic skills learning.

Basic skills

Basic skills are the fundamental literacy and numeracy skills that young people need to live full and active lives and function well at work. In an increasingly technological society digital skills can also be considered as an essential aspect of basic skills. The development of basic digital skills is considered in Section 3 of this document.

Young people on pre-apprenticeship programmes often have lower levels of basic skills than their peers. These skills are crucial in improving people's life chances and that a good level of basic skills is an essential foundation for access to high quality employment and better earnings. Employers also consistently emphasise the importance of good basic skills in the workplace.

Support to develop a basic level of literacy and numeracy is therefore vital for an individual's progression into an apprenticeship or employment and should be a core element of your programme design.

On some pre-apprenticeship programmes, for example those with a specific focus on supporting young refugees, foreign language skills can also be an important component in basic skills development.

This section of the resource offers advice and guidance to pre-apprenticeship providers about best practice in supporting young people to deliver the basic skills needed to progress into an apprenticeship and the workplace.

Basic skills

Delivery of basic skills

There are a number of different approaches and models that you can use for the delivery of basic skills in your pre-apprenticeship programme. This can be in a classroom, in a workplace, online or as blended learning. Provision can be as part of preparatory work, so young people complete literacy and numeracy training before starting their work placement, embedded in their work placement or taught alongside, so that young people spend time in the classroom and time at work.

CASE STUDY

Integration pre-apprenticeship , *Switzerland*

The Integration pre-apprenticeship in Switzerland supports young refugees to develop their basic skills. It includes sector specific training in the host-country language and literacy and numeracy skills development, alongside a focus on cultural values and transversal skills.

Refugees are supported to develop their language skills (in the regional language) alongside other pre-apprenticeship training. This is an intensive element of the programme, and particular attention is paid to the typical vocabulary used in their chosen vocational sector. This helps to ensure participants can effectively and confidently communicate with colleagues and others in the workplace. Language learning is seen as essential for increasing the resilience of refugees and providing them with opportunities for education, social engagement, and access to wider services.

Training in language and basic skills allows young people to develop social networks and familiarity with the Swiss education system and labour market. Language and other basic skills delivered alongside vocational training helps to contextualise and consolidate learning and skills development amongst participants.

Basic skills

TOP TIP

Make literacy and numeracy relevant by tailoring delivery to the interests and employment goals of young people. This will help learners to understand how these skills are relevant to the workplace and everyday life.

Embedding basic skills

The delivery of literacy and numeracy in pre-apprenticeships can be challenging and requires careful consideration. Many young people on pre-apprenticeships may lack confidence with literacy and numeracy and be resistant to classroom-based learning because of previous negative experiences in compulsory education. Equally, some young people may not value these skills or see them as important for their future career aspirations.

Because of this, you should attempt to embed basic skills development systematically throughout your programme, in as seamless a way as possible. This embedded approach can also be more resource efficient as it avoids the need for additional lessons which focus exclusively on basic skills.

Best practice shows that provision of basic skills is most effective where links are made between literacy and numeracy and learners' interests, work experience and employment goals. Young people are much more likely to engage with basic skills learning if they can make clear links between the continued learning of literacy and numeracy and the next step of their career.

Combining vocational content with literacy and numeracy helps learners to understand how these skills are relevant to the workplace.

Example:

In a sector specific pre-apprenticeship such as construction, young people can be encouraged to think about mathematical concepts such as 'area', 'perimeter', 'quantity' and 'ratio' throughout their vocational learning. However, instead of presenting this learning as mathematical concepts, it should be presented in a practical and contextualised way, both as part of their work experience and through any classroom-based delivery. For example, for building a wall a bricklayer needs to be able to calculate how many bricks and how much cement they will need. If it's done incorrectly the wall might collapse, or it will cost the company too much money. During work experience, pre-apprentices should gain direct experience of this. It should also be followed up in classroom-based activities too.

CASE STUDY

Multi-Industry Pilot (MIP), *Australia*

In this schools-based pre-apprenticeship programme, delivered as a partnership between a training organisation (VGTO) and a small secondary school, the training provider focused on employability skills, whilst the school delivered the remainder of the curriculum including English, maths and digital skills. The English and maths curriculum were based on real-life situations. For example, in one activity young people were tasked with working out how much paint was needed to paint a house. In another activity young people undertook research into new developments in a particular industry (eg, autonomous driving cars in the automotive industry) and then as part of their assessment they were asked to share their findings with the rest of the class. As well as helping young people to practice their presentation skills this type of activity gave them insight into the types of jobs available to them in different industries. This practical approach helped to contextualise the importance of literacy and numeracy skills in life and work.

Basic skills

Basic skills can also be embedded throughout wider employability content, for example by encouraging young people to think about literacy such as grammar and punctuation, when developing a CV, or in good language skills in preparing for mock interviews with employers.

TOP TIP

Offer regular opportunities for young people to reflect on how they are using and developing their literacy and numeracy skills outside of the classroom. This will help them to understand the relevance and value of basic skills in the workplace and in their wider lives.

CASE STUDY

City Training Services, *England*

City Training Services have an embedded approach to English and maths delivery on their traineeship programme. As part of their work placement each young person is given a pack which includes questions and prompts designed to encourage them to think about how they are using their English and maths skills during their placement.

Posters in teaching rooms also offer learners examples of how literacy and numeracy skills are used in the workplace. In one of these posters, learners are asked to imagine a scenario where they are working in a pharmacy as a dispensing assistant. To do the job safely requires them to calculate how much medicine to give to customers. Young people might then be asked to calculate how much a 5ml dose of medicine is as a proportion of 1 litre, for example. These examples help learners to make the link between numeracy and literacy skills and the workplace and to reflect on how they are developing their own English and maths skills during their work experience.

Ensuring that training is contextualised helps to motivate young people to engage with basic skills learning and ensures that participants understand the importance of developing these skills for successful progression into the workplace.

Being creative and flexible in the way you deliver basic skills is essential to making literacy and numeracy learning more appealing to young people and more relevant to their lives and employment goals. This is particularly important for increasing the confidence of young people with lower levels of literacy and numeracy. Try delivering maths problems in the form of a game for example or embed maths skills as part of a challenge. Jobwise Training in England, for example, run a Dragon's Den activity which helps to contextualise English and maths as well as improving their financial capability; young people create budgets for the business concept they have designed and deliver presentations to prospective employers.

Find more examples of creative ways to delivery literacy and numeracy
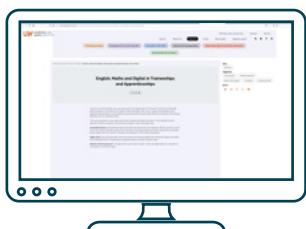
Basic skills

Developing activities

When choosing and developing your activities, think about what kinds of things are most likely to interest and inspire the young people in your current cohort of learners and ensure that activities are accessible for learners at all levels.

Smaller class sizes help to keep young people engaged and allow tutors to build rapport with individual learners. Young people also often prefer short blocks of teaching and one-to-one support, rather than longer classroom-based delivery

TOP TIP

Try to make basic skills activities as engaging as possible. This will help to improve positive outcomes for young people.

CASE STUDY

Joblinge, *Germany*

Recognising that numeracy is essential for almost all vocational training, but in particular for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) occupations, JOBLINGE has embedded maths into its STEM programme which is designed to prepare and equip participants for technical occupations. This approach, which has been tested successfully, aims for 75% of participants to improve their maths scores by 25% over the course of the programme.

In partnership with BMW, JOBLINGE have developed a mobile phone app, "Maths as a Mission", to support participants to improve their maths skills 'in a playful manner'. The app is comprised of a comic story and a game, with difficulty levels linked to playable characters. The app is introduced during the initial phase of the programme and progression is measured with pre and follow-up tests. Alongside this, the Mathe4Joblinge project aims to improve the digital and maths skills of participants on the pre-apprenticeship programme through the use of e-learning modules (bettermarks) and is again tested at the start, middle and end of the JOBLINGE programme

Basic skills

Online learning

Online learning can be an effective way to engage young people in literacy and numeracy and is likely to play a continued role in the delivery of pre-apprenticeships, as a result of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Flexible online opportunities for learning are also easier to combine with workplace or other commitments.

Some pre-apprenticeship providers use online learning platforms such as Skills Builder for the delivery of basic skills. Delivering basic skills online, can be an attractive option to young people who have had negative experiences of traditional classroom-based education. Online learning can also help to overcome barriers arising from any stigma associated with basic skills learning.

Whilst online learning is valuable, many young people, particularly those with low levels of skills including potentially, digital skills, benefit from one-to-one support and you should ensure that online learning opportunities are combined with continued support from a tutor and one-to-one and group activities. If face to face engagement is not possible, staff should telephone learners on a one-to-one basis to talk through any challenges they are facing.

Where there is a broad range of skills levels and needs within a learner cohort, the teaching of literacy and numeracy can be challenging. Most effective pre-apprenticeship programmes use specialist staff to deliver basic skills. If this is not possible, you could explore ways of upskilling existing staff who deliver training in literacy and numeracy. One way of doing this could be through networking, both within your organisation and with other providers, to ensure that effective practice is shared and built upon.

TOP TIP

Short practical sessions, with games and fun activities which are different to young people's experience of school, are more likely to engage learners..

Reinforcing literacy and numeracy in work placements and through employer engagement

Most pre-apprenticeship programmes include a focus on developing young people's basic skills in the classroom before they move on to a work placement. However, workplace learning can play a key role by providing a meaningful environment for young people to build on and test out these skills in practical contexts.

You should work closely with employers to ensure that work placement plans enable young people to put into practice some of the basic skills they have developed during their classroom training. This will support young people to build confidence in their new skills and to better understand their application in their chosen sector.

To ensure that basic skills learning is as relevant as possible to the workplace, you might also want to explore ways to improve links between employers and the classroom delivery of literacy and numeracy. This could include inviting employers (virtually or in person) to talk to young people directly about why they value basic skills and provide examples of the types of literacy and numeracy skills they are looking for when they recruit someone. You could also involve employers more closely in the design of basic skills delivery.

Basic skills

Qualifications

Literacy and numeracy qualifications vary across different countries. Whilst it is a young person's actual skills in these areas that are crucial to their ability to do a particular job well, qualifications are often sought by employers to evidence good literacy and numeracy. It is therefore important that you consider entering young people on your pre-apprenticeship programme for qualifications.

The different skills levels of learners when they join the programme, individual learning goals and the duration of the programme are all factors that influence the achievement of qualifications in literacy and numeracy. Some young people may find it difficult to complete a full qualification or may value a qualification tailored more closely to the sector they wish to work in.

It is important to remember that many young people on pre-apprenticeship programmes may have had negative experiences at school, gaining few, if any, qualifications. For this reason, you should introduce the opportunity to work towards a qualification in a sensitive and non-threatening way, whilst clearly explaining why qualifications are valuable and important to career progression.

Young people will have clear ideas about the type of learning they want. Ensure you incorporate feedback from learners when reviewing your delivery of literacy and numeracy. You could invite young people to share their experiences and views through a focus group or online survey or through regular learner's forums, as well as providing written opportunities for feedback.

TOP TIP

Listen to the voices of learners in shaping delivery of basic skills. Make sure you seek the opinions of young people to inform the delivery and future planning of the basic skills element of your programme. This will help to improve positive outcomes.

TOP TIP

Consider offering both bitesize qualifications and full literacy and numeracy qualifications. This will help to motivate young people with lower levels of skills to engage with basic skills learning and support all young people to make progress towards their individual career goals.

Basic skills

Factors to consider when planning your basic skills provision

- How will you engage young people, who have often had negative experiences of classroom-based learning at school, in basic skills learning?

- In what ways can you make basic skills relevant to the lives and interests of young people on your pre-apprenticeship programme?

- How could you integrate the delivery of literacy and numeracy with other skills for example, digital and employability skills so that basic skills are effectively embedded across your programme?

- How can you improve your links with employers to ensure that classroom teaching of basic skills is relevant to the workplace and to ensure that young people can develop and practice literacy and numeracy skills learned in the classroom, as part of their work placement?

Useful websites & resources

L&W Resource: This report presents six case studies across a range of pre-apprenticeship providers, highlighting features of effective practice in the delivery of English, maths and digital skills.

The Life Skills for Europe Framework offers an overarching framework for life skills learning including Literacy and Language and Numeracy, that is applicable across Europe.

Barclays life skills: This website provides advice and resources for educators, young people and businesses to support young people get the skills and experiences they need to enter the world of work.

Basic Digital Skills

Digital Skills

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often have lower levels of digital skills compared to other groups of young people. This, alongside limited access to technology, can be a significant barrier to their take up of education and employment opportunities. Most jobs now require some element of basic digital skills. Young people who lack these skills or who do not have the confidence or knowledge to make the most of their digital capabilities are at risk of exclusion from employment opportunities and access to vital services and support.

The coronavirus pandemic has further highlighted the importance of basic digital skills for young people, particularly in engaging in education/training and accessing wider support that cannot be provided face to face due to social distancing restrictions.

Pre-apprenticeships have a key role to play in ensuring that young people are equipped with a solid foundation of digital skills as part of their progression to an apprenticeship and other labour market opportunities.

This section of the resource offers advice and guidance to pre-apprenticeship providers about best practice in supporting young people to develop the basic digital skills needed to make a successful transition into an apprenticeship and future employment opportunities.

Aims of pre-apprenticeship programmes

Some pre-apprenticeship programmes have a specific focus on supporting young people to develop the skills and the experience needed to progress to an apprenticeship in an IT or technology-based sector. **The Development Mission** pre-apprenticeship in the US, for example, aims to equip young people with very specific digital skills and experience needed to access entry level roles in the IT sector, such as a support technician, and to work towards the required certification.

More typically, pre-apprenticeship programmes aim to support young people to develop the basic digital skills needed to access and successfully sustain employment in any sector. With digital skills becoming of increasing importance across the labour market, including basic digital skills delivery as a core component of your programme ensures that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to the same opportunities as their peers.

CASE STUDY

IN-VEST2, *Ireland*

The IN-VEST 2 (Integrated Vocational Employability Skills Training) pre-apprenticeship programme is designed to provide direct pathways to a range of new ICT-focussed apprenticeships in Ireland, whilst at the same time developing basic digital skills and soft skills that are transferrable to any career.

An advisory board including 'new tech' apprenticeship providers and ICT sector employers helps to shape the programme ensuring that content is relevant to opportunities in the sector and supports transition into different tech apprenticeships.

In the first stage of the programme, classroom learning includes work related basic IT skills e.g. composing professional emails. Participants also start on an accredited ICT module, which includes, for example MS Word and Excel. IT skills, alongside soft skills, are developed through participation in a variety of individual and group projects, designed to simulate the environment and behaviours of a real workplace. Presentations to other course participants help to develop both technical skills, for example word processing and PowerPoint, which are part of the accredited ICT module, as well as building soft skills such as public speaking, leadership and teamworking.

The project-based approach allows tutors to tailor digital skills activities to the needs, skills and interests of individual participants. For example, a learner whose career goals included teaching IT and media skills, was supported to design and deliver a session on coding skills to other participants.

# Basic Digital Skills

Assessing digital skills

To understand the skills levels and capabilities of young people on your programme you should ensure that there are robust systems in place to accurately assess levels of essential digital skills alongside other basic skills. This will enable tutors to tailor learning to meet the different needs within the group and to provide extra support during classes, where needed.

INVEST 2 in Ireland include a digital literacy assessment as part of their baseline skills assessment before programme entry. Young people are sent a link to complete and return the assessment online. This helps staff to gauge the motivation of potential participants as well as providing an indication of their digital capability.

A number of different European Frameworks are used for assessing competencies in digital skills more widely. **The DigComp 2.0 Framework** for example, provides descriptions of competencies that are required to be proficient in a digital environment at different level, from foundation through to advanced, and provides examples of how these competencies might be applied for learning and employment.
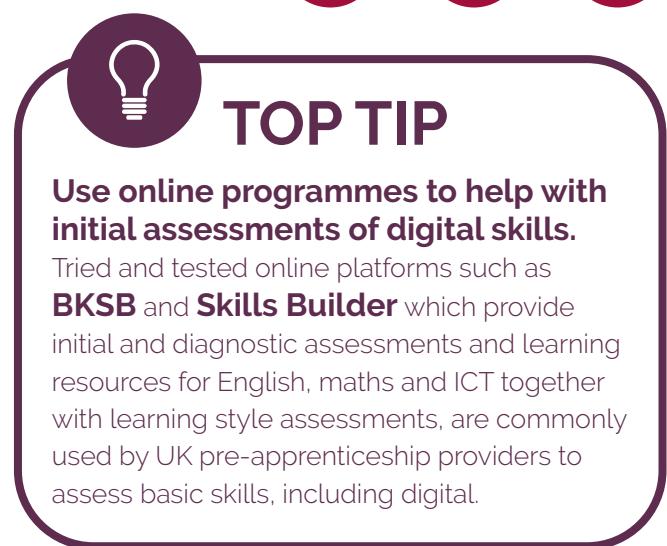
TOP TIP

Use online programmes to help with initial assessments of digital skills. Tried and tested online platforms such as **BKSB** and **Skills Builder** which provide initial and diagnostic assessments and learning resources for English, maths and ICT together with learning style assessments, are commonly used by UK pre-apprenticeship providers to assess basic skills, including digital.

Basic Digital Skills

Delivery of digital skills

There are a number of different ways in which you can support the young people on your pre-apprenticeship to develop digital skills, depending on the aims and objectives of your programme, and the needs of your target group.

Best practice shows that the most effective outcomes are achieved by embedding digital skills learning throughout your programme. Linking the delivery of digital skills with the interests, intentions and aspirations of young people will help them to understand the relevance of digital skills and the importance of developing these skills for employment. As a result, young people are more likely to be motivated to engage with digital skills learning.

TOP TIP

Ensure that you embed creative digital approaches in all aspects of your programme delivery. This will make learning more engaging and help young people to understand the importance of developing digital skills for progression to an apprenticeship and employment.

Example:

In a sector specific pre-apprenticeship such as construction, young people can be encouraged to think about mathematical concepts such as 'area', 'perimeter', 'quantity' and 'ratio' throughout their vocational learning. However, instead of presenting this learning as mathematical concepts, it should be presented in a practical and contextualised way, both as part of their work experience and through any classroom-based delivery. For example, for building a wall a bricklayer needs to be able to calculate how many bricks and how much cement they will need. If it's done incorrectly the wall might collapse, or it will cost the company too much money. During work experience, pre-apprentices should gain direct experience of this. It should also be followed up in classroom-based activities too.

Basic Digital Skills

Embedding digital skills

There are a number of ways in which you can embed basic digital skills into your pre-apprenticeship programmes. For example, you could:

Run courses on basic IT skills used in everyday life and in the workplace. The E2C Paris pre-apprenticeship programme in France runs courses on searching the internet, inputting and understanding basic data on a spreadsheet and communicating through smart devices and social media.

Include digital skills as part of your wider employability training. Young people could use MS Word and other software packages to develop CVs and cover letters or access online databases to search for jobs. Quali4U integrate digital skills into their programme by supporting young people to learn how to use computers and job search databases and to write online documents so that they are able to use these skills at home and become more independent in their job search. This learning is undertaken within individual sessions and in group coaching. La Rueca in Spain offer regular sessions of active job search using online databases, facilitated by a coach.

Offer specific digital skills workshops delivered in-house or through partners. Workshops focused on specific digital skills can help to address identified skills gaps amongst your learners. They can also offer more specialist skills development in response to young people's particular career aspirations.

Useful links

Although staff don't need to be highly qualified to teach the basics of digital skills and make it relevant to the workplace, some staff might feel that their own ICT skills need to be improved in order to confidently and effectively deliver digital skills. ICT skills training for staff could be delivered in-house by colleagues with more developed digital skills or alternatively you could support staff to access training or free online resources or programmes to brush up on their skills.

For programmes with a specific focus on supporting young people to develop the skills to progress to an apprenticeship in the IT or tech sector, consider using specialist tutors or involving relevant employers in the delivery of workshops. This can be an effective way to provide young people with relevant knowledge and skills, whilst also providing good opportunities to expose young people to new people in the IT sector, widening their networks and potentially opening up future apprenticeship opportunities.

Examples of good practice:

Participants on **JOBLINGE's Klassik pre-apprenticeship programme** in Germany are required to communicate digitally and use digital media from day one of the programme. The programme offers a number of workshops on basic digital skills as well a special week called 'digi-week', during which young people learn digital skills through a variety of tasks.

Tomillo Foundation, in Spain, have incorporated a variety of digital approaches within all aspects of their delivery and have updated their programme to include topics such as programming, robotics, 3D printing, database work and computer security. Such additions have helped to ensure that young people not only have opportunities to develop essential digital skills but that they are also given opportunities to acquire specialist IT related skills that can prepare them for highly paid jobs in the digital sector.

Quali 4 U, in Germany, integrate digital skills into their programme by supporting participants to learn how to use computers, search on job databases and write documents so that they can use these skills at home and become more independent in their job search. This learning is undertaken within individual sessions and as part of group coaching.

Basic Digital Skills

Combining digital skills with other skills

Integrating digital skills and other skills such as transversal and basic skills ensures that learning is contextualised and young people understand the importance of developing these skills for successful progression into the workplace.

Embedding digital skills through literacy and numeracy can also be a useful method for developing digital skills. For example, you could:

- **Put your literacy and numeracy resources online.**

- **Deliver basic skills lessons via webinars.**

- **Include the preparation of PowerPoint presentations as part of speaking and listening activities.**

CASE STUDY

Second Technology Opportunities School La Rueca, *Spain*

The Second Technology Opportunities School (STOS) aims to improve access to training and employment for young people who are socially excluded or at risk of social exclusion in Madrid.

Recognising the increasing importance of technology in society and across all employment sectors, La Rueca use technology as a tool for social change, through which young people develop personal and social skills as well as the technological skills needed to access the labour market. The development of transversal or soft skills e.g. team working and communication skills is integrated with digital skills to help young people to understand the relevance and real-life value of these types of skills.

For example, Videogame Space workshops use gaming as a vehicle to work on personal and social skills such as teamworking, group cohesion and communication skills. As part of the programme's focus on addressing the digital gender gap, young women are encouraged to create avatars in the game in their own image, for example a female superhero with a range of powers. Other workshops aimed at developing technological skills provide opportunities to learn and practice free photography, video and audio software

A core element of the programme is the Technolab, a digital social enterprise which aims to achieve transformative social change for individuals and communities through the use of technology. In the Audiovisual workshop for example, participants use digital creation tools to create and adapt content in line with their own interests. This flexible approach helps to engage young people and increase motivation to learn.

Basic Digital Skills

You can also encourage learners to practice digital skills through independent study activities. For example:

- **Ask young people to undertake research on a topical issue using the internet and produce a word-processed article on their findings.**

- **Introduce young people to revision apps they can download to their mobile phones to support them to engage with literacy and numeracy learning outside of the classroom.**

Some young people on pre-apprenticeship programmes may not have access to the technology needed at home to engage with or benefit from distance learning. This is particularly important given the shift to more remote learning as a result of the pandemic. La Rueca, for example, have been providing financial support for participants during the pandemic to help pay for internet access and mobile phones, as a means of enabling young people to have access to technology.

You will need to consider how to support all young people on your pre-apprenticeship programme to engage with different delivery formats for digital skills

Project based learning can be an effective way of inspiring and motivating young people to engage with digital skills. In computer science lessons on Tomillo Foundation's Basic Vocational Training pre-apprenticeship, young people are tasked with a project related to their personal and career interests. This might be designing a prototype that meets a specific objective, for example a household composter which helps to dispose of waste in an environmentally friendly manner. Page X of this resource provides additional information about Project Based Learning methods.

Factors to consider when planning your digital skills provision

- How can you maximise opportunities for young people to practise their IT skills as part of other skills delivery?

- Are there local or national partners that you could work with to deliver training on digital skills? If you are already delivering pre-apprenticeships, there may be employers you have worked with before who could offer specific digital expertise.

- Some young people may be averse to engaging with online learning and new technologies due low levels of digital skills, or a lack of confidence. How will you ensure that these young people are supported to engage?

- How will you ensure that young people with learning difficulties or disabilities are considered in the planning and their access to any online learning is accommodated?

Employability Skills

Employability skills

Young people on pre-apprenticeship programmes typically need support to develop their employability skills and soft skills before exposure to the workplace. These skills can have a significant impact on a young person's chances of getting the job they want and the ability to make progress at work. Consequently, all young people on pre-apprenticeship programmes can benefit from support to develop employability skills. Employability skills are the skills required to successfully navigate the job-application process and that help to make an individual more employable. They include:

- Job searching.

- Creating CVs and writing cover letters.

- Completing job applications.

- Interview skills and techniques.

- Understanding how to dress appropriately for the workplace.

- Arriving to work on time, reliability and willingness to learn new skills.

- Learning how to engage in a professional way with an employer and customers.

Employability skills are an essential first step in the sequencing of activities to help young people to grow in confidence and develop their skills before progressing to work experience. Alongside the development of transversal (or soft) skills, such as communication, problem solving and team working you should ensure that employability skills are a key component of your preparatory activities, so that young people are gradually prepared to engage with employers.

This section of the resource offers advice and guidance to pre-apprenticeship providers about best practice in supporting young people to deliver the employability skills needed to make a successful transition into the workplace and to progress to an apprenticeship.

The delivery of employability skills on your programme could include:

- Job searching sessions including learning how to use online job search and apprenticeship databases.

- Interview practice. You could help young people prepare by thinking about interview questions that might be asked, considering their answers and holding a mock interview.

- Employer engagement activities such as job fairs and employer 'speed dating'. At the Second Technology Opportunities School for example, participants undertake monthly visits to job fairs and exhibitions and participate in opportunities to network with employers, such as employer breakfasts.

- You could run a practice speed dating session with programme staff. Interview a young person for a few minutes and then give them some constructive feedback. This will help to build confidence and improve skills before young people engage with real employers.

Employability Skills

Delivery of employability skills

Employability skills can be delivered in different ways including as standalone learning modules, in combination with other skills development and through employer engagement activities.

You could deliver these skills separately as part of an 'employability skills' unit. This could be in the form of classroom-based learning to build confidence before young people move into a work placement.

For example the Development Mission Pre-Apprenticeship in the US offers a range of classroom-based learning before young people enter the workplace. Alongside pre-workplace technical courses, preparatory learning includes 'critical career skills' - sector focused employability and soft skills, for example networking principles and business communication, interview skills, online applications and getting ready for entry level jobs in IT.

On the Quali4U programme, delivered by BAFF-Frauen-Kooperation gGmbH, participants learn how to use databases, receive 1-1 and group coaching on improving their CVs and take part in training on where to find jobs and apprenticeships, how to prepare for job interviews, preparing for entrance exams and improving their German language skills. The programme provides young people with freedom to experiment and try out composing their own CV, make phone calls to public authorities and write letters on their own.

CASE STUDY

IN-VEST2, *Ireland*

On INVEST-2, in Ireland, young people undertake employability skills training at different stages of the programme including as part of preparatory activities in the first phase and prior to their final work experience placement at the end of the programme.

Work preparation modules include creating effective CVs and cover letters, learning how to apply for jobs online and attending mock interviews with employers at their offices. Young people also receive advice from employers on how to develop and improve their individual CVs to highlight their strengths and emphasise relevant experience. In addition, formal interview practice helps young people to grow in confidence in coping with interviews and builds self-belief about what they can achieve, prior to going for a real interview for an apprenticeship or job.

Alongside dedicated employability skills sessions, young people develop and improve skills through project-based learning such as time management and punctuality, knowledge and awareness of professional boundaries and the nature and demands of work.

Section 4

Employability Skills

Try and think about different ways of delivering employability skills to make sessions engaging for learners and to help young people to understand the importance of developing these skills in preparing for work. Technological University (TU) Dublin, for example, have a dedicated day each week focussed specifically on employment skills.

Some of the most effective pre-apprenticeship programmes combine employability skills within wider learning, for example basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and digital skills.

Some young people will have experienced a range of challenges in accessing training and employment and may need extra time and support to develop new skills and build their confidence before moving into work experience.

For some of these young people, a work experience placement might be their first experience of employment and they might need additional support to understand their role and the expectations of the workplace. Make sure that you take time to understand the circumstances of individual young people so you are better able to understand their needs and any concerns they may have.

CASE STUDY

Access to Apprenticeship, *Ireland*

On the Access to Apprenticeship programme, each Wednesday is known as 'personal development and employer engagement' day, where young people engage in activities related to improving their employability skills such as CV development, interview preparation or employer engagement. Weekly reflections are built into the programme to give young people experience of the assessment and feedback processes in an apprenticeship.

TOP TIP

Embed employability skills into preparatory activities to help prepare trainees for workplace learning. This will ensure that learners have the opportunity to develop and practise their skills over time so that they are as prepared as possible when they begin engaging with employers and seeking apprenticeships

Employability Skills

Employer engagement activities

Employer engagement activities such as attending job fairs or exhibitions give young people the opportunity to learn about different career paths and talk to employers in a less formal setting as before they reach the stage of applying for jobs, going for interviews and entering the workplace.

You could arrange a visit (or virtual tour) to a workplace to give young people the opportunity to speak to staff and get a better understanding of the world of work, or invite employers in to give talks to young people about their organisation.

Employer engagement activities are central to the Bright Light programme. Activities include access to online job fairs, or attendance at bespoke workshops such as interview techniques and employers' expectations. Young people benefit from meeting a range of employers, whilst employers have the chance understand the needs and qualities of young people who have been in care.

Some providers support young people to gain certification to demonstrate their employability skills.

For example, as part of a three-week residential induction for **RingLink**, Scotland Limited's land-based pre-apprenticeship, young people achieve a Certificate of Work Readiness (CWR).

The Certificate of Work Readiness (CWR) is a qualification owned by Skills Development Scotland and certificated by SQA. It helps individuals prepare for work through employability training and a work placement, which results in a nationally recognised SQA qualification upon completion. Successful completion of this award offers the young person improved job prospects and transferable skills in self-evaluation, planning and goal setting that can be applied to any workplace

Factors to consider when planning your employability skills provision

▪ How will you tailor employability activities to meet the different need of participants?

▪ How could you involve your employer partners in supporting the development of employability skills?

▪ How could you embed basic skills learning with employability skills training to ensure that learning is contextualised and meaningful for young people?

CASE STUDY

Bright Light, *England*

Catch 22 work with care leavers on their Bright Light pre-apprenticeship programme. Many of the young people on the programme have had very challenging backgrounds. Support to overcome preconceptions and change the mindset of young people to recognise that they can benefit from an apprenticeship, is an important first stage before they can engage with employability skills support.

When a young person is ready to engage with employability support, the programme offers a range of activities including careers guidance, effective job searching, learning about the job application process and support with making job applications, advice on building CVs and writing cover letters, and supporting participants to engage with employers, for example contacting previous employers to seek references.

LEARNING AND **WORK** INSTITUTE

J.P.Morgan

Learning & Work Institute
4th floor, Arnhem House,
31 Waterloo Way,
Leicester, LE1 6LP

📞 +44 (0)116 204 4200

✉ enquiries@learningandwork.org.uk

🌐 www.learningandwork.org.uk

🐦 @LearnWorkUK