

The impact of learning on participation in work, progression and productivity

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Work in the UK

- High employment rate
- Low pay
- Poor productivity
- Hollowing out of jobs market with less obvious progression – particularly from low pay sectors

- Work first – lessons? Participation?
- Improving quality

Key issues

- Too many low paying, low skilled jobs
- Lack of clear progression structures tied to skills acquisition
- Little pressure on employers to increase pay or invest in training
- Move to contracted out models

Learning for people in work

- Who do employers fund to learn?
- Who does the government fund to learn – and how?

Participation

- Persistent inequalities – reinforce existing divergence
- Expansive vs specific learning
- Data gaps

Data Gaps

Workforce Training Results, Washington State

- Did participants of workforce programs get the skills they needed?
- After leaving the program, were participants employed?
- How much did they earn?
- Were program participants and their employers satisfied?
- Did the participant and public get a good return on investment?

These five questions are the basis for Washington's Workforce Core Measures. Adopted in 1996 after extensive research and stakeholder work, core measures were created to provide a common framework to measure our workforce system's progress across a wide variety of programs. While each program typically has multiple performance measures, many of them mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education, these state core measures give Washington policymakers, workforce professionals, and the public a consistent look at the results of our workforce system.

Progression

- Relevance of learning?
- Access to expansive learning
- Why do employers invest?
- Impact of apprenticeship levy?
- Role of IAG
- Learning at work vs learning before taking job

Productivity

- Focus of research is on high-level skill drivers: management, leadership, complex analytical skills, juggling multiple tasks
- How do intermediate skills drive productivity growth?
- Meeting skills gap – existing workers not just entrants (young people)
- Under-utilisation of skills (flexibility)

Interesting questions arising

- What will be the impact of increase in online learning?
- Better data collection and measurement – and funding linked to employment/progression outcomes?
- How to support self-employed or contracted workers?
- Advice and support for people in work?
- How can learning that meets employer needs, but is not tied to employers and so can be accessed by people wishing to change jobs be funded? Personal Learning Accounts?
- What is the impact of devolution – to the four nations, and also to cities?
- What will be impact of the apprenticeship levy be – would a wider ‘skills levy’ be more appropriate?

Questions for today

- Have we got the right evidence and analysis on these issues?
- Is there other evidence in England that would strengthen the paper?
- Is there specific English policy or practice that is designed to meet these challenges?