

NEWS - PRESS RELEASES

'There's More to Learning than Qualifications', say Employees

Despite the government's emphasis on training and qualifications, a new survey suggests that these are not rated so highly by employees wanting to improve their performance

The survey, carried out by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) in association with researchers from the University of Leicester, suggests that activities more closely associated with the workplace - such as doing the job, being shown techniques by colleagues, engaging in self-reflection and active observation - can be of more help to employees in raising their performance than attending training courses or acquiring qualifications.

One in four employees reported that training courses were of little or no value in improving work performance and around one in three thought that studying for qualifications had not helped them at work. By comparison, over half the sample thought that learning by doing was the most effective means of improving work performance, with 90% agreeing that they had picked up most of their skills through on-the-job experience.

NIACE Director Alan Tuckett commented, "Qualifications are important but they are not the whole story, too much focus on them could be counter-productive. We do need a well-qualified workforce but getting people motivated and involved requires more and different triggers. Softer structures may be a better way to get hard outcomes."

Professor Alan Felstead, co-author of the report said, 'The results suggest that the workplace - and its everyday activities provides the most highly prized sources of learning for employees'. Going on training courses and getting qualifications lay the foundations for initial competence at work, but improved performance is more reliant on doing the job and learning from others'.

He continued, 'The government has put a great deal of investment in raising training and increasing the qualifications stock of the UK workforce in a bid to close the productivity gap with competitor nations. While this is necessary, the results of the NIACE survey suggest that the most effective route to enhanced performance lies in improved relations within the workplace'.

Notes for Editors:

Adult Learners' Week, this year 15-21 May, is the annual celebration of adult learning in the UK and is organised in England by NIACE, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

The University of Leicester team based at the Centre for Labour Market Studies (see link below) comprises Professor Alan Felstead, Dr Alison Fuller, Professor Lorna Unwin, Professor David Ashton, Dr Peter Butler, Dr Tracey Lee and Dr Sally Walters. Their collaboration with NIACE forms part of an Economic and Social Research Council grant funded under the Teaching and Learning Research Programme to investigate learning at work (see link below).

The University of Leicester team are undertaking a major ESRC funded research project, which aims to identify the organisational factors most conducive to closing the productivity gap.

Media Contacts:

Ed Melia, NIACE Press Officer on 0116 204 4248; mobile 07795 358870.

Alan Felstead on 0116 252 5946; mobile (for Adults' Learners Week only) 07817-427987.

Sonia Burton on 0116 252 5976.

[▲ BACK TO TOP](#)

RELATED SITES

[- National Institute of Adult Continuing Education](#)

[- Teaching and Learning Research Programme](#)

[- Centre for Labour Market Studies, University of Leicester](#)

[ARCHIVE](#)[BULLETIN BOARD](#)[BUSINESS & INNOVATION](#)[EVENTS](#)[FEATURES](#)[JOB VACANCIES](#)[NEWS](#)[- DAILY EDUCATION](#)[HEADLINES](#)[- HE NEWS](#)[- PRESS RELEASES](#)[- PRESS RELEASE ARCHIVE](#)[- STUDENT NEWS](#)[OUT AND ABOUT](#)[PEOPLE](#)[PUBLICATIONS](#)[RESEARCH](#)[STUDENTS' UNION NEWS](#)[+ SUBMIT AN ARTICLE](#)

QUICK SEARCH:



ADVANCED SEARCH

[University Home](#)[eBulletin](#)[University Index A-Z](#)[University Search](#)[University Help](#)