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Chesterfield College Endeavour to make an IMPACT

Chesterfield College joined forces with Endeavour Training Ltd to supply IMPACT (Innovative Methods of Practical and Classroom Teaching) to help stop students giving up early on their college course.

Retention of entry level students at colleges on specific courses (generally practical based) has been disappointing – 7 in 10 students are leaving their course early, due in part to their low self esteem and perceived inability to cope with written work.

The 12-week course blends practical exercises including adventure activities, team building and problem solving with paperwork, classroom work and reviewing to increase self esteem, key skills and obtain an entry level qualification: NCFE Working Together.

Specialist organisation Read on Write-Away (ROWA) worked alongside Endeavour and Chesterfield College to make sure the paperwork was suitable for all the learners involved.

Pat McLoughlin, workplace manager for ROWA comments: "We worked with Endeavour to design course materials which embedded Skills for Life and made them accessible to the young people taking part. We helped assist the students reviewing some of the activities they had undertaken, for example abseiling, bouldering and climbing. By recording their

comments on activities which challenged their boundaries, it helped them to grow as individuals.”

12 students started the first programme and nine of them successfully completed their qualification. Most of these learners continued to study further education at Chesterfield College.

The following year IMPACT focused on catering, auto engineering and social and personal care. A staggering 26 out of the 27 students completed their qualifications. 23 of these students went on to continue their further education training, with 19 completing their studies.

“The students involved in this project were from a diverse range of programmes at entry level,” comments Liz Sterland, head of learning of the directorate of business and leisure management, Chesterfield College. “The retention data indicated 100% for a specific group of learners and saw excellent development of their communication and confidence building skills.”

Martin Higgins, project worker, Endeavour Training comments: “IMPACT worked really well not only for the students taking part but also for the college. Retention rates increased, qualifications were gained and most importantly, the students have continued into further education, taking with them invaluable skills and experience.”

Chris Collins, economic development advisor at the Learning and Skills Council Derbyshire, who secured the funding from the European Social Fund for IMPACT, said: “This project highlights how strong partnership working between Chesterfield College, ROWA and Endeavour Training has worked for the benefit of the learners. The college gets improved retention levels, but these learners have achieved qualifications which will equip them better for adult life and the world of work.”

The students celebrated their success with the presentation of framed certificates by Frank Smith, chair of Chesterfield College Corporation and Les Roberts, chief executive of Endeavour Training, followed by a fun filled day at Alton Towers.

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