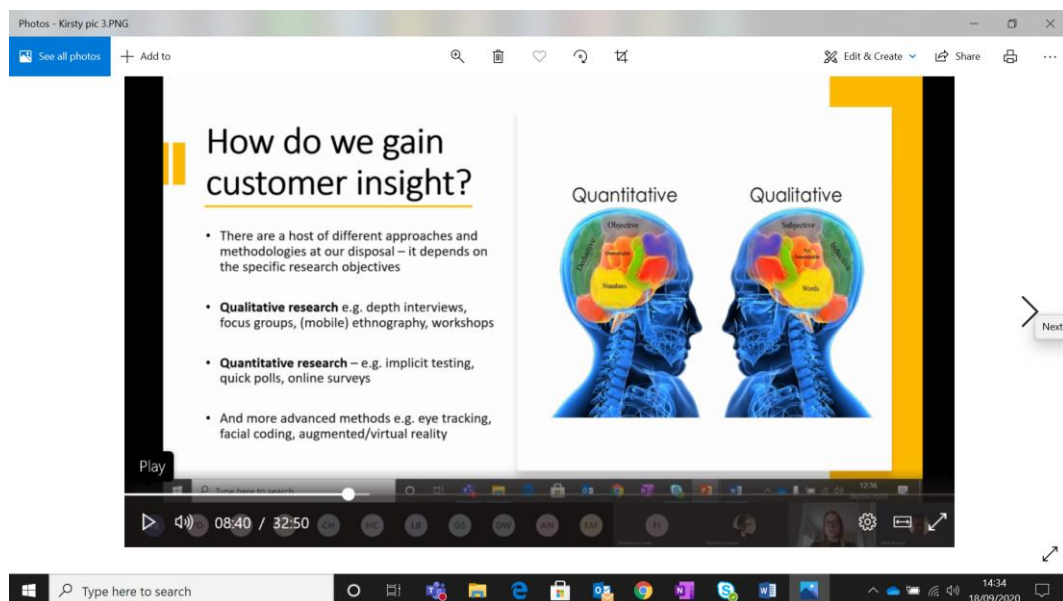
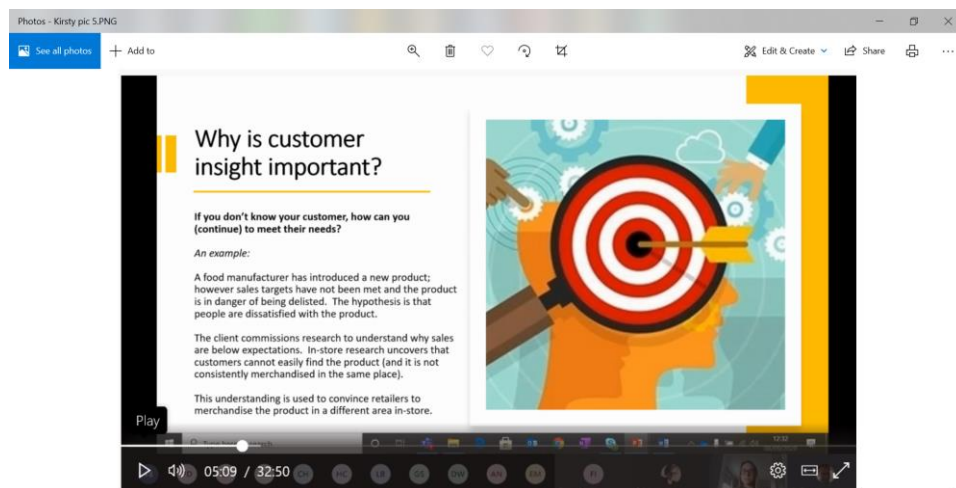


Alex Boyce

## Apprentices progress

I would like to highlight how well the 1<sup>st</sup> cohort of apprentices we had undertaking workshops in Business administration L3 and Customer Service Specialist L3 have performed over the past 6 months.

We had a guest speaker from industry on our last session (Customer service/Knowing your customers). Kirsty Roberts, Managing Director and Co-Owner of Directions Marketing and Research Agency was able to provide the group with some great teaching on examples of “Customer Insight” as shown below.



## Maxine Park

### **18 students attended Puxton Park for their first Access to Animal Sciences teaching day.**

After a morning of cell biology with Sarah, I took them out on the park after lunch for a guest lecture on meerkat and porcupine habitats, during which they were invited to feed both species and as we were all listening to the lecture a 2 foot tall Harris hawk descended from the sky and landed by the students, where she stayed quite happily posing for photos – where else would students get that experience? In the spirit of staying safe and healthy we spent the last lesson exploring the range of parasites that will need to be removed from their bodies and other wonderful zoonotic diseases they could catch if they don't wash and sanitise!

The students had a wonderful time today and went home very happy, although very tired. One learner said as she left "I know this is where I was meant to be." They are a fabulous group and it was such a joy to be properly back in class.

## David LeFeuvre

### **Construction Professionals getting off on the right foot!**

Judging by the calm on campus, you might be forgiven for thinking we hadn't fully started delivery yet, but look on Teams, and it's a very different story. Our construction professional learners across levels 3 and 4 have been benefiting from the blended approach the staff have taken, allowing them to learn regardless of location. Learners have fully embraced the digital agenda, having already submitted their first assignments on the portal too (the early results of which suggest we've got a really strong cohort for another year running!) We've had great recruitment, enrolment and induction, and are now looking forward to getting stuck into teaching in whatever format it takes.

Staff have been working hard to adapt their delivery to suit the different arena's and it's been great to see innovative use of shared documents/ padlets and more to keep learners engaged remotely.

If the first two weeks are anything to judge by, we're off to a flying start, and I am sure this year will continue to see growth in success for all our learners, regardless of Covid!

Sylvia Lane

**A big well done to our FE and HE Performing Arts teams:**

Despite the current trend of students deferring their University places across the UK, the team's worked tirelessly to ensure strong progression and recruitment.

HE Performing Arts is overall up by 11 students in comparison to last year, and Covid-19 did not stop us from growing rather than going in the opposite direction.

This is down to staff working consistently on communicating with applicants and reassuring them over the summer that we will deliver a high-quality experience.

At the same, they regularly stayed in touch with our returning second and third year students to ensure that all of them returned this week.

Tobi Poster has left us to pursue a full time PhD, he will be greatly missed, and I would like to thank him on behalf of the teams for his fantastic work over the last five years.

Lastly, thank to our newly recruited technician James Box who has already had a massive positive impact on the area, and welcome to Nour Kawaja who is our new HE Performing Arts Lecturer in Acting- we are very excited to have them both on the team.

Lauren Squibb

**BLOG: Response to Redundancy**

It is positive to hear that more than half of furloughed workers have returned to their jobs after the lifting of lockdown. However, in stark contrast UK redundancies are rising. They are rising at the fastest rate since 2009, with fears mounting and predictions of a looming autumn jobs crisis.

Early indicators from HMRC are showing 695,000 workers have left company payrolls since March 2020, with the unemployment rate currently at 4.1%, which is approximately 1.4 million people out of work.

A wave of redundancies are becoming more likely as the 16th of September passes, the 45 day consultation requirement for firms planning to make over 100 redundancies when the furlough scheme closes at the end of

October. The Bank of England are expecting the unemployment rate to reach 7.5% before Christmas, which would be 2.5 million unemployed people.

This is not positive reading and we are all too aware of the spectrum of negative impacts that redundancies bring to our society. Here at Weston College we have created a package of support to help both businesses and individuals during these challenging times.

We have innovated and adapted our adult provision to support people through this time; helping individuals to embark upon new careers and businesses to recover, retrain and rebuild. Many employers are considering their options and how they can adapt their business for the future. Individuals are looking to retrain, update their skills and consider different employment options.

If you are currently going through redundancy or have lost your job in recent times, Weston College's promise is simple:

1. We will understand your circumstances, helping you to shape future goals
2. We will provide high-quality bespoke support, including wellbeing and career focused guidance
3. We will connect you with opportunities throughout our extensive network of partners

We understand that times of uncertainty bring increased pressure and that it is not always easy to maintain a positive mind-set whilst looking for a new job. Our team are ready to help you during these times to ensure that your skills are refreshed and you are aware of the opportunities that are out there.

Our message is clear: Weston College is here to support you through these challenging times, creating brighter futures for all. Please contact us at [employability@weston.ac.uk](mailto:employability@weston.ac.uk) for more information.

Jonathan Dibble

### **What Next? Kicks off the 16-19 recruitment calendar for 21/22**

Following the success of last year's physical event, we are extremely excited to launch our careers showcase "What Next?" - ONLINE!

This virtual event will span over the week of 28th September - 2nd October and features exclusive video content from local and national businesses, educating young people about the different kinds of jobs that are out there and hopefully inspire secondary school students to start thinking about what career path they'd like to follow.

All of this content has been released via [www.weston.ac.uk/whatnext](http://www.weston.ac.uk/whatnext) as well as our social media platforms. If you see these videos rolling out throughout the week, don't forget to give it a like and share if you can to help us raise awareness around these careers as well as the companies that have helped us with this initiative.

## FE Week

Weston College are praised as example bucking the national trend by FE Week – click the image to read the full article online:



### How to deliver traineeships successfully as a college

London South East Colleges delivered 100 traineeships in 2018/19 and said it was working hard with employers to use the government's new incentive payments.

Neil Coates, vice principal for adults, apprenticeships and partnerships at the group, explained that their success in the pre-employment programme can mostly be attributed to the college's "strong employer engagement strategy – employer advantage – which takes a membership approach" and "ensures that we develop strategic relationships rather than transactional ones".

He said the college group's traineeships have also been positively impacted by the decision to put all of their employer-focused teams into one department, which has "ensured that the teams work collaboratively with curriculum colleagues to ensure any student at risk of dropping out is identified quickly".

In addition, LSEC's programme of traineeship starts are profiled across the year – which links directly to their drive on apprenticeship recruitment. "Therefore, when a candidate applies for an apprenticeship vacancy, but is not quite ready for a full apprenticeship, we support them onto a traineeship programme," Coates said.

Weston College in Somerset delivered 150 traineeships in 2018/19 and is "definitely" planning on delivering more this year.

A spokesperson said their traineeship model is delivered in-house by a specialist team, with "extensive experience" working with learners at a "crossroads in their educational journey".

Weston's traineeship delivery is "regularly reviewed using Labour Market Intelligence, in the concept of 'career creation' with bespoke traineeships pathways created around sector, employer and regional need, to ensure recruitment levels are sustainable in sectors with potential for high growth".

Sandra Bull

**Well done Karen Morgan**

In the past year Karen has built relations with North Somerset on behalf of our Early years division.

During COVID we were planning on hosting a joint conference to launch our online distance courses but of course this never happened.

In this area we are struggling for placements due to the bubbles and restrictions in place for nurseries and primary school settings but having North Somerset's backing and respect for the college is so vital to overcome challenges such as that.

Karen is doing really well 😊

*Dear Karen*

*I wanted to write to thank you personally for your time and commitment to developing partnership working between Weston College and our EY team in North Somerset. Communication with you has been excellent, and we have valued your time and input into our sector briefing sessions. The joint meetings that we have started with Children's Centre partners have also started to be extremely valuable with regard to planning strategically for targeted work to improve outcomes across our EYFS provision in North Somerset.*

*We appreciate that you have both sought and acted upon feedback from the sector about your students on placement, and we are confident that we are all now focused on the same principles and standards moving forwards.*

*We are excited about continuing to work with you and your team and thank you for helping to make connections and enable targeted action.*

David LeFeuvre

**Sharing good practice**

I wanted to share something that we tried last week, and judging by the success, will be trying again!

For the construction professionals' team, the focus this term is about establishing great habits with our new learners, and really exploiting what good online learning looks like.

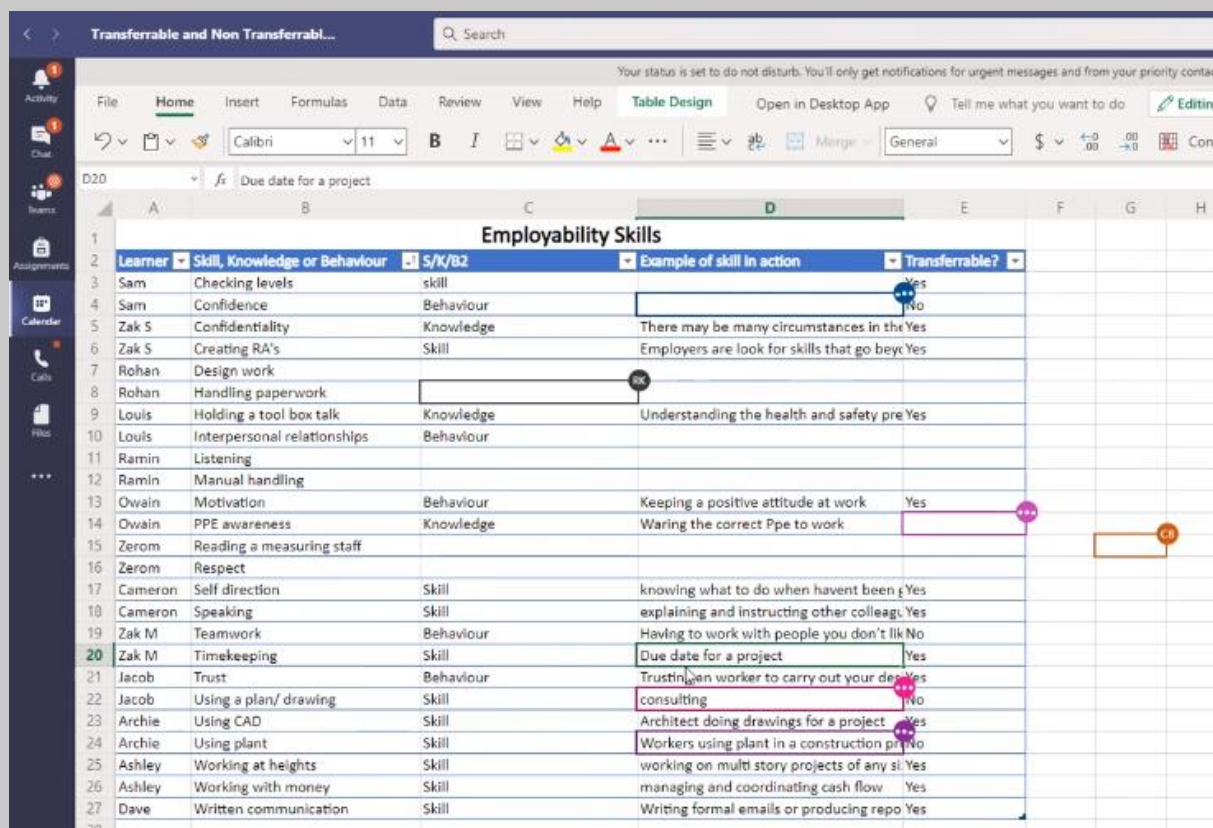
I wanted to share the success we had last week with one group, getting them fully engaged in an online session around employability.



The file the group were working on was shared to the class, and then each learner was given specific sections of the table to complete, having to identify different skills/ knowledges and behaviours that employers are looking for, and thinking about them in practice.

As a teacher, it was fascinating to watch “live” as learners were coming up with their responses, and for other learners to be able to see the kind of quality answers I was looking for.

I’m confident that this positive start ensures the learners have established the kind of habits we want, and they can see that we are not standing still with our innovative delivery!



Learner	Skill, Knowledge or Behaviour	S/K/B2	Example of skill in action	Transferrable?
Sam	Checking levels	Skill		Yes
Sam	Confidence	Behaviour		No
Zak S	Confidentiality	Knowledge	There may be many circumstances in the	Yes
Zak S	Creating RA's	Skill	Employers are look for skills that go bey	Yes
Rohan	Design work			
Rohan	Handling paperwork			
Louis	Holding a tool box talk	Knowledge	Understanding the health and safety pre	Yes
Louis	Interpersonal relationships	Behaviour		
Ramin	Listening			
Ramin	Manual handling			
Owain	Motivation	Behaviour	Keeping a positive attitude at work	Yes
Owain	PPE awareness	Knowledge	Waring the correct Ppe to work	
Zerom	Reading a measuring staff			
Zerom	Respect			
Cameron	Self direction	Skill	knowing what to do when havent been t	Yes
Cameron	Speaking	Skill	explaining and instructing other colleagu	Yes
Zak M	Teamwork	Behaviour	Having to work with people you don't lik	No
Zak M	Timekeeping	Skill	Due date for a project	Yes
Jacob	Trust	Behaviour	Trustin gen worker to carry out your de	Yes
Jacob	Using a plan/ drawing	Skill	consulting	No
Archie	Using CAD	Skill	Architect doing drawings for a project	Yes
Archie	Using plant	Skill	Workers using plant in a construction pr	No
Ashley	Working at heights	Skill	working on multi story projects of any st	Yes
Ashley	Working with money	Skill	managing and coordinating cash flow	Yes
Dave	Written communication	Skill	Writing formal emails or producing repo	Yes

Josh Herrington

### Well done to Lauren Squibb

I wanted to congratulate Lauren Squibb for delivering a great webinar all about the new Kickstart Scheme.

We had 55 employers registered for the event, and it was great to see new businesses who want to engage with Weston College and offer opportunities to young people!

Pete Lane

### **Exciting news on the Farm!**

Despite the on-going troubles and worries we are all facing I am happy to bring you some good solid positive news.

The farm is going from strength to strength and I am in my third week of face to face activity and sessions running daily at the farm.

We have a strong covid practice around the facility and with all the outdoor space available it is easy to request and implement the required social distance.

The weather has been kind and there have been high levels of engagement. Its lovely to see so many smiles whilst the work gets done.

Feedback from all tutors is one of enthusiasm, thanks and gratitude which is a lovely reward for the time and effort that has gone in.

We are still in the first chapter, but what a chapter it has been.





Donna Kenny

**Apprenticeship teams amazing support and guidance**

I wanted to bring to your attention to the amazing support and guidance that current, new and potential students receive from the apprenticeship recruitment team (Louisa Pinkstone, Jane Dean, Charlotte Denning, Naomi Judge & Donna Kenny) during the process of exploring an apprenticeship or indeed applying to one!

The service we offer to both employers and students is based upon quality, ensuring that both have a positive experience whether that's just from the initial IAG, providing support writing a CV, interview support through to onboarding/enrolment ... and all that falls in-between!

During lockdown we have seen the recruitment process change, interviews have become virtual, more tasks are being set prior to interview and as a result we have had to adapt how we support our learners and potential learners. Which we have done with enthusiasm and with the positive approach our team has always taken. As a result, we have received some positive feedback from those that we have supported;

*Hi Jane,*

*Thank you so much for your help with my CV and advice for the group interview, I feel much more confident now and has given me a clearer understanding of what to expect and the advice on my CV will help me with further applications if I am not successful, so thank you!*

*Hope you have a good weekend*

*Leah*

*Hi Donna,*

*I would like to thank you for all your support throughout the process, without your help I wouldn't have got as far as I did, you really went above and beyond and I am truly grateful.*

*Once again thank you for everything.*

*Kind Regards*

*Pippa*

Hi Louisa,

*I attended your zoom call this morning regarding degree apprenticeships which really helped me understand the foundations of what i've got to start doing.*

*Thank you for taking your time out this morning to help us young adults try and build their foundations for the future.*

Harriet

Dear Naomi,

*Thank you for getting back to me about the hiring decision.*

*While I'm disappointed to hear that I was not selected for the apprenticeship I greatly appreciate the opportunity and thank you so much for your time and consideration and also thanks for the constructive feedback, this will help me with future interviews.*

Kind Regards,

Rolan

*"Bristol Sport Foundation has developed a great partnership with Weston College over the past year, despite the current climate with Covid-19, their dedication to meet our needs has remained evident in all aspects. Two of our current apprentices, which Charlotte and the team supported us in recruiting, have been offered full time Community Coach roles with Bristol Sport Foundation for the 2020-21 academic year, this demonstrates Weston College's success in understanding our business and the type of employees that we require. Recently, they have supported us with the recruitment process to appoint a new apprentice, the shortlist of CVs that Charlotte provided indicated a good understanding of the brief and I am confident when interviewing a potential candidate, that they have been vetted in a manner that would be suited to our company and culture. Charlotte and the team have continued to be accessible during the process and we are very impressed with the overall professionalism. We are looking forward to continuing our partnership next year and beyond."*

We recognise that employer feedback is important, however when a student takes the time to recognise the support, they receive it makes a bleak day like today seem that little bit brighter!



WESTON  
COLLEGE

## FE Week Opinion Piece

### DR PAUL PHILLIPS CBE

Principal and  
chief executive,  
Weston College



## Putting SEND learners at the heart of the college means all my students are back

Whether it's providing farm placements or much-needed structure through digital platforms, putting SEND learners front and centre always makes sense, writes Paul Phillips

Since 2001, my mission has been to place inclusive practice at the centre of Weston College. When offered the chance to run a college "my way" it was daunting – miles from home, failing and in poor financial health. But these circumstances allowed me to fulfil my vision of placing SEND learners at the heart of my strategic plan.

The reason? I believe that if you get teaching right for these learners, then you get it right for everyone. Outstanding teaching and learning is about a "personal individualised" approach, and the best practice we have developed for SEND learners here has gone on to benefit everyone.

I had some inspirational staff ahead of their time regarding SEND strategies. However, it was not easy to convince governors and wider staff of the direction of travel. Back in 2001 the college had eight SEND learners, taught in dilapidated facilities at the back of the site. I placed these learners in the most visible location to set the scene for the new college mission, "creating brighter futures".

To their credit, staff quickly got on board. Since then we've transformed ourselves from an FE provider offering pockets of inclusion to a fully inclusive



organisation delivering FE.

This has been achieved through investing in continuous professional development to degree level, a motivational career structure, SEND support hubs at every campus and about £2.5 million invested in specialist facilities, such as an autism residential training facility and sensory learning base.

**"It's crucial that SEND learners are not lost at this critical moment in their education"**

Today we have more than 1,300 SEND learners (511 with high needs) on employability, apprenticeship and degree programmes. Progression rates are exceptional (97 per cent) with 33 per cent into employment (compared with six per cent nationally). We've won the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Inclusive

Practice and became one of only three National SEND Centres of Excellence in the country (the others are Derby College and City College Norwich).

The aspirational place that SEND holds within the college's strategic plan has been even more evident during Covid. The senior leadership team designed our lockdown EdTech strategy to focus on "digital inclusion"; the impact of this meant over 90 per cent virtual attendance from SEND learners throughout the pandemic.

We launched a #MyVirtualCollege concept, which meant all learners and especially SEND learners still felt part of the college through digitally accessible courses, timetables, support sessions, tutors and the wider college community. Innovative virtual teaching operated through Microsoft Teams, involving fun team challenges and activities including mindfulness to reduce isolation.

This provided learners with a much-needed structure to establish new routines. In using these real-world technologies,

learners maintained friendship groups and developed wider skills and behaviours that will be transferable to the workplaces of the future. For some, removing the distractions and anxiety of a classroom setting has had an extremely positive impact on achievement and is a lesson learnt for our future curriculum design.

However, coming back to college presented its own challenges. Anxiety has been high – many have not left their home for six months.

To help, we ran transitional programmes throughout the summer. We quickly realised that a "recovery curriculum" focused on mental health and reducing anxiety was needed. In the main, learners have settled into the new environment and are excited to be back. We have been taken aback by their resilience and adaptability.

Even the most anxious learners have finally returned because of our latest innovation. We've invested in Butcombe Farm, a nearby chili farm, as an alternative classroom to provide a pathway to the "new normal". Here, working with specialist practitioners, we use the concept of "Engagement to Employment" to nurture the talents of SEND learners as employees for the future.

It's crucial that SEND learners are not lost at this critical moment in their education. If colleges prioritise them, these learners have brilliant opportunities ahead of them.