Health and Safety Education: An Evaluation of Its Effectiveness at One FE College in Preparing Students for the Working Environment.

Kirsty Williams
University of Portsmouth

Conclusion

- Over 88% of students feel they would be able to apply their health and safety knowledge at work
- Majority of students have a positive approach to health and safety in the workplace
- Varying levels of risk perception and safety awareness across curriculum

Introduction

Young people and young adults have the second highest accident rate of all age groups at work.

Focus is on training given to young people when they start work.

No promotion on delivery of safety education within the learning environment before they go out to work.

Lack of information relating to the level and content of health and safety training within vocational education.

Lack of information on its effect on forming student behaviour within the workplace.

Objectives

Investigate the levels of health and safety education delivered in one vocational FE college.

Assess its effectiveness at preparing the students for the workplace.

Evaluate the level of understanding students have of health and safety.

Compare and contrast risk perception and risk awareness of students across curriculum areas.

Evaluate the level to which students perceive their own safety in college and at work.

Methods

- 10 vocational areas
- Survey to determine students’ thoughts and perceptions
- Learning Skills Council “Be Safe!” test administered

Focus groups
- What is covered in the Health and Safety teaching within your lessons?
- What are your experiences in the workplace?
- What hazards do you face in the workplace?
- Do you feel prepared for the workplace?

Results

- Students who received regular health and safety instruction as part of their lessons scored more highly that those who didn’t.
- As students progressed through their course their safety knowledge improved.
- Inconsistencies in applying knowledge and confidence across curriculum departments.
- Some students expressed a view that accidents were part of the job and were to be expected.

References

1 Health and Safety Executive (2012). RIDAGEGEN1 and RIDAGEGEN2
2 Health and Safety Executive, (2011a). Young people at work

Further Research

- Health and safety teaching within the Further Education curriculum regionally and nationally
- Comparison of the accident rates of under 21s from differing education streams
- Health and safety knowledge of lecturers