



Innovation Literacy Launchpad
EVALUATION (ABRIDGED)
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Strategic Context and Rationale

Across the UK, there is increasing focus on productivity, workforce capability and the need to equip people with the skills to adapt and innovate at work. National policy, including work led by Innovate UK and the UK Government, emphasises the importance of workforce capability in driving innovation-led growth.

However, while investment in technical skills is recognised, there is consistent evidence of a gap in the practical skills that underpin innovation.

“Analytical thinking remains the most important core skill for employers, with creative thinking second.”¹

World Economic Forum

This points to a clear challenge: while the skills most critical to innovation are well understood, they are not yet being developed consistently at scale. This includes problem-solving, collaboration, experimentation and the confidence to act on ideas in real workplace contexts.

The Innovation Literacy Programme responds directly to this gap. It provides a structured, practical way to build these capabilities within further education and the workforce through engaging, hands-on training course designed for apprentices. Over eight *in-person?* immersive sessions, that can be completed in just 2 days, participants explore the entire journey of innovation, from idea generation to testing, communication, and building a culture where innovation thrives. The programme is accredited by OCN London.

The programme is particularly relevant in the context of skills reform and increasing expectations on colleges and employers to support innovation, adaptability and economic growth.

“Apprentices can act as Trojan horses for innovation, bringing new ways of thinking into businesses that may lack internal innovation capacity.”

College Trainer

“The Innovation Literacy Launchpad is a strong and sensible intervention that demystifies innovation and makes it accessible. It reframes innovation not as something abstract or elite, but as people doing things differently and better in their everyday work. It addresses a clear gap by translating innovation concepts into practical skills that travel through people rather than institutions.”

University Leader

The Evidence Base for a Pilot

The pilot drew on evidence the GM Further Education Innovation Programme (GMFEIP), funded by Innovate UK, which demonstrated how FE-led approaches can widen participation, build capability and support diffusion in innovation.

Across GMFEIP, 353 apprentices² completed the Innovation Literacy Programme in 2024/25 and 2025/26, with high levels of satisfaction and clear evidence of behavioural

¹ World Economic Forum (2023). *Future of Jobs Report 2023*. Geneva: World Economic Forum. See Chapter 2: “Jobs and Skills Outlook”, section on core skills.

² All data accurate as of April 14th 2026

change. Apprentices reported increased confidence, greater willingness to contribute ideas and practical application within their workplaces.

Apprentices described moving from hesitation to action, with one noting: *“The programme helped me feel confident speaking up... this could make things easier, let’s try it.”* Another reflected: *“Now, if I see something that doesn’t make sense, I ask why... and if nobody knows, I get rid of it.”*

The evidence showed that effective innovation support, supported by FE, is accessible, practical, relational and embedded through people.

This pilot built on that model, expanding the programme through a ‘Train the Trainer’ cascade model known as Innovation Literacy Launchpad, with colleges across Wales, England and Scotland, to test how the approach can be sustained and scaled.

Executive Summary

The Innovation Literacy Launchpad pilot ran from October 2025 to March 2026 and was designed to build innovation capability by training college staff to deliver innovation literacy to apprentices.

Funded by Innovation UK, the programme was mobilised and implemented in a short time scale, with the programme team launching activity at financial and reputational risk, before funding confirmation, to ensure successful completion of the project within the tight funding window

The programme has engaged 13 colleges, with delivery to facilitators and apprentices across England, Wales and Scotland.

Headline metrics³ from the pilot include:

- 13 colleges engaged
- 30 college staff trained as trainers
- 275 apprentices projected to complete Innovation Literacy training across England, Wales and Scotland
- High facilitator satisfaction, with a Net Promoter Score (NPS) of +64
- Positive apprentice feedback, with an average NPS of +22

(Net Promoter Score is a standard measure of satisfaction and advocacy. It ranges from -100 to +100. A score above +20 is considered good, a score above +50 is considered excellent. A positive score indicates that more participants would recommend the programme than not.)

The evaluation finds that the programme is strong, distinctive and valued by participants. Trainers responded very positively and felt confident to deliver. Apprentices also reported benefits, including increased confidence and improved problem-solving.

An NPS of +22 indicates overall positive learner experience, though some variation across delivery models and settings suggests the importance of maintaining consistency as the programme scales.

Feedback from stakeholders and learners highlights the distinctiveness and practical value of the programme. A senior leader described it as *“so unique... there’s a marketplace for it”*. Learner and trainer feedback points to strong engagement and early shifts in

³ All data is accurate as of 18th March 2026

confidence and behaviour. Apprentices were described as moving from “*rabbit in headlights*” at the start to actively presenting and discussing ideas by the end, with a “*noticeable increase in confidence... in presenting and articulating ideas*”.

Early feedback also highlights the programme’s relevance to real work contexts. Apprentices quickly identified workplace challenges and began to consider how to improve them, with trainers noting early signs of “*questioning processes and suggesting improvements*”. In some cases, learners were already exploring how to apply ideas in their organisations, particularly after moving from idea generation to planning and implementation.

Overall, the pilot demonstrates clear value and strong potential for continuation and scale. With the right support and positioning, it will play a significant role in building innovation capability across education, employers and public services.

About the Evaluation

The evaluation has been conducted independently by The KWP Ltd⁴, an education and skills consultancy with extensive experience in national skills policy and programme evaluation.

The approach combined quantitative and qualitative methods, including facilitator and apprentice surveys, stakeholder and learner interviews, and monitoring data collected throughout the pilot. This has enabled both assessment of delivery quality and early impact, as well as consideration of longer-term scale and system readiness.

Key Findings from the Pilot

The programme fills an important gap. It provides a practical way to develop innovation skills that are often missing from traditional training, including problem-solving, collaboration and confidence to try new ideas.

The model is high quality and works across different settings. Train the Trainer sessions were consistently rated highly, and facilitators felt confident to deliver.

The learner experience is engaging and applied. Apprentices valued the interactive approach. As one participant said, the course “gave us the knowledge and then made us apply it ourselves”.

There is early evidence of impact. Learners report changes in how they think and work, including being more open to ideas, more positive in their approach and better at working with others.

Delivery quality is critical. The core value of the programme lies in how it is taught: through facilitation, discussion, practical activity and reflection. This is what builds confidence, mindset and behaviour change.

Protecting this pedagogy is essential. Where facilitators adopted the full approach, sessions are engaging, learners participate more actively and the impact is stronger.

⁴ www.thekwp.co.uk

Research⁵ on cascade or Train the Trainer models highlights the importance of maintaining implementation fidelity when scaling programmes through coaching, quality assurance and performance feedback as critical to sustaining impact beyond initial training.

During the pilot, the central team played an important quality assurance role in maintaining this standard. This included co-delivery of some early sessions, live observation, drop-ins and structured feedback to facilitators. This support helped reinforce the intended approach and build facilitator confidence over time.

For future delivery, maintaining this level of quality will require ongoing QA processes. This is likely to include refresher training, observation and feedback, communities of practice and continued central involvement, particularly in early stages of delivery.

Running evaluation alongside the programme enabled real-time adaptation, refinement of tools and improved coordination across delivery partners. This supported a culture of reflection and continuous improvement.

The model can scale but needs support. The Train the Trainer approach enables reach, but consistent quality depends on ongoing support, coordination and clear expectations.

Successes

The pilot has shown that innovation capability can be developed effectively within further education, with strong demand from colleges and employers.

It has worked across a wide range of sectors and learner groups (from level 2 to level 6 across a range of subject sector areas), showing that innovation skills are relevant beyond technical or specialist areas.

Facilitators returned from training “*buzzing with enthusiasm*”, with clear evidence of motivation spreading within teams.

“I honestly had a tear in my eye at the end of the session. The excitement of the trainers to go ahead and deliver it is just palpable. We have demonstrated that yes, it can be put into practice. It’s a different way of working, very collegiate, very open, and safe.”

Innovation Project Director

Learners report practical benefits, including improved confidence, better teamwork and a more constructive approach to problem-solving.

The programme provides a shared framework and language for innovation that can be used across different disciplines and settings.

Amongst pilot participants there is strong interest in continuing and expanding the programme, including potential for commercial delivery and wider use in technical education and workforce development.

Recommendations

Protect the pedagogy. The distinctive value of the programme lies in expert facilitation and structured pedagogy rather than in the materials alone.

⁵ Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blase, K.A., Friedman, R.M. and Wallace, F. (2005) *Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature*. Tampa, FL: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, The National Implementation Research Network.

Hayes, D. (2000) ‘Cascade training and teachers’ professional development’, *ELT Journal*, 54(2), pp. 135–145. Education Endowment Foundation (2021) *Effective Professional Development: Guidance Report*. London: Education Endowment Foundation.

Further strengthen quality assurance and support infrastructure as a non-negotiable condition for scale, including coaching, observation, feedback and communities of practice.

Adopt a phased or hybrid delivery model, with support from the central team to maintain consistency and confidence.

Trial delivery beyond apprentices to other learners in HE and FE such as T Levels, as professional development for FE staff and also direct business engagement. Develop more flexible and commercial delivery models, reflecting strong interest from pilot participants for wider application.

Strengthen the long-term evidence base to demonstrate the role of further education in driving innovation. This should include follow-up data on how learning is applied in the workplace, enabling clearer attribution of impact and building a compelling case for sustained investment in FE as a delivery partner for innovation capability.