Supporting Degree Apprenticeship students:
Tutors' and Students' perspectives

Focus is on the OU's Digital and Technology Solutions Professional Apprenticeship, starting May 2017
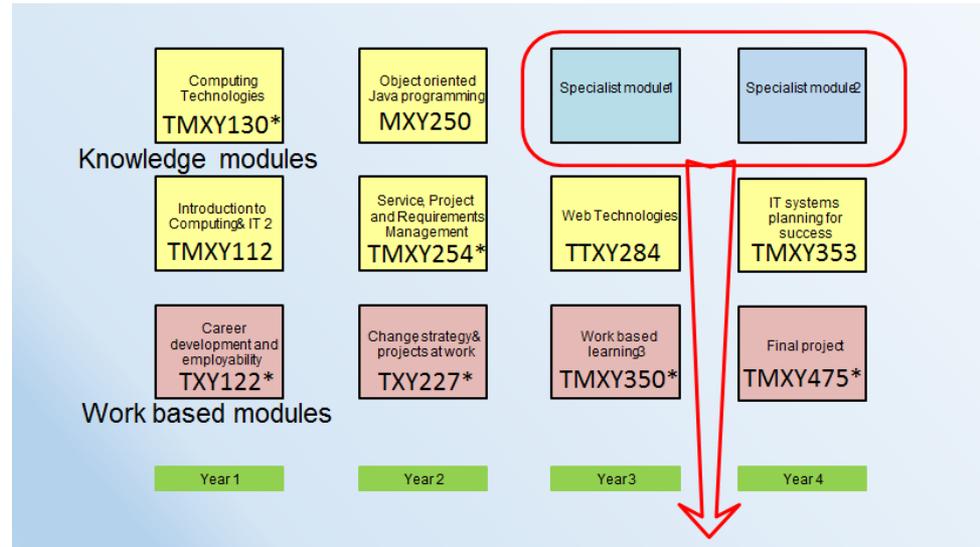
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Rationale

This research seeks to address the fundamental question as to whether Degree Apprenticeship students in England and Graduate Apprenticeship students in Scotland need a different support strategy by identifying current issues that they may face during their apprenticeship journey.
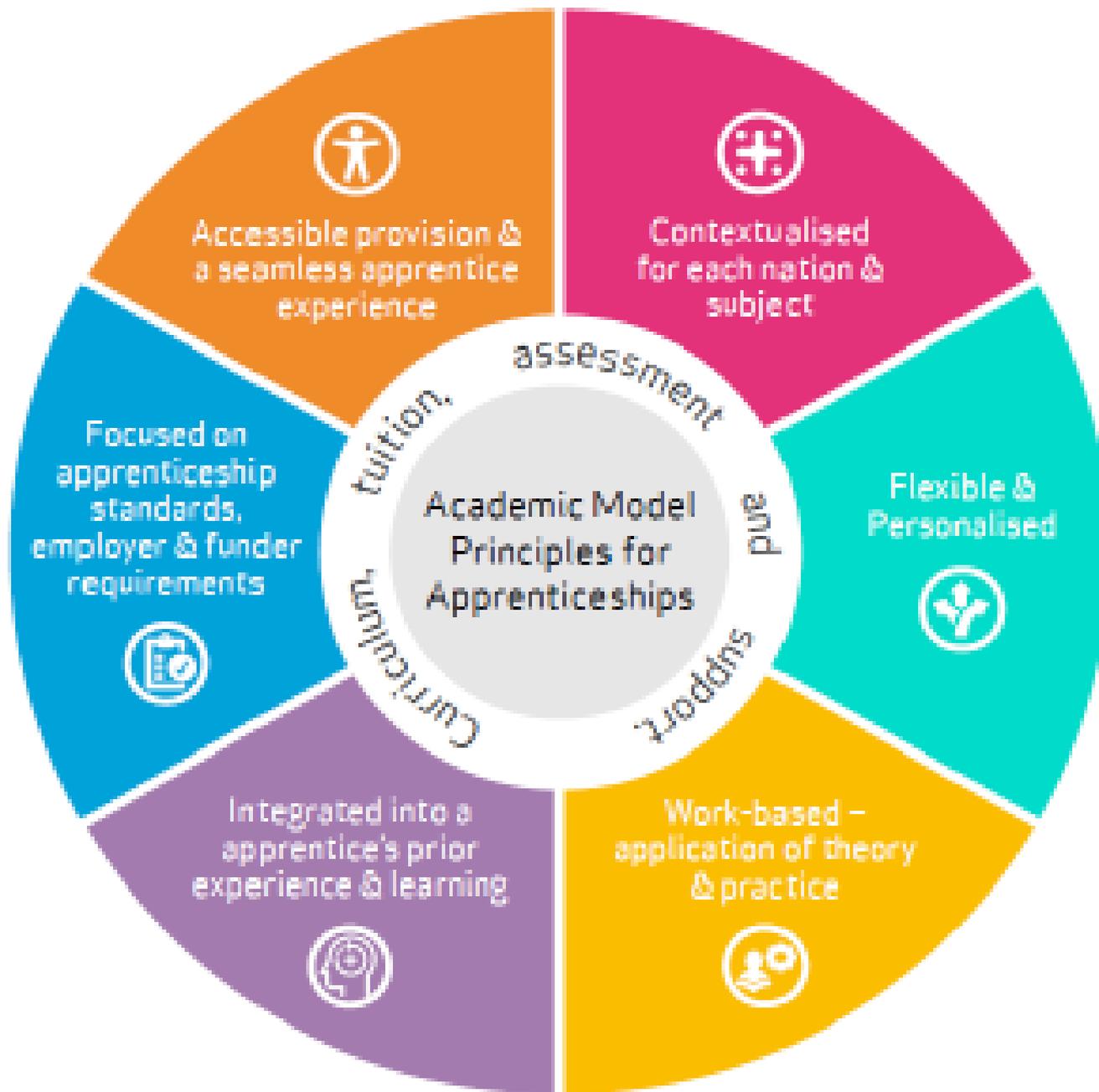
Programme – C &C (England)

Possibly other specialisms in Y3/4, e.g. Microsoft

Practice Tutor
Academic Tutors

Academic Model Principles for Apprenticeships

Accessible provision & a seamless apprentice experience

Contextualised for each nation & subject

Flexible & Personalised

Work-based – application of theory & practice

Integrated into a apprentice's prior experience & learning

Focused on apprenticeship standards, employer & funder requirements

tuition, assessment and support, Curriculum

Research questions

- Apprentice tuition support
  - Support from subject-specific tutors;
  - Support from practice tutors;
- Apprentice employer support
  - How the OU can/should work alongside employers to improve support;
- Apprentice assessment
  - Work-based assessment (relevant to the students' work place);

Students' Perspective

- Online survey – low response rate 8 students (%)
  - 75% have never studied online or at distance;
  - 88% satisfied with the support from module tutors;
  - 100% satisfied with the support from the practice tutors;
  - 88% satisfied with the support from their employers for their DA studies
  - 100% satisfied with the support from the Open University

Students' Perspective

– 100% the assessment relates well to the module content of TMXY130

– 100% the assessment relates well to the module content of TXY122

– 63% TXY122 'Career development and employability' is relevant to their current job role

– 100% TMXY130 'Computing Technologies' is relevant to their current job role

Student perspectives…module feedback

Student experience data for module TMXY130 'Computing Technologies' was really positive overall with very good overall pass rate.

I really enjoyed the NetCad side of things and completing the packet tracer activities.

I wasn't as keen on the maths modules and often found the materials didn't explain some of functions very well, perhaps more examples would be useful.

Really interesting stuff.

Tutor perspectives…practice tutors

Student/tutor difficulties:

Difficulties with possible deferral

Compiling an eportfolio

Getting study time off from employer (government guidelines can be misleading)

Assignment dates can clash with other commitments

Difficult for PTs to see whole student picture

Tutor perspectives...module tutor

- Some key points from TMXY130 debriefing:

Students generally higher standard and more motivated than previous modules.

Lots of questions from students early on.

Not much use of forums.

Interesting because more technical than previous modules

Needed to emphasise need for workings and presentation for some .

Better retention.

Summary

- Apprentice tuition support

  Support from subject-specific tutors is very good according to student feedback. Students are very motivated.

- Apprentice employer support

  How the OU can/should work alongside employers to improve support can be gained via feedback from practice tutors, gives a wider overview of apprentice experiences.

- Apprentice assessment

  Some assessment methods are more relevant that others.

Next steps

- Conduct further research via surveys and interviews, with both students and tutors. Initial cohort was very small.

- Consider the inclusion of Welsh apprentices, alongside English and Scottish apprentices, in the research. Compare national perspectives.

Questions

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