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ADULT LEARNERS LEAD THE WAY

After failing all her exams at school, Julie took a basic skills course to become a supervisor at Britain's largest producer of packaged salads. Following their literacy and IT course, Cheltenham's street cleaners can handle the form-filling and automated side of their jobs much better. And gardeners in Northumberland are better equipped to handle stock-taking and orders at the local authority nursery, following their literacy and numeracy training.

These are just three examples, taken from a new portfolio of case studies compiled by the Workplace Basic Skills Network at Lancaster University, that demonstrate the positive benefits of adult learning. The 11 showcase projects, taken from a wide variety of workplaces all over the UK, have been steered to success over the past 12 months by basic skills providers, all of whom are either institutional or individual Network members.

"At the Workplace Basic Skills Network we believe it is vitally important to highlight the success stories of basic skills training," said Jaine Chisholm-Caunt, the Network's director of operations. "At the end of the day, after all the theorising about getting the approach to learning right, it is the learners – and their achievements - who matter. Case studies are the best way of demonstrating how a good project works.

"Among these 11 studies are glowing examples of ways in which people's lives have been transformed by enhanced literacy and numeracy, both at work and at home. Companies, too, are able to show greater productivity and professionalism following their decision to provide basic skills courses for staff," she said.

The case studies are now accessible on the Workplace Basic Skills Network's website: www.lancaster.ac.uk/wbsnet

The projects, which have been written up by the providers, human resources managers and learners, are a rich mix of experiences from a whole range of environments: an IT recycling plant, a college for the disabled, a care home, a railway company, a horticultural nursery, a council waste disposal centre, a building site, a salad factory, kennels, a football club and an electrical firm.

Note to editors:

The Workplace Basic Skills Network, based at Lancaster University, is a national membership organisation dedicated to workplace language, literacy and numeracy provision. Founded in 1993, it supports "Skills for Life", the government's adult literacy and numeracy strategy. The Network builds professional capacity in workplace basic skills through sharing and dissemination of good practice and continuing professional development, supporting basic skills professionals to meet the language, literacy and numeracy needs of today's changing workplace. Address: Workplace Basic Skills Network, CSET, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YL; tel: 01524 593405; website: www.lancaster.ac.uk/wbsnet

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