What does it take for a workforce development program to be successful?

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Background

- The green market and demand is consistently expanding but the labor force entering green jobs is not increasing enough to meet demand
- To meet demand there needs to be workforce development being conducted for environmental jobs
- However, environmental workforce development is very new and there is very little research on it
- Thus my research aims to discover what makes a workforce development program successful

Research Question

What elements make a workforce development program successful?

Internship & Methods

- Interned this summer with 2050 Project to create a workforce development program
- Developed and administered a survey to environmental majors at UW about workforce development
- Conducted a literature review on workforce development programs in other fields and environmental case studies

Survey Results

- Survey results showed most students thought day camps or field trips would be effective workforce development tactics

Results

Three main elements

- **Hands-On Learning:** Participants given the ability to actively participate and complete tasks
  
  “I think hands-on experience for students would be the best way to get them exposed to the field/career they might take an interest in”
  
  -Quote from one of the UW survey respondents

- **Soft Skills:** Participants are taught workplace social skills to thrive in a team and work environment
  
  “we hire the smile, as we can train the skills”
  
  -Quote from Hard work on soft skills: Creating a “culture of work” in workforce development by Houghton et al

- **Widely Accessible:** Participants with personal barriers are not hindered by program format
  
  “By being inclusive to disadvantaged workers, the workforce can see an increase in diversity”
  
  -Quote from E-learning and social media: Education and citizenship for the digital 21st Century by Brown

Significance

- Research from other industry’s workforce development programs success can be applied to environmental workforce programs
- Programs that connect students with environmental businesses to garner more interest in the youth for green careers should be pushed
- Local universities and community colleges should begin hosting workshops or apprenticeships to individuals interested in environmental fields
- The government should increase funding and grants for environmental workforce development opportunities

Survey Results

- Regardless of your previous experience, what do you think would be the MOST EFFECTIVE workforce development tactic to steer students to be more interested in environmental fields? (select only one)

- Field trips to career facilities in the environmental field
- Videos highlighting different environmental careers and their impact
- Social media campaign informing students about opportunities environ...
- Environmental careers in the industry conducting a show and tell presentation...
- Environmental careers in the industry...
- Day camp workshops that take students...

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