'Tasting progression' – an evaluation of an employer/schools/HE project in hospitality

Report to HEFCE by Thames Valley University

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Contents

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Executive summary

Purpose

1.   This evaluation, undertaken between April and August 2009 by Thames Valley University (TVU), was funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) grant programme relating to links between higher education institutions (HEIs), schools, colleges and academies.

2.   The report evaluates an established and successful schools-HE link programme – the Hillingdon project – designed and managed by the Widening Participation team at Thames Valley University.

3.   The research-based evaluation presents evidence of effective practice and makes recommendations for curriculum development linking employers, the university, schools and the local authority, in order to raise the aspirations and attainment of students aged 14 – 16 and address an identified skills gap.

Key points

4.   The Hillingdon project is targeted. It seeks to address low rates of participation in education, employment and training within particular wards of the borough, through engaging schools in, close to or serving those wards. A project lead with a good knowledge of the area and its networks worked with local schools and communities to identify cohorts of young people likely to remain within or near those communities. The focus on locality and matching a subject area – hospitality and catering – with local employment opportunities was valued by participants, their teachers and their families.

5.   With initial funding from the local authority for one year (2005), the university contracted the project lead, who had experience of the subject area, to engage with schools and develop a curriculum. The curriculum was delivered at the university and was designed to contribute to, and extend, subject delivery at level 2 in schools. The skills set (knowledge of the borough and subject area) and relative autonomy of the project lead enabled effective working with the schools to ensure curriculum relevance and value. This was reinforced by the commitment of the delivery (teaching) team at the university and senior managers.

6.   The curriculum delivery at the university over five weeks, including an employer-based session, focused on professionalism. The delivery of the learning and teaching in an industry environment was discussed with participants. The participants were briefed in

health and safety and were assigned both individual and team tasks, which included leadership roles. The 'professional' approach to the programme proved effective in engaging most of the participants and contributed to improvements in motivation and self-esteem. The evaluation indicates that participants were more motivated to engage with their education following their attendance on the project. There has been a 'ripple effect' from this reaching into the homes, schools, university and employer environments, which is an important feature of the project.

7.   The involvement of employers, both well known (international hotel chains) and local, contributed to the engagement of the schools and participants' families. The relevance of employer involvement for the young people in terms of progression into further study and/or work, although a short element of the programme, was discussed by all involved. The employers identified opportunities through the project, and links for all stakeholders – the schools, the university, Hillingdon Training (a valued training provider) and the local authority – have extended significantly.

8.   The partnership approach is strong and the project has a high profile among stakeholders. These factors have contributed to its sustainability and generated interest from the families of participants. The annual Hillingdon project awards event at the university is supported by Brian Turner, chef and restaurateur, with representatives of the local authority and the senior management of the university. This event has been well attended since the initial pilot in 2005 and attracts head teachers and governors in addition to the participants and their families. It is considered that this profiling of the project contributes to participants' sense of achievement.

9.   Thirty-four participants, from six of the schools involved, have now progressed to the university and are undertaking programmes in hospitality. The context, design, development and leadership of the project have all contributed to this success. The identification of these features in this evaluation offers opportunities for the higher education sector to extend and focus its involvement in curriculum delivery, development and innovation in 14 – 19 education.

Key findings and recommendations

10.   The process of evaluation identified key outcomes for participants. For many, there is clear evidence of positive attitudinal shifts in relation to career aspirations, approaches to teamwork, and increased motivation to engage in studies and curriculum activities outside

school. Going to university had become an option for a number of participants because they considered their career chances would be better following a university education.

11.   The setting of the project at the university is considered to have a positive effect also. Participants felt they experienced more independence and autonomy to explore ideas alongside clear expectations that they should take responsibility for their learning. This manifested itself, on many occasions, in positive behaviour in relation to discipline, timekeeping and trust.

12.   Teachers referred to changes in participants' levels of self-confidence and behaviour. These comments were often in terms of motivation to learn and personal development, with particular reference to maturity and increased levels of motivation. The participants, their teachers, and their families all emphasised the importance of a sense of achievement with receipt of an award.

13.   The project has also enabled links between industry and schools develop. School networks with London hotels are starting to grow, causing more direct partnerships. These links are also associated with the university and assist in the development of careers for students.

14.   There is potential for further research in this area. A greater understanding by higher education of the value attached to employment and vocational study routes by young people could promote greater engagement and involvement in the development and delivery of relevant progression routes. The connections and observations made by young people and their teachers, as a result of the project, in relation to employment and study opportunities indicates an important role for HE in support of more effective information, advice and guidance in schools.

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Section 1   Introduction

This report presents a research-based evaluation of an established and successful schools-HE link programme, the Hillingdon project. The project was set up in 2005 to meet a local need, address a skills gap in hospitality and catering, and provide school students aged 14 to 15 with further options for their personal and career development. The project is run and managed by the Widening Participation team at Thames Valley University.

The evaluation scopes the impact of the project for participants and stakeholders (including employers) and outlines curriculum development within the school and university settings. Attitudinal shifts for the participants and within their home environments are presented alongside commentary on developments and changes in 14 – 19 education.

Working through the set-up, delivery, impact and family influence and engagement stages, the evaluation identifies success factors that could be applied in different vocational subject areas and settings.

The report focuses on the positives of a strong partnership between schools, employers, the university and the local authority, and concludes with recommendations for higher education institutions to consider when extending vocational engagement with schools. The curriculum approach and delivery mode throughout this project resonate well with diplomas, and have also enabled the project team to develop a toolkit available for practitioners seeking to address skills gaps and articulate progression from the 14 – 19 phase into higher education. The evaluation was carried out by a Research Associate and a Senior Research Fellow working with the Head of Widening Participation, all at Thames Valley University.

We welcome your thoughts and feedback and hope you find this evaluation report useful.

Section 2   The widening participation context, local context and framework for evaluation

2.1   The widening participation context

Prior to presenting the evaluation, a brief review is made of the context of this widening participation project.

The engagement and participation of young people in further and higher education is well established as a policy driver. A variety of concerns at national and institutional level, including economic competitiveness, demographic change and institutional survival, have seen widening participation in further education (FE) and HE take centre stage in policy, particularly since the reports presented by Dearing and Kennedy (both 1997).

For HE, the challenges of expansion focus on representation across social class. Higher education expansion in the 1990s and participation in HE were strongly class related. The drive to widen access, through social inclusion and the equity agenda, focused on reaching out to lower socio-economic groups (HEFCE, 2002). Widening participation initiatives are, therefore, often specifically focused on the rates at which those from lower socio-economic groups progress.

In the context of this project and against the background of proposals for the reform of 14 – 19 education (Tomlinson, 2004), the government white paper, *The Future of Higher Education* (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2003) reasserted the role for universities in addressing skills needs, gaps in social class, and strengthening links with the business and economy.

The review of skills by Leitch (2006) three years later confirmed that the challenges outlined by the government remain: 'We have made enormous progress expanding higher education – and this is critical to becoming a high-skill economy. Over one quarter of adults hold a degree, but this is less than many of our key comparators, who also invest more. Our skills base compares poorly and, critically, all of our comparators are improving. Being world class is a moving target' (p.2).

The development of skills and progression through levels remain a significant barrier to participation. The FE sector has focused on progressing students from level 2 to level 3 in order to address skills gaps. Attainment at level 3 remains a significant threshold, particularly for young people from lower socio-economic groups. Poor attainment at level 3 is a key barrier to progression to HE for this group (Whitston, 2005).

It is students from lower socio-economic groups who are more likely to take vocational qualifications, but are less likely to progress to HE. This is crucial in the context of this and similar projects seeking to address under-representation, low participation and progression. Approximately 50% of students undertaking level 3 qualifications, other than A-levels, progress to HE. This compares with 89% of learners with two or more A-levels (HEFCE, 2006). Furthermore, Corver (2005) found that young people living in prosperous areas were up to five to six times more likely to participate in HE than those living in areas of disadvantage.

Widening participation funding from HEFCE and via Access Agreements, required by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) since the introduction of higher tuition fees in 2006, offer levers to universities to develop engagement and access approaches, procedures and policies to address these and other challenges.

In October 2008, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) jointly published *National Council for Educational Excellence: Recommendations*. The recommendations placed further emphasis on higher education to work with schools and academies. School-HE links, including links with colleges, are considered crucial to strategies designed to raise the attainment of learners, widen participation and promote learner progression to HE.

2.2   The local context

The London West Learning and Skills Council report in 2004 (London West LSC, 2004) demonstrated that Hillingdon had the lowest share of young people aged 16+ remaining in education in west London and the highest proportions of school leavers entering low level employment or joining the 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) category.

The Hillingdon project forms part of the local economic development initiative, *Hillingdon's Strategy for a Sustainable Economy*, which includes objectives to enable Hillingdon people to realise their full potential through education and training, and engage employers, with aims to address community needs and maximise local employment and career progression (London Borough of Hillingdon, 2005).

Local opportunities are linked predominantly to Heathrow, the largest employment site in the UK (77,000) (London Development Agency-European Social Fund (LDA-ESF), 2009). A recent employment survey (LDA-ESF, 2009) found that local employers are struggling to fill customer-facing roles because of a lack of skills and motivation among applicants.

Of the Hillingdon wards, those closest to Heathrow have less than 23% of the workforce qualified to degree level or above (LDA-ESF, 2009). There are a number of highlighted gaps in local employment and skills services, and barriers to employment include low levels of qualifications, poor literacy and numeracy, a lack of experience, and employers' perceptions of the skills and attributes of some black and minority ethnic groups (LDA-ESF, 2009). However, with the growth of the hospitality and catering sector in this area of London (LDA-ESF, 2009) it is important to ensure that skills needs are met to support sustainable employment and the local economy.

2.3   Framing the evaluation

Literature outlining the review of education for 14-19 year olds, the subsequent reforms and evolving changes provided the backdrop for the project and the framework for evaluation.

There are themes that run through the reports of Dearing (1997) and Kennedy (1997); that were proposed by Tomlinson (2004) in the context of reform for 14 – 19 education and explored in the recommendations of the National Council for Educational Excellence (DCSF and DIUS, 2008). These themes focus on the role of vocational education and training and its reliance on effective relationships between universities, employers and students – relationships explored in *Unleashing Aspiration: The Final Report of the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions* (Panel on Fair Access to the Professions, 2009) and Lord Mandelson's recent address, *Higher Education and the Modern Life* (Mandelson, 2009).

These themes and relationships not only provided context but influenced the design of the evaluation (detailed in section 4, The evaluation design).

The proposals set out by Tomlinson focused on the importance of equipping young people with attributes for higher education, employment and adult life through a process of change for 14 – 19 education. Alongside the higher education White Paper, *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003), the approach developed at the university at the outset of this project had a clear and pertinent context. This has evolved through the life of the project and is explored in the approach to the evaluation.

The role of employers as a key stakeholder group is clear throughout. It is an important feature of the project and reaffirmed the drive, presented in *The Future of Higher Education* (DfES, 2003), for universities to include a more diverse sector of the community, with changes steered by the needs of employers (Jones and Thomas, 2005).

With the drivers and context for organisations and institutions established, it is young people themselves that provided the key, and most important, focus for the evaluation.

Working with the 14-19 age range brings certain challenges. Tomlinson (2004) noted that disengagement peaks during Key Stage 4 (KS4), manifesting itself in truancy, exclusion and bad behaviour. However, a recent evaluation of a KS4 engagement programme, which included taking students out of the school environment, determined that this type of experience is positive for most pupils and has led to improvements in engaging in learning, self-esteem, enhancement of social skills and support for post-16 progression (Cowen and Burgess, 2009).

It is important that the needs of all students are met by the 14 – 19 agenda; in particular, considerations are required in order to understand the impact of the student's socio-economic background that may influence their participation (Teaching and Learning Research Programme, 2008). This suggests that there is scope for further research in this area as changes to 14 – 19 education develop and are embedded, linked to work with universities and employers.

The themes and relationships framing the evaluation come together at the point of employability. The identification through the project, by participants, of transferable skills that enhance their employability, alongside the setting in an environment considered 'aspirational', is important. Fry *et al.* (2008) considered that 'the increased focus on the development of generic (transferable) skills has increased the employability of students' (p.228) and this has been a key consideration in the evaluation.

The evaluation was framed to deliver a clear voice for young people as well as explore the curriculum and contextual changes that have emerged since 2005 (the first year of the project). The recognition by young people of the development of transferable skills through this, and similar, projects is crucial. It can influence future choices and the value placed by young people on vocational routes provided by universities.

Section 3   The Hillingdon project

3.1   Introduction

In 2005, following discussions and consultations with the London Borough of Hillingdon Community Resources Team and the Hillingdon Education Business Partnership (now Ealing and Hillingdon Education Business Partnership), the university developed a schools-HE link programme to address a mismatch in the skills of young people and local employment opportunities.

The Hillingdon project (also known as Hillingdon Junior Chefs) aimed to link schools with higher education through a programme bridging the two education sectors within a specific subject area, hospitality and catering. Working with targeted schools, the project was set up to meet a local need, to address a local skills gap and to provide students with options for their personal and career development.

3.2   An outline of the project

The project is designed to address low levels of participation in education, employment and training in the wards in the south of the borough. It enables young people in these disadvantaged areas to access training, work experience and jobs in the hospitality and catering industries.

The university employs a project lead with good knowledge of both the industry sector and the borough itself.

Each year approximately 60 young people in years 10 and 11 from target schools, mostly in disadvantaged wards and without expectations of a university education, are involved in this project (London Borough of Hillingdon, 2008a).

The 30-hour programme at the university enables students to achieve an industry-recognised qualification and participate in employer-based training sessions at a Heathrow hotel. Our industry partners include: Arora International Heathrow; Crowne Plaza Hotel London – Heathrow; London Hilton on Park Lane; Holiday Inn London – Heathrow; The London Heathrow Marriott; Radisson Edwardian Heathrow; Renaissance London Heathrow; Sheraton Skyline Heathrow; and Park Lane Hotel (Sheraton). The hospitality and catering industry is the second largest employer in Hillingdon (London Borough of Hillingdon, 2005).

The project provides students with opportunities to observe and discuss different career options and experience different forms of education with a new range of teachers. The

programme includes information on lifestyle choices with regard to catering, nutrition and hygiene, enabling students to share these experiences with their families. During the programme family members are involved through attendance at events and presentations. The programme is also linked to a Saturday club – Junior Chefs Academy – and provides students with opportunities to follow up experiences with work experience and part-time working.

Supported by Brian Turner (chef and restaurateur), a celebration event enables parents/guardians (in large numbers) to find out more about the opportunities for the young people.

The programme has a high profile in the schools involved, the university, the local community and the local authority. The continued support of partners, including Hillingdon Training since 2006, and commitment of the university to this programme have sustained the project beyond the initial pilot.

This project has also acted as a catalyst for other local initiatives. In 2007, Hillingdon launched a Young Apprenticeship programme in catering and with TVU named as a key partner; the borough has also been successful in its bid to deliver the new Diploma in Hospitality. Hillingdon schools also now operate a Hillingdon Junior Hardhats (construction) programme based on the model of Hillingdon Junior Chefs.

This evaluation assesses the impact on stakeholders and participants in the project and identifies the generic success factors for wider application across the higher education sector. Until this evaluation, supported by the HEFCE school-HE links grant, there has not been any identification or assessment of wider outcomes for the participants, their families or the local community.

There are elements of the project design with implications for teaching and learning in the schools and university settings. It is considered that the main strengths and many successes of this project are based not in the subject content but in the set-up, engagement and delivery phases. The ingredients and recipe for this project offer potential for other subject areas and settings.

3.3 The curriculum

The curriculum was planned by the university with the local authority, schools and hotels. The aims for the project were to liaise with those who teach at years 10 and 11 in schools and to work with careers officers, food technology teachers and any other relevant people,

including learning mentors, heads of year or pastoral support staff. The project accommodates two groups of 12-15 students at a time, with the aim of repeating this twice in an academic year to offer places to approximately 60 students.

A plan of 30 hours of learning was agreed that takes place over a five-day period. Teaching and learning at the university prepares students with skills enabling entry into employment. The school students are also supported by current undergraduate students undertaking hospitality. Students enter the industry standard environments at the university focused on a professional approach to learning and teaching. This is complemented by the industry-based sessions, in a hotel, providing a taster for employment opportunities.

The content includes aspects of health and safety, particularly kitchen safety; food hygiene at basic level; recognition of healthier lifestyles; and food preparation, including diet, nutrition and cultural awareness in relation to food. Sessions are both theoretical and practical and linked to students' everyday lives so that they can prepare and cook basic dishes. Sessions are planned to maximise student interactivity. All equipment and facilities are provided, so there is no cost to the families. All students complete the assessment for the award of a certificate in basic food hygiene, which is a nationally recognised certificate awarded by the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH, 2009).

In planning the curriculum it was necessary to be aware of the school timetabling and of associated school-assessed programmes, such as the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) programme (ASDAN, 2008), so that the content of this interactive programme had relevance and value to the students' lives and their work at school. In planning the project, consideration was given to the student's level of work at school and the amount of time necessary to achieve an impact on the student.

3.4   Implementing the project

Preparation included development of appropriate resources and literature for students' learning. Students are given a textbook and a reflective diary to maintain during the project, as part of the assessment requirement. Information in respect of this programme has been written to be accessible to all students of all levels and backgrounds.

The project lead liaises with all personnel associated. Initially she was responsible for negotiation and networking with all the stakeholders. She facilitates and negotiates access for schools to the project, visiting each school to provide information for teachers, students and families. Meeting students prior to the project provides continuity between schools and

the university. This continuity is maintained for those students who enrol for higher education. There is close monitoring of this progress by the project lead.

3.5   Sustainability

The university is keen to ensure that links made with Hillingdon schools, through this project, lead to the development of a regular and consistent range of activities for students and 'hard to reach' young people. The impact of wider outcomes on the students, the schools and the university is of interest. This includes the impact of the programme on students' lives and their career options, the potential for implementation of similar projects in other subject areas, and extension of the present curriculum.

3.6   The rationale for evaluation

The evaluation was planned to deliver a comprehensive overview of the project in the context of widening participation in higher education.

It aimed to identify generic success factors assisting students from groups under-represented in HE to further their education. The evaluation sought to obtain views from all those involved in the setting up of the scheme, the planning and implementation as well as those who have participated, and to derive, where possible, indicators for success and areas for improvement.

The key objectives of the evaluation were to:

- identify drivers and inhibitors for success in the current scheme;

- explore how it could be transferred to other settings and subject disciplines;

- map student pathways and progression to identify outcomes of the project;

- create a toolkit of good practice for use in assisting in transferring the project to other settings and disciplines.

Outcomes and feedback from participant evaluations, student progression and the sustained engagement of partners already demonstrate, to a limited extent, the success of the project.

The design of the evaluation is detailed in the following section.

Section 4   The evaluation design

4.1   The aims of the evaluation

The principle aim of the research was to review the Hillingdon project, capture the voices of those who have participated, and present generic success factors for application in different subject areas and settings.

4.2   Evaluation methods

This evaluation used different research methods applicable to the project (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Clarke, 1999), recognising the challenges of gathering reliable data from a wide and non-homogeneous group:

- students in the 14-19 age group;

- families with varied expectations of education;

- schools and higher education staff;

- the local authority;

- employers.

Data was obtained through mixed methods to identify outcomes of the project to date, in quantitative terms, alongside the perceptions and views of those involved, with particular focus on the participants. It was anticipated that evaluation of set-up, planning and delivery would describe and identify:

- the benefits to each group involved and to the families, teachers, employers and educational organisations;

- the participation and progression of students from schools to higher education;

- the levels of engagement and benefits between teachers, HE staff, students and families, and employers, exploring differences in teaching and learning strategies;

- the views of the negotiations with schools, local authorities and stakeholders, such as hotels and university staff;

- areas for improvement and recommendations for similar projects in different subject areas and settings;

- the impact of the curriculum and its development in the schools, identifying changes, with examples of attitudinal and expectation shifts by students.

As the project was originally implemented for year 10 students (aged approximately 14) in 2005, at the stage of the evaluation, data was limited to those students who had undertaken the scheme to date and those who had transferred to the university (aged 18-19) in the academic years 2007/08 and 2008/09. This data pertains to a small number of students only.   It was not possible, within the timeframe, to obtain data on students' career progression from those who had attended the scheme and had not transferred to the university, though three working students not at university joined one focus group (FGP 13).

4.3   The evaluation phases

In planning the evaluation there were four overlapping phases:

- evaluation of the set-up and implementation of the scheme;

- evaluation of the engagement of students, teachers and other stakeholders;

- evaluation of delivery of the scheme and to elicit areas of improvement;

- assessing the impact of the project and its wider application.

The four phases were not discrete and were addressed in the different methods used to obtain data.

4.4   The research methods

The mixed-method approach, with qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, enabled analysis and triangulation.   This aimed to add rigour, completeness and confirmation through replicability of the data (Knafl and Breitmayer, 1991; Casey and Murphy, 2009).

An attitude scale was used to identify changes after the project, with before and after indicators. Students were asked to reflect on their attitudes prior and post participation in the project. It is recognised that this may limit the accuracy of these findings.

Qualitative research methods used were focus groups, group and individual interviews, vox pops, case studies, social networking (Facebook) membership and entries, an open event and an award ceremony where data was gathered on boards and charts. The report uses voices of those interviewed and data from the databases that were made available to the research team. These inform the subsequent data analysis.

Quantitative data was collected for all available outcomes that could denote success or achievements of the project. There were limited available sources for progression of students from schools who had completed the project or others for comparative data. The samples used to obtain data were from all participating schools (8), as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: School profiles

School code	Type of school	Single or mixed	Total no of students
School A	Comprehensive	Single (boys)	560
School B	Comprehensive	Mixed	1369
School C	Comprehensive	Mixed	1230
School D	Comprehensive	Mixed	1181
School E	Comprehensive	Mixed	1149
School F	Comprehensive	Mixed	826
School G	Comprehensive	Single (girls)	1043
School H	Comprehensive	Mixed	1048

Source: Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009)

Table 2: Organisations involved in the evaluation

Organisations	Possible number	Number included in evaluation
Schools	8	8
Hotels	4	3
University	1	1
Local authority	1	1

4.5   The respondents

The schools participating in the scheme linked with one university school of hospitality and catering, and arrangements were made with one borough of London training authority that linked with local industries. The total sample group of 97 respondents is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The range of respondents

Organisation	Respondent(s)	Number
The schools	Teachers	12
	School assistant head	1
	School administrator	1
	Students	42
The university	Lecturers	6
	Mentor	1
	Administrators	2
	Students	15
	Honorary professor	1
The hotels	Hotel human resources managers	3
	Hotel chef	1
Other stakeholders	Hillingdon Training	2
	The local authority	2
Families	Parents	2
	Friend	1
Others	Young people in work	3
	Facebook members (37)	2
Total		**97**

4.6 Development of the data tools

The open questions used on the semi-structured schedules sought information on the four phases of the project: the set-up and implementation of the scheme; the engagement of students, teachers and other stakeholders; delivery of the scheme and eliciting areas of improvement; and assessing the impact of the project for a wider application. Each schedule was reviewed by two members of staff external to the research team for its applicability and relevance and to enhance rigour (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

4.7 Ethics and consent

This evaluation, with its research approach, is compliant with the university's *Research Governance Policy* and *Research Ethics Code of Practice* (Thames Valley University, 2009a and 2009b).

An evaluation board was set up with terms of reference to oversee the project development through its processes, monitoring and final report submission. This included membership from the local authority, schools, employers, the university and the evaluation team. A report

was given monthly on progress issues. The evaluation team included two researchers, the project manager, and administrator. All aspects of the research were discussed by the team prior to implementation.

An application was made to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee and was approved. The local authority (London Borough of Hillingdon, 2009) and all the schools were approached for their agreement and permission to undertake the evaluation. Information about the evaluation (with the development of a report) was sent to schools, who circulated this to all parents and students. Access and arrangements to meet with students, teachers and families was gained via the individual schools' information systems, and agreement with parents was through the schools' normal routes of communication. Of particular concern was the compliance with guidelines for research with the 14-19 age group. Permission was sought to have agreement from all parents or guardians with this age group prior to any data being obtained and used, including the data from the attitude scale, as well as obtaining individual consent from students. This also applied to students at university who were under 19 years of age. Any data to be used through media recording required a further specific consent form as well as consent from the student's parent or guardian for any material to be used.

All participants were asked to provide their permission to consent to all data being used, that would be confidential to the researchers and made anonymous. All quotations to be used would be referenced to groups and not individually identifiable, unless a separate agreement was made, as above.

4.8   Data collection

Quantitative data was collected from the local authority schools from online sources. Of particular interest was the level of GSCE points scoring at each school and entry to the university.

Student GCSE achievement was used as a comparison with those who were taking part in the project. Data was collected on all students who had entered the university since commencement of the scheme. Two years of data were available from students so far transferred into the university courses.

The attitude scale (33 responses)

An attitude scale, in the form of a questionnaire, was devised for use with the students to assess changes prior to and after undertaking the project. This was based on Oppenheim's (1992) suggestions for rating scales using positive and negative poles.

Four areas of changes in behaviour were sought: teamwork, motivation, career aspirations and self-esteem/development.. Scores were based on students' self-perceptions of a three-part rating of 'Not at all'*, '*A little', or 'Definitely'. Total scores were used for individuals and categories, which were cross-mapped. The scale was tested with students who were not part of the evaluation and redesigned for clarity, with two statements revised. The scale was used for students in schools and those who had entered university. Its use was considered indicative rather than reality; 33 responses were received.

All qualitative data was obtained through interviews by one or two members of the research team. The variety of methods used to collect different forms of data from all those who had participated in the project are given below.

Focus groups (7 (3 in the university and 4 in schools))

The main approach to gathering data from all groups of students was to use focus groups.

This approach enabled the team to gather ideas from a large group of people at one time through a structured approach in obtaining information (Kreuger, Casey and Casey, 2000; Morgan, 1997; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). This was considered appropriate to students in the age group; it encouraged ideas and participation on similar topics and generated reflection of views and feelings among the group (Campbell, McNamara and Gilroy, 2004).

A schedule of questions was devised for use with all groups and to provide focus data. There was a set of 8 questions, framed on the aims of the project evaluation. Each focus group had a researcher who asked questions and a moderator who made notes and encouraged participation from different members of the group (Kreuger, Casey and Casey, 2000). Focus groups took place in the schools and the university. The numbers of students attending each group varied between 4 and 13.

Group interviews (8)

These differed from the focus groups, in that the questions were focused for a small number of participants (2 to 3). An interview schedule was used for each, with one interviewer. Group interviews were used for students, families and school teachers.

One-to-one interviews (24)

Interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire schedule were used for students in the university (2), school teaching staff (5), university staff (9), hoteliers (3) and stakeholders (5). Two different schedules were used according to the role and involvement of the interviewee.

Vox pops (10)

A sample was asked to provide a video recording of their views of the scheme. The aim was to use these as video recordings and for use in the toolkit, but they also provided further data. A semi-structured set of questions was used to promote spontaneous responses from different groups of people.

Events (2)

Two events were held to capture views of parents and other students who may or may not have attended university. At these events notice-boards and 'post-it' boards were used for all who attended to give views on the scheme under the title of 'Your Views Matter'. Both boards provided further data. Interviews and videos were also completed.

Data from social networking (37 participants, 10 posts)

A Facebook page was set up to be able to communicate with students about the project evaluation, invite them to events and to ask for views on the scheme. This gained further opinions from students, adding to data collected for the toolkit and evaluation report. This will be ongoing as a networking site for Hillingdon project students in the future.

Case studies (2)

Selected case scenarios were chosen to illustrate the influence of the project on some of the participants. These were for use in the toolkit.

4.9   Data analysis

Quantitative analysis

Available data was acquired from university and school records and the Council, and online government sources. These were entered onto a spreadsheet and tables to show different categories of data.   Data was cross-referenced between the focus groups (Campbell, McNamara and Gilroy, 2004; Veal, 2006). Tables were compiled to demonstrate variations between focus groups, and descriptive statistics were used to show variations where relevant and linked to the qualitative data and the emergent themes.

Qualitative data

The framework for analysis was taken from Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Strauss and Corbin, 1997; and Bryman and Burgess, 1994. This was a five-stage approach comprising:

> 1) Data review;
>
> 2) Selective coding;
>
> 3) Group themes and agree categories;
>
> 4) Review all data and categorise data according to groups;
>
> 5) Reflect and identify gaps and differences between groups.

This was undertaken using a stepped approach (see Figure 1) that allowed movement backward and forward from one stage to the other for confirmation and replicability.

Figure 1: Data analysis, five stages showing movement of analytical steps
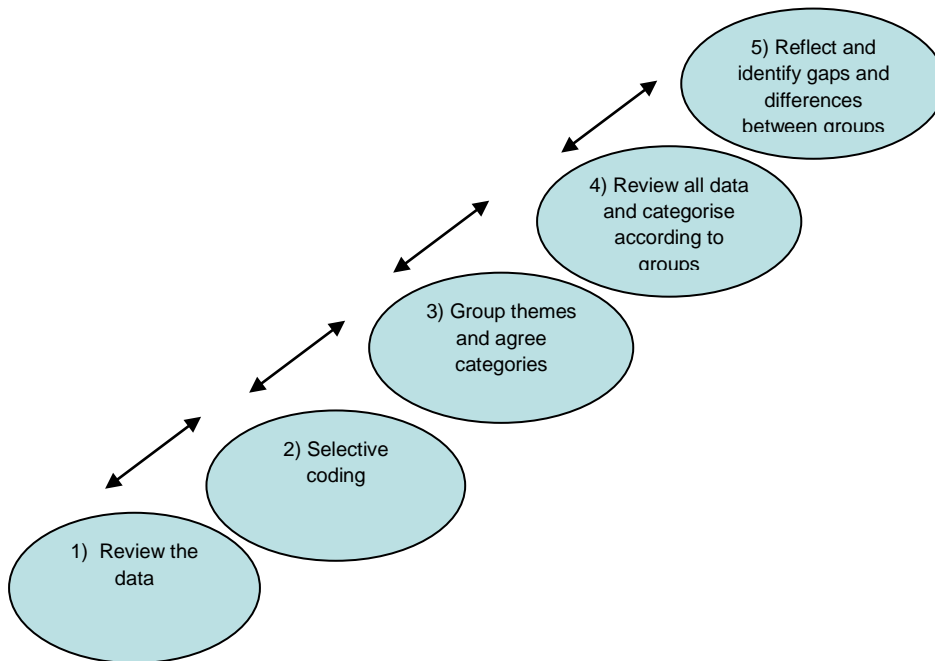
All the interviews were transcribed verbatim, where possible. Each member of the research team had a full set of audio data to review with a data sheet. The two researchers reviewed each transcript with the audio recording. Transcripts of the focus groups were cross-checked by researchers and moderators. Coding of the transcripts used the language of the respondents (Strauss and Corbin, 1997). The team collectively agreed coding for the datasets for each group (e.g. FGP 01 = focus group 1).

Data from the focus groups, group interviews, one-to-one interviews, vox pops, social networking site and events was all used to inform the data for analysis and included in the initial coding system. A preliminary set of codes were grouped and from these key themes emerged. The key themes are:

The importance of a professional approach and setting

Exploring options and making decisions – jobs and careers

Impacts on participant motivation and self-esteem

A final stage in the development of the analysis was to cross-reference the quantitative and qualitative data. This form of triangulation of matching data across methods aimed to verify the findings emerging from the data (Casey and Murphy, 2009).

4.10   Reliability of data

An audit trail of the events of this evaluation was recorded. Triangulation between methods and cross-referencing between focus groups was done to verify and strengthen findings (Knafl and Breitmayer, 1991). Cross-checking of data sets with members of the team was also carried out to verify the emergent themes. Trustworthiness of the data was an aim, so each member of the research team verified the data recordings and transcriptions.

4.11   Risk assessment

A risk assessment audit tool was developed from the proforma (Appendix 4) to identify problematic areas in completion of the research. This was initially reviewed every four weeks and latterly on a two-weekly basis. It was used at project team meetings to identify areas for monitoring progress of the research.

A project plan was initially developed with a timescale for all activities.

The following section presents the findings from this evaluation.

Section 5   The findings of the evaluation

5.1   Introduction

This section presents the outcomes of the evaluation. This includes a review of the targeted approach to engagement with schools as well as presentation of the views of participants, teachers and stakeholders (including hotel and university staff). The qualitative findings, following the feedback resulting from the attitude scale, are grouped by theme. The section concludes with an overview of the issues and considerations related to the transferability of the scheme to other institutions and sectors.

5.2   The targeted approach

The targeted approach taken by the Hillingdon project was clear from the outset of the evaluation. All the schools involved in the project since 2005 are in, close to, or serve the wards to the south of the borough. These wards are identified as the most disadvantaged in the borough (London West LSC, 2004; London Borough of Hillingdon, 2008b) using the Index of Multiple Deprivation.

The HEFCE POLAR (Participation of Local Areas) mapping (www.hefce.ac.uk/widen/polar/), presenting the participation of young people in higher education for geographical areas, shows that the lowest levels of participation for the London West LSC region are in the south of Hillingdon.

Using GCSE results (5+ A* - C grades) as a comparator for achievement shows that 6 of the 8 schools that took part in the project are below the borough, London and national averages for GCSE points scored in 2007 and in 2008 (http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/performancetables/).

Robust data, assessing the effectiveness of the programme in terms of progression, is restricted to participants who entered the university in 2007/08 and 2008/09. In 2007/08, 11 former project participants entered the university. For 2008/09, the cohort was 7 students. These students were from four schools (A, C, E and G – see Table 1 in section 4.4 for coding) out of the eight schools (A – H) involved in the project during this period. Although the schools vary in terms of GCSE achievement profiles, 13 out of the 18 students were below the GCSE averages for the borough.

There are targeting and widening participation features of the project that have developed well. The project has reached target schools and students in terms of location and

achievement, and progression to higher education has resulted from a targeted curriculum intervention.

The curriculum intervention and enhanced information and guidance for participants, their teachers and their families are considered key features of the project and are referred to in project documentation and reports. It was important to explore these data findings using qualitative methods exploring perceptions of impact in terms of aspiration, motivation, decision-making and progression.

5.3   The findings from the attitude scale (reflective questionnaire)

The attitude scale devised explored shifts, based on reflective reporting, in attitude prior to and after undertaking the project. The responses were gathered through questionnaires structured to divide into four themes:

- teamwork;
- motivation;
- career aspiration;
- self-esteem.

Thirty-three (33) responses were received from 29 school students, 1 university student and 3 young people now in full-time work.

The responses indicate significant (positive) shifts related to career aspirations. Respondents also reflected positively on a shift in their attitudes to teamwork. Their reflective scoring did not indicate a shift, positive or negative, in terms of their perceptions of their motivation and self-esteem.

Drilling into the themes revealed that respondents consistently identified key factors underpinning their responses. Analysis in relation to career aspirations, with the greatest reported shift in attitude, showed that the respondents identified participation in the industry (hotel) visit as the most significant positive factor. For teamwork, respondents reported that their attitude in relation to their willingness to share readily with others had increased. In their reflections of changes to their motivation and self-esteem, respondents reported increased interest in their studies alongside more involvement in curriculum activities outside school.

The questionnaire also asked respondents to report participation in additional activities, other than their part/full-time study/work. This showed that 11 of the 33 respondents took

part in regular recreational (sport/leisure) activities, 7 attended an evening or weekend class, and 7 were undertaking a hospitality-related course. These findings offer context in relation to the respondents' motivation, in particular. The number of respondents undertaking a short course in hospitality suggests that the project had an impact that may influence participants' choices and decisions in the future.

5.4   Participant and stakeholder views

This section presents the views of participants, teachers and other stakeholders (including university staff and employers). There was an enthusiastic response from everyone we met involved in the project. This often led to conversations and discussions widening the key themes identified through the evaluation design process. The findings are presented in key themes arising through the design and structure of the interviews, with the themes that emerged.

The key themes explored and arising during the evaluation are the importance of the professional environment, jobs and careers, and the impacts for motivation and self-esteem.

The importance of a professional approach and setting

A principle purpose of the evaluation was the identification and exploration of changes in student behaviour and attitude in the school and/or home setting.

One of the unanticipated, yet significant, outcomes identified through this evaluation was the characteristics, considered 'professional' by hotel and university staff, displayed by participants:

'*We learned how to cook in a professional way'* (FGP 04, school student).

Consistent feedback from hotel and university staff suggests that the behaviour of participants was significantly different when compared to experiences of generic schools visits and tasters at the university or work experience placements in the hotels. Although it was difficult for teaching staff in both schools and the university to identify specific events or changes in the programme design, it was clear that hotel staff, in particular, considered the level of student commitment and engagement remarkable.

The setting of the project at the university is considered to have an important effect, alongside the requirements within the profession to work in a team, respect others and manage time effectively. Ground rules were set at the university associated with service in a professional setting. Professional characteristics displayed, such as wearing a uniform and

giving the students a professional identity and status (for example, calling the students in the university 'chef'), offered mutual respect. These characteristics may account for changes in student behaviour. The positive role modelling of the undergraduate students, with their approaches and experiences of work placement, is also considered an influential factor.

Students considered there were *'More rules at university'* (FGP 04, school student), with a clear focus on discipline, timekeeping and trust. Students perceived that they were given more independence and autonomy to explore ideas and take responsibility for their learning:

'[The experience] made us feel older and more responsible' (FGP 01, HE student).

'At university they allow you to do more and to make your own decisions' (FGP 04, school student).

'Allows you to experiment a bit more, while you are learning' (FGP 04, school student).

Participants' enthusiasm for their learning, and a professional approach, is evident in the language many used to discuss features of the project: *'cost-saving preparations', 'more advanced equipment', 'health hazards', 'cross-contamination'.*

Applying knowledge gained from the project was relevant to many students. Some were able to see the relevance of a transfer of knowledge from the calculations of recipes and ingredients to their maths work, while others connected biological contamination with their studies in science. The mix of learning and linking practice to the theory was considered *'a good mix':*

'[They] really enjoyed being involved and getting some life skills' (SCHCo 01, assistant head teacher).

There were several skills identified as life skills by the participants, teachers and higher education lecturers, although nearly every participant commented on the acquisition of one skill in particular:

'Deboning a chicken – new skill', 'did not think it would be so complicated' (FGP 03, school students).

This indicates that teaching skills considered useful, albeit with some complexity, can generate enthusiasm and pride among young people. Participants were required to work together in groups through various tasks, and many noted a difference between working at school in groups and working at university:

'[We] learned social skills and teamwork that [we] would not get in school, accessed as a direct result of the project' (FGP 01, HE student).

The design, delivery, key skills and behavioural outcomes emanating from the professional and industry-focused features of the project also affected participant and stakeholder views of employment and study options.

Exploring options and making decisions – jobs and careers

Employer links were an essential design feature when the project was first discussed and developed in liaison with the London Borough of Hillingdon. They are a recognised and established strength at the university, particularly in the delivery of hospitality education.

While a small number of participants considered that, by year 10, they had already made their career choices, for others, taking part in the project *'opened up the students' eyes'* to other job and/or career options:

'Catering not previously on the radar – I would not have thought of being a chef when I was 14' (FGP 03, school student).

All groups identified the value for participants in seeing the types of jobs available in the sector. One family suggested that although their son had been offered a job in construction he felt he was not suited to this, and the project offered him a change of direction (FAM 01, parent). Aspirations were not limited to the hospitality sector. Participants and their teachers stated that the opportunity to visit an employer strengthened awareness and understanding of work in different organisations. The hotels were also aware of the value of participants '*seeing a place of work for themselves'* (HOT 02, hotel staff), as well as the potential to recruit: *'[I] have a project student training at the Skyline'* (HOT 01, hotel staff).

Teachers spoke of the applicability of the project to students' lives, which provided an alternative avenue for a career, even if it was not their main choice. Teachers also indicated that it provided additional choices for families to consider when promoting options to their children.

The professional approach and employer links presented direct and tangible impacts for this evaluation and were consistently commented upon by all involved, including families and teachers. The next section explores additional factors with significant and positive impacts on participant motivation and self-esteem.

Impacts on participant motivation and self-esteem

The project had an impact on the personal aspirations of many students. One teacher spoke of five students having changed their aspirations, and students presented ways in which the project had altered their eating habits, lifestyle, healthy eating and aspirations to cook:

'*Good experience – I am cooking at home now'* (FGP 05, school student).

'*Had never thought about how food was prepared – now prepare from raw'* (FGP 09, school student).

'*At home I will only have steak or chicken – not nuggets'* (FGP 01, school student).

Parents also spoke of their and their child's pride in their achievement and the ripple effect at home:

'*I have five children, [it is] having an effect – the younger siblings want to have a go [at cooking]'* (FAM 02, parent).

All groups referred to changes in participants' levels of self-confidence. While teachers spoke of: *'a growth in confidence,' 'builds students' confidence,'* and *'students blossoming,'* participants stated that: '*it boosts your confidence,' 'Boosts your confidence in science,' 'gives confidence and self-confidence'.*

Teachers were also positive about the change in behaviour of participants in terms of their motivation to learn and in their personal development. They particularly commented upon students *'becoming more mature'* and *'putting childish behaviour behind them'* (FGP 11, teacher) and displaying increased levels of motivation: *'Turned on to lessons … Students are really brought out of themselves … Making more effort'* (FGP 06, teachers).

Teachers were not only surprised at the development of students but also enthusiastic about the effects on the student of the experience, by offering comments such as: '*Low self-esteem can be improved,'* '*Gives students value,' 'seeing a young person completely turned around,'* and '*More inspired and enthusiastic with exams'* (FGP 06 and 07, teachers).

All groups emphasised the importance for students to gain a sense of achievement with receipt of an award. All students achieved a certificate. This was publicly acclaimed at the presentation event where parents could see participants' work. The requirement to complete a portfolio of evidence that could be shown to the family was highlighted by families:

'Something to show that they have achieved something as a form of recognition' (FAM 01, parent).

Choices about the future were indicated by a preference, by some, to come to university. Students saw that a university has potential for employment as the work experience opportunities are good:

'It changed my mind – I can go into university ... my parents were pretty pleased' (FGP 04, school students).

For many of those who may not have previously considered it, going to university had become an option. A straw poll of a participant focus group (FGP 03) revealed that all (7) now considered that their career chances would be better following a university education.

An unforeseen, but not unpredictable, aspect of this project has been the development of links between industry and schools. School networks with London hotels are starting to grow, causing more direct partnerships. These links are also associated with the university and assist in the development of careers for students.

The following section explores applications and considerations related to the findings for different industry sectors and education settings, highlighting key issues and factors influencing success.

5.5   Transferring and improving the project approach – key considerations

The change in the environment, in location, attitude and atmosphere was a stimulus for participants. The opportunity to work in a teaching environment designed for industry was a key feature for students and developed the sense of professionalism detailed previously.

Treating participants as adults offered a greater sense of responsibility and stimulated individual approaches to learning:

'Allows you to experiment a bit more while you are learning' (FGP 04, school student).

'My parents have seen a change in me – something inspired me, books and uni, it turned me around, makes me feel differently about all the stuff I do' (FGP 07, school student).

The careful targeting of the project to serve a local skills gap is also important. From the accounts given by all stakeholders interviewed, the project has stimulated further partnerships between industry, schools and the university. Teachers identified the importance of offering students examples of career choices, and links now involve hotel staff in the schools. The links and partnerships between the three forms of organisations are all seen as positive partnerships to achieve success for students:

'There is a direct correlation with progression routes' (OSH 01, stakeholder – local authority).

However, there are inconsistencies in the project, with the potential to present challenges for stakeholders. Although a clear geographic and industry sector focus has successfully extended partnership working between the schools, hotels and university, the schools have engaged and selected students for many different reasons and with a variety of expectations and experiences. It is recognised that the autonomy of schools to target and select students considered appropriate often enables involvement in projects; however, this can create vulnerabilities and could, in part, be addressed through clearer guidance to schools from the outset.

For the university and hotels, staff development remains crucial in developing this and similar projects. Although the university delivers a wide range of interventions with schools and FE, the development of an intensive programme rather than a one-off or short summer school can generate anxieties:

'Apprehensive – I was not used to school children' (HET 01, HE lecturer).

It is important that this, and similar, projects consider barriers created by the age of the participants, the use of (industry) terminology, and the differences in the experiences, preparation and focus of students involved:

'Hotels are naive about how little students knew about hospitality – language use and their abilities' (HOT 01, hotel staff).

Careful planning of the programme and curriculum with schools, industry and the university, involving all, can reduce these and similar challenges to an extent. It is the considered view of the authors of this report that a tenacious and industry-experienced project lead, alongside the enthusiasm and commitment of all stakeholders, including senior management, is required to reach the point of delivery.

The approach to curriculum and delivery planning that has developed through this project has required careful facilitation. This has enabled stakeholders to identify generic successes and considerations for the development of projects, in addition to good practice in terms of employment, health and safety, and safeguarding for young people and vulnerable adults. The considerations include:

- mapping awards and subject content, such as food hygiene, with school curricula (including key skills/personal learning and thinking skills);

- strong leadership and liaison;

- speedy resolution of issues (e.g. participant non-attendance);

- good communication between stakeholders;

- articulating to participants differences in learning and teaching styles and defining the approach to be taken in the university setting;

- considering group sizes and staff ratio;

- clarifying differences between the settings and school to prepare expectations;

- ensuring that sessions are fun, applicable in school, and relevant to employability and life(style);

- developing a social networking environment linking participants to materials and updating all on project developments.

Facebook has proven a valuable tool for liaising with both participants and staff involved in this project. A Facebook post provides the closing comment from a participant who took part in the project this year:

'This was such a great experience. I had such a good time. The people were great. The food was superb. Had a fab time thanks.'

The final section of this report presents recommendations and considerations for the improvement of this project and for the application of this approach to different subject areas and settings.

Section 6   Recommendations and conclusions

The recommendations and conclusions arising from the findings of the evaluation and through the conversations and discussions with stakeholders have been drawn together into six key areas.

There is a multitude of useful guidance and information assisting and supporting HE to engage with schools. The Aimhigher programme has developed partnership working across sectors and stages effectively.   The recommendations grouped here reflect particular features of the project that can be applied in generic and more general interactions with schools.

1.   Consider the impact of the environment

The importance of accessing facilities at the university for this project cannot be overstated. Not only has it exposed participants to the environment and promoted the quality of HE provision, it has set the tone of the project. Participants recognised that their project is valued by the university and that their experience would mirror the experience of the undergraduates with whom they worked.

Challenges related to capacity when arranging access for schools and widening participation activities are common across the sector.   However, the findings of this evaluation demonstrate that access to specialist facilities, although challenging at early stages, has a significant impact on the behaviour, motivation and engagement of school students in projects. This impact can reach both the schools and home environments.

This impact is deepened by the involvement of undergraduates from the subject area and the commitment of full-time lecturers – supported, if required, by staff development relevant to work with the age group – to the project at the university.

2.   Presenting next steps and options

Context and relevance are important for young people. For all activities, interventions and projects, it is important to participants where they may lead in terms of both further study and employment. The delivery of this information in general terms can be useful. However, information specific to the locality and subject area, alongside employer links that can realise ambitions in terms of work experience/placement or a part-time job, is extremely valuable.

This approach is highly valued by parents and teachers and can broaden the range of discussions in the home and at school related to students' next steps and options.

Discussions with the local authority, as in this project, may also prove fruitful in identifying, targeting and, crucially, funding (probably as a pilot) projects and interventions.

3.   Improving motivation and raising self-esteem

Outcomes such as greater levels of motivation or raised self-esteem are often considered intangible and difficult to measure and therefore end up in the background. In part, this appeared to be the case in this project. However, it is clear in this evaluation that they can come, for the participants, to the foreground and drastically alter attitudes, engagement and the performance of young people.

The attitudinal shifts of the participants towards further study and employment provided the evaluation team with outcomes related to motivation and self-esteem. An area of improvement for this project and a recommendation for similar projects is a 'light touch' approach to assessing students' motivations and perceptions related to the subject area and sector prior to delivery. This could take place during the introductory stages, in schools, when students select or are guided to participate.

The reporting and tracking of this data would strengthen this project and may also support the contextual value-added assessment applied in schools by OfSTED, as well as attainment and attendance levels.

4.   Getting the curriculum right

Timing, level and delivery are the key points for consideration when developing a curriculum-focused intervention.

Careful consideration regarding the timing and length of interventions can make tangible differences to outcomes. Targeting students at a stage in their studies when impact measures can be obtained is important and promotes further engagement by schools; as the indications of increased motivation and raised self-esteem suggest, This needs to be coupled with the targeting of students for whom a project/intervention may have direct relevance to their next steps in terms of further study and/or employment. Year 10 is considered a suitable stage and has worked well for this vocational project. It may also work at level 3 for students in year 12/first year of FE.

The length of interventions/projects is also important. The vast majority of participants felt that the project could be longer; however, this may reduce impact in the schools, by limiting the numbers involved. Discussions around length should be led by schools and seek to strike a balance between engagement (in the project) and distraction (from school studies).

The identification of the level should be led by the schools. The intention of this project is not to stretch the students too far but to focus on the experience of the project – in particular the 'professional' approach to delivery and the exposure to local employers. These have proved important success factors. It is important at the early stages of project design to discuss and agree with schools the targeting of students and to identify outcomes for those students. This has developed through this project, but was assisted by the targeting of specific schools.

The opportunity for students to complete a qualification within the lifecycle of a project or as a direct result is beneficial for the students, attractive to schools and employers, and valued by parents.

It is also important that the curriculum is fun, engaging, links to students' lives and supports interactive group and teamwork promoting participation.

5.   Targeting and tracking

Identified measurements of impact aligned to cost-effectiveness will aid weight at start-up, delivery and review stages. These measurements may enable access to funding and will almost certainly offer projects further credibility internally and externally.

This project has benefitted from its targeted approach, identified with the local authority, and the existence of direct progression routes within the university. These circumstances, in particular progression to the higher education institution, may not exist in different settings. However, it is conceivable that with an FE partner similar projects could be developed to address local skills gaps and support local schools.

Tracking is a challenge, particularly for initiatives focused on the hard to reach. It is recommended that the lead partner, likely to be the HEI, maintain regular contact with participants (on an 'opt out' basis) to monitor their progress and assess their outcomes on completion. It is considered that a carefully administered and designed Facebook presence may provide a way forward.

6.   Profile, profile, profile

It is crucial that successful projects are on the radar of the vice-chancellor and senior management, the chief executive of the local authority, the head teachers and employers.

An event, such as an awards ceremony, provides an important opportunity to celebrate the achievement of the participants and the support of their teachers and families. It also

increases the awareness and value of projects among stakeholders and provides a valuable opportunity to extend partnership working. Valuing and recognising the importance of communication and networking can raise awareness among employers of the possibilities of collaboration with the education sector.

In conclusion, the evaluation of the project demonstrates that school-HE links partnered with employer and local authority can be developed and sustained. The clear commitment of all involved to target and address a local issue is crucial and can lead to further collaborations with an impact for students and their local communities.

Glossary of terms

ASDAN	Awarding body offering the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE)
BIS	Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
CIEH	Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
DCSF	Department of Children, Schools and Families
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
EBP	Education Business Partnership
ESF	European Social Fund
FE	Further education
HE	Higher education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
KS4	Key Stage 4
LDA	London Development Agency
LSC	Learning and Skills Council
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
WP	Widening participation

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Appendix 1

The Evaluation Board Terms of Reference

The project board will comprise representatives from all stakeholders

The Project Board will be chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor

The purpose of the board is to:

- Oversee the management of the research evaluation
- Provide advice on the range of people who could contribute to the evaluation
- Assist with access to the various institutions and the personnel
- Assist with raising awareness of the evaluation so that access and consent may be gained form institutions, parents, teachers and students
- Provide advice on the sources of data required to meet the aims of the evaluation
- Monitor the progress and review the risk assessment
- Receive reports on the progress of the project

The Board members will be a source of information for the research team throughout the evaluation.

A meeting will be held initially to bring all parties together. Subsequent meetings will be held through electronic communication on a bi-monthly basis and advice will be sought from the board on the final report.

Appendix 2

The Evaluation Board Members

Graeme Baker, Head of Widening Participation, Thames Valley University (Research team)

Jane Burchett, Deputy Head, Bishop Ramsey CE School, Hillingdon

Caroline Ennis, Research Associate, Thames Valley University (Research team)

Charlotte Gilbert, Human Resources Manager, Sheraton Heathrow, London

Peter Sale, Director, Hillingdon Training, Hillingdon

Dr. Julia Magill-Cuerden, Senior Research Fellow, Thames Valley University (Research team)

Dr. Mike Mortimer, Deputy Director, Institute of Teaching, Innovation and Learning, Thames Valley University

Dr. Ian Tunbridge, Deputy Vice Chancellor (External), Thames Valley University (Chairperson)

 Helena Webster, Economic Development Manager, London Borough of Hillingdon

Appendix 3

The SETH Evaluation Team

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Appendix 4

Risk Assessment Proforma

AREA 1 Setting up project

- Undertaking the research in the short timespan;
- Getting the right equipment to develop the project;
- Appointing an administrator and research fellow to develop project in early stages;
- The project is occuring in the summer term and therefore speed is required to ensure access to students;
- Students are taking examinations at this time of year, therefore it is a difficult time to engage teachers, student and teachers in other activities.

AREA 2 Process of project

- Acquiring the full details for data collection;
- Gaining acess to all participants for all stages of data development; students, teachers and familes and gaining their willingness for interviews either individual or group;
- This is examination time and not all student will be in school and therefore access may be limited;
- Developing expertise to obtain vox pops;
- Recognising that the project is in a specialist area and discovering what may and may not be portable to other subject areas.

AREA 3 Completion of project

- Gaining full outcome data on all students;
- Meeting timescales and gaining data in term time;
- Gaining enough material to develop tool kit;
- Transferablity to other areas could be questioned as to the willingness of other subject groups to particpate and engage in this type of scheme;
- Recognising that this model is based on a practice component and determing flexibility in the model for alternative models for use by others to engage in such a scheme;
- Ensuring the outcomes demonstrate the transferability of other subject disciplines and how to ensure the portability of the project.

Appendix 5

The Project Team

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