

ENTERPRISING ATTRIBUTES AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS - PROJECT EVALUATION

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- St Benet Biscop RC Voluntary Aided High School
- Skill Force
- Director of Schools and Family Support

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Northumberland InfoNet was commissioned by the Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP) and Learn 2 Work to undertake an evaluation of the Enterprising Attributes and Employability Skills (EAES) project.

Out of the 15 high schools in Northumberland 6 are substantially underperforming with attainment levels as low as 28% - the UK average being 45.8%. In addition 6 schools also have a high level of pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) – 12% to 15% compared with the UK average of 8%. Certain parts of the County also have very high concentrations of young people who are not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET). Targeting these areas is a central element of ‘Whatever it Takes’; the Young People’s Education, Employment and Training strategy for Northumberland 2008-2011. A key theme of the strategy is ‘Learning Provision’ which aims to develop a pattern of accessible, high quality learning provision, both formal and informal, that meets employer demand and responds to the needs, aspirations and potential of all young people, prepares them effectively for adult and working life and enables them to achieve appropriate qualifications.

Employers are increasingly demanding key employability skills alongside vocational and traditional academic qualifications and the flexible curriculum gives schools the opportunity to offer students additional programmes at Key Stage 4 (KS4 – 14-16 year olds undertaking their GCSEs). The EAES project, administered in High Schools in Northumberland, offers KS4 pupils the opportunity to achieve a formalised employability skills qualification. Schools offer this project alongside and integral to their GCSE and vocational programmes. At project completion the students gain 3 Wider Key Skills; Problem Solving, Working with Others and Improving Own Learning; at Level 2, which is worth 104 SCAAT (School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables) points. In addition they also receive a Northumberland Employability Skills Award, formally endorsed by CBI, ILM and the North East Chamber of Commerce.

The key objectives for the EAES project are:

- To provide students who would not normally gain 5 GCSEs at A* - C with the opportunity to gain wider key skills via a recognised qualification (with a GCSE equivalent) which focuses on employability skills rather than the traditional academic subjects.
- To give students who would normally be NEET an opportunity to use this qualification as progression into employment or further learning.
- To meet employers demand for recognised employability skills alongside the traditional academic qualifications.
- To raise the attainment levels within the high schools, particularly those underperforming.
- To create capacity within the schools to embed this additional learning across the county thereby generally raising the attainment levels across the County.
- To achieve 750 additional qualifications in the 2007-08 academic year.
- To encourage schools to “match” the project and sponsor additional students in their school in the first year 2007-08.
- To provide an element of capacity building within the schools to allow continuation of the project when the funding ends by developing the tutor support and assessment skills “in-house” and become an approved centre for delivery of the qualification(s).
- To embed the programme within the curriculum and thereby enable all KS4 students in Northumberland to achieve an “employability” skills qualification in addition to their GCSE’s.

The required outcomes of the evaluation were to;

- determine the views of pupils on the programme both before and after it had taken place
- determine the views of teaching staff involved in the programme
- assess the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme's implementation and outcomes
- assess the effect of the programme on pupils regarding their readiness for work
- assess the relevance of the qualification for employers.

Of the 6 schools participating directly in the evaluation, 149 pupils completed a pre-project questionnaire, 145 pupils completed a post-project questionnaire and 43 pupils attended focus group sessions. A further 18 pupils gave feedback for a case study. A member of staff in each school provided thoughts and comments on the EAES project and Skill Force provided detailed feedback in the form of their own evaluation reports covering 7 schools (2 of which were in addition to those covered in this evaluation) and comments from 2 members of staff. A total of 40 businesses were successfully interviewed to provide feedback from potential employers; this included additional comment from 3 Northumberland Business Ambassadors.

The main reason pupils participated in the EAES project was to gain a further qualification, however at project completion pupils felt they had benefited in a number of other ways:

- 99% had gained new skills
- 83% felt they had gained more confidence
- 66% felt they had better longer term opportunities.

Furthermore almost all pupils (97%) felt they now had a better understanding of the skills employers were looking for in potential new recruits and an even higher number (98%) felt confident in using their new skills in post.

Focus groups highlighted the pupil's enjoyment of the project, in particular the practical aspects. There did appear to be a time-tabling issue however; both pupils and teachers expressed concern about missing regular lessons, some felt the

activities would have been more appropriate spread over a longer period of time, earlier in the school year or indeed in a different school year altogether (year 10).

Teaching staff were very happy with the content and organisation of the EAES project and were satisfied with the administration of the project by Skill Force. The improvement of both pupil and school attainment levels was considered to be extremely worthwhile. Liaison between Skill Force and school staff was largely successful and the existence of an external administrator was perceived to have a positive effect on the participating students.

Funding for the project in future years is an issue and will impact upon how and if, the course is administered again. Similarly resource to administer the project in house may also be a problem, it was recognised that without an external administrator, school staff would not necessarily have the time or resource to organise such a project.

A total of 40 Northumberland businesses were interviewed and the majority of these employers had no knowledge, prior to the interview, of ASDAN qualifications, or the purpose of the EAES project. However 83% felt that the skills (e.g. team working, communication, interpersonal skills, etc) nurtured by this project would be useful within their business.

At the time of writing it is not possible to examine pupil's actual results as they will not be available until September 2008, however at this stage the EAES project has 'reached' a total of 680 pupils in 14 Northumberland High Schools between September 2007 and March 2008. Of those, approximately 650 are predicted to gain 3 Wider Key Skill qualifications at level 2.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report was commissioned by the Northumberland Strategic Partnership (NSP) and Learn 2 Work. The report also has input from Ashington Community High School, Berwick Upon Tweed Community High School, Cramlington Community High School, The King Edward VI School, Ponteland Community High School, Prudhoe Community High School, St Benet Biscop RC Voluntary Aided High School and Skill Force.



The Enterprising Attributes and Employability Skills (EAES) project works with High Schools in Northumberland to offer Key Stage 4 (KS4) students (14-16 year olds undertaking their GCSEs) the opportunity to achieve a formalised employability skills qualification. Schools offer this project alongside and integral to their GCSE and vocational programmes.

In the academic year 2007/08 the project was made available to 700 students out of a total cohort of 3,800. Pupils given the opportunity to participate were those who may not achieve the desired 5 A*-C GCSEs in the traditional academic subjects.



SKILL FORCE

The project provided funding for external training providers to deliver the training and assessment of pupils and initiated the training of tutors to provide the same function in future years. NSP approached Skill Force to deliver 3 x Wider Key Skills (WKS) qualifications to the 700 students, the delivery window for the project was September 2007 to March 2008.

The basic criteria were as follows:

- a. £35 per student per day
- b. 8-day Waypoint courses as the staple delivery vehicle
- c. Average 35 students per course

At project completion the students gain 3 Wider Key Skills; Problem Solving, Working with Others and Improving Own Learning; at Level 2, which is worth 104 SCAAT (School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables) points. In addition they

also receive a Northumberland Employability Skills Award, formally endorsed by CBI, ILM and the North East Chamber of Commerce.

The required outcomes of the evaluation were to;

- determine the views of pupils on the programme both before and after it had taken place
- determine the views of teaching staff involved in the programme
- assess the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme's implementation and outcomes
- assess the effect of the programme on pupils regarding their readiness for work
- assess the relevance of the qualification for employers.

This paper is set out in the following sections:

- An overview of the project context.
- A description of the methodology used for the evaluation.
- A breakdown of the results from the various information streams.
- A case study demonstrating an alternative delivery method.
- Conclusions and recommendations for further work.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Out of the 15 high schools in Northumberland 6 are substantially underperforming with attainment levels as low as 28% - the UK average being 45.8%. In addition 6 schools also have a high level of pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) – 12% to 15% compared with the UK average of 8%.

Certain parts of the County also have very high concentrations of young people who are not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET). The areas where the proportion of 16-18 year olds in the NEET group are currently particularly high are Ashington (21%), Blyth (20%), Bedlington (15%) and Amble (13%), although there are smaller pockets elsewhere in the County. Targeting these areas is a central element of 'Whatever it Takes'; the Young People's Education, Employment and Training strategy for Northumberland 2008-2011. The vision is that:

"All Northumberland's young people will have access to and successfully engage in high quality education, employment and training opportunities and life experiences to meet their individual learning needs and to prepare them effectively for employment and adult life."

A key theme of the strategy is 'Learning Provision' which aims to develop a pattern of accessible, high quality learning provision, both formal and informal, that meets employer demand and responds to the needs, aspirations and potential of all young people, prepares them effectively for adult and working life and enables them to achieve appropriate qualifications.

Employers are increasingly demanding key employability skills alongside vocational and traditional academic qualifications. The flexible curriculum gives schools the opportunity to offer students these additional programmes at KS4.

2.1 Project outcomes and objectives

Students taking part in the EAES project build a portfolio of evidence of learning and skills. The schools select the programmes and awarding body most relevant to their curriculum and students. For example:

- ASDAN Wider Key Skills (46 points – equivalent to 1xGCSE at Grade B)

- ASDAN Level 2 Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (46 points – equivalent to 1xGCSE at Grade B)
- NCFE Level 2 Certificate for Developing Enterprise Capabilities (46 points – equivalent to 1xGCSE at Grade B)
- EDEXCEL Level 2 BTEC Certificate in Employability Skills (92 points – equivalent to 2xGCSEs at Grade B).

The project familiarises the schools, teachers and pupils with the programme and enables them to see how the learning and skills can be integrated into the curriculum and thereby automatically generate portfolio evidence. The project also provides an opportunity for teachers to be trained and become accredited assessors within the schools, potentially enabling the schools to carry out the project themselves in future years.

The key objectives for the project are:

- To provide students who would not normally gain 5 GCSEs at A* - C with the opportunity to gain wider key skills via a recognised qualification (with a GCSE equivalent) which focuses on employability skills rather than the traditional academic subjects.
- To give students who would normally be NEET an opportunity to use this qualification as progression into employment or further learning.
- To meet employers demand for recognised employability skills alongside the traditional academic qualifications.
- To raise the attainment levels within the high schools, particularly those underperforming.
- To create capacity within the schools to embed this additional learning across the county thereby generally raising the attainment levels across the County.

- To achieve 750 additional qualifications in the 2007-08 academic year.
- To encourage schools to “match” the project and sponsor additional students in their school in the first year 2007-08.
- To provide an element of capacity building within the schools to allow continuation of the project when the funding ends by developing the tutor support and assessment skills “in-house” and become an approved centre for delivery of the qualification(s).
- To embed the programme within the curriculum and thereby enable all KS4 students in Northumberland to achieve an “employability” skills qualification in addition to their GCSE’s.

In addition to the above objectives it is anticipated that the project will help students achieve greater confidence and it closely links with the Key Stage 4 Engagement Programme (National Assessment Agency), which is intended to provide a more work focused learning experience for those 14–16-year-olds who are not achieving their potential, are unmotivated or are at risk of losing interest in learning.

EAES also links with other projects encouraging enterprising activity in schools, in particular, the Enterprise Pathfinder projects, funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), which tested a variety of approaches to embedding enterprise education within the culture of schools. EAES complements and adds value to the KS4 Enterprise Entitlement. The statutory requirement is that schools have to provide work-related learning and from September 2005 all Key Stage 4 pupils must be provided with the equivalent of five days' enterprise experience.

The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI), announced in the 2005 Budget, aims to release the economic and productivity potential of the most deprived local areas across the country through enterprise and investment, locally the Wansbeck Education Enterprise Network (WEEN) are striving to raise the aspirations of young people and the EAES project provides a springboard for this type of activity.

ASDAN is an educational charity, whose purpose is to promote the personal and social development of learners through the achievement of ASDAN awards, so as to enhance their self-esteem, their aspirations and their contribution to their community. ASDAN grew out of the Youth Award Scheme development during the 1980s and was formally established as a charity in 1991.

ASDAN manages and administers the work associated with supporting 3,500 registered centres (mostly schools and colleges) throughout the UK, publishes a catalogue of over 100 titles, supervises the moderation and verification procedures for its awards, and develops new curriculum resources and qualifications in response to the needs of the profession.

ASDAN offers a wide range of Awards for young people of all abilities. They aim to recognise and reward their skills as they complete 'Personal Challenges' in such areas as sports, healthy living, community involvement, work experience, expressive arts, relationships, citizenship, personal finance and enterprise.

2.2 The Strategic Context

The EAES project contributes to and compliments local, regional and national priorities as follows:

2.2.1 Local

Children and young people are a key priority community for the Northumberland Sustainable Community Strategy, *Releasing the Strength of Our Communities* (September 2007).

Our **children and young people** matter most in terms of our future – their start in life is crucial to the quality of their adult lives and to the future of our communities. Throughout growing up, they all need support and guidance to flourish and realise their potential. They want to be at the heart of everything we do and feel they have a vital part in positively shaping our communities.

Achieving economic wellbeing is a key priority in *Having a Life*, the Northumberland Families and Children’s Trust (FACT) Children and Young People’s Plan 2006-09.

“In November 2005 9.7% of 16 to 18 year olds were not in education, employment or training (NEET). By November 2008 we aim to reduce this figure to 6.3%. (This is a ‘stretch’ target in the Local Area Agreement)...

Our young people will have the opportunity to participate in learning programmes that meet their individual needs and equip them to achieve their full potential in learning, in work and in life. It will be achieved by (*amongst others*):

- Encouraging the development of employability skills in our young people so that they can realise their ambitions in working and adult life.
- Working with employers to ensure that knowledge and skills developed by our young people through work related learning opportunities meet the needs of future training and employment.

We will encourage enterprise and creativity in our young people, with a focus on cultural and attitudinal change that may lead to entrepreneurship and starting in business. This is an outcome in the Local Area Agreement.

We will measure effectiveness through these indicators over the next three years:

- Business creation by young people (under 30 years old) /percentage of young people in self employment.
- Proportion of young people considering going into business
- Number of key stage 4 students receiving a minimum of 5 days enterprise experience
- Number of High Schools embedding enterprise and creativity into the whole school curriculum
- Availability and take up of apprenticeship placements and quality work experience opportunities in the county.”

The project compliments the Northumberland Enterprise Culture Strategy, *Enterprising Northumberland* (March 2004) and the objectives set within the *Enterprising Communities* section, specifically the objectives to encourage enterprise in young people and overcome barriers to involvement in enterprising activity.

Goal 1 Enterprising communities

Research highlighted the importance of prioritising: young people; of harnessing the contribution that community enterprise can make; of providing regular and effective promotion of stories which carry the enterprise message; and, access to people who can act as ambassadors for enterprise.

Four objectives have been set:

Every young person has an experience of enterprise, develops the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be an enterprising person and has access to support and opportunities if they wish to progress in this direction

- Obj. 1.1 Enable those at a disadvantage to overcome barriers to involvement in enterprise activity
- Obj. 1.2 People take an active and enterprising role in how their community is run and developed
- Obj. 1.3 Promote and support the sustainable growth of community and social enterprise

2.2.2 Regional

Leading the Way, the Regional Economic Strategy for North East England (RES 2006) states the following:

“People

We need to ensure that the adult workforce – and young people entering the labour market - acquires additional, relevant skills. We also need to raise aspirations and attainment, particularly among our young people and promote economic inclusion by reducing worklessness, and promoting equality and diversity in skills and employment provision.”

The programme also seeks to address other aspects of the RES in respect of skills, employability and barriers to work:

Skills

'Particular emphasis should be placed on young people as the future entrepreneurs of the North East.This can only be achieved by providing a continuum of awareness throughout the education system (from primary through to higher education), delivered with support from the private sector'. Page 47

Skills challenges – Supply side:

'Poor educational attainment by young people will perpetuate the gap between the North East and the rest of the country in relation to workforce skills'. Page 86

Regional Skills Partnership: The way forward

..'the RSP must focus on raising the aspirations participation and attainment of young people to ensure more of them leave mainstream education equipped for employment in globally competitive organisations'. Page 87, 88

Market failures in economic participation: Barriers to employment

'employability .. too many people lack the basic skills, key skills and life skills which are an essential prerequisite for employment. This is a fundamental barrier for many people who are not in work'. Page 96

The RES Action Plan 2006-2011 launched by One NorthEast and partners in May 2007 gives the following commitment:

'D21 – we will increase activity to raise the aspirations and attainment levels of young people by offering a choice of high quality relevant learning opportunities to equip them with the skills for employment, further or higher learning and wider social and community engagement'

2.2.3 National

The Government has prioritised the need to ensure that every young person remains in some form of learning up to the age of 18. The 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper (DfES, February 2005) states:

Numbers staying on post-16 have improved but are still far too low down the international league table. Many employers are not satisfied with the basic skills of school leavers going directly into jobs. Some young people drift outside education, employment or training between the ages of 16 and 19. The most able young people are not as fully stretched as they could be...we will create a system better tailored to

the needs of the individual pupil, in which teenagers are stretched to achieve. We will introduce greater choice of what and where to study and make it easier to combine academic and vocational learning...

The findings of the Leitch Review of Skills, Prosperity for all in the global economy – world class skills (2006) demonstrate the need for targeted activity such as the EAES project:

'Increasingly, skills are a key determinant of employment – less than one half of those with no qualifications are in work, compared to nearly 90 per cent of those with graduate level qualifications. The employment rate of those with no qualifications has fallen over the past 10 years at a time when the employment rates of most disadvantaged groups have risen more quickly than the average. Lack of skills can be a key barrier to employment for people from some ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups.

History tells us that no one can predict with any accuracy future occupational needs. The Review is clear that skill demands will increase at every single level. Better skills will be needed at higher levels to drive leadership, management and innovation – these are key drivers of productivity growth. Intermediate skills must be improved to implement investment and innovation. Basic skills are essential for people to be able to adapt to change. People lacking basic skills will be most at risk of exclusion in a global economy.'

2.3 Skill Force and the Waypoint Course

Created in 2000, Skill Force is an independent national charity operating throughout Great Britain. Skill Force's specialisation started with Key Stage 4 pupils who were identified as "difficult to reach". From here their expertise has spread through Wider Key Skills training to "Life Skills" development generally. Schools and LEAs use Skill Force to work with more challenging students and to develop wide-ranging programmes, from leadership development in talented senior pupils, to supporting younger students during the significant transition phase from primary to secondary school.

Skill Force's Mission is:

To deliver inspiring programmes that increase the number of young people entering education, employment and training on leaving school.

Courses draw together vocational qualifications, community work and life skills in a classroom and outdoor activities based framework. Instruction and mentoring is provided mainly by ex-armed forces personnel, who develop a close working relationship with individuals and instill a culture of respect and mutual support.

Skill Force began delivering Wider Key Skills courses in 2005. Entitled 'Waypoint' the courses are designed to progress students to successfully achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs.

2.3.1 Waypoint – Wider Key Skills

Waypoint courses are a mixture of activity, skills, practical and theoretical teaching and learning. There is an element of friendly competition and physical challenge to each course. Skill Force instructors deliver and accredit the intensive 8.5 day course of activities. Nationally recognised qualifications are achieved via ASDAN Wider Key Skills, Level 2.

Elements of the course are as follows:

- Learning and peer teaching using rope work and knots
- Study skills and planning estimates to aid preparation for examinations and tests
- Route planning and navigational skills and practice
- Building self-propelled vehicles and siege catapults
- Designing and delivering a simple Command Task for peers
- Debating Day
- Team Competition Day

Each young person completes 6 ASDAN Action Plan-Do-Review (APDAR) packs during the course and two challenges in each Wider Key Skill area including: Working with Others; Improving Own Learning and Problem Solving.

The qualification outcome is equivalent to two GCSE A*-C grades.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

As highlighted in the Introduction to this paper, the required outcomes of the evaluation were to:

- determine the views of pupils on the programme both before and after it had taken place
- determine the views of teaching staff involved in the programme
- assess the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme's implementation and outcomes
- assess the effect of the programme on pupils regarding their readiness for work
- assess the relevance of the qualification for employers.

Consequently the data gathering for the evaluation took place in various phases.

Phase 1 - Survey of participating pupils at/during project launch

Phase 2 - Survey of participating pupils post project completion

Phase 3 – Focus Groups with participating pupils post project completion

Phase 4 – Interviews with teaching staff involved in project implementation

Phase 5 – Interviews with Skill Force and analysis of their feedback reports

Phase 6 – Telephone survey of potential employers (selected with guidance from schools)

The method of data collection varied for each of the different groups (pupils, teachers, administrators and employers) in order to ensure they were communicated with effectively and efficiently, however many of the questions used were similar in order to allow cross-group analysis.

3.1 Pupils

The pre-project questionnaire was developed following discussion with the project co-ordinator (NSP) and the Learn 2 Work manager. The questionnaire was then sent

out to lead contacts in each of the 15 High Schools who were set to carry out the project in order to determine their views on the questionnaire content and to obtain permission to survey the participating pupils. Positive feedback and permissions were received from 7 High Schools, with Berwick Upon Tweed Community High School agreeing to act as a Case Study for their individual approach to the project. Upon completion, pre-project questionnaires were returned and appointments were then made to conduct post-project focus groups and to distribute the post-project questionnaire. Copies of the questions used in each of these three phases are included in the appendix.

3.2 Teachers

Having consulted the lead contact in each school prior to project implementation, appointments were made to carry out interviews with teaching staff involved in project implementation. Interviews took place both during and post-completion of the project (at teachers discretion) and were based around a set of questions agreed following discussion with the project co-ordinator (NSP) and the Learn 2 Work manager. Copies of these questions were also sent out to lead contacts in each of the 15 High Schools who were set to carry out the project in order to determine their views and to obtain permission for interviews. As mentioned in the previous section, positive feedback and permissions were received from 7 High Schools, with Berwick Upon Tweed Community High School agreeing to act as a Case Study for their individual approach. Copies of the questions used are included in the appendix.

3.3 Administrators

Given the fact that Skill Force were delivering and accrediting the project their views, experience and feedback were deemed appropriate for consideration. Interviews took place with the Northern Regional Director and Northern Team Leader and Skill Force's own evaluation reports were collected from each school they visited.

3.4 Employers

During liaison with each participating school, staff were asked to identify any specific businesses which they felt were appropriate to provide opinions on the EAES project and/or its' ethos. Furthermore a selection of Business Ambassadors were identified

by Northumberland Education Business Partnership. An additional 450 businesses were selected at random from the Infonet Business Database. It was felt that a telephone survey would be the best method of ensuring a reasonable level of response and would allow more detailed qualitative information to be gathered. The questions used were agreed following discussion with the project co-ordinator (NSP) and the Learn 2 Work manager. Copies of the questions used are included in the appendix.

4.0 RESULTS

Of the 6 schools participating directly in the evaluation, 149 pupils completed the pre-project questionnaire, 145 pupils completed the post-project questionnaire and 43 pupils attended focus group sessions. A further 18 pupils gave feedback for the case study. A member of staff in each school provided thoughts and comments on the EAES project and Skill Force provided detailed feedback in the form of their own evaluation reports covering 7 schools (2 of which were in addition to those covered in this evaluation) and comments from 2 members of staff. A total of 40 businesses were successfully interviewed to provide feedback from potential employers; this included additional comment from 3 Northumberland Business Ambassadors.

4.1 Pupils

At the time of writing, Skill Force have ‘reached’ a total of 680 pupils in 14 Northumberland High Schools between September 2007 and March 2008. Of those, approximately 650 are predicted to gain 3 Wider Key Skill qualifications at level 2. The original target of 700 students across 15 schools was not achieved due to:

- Project cancellation at Hirst Community High School
- Schools not using their full allocation of spaces per course
- Pupils failing to attend.

(Gareth McIndoe, Skill Force Team Leader, February 2008)

4.1.1 Pre-project questionnaire

Of the 149 pupils who responded, basic respondent demographics are shown in Figure 1:

Fig 1: Pupil demographics – pre-project

| Gender | | Age | |
|--------|--------|-----|-----|
| Male | Female | 15 | 16 |
| 59% | 41% | 66% | 34% |

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are usually between the ages of 14 and 16 years old. At the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils sit national examinations, usually GCSEs. In Key

Stage 4, pupils study a mix of compulsory and optional subjects. Compulsory subjects are:

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Physical education
- Citizenship

In addition, pupils have to take careers education and work-related learning. Schools must also offer religious education, SRE and at least one subject from each of the four 'entitlement' areas, which are:

- Arts subjects
- Design and technology
- Humanities
- Modern foreign languages

In addition to the compulsory subjects, pupils participating in the evaluation were studying the subjects shown in Figure 2:

Fig 2: Subject mix

| Subject | Percentage of Pupils |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Art | 24% |
| Business Studies | 25% |
| Dance | 1% |
| Graphic Design and Technology | 18% |
| Drama | 15% |
| Engineering | 12% |
| Food Tech | 14% |
| French | 15% |
| Geography | 15% |
| Hairdressing | 3% |
| Health and Social | 17% |

| | |
|----------------|-----|
| History | 24% |
| Humanities | 5% |
| Media | 15% |
| Music | 5% |
| Other | 13% |
| Product Design | 4% |
| Psychology | 1% |
| Spanish | 5% |
| Sports Studies | 18% |

Pupils were asked why they were participating in the project, responses were as follows:

- 73% wanted to gain a further qualification
- 61% thought they would gain new skills
- 77% wanted to improve their grades
- 40% thought it would help them gain employment
- 30% thought it would build their confidence.

A total of 44% of pupils were advised to attend the EAES project, the majority of which (92%) were advised to do so by teaching staff at the school. 15% were also encouraged to attend by family and friends. Only 3% of pupils did not know why they were participating.

When asked what they hoped to learn from the project, pupils gave the following responses:

- 59% hoped to learn interview skills
- 47% hoped to learn how to fill in a job application
- 10% wanted to improve their team working skills
- 3% wanted to improve their communication skills
- 3% wanted to learn problem solving techniques
- 0.7% wanted to learn how to write a good CV
- 7% highlighted that they simply hoped to learn 'other skills'.

A significant number (18%) did not know what they hoped to learn during the project.

4.1.2 Post project questionnaire

Of the 145 pupils who responded, basic respondent demographics are shown in Figure 3:

Fig 3: Pupil demographics – post project

| Gender | | Age | |
|--------|--------|-----|-----|
| Male | Female | 15 | 16 |
| 61% | 39% | 63% | 37% |

Pupils were asked what they gained from attending the EAES project. Responses were as follows:

- 90% gained another qualification
- 99% gained new skills
- 83% felt they had gained more confidence
- 66% felt they had better longer term opportunities.

Only 1 pupil did not know what they had gained from the programme. Another pupil noted that they felt they had made more friends in attending the course.

When asked what they felt they had ‘learned’ from the project, pupils responded in the following way:

- 45% learned how to work better in a team or group
- 45% learned interview skills
- 33% learned communication skills
- 31% learned how to fill in a job application
- 18% learned First Aid skills
- 18% learned problem solving and task planning skills
- 14% learned ‘other’ skills
- 8% learned how to work independently.

Unfortunately a significant number (22%) did not know what they had learned.

Almost all pupils (97%) felt they now had a better understanding of the skills employers were looking for in potential new recruits and an even higher number (98%) felt confident in using their new skills in post.

When asked if they felt the EAES project could be improved, 26% felt it could. Their suggestions for improvements are outlined below:

- 32% wanted less paperwork/writing.
- 32% said it should not be as “rushed” and 2 pupils commented that they thought there should be more staff administrating the project as it seemed too much for the 2 members of Skill Force staff.
- 24% wanted more practical activities or challenges, indeed one pupil felt this should include outdoor activity.
- 8% wanted more advice and guidance regarding the job application and interview process.
- 5% wanted more break time and a further 3% felt more ‘fun’ tasks should be included.

4.1.3 Focus Groups

Each of the 6 High Schools that took part in the main evaluation were requested to select approximately 4 to 6 pupils who would be happy to talk in more detail about their experiences, thoughts and feelings regarding their time on the EAES project. The following sections provide an overview of the results of these ‘focus group’ activities.

Ashington Community High School

29th November 2007, 5 pupils, 30 minutes

All 5 pupils enjoyed the course although they found it hard (‘lots of writing’).

Independent working was useful, team working less so.

Much of what was done they felt they knew already.

The ‘Improve own learning’ module was useful in that they were given a topic, ‘had to research it and complete a worksheet based on it’. Problem solving was useful, e.g.

pupils built a car out of junk and make it go a certain distance, pupils felt they would use this skill again.

Most enjoyable aspects were:

- Having a good laugh with the instructors – got on well with them.
- Making car and other practical activities.
- First Aid Course – theory and practical – bandaging, CPR, etc.
- Testing models they had built.
- Plenty of time to fill in worksheets and if they finished early, they watched a film.

Least enjoyable aspects:

- Being disappointed when the model they made didn't work.
- The writing.
- Homework everyday (took about 30min) but they did have chance to catch up in the morning if it wasn't finished.
- Missing other lessons – being forced to fall behind then catch up afterwards. If they don't catch up they would miss out on study leave.
- Doing treble the amount of homework during the project, doing more homework than they would have done in regular 2 weeks.
- Unable to choose their groups – forced to work with people they didn't like/get on with.

All 5 pupils would be happy to do the course again; 'especially for the 2 GCSEs they should get at the end'.

Improvements to the course would be as follows:

- Change the timing of the course – they had trial exams the following week. They also had a lot of coursework at the time.
- Do the course in year 10.
- Extra breaks.
- Comfortable seats.
- Different venue – 'stuck in the same room for 2 weeks'.

- Computer based activities.
- For those who don't like writing – give option to type up worksheets.
- More practical tests.
- Make questions easier to understand.

All pupils would recommend it to their friends and felt that the original objectives had been met.

Cramlington Community High School

29th November 2007, 5 pupils, 10 minutes

All 5 pupils enjoyed the course and felt it was worthwhile. Pupils were glad they did it and preferred it to regular lessons; it prevented them getting distracted and helped with their confidence.

All pupils liked the fact that the course wasn't run by their usual teaching staff.

Most enjoyable aspects were carrying out the challenges, making the car and First Aid.

The least enjoyable aspect was the amount of handwriting.

All 5 pupils would be happy to do the course again. Possible improvements were longer challenges, more challenges and overall, a third week of activity.

All pupils would recommend it to their friends and two pupils had friends who wanted to go on the course. They all understood that they would get another qualification from the course and that it would help them to get into employment or further learning.

The King Edward VI School

12th December 2007, 15 pupils, 15 minutes

All pupils enjoyed the course and found it useful/ worthwhile.

Most enjoyable aspects were:

- Building and practical activities.
- Teamwork.
- Having a laugh.
- More relaxed than school work.
- Cups of tea.

Least enjoyable aspects were:

- Writing.
- Getting kicked off for mucking around.
- Not doing enough activities.
- Not picking your own groups.

Suggested improvements were less writing, more fun and more time for the course in general, however all pupils would recommend it to their friends and would gladly revisit the course. It was felt that the course objectives had been met by all concerned.

Ponteland Community High School

17th January 2008, 2 pupils, 15 minutes

The pupils enjoyed the course and felt it was worthwhile as they were able to identify how they learned and could then apply this to the rest of the course and other subjects.

The most enjoyable aspects were the “Heart start” course – CPR, first aid, problem solving/ group work – building bridges, catapult, self-propelling car.

The least enjoyable aspects were the timing; lost study leave.

Little improvement to the course was necessary as both enjoyed it, however another activity could have been administered instead of watching the DVD which they felt was boring.

The pupils felt that all course objectives had been met.

Prudhoe Community High School

8th February 2008, 6 pupils, 15 minutes

All pupils enjoyed the course and found it useful/ worthwhile. The most enjoyable aspects were:

- Building, designing
- Practical work
- Challenges
- Constructing bridges

The least enjoyable aspects were:

- Writing
- Repetition
- Falling behind on the course and feeling under pressure to get the work done.

All would revisit the course if given the opportunity however they would suggest less writing in future.

All pupils found the course extremely helpful and felt it would be beneficial to their friends. All felt the original objectives had been met.

St Benet Biscop RC Voluntary Aided High School

15th February 2008, 10 pupils, 15 minutes

All pupils enjoyed the course and found it useful/ worthwhile.

The most enjoyable aspects were:

- Practical –building/ designing
- Challenges
- Constructing catapult and cars
- DVD

The least enjoyable aspects were:

- Timing – felt “rushed”
- Catching up with missed lessons

- Would like more than a 'B' grade

All pupils would do the course again, given the opportunity, however they felt that it should be less rushed in future and that the 8 days should run consecutively instead of in spaced weekly blocks. The pupils would have liked more room in which to work and would have appreciated some outdoor activities.

All pupils found it really helpful and felt that all of the objectives had been met.

4.2 Teachers

Only a small number of school staff were involved in the organisation of the project in each school, mainly due to the fact that Skill Force had been commissioned to administer the project and accredit pupils on completion. One member of staff in each participating school was kind enough to offer their thoughts and opinions on the EAES project. These are detailed in the following 6 sections.

4.2.1 Ashington Community High School

Interview with Shirley Hindmarsh – Head of Year

3rd March 2008

The course was considered to be really good and well organised. Skill Force delivered everything they promised and the students were very positive.

At the time of interview no decision had been made on the course running next year and no results had been received. A number of students had already asked to attend the second cohort after hearing positive things about the first course.

There was little disruption and the course ran smoothly on school's behalf however some staff were concerned with students missing lessons.

Skill Force did have the school timetable, however they missed the fact that Ashington High finished at 2.30 on Thursdays and Fridays. This was not accounted for during the course which caused some panic that the course would not be completed in the time allocated.

4.2.2 Cramlington High School

Interview with John Pattison – Learning Mentor

29th November 2007

Overall the course was received very well by pupils and staff.

Pupils responded well to Skill Force – more-so than if the course had been run by the school's own teaching staff.

The course raised pupil's attainment levels and provided them with additional wider key skills alongside the more traditional academic qualifications.

The course provided something new for pupils and the restricted timeframe helped to keep them focussed.

There is no need for the course to be targeted at the whole school because pupils who will achieve 5 A*-C and above will be able to access suitable jobs and/or enrol in college with traditional qualifications.

4.2.3 The King Edward VI School

Interview with Clare Savage – Head of Year

3rd March 2008

The course went very well and the students all enjoyed it, however they found the paperwork aspect challenging.

All students passed; it was extremely worthwhile for the students because they got 2 grade B GCSEs and it was also beneficial for the school in terms of grades – “Contextual Value Added”.

KEVI have signed up for the project next year, but are delivering in-house as money is key issue; ‘the cost of putting 30 students through the course with Skill Force is the equivalent of 320 students in-house’. However they may ask Skill Force to deliver some of the activities.

Next time the whole of year 10 will do the course but it will be incorporated into normal timetable so as not to be disruptive to other lessons. Timing has been an issue, i.e. missing 8 days of schooling in other subjects, for example, students were trying to complete science coursework at the time; these are students who ‘can’t

afford' to miss out, more than anybody else. If students missed one day of the 8 day course, they weren't allowed to complete because it was so intense.

4.2.4 Ponteland High School

Interview with Chris Richardson – Deputy Head

17th January 2008

Largely the school are very happy with the programme despite the fact that they picked up on it late. The school aimed to do it last year but Skill Force were fully booked, consequently the previous years funding was used this year. Initially there was only sufficient funding to administer the course to 14 pupils. Additional funding from Learn 2 Work and the Key Stage 4 Engagement Project ultimately allowed 70 pupils to complete the project.

Some teaching staff were sceptical about the project because they felt that 8 days work would not be sufficient to gain 2 GCSE's. Ultimately the benefits were recognised however.

The course was at targeted borderline pupils or those just shy of expecting 5 A*-C grades; the intention being to give access to post 16 education.

Skill Force worked closely with the pupils. They gave feedback to the school with regards to individual pupils and what they could do to improve.

All pupils were enthusiastic when they were first told about the project. No-one declined and they understood what the outcomes would be, a number of parents and pupils asked if they could participate, some were turned down. It was felt that the enthusiasm led to motivation – the school intends to monitor the effect on pupils.

Skill Force had asked the school if any of the pupils needed curriculum support that could then sit in with the pupils whilst they were completing the course. When the 2nd group ran, using different facilitators, Skill Force sent the support away as "they didn't need them". A "scuffle" occurred at the end of one session; this may not have happened had the support been there.

Ponteland have non-teaching Heads of Year who provide pastoral care. The Heads of Year were sent on Wider Key Skills training however they felt it would have been better if actual teaching staff had attended.

Ponteland would like to run the course again if funding is available.

4.2.5 Prudhoe High School

Interview with Lizzie Maddison – Deputy Head

8th February 2008

Wider Key Skills work was pioneered by Prudhoe High School approximately 5 years ago when it was highlighted that pupils had skills which weren't formally recognised. The school is now in its' 4th year of running this type of course, however this is the first year that the course has lasted 8 days, previously it lasted 4 days.

A great deal of time was spent identifying appropriate pupils to attend the course. Middle achievers were concentrated upon; these are pupils who do not normally have a lot of attention, so they were made to feel special.

In the first 3 years delivering the course Prudhoe spent a lot of time on induction. Forms were completed detailing pupil's strengths, weaknesses, pastimes, etc. This helped the teachers learn more about the individual pupils. Previously this worked extremely well, however this stage was not carried out this year.

In previous years the course had a good impact on pupil's performance in other subjects – it boosted confidence and motivation.

This year it was felt that the timing of course was a bit too late and it could possibly be slightly shorter than 8 days; time missing from lessons was a concern.

In future years when Prudhoe are delivering the course in-house (they are an ASDAN centre), they still intend to use Skill Force to deliver the practical side – i.e. the problem solving, as they feel it works better.

In future years Prudhoe would like to integrate this project with work experience and hold the training in year 10 before pupils are sent on 2 week placement.

4.2.6 St Benet Biscop

Interview with Wendy Parker – Assistant Head Teacher

15th February 2008

The project provided pupils with an excellent opportunity to gain wider key skills and as all students successfully passed the course it meant they had achieved additional qualifications. The fact that the project targets pupils who are not usually singled out for special attention was most welcome, however the benefits of a whole school approach were also recognised because some high achieving pupils struggled with some wider key skills.

Skill Force were observed as being very well organised and integrated well with the school and its' staff. They took time to include all pupils in each activity. Pupils responded well to external administrators throughout the project and appeared to enjoy the smart learning environment, activities and tasks. Teaching staff were informed of pupil's absence from timetabled lessons; there were some concerns regarding the ability of certain pupils to 'catch up' at the end of the 8 day period.

Ideally St Benet Biscop would like to continue this project in this way in future years as there is an issue that staff would not have time to administer such an intensive programme internally. In addition pupils would be less likely to respond as well to their usual teaching cohort. It is hoped however that a project such as this will eventually become part of the National Curriculum and that students can "tap in to what is best for them" as opposed to just doing it to gain a GCSE.

4.3 Administrators

The following section provides the outcome of an interview with Skill Force's Northern Regional Director and Northern Team Leader. A number of reports were

kindly supplied by Skill Force to aid in the overall evaluation of the EAES project, these can be found in the appendix.

4.3.1 Skill Force

Interview with Steve Handford, Northern Regional Director and Gareth McIndoe, Northern Team Leader

17th January 2008

Overall it was felt that the project had been received positively within the schools.

At this stage links could not be made between improved grades and taking the course, thus investigation and possible follow up of 'success stories' may be beneficial.

The profile of Wider Key Skills needs raising in general.

The cost of maintaining this course is £220,000.

The course has been running for 3 academic years.

Skill Force have had a good relationship with all schools and have been treated like staff members when on site delivering the project.

Skill Force feel that external facilitators are beneficial within schools, this benefit may be lost if teachers start delivering the course as it would be difficult to hold pupil's attention.

A week long residential version of the course is available.

Skill Force felt that Berwick-upon-Tweed Community High School's approach may be too disjointed (see section 5.0 Case Study). A similar method was observed at a school in Pennywell, Sunderland. This resulted in a poor outcome with no momentum; problems arose in last 15/20% of course when pulling together portfolios. The course was administered to 60 pupils in Pennywell. Of those, 60% achieved level 2, the remainder achieved level 1 or partial awards. Ultimately the course was extended by 30% to enable pupils to complete.

Skill Force feel that the best method of delivery for the course is over a 3 week period of 40 hours in total.

Should the project run again next year it needs to be more organised for planning purposes; Skill Force need May, June and July to organise staffing and administration. If notification occurs post May some of the trained skills base may be lost which will have negative impact on schools.

4.3 Employers

A total of 40 Northumberland businesses were interviewed over the telephone in order to obtain views from potential employers regarding the relevance of Wider Key Skills, the EAES project and the ASDAN qualification. The size of the organisations ranged from 2 employees (e.g. Station House Stores) to approximately 1100 (RAF Boulmer). Business types are shown in Figure 4:

Fig 4: Types of employer interviewed

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Agricultural sales and engineering | General and convenience stores |
| Arable contractors | Golf courses and clubs |
| Builders | Homeland defence |
| Builders merchants | Hospitality |
| Caravan parks | Hotel |
| Care homes | IT, computer programming |
| Carpet retailers | Landscape contractors |
| Catalogue company | Leisure centres |
| Chartered surveyors | Mobile homes |
| Chemists dispensing | Motor company |
| Distribution | Newsagents |
| Doctors | Pharmaceuticals |
| Estate Agents | Plastic packaging manufacture |
| Farming | Post office |
| Food Retail | Private nursing |
| Fragrance, aerosol, etc. manufacture | Public house |
| Garden centre | |

A list of participating organisations can be found in the appendix.

In order to enter employment with these organisations, 28% required GCSE's (usually a minimum of English and Maths, grades A-C), 18% required A-levels and 20% required a degree. Additional desirable qualifications were NVQs. The skills most frequently highlighted by the businesses as being key for employment were communication (34%) and teamworking (28%) abilities. With confidence, leadership qualities and decision-making skills (10%) also highlighted as desirable.

The majority of employers contacted had no knowledge, prior to the survey, of ASDAN qualifications, or the purpose of the EAES project, however 83% felt that wider key/soft skills (i.e. team working, communication, interpersonal skills, taking responsibility for one's own learning and development) would be useful within their business.

More than half (55%) of the businesses contacted were involved with their local schools, the majority of which (77%) via work experience placements. This link was considered beneficial to 77% of the organisations concerned, the remainder felt it more beneficial to the pupil's concerned. Employers found working with pupils "refreshing", efficient and advantageous with regards to recruiting new staff from the local community.

When asked whether businesses would be more likely to employ a person with an ASDAN/wider key skills qualification rather than one who hasn't, 53% said yes.

5.0 CASE STUDY

Berwick Upon Tweed Community High School administer the ‘AQA Preparation for Working Life’ course (equivalent to ½ GCSE) to all year 11 pupils. The course has been running for two years. Delivery is predominantly by teaching staff however visiting speakers deliver some of the more specialist areas, e.g. recycling, entrepreneurialism, how to find jobs. Each Head of Year is asked to write a lesson plan for either one lesson or a sequence of lessons in an enterprising way. Prior to commencing this course, pupils carry out work experience in the final 2 weeks of year 10.

At the time of the evaluation visit (13th February 2008, kindly hosted by Sheena Blain, Assistant Head), 6 “themed”, off-timetable days had taken place. These included careers days, problem solving, how to deliver and give assemblies and other activities. In addition to the full day sessions, pupils have “Preparation for Life” lessons every other week – including citizenship, PSE (physical and social education) and exam preparation. Pupils also sit a trial exam and complete coursework (including how to prepare for a job interview).

There is a proposal for year 10 to get an ASDAN qualification or similar, unfortunately Skill Force were fully booked this year. Berwick currently have 25 pupils participating in the Key Stage 4 Engagement Programme.

5.1 Pupil feedback

The timing of the evaluation meant that only a sample of 18 pupils were accessible to give feedback on the course, their basic demographics are shown in Figure 5:

Fig 5: Pupil demographics – case study

| Gender | | Age | |
|--------|--------|-----|-----|
| Male | Female | 15 | 16 |
| 44% | 56% | 50% | 50% |

When asked why they participated in the programme, 39% wanted to gain a further qualification and 22% wanted to gain new skills, improve their grades and build their confidence. In addition 22% hoped it would help them gain employment. A high proportion of pupils hoped they would learn how to fill in a job application (61%) and learn interview skills (67%).

The vast majority (78%) of pupils felt that the AQA 'Preparation for Working Life' course had given them a better understanding of the skills employers were looking for and more still (83%) felt confident in using these skills in a job. A third of pupils felt the course could be improved by making it more 'fun', incorporating an activity on writing a CV and by increasing the time spent on it.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

To reiterate, the required outcomes of the evaluation were to;

- determine the views of pupils on the programme both before and after it had taken place
- determine the views of teaching staff involved in the programme
- assess the impact, effectiveness and efficiency of the programme's implementation and outcomes
- assess the effect of the programme on pupils regarding their readiness for work
- assess the relevance of the qualification for employers.

6.1 Pupils

Pupils participating in the evaluation were mainly driven by the opportunity to improve their grades and gain further qualifications. Few pupils (<10%) displayed accurate knowledge of what they might learn from the project, indicating a lack of understanding of the EAES project purpose at commencement. Almost all pupils were encouraged to participate by members of teaching staff at school.

At project completion, an overwhelming majority of pupils felt they had gained new skills (99%) and more confidence (83%) by participating in the EAES project – a fact that wasn't anticipated by the pupils prior to this stage. In terms of skill 'specifics', a significant number of pupils (22%) appeared unsure as to what they had learned from the project – this would suggest some confusion and perhaps a lack of communication regarding the projects aims and objectives.

Almost all pupils (97%) felt the project had given them a better understanding of skills needed by potential employers which indicates that the participants felt more 'readiness for work'.

The focus groups highlighted the pupil's enjoyment of the project, in particular the practical aspects. The EAES project was considered to be a 'fun' course with many

enjoyable activities, however the written work appeared to be too intensive and possibly rather rushed in the limited time available.

The Case Study pupils demonstrated very similar motivations and outcomes to those highlighted above, however the overall achievement of ½ GCSE (as opposed to 2 GCSEs via the Waypoint course) may have an impact on attainment levels.

6.2 Teachers

Teaching staff were very happy with the content and organisation of the EAES project and were satisfied with the administration of the project by Skill Force. The improvement of both pupil and school attainment levels was extremely worthwhile, however the overall impact of the project would not be fully demonstrated until the Autumn when students overall results were available.

The timing of the course and the fact that pupils had to miss lessons appeared to cause concern amongst some teaching staff, particularly those who were not directly involved in the project, however in most cases the ability of the pupils to “catch up” did not appear to be an issue and staff mainly felt confident that there would be no knock on effect. Indeed, pupils also expressed concern about missing regular lessons; some felt the activities would have been more appropriate spread over a longer period of time, earlier in the school year or in a different school year altogether (year 10). Again, the impact of the project would be demonstrated later in the year.

Liaison between Skill Force and school staff was largely successful and the existence of an external administrator was perceived to have a positive effect on the participating students. Indeed a number of teaching staff recognised that without an external administrator, school staff would not necessarily have the time or resource to organise such a project. Isolated incidents which did occur may have been avoided by improved communication between Skill Force and teaching staff and by giving consideration to the fact that each school is slightly different.

Funding for the project in future years is an issue and will impact upon how and if, the course is administered again.

6.3 Administrators

Skill Force felt they were very well received by pupils and teaching staff alike. Skill Force's own evaluation reports show that pupils enjoyed the course and got on well with the administrators. Other than comments on the volume of writing involved, there appeared to be very little negative feedback from the pupils – a fact that is reflected in this evaluation.

The intense nature of the course would be better administered if the schools were able to devote a longer period of time to the project. Skill Force highlighted that 40 hours over a three week period would be the optimum learning time – this would perhaps alleviate some of the “rush” which a number of pupils highlighted within the focus groups.

The organisation of the project is key therefore a longer lead in time would be preferable in order that Skill Force can prepare staff and resource for more efficient administration of the project.

Again, full evaluation of the overall impact of the project would not be possible until results were available later in the year.

6.4 Employers

Knowledge of the EAES project, ASDAN and Wider Key Skills was limited amongst the Northumberland employers that participated in this evaluation, this suggests a need for more publicity in this area as businesses would not know what to look for faced with an application form detailing such a qualification. However, upon explanation of the programme's objectives, the vast majority of employers (83%) felt team working, communication, interpersonal skills, etc. would be useful within their business.

Only 28% of employers interviewed required formal qualifications (GCSEs) for employment within their business, personal attributes and a variety of skills were more favourable.

Work experience placements were the main way in which employers connected with their local schools, this was seen to be beneficial to most of the businesses concerned (77%).

7.0 Further Work

Prudhoe High School piloted the EAES project in 2006. The results were very encouraging. Out of a cohort of 52 of their Key Stage 4 pupils, 37 were **not** expected to achieve 5 A*-C GCSEs. On completion of the programme, 21 of the 37 pupils (57%) **DID** achieve 5 A*-C GCSEs. In addition to improving attainment levels for both the pupils and the school, the programme appeared to raise aspirations and improve pupil progression in that 79% of the pupils progressed onto A-Level or Further Education studies and a further 12% took up apprenticeships or fulltime employment.

At the time of this evaluation it is not possible to examine pupil's actual results as they will not be available until September 2008, it is therefore suggested that an addendum study be carried out in Autumn 2008 to enable a similar overview such as that demonstrated by the Prudhoe pilot highlighted above. Comparisons should be made between predicted and actual grades achieved by pupils who attended the programme and those with similar expectations who did not attend the programme. Furthermore, comparisons could also be made to the results of the Case Study pupils.

The project's effectiveness could be further demonstrated by tracking the progress of pupils into Further Education, apprenticeships and employment to determine whether pupils apply the knowledge and skills gained.

In terms of the evolution of the project, the Case Study partially demonstrates the effectiveness of administering this type of course 'in house', a factor which is recognised in the original objectives of the EAES project:

- To provide an element of capacity building within the schools to allow continuation of the project when the funding ends by developing the tutor support and assessment skills "in-house" and become an approved centre for delivery of the qualification(s).

Teacher training in administering an 'in house' project was only at 'fledgling' stage when this evaluation took place therefore more work should be undertaken to evaluate teaching staff's ability, capacity, understanding and attitude to managing and delivering a project 'in-house'.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Survey Questions *(please note: formatting has been removed from the original questionnaires in order to streamline the documents)*

Pupils Pre-Questions

1. Are you:

Male Female

2. How old are you?

3. Name of school

4. Why did you decide to participate in the programme?

Gain a further qualification

Gain new skills

Improve my grades

Help gain employment

Build my confidence

Advised to do it

If advised, who by

Don't know

5. What grades do you hope to achieve?

5 + A*-C 5 + A* - G 1 + A* - G

6. What GCSEs/ vocational programmes are you undertaking?

7. What do you hope to learn from the programme?

How to fill in a job application

Interview skills

Other (please list)

Don't know

Pupils Post-Questions

1. Are you:

Male Female

2. How old are you?

3. Name of school

4. What did you gain from taking part in the programme?

Another qualification

New skills

More confidence

Better longer term opportunities

Don't know

Other (please give details)

5. What do you think you have learned from the programme?

How to fill in a job application
 Interview skills
 Don't know
 Other (please give details)

6. Do you feel you have a better understanding of the skills employers are looking for?

Yes No

7. Do you feel confident that you can use your skills in a job?

Yes No

8. Do you feel the programme could be improved?

Yes No

If yes, in what way

Pupil Questions – Case Study

1. Are you:

Male Female

2. How old are you?

3. Name of school

4. Why did you decide to participate in the programme?

- Gain a further qualification
- Gain new skills
- Improve my grades
- Help gain employment
- Build my confidence
- Advised to do it
- If advised, who by
- Don't know

5. What grades do you hope to achieve?

5 + A*-C 5 + A* - G 1 + A* - G

6. What GCSEs/ vocational programmes are you undertaking?

7. What do you hope to learn by the end of the programme?

- How to fill in a job application
- Interview skills
- Other (please list)
- Don't know

8. Do you feel you have a better understanding of the skills employers are looking for?

Yes No

9. Do you feel confident that you can use your skills in a job?

Yes No

10. Do you feel the programme could be improved?

Yes No

If yes, in what way?

Teachers Pre-Questions

1. Are you:

Male Female

2. Which age category are you in?

3. Name of school

4. How long have you been teaching for?

5. Have you worked outside of education for a substantial length of time (i.e. 3 years or more)?

6. Do you feel you have a current awareness of the employment market?

7. What are your expectations of the programme?

8. What do you hope the students will learn from the programme?

9. Do you understand the purpose and content of the programme?

Teachers Post - Questions

1. Are you:

Male Female

2. Which age category are you in?

3. Name of school

4. How long have you been teaching for?

5. Have you worked outside of education for a substantial length of time (i.e. 3 years or more)?

6. Do you feel you have a current awareness of the employment market?

7. What expectations did the programme fulfil?

8. What do you think the students have learned from the programme?

9. Do you understand the purpose and content of the programme?

10. Have you received training to deliver this project in future years?

11. Do you feel the peripatetic approach of the project is *practical* (i.e. the use of teachers/training organisations travelling between schools)?

12. Do you feel the peripatetic approach of the project is *effective* (i.e. the use of teachers/training organisations travelling between schools)?

13. Do you feel the project would be better targeted at the whole school?

14. Do you feel a different school approach would be more practical/effective?

Employers Questions

1. Company Name
2. Contact Name
3. Address
4. Number of Employees
5. Approx. Annual Turnover
6. Nature of business
7. What qualifications are required for employment with your business?

| Qualification | Number/Grades | Approx proportion of employees with these qualifications |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|
| GCSEs | | |
| A-Levels | | |
| Degree | | |
| Other (please give details) | | |

8. Would you find wider key/'soft' skills useful within your business (i.e. team working, communication and interpersonal skills, taking responsibility for one's own learning and development)?
9. Are you involved with the local schools in any way?
10. Do you feel your business benefits from this link?
11. Would you be more likely to employ a person with an ASDAN/wider key skills qualification than one who hasn't?
12. What skills are most often taken into the company?
13. How many recruits does the company typically take in every year?
14. Do you/would you visit local schools to provide information on working in your industry sector?

Appendix B: Skill Force Reports

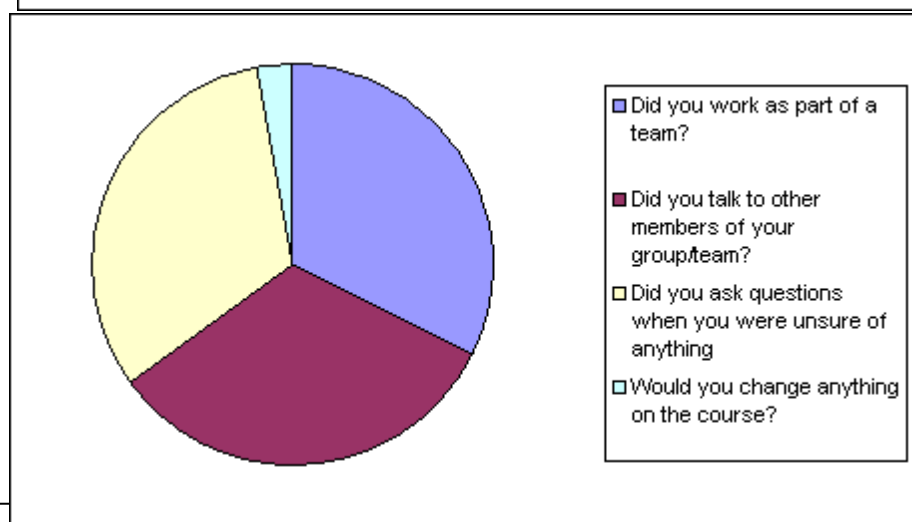
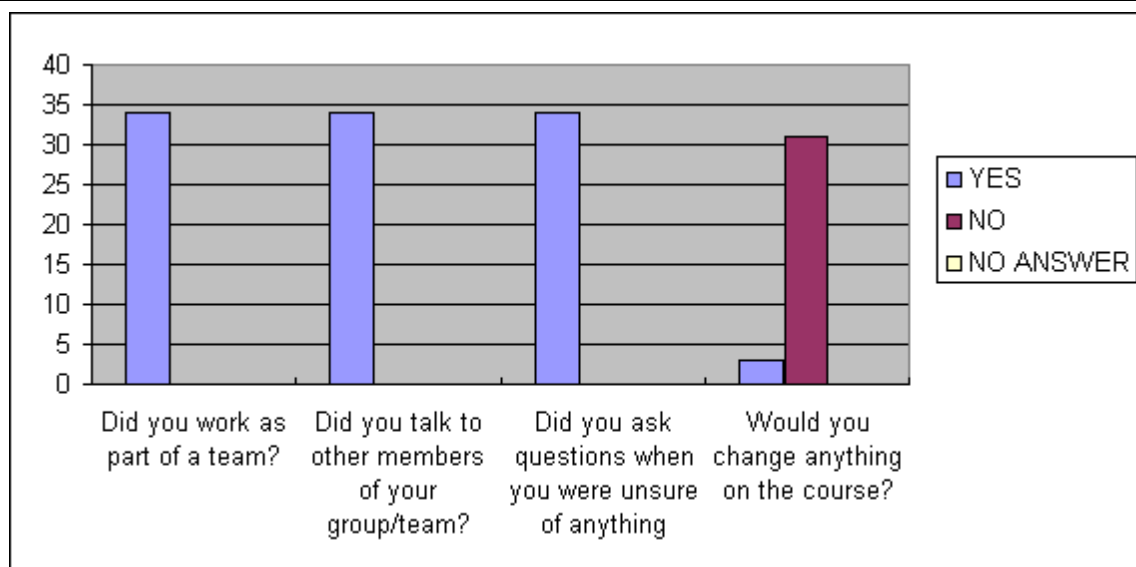
B1: Astley Community High School

The following report has been reproduced with kind permission from Skill Force.

Waypoint 2 Evaluation from Astley High School

Course completed on 2/11/07

| | EXCELLENT | GOOD | AVERAGE | POOR |
|--|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| How good was the programme? | 11 | 23 | | |
| How motivated/challenged were you? | 11 | 22 | 1 | |
| How good were the instructors in describing training sessions? | 21 | 13 | | |
| In involving you in the training sessions? | 23 | 11 | | |
| In supporting you throughout the activities? | 29 | 5 | | |
| In describing Health and Safety? | 16 | 16 | 2 | |
| How good have the resources been? | 18 | 14 | 2 | |
| | YES | NO | NO ANSWER | |
| Did you work as part of a team? | 34 | | | |
| Did you talk to other members of your group/team? | 34 | | | |
| Did you ask questions when you were unsure of anything | 34 | | | |
| Would you change anything on the course? | 3 | 31 | | |
| Grade your efforts throughout the programme out of 10 | | | | |

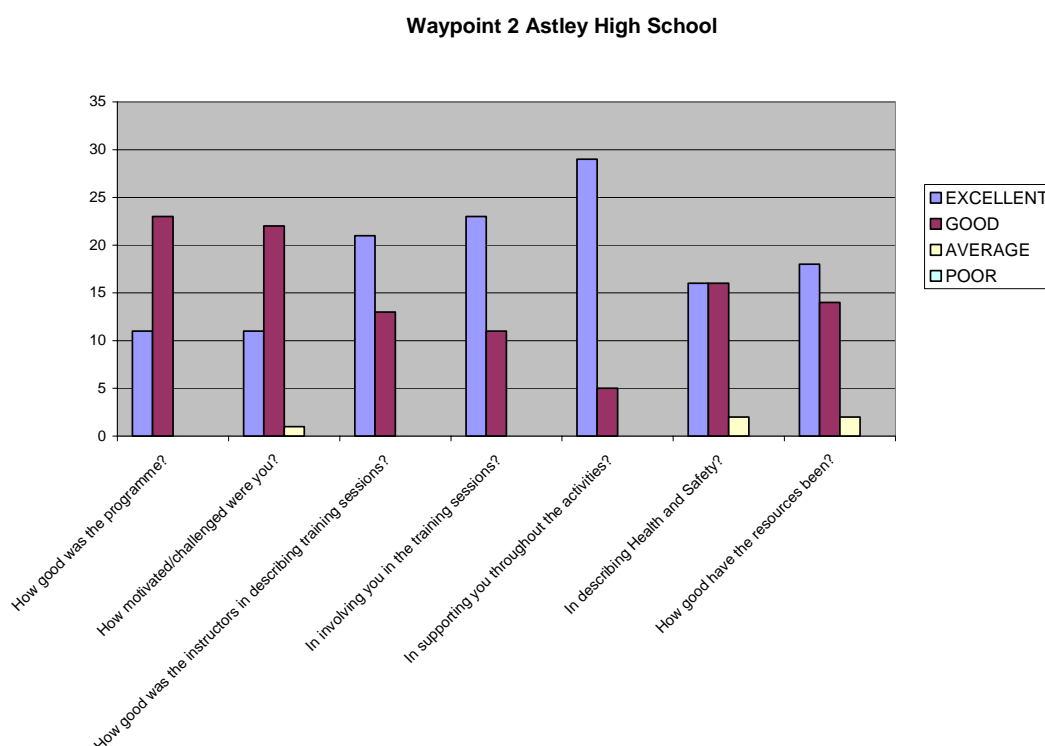


Tutor Comments

All Learners' from Astley Community High School that took part in the Waypoint 2 course worked extremely well and they produced some excellent work. Learner's behaviour was to an excellent and all should be proud of their achievements, well done!

Individual Effort Grade Comments

All learners graded themselves on their efforts and behaviour throughout the course and after looking through the evaluation sheets I identified that some learners were particularly hard on themselves and others over generous with their grading. Overall, I agree with the grading and think it was a fair reflection.



Positive

I enjoyed the course a lot, and I think it will help us a lot in the future. I don't think there is very much you can change in the programme to make it better. Cheers!

I have really enjoyed the Waypoint Programme, the activities, posters and information have been tremendous. The team have been good and excellent, they have also been supportive.

It was possible to have a bit of 'banter' with Mark and John, while still getting the work down.

I thought the programme is/was really fun and really good. I really enjoyed my time and would have liked it to last a bit longer.

Throughout this course it has been excellent working with John and Mark. We have all only worked with each other for eight days but we have all bonded really well as a group. Also I enjoyed this course because John and Mark made it really fun to take part in.

I believe the programme was really good and I enjoyed it a lot, I gained a lot of confidence in all the challenges I completed.

I generally enjoyed the course; also I have learned some valuable skills that will help me in the future. The instructors have been excellent by supporting us. The activities themselves have helped me and I enjoyed them. I am proud of passing Level Two, which I thought I would never achieve.

Negative

The programme was good, but it was very tiring doing the course for two weeks. I enjoyed the course overall though.

It was ok could of made it more exciting. It was a bit cramped but the tasks were good.

It was good but got a bit boring at the end of the end of the day and a bit cramped and hot.

The programme was really good, but I personally found it tiring repeating sheets after sheet but overall the course was great and I gained a lot of support.

The programme was really good but there were too many written sheets. I would have preferred to do more things like posters.

The last two weeks have been really fun and I have learned loads of new stuff the instructors were great, but the plan, do, review could have had lines on the pages.

I have enjoyed most of the programme apart from all the writing. Both Mark and John treat all of us like adults not kids.

Action Points

One learner commented on completing the course over two weeks and how it was tiring, however this cannot be altered due to other school commitments.

Two learners commented on making course more exciting and it was cramped, action for this will be development of further activities. The school dictates our learning area, this could be discussed when the next course due to begin at the school.

Two learners commented on sheets being repetitive, this has been discussed and we are dictated to on the amount and what sheets we use.

A learner commented on the layout of the 'plan, do and review' sheets and I agree with this comment, this will be brought up at the next team meeting.

One learner commented on the amount of writing that was required, however it was explained that the qualification was at level two and there is a minimum standard to be met.

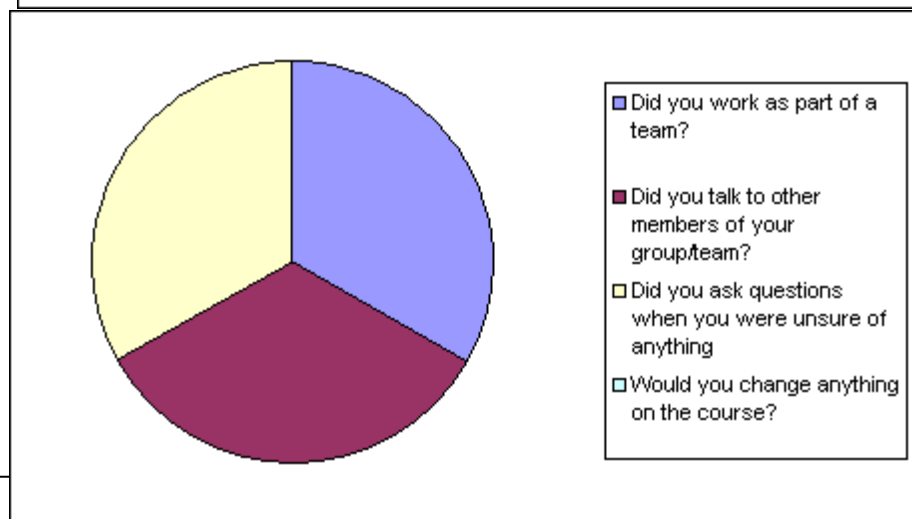
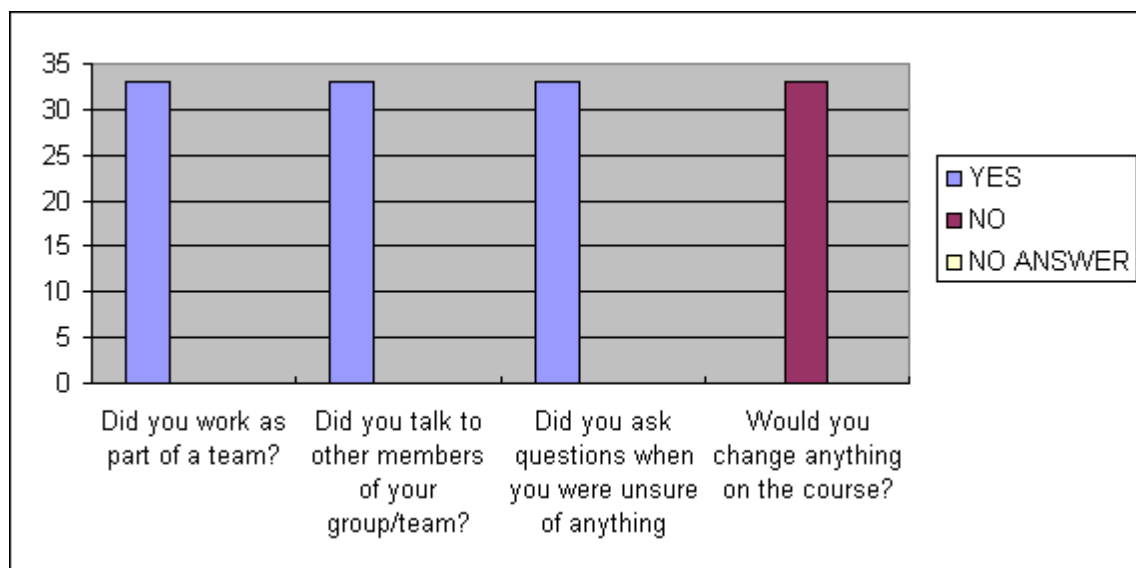
B2: Coquet Community High School

The following report has been reproduced with kind permission from Skill Force.

Waypoint 2 Evaluation from Coquet Community High School

Course completed on 24/01/2008

| | EXCELLENT | GOOD | AVERAGE | POOR |
|--|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| How good was the programme? | 31 | 2 | | |
| How motivated/challenged were you? | 23 | 10 | | |
| How good were the instructors in describing training sessions? | 32 | 1 | | |
| In involving you in the training sessions? | 31 | 2 | | |
| In supporting you throughout the activities? | 29 | 4 | | |
| In describing Health and Safety? | 29 | 4 | | |
| How good have the resources been? | 23 | 9 | 1 | |
| | YES | NO | NO ANSWER | |
| Did you work as part of a team? | 33 | | | |
| Did you talk to other members of your group/team? | 33 | | | |
| Did you ask questions when you were unsure of anything | 33 | | | |
| Would you change anything on the course? | | 33 | | |
| Grade your efforts throughout the programme out of 10 | | | | |



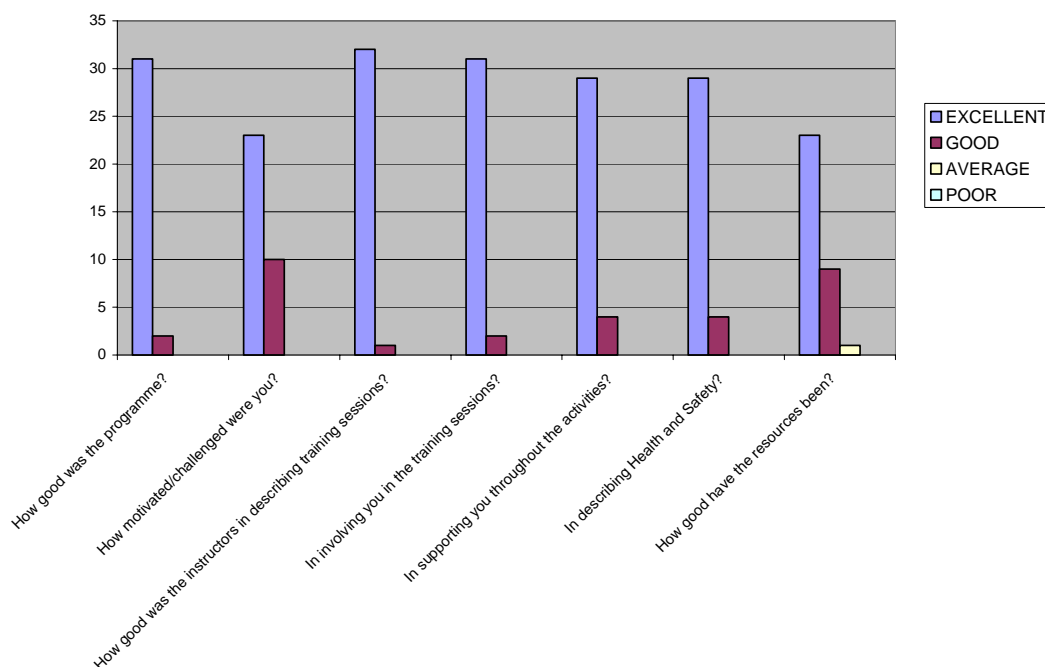
Tutor Comments

All Learner's from Coquet Community High School that took part in the Waypoint II course worked well and produced good work. Learner's behavior and enthusiasm was to a high standard.

Individual Effort Grade Comments

Students graded themselves on average 9 out of 10 which is a fair reflection.

Waypoint 2 Ponteland Community High School



Positive

I thought the programme was very good because the instructors explain the challenges well and the exercises were challenging.

The Instructors were helpful and supportive throughout the duration of the course.

"I would do it again and I would definitely recommend the programme".

"Extend the course as I really enjoyed it".

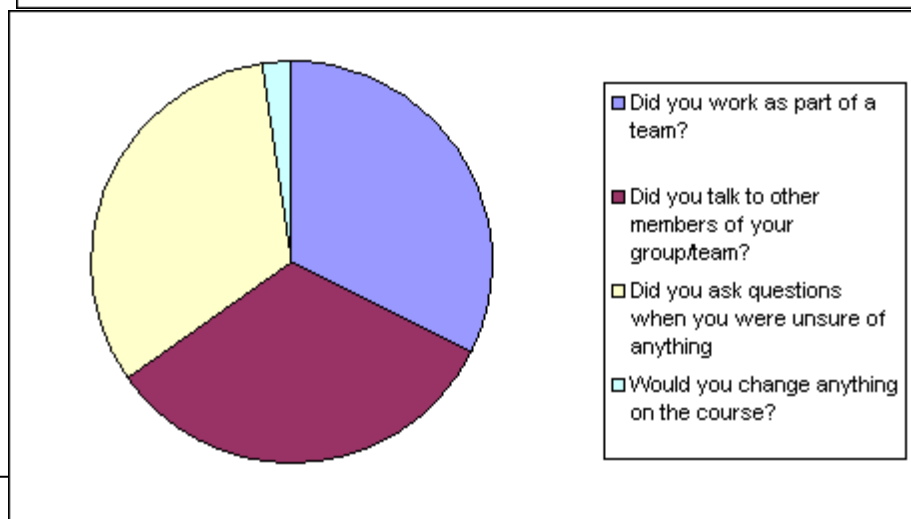
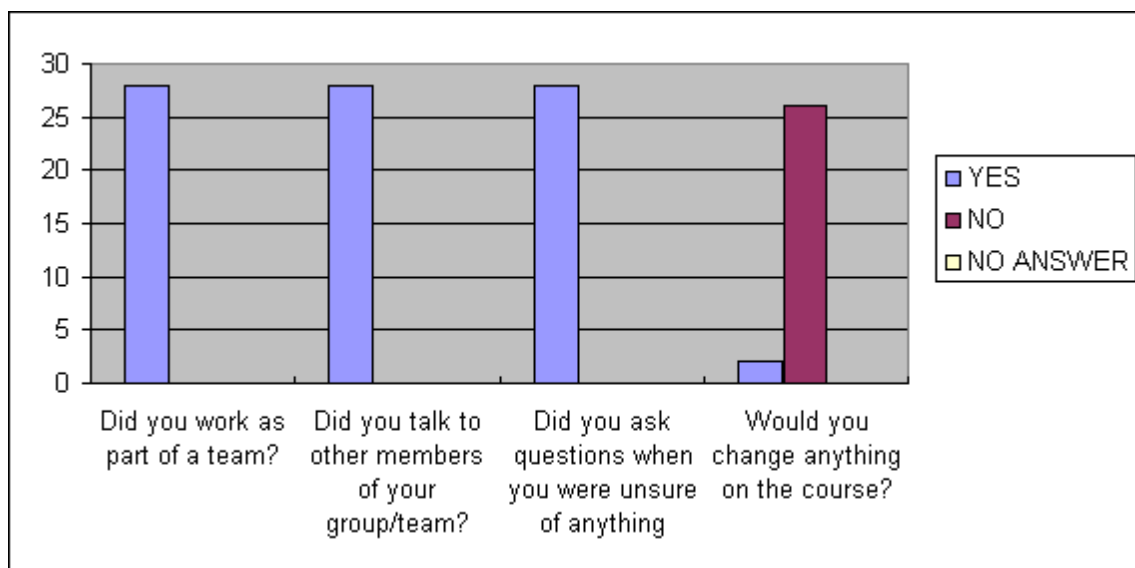
B3: Cramlington Community High School

The following report has been reproduced with kind permission from Skill Force.

Waypoint 2 Evaluation from Cramlington Community High School

Course completed on 29/11/2007

| | EXCELLENT | GOOD | AVERAGE | POOR |
|--|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| How good was the programme? | 21 | 7 | | |
| How motivated/challenged were you? | 13 | 14 | 1 | |
| How good were the instructors in describing training sessions? | 15 | 13 | | |
| In involving you in the training sessions? | 19 | 9 | | |
| In supporting you throughout the activities? | 23 | 2 | | |
| In describing Health and Safety? | 19 | 7 | 2 | |
| How good have the resources been? | 18 | 7 | 3 | |
| | YES | NO | NO ANSWER | |
| Did you work as part of a team? | 28 | | | |
| Did you talk to other members of your group/team? | 28 | | | |
| Did you ask questions when you were unsure of anything | 28 | | | |
| Would you change anything on the course? | 2 | 26 | | |
| Grade your efforts throughout the programme out of 10 | | | | |



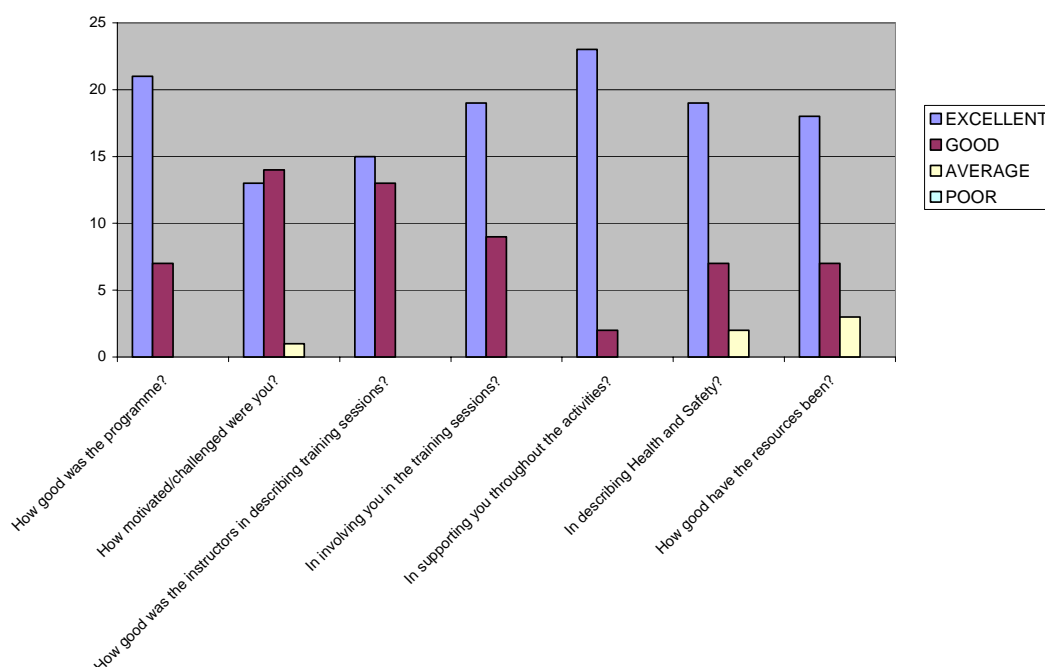
Tutor Comments

All Learners' from Cramlington Community High School that took part in the Waypoint 2 course worked extremely well and they produced some excellent work. Learner's behaviour was to an excellent standard and all should be proud of their achievements, well done!

Individual Effort Grade Comments

All learners graded themselves on their efforts and behaviour throughout the course and after looking through the evaluation sheets I identified that some learners were particularly hard on themselves and others over generous with their grading. Overall, I agree with the grading and think it was a fair reflection.

Waypoint 2 Cramlington Community High School



Positive

This course helped me a lot. It gave me confidence within myself and the instructors were very supportive. There is nothing wrong with the course it works excellently and has helped me with loads of things. I enjoyed myself and had fun aswell, thank you.

I think the programme was really good and it was very enjoyable and the instructors were very helpful and very supportive

The whole course was great. Mark and john made it as fun as possible. It was absolutely awesome I found the work fairly hard but I did it in the time given

A very good programme, have learnt a lot!

The course was a great opportunity and the people were really nice.

I think that the amount of work you do in the course is excellent for the grades you get.

I really enjoyed the course it has been a fun way to learn thanks for a good time.

Negative

The programme was really good and enjoyable but there was a lot of writing.

I like the course but the room was very cold.

Make it 2 whole weeks not just eight days

I did not like building with the pass kit but enjoyed the rest

I enjoyed this course and would do this again. I just don't like when there is a lot of writing but I do it. I would also like to thank you for giving me this opportunity

Action Points

One learner commented on the temperature of the room. This could not be helped as the heating was broken but was taken into account on the following days.

Two learners commented on the amount of writing that was involved throughout the course. This cannot be amended as it is not down to the instructors what paperwork is involved in the course.

One learner commented on changing the course to two whole weeks however this is not attainable due to other work commitments.

One learner was unhappy when working with the Pass Kit in the challenge Working with Others. However the challenges were divided fairly amongst the group and it would be unfair to change the challenges because of one learner.

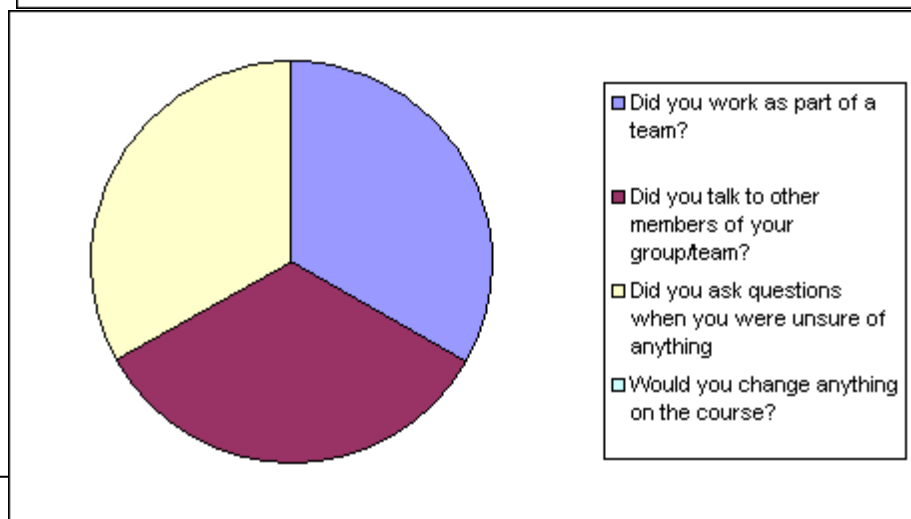
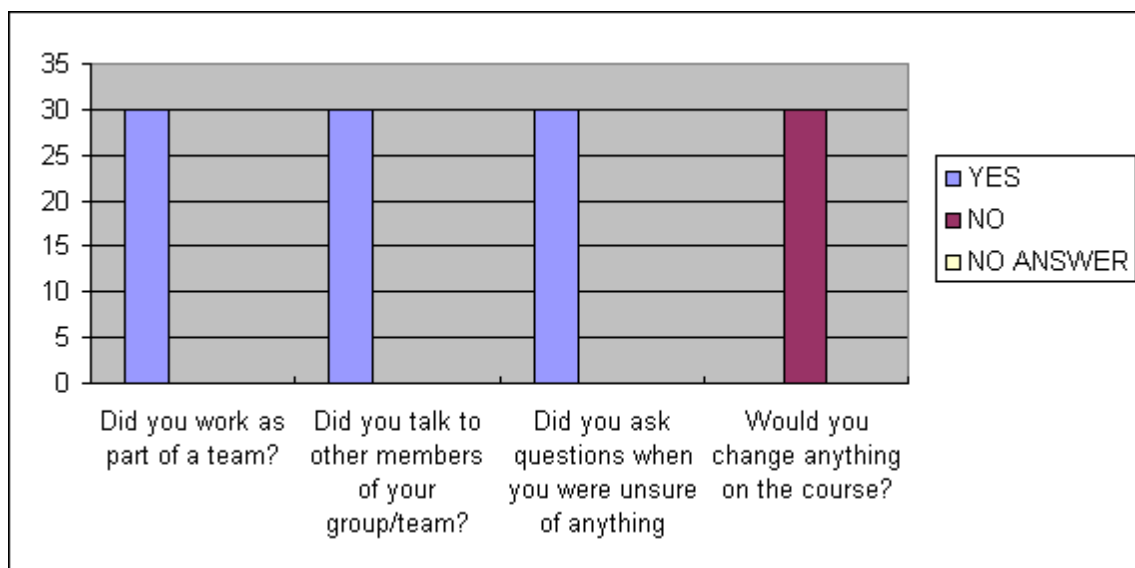
B4: Ponteland Community High School

The following report has been reproduced with kind permission from Skill Force.

Waypoint 2 Evaluation from Ponteland Community High School

Course completed on 20/12/2007

| | EXCELLENT | GOOD | AVERAGE | POOR |
|--|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| How good was the programme? | 22 | 8 | | |
| How motivated/challenged were you? | 20 | 10 | | |
| How good were the instructors in describing training sessions? | 26 | 4 | | |
| In involving you in the training sessions? | 23 | 6 | 1 | |
| In supporting you throughout the activities? | 26 | 3 | 1 | |
| In describing Health and Safety? | 21 | 9 | | |
| How good have the resources been? | 24 | 4 | 2 | |
| | YES | NO | NO ANSWER | |
| Did you work as part of a team? | 30 | | | |
| Did you talk to other members of your group/team? | 30 | | | |
| Did you ask questions when you were unsure of anything | 30 | | | |
| Would you change anything on the course? | | 30 | | |
| Grade your efforts throughout the programme out of 10 | | | | |



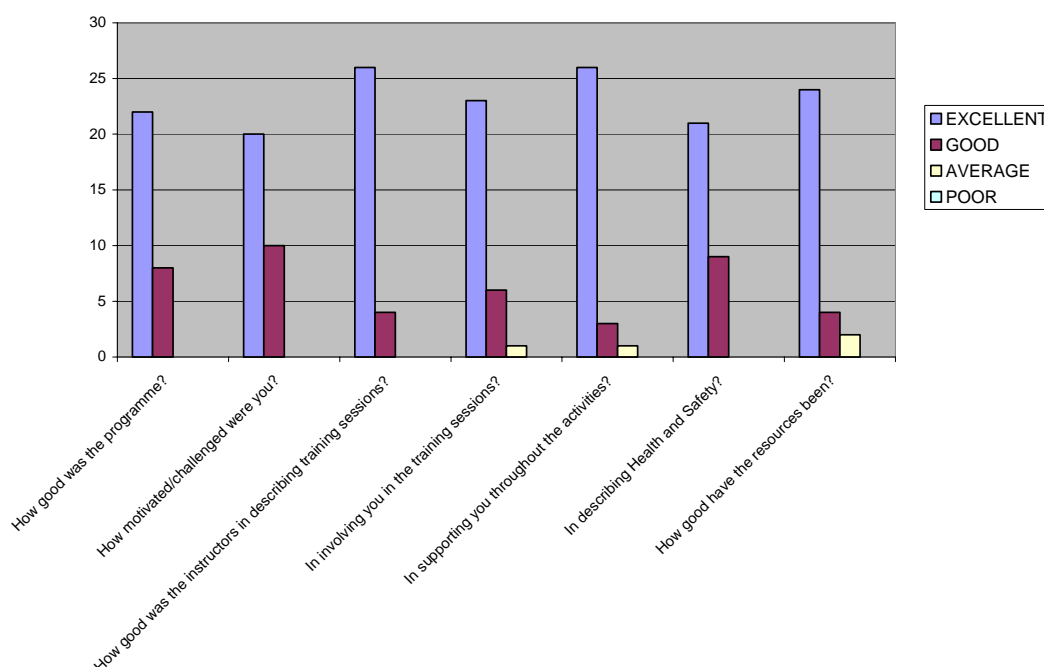
Tutor Comments

All Learners' from Ponteland Community High School that took part in the Waypoint 2 course worked extremely well and they produced some excellent work. Learner's behaviour was to an excellent standard and all should be proud of their achievements, well done!

Individual Effort Grade Comments

All learners graded themselves on their efforts and behaviour throughout the course and after looking through the evaluation sheets I identified that some learners were particularly hard on themselves and others over generous with their grading. Overall, I agree with the grading and think it was a fair reflection.

Waypoint 2 Ponteland Community High School



Positive

I thought the programme was very good because the instructors explain the challenges well and the exercises were challenging.

The Programme was brilliant and has helped me a lot. The instructors were very good and helped us a lot. The thing I enjoyed most was making my bridge.

I thought that overall the programme was a great way to learn. The thing I enjoyed most about the course was the Heart Start course and learning about CPR. It's been a fun experience and I am glad that I was chosen for this opportunity.

It was good and very interesting and Mark has been a very good support throughout the course.

The programme is really good and a fun way to learning. Our instructors were a really good help.

The way we were treated throughout the programme was very good as we were treated like adults. The programme was fun and exciting throughout.

I think the Way Point programme was a great opportunity for me and I enjoyed it a lot. I would do it again and I would definitely recommend the programme.

Negative

I did not like doing IOL

I think the programme was fun. But it had a lot of writing.

It was very good but there was too much writing.

Action Points

Two learners commented on the amount of writing within the course. Instructors cannot action this point as they are dictated to what paperwork to use.

One learner commented on the IOL challenges and that he did not enjoy them. However, this area is in the process of being developed and will be changed within the next few courses.

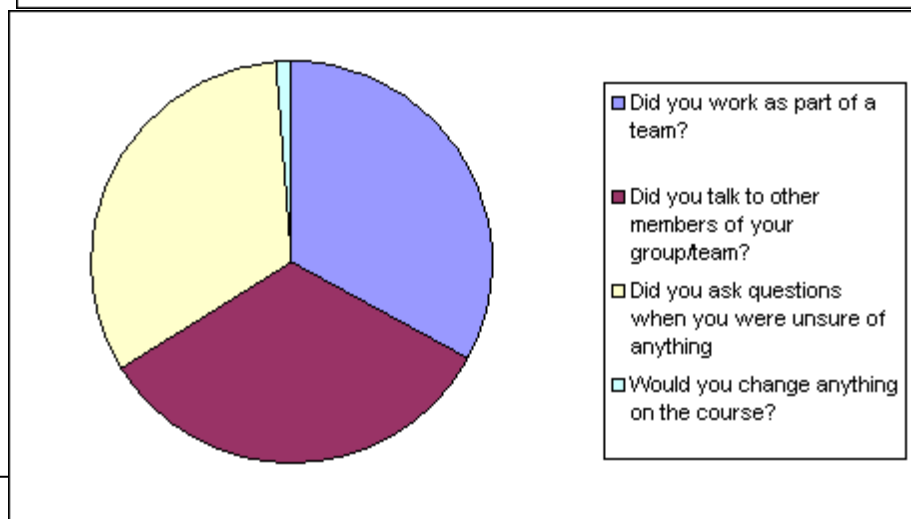
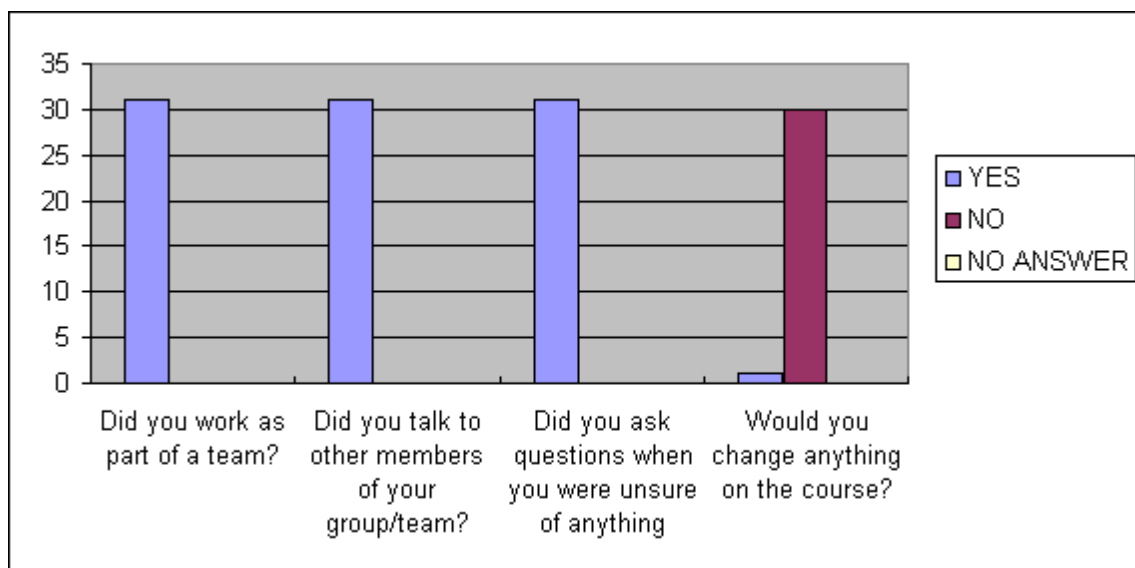
B5: Prudhoe Community High School

The following report has been reproduced with kind permission from Skill Force.

Waypoint 2 Evaluation from Prudhoe Community High School

Course completed on 8/2/2008

| | EXCELLENT | GOOD | AVERAGE | POOR |
|--|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| How good was the programme? | 20 | 11 | | |
| How motivated/challenged were you? | | 28 | 3 | |
| How good were the instructors in describing training sessions? | 4 | 27 | | |
| In involving you in the training sessions? | 26 | 5 | | |
| In supporting you throughout the activities? | 30 | 1 | | |
| In describing Health and Safety? | 10 | 12 | 9 | |
| How good have the resources been? | 9 | 21 | 1 | |
| | YES | NO | NO ANSWER | |
| Did you work as part of a team? | 31 | | | |
| Did you talk to other members of your group/team? | 31 | | | |
| Did you ask questions when you were unsure of anything | 31 | | | |
| Would you change anything on the course? | 1 | 30 | | |
| Grade your efforts throughout the programme out of 10 | | | | |



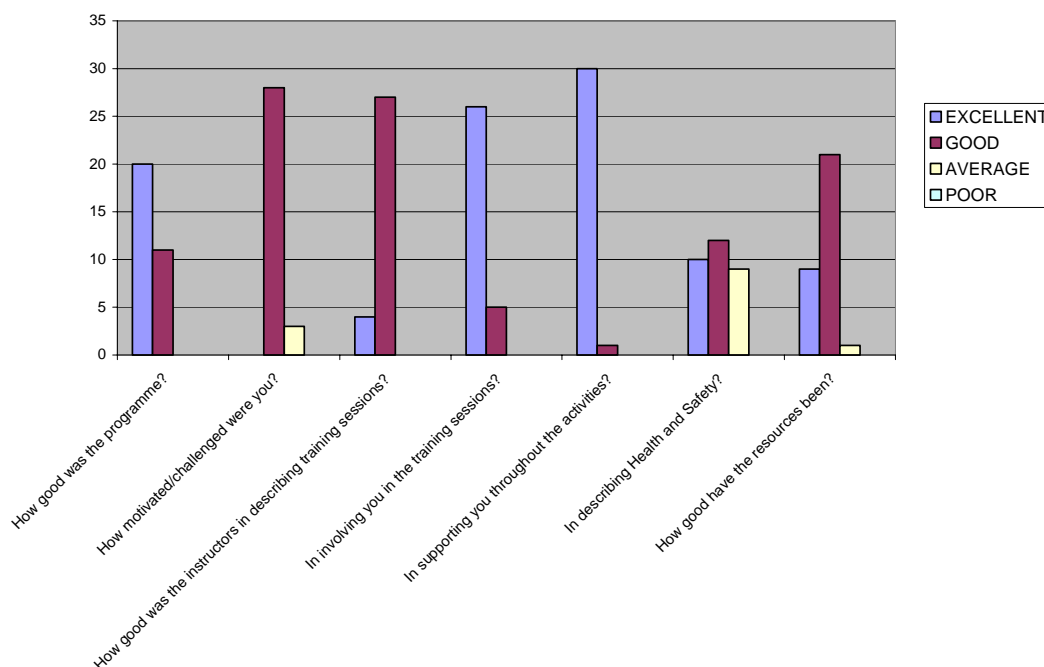
Tutor Comments

All Learner's from Prudhoe Community High School that took part in the Waypoint 2 course worked extremely well, and produced some excellent work. Learner's behaviour was to a good standard and all should be proud of their achievements.

Individual Effort Grade Comments

All learners graded themselves on the their efforts and behaviour throughout the course and after looking through the evaluation sheets I identified that some learners were very keen to give themselves a good behaviour grade which did not reflect their behaviour. Overall though, the group did behave to a good standard.

Waypoint 2 Prudhoe Community High School



Positive

I thought the course was very enjoyable and helpful and gave me a chance to develop skills. Thanks Mark and John!

I think the Way Point programme was an excellent opportunity and I have enjoyed every task we have solved.

I feel the Way Point programme has been great fun. It has helped me develop new skills. I feel this course should stay the same for the next group because they will enjoy it.

I thought the course was well good; it was funny and a relaxed way to learn.

I think the Way Point programme has been really good and very useful as I have improved a lot of my skills.

The Skill Force Instructors treated us like adults and when we were unsure of anything they were there to help and give us advice. I feel the programme was really helpful to my self esteem and my GCSE grades. Also the instructors were extremely helpful all the way through the course and made the experience even more enjoyable.

Negative

Work is very repetitive and there is a lot of writing.

Too much writing

I feel some of the questions were repetitive and some did not make sense.

A little bit too much paperwork.

Action Points

Same points identified by the group. Work is very repetitive and there is too much writing. However, learners have been informed that there is nothing the instructors can do to reduce the amount of writing as all challenges have to be completed in the eight days.

One learner commented on some questions not making sense. On asking the learner she was not sure which questions. Instructors will look at the way some of the questions have been worded and change it if necessary.

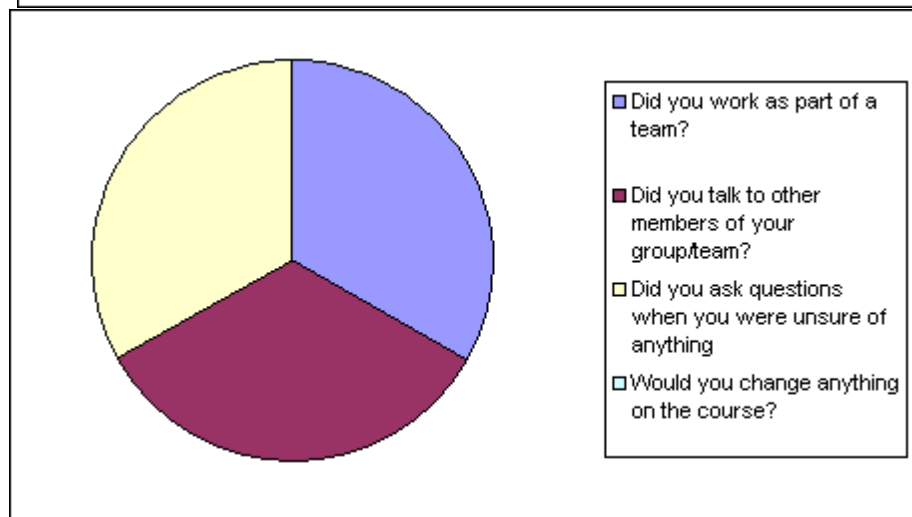
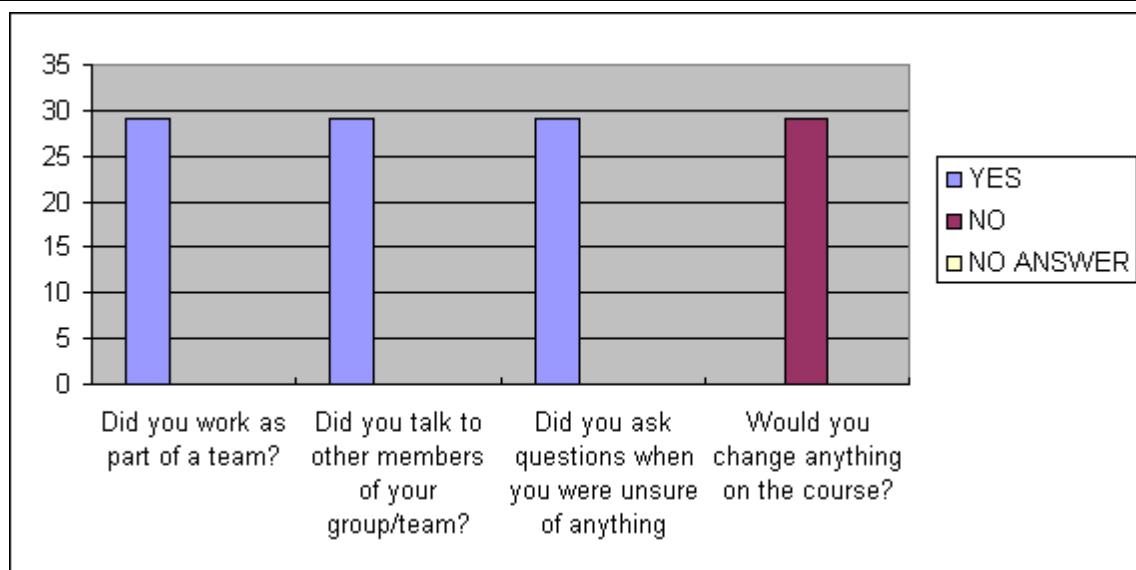
B6: St Benet Biscop RC VA High School

The following report has been reproduced with kind permission from Skill Force.

Waypoint 2 Evaluation from St Benet Biscop High School

Course completed on 14/2/2008

| | EXCELLENT | GOOD | AVERAGE | POOR |
|--|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| How good was the programme? | 9 | 20 | | |
| How motivated/challenged were you? | 9 | 11 | 9 | |
| How good were the instructors in describing training sessions? | 7 | 22 | | |
| In involving you in the training sessions? | 26 | 3 | | |
| In supporting you throughout the activities? | 3 | 26 | | |
| In describing Health and Safety? | 3 | 22 | 4 | |
| How good have the resources been? | 4 | 25 | | |
| | YES | NO | NO ANSWER | |
| Did you work as part of a team? | 29 | | | |
| Did you talk to other members of your group/team? | 29 | | | |
| Did you ask questions when you were unsure of anything | 29 | | | |
| Would you change anything on the course? | | 29 | | |
| Grade your efforts throughout the programme out of 10 | | | | |



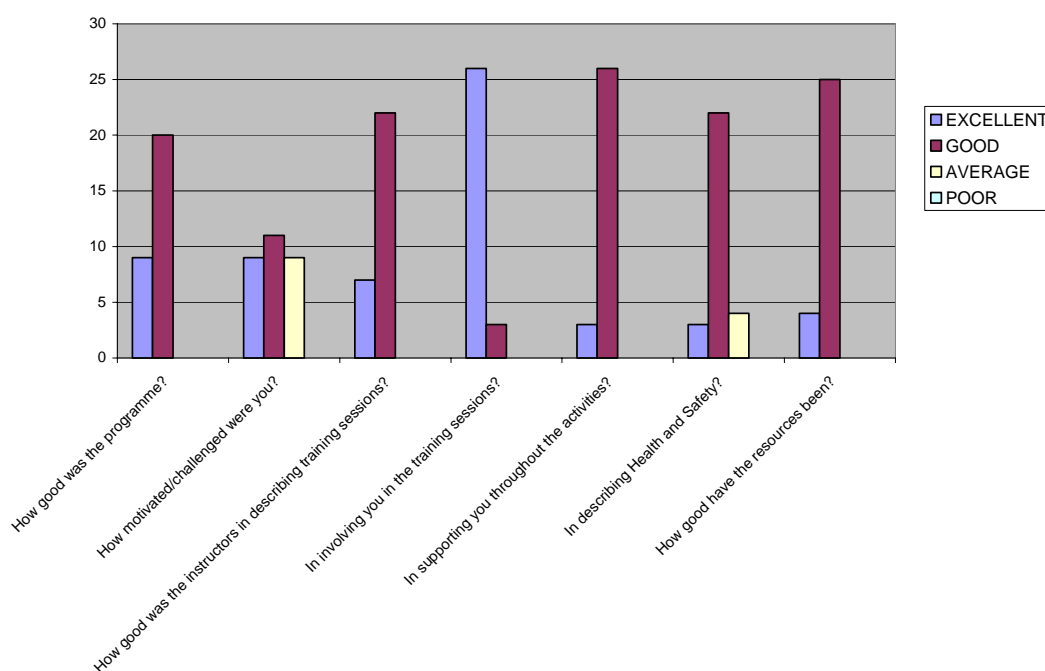
Tutor Comments

All Learner's from St Benet Biscop High School that took part in the Waypoint 2 course worked extremely well, and produced some excellent work. Learner's behaviour was to a good standard and all should be proud of their achievements.

Individual Effort Grade Comments

All learners graded themselves on the their efforts and behaviour throughout the course and after looking through the evaluation sheets I identified that some learners were very keen to give themselves a good behaviour grade which did not reflect their behaviour. Overall though, the group did behave to an excellent standard, well done!

Waypoint 2 St Benet Biscop Catholic High School



Positive

I liked the programme because we were treated with respect and we more of a laugh than in school and we still got lots of work done.

I thought the course was excellent as they treated us like adults and had a laugh and were supportive and friendly.

I enjoyed the fact that there was a laugh and that and we had to do building activities instead of just doing paperwork. The Instructors showed a lot of patience with my behaviour.

I thought the programme was a good opportunity to learn new skills. The instructor was friendly and supportive.

I enjoyed the course a lot as it was a chance to improve my teamwork and my own learning.

Negative

I did not like how much we had to write and we could have had more time to complete the course.

I did not like how much we had to write.

Action Points

Same points identified by the group. Work is very repetitive and there is too much writing. However, learners have been informed that there is nothing the instructors can do to reduce the amount of writing as all challenges have to be completed in the eight days.

One learner commented on the programme being rushed. At the beginning of the programme all learners were briefed that the course was very intense and there was not much time to complete the programme.

Appendix C: Participating Employers

21st Century Videos
Abbey Chemists
Argos Ltd
Astor Court Care Home
Barmoor Castle Country Park
Berwick Holiday Centre
Block and Tackle Public House
Burn Brae Medical Group
BXL Plastics Ltd.
C. A. Graham
Chase Dale Nursing Home
Co-Operative Group
Co-Operative Wholesale
Dene Park House
Durban House Nursing Home
Goswick Golf Club
Halls of Heddon
Harcros Timber & Building
Harrison's Newsagents
JC Dinning
Keith Pattinson Ltd
NPIL Pharmaceuticals
Otter Arable Ltd.
Post Office
Proctor and Gamble
Pubmaster Ltd.
RAF Boulmer
Ryecroft Hotel
Sale and Partners
Station House Stores
Stone Homes Ltd.
The Bedlington Terrier Public House
The Blake Arms Hotel
Thomas Sherriff & Co. Ltd.
Tomme Tippee Ltd
Tweed View Residential Home
Tyne Mills KIA Ltd.
Tynedale Leisure Trust
Walter Wall
Whiteknights Consultants



The Northumberland Information Network

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The Northumberland Information Network is a partnership between:

ONE North East, Northumberland Strategic Partnership, Northumberland County Council, Connexions, Northumberland Care Trust, Northumberland Community Safety and CDRPs, Northumberland DAAT and GO-NE.

