

Give Yourself the Edge

Evaluation Report

Vanessa Dodd
Jill Hanson



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About iCeGS

iCeGS is a research centre with expertise in career and career development. The Centre conducts research, provides consultancy to the career sector, offers a range of training and delivers a number of accredited learning programmes up to and including doctoral level.

A history of the Centre is available in the book:

Hyde, C. (2014). *A Beacon for Guidance*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies. University of Derby.

For further information on iCeGS see www.derby.ac.uk/icegs

Recent iCeGS publications

Dodd, V. and Hooley, T. (2018). The Development of the Teachers' Attitudes toward Career Learning Index. *Teacher Development*, 22(1): 139-150.

Dodd, V. (2017). *CPD for Teachers Developed by Employers. What Works?* London: Careers and Enterprise Company

Dodd, V. and Hooley, T. (2016). *Evaluation of the Legacy Careers Project*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies.

Hanson, J., Codina, G., and Neary, S. (2017). *Transition programmes for young adults with SEND. What works?* London: The Careers & Enterprise Company.

Moore, N. Vigurs, K., Everitt, J. and Clark, L. (2017). *Progression for success: Evaluating North Yorkshire's innovative careers guidance project. Final report*. Northallerton: North Yorkshire County Council.

Hooley, T., Dodd, V. and Shepherd, C. (2016). *Developing a New Generation of Careers Leaders: An Evaluation of the Teach First Careers and Employability Initiative*. Derby: International Centre for Guidance Studies.

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Introduction

Young people in England face transitions into a complex education and labour market system. These difficulties create a challenge for young people trying to make informed decisions about work and their future. Smooth transitions from education to work is critical to developing a skilled and responsive labour market.

Despite the repeatedly stated aspiration of bringing education and employment closer together, young people are now spending longer and longer in education often with very limited exposure to the workplace. The lengthening of school to work transitions has also been accompanied by the increasing complexity of educational and vocational options (Dorsett and Luccino, 2015; Hutchinson and Kettlewell, 2015; Lanning, 2012). The ever changing nature of the English education system means that students who are currently in school will encounter reforms to GCSE, AS and A levels (DfE, 2015), an overhaul of higher education (DBIS, 2016) and the results of Lord Sainsbury's vocational education proposals (DBIS and DfE, 2016).

Changes to Career Education

In December 2017 the Government published a new careers strategy (DfE, 2017). This strategy solidifies the importance of employer engagement in schools and reiterates the importance of meaningful encounters for young people with employers (Mann, 2016).

Teachers form important relationships with young people and in many instances occupy a critical role in supporting career education (Dodd, 2017). Teacher placements have emerged as a potentially effective activity to support both teacher professional development and employer engagement in schools. Teacher placements can support:

- improved quality of business-education partnerships;
- the development of curriculum materials based of the world of work; and
- experiential learning opportunities.

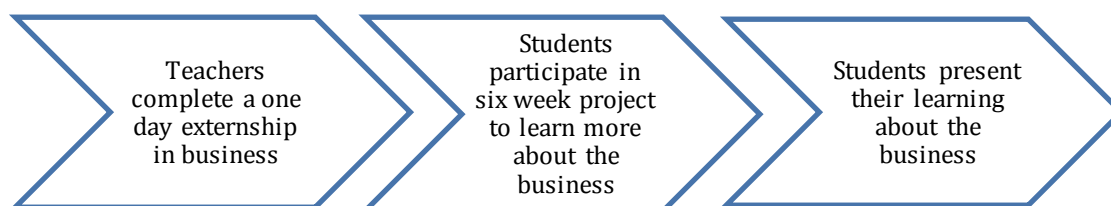
Despite limited research, teacher placements have positive outcomes for teachers (Dodd, 2017). Teacher placements have been found to increase knowledge and understanding of business and industry. In addition teacher placements have been found to both improve capacity to deliver learning and to change the teaching practice of teachers.

Give Yourself the Edge (GYTE) was developed following a study visit between the Edge Foundation and school teachers from several Nottingham schools to the Academies of Nashville in the United States. Their Academies of Nashville model is a unique approach to 14-19 education where students can access a variety of career academies alongside core education subjects. As part of the Academies of Nashville model young people engage more frequently with project-based learning and teachers interact more often with employers by completing externships (placements) based with employers participating in the career

academy. The Edge Foundation and Nottingham teachers agreed that translating elements of the teacher externship model would work well in their area. They worked with senior leaders at the schools and Business in the Community to establish a pilot programme in Nottingham. In 2017- 2018 GYTE scaled up to three regions following the success of the pilot programme in Nottingham.

About Give Yourself the Edge

GYTE is a careers education programme targeting Year 8 students in secondary schools. There are three core components to the programme.



GYTE took place in three regions over the course of 2017-2018:

- Nottingham
- Derby
- Newcastle/North East

Recruitment. Schools were recruited in a variety of ways. Many schools that participated in the pilot also participated in the programme's second year. The project manager of GYTE delivered presentations about the programme in the North East and Derby. Links were developed with interested schools which further supported school recruitment. Employers were recruited either via existing school links or through the local enterprise partnership (LEP).

Externship. Year 8 teachers took part in a one-day externship with employers in their local area. Teachers came to the externship from a variety of schools. The externship day was managed by the employer and each externship experience varied. After the one-day externship teachers complete a school based project with their students (typically lasting six weeks) where the students learn more about the local employer the teacher visited. To showcase student learning, pupils develop a short presentation about the employer to either the employers themselves or to a group of their peers.

School-based programme. Schools typically scheduled GYTE within their existing timetables. Schools either delivered the project during tutor time or PSHE.

- *Tutor time.* Short programmes were delivered during tutor time. Students worked in 20 minute blocks of time over six weeks with their tutor.
- *PSHE.* Full programmes were delivered during PSHE. Students worked in approximately one hour blocks over six weeks with their tutor.

Students were given the following brief at the beginning of the project:

*“Imagine you work for a local employer. It’s your job to recruit new and enthusiastic staff to the business.
You need to create a presentation outlining why the employer and the business is the best place to work. You need to cover:*

- *What the employer/ business does?*
- *Outline the careers which are available in the business. Include both the more obvious jobs that they are known for and any ‘hidden jobs’ you didn’t know about at the start of the project.*
- *Explain why the employer is the ‘top place to work’. What is it like work there? What have they achieved recently? Why would you recommend it to a friend?”*

The Edge Foundation provided teachers with a suggested session plan and resources for the six weeks:

1. Launch and introductions to Give Yourself the Edge
 - a. Career choices activity
 - b. SWOT activity
2. Overview of the employers being studied and the teacher externship
 - a. Planning employer investigation activity
3. Research the Employer
 - a. Employer information worksheet
4. Continue to research the employer
 - a. Employer culture and objectives task
5. Developing the presentation
 - a. Presentation tips sheet
6. Finalising and practicing the presentation
 - a. Evaluation and SWOT activity
7. Celebration event

Project outcomes. The Edge Foundation articulated six outcomes for Give yourself the Edge.

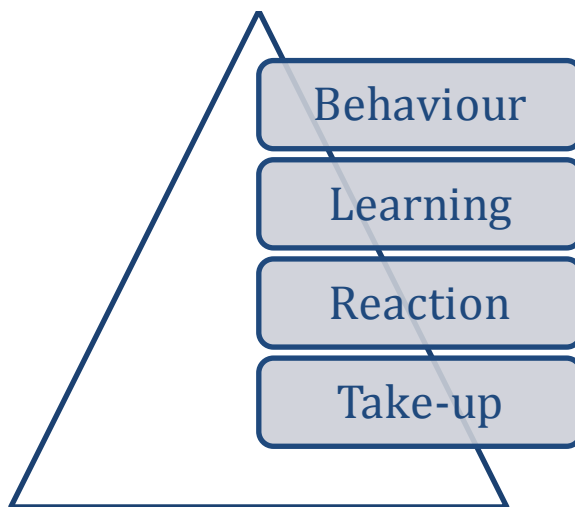
- Increasing **teachers’ knowledge and understanding** of the world of work through CPD at a local employer.
- Enabling teachers to develop **employer links**, develop **engaging curriculum** and offer **real world advice** on opportunities.
- Raising the **aspirations of students**.
- Making them [students] aware of the **types of jobs and career paths** available through local employers.
- Providing **meaningful encounters with employers**, which research shows boosts future earnings and employment.
- Fostering **profound employer engagement**, which is beneficial to the whole school and looked for by Ofsted.

About the Evaluation

The Edge Foundation commissioned the International Centre for Guidance Studies (iCeGS) to conduct an evaluation on GYTE. The evaluation was to run in both the Spring 2017 term and Autumn 2017. The evaluation was extended until May 2018 to accommodate schools who had rescheduled their programme of activities.

The evaluation was designed using a mixed methods approach. We used the proposed outcomes of the project to articulate our research questions. We used the Kirkpatrick (1994) model of evaluation to inform and contextualise research questions (See figure 1). This model focuses on four levels: one on outputs and three on outcomes. The first level, take-up, looks at the level in which the programme has engaged with its target population. Level two, reaction, looks at whether those engaged with the programme enjoyed participating and whether they found participating useful. Level three, learning, is informed by the project outcomes and learning objectives for the intervention. The last level, behaviour, focuses on whether participating in the programme results in behavioural changes articulated in the project outcomes.

Figure 1. Adapted Kirkpatrick model of evaluation.



Observations. Six observations of programme delivery in schools were carried out by the research team. Each school was observed once. Observations were scheduled at the convenience of the school and as a result the research team was able to observe the project at different phases. Three schools were observed on class six of GYTE. Three schools were observed during class two of GYTE.

Interviews. The research team interviewed *ten teachers* that participated in GYTE. Seven of these interviews were one-to-one while two interviews ran in a focus group style. This was done in order to accommodate additional teacher viewpoints. We interviewed *nine employers* about their experiences delivering an externship to teachers.

Surveys. The research team designed two surveys: one for teachers and students. We had intended on a pre-test (before the externship) and post-test (after the end of the programme) for teachers however the post-test did not receive a high enough sample size (n=24) for inferential statistics. This evaluation report will focus on the post-test data only. Students (n=388) completed a survey at the end of the programme. Surveys were mixed-mode; the schools determined whether to complete the web-based survey or a paper-based survey. Surveys were completed after their presentations about the business they researched. One school with paper-based surveys aggregated the data rather than creating a raw data file which limited analyses conducted.

Findings

The following section details the findings from the evaluation. The section is structured by the evaluation model. Within each section, if applicable, we discuss the outcomes with reference to the three main stakeholders: teachers, pupils and employers.

Take-up: Who engaged?

Schools

A variety of schools registered their interest for GYTE. Fourteen schools were initially recruited to GYTE:

- Six schools from Nottingham
- Four schools from Derby
- Four schools from the North East/Newcastle Area

One Nottingham school withdrew prior to the teacher externship date. Two schools (one in Derby and one in the NE) participated in the externship but did not complete the programme in school to date. Both schools cited staff sickness as the reason the programme did not go ahead in schools. One school in the NE used the externship for their own school activity rather than the formal GYTE programme. One school in Derby completed the programme in school but did not participate in the evaluation despite an attempt to engage them in the process.

Within the normal and short programme, there were a variety of ways in which GYTE ran in practice. In some GYTE schools whole year groups took part in the programme. In some schools, selected tutor/PSHE groups took part in the programme. One school put two tutor groups together in order to facilitate team working with students they may not have interacted with before. In a few cases schools selected a small number of students (8-12) to take part in the programme after school or during breaks.

Schools participated in GYTE for a variety of reasons, but most were particularly interested in how GYTE could be used within the curriculum. One teacher interviewed stated that the school had *“an interest in getting a careers programme embedded further into a subject area. We wanted to make the information relevant to students by focusing in on one organisation.”* Another teacher stated that,

"[GYTE] is a good way of embedding careers provision into the curriculum and in a way that is sustainable, easy and has a lot of positive outcomes for staff and students."

Teachers

The Edge Foundation reached out and offered externships for teachers from schools not involved in GYTE. In total, 62 teachers participated in the teacher externship. Of the 62, 53 teachers participated the externship linked to a school recruited to complete the programme. Some teachers were pulled out of the externship by their SLT. This was mainly due to issues of staffing or student misconduct on the school site.

Employers

Twelve employers across the three regions were recruited to provide an externship for teachers. Employers were recruited to GYTE using different processes depending on the region. In Nottingham employers that participated in the pilot were re engaged and continued to provide support. In Derby additional employers were recruited via a gatekeeper at one of the participating schools. In the North East employers were contacted and recruited via NE LEP contacts.

Reaction: Was it enjoyable and worthwhile?

Teachers

Teachers, employers and students were asked about their initial reactions to GYTE and specifically the parts in which they participated. We were interested in whether participants and stakeholders enjoyed the programme and found the programme useful.

Teachers were positive about GYTE. Most teachers (82%) surveyed enjoyed participating in GYTE. Over half (58%) of teachers surveyed believed their students enjoyed participating in GYTE however 29% of teachers neither agreed nor disagreed with this. This may be because they believed they could not answer the question on behalf of young people.

Teachers had mixed reactions about the externship day. Teachers that enjoyed their experience usually had a day that was hands on, met different people from different departments and saw a variety of working contexts. One teacher was excited about the demo at one employer, *"I can use these skills for at home DIY."* Teachers that did not enjoy the day described the externship as mainly information giving with powerpoint presentations throughout. One teacher stated that while she did learn a lot about the employer she just wasn't as engaged with the day as she would have liked due to the way in which content was presented.

Students

Students were also asked whether they enjoyed GYTE.

- 63% of students surveyed enjoyed learning about a local employer through GYTE.

- 49% of students surveyed enjoyed presenting information about a local employer through GYTE.
- 71% of students agreed or strongly agreed that doing GYTE was a good use of time in school.

While students generally enjoyed learning about a local employer and thought it was a good use of their school time, less than half enjoyed presenting information about a local employer.

There was a large amount of regional variation. Students from the North East largely enjoyed all aspects of the programme including presenting about employers. Students from Derby were least enthusiastic about both learning and presenting about a local employer.

Table 1. GYTE student reactions by region.

| <i>(% agree or strongly agree)</i> | Nottingham (n=114) | Derby (n=123) | NE (n=143) | Total (n=380) |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| I enjoyed learning about a local employer through GYTE | 61% | 47% | 86% | 63% |
| I enjoyed presenting information about a local employer through GYTE. | 42% | 43% | 76% | 49% |
| Doing GYTE was a good use of time in school. | 77% | 57% | 95% | 71% |

Learning: Did stakeholders improve their learning as a result of participating?

Teachers

One GYTE outcome stated that the programme would increase teachers' knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

- 80% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that participating in Give Yourself the Edge gave them an insight into the world of work.
- 85% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the externship increased their knowledge of possible career paths in local businesses.

Many teachers interviewed suggested that the day out with the employer was useful and they were surprised to learn about the range of jobs available. One teacher stated, *"I had no idea how many different types of roles there were in the sector and what they did for their [clients]."* Another teacher suggested that while she believed she knew more about the employer she externed with but not necessarily about the wider range of jobs available in the region.

Teacher views on whether the externship increased their knowledge and understanding of the world of work was dependent upon whether they had held professional jobs outside the education system. One teacher stated, *"You go do your studies, get your qualification and enter teaching. I had no idea about other*

routes like apprenticeships.” One headteacher noted, “I had a straightforward career path of school-uni-school and I didn’t really know what the outside world of work was like. [GYTE] gave me an opportunity to learn.” She stated that while employability is a key objective of the school it is hard to embed without teachers knowing what the larger world of work is like.

Those who already had experience outside of the education system were less likely to find it increased their knowledge. One teacher suggested that while he had learned more about the particular employer he visited he did not learn more about the world of work. Another teacher stated that she “already had a good handle on what is going on in the [world of work]” and that participating in GYTE did not increase this awareness.

Students

Students learning and awareness of the types of jobs and career paths available was an important project outcome of GYTE.

- 84% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that they learned a lot about local employers through GYTE.
- 84% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed they learned about lots of jobs local to them through GYTE.
- 82% of students surveyed agreed or strongly agreed they had learned about jobs they had not thought of before through GYTE.

Most students agreed they learned a lot about local employers, local jobs and jobs they had not heard of before. Despite high levels of agreement from students in all three regions there may be variation in learning between regions. Derby students reported the lowest agreement (63%) within all three learning outcomes while NE students reported higher than average outcomes (93%-94%).

Table 2. GYTE student learning by region.

| (% agree or strongly agree) | Nottingham (n=114) | Derby (n=123) | NE (n=143) | Total (n=380) |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| I learned a lot about local employers through GYTE. | 89% | 63% | 94% | 84% |
| I learned about lots of jobs that are local to me through GYTE. | 89% | 63% | 94% | 84% |
| I learned about jobs I had not thought of before through GYTE. | 80% | 63% | 93% | 82% |

Employers

One indirect outcome of the programme was that employers noted an increase in staff awareness of both themselves and teachers. The following is a case study of

an externship from the employer's perspective which highlights the reciprocal learning of both teachers and staff on the externship day.

Employer Perspective

One employer was keen to participate in Give Yourself the Edge because of the organisational recognition of a skills gap in their workforce. As a construction company they felt that young people were pursuing 'comfy options' and as a company they needed to increase awareness of the range of opportunities a company like theirs have available.

The company had engaged in a wide variety of careers education programmes but found the idea of working with teachers particularly appealing. The company believed that by increasing teacher awareness in their business they could reach more young people.

On the day of the externship teachers attended a presentation about the business, went to a building site and interviewed staff from six departments about their career journey. The externship was due to finish at 4 pm but teachers and staff stayed on to 6 pm talking.

The interviewee stated, "feedback from our externship day was tremendous. The teachers came from lots of different angles and made a lot of notes. Some teachers were talking about a possible 'industry into maths' project." The employer also stated that staff sharing their career journeys got a lot out of the training as well, "It reaffirmed to [staff] that training and upskilling is a positive thing."

Behaviour: Did the programme affect decision-making or behaviour?

Several project outcomes of GYTE focused on behavioural changes of both teachers and students. For teachers, the GYTE project outcome associated with behaviour was to enable "you to develop employer links, develop engaging curriculum and offer real world advice on opportunities." Three-quarters (75%) of teachers surveyed agreed that participating in the externship improved their ability to provide careers advice to students. During the interviews, one teacher discussed learning about apprenticeship opportunities and meeting apprentices on the externship. She was able to learn about the apprenticeship process in the students' own words. She believed that as a result she will be able to confidently discuss apprenticeships with interested students.

Only one-third (33%) of teachers surveyed agreed that the externship improved their curriculum teaching. While linking careers to the curriculum was a priority when schools decided to engage with the programme it seemed to have only a small impact on teacher's curriculum teaching. This may be due to the way in which the programmes were delivered in schools during PSHE or tutor time only.

Students

One proposed outcome of GYTE was that participating students would have raised aspirations. While behavioural change is difficult to measure in short term evaluations, several questions were asked in the survey about the potential changes in decision-making that may occur as a result of the programme. While over half (67%) of students believed that GYTE helped them to think about what they wanted to do for future learning and work, less than half (45%) believed that GYTE influenced their GCSE decisions.

Regional differences persisted and were consistent with potential behavioural outcomes. In the NE students (80%) reported that GYTE was influential in helping them think about further learning and work. This was 29 percentage points higher than Nottingham students and 37 percentage points higher than Derby students.

Table 3. Potential student behaviour changes by region.

| <i>(% agree or strongly agree)</i> | Nottingham (n=114) | Derby (n=123) | NE (n=143) | Total (n=380) |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| GYTE helped me think about what I wanted to do for further learning and work. | 51% | 43% | 80% | 67% |
| GYTE activities helped me decide my GCSE options. | 42% | 29% | 54% | 45% |

Overall North East students had better than average reactions to the programme and higher levels of learning than both Derby and Nottingham students. Derby students had the least positive reactions to the programme. A further school level analysis of Derby schools suggests that while there was variation in responses, students from one school in particular were less likely to agree that they enjoyed the programme, that they learned from the programme or that it had helped with their decision-making. The reason why this is the case is not exactly clear from the data and could be the result of multiple factors. This is an important area for future research.

The externship and project process

As part of the evaluation of GYTE we collected data on programme process. This data centred on three key elements: the externship day, the six week school based programme and programme management by The Edge Foundation. The following section details the findings from data collected about each of these three elements.

Teacher externship

The point is for the teachers, schools and students to learn about the diversity of roles in our organisation, learn how people got

into them, learn about the ethos and culture of the organisation and learn about sustainability.

-Employer

Employers wanted to provide an externship for a variety of reasons. They were interested in

- continuing or extending their partnerships with schools,
- increasing awareness of local jobs,
- broadening teachers perspective on the world of work,
- improving participation in local community, and
- preparing their potential future workforce.

Employers designed the content and delivered their externship in house. As a result there were a variety of externship experiences to which teachers were exposed. Teachers were largely enthusiastic about the day; 82% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the day was managed well by the employer.

Teachers were able to articulate the types of externships they believed made for the best learning environments. These externships had a variety of content modes throughout the day. Days that engaged teachers had aspects of:

- information giving,
- access to a range of employees,
- site or lab visits and
- experiential learning opportunities.

Teachers also believed that visiting local employers with either direct or indirect relevance to students was important. One teacher said, *"I thought it was a great business to go to as they are located right down the hill and the students pass the office."*

Teachers mentioned that some employers had a good understanding of what they (the teachers) needed and the resources they provided showed this. At one employer teachers sat in on customer service calls. At another employer teachers went to an active construction site. At another externship teachers were able to do demos of the type of work the organisation carries. In these instances teachers were provided opportunities to take pictures so they could better explain and visualise the employer to students.

Another teacher thought her externship was "fine" but not very engaging. She stated that she would have preferred something a bit more hands on. She went on to say *"that it is so hard to get out of school so the day must be impactful."* Lastly she suggested that during the externship teachers should be able to produce something on the day to help support the programme in school.

Employers interviewed stated that delivering the externships fulfilled their expectations. However, they had mixed reactions of both the teacher participation and the celebration event. Some employers believed that teachers were excited about the externship day. Many employers enjoyed the time they

spent with teachers and were surprised with how engaged they were when asking questions about the business.

Employers stated that teachers involved in the externship should be:

- aware of the purpose of the externship,
- motivated and enthusiastic about the programme and
- willing to continue the relationship and provide feedback to employers.

While most employers agreed that the externship was worthwhile, employers that held externships for two regions found that teachers from one particular region were more engaged than the other. One employer was disappointed that a teacher sat on her phone the entire day. This employer also believed that some of the teachers acted in an unprofessional manner. Instructions were given to wear casual clothes on the day due to the working environment but many came in suits and business attire. The employer also stated that many teachers turned up late and left early. She found this very disruptive and that it had caused issues with health and safety at the employer's site.

Employers interviewed were also disappointed by the lack of follow-up from schools and teachers after the externship. Many had hoped the externship would help them to build a relationship with local schools. Other employers were more optimistic. One employer stated they "*understood the demands on teachers at schools.*" They expressed that while there may be no immediate follow up but wanted teachers to know that "*the door was always open.*" Some teachers did follow up with employers which has led to further working relationships. The below programme perspective is an excellent example of this.

School based programme

After the externship day teachers went back into schools to deliver a six week careers education programme centred around the employer with whom they externed. This process was managed in different ways depending on the school. In Nottingham, students had to prepare for a celebration event which provided schools with an end date to work toward. Employers were invited and attended the celebration event which was hosted by an employer. In Derby and Newcastle there was no central celebration event so the timescales were more flexible. As a result however some schools waited until the term after which the programme was originally scheduled to run to complete the programme.

Programme Perspective

One school worked closely with their externship provider to support GYTE with further employer engagement. Students were introduced to the employer at an assembly to kick off the programme in school where they gave a talk to students.

Resources from the Edge were adapted around themes which slightly changed the structure of the programme.

Apprenticeships. Introduction of the concept of apprenticeships and what apprenticeship offers the employer has.

LMI. Initial conversation of labour market information with further LMI specific to employer.

Job roles. A discussion of the range of role available in organisation with special attention paid to the types of jobs available within the externship organisation.

Employability. A discussion of general employability skills as well as specific skills suggested by employer.

Sector Focus. A broad discussion of the sector in which the organisation sits with a particular focus on how the employer sits within the sector.

Students produced leaflets as a team with a page dedicate for each theme discussed. The winning team received a full day of work experience at the externship organisation.

We asked stakeholders how best to improve school-based programme portion of GYTE. Scope for improvement was centred around the following themes:

- better preparation and management for delivery,
- thoughtful programme timing to increase buy in,
- An appropriate 'end' to the programme and
- More meaningful employer engagement.

There may be scope for improvement on the school's management of GYTE. Only half (50%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that GYTE was managed well by the school. Some teachers needed more general information and support for the project, *"further understanding of the tasks that need to be completed and a better understanding for the students - centralised workshops for teachers."* Another teacher suggested, *"more guidance in school of the objectives and deliverable for each class. This was left to us to decide individually with little input from the school."*

Another teacher suggested that schools should organise GYTE, *"at a different time of year. On top of GCSE commitments it was a real pain to take time off and plan a full day of cover lessons."* One teacher suggested that GYTE be *"sold better to get more tutors on board. Get businesses to come into school for drop down day so students buy in the project."* Some teachers stated they needed, *"more time allowed to plan and deliver the sessions in school."*

Students were asked open-ended questions about what they liked about the programme and what they thought could be improved. Students enjoyed a number of things:

- The leaflet activity (one school in the NE)
- Learning about new/different jobs and businesses
- Working as part of a team
- Doing the research
- Making the power point

- Doing the presentation
- Learning about what skills will be useful for them to have in the future
- That what they learned had helped them make GCSE choices and know what they want to do when they leave school/do as a career

“the best bit was it helped me to see all the different jobs that are on offer”

“It has helped me choose my GCSEs”

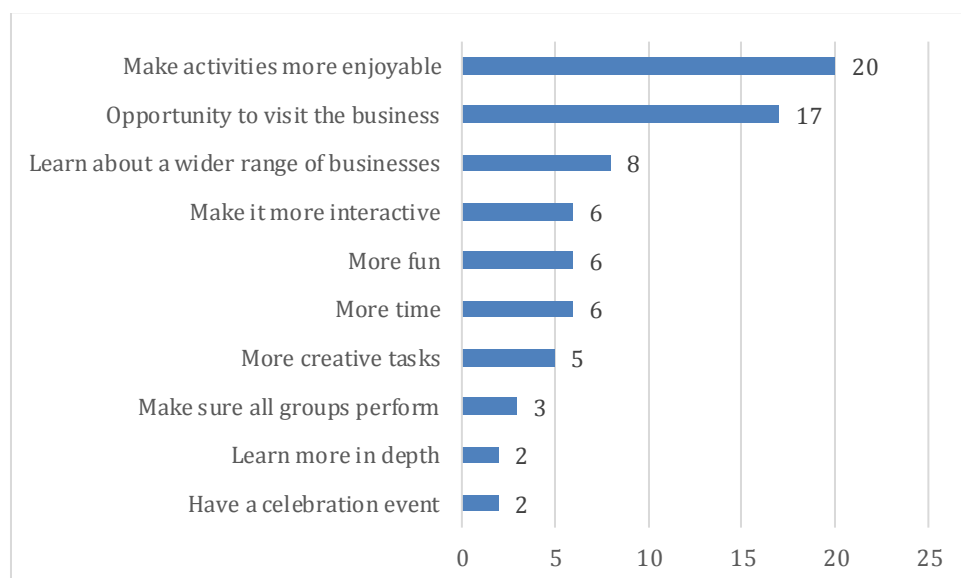
“It has helped me choose the path I want to take after school”

“We got to learn about lots of different jobs and what skills are useful to us in the future”

“The best part about the business in classrooms activities, was that I have learned a lot from it and it will help me in future”

Comments on what could be improved were varied (see Figure 1); some considered the activities, some were focused on the content of the whole programme. The majority of comments concerned making the activities more enjoyable/interesting/creative and that they would have preferred to go out and see the business and the jobs in action. Many responses indicated a desire for it to be generally more interactive and practical. Another common comment was that they would have liked more time to work on the programme and several responses suggested that presenting to the businesses or having a party ‘celebration event’ would have improved the programme.

Figure 2. Top 10 responses to “What could be improved” about GYTE.



Most stakeholders from Derby and Newcastle (where there was not central celebration event) felt the programme didn’t feel “finished” even after the delivery of the the programme. Employers in particular liked the idea of a

celebration event where they could get together, meet the students and to hear their presentations. They wanted something tangible to show to their organisation that they had been working with local schools and that students had been learning about their organisation. Employers suggested photographs with the students or a video of the day could help provide evidence of impact.

Nearly everyone surveyed or interviewed suggested that students meet or visit the employer as part of the programme. One teacher echoed many of thoughts of teachers, *“allow the pupils to go into businesses, this would give the program real meaning.”*

There were some instances where the programme ran to plan. At least three schools had some instances where the programme was run with only a subset of their class or form. This typically had to do with

- programme priority,
- time or
- student ability.

One teacher remarked, *“I started with the whole group but felt they struggled with the amount of information. I chose to [work with a smaller group of] students. My idea is they will present back to the whole group at a later date.”* This teacher was part one school where teachers worked together with a selected group of students after school. When asked about this the teachers stated, *“the programme we ran [during lunch and after school] worked well for the [participating] students.”* They admitted that some teachers in their school had dropped out of the externship which created challenges for the programme at the start. This was not the only school that delivered GYTE after school to students. Another school asked for volunteers to take part in the project as part of an extracurricular activity.

Programme management

After the success of the pilot, the Edge Foundation hired a part-time project manager in order to scale up the programme. Schools and teachers enjoyed having project management support and thought it was largely effective. Employers also commented on the effective project support from the Edge Foundation. When asked they were able to articulate where project management support could be best deployed:

- scheduling,
- resources and
- communication.

Some employers struggled with the initial scheduling of GYTE. One employer noted there was no timeframe for a long time and because all stakeholders were involved in the initial scheduling decisions took too long to make. This employer suggested that the programme should be pitched as ‘going ahead’ in a certain timeframe to which schools and employers can sign up. Another employer thought that the programme could work better towards the needs of professionals acting on behalf of business. One employer did not work on days in

which meetings were scheduled and would have liked this to have been considered.

Many teachers enjoyed and used the resources provided. Fifty-nine percent (59%) of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they were given enough resources to deliver GYTE effectively. Some teachers suggested that there should be a greater variety of resources. Several particularly commented on the need for more accessible resources for both lower ability students and students with disabilities. This includes the resources provided by employers which often have adults as their target audience.

A GYTE lead in schools suggested there could be more explicit communication between the Edge Foundation and schools particularly in two areas: how information was to be disseminated to others and an early articulation of key deadlines. She stated that while there was “a lot of e-mails” she often was unsure whether the information and deadlines had been cascaded to teachers or whether she was responsible for dissemination.

Discussion

GYTE was a career education programme which combined a teacher externship in business with a six week Year 8 student programme. The evaluation was conducted during the 2017 – 2018 programme year in Nottingham, Derby and North-East schools. Data collection was conducted from February 2017 to May 2018.

Overall all GYTE stakeholders were very positive about the programme and their experience with the programme. Teachers, employers and students thought it was a good use of their time and would engage again with the programme. There was some regional variation in terms of student learning and possible decision-making.

GYTE achieved many of the articulated programme outcomes:

- 80% of teachers surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that participating in Give Yourself the Edge gave them an insight into the world of work.
- Schools were able to develop employer links.
- Students had raised aspirations; 67% of students agreed that GYTE helped them think about what they wanted to do for further learning and work. However the programme was less likely (45%) to have affected their GCSE decision making.
- Students were more aware of the types of jobs and career paths available through local employers; 84% of students reported they learned a lot about local jobs and employers through GYTE.
- 75% of teachers surveyed were more confident about offering career advice after participating in GYTE.
- GYTE helped foster profound employer engagement, as all employers were interested in continuing their support to both the schools and the programme.

GYTE could improve the impact on the following project outcomes:

- Teachers were less likely (33%) to agree GYTE helped them with their curriculum teaching.
- Both students and teachers suggested providing more meaningful encounters with employers as part of GYTE.

The key recommendations echo the informal feedback from the mid-point of the programme. The recommendations for the programme moving forward are centred on the themes of recruitment, communication, 'interaction for students' and reflection or "capping off" the programme.

Recruitment. Recruiting employers, schools and teachers is an important part of the programme process. It is important that schools and employers are eager, engaged and understand the value of a programme of this type.

Employers. Employers and organisations that can provide teachers with interesting, hands on externship days should be recruited. Employers should provide more than just information to teachers about the organisation. This is in line with both feedback from teachers that participated in GYTE and previous research (Dodd, 2017). Externships where teachers were given relevant information, hands-on activities and a chance to ask questions seemed to be the most successful from both the teacher and employer perspective.

SLT. Schools that are interested in the programme should commit to provide support at the SLT level. Schools where GYTE is driven from SLT were more likely to have a quality assurance protocol, provide support for teachers ensure feedback is given on the programme.

Teachers. Teachers interested in career education and employer engagement should be given priority for externship placement. Teachers should understand why they are completing the externship and how the GYTE can add value to their students and to their professional practice. The literature suggests that this can be supported by giving teachers learning outcomes or project-based activity to be reflected upon or completed as part of the externship process (Dodd, 2017).

Communication. Communication is key to maintaining programme success. Teachers felt the programme was managed well by the Edge Foundation and by the employer. They were less likely to believe the school managed the programme well. Communication protocols for employers, schools and teachers are important and particular attention must be paid to communication between the school and teachers.

Employers. Employers wanted externship dates to be set early in the process. They wanted individual needs to be taken into account when arranging meetings. They wanted teachers to follow-up after the externship and school-based programme. While these things may not always be possible in practice it is important to keep in mind with regards to setting up the next round of externships. However, it may be possible to require or challenge teachers to at

least one follow-up with externship employers. This could be an e-mail or telephone conversation that requires very little resource or time. This follow-up could be a supporting piece to attempting a more lasting school-business partnership mutually beneficial to both stakeholders.

SLT. SLT must drive the project in order to achieve success. One school the evaluators visited had a quality assurance process in order to ensure that the programme was being delivered. In another school one teacher did not know whether the other teachers from their school (that went on an externship) actually completed the programme in class. A quality assurance process for GYTE should be standard. Many schools ran the programme in a way that was not standard such as working with a small group of students after school. SLT should agree to feedback management information about the project to the Edge Foundation throughout the life of the programme. This type of information should include how many teachers deliver the project, how many students are involved and the type and amount of sessions in each school. The Edge Foundation may want to create a template for each school to complete. A key person should also agree to keep the Edge Foundation up to date with how the project is progressing in their school.

Teachers. Teachers need an embedded system of communication and feedback. Some teachers are unsure and need support to improve their confidence to deliver a programme of this type. Other teachers were unsure of the 'point' of GYTE. Standard communications to all teachers throughout the process could demystify the project for teachers. These could be mailers with suggestions throughout the project delivery life in the school. An improved recruitment process for teachers by the school could also improve knowledge and understanding.

Engagement for students. Many students made explicit comments about wanting to have visited the businesses themselves and seen the workspace, the jobs and employees in action, or more indirectly by suggesting the programme should be more interactive. The Edge Foundation could think about how to practically get groups of students into businesses to interact directly with employees and then share this learning with their fellow students. One school worked with their placement provider to support work placements for the winning team. This could be one of several ways to boost employer engagement.

It is also important to think about the employer materials used to engage students with the business. Business website target audiences may not be for year 8 students and teachers suggested that mixed ability students had trouble with comprehension. There may be opportunities for teachers and employers to co-create resources accessible to younger audiences. This could be beneficial to both parties.

Capping off the programme. The Edge Foundation could think about adding further reflective components to the overall GYTE programme to embed learning and to add value to the programme offer. In addition, stakeholders were in

unanimous agreement that GYTE should ensure employer encounters for young people.

Teachers. There could be opportunity for teachers to reflect and share their learning of the externship and the student project. One way in which they could do this is via an invitation to a conference or workshop hosted by the Edge Foundation. They could talk about the key aspects of their experience in their own words. In addition teachers could collaborate on successes and challenges throughout the project in either a webinar style format or a 'wash up' meeting at the end.

Employers. Many employers wanted the opportunity to interact with students. They liked the idea of a celebration event where they could get together, meet the students and to hear their presentations. They wanted something tangible to show to their organisation that they had been working with local schools and that students had been learning about their organisation. Employers suggested photographs with the students or a video of the day could help provide evidence of impact. One school rewarded the students with a winning presentation a day of work experience with the business they researched. This seemed to be good practice for schools for which this is practical and realistic.

Students. Students enjoyed developing their presentations but those students who did not participate in a 'celebration event' often commented that improvements to the programme should include meeting with people from the businesses and having a 'party' at the end. The Edge Foundation should consider making this event a core component of engagement in the programme, not only does it help with the 'capping off' but also permits interactions between students and employers/employees.

Moving Forward

We have developed four practical recommendations for the programme moving forward:

- The creation of guidelines around teacher selection for GYTE for schools.
- A workshop of set of guidelines for schools and employers about making the most of the externship time as well as some recommendations on how to create a good externship experience within business.
- Further development of training materials and resources on how to build activities out of the internship experience.
- Create opportunities for teachers to get together. There may be an opportunity to set up an online space or physical space for teachers to reflect and share their learning.

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