

Aim: maintain, raise or accelerate the attainment of a set of gifted and talented year 7 students 'Gifted and talented' describes children and young people with an ability to develop to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop those abilities).

Objectives:

- To deliver active, engaging and motivational activities to provide higher quality personalised learning for all pupils.
- To track and evaluate students' performance in relation to previous performance and with other students in the year group (non-participants)

Background Information

Heath Park Business and Enterprise College is a co-education institution located within the inner city area of Wolverhampton and the school's population is ethnically diverse. The school's catchment area covers a large area of high social and economic deprivation. Despite the potential barriers to achievement students have thrived. The successes of the school have not gone unnoticed as it has been recognized locally and nationally. Thus making the school one of the most sought after schools in Wolverhampton and it usually has a long waiting list. Most recently in 2008 it was awarded a certificate in recognition of being one of the **most improved** schools in the England and an **outstanding** grade by OFSTED in 2010.

"Heath Park is an excellent school. It serves a community facing significant challenges and turns these potential barriers into opportunities for celebration and achievement" Ofsted

Heath Park curriculum is designed slightly differently from most schools in the country as it has a two year KS3, a three year KS4 and a two year KS5. At KS3 students are exposed to a competency based curriculum which is literacy based with a thematic, subject integrated approach. This thematic aspect of the syllabus is delivered by the form tutor who the students spend most of their time with. Students engage in Mathematics, Science, PE and Music. The significant amount of time spent with the form tutor should enable the tutor to know each child well in order to best meet the child's needs. The school rationalizes its aim for a competency based curriculum with this quote in its 2009/10 prospectus;

'Since we cannot know what knowledge will be most needed in the future, it is senseless to try and teach it in advance. Instead, we should try to turn out young people who love learning so much and learn so well that they will learn what needs to be learned.' Holt 1964

KS 4 which commences at year nine is as the regular KS4 in the country but a year earlier. Starting KS4 a year earlier gives students an opportunity to start A Levels a year earlier or to re-sit subjects they did not get the desired grades for in year nine or ten. The "stage but not age" program presently has 35% of KS4 students commencing AS courses in year eleven. Students do not only excel in the academia but also vocational areas and the arts.

At first I wanted to look at the achievements/development of ethnic minority students as there is a noticeable absence of these students in the KS4 and 5 top sets and more traditional subjects (GCSE and A Level). Many of these students opt to undergo courses in vocational or other such BTEC courses. In looking at some data and talking to some teachers I realized that in 2002 OFSTED inspectors have praised the work of nine schools in raising the achievement of black Caribbean pupils, bucking national trends and it still continue to do so. I have also realised that not only ethnic minority students were under achieving based on their KS2 target grades. Despite the fact that the school has been successful for many years and in many areas there is still room for improvement and the school's vision statement (**'Every Pupil: Always in Focus'**) acquaints that commitment for the achievement of all students in a safe and purposeful working environment is paramount.

In motivating G&T students to achieve, extensive research in educational psychology has demonstrated the relationship between four factors:

- ❖ Task Value; Students have to value their experiences for it to be meaningful
- ❖ Self Efficacy; they believe that the skills they possess can be use to create success
- ❖ Environmental Perceptions; they trust they environment and believe that they can succeed in it
- ❖ Self Regulation; applying the appropriate strategies conducive to learning e.g. high standard of behaviour/discipline

Plan of first phase of study with a Pilot group during the summer term

<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contact SMT <input type="checkbox"/> Select focus group & team <input type="checkbox"/> Set time frames <input type="checkbox"/> Aims and Objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Informal interviews 	<p>2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with team to agree aims and objectives <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback to coach 	<p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meet or contact stake holder/s to share plans <input type="checkbox"/> Auditing (resources and plans etc)
<p>4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Start working with the focus group <input type="checkbox"/> Informal meeting with team members after each session to check on progress 	<p>5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Team meeting (May 31st 2010) <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting with coach 	<p>6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Update SMT of progress <input type="checkbox"/> Meet with team and coach <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for the next phase of the project

Methodology

We decided that the best methods of data collection were questionnaire, informal discussions and activity sessions. Questionnaires or any views they wanted to express were done anonymously so that students felt safe to write their feelings, as the responses could not be traced. Bearing in mind that parents or guardians do play an important part in a student's life and motivation and self believe can be and should be encouraged/supported at home. I fed back to the form tutor who then passed on information to parents.

Main Findings

Students were met at least once a week to discuss how they were getting on and this was sometimes followed by a questionnaire such as to ask how well they have done for the week etc

The chart below shows the response of the participants recently regarding their regular classroom environment. As you can see most of the students believe that more can be done to motivate them to work at their full potential.

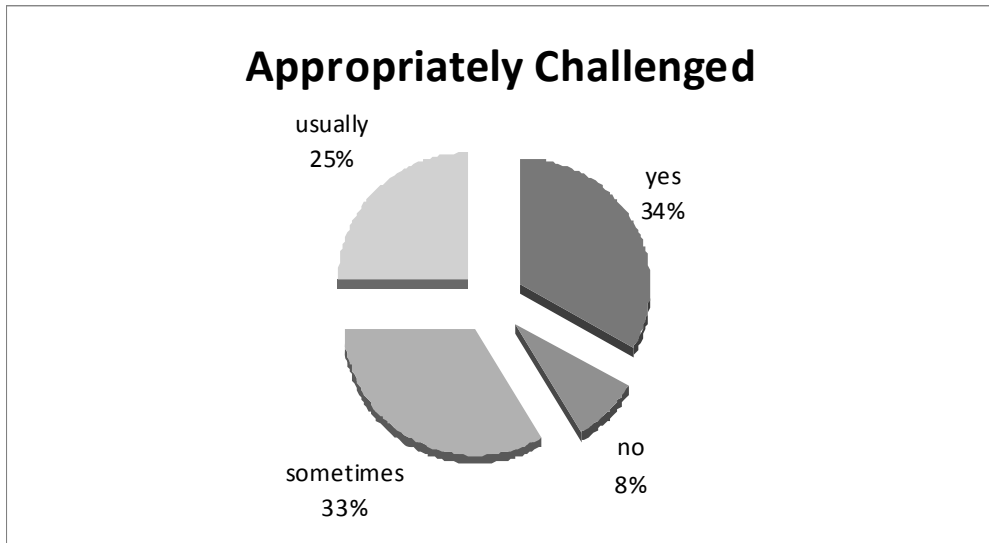


Fig 1

Figure 2 shows the link between how interesting the students find their lesson and how motivated they are to achieve it appears that the same students who feel interested or not is identically linked to their level of motivation. At first when the students were given an activity most of them lacked detail in their answers as they "could not be bothered". After getting to know the team in and out of sessions it made it easier for them to work at their level. I made sure that I would stop and talk to the students in the corridors about their day, weekend, extra curricula activity etc and it really made the communication link stronger as I had not previously had any interaction with these students.

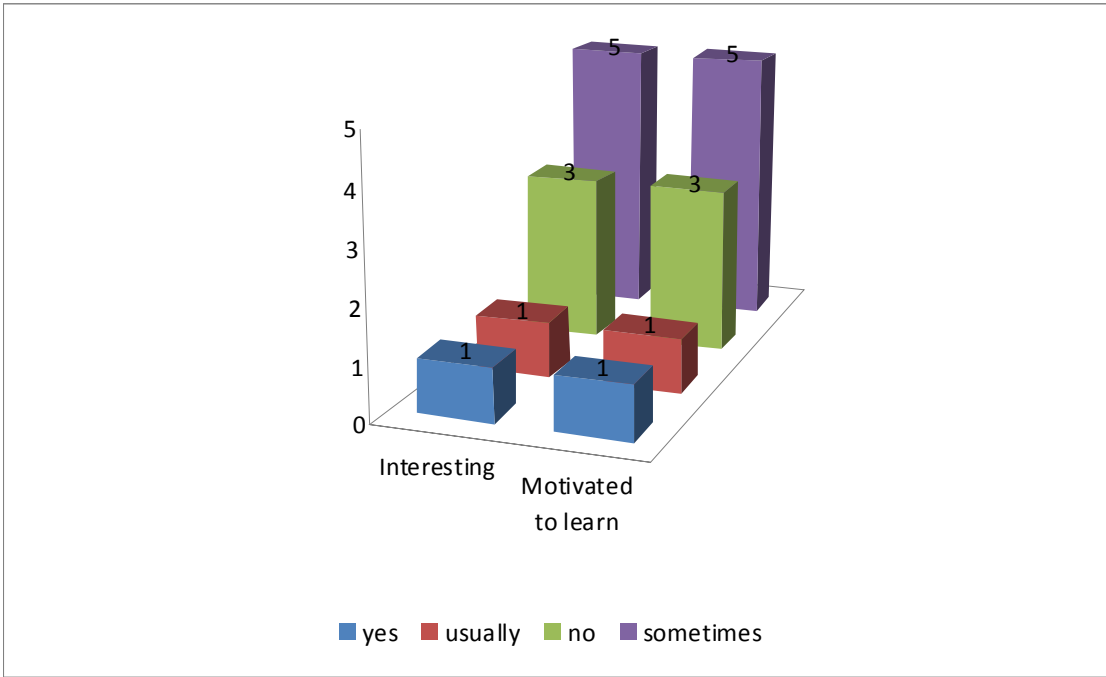


Fig 2

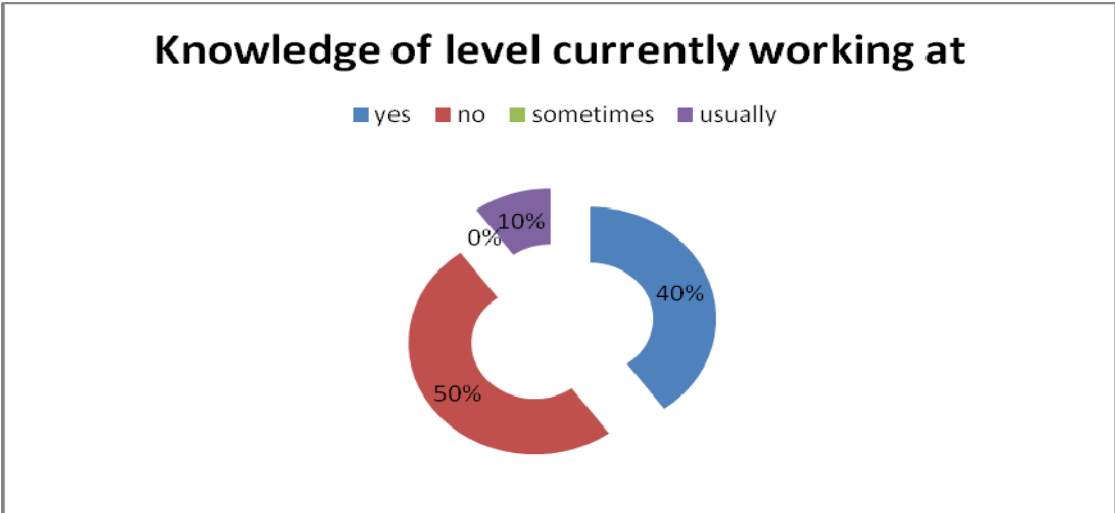


Fig 3

Despite the fact that each student knows their KS 2 levels and target level, most students (as shown in Fig 3) felt that they went through a considerable period before knowing what level they were working at. Since much of the work is project based they lacked short episodes to write and reflect.

Many of the students believe that they have tried their best and as a result they have done well by their standards Figure 4 shows the results. Some cited that a change in teachers sometimes disrupt their learning especially in mathematics where some students said they had changed teachers over three to four times. Although their reports have not been completed yet the students are optimistic

that they have improved especially in their confidence and motivation. Teachers are of the same opinion as the students. My coach has sessions of Humanities with the students and he believes that they are fantastic students who give of their best in each lesson.

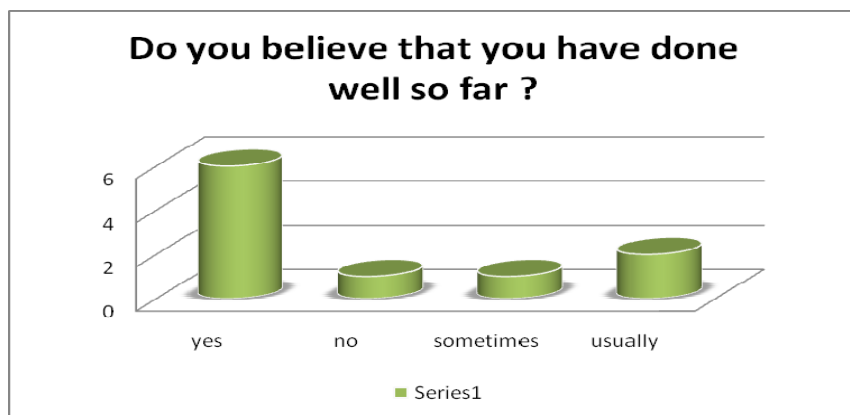


Fig 4


Limitations

Time was the greatest limitation as the project was not incorporated into the school's timetable so I had to constantly keep track of what others were doing and arrange meetings/sessions accordingly. The students participated in extra curricular activities so sessions after school was not an option. These plans did not work perfectly as sometimes arrangements were postponed. A good example of this was an English Language lesson that had to be postponed due to the launch of a whole school collapsed time table which allows for flexibility thus during an unassigned session the teacher was told at the last minute to accommodate a year eleven exam group for "catch up work". This had a knock on effect on other planned activities. Students and teachers sacrificed their lunch time on several occasions to have the sessions going.

Key Points for Action; Recommendations for the SLT

All parties involved enjoyed the sessions according to both oral feedback and the **Voice of the Learner** activity sheets. I would like the sessions to continue next school year with planned sessions in the timetable to get more specialized in depth teaching which the students felt is lacking. One student in a review wrote that there were too many projects and not enough variety/opportunity to practice their higher order written skills so these lessons would suit such a person. This would also give them a chance to interact with more members of staff as they feel that some teachers are not interesting excited and patient. After discussing this as a group with a member of the team they came to realize that the way they are taught is not how the rest of the school operates and teachers had different teaching styles so they have to learn to adapt to different personalities.

Students felt that the levels were over rated and used for them to perform instead of the interest being on their well being in the lesson. They would prefer instances of short detailed episodes to learn and reflect on their learning with more focus on their shortcomings and celebrations of their strengths. Despite the fact that they felt that there were things teachers needed to do they felt that they also had to make more of an effort to put their best in their work as it impacts on their future.



Personally I found the students very intelligent and well mannered and full of potential. Looking at KS 2, 3 and 4 data I realized that some of the most disruptive students in a particular vocational subject that I had assisted were high performing students in KS2 and the start of KS 3. What went wrong (under achieving)? I am not sure but I would not like any other of these students to become disruptive and begin to underperform.

Suggested SLT Recommendations for Implementation in September 2010

The students are excellent at organising and carrying out extended projects which they enjoy and learn a lot from (evident in their feedback from the Voice of the Learner survey, work displayed and oral feedback). However to facilitate **equal opportunities for feedback and reflection** together its necessary for the incorporation of “short sharp” intense sessions to facilitate deeper and wider thinking of the students as they and their teachers set targets and work towards ameliorating their knowledge, skills and attitudes at the end of each unit or topic.

Specialist teachers will be introduced in lessons where necessary to support tutors to facilitate deeper and wider thinking of the students. Since these teachers have a detailed knowledge of all aspects of their subject area they will enhance the teaching and learning process in which the students will be suitably challenge to maximise their potential.

As a result of all the measures above and our regular contact with parents/guardians we aim to increase or maintain students’ **confidence in their own abilities**. These students are very smart and articulate as a result we need to improve the skills that they are lacking. By providing an environment conducive to learning, specialist teachers, making targets challenging yet realistic which will bring about success which will increase confidence and maintain a good appetite for learning.

Impact of the Study on my Professional and Leadership Learning

I have enjoyed the challenge thoroughly as I have worked with members of staff who I would not normally have worked with and I have learnt a lot from them not only about their personality but how different subject areas/people view certain issues and their approach. I have found out that although some members of staff may not have previously participated in whole school activities but given the chance can be extremely efficient.

It’s imperative to communicate with compassion and respect as it allows openness. The project has reinforced the importance of constant communication and which is fundamental for a team to function effectively as it is an essential element of monitoring to make sure all involved are on the same page.

I enjoyed the activity and gained much more confidence knowing I can implement and manage whole school activities using the skills I have garnered over the years. I am now ready to move on to the next level (promotion) and make a meaningful contribution to an energetic, positive and dynamic team.



Evaluation of the EAP programme on my leadership learning

I have found the EAP programme useful and appropriate for developing and improving me as a leader. The on-line aspect of the course is user-friendly. I was given the opportunity of not just communicating with the facilitators but other participants as well. I never felt like I was alone on any aspect of my leadership journey.

The methods of delivery on the residential plus the resources were not only appropriate but effective; I still use the resources as the need arise. I have gained much confidence and knowledge about different leadership styles. I have a better understanding of various types of leadership styles, when they should be best used and how to integrate one style with another to suit different situations.

This is the best course I have participated in since teaching. Thank you.
