Learner voice in schools and making choices post 16

This project explores how learners can be supported through learner voice to research and make informed choices prior to entry into college

Findings

Learners are serious about their future…
… but many are unsure about how to reach their aspirations.

All learners wanted more information on progression into university and employment, from their chosen course.

Party time wasn't a priority! Enrichment wasn't as highly valued as we thought.

All students wanted to study *"something that interests me"*, but what does this mean?

Students still value the paper-based resources.

Location was not important for school students… but we find a minority of students change course due to locations after year 1

Priorities for learners
"something I am interested in"
 2. *leads to a degree course*
 3. *has good job prospects*

Method

Students need help to make choices

Commissioned J2Profit:

Determine the destinations of 16-18 year old of students (where not known)

To find out what these former students are currently doing, whether they are in employment or in education

Telephone interviews of 897 former students with unknown destinations – we asked:

Whether they were employed; if so which sector they worked in, what their role was and who they worked for.

If not employed, what they were currently doing and, if they were in education, what they were studying and where.

Who we worked with & what did we do?
The School – We worked with an inner city 11- 16, mixed education school in the North West of England. With 755 students, currently on role, the school represents the ethnic mix in the area and an above average number of students speak English as an additional language.

The Participants – Participants were 14, Year 11 students, 10 male and 4 female, who were all part of the same 'form' group at school. Of the 14 students, all had applied for College, with 11 students applying to study A levels, 3 choosing to apply for vocational courses and 1 student applying for an Apprenticeship, in addition to the College course.

We met with students on three occasions whilst collecting data for the project.

Thursday 28th April Researchers dropped into the class form time, to introduce themselves and give an overview of the project.

Tuesday 3rd May Students completed individual, paper-based questionnaires to find out where students gain information on their post-16 options.

Thursday 5th May Students enter for a Focus Group style discussion regarding their post-16 options.

Recommendations

What does this mean and what will we do?
Students thought there was too much information supplied at the beginning of the year, with lots of colleges giving the same information.
We propose working closely with one school to create and develop a prospectus & learning package: Students will work throughout the year to design their '*Perfect Prospectus*'.
Helping students develop their knowledge and research skills regarding post-16 options and help us understand the information they need.

Literature Review

"'Choice' possesses the double virtue of engaging and motivating those who make the choice and disciplining those whose job it is to provide the service in question whilst its pervasive, insistent and eloquent presence masks the central framework which choice is expressed and action constrained." **Fielding M (2004)**–'New Wave' Student Voice and the Renewal of Civic Society

Coffield(2009) "i*n theory you have this choice, but in practice"* - explicit & hidden

Biesta(2011). Qualification - **"entry criteria". S**ocial and subjectification - a school focus on entry to 6th Form or teachers only have experience/knowledge of academic educational routes.

Hodgson and Spours(2015) in a complex system where qualifications that have uncertain value/currency progression.

McLoughlin (2013) *"a clear line of sight to work"* & "two-way street" with employers and potential of clearer pathways to work

Little and Connor (2005) "Vocational ladders or crazy paving?" to higher level jobs and higher **OECD (2014)** opportunity to travel between academic & vocational - clarity a coherent framework of qualifications that makes sense.

"School and university, and the well-trod path between them, play a dominant role in thinking on education policy. But separately from these two institutions there exists a less well understood world of colleges" **OECD** *"Skills beyond School"*(2014)

42.9%(385) students were in employment

33%(127) - in a **job directly related to their previous course of study**
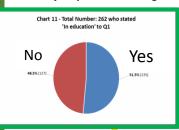
82.3% who were in work **agreed or agreed completely** that **their course prepared them for their job role**

29.2% (262) students were **in education**

48.5%(127) were not studying the same subject they did at college

33%(88) of students didn't study at the college as the college didn't do the course I wanted to do

Are you studying the same subject you did at college?

Chart 11 - Total Number: 262 who stated 'In education' to Q1

No — 48.5% (127)   Yes — 51.5% (135)

About us……
Project researcher **Charlotte Hoyland**, School Liaison Advisor. Working as part of the School Liaison Team, I create and deliver sessions offering IAG to School students, regarding their Post – 16 options.
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How can learners be empowered to:
- have a clear voice in the process of making choices
- help us to provide the information they want & need
- shape our provision to meet their needs and aspirations for the future

LTE group
Learning | Training | Employment

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