

National evaluation of the 14-19 pathfinders initiative

The 14-19 pathfinders were developed to give young learners more choice in where and how they learn, as well as broadening the curriculum. An evaluation of the final year of this three-year initiative found examples where young people had been motivated into a positive outcome at age 16. These included:

- a 25% reduction in the Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) group in Bradford
- a raised post -16 participation rate in Gateshead.

The 39 pathfinder areas used a range of innovative teaching methods to engage and motivate a wider range of learners with an aim of 'bring learning to life'. This was approached through:

- developing the range of modes of learning, and
- increasing the range of locations where learning took place.

The evaluation included an array of learning modes from a one-off visit by Jaguar staff to a GCSE Engineering Course, through to 'realistic task-based learning' which involved working on real problems with an employer to integrate the knowledge, skills and experience of the student within a workplace.

Varying learning locations helped too. In rural areas the most common approach was to develop Local Skills Centres to address barriers to access. The Hampshire and East Devon partnerships found that skill centres cut travel time by half for some students and also gave them a broader range of options. Varying locations also worked well within courses. Learners on one course in Southwark spent two days at school, followed by two days in a college or a training provider and one day at a work placement.

In what ways might increasing the range and modes of learning help to engage and motivate learners in your setting?

Highman, J and Yeomans, D. (2006) Emerging Provision and Practice in 14-19 Education and Training. A Report on the Evaluation of the Third Year of the 14-19 Pathfinder Initiative. University of Leeds:
www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR737.pdf