Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16 – 19 Study Programmes

East Norfolk Sixth Form College
East Norfolk Sixth Form College have provided a two year update on their Study Programmes for Learners with Special Education needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Since the original study programmes were launched at East Norfolk in 2013 profiled in a case study “East Norfolk Sixth Form College Study Programmes a student led framework” under the Association of Colleges initiative “Sharing Innovative Approaches to Delivering 16 - 19 Study Programmes”, a 2 year review of these initial study programmes at ENSFC has formalised four study programmes for students with SEND starting in 2015-16.

- Sports and Hobbies for students with SEND to develop team building and communication skills for independent learning
- Talking Partners a social communication programme for learners with Autism and Mental Health Stress
- Employability a pre work placement training and coaching programme for students with SEND developing maturity and work skills for successful work placement with reduced support (JPUH and IT based industry focus currently)
- Wellbeing Strategy for learners with mental health stress to undertake a bespoke 10 week 1:1 intervention for coping strategies and self-management skills to reduce stress/anxiety and a buddy mentoring programme linked to the Student Association and College Activities to lead other students with confidence, advocacy and engagement for independent study and progressions from college

The driver for the Study Programmes was to improve the academic and employment successes of students with SEND v those without SEND. In Norfolk 9/100 16 year olds with a SEN Statement gained 5 GCSEs at C or above including maths and English in 2012, the national average is nearer 58% for Year 11 pupils without SEND.

The purpose of the Study Programmes initially was to set up an additional academic support or additional learning support provision that integrated across the time table reinforcing and revising support sessions in and out of classes with “soft” skills, study skills, engagement with college, community cohesion and peer group respect and wellbeing. This purpose remains in the evolved line up of Study Programmes but focused more tightly within the barrier of learning type and requirement to manage for effective learning, communication, progression to University or Employment and healthy relationships with themselves and others.

Since 2013 over 100 students with SEND have worked through and benefitted from the Study Programmes in terms of soft skills, study skills, self-confidence and
coping strategies for successful employment and university. One measure of the success is through individual value added learning based on average GCSE score at start of College and at end of College.

Unfortunately the Hospital Internship Project Pilot (HIPP) running with the James Paget University Hospital (JPUH) ceased in 2014 due to a lack of resources by the Hospital, end of funding for the Level 3 Work Skills award, but also the low work & employability skills the selected learners with SEND demonstrated at the start of 2014-15 academic year. This was a setback as the College has hoped to run this Study Programme with other key employers in the area, a locality of high economic and social deprivation.

Across a small sample (N=10) of High Needs Students in 2014 – 2015 Year 12 (first year of Sixth Form) there was a 35% increase compared to a contrast sample of learners with no High Needs (N=10) but receiving some support showing 23% value added learning. This sample of students received exam access arrangements and some out of class and in class support but were not engaged in a Study Programme, so the only difference between the two groups was Study Programmes participation. Both groups' studied a mixture of Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 exam and course work led awards with an academic dimension rather than a vocational one. The students are now being followed in a longitudinal study over the next 2 years.

Overall the students with SEND involved with the Study Programmes have shown improved study skills, “soft” skills, concentration, verbal and social media communication, memory recall. Cross college integration between pastoral, subject, welfare, career and work placement/apprenticeship provision with academic support has strengthened although there is room for improvement.

Learning Support Assistant career and pay prospects have improved in and out of college. Unexpectedly pre Study Programme projects have started to check the feasibility of becoming a time tabled Study Programme, run by Learning Support Assistants and trialled with new applicants with SEND to East Norfolk in Year 11 and undergoing a transition form Year 11 to Year 12. This builds relationships with schools, the students with SEND and their parents/carers.

**How these evolved Study Programmes run**

In 2015-16 out of 124 students with moderate to high needs 45 are funded or identified as High Need Students (HNS) by EFA and LAs, and the Study Programmes average 8 – 10 HNS for each Study Programme, which is timetabled as a non-accredited award contributing to full time hours. Learning Support Assistants as Instructors/Coaches take these programmes, not teachers so there is not a formal teaching, learning and assessment style but a more informal,
individualised style that teaches “to the student” and not “the subject”, but complementing and integrating with subject studies relevant to each student with high needs.

LSAs are recognised in and out of ENSFC as leads in specific types of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), such as Autism, Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD/ADD), Behavioural, Emotional & Social Development (BESD), Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), Mental Health Stress (MHS), Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD), Physical Disabilities (PD), Sensory Impairments (SI) and Medical barriers to learning.

The Study Programmes provide “soft” skill development - Communicative skills, Thinking skills and Problem solving skills, Team work force, Life-long learning and Information Management, Entrepreneur skill, Ethics, moral and professionalism, Leadership skills. Soft skills contrast to hard skills that are measurable and quantified by grades, such C grade in maths or English GCSE.

The Study Programmes include group work, 1:1 lead LSA “flipped learning” styles of knowledge development and skills consolidation integrating current subject studies with planned progression alongside their aspiration. Time tabled for 4.5 hours per week the student with High Needs is expected and encouraged to self-study to complete tasks and log work and experience towards set goals via Moodle home page, revised with the lead LSA.

Students complete a log of their activities and action plan with what they want to achieve and get out of the programme and this is reviewed by the lead LSA running the Study Programme, which is reviewed at by the lead LSA and the student’s Personal Tutor to integrate academic support interventions with pastoral needs and care. Improved study skills and readiness to learn is a noticeable result of successful engagement with these Study Programmes.

**Benefits of the Study Programmes**

- Local Authorities understand how the study programmes complement the “soft” skills of students with high needs for progression to university, employment or more vocational focused studies at another FE College
- Students enjoy competitive features, self-reflective strategies, enhancement of existing “soft” skills and study skills that impact positively on subject learning, confidence and wellbeing that they can achieve their aspirations, successes that can be declared on UCAS statements, CVs and Job Applications
Individual HNS report along with teaching and support staff improved study skills, memory and concentration in lessons and exams

Act as a “filler” but relevant and essential alternative for HNS taking 2 or 3 subjects, not 4 as part of a modified curriculum

Cross college curriculum and pastoral provision has improved through integration so that some of lead LSAs have become Personal Tutorials as the College recognises the skills for coordinating Study Programmes with HNS is exactly those needs for Personal Tutoring for students with or with SEND

LSA have a clear job promotion and pay grade prospect that Study Programmes for SEND have delivered, there is now a variety of pre Study Programmes pilots that are running to check if they a feasible to time table in 2016-17. For example BSL communication groups and skill development, Textiles and Arts, English as Second Language small group pilots among HNS and those students with SEND in transition from Year 11 to College

Maths and English skills have improved and more HNS are staying longer to take GCSE maths and English from Functional Skills Entry 3, Level 1 and Level 2

Valued added learning is enhanced for students engaged with these Study Programmes than those who do not but still require some level of support, estimated enhancement is 12% (23% for students with SEND v 35% for students with SEND engaged with Study Programmes) but the sample sizes are small (N=10) and only one year's worth of data available with no national or local bench marks for comparison

College has an option for alternative curriculum and maximising full time hours for funding applicable to students with SEND but not a High Needs Learner as recognised by the EFA and LA through an Learning Difficulties Assessment (valid until 2017/18) or an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

HNS on these Study Programmes compete alongside East Norfolk Sixth Form College teams in football, basketball, tennis and general sports in local and regional leagues for cups and awards won by points accumulation, such as the Dixon Trophy for Easter Region Colleges.

**Issue and Next Steps**

The Study Programmes are now part of the college provision and feeds into course choices at application and actual enrolments after exams results in August. There is a general feeling that the Study Programmes are flexible to be an enrichment activity that is durative and productive as time tabled event weekly. The Study Programmes are not for everybody and there is a 10 – 15% drop out rate in September with finalised HNS engaging fully and routinely after the half term in Winter. This requires a long period of review and dialogue between HNS, parent/carer, teachers and pastoral/welfare to make sure their full curriculum
offer is the right one for that student. This can take form 2 – 10 months for some HNS.

The shape and form of the Study Programmes really depends on current funding allocations, new GCSE and A Level specifications and the risk of a reversal of policy. By allowing part of the time table for a student in college to have Study Programmes complementing their subjects and personal skills development, there is a confidence across college and sector colleagues Study Programmes can be made to work for students and their development and learning.

For 2016 – 16 East Norfolk Sixth Form College is trialling pre Study Programmes in Textiles and Arts and a BSL Communication club/course for students alongside staff. The focus is for more staff and student cohesion and integration to extend the culture of the college community and communication for excellent teaching, learning and assessment with improved achievement at GCSE and A levels with progression increases to University and Employment for learners with SEND and those with High Needs.
particularly with non-qualification activity, as shown below.