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YORK
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UNIVERSITY

Impact Evaluation Report: FutureHY Campus Visit

 futurehy

 ofs Uni Connect
Programme



Background

Typically regarded as an early opportunity to provide prospective students with experiential knowledge of the setting, they can include single or multiple visits and a range of accompanying activities. These include: meeting with students and staff, content focused on specific subjects or general study, information giving and the development of attributes associated with college success (eg. study confidence).

Research suggests that campus visits are an effective way of engaging with students, with those who take part in these visits reporting higher knowledge and confidence about further study than those who simply receive information about further study (e.g., Swanson et al., 2021). Some of the reasons why they are considered effective are that they allow Higher Education providers to communicate directly with prospective students, increase familiarity, reduce anxiety, and contribute to a greater sense of readiness for further study.

There is also evidence that campus visits can be particularly useful in regards to raising aspirations and recruitment into subjects where applications are lower (e.g., STEM; Kitchen et al., 2020) as well as among underrepresented groups (e.g., Quarterman, 2008). As such, campus visits may offer a valuable way of engaging with prospective students in an effective way and aid them in making well-informed decisions regarding pursuing study in Higher Education.

Aim and scope of evaluation

Here we report the evaluation of the impact of part of the outreach intervention programme undertaken by FutureHY. The specific part of the outreach intervention programme is a **campus visit to a HE provider** aimed at increasing knowledge, confidence, and motivation regarding Higher Education.

Research questions / hypotheses

Our research question was; can a campus visit to a local HE provider increase knowledge, confidence, and motivation regarding Higher Education?

The campus visit included an itinerary of a campus tour led by student ambassadors, free lunch, and two workshops.





Characteristics of outreach

<p>Detailed description</p>	<p>FutureHY Campus Visit</p> <p>The visit aimed to increase participant familiarity with the HE setting</p> <p>The content included a campus tour, free lunch and two workshops.</p> <p>The workshops focused on HE and the university generally, as well as the UCAS process, finance and budgeting, and social aspects of university life. The focus was not subject specific.</p> <p>The campus visit was designed to be interactive with student ambassadors involved throughout the day to answer questions informally.</p>
<p>Activity type</p>	<p>HE Campus Visit</p>
<p>Timing, duration and frequency of activity</p>	<p>A standalone session</p> <p>Lasting 4 hours</p> <p>Delivered once</p>
<p>Mode of delivery</p>	<p>Delivered on university campus</p> <p>Face-to-face in a classroom setting and tour</p>
<p>Target group or groups</p>	<p>Target group was all students leading up to selection of GCSE, A-level/BTEC, and HE course selections</p> <p>Year 9 students (age 13-14)</p> <p>Year 10 students (age 14-15)</p> <p>Year 11 students (age 15-16)</p> <p>Year 12 students (age 16-17)</p> <p>Year 13 students (age 17-18)</p>

Outcomes

Outcomes for NCOP / Uni Connect target learners	<p>Knowledge about higher education</p> <p>Ability to make informed choices about KS5 study to facilitate access to higher education</p> <p>Confidence in ability to succeed at higher education</p> <p>Understanding of the benefits of higher education relative to other progression routes</p> <p>Likelihood of applying to higher education</p> <p>Likelihood of accepting a place at higher education</p> <p>Likelihood of enrolling on a programme of higher education</p>
Outcomes for parents	None
Outcomes for teachers / school staff	None

Methods used to evaluate impact of intervention

Type of evaluation	Type 2: Empirical Enquiry
Type of research approach	Primary quantitative
Rationale	The approach was adopted for pragmatic reasons, the difficulty associated with creating a control or comparison group in the setting, as well as accessing the participants ahead of the event. Questions were created to allow post-event measurement only.
Data collection methods	<p>Survey</p> <p>Questions and response formats are reported in Table 1</p>
Sampling and response rate	<p>The current sample represents a subsample of the total students who took part in the campus visit</p> <p>A total of 333 students completed the questionnaire: year 9 (228), year 10 (45), year 12 (8), and year 13 (27). 25 students did not provide this information</p> <p>The sampling strategy was one of convenience (based on availability and additional time to complete the survey)</p> <p>Students were from nine high schools in the North Yorkshire region</p>
Timeframe for evaluation	Survey was completed at the end of the campus visits
Approach to data analysis	<p>Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations)</p> <p>We also compared pre-16 (aged 15 and below) and post-16 (aged 16 and above) responses aligned with our overall mapping of evaluation activities</p> <p>To do so, we used percentage difference, independent t-tests with estimate of statistical significance ($p < .05$), and effect sizes (comparisons were corrected in the presence of unequal variances)</p> <p>Effect size to quantify the size of change (Cohen's d_s; Lakens, 2013)</p>



Table 1. Response format of the questions and scoring

Question	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	Don't know/ unsure	
I feel more knowledgeable about Higher Education after today							
I feel more knowledgeable about what student life would be like							
I am more motivated to do well in my studies							
I feel that higher education is for people like me							
I know more about student finance and additional financial support							
I feel more confident about meeting new people after today							
How likely are you to apply to Higher Education?	Definitely won't apply (1)	Very unlikely (2)	Fairly unlikely (3)	Fairly likely (4)	Very likely (5)	Definitely will apply (6)	Don't know/ unsure
Has this event in anyway affected your decision?			Yes	No			
Would you recommend this activity to a friend?			Yes	No			



Table 2. Scores for all respondents

Question	Respondents	Mean	SD
I feel more knowledgeable about Higher Education after today	333	4.18	0.80
I feel more knowledgeable about what student life would be like	332	4.23	0.76
I am more motivated to do well in my studies	258	4.03	0.95
I feel that higher education is for people like me	330	3.85	1.28
I know more about student finance and additional financial support	192	4.08	0.90
I feel more confident about meeting new people after today	115	3.65	1.00
	Respondents	Mean	SD
How likely are you to apply to Higher Education?	255	4.55	1.47
	Respondents	% Yes	% No
Has this event in anyway affected your decision?	242	99.20	0.80
Would you recommend this activity to a friend?	254	66.90	33.10



Results and conclusions

Results	<p>Descriptive statistics for all respondents are reported in Table 2</p> <p>Key findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendees reported that they felt more knowledgeable, confident, and motivated regarding Higher Education following the event• Typically attendees reported that they were “fairly likely” to apply to Higher Education• Over two-thirds of attendees indicated that the event had influenced their decision• Almost all attendees indicated that they would recommend the event to a friend• Comparison of pre-16 and post-16 attendees revealed two statistically significant differences: Pre-16 attendees were significantly more likely to report that they felt like Higher Education was for them and more likely to apply to Higher Education
Impact achieved	<p>Our evaluation indicates a positive impact of the campus visit on knowledge, confidence, and motivation regarding Higher Education</p> <p>The positive impact was most evident in pre-16 attendees and less evident in post-16 attendees</p>
Contribution or attribution	<p>We consider the evaluation to provide evidence of a contribution (not attribution of causality) to the observed changes due to the type of design (post-test only design)</p>

Closing remarks

Our evaluation of the campus visit indicates that this part of our outreach intervention programme **has a positive impact** and contributes to knowledge, confidence, and motivation regarding Higher Education.

Students typically reported that the event positively influenced their decision to apply to Higher Education.

However, it was less effective for students aged 16 and above who were less likely to feel university was for people like them and less likely to apply.

Recommendations

1. Campus visits are a valuable way to introduce and familiarise students with Higher Education environments therefore outreach programmes should, where possible, include these types of visits.
2. Student focused sessions offer the most authentic and relatable experience for prospective students.
3. Campus visits may be most effective among students pre-16 years of age. While knowledge and confidence might be improved in older students, motivation and likelihood of attending Higher Education are less affected by this type of outreach activity.

References

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- Quarterman, J. (2008). An assessment of barriers and strategies for recruitment and retention of a diverse graduate student population. *College Student Journal*, 42, 947-968.
- Swanson, E., Kopotic, K., Zamarro, G., Mills, J. N., Greene, J. P., & W. Ritter, G. (2021). An evaluation of the educational impact of college campus visits: A randomized experiment. *AERA Open*, 7, 2332858421989707.

Note: This report was prepared by Professor Andrew Hill, Laura Fenwick, and Rebecca Harland, and Helen Smith.

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