

case study

CityChallenge
London • Black Country • Greater Manchester

"The students are mature in their attitudes and possess the ability to adopt and indeed personalise the range of theoretical approaches contained throughout the modular programme. They apply it to their communication styles and this accordingly drives their state of confidence."

**Robin Hill,
Trainer**

"It was very informative and helpful in explaining the importance of further education and tips in how to extend my chances of achieving my goals."

Student

Crelos helps shape and deliver the Young Gifted and Talented's progression skills

Young Gifted and Talented: A praised academy

Government statistics show that a child from a poor home is half as likely to get five good GCSEs than his or her peers and a child brought up in care is statistically more likely to end up in prison than university¹.

To address the issues of educational underachievement amongst gifted and talented young people from disadvantaged backgrounds the government has funded a three year, £160 million programme, initially focused in the Black Country, Greater Manchester and London – the City Challenge Gifted and Talented Initiative.

Part of this programme, the City GATES Progression Academy, has been established specifically to address the issue of the lack of progression to higher education of these bright young people from challenged areas.

"Many of these young people will belong to families with no history of higher education so might not even consider this as an option. Equally, as their parents and relatives will not have experience of higher education they will not be in a position to help them," says Alf Brown, Programme Lead for City GATES, CfBT Education Trust.

Having identified a number of 'progression skills' that it felt were blocking these young people's progression to good universities and ultimately rewarding careers, the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) - which delivers the Young Gifted and Talented Programme on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) – partnered with business psychology specialists Crelos.

From the work environment to the classroom

Crelos' brief was to design six different workshops suitable for pupils in years ten to thirteen (aged fourteen to eighteen). Workshops addressed skills such as setting career and life objectives, understanding yourself, your strengths and weaknesses, learning communication techniques, managing important stakeholders and working in teams. Their aim is to help students increase their self-awareness by understanding their environment and how it influences their behaviour and decision-making. Another objective is for young people to understand how to set themselves personal objectives and understand what level of effort and support they need to make these happen. Ultimately, they will realise how they can have a personal impact on their own life and future career, no matter what the situation.

To deliver this, Crelos has introduced models commonly used in business for personal and management development to the workshops. These include Force Field Analysis (a model developed by Kurt Lewin to assist with decision making), the GROW model² (used to coach each other to solve problems and set goals) and personality questionnaires to understand the differences between people.

Although it was originally anticipated that the Progression Academies would be delivered by teachers, it soon became evident that there were not enough teachers available with the time to commit to the delivery of the programme. Crelos was asked to recruit course tutors and by utilising their existing network of associates and recruitment skills, recruited twenty-five tutors in the space of a month. The tutors' backgrounds vary and include retired and ex-teachers, youth workers and professional trainers such as outdoor trainers – all very skilful deliverers and facilitators and with a desire to help young

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"We were all engaged because we were learning in an interesting way which is different from school."

Student

"Young people are learning to set goals and expectations, to identify the support they need to get there, as well as the amount of effort they will have to put in. It isn't different to what we deliver in the work environment. What we have done is tailor the material to their interests and use activities they enjoy".

**Miriam Luke,
Trainer**

people to achieve their potential and open up their eyes to new opportunities.

Based at universities or venues such as football grounds, the workshops have been designed to feel as different from school as possible. They are learner centred – based on the needs of the learner – rather than teaching to a particular curriculum. There is very little 'chalk and talk' averaging a maximum of five minutes per session with the tutor presenting, while the rest is focused on the learners doing. Tutors are called by their first names and university students are on hand to help facilitate and discuss their personal experiences.

"YG&T is a talent management programme, although for a younger audience than Crelos would usually work with. Gifted and talented young people need to be engaged, developed and supported, just like talented people in the 20s and 30s. And the same models that we introduce to managers and leaders within business to increase their performance can be equally useful to help a young person to think through their career choices", says Elizabeth Henshilwood, Crelos Client Director for the programme.

An overwhelming response

Although it is too early to measure the success of the programme in terms of the numbers of students moving to higher education, the initial responses from both students and trainers have been extremely positive.

"The students' ability to adopt and indeed personalise the range of theoretical approaches is amazing. They apply it to their communication styles and this accordingly drives their state of confidence and consequent presentations – which would certainly be a credit to any business environment let alone school" says trainer Robin Hill.

"Students have told me that the programme has been very helpful in explaining the importance of further education and giving them tips to extend their chances of achieving their goals. They loved the way they were treated. They said they liked

being treated with respect, like young adults" he adds.

"At some point in our life, we learn to take control of a situation" says Crelos Consultant, James Finn. "The YG&T programme empowers students to do it from an early age. If acquired young, these skills will enable a smoother transition to university and the working world. It is no different to the work we do with organisations." he adds.

"We are delighted to have chosen Crelos as our partner for the design and delivery of the Progression Academies. Throughout the project they demonstrated a strong professional approach and project management skills. Their expertise and ability to link precision psychology to business performance has not only served to deliver a successful programme but also to adapt material often used with management communities in business and adapt it to the needs of young people to make a positive impact to their lives" concludes Alf Brown..

¹ Department for Children, Schools and Families, 1st September 2008

² "Coaching for Performance: Growing People, Performance and Purpose", Sir John Whitmore, Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2002