

Case study: new activity in a familiar setting

Young people within a pupil referral unit (PRU) demonstrate their capacity to try an unfamiliar activity when presented within a familiar context.

Background

Meadowbrook College comprises four alternative education providers (APs) in Oxfordshire that collectively offer varied support for young people of all ages with social and emotional needs. Located across Oxford, Banbury, Kidlington and Abingdon, it provides full and part-time education and support to over 150 aged 5-16 students who are excluded from, or are finding it difficult to fully access, their mainstream schools. Young people attending these settings have a high degree of emotional need and low self-esteem: the schools have no uniform and offer considerable opportunities for individual responsibility e.g. through cooking for their peers.

The value of anticipation

A virtual rowing event across the campuses was decided upon, with the concept developed further by a group of Y10 and Y11 students. All bought into the opportunity to compete within their setting and across the other three, to gain a skill and develop physical fitness. They responded positively to a new activity within a familiar setting but noted that 'rowing on a river' would have been too much of a challenge. There was buy-in to both personal challenges and inter-setting challenges, though staff sought to keep this informal and enjoyable rather than reinforce existing silos.



- Offer something fresh and not generic
- Ensure inclusivity
- Bring young people together across the four sites
- Address silos
- Support a sense of identity
- Permit some informal competition
- Encourage girls to use the gym
- Explore impact via a QCA* social and emotional survey

We are going to try 'my personal best' and 'around the world' competitions. Be a little bit competitive but not just in their bases. They don't normally have a chance to compete against one another



Delivery was halted due to COVID-19, though is hoped to be reinstated in September 2020. The positive response of young people to trialing a new activity has already seeded confidence in their capacity for wider engagement next academic year.

*Qualifications and Curriculums Authority