



**National Academy for Gifted & Talented Youth
(NAGTY)
Goal Short Residential Courses.
Goal, University of Lancaster Course,
26-28 March, 2007.**

Dr Stephen Cullen,
Professor Geoff Lindsay.
Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research
(CEDAR), University of Warwick.
May 2007.

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK

Contents:

1. Executive Summary.
2. Introduction.
3. Students' expectations of the course.
4. An exemplar academic session on the course.
5. Business education on the course.
6. The organisation and conduct of the course.
7. Students' views on their experience of the course.
8. Conclusions and Recommendations.

1. Executive Summary

- In 2006 the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) initiated a four year pilot project – Goal - aimed at NAGTY student members deemed to be from groups at risk of under-achievement. The first cohort of Goal students (2006), consists of 200 selected NAGTY members from seven LAs (Coventry, Birmingham, Cumbria, Peterborough, Sheffield, Leicester, and Islington). The second cohort (2007) is currently being recruited, and will consist of approximately 250 NAGTY students from fourteen different LAs. The pilot will continue until 2009, with an additional two cohorts being recruited.
- The Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR), the University of Warwick, was contracted to undertake the evaluation of the Goal programme in its early stages. This report addresses the residential course held at the University of Lancaster.
- Students attending the NAGTY Goal University of Lancaster residential course all held high expectations of the course. They expected to enjoy a high quality academic, business and social experience.
- The academic experience of the residential school was well regarded by the students. There was a close match between the students' pre-course expectations of the academic aspects of the course and their actual experiences.
- The history class, 'Remembering the First World War', was an exemplar teaching and learning session.
- Overall, there appeared to be some degree of mismatch between very high student expectations of the business element of the course, and their experience of it. Nonetheless, the experience was viewed positively by the majority of students.
- The day to day organisation of the course was characterised by efficiency, a high level of attention to the demands of student safety, and an atmosphere that was relaxed and informal.
- The Residential Assistants were friendly, caring and intelligent people who quickly established good relations with the students.
- The students rated the social experience of the course very highly, with only one student indicating a negative response to questions on the social experience.

- Prior to attending the residential course, the students, as a group, already had clear ideas about university, and, to a lesser extent, careers, but attendance at the residential course had some impact on a majority of students about their futures.
- The NAGTY Goal University of Lancaster residential course was successful.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Goal Programme

In 2006 the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) initiated a four year pilot project – Goal - aimed at NAGTY student members deemed to be in groups at risk of under-achievement. NAGTY's mission statement for the Goal programme states:

NAGTY is committed to helping young people from under-represented groups to see that higher education is attainable. Goal is a scholarship programme from NAGTY, designed to support gifted and talented students from socially disadvantaged or ethnic minority backgrounds who are currently under-represented in higher education¹

The first cohort of Goal students (2006), consists of 200 selected NAGTY members from seven LAs (Coventry, Birmingham, Cumbria, Peterborough, Sheffield, Leicester, and Islington). The second cohort (2007) is currently being recruited, and will consist of approximately 250 NAGTY students from fourteen different LAs. The pilot will continue until 2009, with an additional two cohorts being recruited.

NAGTY's stated aims for the Goal programme are to improve outcomes for the target group in a number of ways:

- by improving the effectiveness of NAGTY's intervention strategies aimed at the students
- by enhancing the personal educational experiences of individual students
- by increasing participation rates in NAGTY activities by the students
- by monitoring the valued added by the Goal programme over the period of students' involvement in Goal

In terms of outcomes for individual students, the key objectives of Goal are to increase student:

- confidence
- motivation
- self-esteem

¹ http://www.nagty.ac.uk/student_academy/goal/index.aspx accessed, 31/05/07.

- attainment
- awareness of, and attitudes to Higher Education

To fulfil these objectives, and improve outcomes for the target group, the Goal programme offers each student:

- Access to day and residential courses
- Access to a distance learning course
- Access to a careers and leadership programme
- personal support and mentoring

All these opportunities are offered to Goal students free of charge, and combine access to existing NAGTY programmes, such as the residential summer schools, with new provision linked to Goal, for example, the mentoring scheme. NAGTY is working in partnership with The Brightside Trust to deliver the distance learning course, 'The Big Deal'. NAGTY financial partners for the Goal programme are The Goldman Sachs Foundation, the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Settlement, and the Caterpillar Foundation.

2.2 The evaluation programme

NAGTY commissioned the Centre for Educational Development Appraisal and Research (CEDAR), the University of Warwick, to undertake an independent evaluation of the Goal programme. The evaluation will cover the three elements of the Goal programme, as extant in the Spring of 2007. The evaluation is to produce the following outputs:

- A report on the NAGTY Goal University of Lancaster residential school, 26-28 March, 2007.
- A report on the NAGTY Goal Aston University residential school, 5-7 June, 2007.
- A report on 'The Big Deal', 1 May – 14 July, 2007.

2.3 Methodology

The evaluation of the NAGTY Goal University of Lancaster residential school consisted of a number of components:

- A CEDAR fieldworker attended the entire residential event.
- Observations were made of three of the six academic sessions- law, Arabic, and history - and of the business classes.
- A pre-course questionnaire was administered to all students in attendance at the beginning of the residential course.
- A post-course questionnaire was administered to all students in attendance at the end of the residential course.

The pre-course questionnaire was administered to all 33 students in attendance at the start of the residential course – a 100% response rate. Similarly, all 31 students still in attendance at the close of the residential course completed the post-course questionnaire, providing another 100% response rate. The pre- and post-course questionnaires are contained in the report appendix. The pre-course questionnaire comprised nine parts, consisting of 34 questions, in both closed and open format. The purpose of the questionnaire was to establish basic information about the students (for example, age, ethnic background, gender, prior involvement with NAGTY), to create a picture of the students' expectations of the course (for example, expectations concerning new skills acquisition, new academic knowledge, and business skills), and to develop a picture of the students' expectations of their futures in terms of higher education and possible careers. The post-course questionnaire comprised eight parts, consisting of 32 questions, in both closed and open format. The intention was to ask a series of questions that would enable the students' expectations of the residential course to be related to their experiences of the course. The questionnaires are included in the Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

The evaluation was planned to include interviews of a random selection of students about their experience of the residential course. This was to enable some depth and texture to be added to the data generated by the questionnaires. However, time pressures in a highly structured short residential course made this impracticable.

2.4 The student group

Of the 33 students, 17 indicated that they were male, and 13 female, and 3 did not respond to the question. Three students indicated that they were 13 years old, 14 indicated that they were 14, and 16 that they were 15 years old. Ethnicity was based on self-description, and responses are given in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1. Ethnicity of students attending the course (N = 33).:

Self described ethnicity	N
Caucasian	3
White British	13
White	4
British	3
British Asian	1
British Pakistani	1
White British Chinese	1
British Chinese	2
Mixed British	1
Mixed	2
No response	2

Of the 33 students, five had been members of NAGTY since 2004, 15 since 2005, nine since 2006, two since 2007, and two failed to respond to the relevant question. Involvement in NAGTY activities prior to the Goal University of Lancaster residential course was mixed among the respondents. Only one student indicated that they had attended a NAGTY university Summer School, 15 had attended one or more NAGTY day courses, five had been involved with a NAGTY online course, and two had attended a NAGTY short residential course. Fourteen students indicated that they had not previously taken part in a NAGTY activity. Twenty-eight of the 33 respondents indicated that it was through a teacher at their school that they had heard of the course, while four indicated that it was from NAGTY itself, and one gave another source.

3. Students' expectations.

3.1 Choosing to attend the course

Thirty-one students responded to an open question to outline why they wanted to attend the residential school. There was a fairly narrow range of explanations given by the students, focusing on only six reasons (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Reasons for wanting to attend the course:

	Number of mentions
To have a new and/or valuable experience	11
To learn new skills and knowledge	10
To experience university life	9
To have fun	6
The influence of parents	4
To meet new people and/or friends	4

Typical commentary from students included:

I felt that it will be a good experience and help me in the future if I go to university.

It sounded fun and looked interesting.

[To] learn about the university environment is like (specifically accommodations!) and meet other Goal students and Goal activities.

To have fun with friends, to learn more about university life.

It was with [through] the school and my mum persuaded me to go.

I decided that it would give me a wider knowledge of a broader range of subjects.

I thought the experience would help me learn new skills and improve

The responses gave a picture of a group of students who were interested in new experiences, new subjects, and finding out more about what university entailed.

3.2 Expectations of the residential course

Student expectations of the value of the course were high, with clear majorities responding positively to a series of questions in the pre-course questionnaire focusing on their hopes for the course. Expectations that the academic sessions would help students acquire new knowledge and skills in important areas were

particularly high. For example, all 33 students 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they hoped that they would learn new skills to improve their academic performance. Similarly, 32 of the 33 respondents 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they hoped that they would be able to increase their knowledge of academic subjects that they felt to be important. Responses to the question concerning potential academic benefits arising from the course are presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3. Student hopes for the academic aspects of the course (N = 33).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) learn new skills to improve academic performance.	13	20	-	-
b) increase knowledge of subjects that are important.	11	21	1	-
c) increase confidence dealing with new ideas and subjects.	11	20	1	1
d) academically exciting.	9	21	3	-
e) opportunity to contribute views in the academic sessions.	4	23	6	-
f) opportunity to work in groups with peers.	7	22	4	-

The respondents expressed a similarly positive view of their expectations with regard to the business workshop element of the course. Student responses to all the questions relating to their expectations of the business element of the course were strongly positive. For example, 32 students 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they hoped that the business skills classes would teach them new thinking and learning skills. Similarly, 30 respondents hoped that they would learn new leadership and management skills. The responses to the business skills questions are presented in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. Student hopes for the business skills workshops (N = 33).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) teach me thinking and learning skills.	17	15	1	-
b) teach me leadership and management skills.	13	17	2	-
c) teach me planning skills.	13	18	2	-
d) will be useful for other areas of my life in addition to business.	17	12	4	-

There were even higher expectations of the social side of the course, with almost all responses (with only two exceptions) indicating positive expectations in terms of meeting new people and taking part in fun social activities. All 33 respondents, for example, 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they hoped to take part in fun social activities on the course. Similarly, 32 students 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they hoped to make new friends on the course. The results are presented in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5. Students' hopes for the social aspects of the course (N = 33).

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) meet interesting people	15	16	1	-
b) make new friends	13	19	1	-
c) take part in fun social activities	16	17	-	-

3.3 Expectations of the residential course – summary.

The pre-course questionnaire gave a picture of a reasonably homogenous set of expectations held by the students. The open question responses indicated that the respondents had chosen to attend the Goal residential course for a narrow range of reasons – to have a new or valuable experience, to learn new skills and gain new knowledge, to experience university life, to have fun, to meet new people and make new friends, or because of the influence of parents. Responses to a series of questions concerning expectations of the academic, business skills, and social side of the course were also fairly uniform. Responses to questions about expectations of the academic aspects of the course varied from all 33 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to the statement that ‘I hope that the GOAL residential course will help me learn new skills to improve my academic performance at school’, to the lowest positive response rate of 27 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that ‘I hope that the GOAL residential course will ‘give me the opportunity to contribute my views in the academic sessions’. The students also had high expectations of the business element of the course, with, as a typical example, 31 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, ‘I hope that the business skills workshop will teach me planning skills’. Finally, the students appeared to be particularly hopeful that the social side of the course would be positive, with, for example, all 33 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement, ‘I hope that on the GOAL residential course I will take part in fun social activities’.

4. An exemplar academic session on the course.

4.1. Observations.

The CEDAR researcher attended and observed three of the six academic sessions on offer over the course – law, Arabic, and history. Each session was observed throughout, with each session lasting a total of three hours, composed of two one and a half hour parts, divided by a half hour break. Of the three sessions observed, the CEDAR fieldworker felt that the history session – ‘Remembering the First World War’, taught by a doctoral student in the University of Lancaster History Department – represented an exemplar session for the Goal short residential course. In terms of delivery, subject and topic content, and session organisation, ‘Remembering the First World War’ was a very positive teaching and learning experience for the Goal students.

4.2 An outline of 'Remembering the First World War'

After introducing himself, the teacher began the history session by getting the students to rearrange themselves and the desks into small groups. He then gave each group a large sheet of paper, and asked them to 'mind map' everything they knew about the First World War. While they were engaged on this group task, the teacher went around the groups and found out the names of each child. The students were all quickly engaged in the exercise, and each group was able to list a variety of points about the war. The exercise was a valuable one, as it quickly engaged the students, focused them on the topic, enabled them to undertake active learning, and gave the teacher an opportunity to personally introduce himself to the students. The mind mapping was followed by a plenary session in which the students' thoughts were brought together on a white board, supported by a Power Point of illustrations of people and events from the period. This collective effort was used by the teacher to pose some fundamental historiographical questions, and to introduce a key concept in relation to the history of the First World War – 'sites of memory'. The teacher explained the meaning of 'sites of memory', and then set the students another activity, split the students into three, larger groups, and gave each group a folder containing various primary and secondary sources focusing on three sites of memory – the memorials at Thiepval, the Cenotaph, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Again, the students worked enthusiastically together, and presented their findings to the whole class, each group in turn. The teacher used the presentations by the students on the sites of memory to discuss with them the nature of primary and secondary sources, which he did in a question-led fashion. Finally, the teacher discussed the nature of film as a site of memory, particularly film about historical events made long after those events. This discussion formed an introduction to a film he was going to show following a break. The teacher briefed them about the animated film they were to watch, which was based on Michael Morpurgo's book, *The War Game*. The briefing was supported by copies of two letters to local newspapers published in January 1915, which each student was given.

After their break, the students' watched *The War Game*, which lasted for 30 minutes. The teacher then briefly talked to the students about how a film made in 2005 threw light not just on historical events, but also on contemporary perceptions of history. The students were then tasked with completing work sheets in groups related to *The War Game*. Interestingly, although they were asked to undertake this task in groups, the students largely undertook the task as individuals, each filling in a work sheet by themselves. The work sheet responses acted as the basis for a plenary discussion,

led by the teacher, who summarised their findings and related them to the historiographical concepts that had informed the entire class. The entire session was rounded off with a quiz, which mixed general knowledge questions with questions on the First World War.

4.3 Key teaching and learning elements in 'Remembering the First World War'.

The history class, 'Remembering the First World War', was an exemplar teaching and learning session. The class was constructed and delivered in such a way that the teacher was able to introduce the students to a number of important historical facts, concepts and techniques. From the outset, the children were enabled to be engaged, participating, and receptive students. The session demonstrated all the features of successful teaching for gifted and talented students, as identified from earlier evaluations of NAGTY university summer school teaching:

- The aim should be to focus on learning by the students, more than teaching by the teaching team.
- The atmosphere created in the classes is important. A relaxed, happy, relatively rule-free environment is most beneficial in terms of teaching and learning. Students are happier when the experience is not like that at school.
- In terms of content and activity, variety is seen as being essential.
- The students value interactive, hands-on learning. They also think that discussion-based activities with their strand peers are very profitable.
- Intellectual freedom and freedom of choice are seen to be exciting and beneficial.
- Students enjoy having two-way conversations with the teaching staff, but dislike formal lectures.
- Students prefer to work in small groups on practical tasks, rather than as individuals on worksheets.
- Enjoyment is seen to be essential to effective learning²

² (2). Cullen, S., Cullen, M.A., Lindsay, G., *NAGTY Summer Schools 2005 Seven Case Study Strands*, CEDAR, The University of Warwick, November 2005, pp. 78-9.

5. Business education on the course.

5.1 Observations.

The business education component of the residential course was provided by two facilitators from Business Enterprise, delivering the 'Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Programme'. The students spent two hours on the final evening of the course working with Business Enterprise, in preparation for the final day's work. That consisted of the morning spent on business education, followed by group work on business ideas, which were then presented to a 'Dragon's Den' of three business related experts – an HSBC commercial manager, a member of the University of Lancaster's management school, and a Lancaster-based entrepreneur. The CEDAR field worker observed the final day's business education sessions, and the students' presentations to the 'Dragon's Den'.

The business education sessions were delivered using a variety of teaching styles, and covered topics such as, identifying fixed and variable costs, choosing differing managerial roles in firms on the basis of psychological testing, and the role of marketing and brand name loyalty. This preparation seemed to be effective, as the student groups rapidly came together when they began their preparation for presentations to the 'Dragon's Den'. The students worked well in their teams, were engaged by their tasks and were well-focused. There was a noticeable atmosphere of excitement among the students as they put together the different aspects of their presentations. The presentations themselves were successful, and even those students who had expressed concerns about talking before a comparatively large group of adults, students, and experts, proved to be competent speakers.

6. The organisation and conduct of the course.

6.1. General observations.

The day to day organisation of the course was characterised by efficiency, a high level of attention to the demands of student safety, and an atmosphere that was relaxed and informal. All classes were held in well-appointed, modern class rooms, and gave students the feeling that they were valued; something that was remarked upon by students themselves. The students were well-briefed from the outset, both about functional, 'housekeeping' matters, and about the experience of university in terms, for example, of socialising, and teaching and learning. The Residential Assistants were friendly, caring and intelligent people who quickly established good

relations with the students. Meals were of a good standard, and a range of options was provided.

7. Students' views on their experience of the course.

7.1. Introduction.

The students completed a post-course questionnaire on the last morning of the course. Thirty one students completed the post-course questionnaire, as one student had left the course on the first morning, and another had to leave the course early (an arrangement that had been made from the outset). The post-course questionnaire was in eight parts, and consisted of 28 closed questions, and one open question. The closed questions covered the academic, social, and business experience of the residential course, questions about the students' future intentions, and general questions about the course. The single, open question asked respondents to 'add any further comments you wish to make about GOAL and/or the Lancaster GOAL residential school'.

7.2. Academic expectations fulfilled?

One section of the post-course questionnaire, questions 2a – 2f, was intended to generate comparisons with questions in the pre-course questionnaire, questions 4a – 4f, that examined the students' academic teaching and learning expectations of the course. The comparison of the pre and post-course questionnaire responses is given in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1. A comparison of academic teaching and learning expectations and experiences on the course:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) New skills to improve academic performance at school.	13 <i>12</i>	20 <i>16</i>	- <i>1</i>	- <i>1</i>
b) Knowledge of subjects that the respondent felt were important.	11 <i>11</i>	21 <i>17</i>	1 <i>3</i>	- <i>-</i>
c) Increased confidence to deal with new subjects and ideas.	11 <i>11</i>	20 <i>18</i>	1 <i>2</i>	1 <i>-</i>
d) Academic excitement.	9 <i>8</i>	21 <i>19</i>	3 <i>4</i>	- <i>-</i>
e) Able to contribute own views.	4 <i>12</i>	23 <i>18</i>	6 <i>1</i>	- <i>-</i>
f) Opportunity to work in groups with peers.	7 <i>20</i>	22 <i>10</i>	4 <i>1</i>	- <i>-</i>

Note: **Pre-course responses in black; N=33.** *Post-course responses in red; N=31.*

With allowance for the loss of two respondents between the pre- and post-course questionnaires, most categories show a reasonably close match between expectations and experiences. Comparison using the Chi Square revealed no statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-course results. There appeared to be some slight slippage in terms of hopes of acquiring new skills to improve academic performance, and knowledge of subjects that respondents felt to be important (responses a and b). The most notable differences between expectations and experience came in responses e and f. From 33 pre-course questionnaire respondents, only 4 strongly agreed with the statement 'I hope that the GOAL residential course will give me the opportunity to contribute my views in the academic sessions', while 23 'agreed' with the statement, and six disagreed. However, the 31 post-course questionnaire respondents indicated a strong positive shift on both questions. Twelve 'strongly agreed' that 'I was able to contribute my views to the academic sessions', 18 'agreed' with the statement, and only one disagreed with it. The responses show that the experience of the residential school was more positive, in this respect, than the students had expected a statistically significant change, $\chi^2(2,64) = 8.13, p < .025$. It may have been that students were apprehensive of contributing to the academic sessions before the course began, but

then found that they could do so. An alternative explanation may have been that they had not expected to be given the opportunity to contribute, but found that the classes on the course enabled them to do so.

The students also provided a similar picture in respect to working in groups with peers. The pre-course questionnaire responses showed that only seven students 'strongly agreed' with the statement that 'I hope that the GOAL residential course will give me the opportunity to work in groups with my peers', while 22 'agreed' with the statement, and four disagreed. In contrast, 20 of the post-course respondents indicated that they 'strongly agreed' with the statement that 'I had the opportunity to work in groups with my peers', 10 'agreed', and only one 'disagreed'. Again, the residential course had exceeded the students expectations $\chi^2(2,64) = 12.51, p < .01$.

7.3. Social expectations fulfilled?

Both questionnaires contained comparable questions regarding social expectations and experiences of students on the course, focused on meeting interesting people, making new friends, and experiencing fun social activities. The comparisons are presented in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2. A comparison of social expectations and experiences of the residential course:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Interesting people.	15 <i>22</i>	16 <i>9</i>	1 <i>-</i>	- <i>-</i>
b) New friends.	13 <i>20</i>	19 <i>10</i>	1 <i>1</i>	- <i>-</i>
c) Fun social activities.	16 <i>15</i>	17 <i>16</i>	- <i>-</i>	- <i>-</i>

Note:

Pre-course questionnaire in black; N = 33. Post-course questionnaire in red; N = 31.

The experiences of the students with regard to 'fun social activities' was broadly in line with their expectations; non-significant difference, ($p > .05$). However, their expectations with regard to meeting 'interesting people' were exceeded, ($\chi^2(1,64) = 4.27, p < .02$), with 22 respondents 'strongly agreeing' that they had 'met interesting

people', compared with 15 respondents who expected to 'meet interesting people' at a level approaching significance. The difference in figures (even allowing for the two students who did not complete the post-course questionnaire) is explained by a shift from 'agreeing' to 'strongly agreeing'. A similar pattern indicating a statistically significant, difference ($\chi^2 (1, 64) = 4.22, p < .02$), underlay the change from 13 respondents who 'strongly agreed' that they would 'make new friends' on the course, and the 20 who 'strongly agreed' that they had, in fact, done so. Given that only one student responded in a negative fashion to any of the social experience questions in the post-course questionnaire, that aspect of the course appeared to have been very successful.

7.4. Business expectations fulfilled?

The pre- and post-course questionnaires contained questions about the students' expectations and experiences respectively of the business education elements of the course. The comparisons of responses to these questions are contained in Table 7.3. The responses appear to indicate that there was some mismatch between the high expectations the students had of the business education component of the course at the outset, and their views of the business component once they had experienced it. For example, 17 of the 33 respondents in the pre-course questionnaire 'strongly agreed' that they hoped that 'the business skills workshops will teach me thinking and learning skills', but only eight of the 31 post-course respondents 'strongly agreed' that this had happened. Similarly, 13 of 33 pre-course questionnaire respondents 'strongly agreed' with the statement that they hoped 'that the business skills workshops will teach me leadership and management skills', whereas only nine of the 31 post-course respondents 'strongly agreed' that that was what had happened.

The figures were the same for the relevant question on being taught new planning skills. In all these cases, much of the mismatch between expectations and experience was accounted for by students shifting their responses from 'strongly agree' in the pre-course questionnaire to 'agree' in the post course questionnaire. So, for example, the fall of nine in the 'strongly agree' response to the question about new thinking and learning skills', was partially matched by a rise from 15 to 20 in the 'agree' response between the pre and post-course questionnaire. It should also be noted, however, that there were small increases in the negative, 'disagree', responses to the new thinking and learning skills, new leadership and management skills, and new planning skills questions (a, b, and c in table 7.3). Only in the question concerning 'information of use for non-business areas of students' lives' was there a

fall in the negative responses between the pre and the post-course questionnaires, although, in other respects, the pattern of responses was the same. None of these differences was statistically significant ($p > .05$).

Table 7.3. A comparison of the business education expectations and experiences of the course:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) taught new thinking & learning skills	17	15	1	-
	<i>8</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>3</i>	-
b) taught new leadership & management skills	13	17	2	-
	<i>9</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>4</i>	-
c) taught new planning skills	13	18	2	-
	<i>9</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>6</i>	-
d) provided information of use for non-business areas of students' lives	17	12	4	-
	<i>11</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>1</i>	-

Note:

Pre-course questionnaire in black; N = 33. Post-course questionnaire in red; N = 31.

Overall, the questionnaire-generated data related to the business element of the residential course appeared to indicate that some students experienced a degree of mismatch between very high expectations of the business element and their actual experience of it.

7.5. The residential course and students' futures.

7.5.1. Introduction.

Two key aims of the NAGTY Goal programme were to target young people from groups at-risk of underachievement, and to address under-representation among ethnic minority and socially disadvantaged gifted students. Part of the task was deemed to be enhancing the aspirations of such students in respect of higher education and career choices. CEDAR's evaluation attempted to capture some information with regard to the possible impact on the students of attending a residential gifted and talented course at a well-regarded university. The pre- and post-course questionnaire asked questions about students' intentions with regard to university choices, degree courses, and career choices. The picture which emerged suggested that the students, as a group, already had clear ideas about university,

and, to a lesser extent, careers, but that attendance at the residential course had some impact on a majority of students about their futures.

7.5.2. Student futures and the impact of the residential course.

The pre-course questionnaire asked students five questions relating to their futures; the results are shown in Table 7. 4.

Table 7.4. Students' responses to the pre-course questionnaire question, 'Thinking about your future, do you feel that you:'

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) have a clear idea that you would like to attend university.	20	10	3	-
b) have a clear idea to which universities you would like to apply.	5	14	12	2
c) have a clear idea what subject/s you would like to study at university.	8	16	7	2
d) know what career you would like to follow in future.	9	14	4	6
e) have a clear idea what you have to do in order to follow a career/s in which you are interested.	6	17	7	3

N = 33.

The responses in the pre-course questionnaire indicated that a high proportion of the Goal students on the residential course had a clear idea that they wished to attend university – 30 out of 33. The respondents were less certain about which particular universities they would like to apply to, with 19 responding positively, and 14 negatively. However, the questions related to subject choice, career, and steps necessary to undertake career choices, indicated that 24, 22, and 23 students out of 33 'strongly agreed' or 'agreed' that they knew what they wished to do, and how they should go about it.

The pre-course questionnaire responses indicated a fairly high level of confidence among the students as to their educational and occupational futures. The post-

course questionnaire sought to identify the possible impact on those imagined futures of attendance at the residential course (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5. Student responses to the post-course questionnaire question, 'Thinking about your future, and the GOAL residential course, do you feel that:'

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) your ideas about university have changed because of being on this GOAL course.	10	13	6	2
b) your ideas about what subject/s you would like to study at university have changed because of being on this GOAL course.	8	10	11	2
c) your ideas about what career you would like to follow have changed because of being on this GOAL course.	3	8	15	5

N = 31.

The post-course questionnaire responses seemed to indicate that the experience of the residential course did have a positive effect on the majority of students' perceptions of university, and university subject choices, with 23 and 18 of the 31 respondents 'strongly agreeing' or 'agreeing' that the course had an impact in these areas. The impact of course attendance was less noticeable on possible future careers, with only 11 respondents 'strongly agreeing' or 'agreeing' that 'ideas about what career would like to follow have changed because of being on this GOAL course'

7.6. Students' final thoughts.

The responses of the students to questions regarding the overall experience of the residential course were almost universally positive (Table 7.6).

Table 7.6. Students' overall views of the course:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) a worthwhile experience.	16	14	-	-
b) an experience that I would like to have again.	14	15	1	-
c) valuable in academic terms.	11	17	2	1
d) a good social experience.	15	15	-	-
e) a good business experience.	15	14	1	-

N = 31.

This overall picture of student satisfaction with the NAGTY Goal University of Lancaster residential course experience was reinforced by comments made by the students in response to the open question in the post-course questionnaire. Respondents were asked to 'please add any further comments you wish to make about GOAL and/or the Lancaster GOAL residential school'. Typical responses included: 'It was really good for my first experience of a university'; 'Really enjoyed it! Cheers!'; 'Three days was not long enough'; 'I hope to come again'; and 'I need to come back'.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations.

8.1 Overall conclusions.

The short residential course model in place at the NAGTY Goal University of Lancaster course, 26-28 March, 2007, was successful. Observations made by the CEDAR fieldworker, informal conversations with participating staff and students, and the data generated by the pre- and post-course student questionnaires, all indicated that in organisational, academic, business education, and social terms, the overwhelming majority of students both enjoyed and benefited from their attendance.

8.2 Recommendations.

It should be noted that the recommendations arising from the NAGTY Goal University of Lancaster residential course relate to courses run on the same lines as the Lancaster course.

One main issue arose during the course, which was related to the content, organisation and quality of the academic sessions. The history session, presented here as an exemplar session, conformed to what might be regarded as best practice for this type of short academic experience on a Goal residential course. The elements of that best practice are identified in this report. Not all of the academic sessions observed conformed to this model. In particular, extended, largely didactic input from teaching staff seemed to be less than successful. However, it must be noted that there was some tension between the need to impart basic information in subjects that were new to students, and the scope that the history session had to build upon existing student knowledge. Some thought, therefore, needs to be given to the difficulties and challenges created for teachers introducing entirely new subjects to Goal students in a short space of time. The benefit and potential excitement of encountering a non-school subject might be offset by limited student involvement in the learning process, while a more fulfilling learning process arising from participation in a familiar subject might lose the benefit of a new subject challenge.

The pre- and post-course questionnaire data suggested that there was the greatest mismatch between expectations and experience on the part of students when it came to the business education element of the course. The exact nature and causes of that mismatch might be fruitfully examined, while acknowledging that, overall, the business education experience was very positively regarded by most students.

8.2 Recommendations

- The model implemented on this short residential course is appropriate for use on other courses.
- Consideration should be given to implementing the elements of successful practice identified in this evaluation across other sessions.
- The business education element of this course should be reviewed to explore further the relatively lower level of match between students' expectations and experience.



Pre-course questionnaire

GOAL Residential School, University of Lancaster

Monday, 26 March – Wednesday, 28 March, 2007.

This questionnaire is part of the independent evaluation of the Goal Programme that is being carried out by the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR), the University of Warwick. Completion of the questionnaire is voluntary, but it will greatly help the evaluation process if you do complete it. The questionnaires are anonymous and confidential.

1. About Yourself:

- a) Age:..... b) Year Group at School:.....
c) Gender: male/female (*delete as applicable*)
d) How do you describe your ethnicity:
e) I have been a member of NAGTY since.....

2. Involvement with NAGTY:

Before attending this residential course, I had (*Please tick as many boxes as apply to your involvement with NAGTY*):

- a) attended one or more NAGTY Summer Schools
b) attended one or more NAGTY day courses
c) been involved in one or more NAGTY online programmes
d) Any other NAGTY involvement, please identify.....

3. Learning about the NAGTY Goal/University of Lancaster residential school:

a) I first heard about this residential school from (*Please tick one box*):

- a teacher: NAGTY:
a parent: another NAGTY student:

Other (please specify):.....

b) Please outline why you decided that you wanted to attend the residential school:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The GOAL residential school - expectations and hopes:

4. I hope that the GOAL residential course will (*Please tick one answer in each row*):

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) help me learn new skills to improve my academic performance at school.				
b) will increase my knowledge of subjects that I think are important.				
c) increase my confidence in dealing with new ideas and subjects.				
d) be academically exciting.				
e) give me the opportunity to contribute my views in the academic sessions.				
f) give me the opportunity to work in groups with my peers.				

5. I hope that on the GOAL residential course I will (*Please tick one answer in each row*):

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) meet interesting people.				
b) make new friends.				
c) take part in fun social activities.				

6. I hope that the business skills workshops will (*Please tick one answer in each row*):

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) teach me thinking and learning skills.				
b) teach me leadership and management skills.				
c) teach me planning skills.				
d) will be useful for other areas of my life in addition to business.				

Looking towards the future:

7. Thinking about your future, do you feel that you (*Please tick one answer in each row*):

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) have a clear idea that you would like to attend university.				
b) have a clear idea to which universities you would like to apply.				
c) have a clear idea what subject/s you would like to study at university.				
d) know what career you would like to follow in the future.				
e) have a clear idea what you have to do in order to follow a career/s in which you are interested.				

8. Thinking about your future, do you (*Please tick one answer in each row*):

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) often get information about courses, universities and careers from your friends.				
b) know who you can ask at school to get good advice and help in planning your future.				

c) have another adult outside school, for example, a relative or friend, who you trust to provide you with help and advice in planning your future.				
d) know where else you could go to find information about academic courses, universities, and careers.				

9. Please add any further comments you wish to make about GOAL and/or the Lancaster GOAL residential school.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

For further information about this evaluation please contact:

Dr Stephen Cullen
 Research Fellow
 CEDAR
 University of Warwick
 Coventry
 CV4 7AL

Tel.: 02476 522911 (direct line)

d) the academic sessions were exciting.				
e) I was able to contribute my views to the academic sessions.				
f) I had the opportunity to work in groups with my peers.				

3. On this GOAL residential course I *(Please tick one answer in each row)*:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) met interesting people.				
b) made new friends.				
c) took part in fun social activities.				

4. The business skills workshops *(Please tick one answer in each row)*:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) taught me new thinking and learning skills.				
b) taught me new leadership and management skills.				
c) taught me new planning skills.				
d) provided information that will be useful for other areas of my life in addition to business.				

Looking towards the future:

5. Thinking about your future, and the GOAL residential course, do you think that *(Please tick one answer in each row)*:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) your ideas about university are unchanged.				
b) your ideas about university have changed because of being on this GOAL course.				

c) your ideas about what subject/s you would like to study at university are unchanged.				
d) your ideas about what subject/s you would like to study at university have changed because of being on this GOAL course.				
e) your ideas about what career you would like to follow are unchanged.				
f) your ideas about what career you would like to follow have changed because of being on this GOAL course.				

6. Thinking about your future, do you think that you (*Please tick one answer in each row*):

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) already have access to enough good advice and help at school.				
b) already have access to enough good advice and help outside school.				
c) would like more help and advice.				

7. The Lancaster GOAL residential school was (*Please tick one answer in each row*):

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a) a worthwhile experience.				
b) an experience that I would like to have again.				
c) valuable in academic terms.				
d) a good social experience.				
e) a good business experience.				

8. Please add any further comments you wish to make about GOAL and/or the Lancaster GOAL residential school.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

For further information about this evaluation please contact:

Dr Stephen Cullen
Research Fellow
CEDAR
University of Warwick
Coventry
CV4 7AL

Tel.: 02476 522911 (direct line)
Email: S.M.Cullen@warwick.ac.uk