



Activity Name	KS5 Level 3 Subject Specific Masterclass
Run by	Next Steps South West
Date	17 Subject-specific Masterclasses delivered throughout Tranche 4 (Sep 2019 – Jun 2020) *Online delivery started from 25/03/2020
Location	12 Target schools and colleges across Cornwall, Devon and Somerset
Total number of students	~429 Target and Non-Target Students
Number of target students by postcode	~66 Target students
Schools involved in the event	Bodmin College, Callywith College, City College Plymouth, Cornwall College, Eggbuckland CC, Exeter College, King Edward VI Community College (KEVICC), Marine Academy Plymouth, Petroc, Teignmouth Community School, Torquay Academy and Truro College

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Introduction

This report outlines the impact of various masterclasses organised by Next Steps South West (NSSW) staff and delivered to Year 12 and Y13 students across the South West throughout the 2019-20 academic year, which corresponds to the Tranche 4 (T4) period for NSSW.

KS5 Level 3 subject-specific masterclasses were an opportunity for students to learn about student life, Higher Education (HE) study style, careers and courses available. Furthermore, it provided a chance to motivate attendees with their current studies through a hands-on experience led by HE academic staff.

Aims

These masterclasses aimed to broaden students' knowledge of HE pathways related to their chosen subject and support the development of skills. Subject-specific taster lessons and a positive experience of HE were delivered to encourage pupils that are already thinking about university as an option and present new opportunities to those that are unaware or unsure about their options after college. These aims align with key barriers identified by NSSW related to lack of *Knowledge of HE*, lack of *Soft Skills*, *Socio-economic factors* and perceived *Geographical* barriers.

Evaluation Design and Data Collection

Evaluation of KS5 Level 3 subject-specific masterclasses across the NSSW consortium in T4 consisted of post-activity evaluation surveys designed to evaluate the short-term outcomes by using the indicators illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. Anticipated outcomes for KS5 Level 3 Subject-specific Masterclasses

Barrier to HE	Short-term outcomes	Indicators
<i>Knowledge of HE</i>	Increased exposure to HE opportunities in chosen subject area.	Students report more interest in HE opportunities in chosen subject area.
<i>Socio-economic factors</i>	Increased aspiration to study chosen subject at HE level.	Students report increase in intention to study at HE.
<i>Soft Skills</i>	Increased ability to identify and use HE study skills and subject-specific knowledge.	Students are able to identify differences in HE and L3 study.
<i>Geography</i>	Increased awareness of local HE options in chosen subject.	Students are exposed to information on local HE options in chosen subject.

Each survey included quantitative and qualitative questions related to the barriers to evaluate these masterclasses' success in achieving the short-term outcomes.

The following sections present the analysis of results gathered for the masterclasses, and the impact they had on NSSW barriers to HE.

Impact Evaluation Results

This section presents the findings gathered from 127 surveys from KS5 Level 3 students that attended the masterclass sessions. Figures 1 illustrates that the information disseminated in these masterclasses increased students' knowledge of HE.

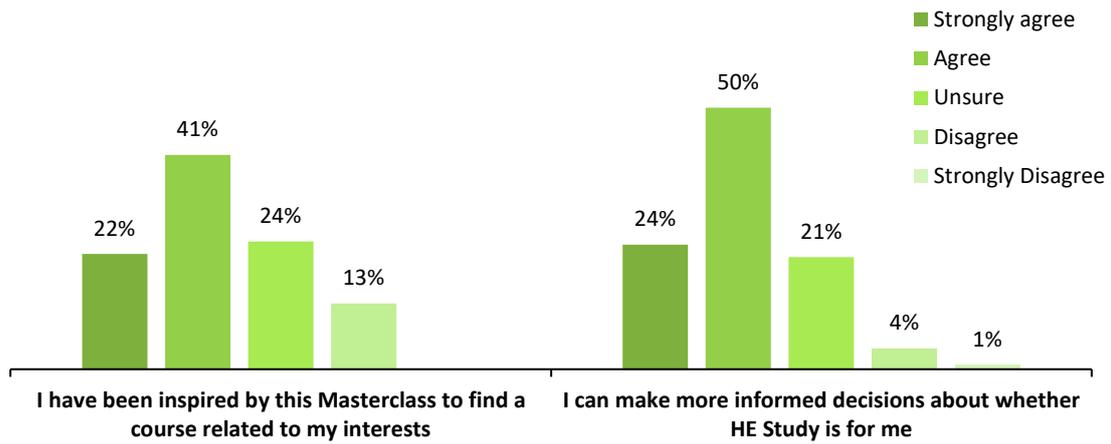


Figure 1. Increased Knowledge of HE

At the end of the masterclass, 63% of students reported they were inspired by the masterclass to find a course related to their interests and 74% that they are able to make a well-informed decision about whether HE is for them.

Furthermore, Figure 2 indicates that, after the masterclass, 78% were able to identify different national and local course options in their subject at HE level. This indicator that shows students' HE knowledge highlights the impact these masterclasses had in broadening students' options, which is likely to help them overcome perceived geographical barriers.

I can identify different national and local course options in my subject at higher education (HE) level

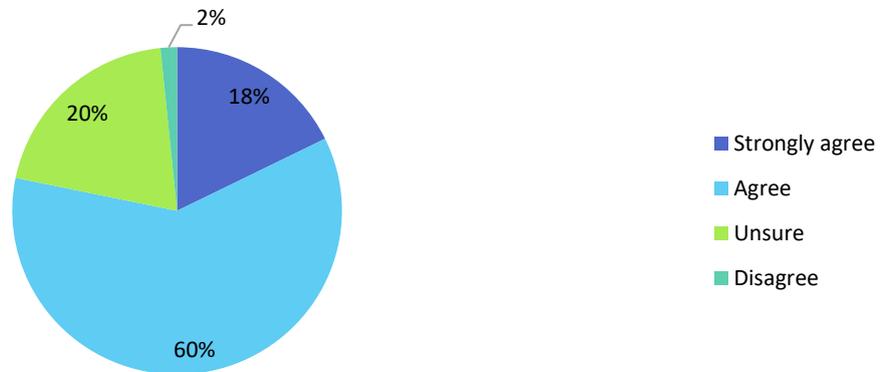


Figure 2. Knowledge of HE and the impact on perceived Geographical barriers

Figure 3 illustrates the impact these masterclasses had in supporting participants' development of Soft Skills. The majority of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they can identify differences between studying at HE and at school/college level (91%), they had a chance to experience university-style teaching in a subject that interests them (81%) and they have learnt skills/knowledge in their subject that they had not experienced at school or college (77%).

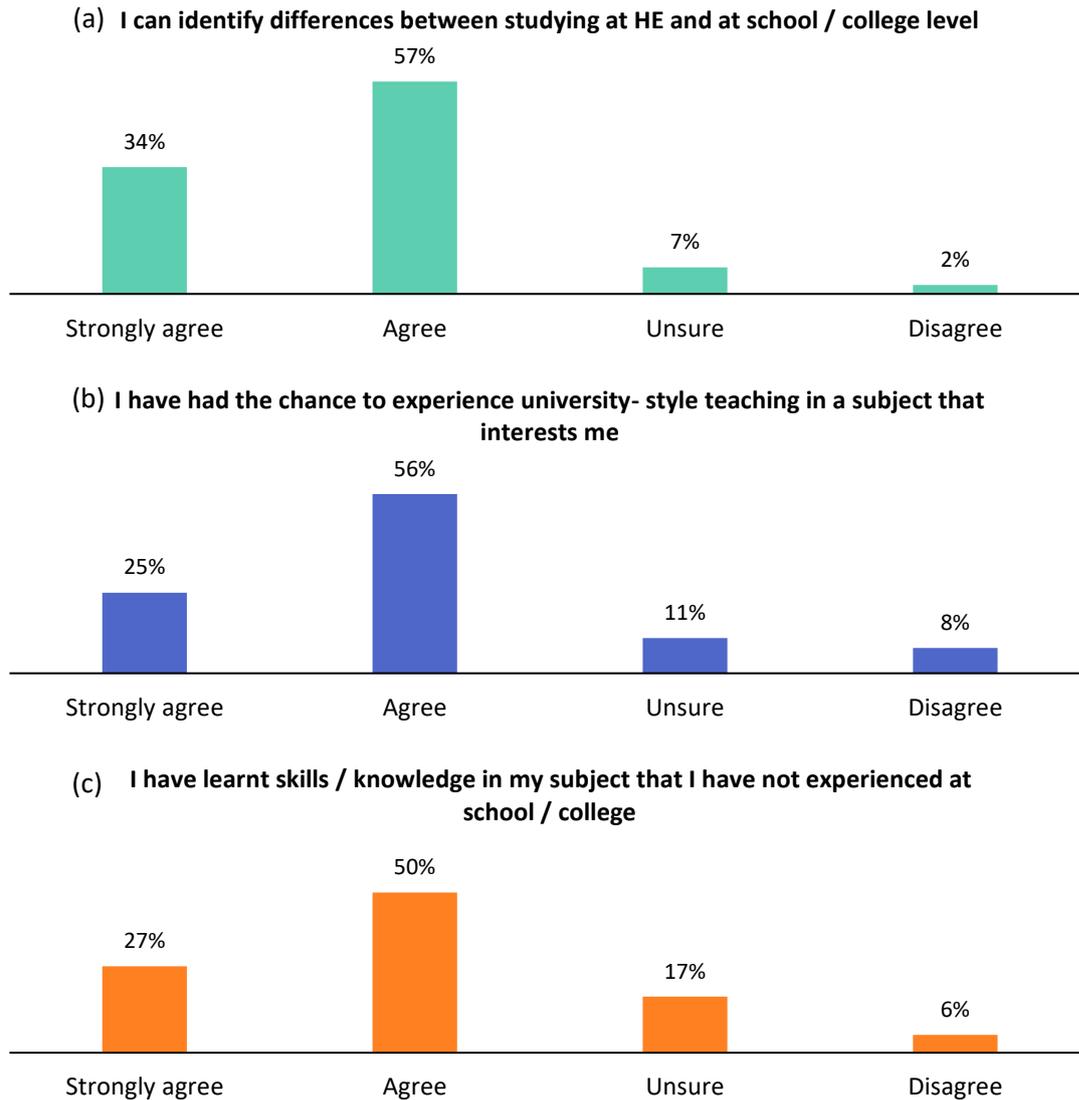


Figure 3. Development of Soft Skills

Moreover, attendees were asked to assess their likelihood of progressing and applying to HE and university (see Figure 4). Figure 4a indicates that 60% of students either strongly agreed or agreed they are likely to progress onto HE and/or University and Figure 5b illustrates 70% are likely to apply to HE/University.

Figure 4c shows these responses together, which highlights expected correlations (i.e. those that are likely to consider HE, are likely to apply to HE). However, there are contradictory responses provided by some of the students (i.e. students that stated they are very likely to apply to HE but disagree when saying they are considering HE/university as an option). It can be argued that, when completing this survey, some students were considering university/HE as an option, but they were unsure about applying. Given these are self-reported responses, it is also important to consider students might have not been attentive when responding to the last questions of the survey.

(a) **Progressing to HE/University** ■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Unsure ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree



(b) **Applying to HE** ■ Very likely ■ Fairly Likely ■ Unsure ■ Not very likely ■ Not at all likely



(c) **Progressing and Applying to HE/University**

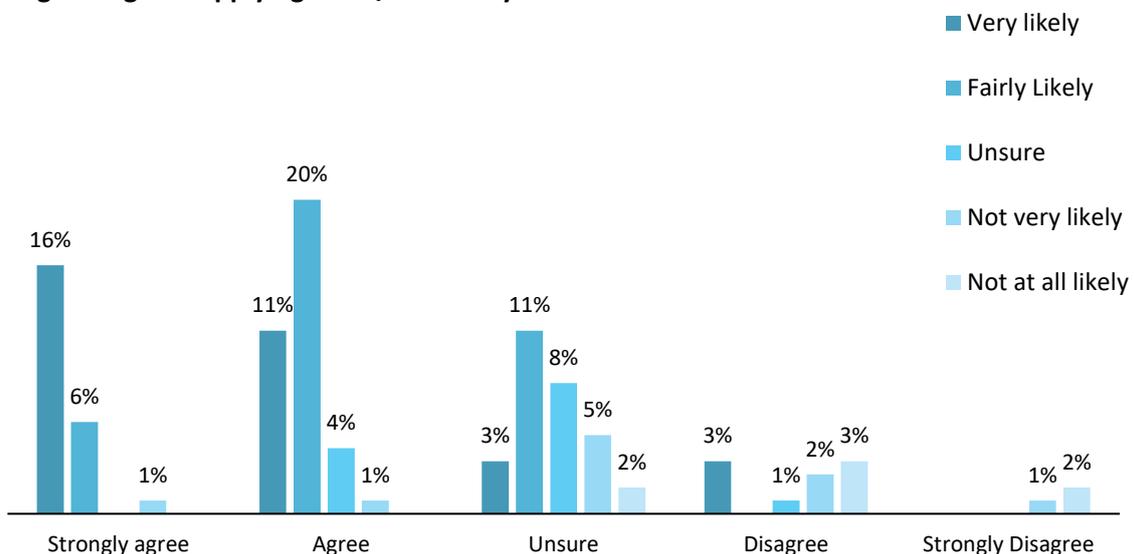


Figure 4. Likelihood of HE progression

To better understand these results, students were asked to provide their reason for their likelihood of applying to HE/University (see Figure 5). The majority of those that are either “Very likely” or “Fairly likely” to apply to HE/University, are clear on a specific career pathway that requires a HE degree (i.e. Engineer, Paramedic, Psychology, etc.).

Conversely, most of the students that stated they are unlikely to apply to HE are those who are considering a career pathway that does not require an HE degree (i.e. RAF, Navy, going straight to a full-time job). Additionally, reasons for students who are indecisive about their career pathways vary from not knowing what they want to do yet, being undecided between an apprenticeship and an HE degree, and considering factors linked to HE (e.g. accommodation, location, etc.).

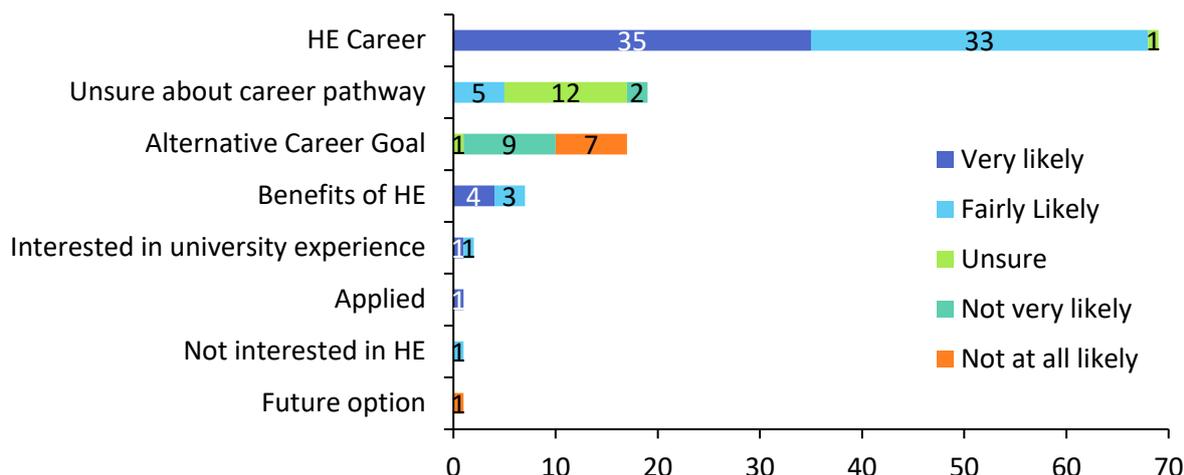


Figure 5. Underlying reasons for likelihood of applying to HE/university

Overall, most students reported increased knowledge of different aspects of HE and the information disseminated in the masterclass is likely to have helped with the development of their soft skills. Furthermore, the session provided students with an opportunity to address concerns about HE which is likely to have raised their aspirations, addressing the barrier of Socioeconomic factors. Although students might have already been interested in pursuing an HE career, it is likely the masterclass supported students with their decision-making process as to whether HE study is for them (see Figure 1).

Finally, students were asked to provide two statements about what went well in the masterclass. For the qualitative analysis, it should be noted that in some cases a thematic area was coded twice within an individual comment. Hence, the count of thematic responses (TR) is not always equivalent to the total number of individual responses (IR). Table 2 provides examples of comments from respondents to illustrate the emergent categories from their feedback. The most common comments were about the subject-specific knowledge, the career and course insight they gained from the masterclass, and second to that was the information received about different aspects of HE/University (i.e. course options, study style, benefits of HE degree, accommodation, etc.).

Table 2. Students' feedback on what went well on the session

Thematic category	TR	Quote from comments
Career/Course Insight	65	"I learnt more about the adaptations and anatomy of fish, and more about ecology techniques that I could take away and use within my course. We also learnt about ethograms"
HE Knowledge, Uni Life, Career Pathways	53	"I have found out that there are many courses relating to my interests."
Fees and Finance	16	"Learned more about the types of funding available in HE."
Positive comments	11	"It went well as it helped me to make my mind up on what I would like to do in the future."
Suggestions to improve delivery	9	"This could be improved by being more engaging." / "I felt organisation and practicing more could've been better"
Motivation to progress to HE	8	"HE is more achievable than I thought. It appeals to me more than I thought."
Barrier to progress to HE	4	"This has reinforced my decision that uni is not right for me at the current moment in time." / "It gave an in depth look into university but didn't feel too inclusive"
Further support required	3	"The session could have more information on grants etc. Not just finances link to paying back funds."



Outcomes Achieved (T4)

To monitor the success of KS5 Level 3 Subject Specific Masterclasses, results were measured and evaluated against targets for the short-term outcomes concerning NSSW barriers to HE that were established in the Phase Two Evaluation Framework (see Table 3).

Table 3. KS5 Level 3 Subject-specific Masterclasses – Outcomes achieved in T4

Activity Title and HE Barriers (italics)	Short-term Outcomes and Outcome Targets (bold)	Indicators <u>Students report/are able to</u>	Evidence	Target Outcome Achievement
KS5 / Level 3 Subject-specific Masterclasses <i>Knowledge of HE Socio-economic factors Soft Skills Geography</i>	Increased aspiration to study chosen subject at HE level for ≥ 50% students	Increase in intention to study at HE	60% stated they are more likely to consider going to university/HE 71% said they are either very likely or fairly likely to apply to HE Target 50%: T4 achievement 60% and over	Achieved
	Increased ability to identify and use HE study skills and subject-specific knowledge for ≥ 60% students	Identify differences in HE and L3 study	91% are able to identify differences between studying at HE and at school/college level 81% said they had the opportunity to experience university-style teaching in their subject of interests 77% stated they have learnt skills/knowledge in their subject that they have not experienced at school/college Target 60%: T4 achievement 77% and over	Achieved
	Increased exposure to HE opportunities in chosen subject area for ≥ 90% students	Identify different local HE options in chosen subject	74% reported they can make a more informed decisions about whether HE is for them 63% said they are inspired by the Masterclass they attended to find a course related to their interests Target 90%: T4 achievement less than 90%	Not Achieved
	Increased awareness of local HE options in chosen subject for ≥ 60% students	Increase in awareness of HE opportunities in subject area	78% said they can identify different national and local course options in their subject of interest at HE level Target 60%: T4 achievement 78%	Achieved

The table above illustrates that four out of five targets were met or exceeded. Furthermore, although the target established for the third outcome was not achieved, results were still considered positive, since over 50% of students reported learning about different options of HE. There is evidence that the KS5 Level 3 Subject-specific Masterclasses were effective in supporting students overcome the lack of *Knowledge of HE* and *Soft Skills*, addressed *Socio-economic factors* and perceived *Geographical barriers*.



Conclusion and recommendations

Quantitative and qualitative data indicate that participants benefited from engaging in these KS5 Subject-specific Masterclasses delivered throughout T4 and from the information disseminated in them. The specificity of these masterclasses provided an opportunity to learn about possible applications of their current studies. Finally, the delivery and content of the workshop, along with NSSW staff support, was key to providing an engaging and productive experience for the students that took part in these lessons.



KS5 / Level 3 HE Subject-specific Masterclasses 2019-2020

A hands-on experience, led by academics, for students to be inspired in HE subjects, with insights into study styles, careers and courses.

Engagement

No. of students	429
No. of schools	12
No. of survey responses	127

'I have found out that there are many courses relating to my interests'

'Foundation degrees are available in North Devon'

'HE is more achievable than I thought - it appeals to me more than I thought.'



74% reported they can make a more **informed decision** about whether HE is for them



71% said they are either very likely or fairly likely to **apply to HE**



77% stated they have learnt **skills/knowledge** in their subject that they have not experienced at school/college



78% said they can identify different **national and local course options** in their subject of interest at HE level

The Masterclasses focused on possible barriers to progression for these students, addressing gaps in HE knowledge, perceived geographical barriers and socio-economic factors.