

Hold on to Sport – games based learning project

Dr Jo Armitage for Together We Create July 2012

In the academic year 2009/10 Sarah Hoyle of Together We Create and I set up a games-based learning project that we called Hold on to Sports (HOTS). The project expanded over the next three and impacted on learning and community cohesion in ways we never imagined. This was in the West London Borough of Hounslow, a borough that forms a corridor between Heathrow Airport and Central London. It is a borough of immense cultural diversity where more than 50% of pupils do not have English as their first language¹, 21.6% are eligible for free school meals² and 25% of pupils are described as having some form of special educational need.³

There are 84 schools Hounslow, including special schools and there are five youth centres. Each school or centre was invited to enter a team into HOTS and over 6000 young people have now taken part. We tried to include as many groups of young people as possible: young people from the youth centres; children in mainstream schools including Key Stages 1-5; gifted and talented children; children from special schools for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as special schools for moderate and for severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties.

With the London 2012 Olympic Games for inspiration, the context for the learning was based on an Olympic sport. Sports were chosen that could be played on the *Nintendo Wii* using the *Wii Sports Resort* game and were that accessible to play and watch for real. Within each team there need to be a trainer, physiotherapist, public relations manager, dietician and an athlete. The teams researched and produce media presentations about each role. They needed to understand muscle groups and to devise appropriate training programmes. They considered diet, healthy eating and healthy living choices and devised recipes for the athletes to eat, with an understanding of food groups and drawing on world cuisine and a variety of cooking methods. Finally, they designed the kit to play the sport, considering fabric, practicality, colour and logos.

In order to complete the tasks, the young people not only learned about sports, but how to work together in teams, how to complete research and how to present their ideas in multi-media forms to a panel of judges. They worked with technology and gaming to understand that sports games played on computers at home can link with physical sports played outside. The completed digital work was located on a web site, <http://www.thehots.co.uk/>, and submitted to external judges who award gold, silver and bronze medals to the physiotherapists, trainers, dieticians and public relations managers as well as the athletes during the finals. The finals occurred in July each year culminating in the July 2012 finals as Hounslow's official Olympic project.

¹Department of Health (2011) Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for London Borough of Hounslow

² Hounslow Language and Communication Data – Free school meals 2010 Special Educational Needs Joint Initiative for Training (SENJIT), Institute of Education, London

³ Hounslow Language and Communication Data – SEN Profiles 2009, Special Educational Needs Joint Initiative for Training (SENJIT), Institute of Education, London



In recognition of the commitment the project has shown to Olympic values the HOTS has been awarded the London 2012 Inspire Mark and it is these aspects that this report considers:

- excellence in learning;
- respect through teamwork and cooperation resulting in tangible outcomes;
- friendship, within school, across schools and throughout the community engaging all, regardless of experience, skill or confidence;
- courage and determination to experiment and take risks, to try new ways to express oneself creatively;
- inspiration by learning from peers and sports professionals;
- Equality; with young people taking part regardless of age, physical and mental ability or experience.

The impact on learning and interest in sports has been impressive, but perhaps the most impressive outcomes were to do with motivation, self esteem and impact on team spirit in a completely inclusive environment, which built up over the three years. The nature of the project does not enable us to identify impact on levels of attainment, however, feedback from teachers and students provides a strong indication that the positive impact on motivation and attitude to school and learning has transferred across the curriculum. Two schools have now integrated the HOTS programme into their curriculum and the shift in pedagogic thinking and use of ICT in the classroom is a lasting legacy of the project. A series of visits to all settings took place to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project through:

- discussion with teachers to consider progress as the project moved forward
- observations in class
- interviews with teachers and pupils about how they felt about the project

Infant and junior schools took part, integrating the project into the curriculum or working with groups, for example gifted and talented groups. Secondary schools worked with classes as part of the combined studies or personal, social, health and economic curriculum, or worked with special educational needs extract groups. The special schools worked with year groups and the youth centres used the project as a focus for evening activities.

Excellence in Learning

At the end of the first year teachers were making such comments as:

This is without doubt a learning initiative that has had more impact on learning than any other I have ever taken part in... there was a real buzz in the classroom with full on learning involving organisational skills, multi tasking and deadlines Teacher - Springwell Junior School

Best motivational topic ever done... covering ICT, speaking and listening, presentation and co-operation far better than anything else... Year 6 teacher

Literacy

Impact on literacy skills, suggested that reading for understanding improved as a result of the desire



to complete the research tasks and to reach the finals, with teachers reporting, 'definite improvement on writing skills'. Teachers commented that pupils were reengaged in learning, particularly reluctant writers. At the primary school for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, all the pupils were reluctant to write at the start of the initiative. The teacher reported:

At the beginning of the project I asked each child, individually, what they thought of when I said non-fiction and the answers I received were those of a fairly basic level; answers such as 'it's a true story', 'non-fiction tells you things'. (Level 1a-2a)

By the end of the unit the children were producing work far beyond their starting levels. They were confidently using the language of non-fiction accurately and producing writing, which was that of a Level 3 and in some cases approaching Level 4 (i.e. age appropriate writing). Teacher – primary school for Social and Emotional Behavioural Difficulties

All teachers agreed that there was an impact on literacy, similar to that reported in the first year of the project and typical comments included:

It definitely motivated the pupils and will have had an impact on literacy skills. There was progression in the level of formal writing, concise use of information and selection of appropriate information for a given audience. Teacher – Belmont Primary

Information Technology

It is important to record the project-wide gains in ICT confidence and expertise of both teachers and students, which became so embedded that the skills could easily have passed unremarked. For example: podcasting, green screening, filming and editing, web page development, use of forums to share ideas; creative use of PowerPoint and use of Web 2.0 tools to upload creative work and to find and download free software to create the work. The primary teachers all believed that the skills that their pupils were demonstrating exceeded expectations and were closer to the demands of the Key Stage 3 secondary curriculum as the following observations demonstrate:

My years 5 and 6 (top primary) used the school MLE to put together a web site and used Web 2.0 free tools to embed video. I didn't know how to use some of the Web 2.0 tools before but I learned alongside the kids...sometimes they taught me how to do it...it is a great way to capture evidence of learning not just for HOTs ... we put everything up onto a web site now. The ICT skills that were developed throughout this project exceeded the primary curriculum and began to draw on strands on the KS3 curriculum. Teacher - Cedars Primary

One boy joined us from abroad... he had had no formal education, no experience of IT and very little English. He jumped to an ICT Level 4 during the project and his speaking and listening skills shot up. Teacher - Springwell Junior School

As a result of this project we have built a green screen studio and acquired 6 Macbooks and Flip camera. Even our younger children now film weekly news stories to go on the MLE to be viewed by pupils and parents impacting on parental engagement... this is a direct result of this project...they can podcast and are meeting elements of Key Stage 4 media work... someone should tell Michael Gove how advanced the IT skills can be in primary and this needs to inform the primary curriculum. We are also sharing our successes with the secondary schools, it is a shame if our pupils go into Year 7 to only do Excel spreadsheets... the neighbouring secondary schools are now evaluating their Year 7 delivery of IT. Teacher - Beavers Community Primary School



One school chose a group of predominantly Muslim girls (three in year 5 and three in year 6) because although high achievers in maths and literacy they had little home experience of computers or gaming. They were all shy girls who were hard working but were rather introverted. The project was described by the teacher as follows:

..a resounding success... the girls all became more confident as a result... they developed presentation skills and filming skills, but through the additional ICT skills that jumped from Level 3 to Level 5 they were also now able to apply their academic skills to access higher level resources on the Internet... the girls gained in confidence so much they were able to lead podcasting and green screening across the school, teaching pupils and teachers so that we now have IT confident teachers embedding IT.... the girls are now confident enough to take part in G&T programmes such as debating clubs. Teacher- Beavers Community Primary School

As a result of the impact in the first year of HOTS, schools asked us to include Key Stage 1 pupils, 'they can come to us in nappies unable to feed themselves but they all have basic keyboard skills. The curriculum just doesn't recognise these skills until year 4... we need programmes like HOTS to challenge these younger children'. One Infant school reported:

It consolidated IT skills in a way that they would not have had an opportunity to do in class. They prepared PowerPoints independently including slide transitions. They had fun...it improved their presentation skills...they can now download photos into PowerPoint and next year we will include videos. Teacher – Cranford Infants

Healthy eating and life styles

All the teams that took part researched healthy eating. Teachers across all phases described how relating diet to sport and healthy living made the pupils far more aware of the different food groups and the meaning of a balanced diet. They recognised links between good diet and health and were willing to consider their own lifestyles and eating habits in relation to fitness both for playing real sports and virtual sport.

The primary school for pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties found this was a particularly useful aspect of the programme and they were able to combine the daily physical training programme with vocabulary work on parts of the body, how it works and food groups. Using the Blank speech and language levels, initial responses to fruit and vegetables were at Level 1 with questions such as: find one like this; what is this; what colour is it; what can you see. However, progress through the project demonstrated that pupils were able to begin to respond to questions at Level 4 on the Blank scale, such as why did you pick that one; why is it made of

All teachers and youth workers reported interest in diet, leading to research on healthy recipes and opportunities to make and star in 'how to cook' videos.

Sports

Without doubt this programme has had an impact on take up and interest in real sports. Mainstream teachers reported a surge in interest from 'non-sporty' members of the school.

It gave a chance for our pupils to excel and to receive medals... these pupils would not stand a chance of going to the borough sports... this encouraged interest in sport even with the non-sporty ones...
Teacher -Beavers Community School



Non-sporty winners qualifying for the finals was a big plus it gave them a big boost to confidence and self esteem ... in the past sportier classmates may have seen them as not very good ... it was really helpful. Teacher Springwell Junior School

Schools appointed lead 'trainers' and these students were responsible for running a training programme for the whole team or class. This was tailored to the needs of each sport, informed by the research of the physiotherapists. The trainer was responsible for a short daily training programme for all team members, not just the athletes. The routines included warm ups, stretches and strengthening exercises.

Every child who took part in the programme took up their virtual sport for real. Many of the schools who took part reported that table tennis was now a permanent fixture in a school hall and basket ball in the gym or outside. Visits to the local bowling alleys increased. Pupils extended this interest to researching and contacting local clubs. Hounslow Leisure Centres supported the project with sports awareness days. Pupils tried different sports with sports coaches and were introduced to local sports clubs.

Involvement in the HOTS resulted in a number of schools discovering pupils already pursuing sports at a competitive level.

They chose BMX biking – they then discovered one of the group was a competitive BMXer at national level and that there were four other national BMX competitors in the school. Four of these students were described as having a SEN (emotional and behavioural difficulties in class). None of them had had their BMX achievements acknowledged in the school until this point and their self esteem in school increased as a result. Teacher - Isleworth and Syon School

Soft skills

A teacher from Our Lady and St John's Primary School commented 'it's not just about sport it's about teamwork, respect, determination and inspiration and many other soft skills. These were summarised by many of the other teachers, typically:

They have learned a lot including referencing and research skills, speaking and listening, as well as IT and media skills, including camera technique, etiquette of being on-camera, e.g. no fidgeting, looking at the person who is talking, prompting during interviews, interview structure and order of questions, time management. They worked out who should be presenter, director, cameraman and mike man. This was done democratically with the minimum of fuss. Teacher -Spring Grove Primary School

It was about bringing all the pupils together...they realised they had to manage their time work as a team and listen to each other, these skills were a particular issue. These skills improved and I noticed these skills transferred to the classroom, they recognised the need to listen to each other Teacher - Our Lady and St John's Primary

Inspiration by learning from peers and sports professionals work

At St Marks School the focus on rowing resulted in Joanna Cook from the GB Olympic Rowing Squad visiting the school to give an inspirational talk. She commented on the pertinence of the pupils' questions about her high calorie diet, her work-life balance and her determination and commitment.



The primary school for pupils with social emotional and behavioural difficulties received regular Tweet messages of encouragement from Darius Knight of the GB Olympic Table Tennis team. The teacher commented:

It has had an impact on writing for a purpose and for blogging. Darius Knight tweets them and so now they will have a greater reason to watch the Olympics... We are a school that never does well at sports (this school gained a medal in every category) it is great to foster interest even with the non-sporty ones.

A trip to the Olympic stadium, organised by Dee Doocey, Former Liberal Democrats Assembly Member for London and Chair of the Economy, Culture & Sport Committee (now Baroness Dee Doocey), resulted in a surprising impact on career choices.

It was an opportunity to leave Hounslow and to drive through Central London, some students had never been. One student loved the architecture so much, not just in the stadium but in London itself he bought a travel card to go up at weekends and would like to be an architect. Teacher - Rivers Academy

They began to make connections between the role of Parliament and Westminster and the Mayor of London and City Hall. One student would like to work at City Hall. Teacher - Rivers Academy

It opened their eyes to possibilities – of working as architects, and town planning as well as in geography and the sciences. Teacher - Rivers Academy

The pupils are exposed to skills for later life... one now wants to be an animator (from a special school) Teacher - Primary school for Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

At St Marks School, the nine students from year 10 and one student from Year 9, plan to keep their portfolios of work for college and job interviews. The student that took on the role of dietician would like to study to be a chef and the student that took on the role of physiotherapist now intends to go to university to study sports science.

Courage and determination to experiment and take risks, to try new ways to express oneself creatively

Teachers were pleased that they could use the HOTS framework so flexibly. They were also surprised how easily the framework enabled pupils with special educational needs to be challenged and included as well as very able pupils. The judges were impressed by the high standard of work submitted by the special schools. That the project was flexible enough to enable a school for severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties to take part and to compete alongside a gifted and talented group is one of the most important outcomes of the project.

Many of the pupils at the school for severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties suffer co-ordination problems, however real determination to take part was observed and improvement in co-ordination through Wii playing. This in turn contributed to the enthusiasm to take part, to train and to learn from the qualifying tasks.

To begin with two of the students with very poor motor skills were laughed at when they used the Wii, but then they all realised that they had to help each other so these students were helped to use



the Wii... they became confident enough to join in at the finals in front of strangers helped by their friends. Teacher – Oaklands (SPMLD)

Pupils set their own challenges and pursued their own interests, for example film work and use of Web 2.0 tools, which resulted in pupils learning new skills. Comments from teachers included:

Pupils worked hard on the project out of lessons, they organised their teams, agreed tasks, asked for tutorials for technical support as appropriate. They learned how to make films and edit them to embed in PowerPoints... It was not unusual for pupils to put in extra time at lunchtime or out of school hours. Year 9 Teacher

Attitude to learning represented a shift from, 'I do not want to be in school' to 'I like school'. There was a positive attitude to do well and move on to the next school with a 'can do' approach to new challenges Teacher -Primary school for Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

More importantly than anything else was that the boys' confidence and attitudes grew and improved throughout the project. They were enthusiastically engaged with their learning and saw a true and useful purpose to what they were doing. The impact this had on their behaviour was clearly shown by the children, with only the odd exception, achieving their work and behaviour targets daily throughout the project. Teacher - Primary school for Social Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties

For this group of G&T children an important lesson to learn was 'I'm not best at everything all the time sometimes I need help' Teacher of G&T group

Their research skills improved.. they learnt to think for themselves and to help each other rather than looking to the teacher to be spoon fed and this boosted their confidence in the classroom. Teacher – Cranford Infant

Many schools commented on the ability to work independently, or to support each other, rather than dependency on the teacher.

All participants enjoyed the programme. The immersion in the qualifying activities, once started, was impressive. Teachers and youth workers commented on the motivation displayed by the pupils and the amount of both formal and informal learning that took place. One of the most powerful aspects of the project was the way pupils were asking teachers to guide them to higher levels of achievement driven by a desire to do well and to win. This was on a technical level, for example, filming, editing, podcasting, green screening and printing T-shirts. In addition, in order to achieve well, pupils were also learning how to learn effectively. One teacher explained that after improving their Internet research skills, the pupils went on to organise notes as spray diagrams in order to share ideas. They then identified areas for further research, checking against the judging criteria in order to be successful. Although these are basic effective learning strategies, they are not always acknowledged as skills to be learned, but pupils understood the benefits and purpose of preparation and transferred these skills across the tasks.

Respect through team work and cooperation resulting in tangible outcomes

Teachers recognised the value of team work for generating ideas, which then prompted discussions on merit and choice. A primary school teacher described how one child came to her at the end of the lesson to say he now understood that other ideas should be listened to as well as his own. Once



pupils had decided what to do as part of a team, they then learnt to implement their ideas by working co-operatively. They gathered and organised information, identified what needed to be done, made decisions and evaluated against given criteria. This contributed to effective learning strategies that were transferable across all forms of independent learning. Typical comments from schools included:

They researched, scripted and recorded the films themselves.. they had to devise their own action plans and chose roles that interested them. They were responsible for their own learning; they had to learn all aspects of directing and editing a film. It helped us as teachers to recognise the importance of teaching film making as it develops so many skills. We are planning an INSET to share with all members of staff. Teacher - Cleve School

All team members worked together, for example, the dietician needed to understand the physical demands of a sport in order to devise an appropriate diet. The trainer had to understand the demands on each muscle group in order to devise an appropriate training schedule. The PR manager needed to agree team colours and styles and needed to understand the physical demands of a sport in order to develop the kit. Teachers reported the impact on classroom cohesion as respect developed for skills that were not previously apparent or appreciated in class.

The pupils in the school for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties began the year as a disparate group unable to function well together. The teacher described how they learned to respect each other's different skills through the project, which gave opportunities for different types of talents to emerge. "There was something for everyone to be good at and this promoted respect and appreciation of each contribution to the team effort". The incentive to behave well at the school for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties was always present in order to demonstrate they could be trusted to behave well at the finals.

The Youth Service reported:

For us as youth leaders what was important was that the senior, intermediate and junior clubs had somehow crossed over and merged which is amazing, having a positive cohesive effect on the community with the younger ones gelling with the big ones.. it worked really well. . It would have been easy to just run with separate groups but this way the positive outcomes were that all the young people felt part of the Youth Centre and saw themselves as part of the community. It impacted on their behaviour as well as they really got something out of it and felt good about themselves. ... it had a positive impact as well of holding on to new intakes, they immediately got involved and as a result are still attending the Centre. They are not on the streets and possibly getting themselves into mischief. Youngster really need a positive project to take part in. They showed each other fantastic support, sportsmanship and friendship. Youth Worker - Hogarth Centre

The school for severe profound and multiple learning difficulties reported:

It helped with team skills and taught them to support each other...as teachers we were surprised and impressed. There was something for everyone to be good at across all the tasks and so each student was able to contribute to the team performance and lead on an element ... they learnt to encourage each other and teachers from other schools at the finals were delighted with the way Oakland pupils encouraged pupils from other schools as well. Teacher - Secondary School for Severe, Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties



Friendship: within school, across schools and throughout the community

Development of friendship groups was observed within groups and classes, through transition projects and through cross phase working . It was also observed when all groups came together for the finals, when young people were engaged, regardless of experience, skill or confidence. The wider community also became involved.

Small group friendships

In several of the secondary schools, the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) initiated the take up of the HOTS. Typically groups were made up of 10 students for 2 periods a week for six weeks. Most participants were described as having social emotional and behavioural difficulties, lacking in confidence and having poor communication skills. The participants did not know each other well as they were usually from different tutor groups. Typical descriptions of these students were as follows:

These students are not comfortable or particularly happy in the classroom. Here they are keen to answer. Teacher- Rivers Academy

Shy students with low self-esteem could easily be swamped and unnoticed in class but in this group they are doing alright and this will give us an opportunity to develop language further as the project develops. They now feel like a group Teacher - Hounslow Manor Secondary School

They gelled as a group; the sessions were structured and groups small... there was no need for telling off...everything was active, these students can't sit still but they are harmless. P can sit on tables and swing his legs, he is focused and content

There was a gender divide at the beginning but they came together and just got on with it.

The student comments reflected the teachers' observations

Everyone (in the group) is easy to talk to ...(i'm) not good at talking to people... wanted to change school...was feeling isolated.. I feel better now ... I find it easier to communicate. It helps being in a small group working together .. I find I really like to learn about things...

Group work here is fun, we don't argue.. we talk it out and agreeI feel I have learned useful skills for class, I feel more confident to talk in front of others and to speak to the teacher in class and to class mates.

School can be difficult to concentrate.. don't usually do school work it can be boring but I work hard here. I like working with friends researching and learning. The team work helps me to work together in class.

I like working with friends and making new friends I now know everyone in class better ...

I like the teamwork and I like sharing tasks and deciding what to do... I now participate more in art, English and drama.

I don't like many kids, some are fine. This class is friendly and that is why I like to be here and making friends for outside the lesson.



I liked being with everyone here, everyone here is friends and supports each other and I like to do group work with them. I like this more than any other subject because the group is supportive. I prefer to be in groups you can talk about your work if you get stuck...

I like moving around ... in other classes where I have to sit still it is boring so I cut off and go into my own world.

The students quoted above, appear to relate the group work to a safe learning environment and making friends. We may underestimate the importance of such opportunities to help students feel safe to learn in the bigger classes.

Transition friendships

Two of the secondary schools chose to work with their feeder primary schools to support their transition programme. Both secondary schools chose pupils who lacked confidence in the mainstream school and asked their pupils to act as mentors to the younger pupils and to act as mentors. They were also asked to take on the responsibility for showing the younger ones around the school.

Teachers commented:

The younger pupils liked interacting with the secondary school and working with new and older pupils... it helped with their confidence to work on a level ground with the older pupils they realised they could contribute ideas ...they were challenge and extended and developed the confidence to communicate their ideas with unknown people I've seen this transfer to the classroom.

Some of the pupils from the junior school didn't want to leave to go the Academy in Year 7 they were terrified now they are not scared anymore and feel a lot more confident.

They (secondary pupils) felt motivated and developed confidence. These students don't usually enjoy school, they have less stable friendships than others, they often feel lonely, miserable and failures. They often get into trouble. Now they feel they have friends. They have learned to value the strength of each other, each week they step up to working in a team. Already each week feels different. They have moved in a group of 20 around the school showing the younger ones round. . They chatted and took responsibility, we were able to trust them. Teacher -Rivers Academy

Friendship across year groups

Two primary schools chose to work across year groups, one school gave a different HOTS roles to each year group and the other worked across years 4 and 5.

In both schools, the teachers committed time to integrating the programme into their science and healthy eating curriculum planning over a six week period. The teachers reported impact across all curriculum areas including impact on planning, scripting, researching and extraction of key and relevant information and critical thinking. They also reported on the benefits of working cross-phase:

Very good impact on motivation, sharing and taking responsibility for each other, including the older ones for the younger ones. The weaker ones surprised us especially with the role playing and their developing confidence. . They became more confident including the child with Down's Syndrome who love working with the younger ones.

Year 4 were challenged and the more able were really able to be stretched with responsibility for editing for example and mentoring.



It was a very easy vehicle for differentiation. The school will continue to plan a similar programme for next year.

Overall benefits included, communication and social skills, friendship groups across phase contributing to school cohesion, respect when working with each other, lovely team work and confidence with everyone contributing and feeling that they could.. tapped into personal skills of each child so all could contribute through their strengths.

Finals and cohesion across schools

During the finals, an infant school teacher reported:

There was a positive impact on cohesion in the classroom, with an understanding of different roles and the need to co-ordinate and bring it all together. They took responsibility for organising themselves and for preparing for each Wednesday afternoon. . Then they got on with it... true independent learning that they carried out brilliantly Teacher – Cranford Infant

Perhaps the most heartening comments came from teachers at the finals on the inclusive nature of the final event. Both special school and mainstream teachers agreed that it was a wonderful opportunity to be part of the same event. A primary teacher commented how one very shy girl was very nervous of the much bigger and louder secondary students, but quickly gained confidence and her teacher believed that this will have an impact on her confidence on transfer to a bigger school, commenting, 'they (the Year 2 pupils) were daunted at first by their size and mannerisms but didn't notice very quickly and mixed well'.

The teacher from the primary school for social, emotional and behavioural difficulties commented:

It is a great, great idea, particularly good for our lot to be at the Civic Centre and to see they are not different to other kids, they forget because they don't get to see them. Three of my group are now returning to mainstream school it helps them to prepare. One stepped out to let another in (gave up his opportunity to play in a match) when another school came to the finals match late. This is the last child I would have expected to offer his place and to learn to deal with losing. Teacher- Primary SEBD School

Extra community activities and legacy

During the final year of the HOTS programme, schools were offered taster days for different sports in partnership with Sports Impact and the local leisure centres. The Hounslow library service also became involved and ran a Saturday workshop linked to the HOTS, as did Gunnersbury Museum. The schools designed individual triangular pennants to celebrate the HOTS and the Olympics that have been printed to form 201.2 metres of bunting. This flew across Hounslow during the Olympics and is held in the Central Library to be used by community groups for events in the future. HOTS activity days continue to run every school holidays at Griffin Park Learning Zone based at Brentford Football Club.

In addition, the schools and youth centres made torches for their own Olympic torch relay and walked to a local leisure centre for a HOTS and Olympic celebration in partnership with Sports Impact. Exhibitions of the media work were held at the local community arts centre and the Civic Centre and local councillors and Member of Parliament became involved at the community events and by acting as judges.



Equality regardless of age, physical and mental ability or experience.

Throughout this report there is evidence of various groups taking part in the HOTS regardless of age, physical and mental ability or experience. This was formalised by one school who integrated HOTS into their Equality Duty published in response to the Equality Act 2010 which states:

‘schools cannot unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their sex, race, disability, religion or belief and sexual orientation. Protection is now extended to pupils who are pregnant or undergoing gender reassignment ... requiring schools to publish equality information and objectives. Initially this must be done by 5 April 2012..’ (DFE, 2012)⁴

The teacher responsible for publishing their school’s Equality Duty used the HOTS programme as follows

HOTS has become a huge component of our objectives for our Equality Duty which we are required to publish concerning the eight protected characteristics for positive action based on Equality Act 2010’

HOTS has helped us to address complex needs, integration and socialisation

It has contributed to the accessibility plan addressing inclusion and function in the classroom

It has helped in our duty to eliminate discrimination by promoting tolerance, understanding of each other and respect for differences

It has helped in our duty to foster good relations across the protected characteristics

Teacher - Isleworth and Syon School

Discussion

With a project like this, value-added academic gains by individuals or groups, over the year, cannot normally be identified as relating only to the single project. How gains are interpreted must be considered alongside the hard work of the teachers in many other areas. However, it would be unreasonable to ignore evidence from individual results that demonstrate that a good proportion of individuals, including those with special educational needs, made striking gains and demonstrated high levels of engagement and motivation.

The evidence gathered through interviews and observations clearly indicates:

- The pupils enjoyed learning and were motivated and enthusiastic
- The pupils responded to the tasks because they understood their purpose and they related them to the real world and the world of sport

⁴<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/policiesandprocedures/equalityanddiversity/a0064570/the-equality-act-2010> DFE General Article on Equality Act 2012, updated March 2012 – accessed 5/4/2012

- Teachers felt the project enabled learning due to the flexibility of the project and the ability to slot it into the curriculum, benefitting from the motivation derived from the sports and the Wii.
- There is good evidence of substantial value added gains in English and ICT
- There is good evidence of a substantial shift in interest from a sport-based computer game to participation in real sports in schools and leisure centres.
- There is good evidence that the young people have learned new skills – teamwork, leadership, responsibility and self-direction

This study demonstrates that there are many advantages to be gained from working with technology and gaming. The young people understood that sports games played on computers at home can link to physical sport played outside. They were encouraged to try new sports and to get actively involved whilst learning about sports as being more than just the athlete, but including different sports professionals and healthy choices. The young people were also empowered to get involved, make decisions and work together in teams to research, create and present their ideas.

The positive outcomes will now act as a legacy in the schools and youth centres as the teachers and youth workers continue with the programme, impacting on their approaches to teaching and learning:

We will repeat this again as a similar 6 week project to address confidence building, with disaffected challenged students with behaviour difficulties. We will work across different year groups. Teacher - Our Lady and St John's Primary School

The teacher from the primary school for SEBD is now taking on a new role in the school as a lead teacher for teaching and learning and ICT. She will leave the classroom to promote learning supported by ICT across the curriculum and through project work across the school. She commented that the HOTS had been invaluable in supporting this progression:

It has impacted on ways to approach project work in school now and in the future. I will show the other teachers in the school how you can take anything and can use ICT to enhance it. How you can use games based learning as a way forward. With a more literate class you could do anything having visual stimuli for all the rest. We live in a visual age but school can be analogue in approach – it is about rethinking the whole curriculum.

As a teacher I was able to embed IT across the curriculum with real reason to be used, which would not necessarily have been done.

During the pilot year 2009/10, over 700 children took part from primary, secondary and special schools. In the second year, the infant schools and the five Hounslow youth centres joined the project, ensuring that more than 6000 young people took part. The project is a simple idea, which is easily taken forward and managed by teachers and youth workers.

