

EVALUATION OF THE TALENT TO TEACH PROGRAMME: FINAL REPORT

A report submitted by CFE Research

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aims of the study were to seek views on the Talent to Teach programme and assess its effectiveness. The research also provides evidence on whether the programme raised awareness of FE teaching as a career option, and examines the impact of the programme on participants' knowledge and behaviours.

Characteristics of Talent to Teach participants

The evaluation covers recruitment which took place between July 2019 and February 2020. At this point, 190 out of a target of 400 had completed their placement, 75% of which were female. Nearly four-fifths of participants were aged 20-29 (79%), which is reflective of the Higher Education (HE) student population. Three in five participants (61%) were white, 18% were from an Asian background, and 10% were black / Caribbean. Three in five participants were completing a degree in Humanities and Social Sciences.

Motivations to apply

The primary motivations for applying were the opportunities to: gain experience of teaching before committing to it as a career (81%); enhance their CV with employability skills (76%); and gain experience of the FE sector (73%). Just over a third (36%) of participants said bursary was an incentive to participate in the programme. The bursary was a stronger motivation for those completing a sciences or computing, maths and engineering degree. Talent to Teach also attracted participants who were not previously interested in teaching. Some younger participants who applied because it offered a new experience or was recommended by friends.

Provider preparation

Provider representatives said they did not need to prepare extensively to receive programme participants and found Cognition responsive and helpful to their requests. However, there were some organisation hurdles cited by providers: availability and timetable conflict between teachers and participants; and participants changing their availability upon starting their placement without enough notice. These hurdles meant placements were not always as relevant as they could have been for participants.

Effectiveness and experiences of programme delivery

Application process

Nine in ten (89%) of participants were satisfied with the application process, finding it quick and easy. Those participants who had the opportunity to discuss their preferences and availability as part of the application process were more likely to be satisfied as the subsequent arrangements met their needs. A minority of participants found there was limited discussion or consultation about the placement.

Overall experience

Nine in ten (91%) of participants were satisfied with their experience and 85% were satisfied with the content of their placement. Participants were positive because participants and provider staff worked together to design placements. Conversations between mentors and participants helped shape the placement so it could meet the participant's expectations. This was particularly effective for younger participants.

A minority (4%) were dissatisfied their placement for a number of reasons. Some felt placements which took place at the end of term or during the exam period limited the range of teaching experiences. Other felt mentors and lessons did not relate to their subject of study. Others felt the placement was not well organised.

Perceptions of the design and delivery of placements

Activities offered

While the activities varied from provider to provider, almost all participants were offered the following three activities: observing classroom activity (97%), interaction with staff (96%), and completing a reflective journal (93%). During qualitative interviews, some participants said they were offered opportunities to teach if they wished.

Satisfaction of activities

Satisfaction levels with programme experiences were high: 85% or more of participants were satisfied with each of the activities in which they took part. These findings were supported in interviews, which found that the reason these activities were rated so highly was because they made participants feel like teachers. Participants also valued the insight into the daily life of a teacher as it helped further inform their career decisions and challenged their preconceived conceptions about teaching older students.

Mentoring

Cognition provided a mentor guide to providers, which outlined support which mentors could offer. Use on mentors was not universal as 43% participants said they did not have one during their placement. Four in five (80%) of placement students with a mentor said this support met their expectations. Mentors were highly valued for providing pastoral support and for facilitating teaching activities.

Benefits and impact of the talent to teach programme

Organisational impact

Providers valued the programme for workforce planning and assessing the capabilities of future potential teachers. The programme also identified likely candidates for future teacher training programmes. Many teachers found that placement students were helpful in lessons as they offered fresh ideas and approaches and allowed existing teachers to reflect on their practice.

Impact for students

The post-placement survey shows a significant increase of 42 percentage points for interest in a teaching career in FE. However, there was a fall of six percentage points for those certain that they would like a career in FE (42% after the placement). The impact of the programme was positive, shifting attitudes of those who were interest in FE prior to the programme and helping those uninterested realise teaching was not for them.

Conclusions

Relevance and need

The study found there is a strong rationale for graduates to experience FE teaching. The post-programme survey revealed a significant increase of 42 percentage points for self-reported interest in a teaching career in FE compared to the pre-placement survey. The programme may alleviate some recruitment challenges in the FE, and the wider teaching sector.

Effectiveness of programme delivery

Most participants spoke favourably about their experiences of the Talent to Teach application process. Participants who discussed their preferences and availability with Cognition were more likely to be satisfied with the application process since the arrangements better met their needs.

Overall satisfaction of placements was high among participants. The organisation and structure of placements was a key strength. Participants were highly satisfied with activities that provided an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of teaching and were pivotal in helping learners make a decision about their career in FE.

Four key improvements were raised by a small minority of participants: to ensure placements were well-structured, with a timetable in place; ensure placements were offered during term time where teaching can be observed; create opportunities to micro-teach students; and tailoring activities in line with students' specialist subject area.

Benefits and impact

Participants reported that the programme increased their knowledge about the options available to teach FE, and allowed them to experience teaching styles in an FE setting. The programme improved soft skills which contribute to wider employability.

The programme challenged participants' views about teaching and helped them make better decisions about FE careers and teaching, both steering some towards a careers in teaching, while helping others realise that it was not for them.

The programme was beneficial for providers hosting placements, helping providers' workforce planning, allowing assessment of those on placements as potential teachers, and developing mentors' skills.

Recommendations

The ETF should continue to support the Talent to Teach programme. The programme enables potential teacher trainee applicants to make informed decisions about their career, and has the potential to reduce retention challenges.

In future cohorts, the delivery partner should ensure all students are offered a mentor during their placement experience. Mentors were highly valued among students as they ensured placements were well organised and offered guidance and support.

The programme should ensure all participants receive a varied placement experience.

Dissatisfaction arose due to placement timing and limited opportunities to get practical experience of teaching. Placements more related to their course would also mean they can focus on teaching and not familiarising themselves with unfamiliar content.

The ETF should continue to provide bursaries for the placement. The bursary was an important factor in helping participants decide to enrol in the programme, although the experience of teaching may still be the primary incentive.

1 INTRODUCTION

In March 2019, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) commissioned CFE Research (CFE) to undertake an evaluation of the 'Talent to Teach' programme delivered by Cognition. This report will enable ETF to make informed judgements about whether the programme has met its objectives, early impact for both providers and participants involved and continuing developments of the Talent to Teach programme.

1.1 Background and context

The ETF was established in 2013 to work with teachers, leaders and employers to help them deliver excellent further and vocational education and training (VET). As set out in their five year plan published in 2015¹, the ETF's long term strategic goals over the next 20 years are to create a strong, resilient and responsive FE and training system and a highly professional teaching and training workforce recognised as consistently good to outstanding by international standards. To work towards meeting their vision, ETF have set out types of activities in four key areas: Professional Standards and Workforce Development (PSWD), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Leadership, Management and Governance (LMG) and Research and Innovation.

Furthermore, the ETF acts as a catalyst for improvement in teaching effectiveness, with the purpose of increasing learner attainment and employer satisfaction. One key way of meeting this agenda is to support practitioner-orientated interventions and programmes that support recruitment, training and retention of staff in the sector. As such, the Talent to Teach programme was founded on a belief that, unlike in school based teaching, careers in General Further Education (GFE) Colleges were not clearly understood nor widely advertised. As a result, high quality undergraduates were not as aware of the rich and varied careers available within vocational education. The programme aims to raise awareness of FE teaching as a career option amongst final year undergraduates and post-graduates, by providing a pathway to actively experience FE settings during a work placement. This supports the agenda of supporting sustainable workforce supply and development in the sector.

1.2 Overview of Talent to Teach programme

The Talent to Teach programme involved recruiting students (final year undergraduates, or post-graduate students), and recruiting FE colleges, Independent Training Providers (ITPs) and Adult and Community Learning (ACL) providers, who could offer 40-hour placements to students. Cognition managed the programme in eight key locations and their surrounding areas (London, Leicester, Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Leeds and Newcastle). Students were matched to providers primarily depending upon geographic location. Providers were requested to provide a varied placement experience with a mentor who acted as a point of contact during the placement and was provided with guidance by Cognition. All students were also invited to attend an induction webinar hosted by cognition.

Students were offered a financial incentive of £300 and providers were paid £300 for each student placed with them, to provide operational funding. Students were paid on successful completion of their placement, following completion and submission of their student evaluation survey.

¹ <http://www.etfoundation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2015-20-5-year-plan-WEBSITE.pdf>.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the evaluation

The evaluation sought to elicit views on the Talent to Teach programme and perceptions of its impact, especially in relation to awareness of FE teaching as a career option. To achieve this aim, CFE were tasked with the following objectives:

- Assess the effectiveness of programme delivery, including what worked well and what could be improved. This was to identify recommendations to influence the design of the programme for future cohorts and inform wider ETF training and support for FE practitioners;
- To provide evidence on whether the programme was successful in raising awareness of FE teaching as a career option amongst final year undergraduates and post-graduates;
- Examine the impact of the programme on participants' knowledge, behaviours and work practices, using the Kirkpatrick Model and COM-B framework. This was to help the ETF understand the returns on their programme investment.

1.4 Approach and method

The evaluation methodology was designed in close partnership with ETF and involved both quantitative and qualitative methods. The key aspects of the methodology included a pre- and post-programme survey with all successful participants, a comparator survey and seven case studies consisting of interviews with senior leads, teaching staff (who were mentors) and students who completed a placement.

The research activities was based around a behavioural evaluation framework informed by the COM-B and Kirkpatrick models, which sets out the causal relationship between programme activities and their intended outputs, outcomes and impacts (Appendix 1). The framework was used to inform the range of attitudinal and experiential questions and analysis necessary to meet the research aims, especially regarding the influence of the programme on decision-making for beneficiaries and wider stakeholders.

1.4.1 Methodology overview

The research activities undertaken as part of the evaluation are described below.

Pre-programme survey of participants

An online application form was used as a pre-programme survey between July 2019 and February 2020. Whilst the pre-programme survey was used as an application form, it also sought to explore views on where participants heard about the programme, motivations to apply to the scheme, pre-programme knowledge of careers in FE and social demographic information.

The survey was designed and administered by ETF using online software, Snap. A generic survey link was shared with interested participants through universities in the key eight areas. For the purpose of the research, participants from the post-course survey were matched on to the application form survey to include data only for those participants who were successful in their application and completed a placement.

Post-programme survey of participants

Upon completion of the placement, participants were required to complete a post-programme survey which was a mandatory requirement for payment. The survey aimed to explore placement experiences, how the placement impacted participants' knowledge of FE and decisions about pursuing a career in FE. Questions were added to both the existing application form and post-programme survey to capture the key performance indicators (KPI's) outlined in the theory of

change model which can be found in Appendix 1. During this period, a total of 196 participants completed the placement and thus both the pre- and post-programme surveys.

Comparator survey

A comparator survey was conducted with non-beneficiaries from similar backgrounds to Talent to Teach programme applicants (e.g. gender, age, region and course studied). The aim of the comparator survey was to understand their awareness of FE teaching, knowledge of careers and attitudes towards the sector. This provided a useful baseline point for the wider target audience to compare self-reported impacts of placement beneficiaries. The survey also captured information on where final year undergraduates and postgraduates sought career information and the importance of work experience placements. This information will provide ETF with recommendations on where to promote their placements for future cohorts. The survey was designed and administered using online survey software, Conconfirm. Survey links were distributed to potential respondents via email using an online panel. In total, 398 respondents completed the survey. Since the sampling characteristics were based on those who applied to the programme, rather than the successful applicants, the dataset was weighted. A process that requires a re-balancing of the data in order to more accurately reflect the target population, in this case Talent to Teach participants.

A note on reporting aggregated data

A significant proportion of the response items in the survey employed a five-point Likert scale to measure the level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with given statements. The scale is useful to identify instances where respondents feel particularly satisfied on a given aspect of their placement. For ease of reading, this report often aggregates responses as follows:

- Satisfied = an aggregation of “strongly satisfied” and “satisfied”;
- Dissatisfied = an aggregation of “strongly dissatisfied” and “dissatisfied”.

Seven case studies

As part of the qualitative element of the evaluation, seven case studies with placements hosts were conducted. Fieldwork for each case study consisted of:

- In-depth interviews with those responsible for managing the Talent to Teach programme at their institution lasting approximately 45 minutes. Interviews sought to elicit perspectives on the application process, preparing to host placements, experience and any resulting impacts of hosting placements for both their institution and students.
- In-depth interviews with mentors lasting approximately 45 minutes to understand their motivations of becoming a mentor, perceptions of successes and challenges of hosting a placement and on if, how and why the programme met its’ aims.
- In-depth or paired interviews with students to understand their experiences of the placements, what worked well and not so well and any impact on their knowledge of careers in FE.

The delivery partner, Cognition supported the recruitment process by informing institutions about the research whilst arranging placements. The sampling for this study was purposive. The case studies were sampled purposively, to ensure a range of contexts were included that captured a variety of experiences. The key sampling characteristics were: type of provider (i.e. Further Education College and Independent Training Provider), region (spread across the eight areas) and size of provider (number of students).

In total across the seven case study areas, 9 interviews were conducted with those organising the

visits, 7 interviews/mini focus groups with mentors and 14 interviews/mini focus groups with students who completed a placement.

Qualitative interviews with key stakeholders

To supplement the case study visits, CFE conducted three interviews with representatives from DfE, ETF and Cognition. These interviews covered processes used to design, administer and adapt the programme and the decisions influencing those processes.

1.4.2 Limitations of the research

Due to a reduced sample size (190), the maximum statistical significance of $\pm 9\%$ is lower than could be expected from the expected 400 sample. A lower sample size also makes it more challenging to draw definitive and effective comparisons between sub-groups (i.e. male v female).

The post-course survey was conducted relatively shortly after participants had completed their placement. As a result, some of the impacts of the programme may be underrepresented, and long-term impacts are not discernible. This report, therefore does not make any conclusions regarding long-term impacts of participating in the Talent to Teach programme.

The report also makes no attempt to quantify findings from qualitative case studies, which cannot be generalised beyond the sample, but the learnings are transferable. While the sample size was limited, the findings provide insight into a range of perspectives, an important contribution to the evidence base around perceptions of the Talent to Teach programme.

1.5 Structure of the report

The remainder of this report presents findings from the evaluation to address the aims outlined earlier. Chapter Two provides an overview of the participants engaged in the programme, their characteristics and motivations for taking part in the programme. It also provides an overview of provider motivation and preparation. Chapter three summarises the participants' and providers' overall experience by providing an overview of the application process, how their placements were organised, including the nature of the placement activities and the support that was provided. Thereafter, chapter four considers the impacts and recommendations of the programme, by exploring FE knowledge and perceptions of pursuing a career in FE. The report concludes by discussing the key messages to take forward from the Talent to Teach Programme.

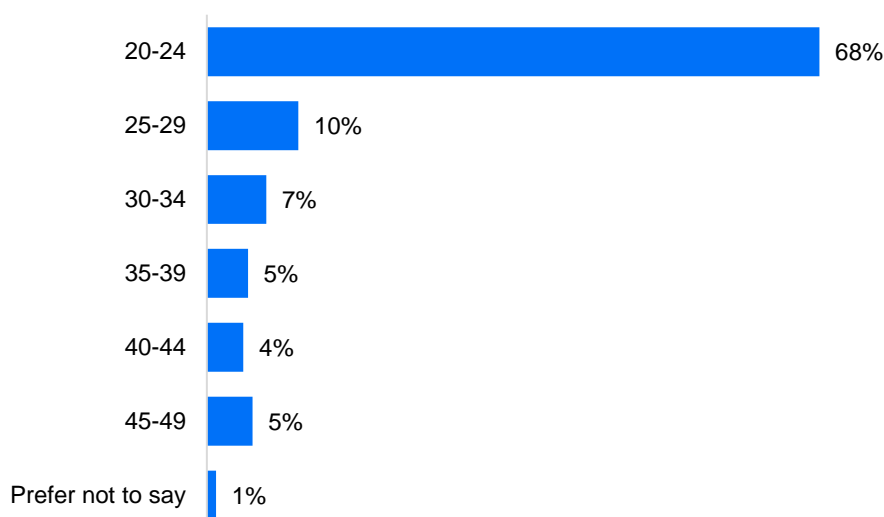
2 PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED AND PROVIDER INVOLVEMENT

This chapter provides an overview of the participants engaged in the programme, their characteristics and motivations for taking part in a placement. It also provides an overview of provider motivation, and successes and challenges of preparing to deliver the talent to Teach Placements.

2.1 Characteristics of participants

The recruitment took place between July 2019 and February 2020 (with the programme currently ongoing). 190 participants had completed the placement by this stage, with an overall target of 400. Three-quarters of participants were female (75%), with just over one-fifth male (22%). Typically, the programme also attracted younger participants. As shown in Figure 1, nearly four-fifths of participants were aged 20-29 (79%), whilst the remaining fifth of participants were over 30. This is reflective of the Higher Education (HE) student population in England, where in 2017/18 HESA found 20% of HE students were aged 30 years and over, and 80% were 29 years and younger.²

Figure 1: Age of Talent to Teach participants (n=196)



Source: Pre-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

The successful applicants were from a diverse backgrounds with three in five who were white (61%), nearly a fifth were from an Asian background (18%) and one-tenth were black/Caribbean (10%). To provide context, three in five (59%) were completing a degree in Humanities and Social Sciences indicating the Talent to Teach programme appears to attract learners from these disciplines. Under one-fifth (15%) were undergoing a sciences degree whereas only 8% were completing a Business and Finance degree and 7% Computing, Maths and Engineering.

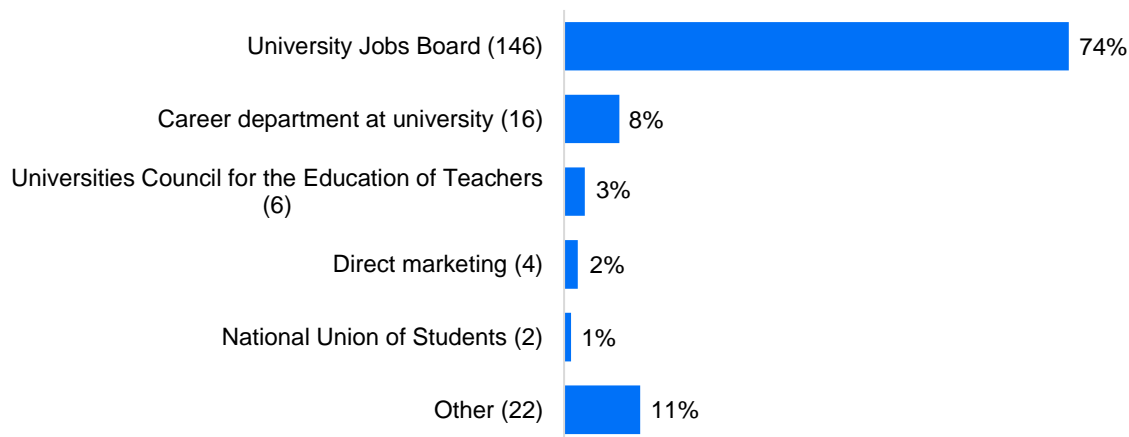
² <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/17-01-2019/sb252-higher-education-student-statistics/numbers>

2.2 Attraction to the placement

2.2.1 Awareness of Programme

The majority of participants reported they first heard about the programme through their university. Just under three-quarters (74%, n=146) indicated that they that they first heard about the programme through their university jobs board (Figure 2). Similarly, all interview respondents found out about the programme via their university, either through the jobs board or a careers event, direct email from a lecturer, email from a careers department or via social media.

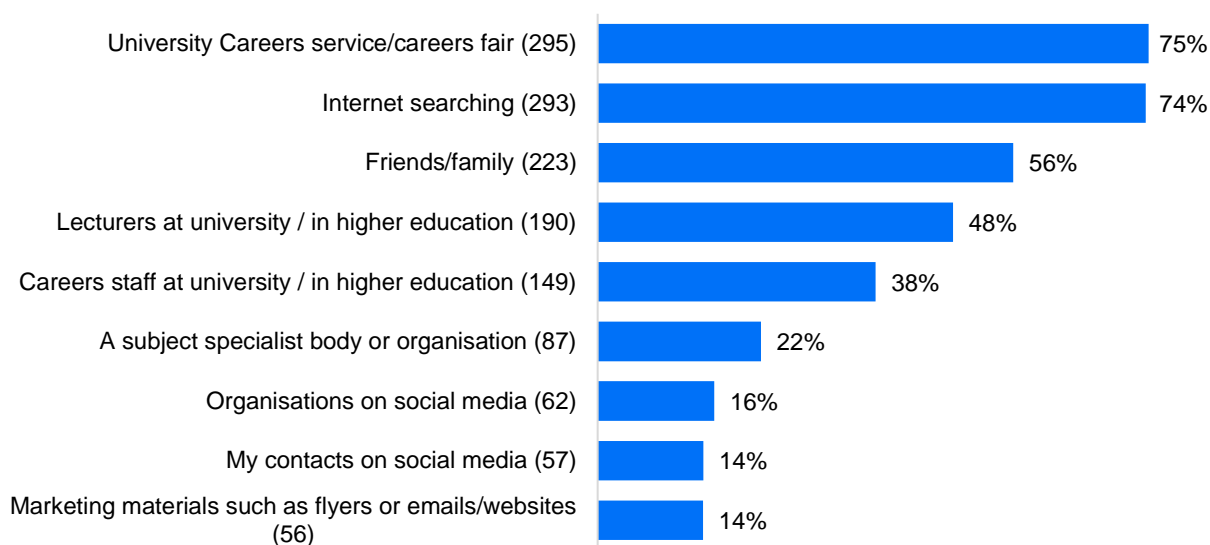
Figure 2: Where did you hear about this programme? (n=196)



Source: Pre-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

Participants in the comparator survey were asked about the sources they have used to find information about future career opportunities. As shown in Figure 3 below, three-quarters of participants use either their university careers service (75%) or the internet (74%). This indicates that the marketing approach of using university career services for the Talent to Teach programme has been paramount in its' successful uptake since this is the primary source of gaining career information. However, there are further opportunities to improve the reach of the programme by promoting via career websites. In addition, half of the participants (48%) specified that they gain career information from lecturers. It may be beneficial to raise awareness of the programme among lecturers, in particular those in faculties where uptake was lower as discussed earlier.

Figure 3: Which, if any, of the following sources have you used to find information about career opportunities? (n=398)

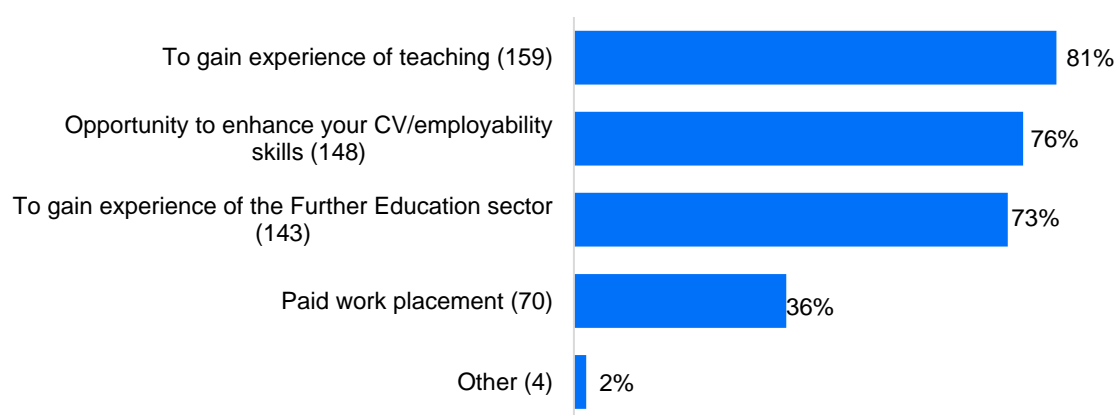


Source: Comparator Survey (n=398)

2.2.2 Motivations to apply

As can be seen from Figure 4, the most influential factors that motivated participants to apply for the programme included: the opportunity to gain experience of teaching before committing to it as a career (81%, n=159), the opportunity to enhance CV with employability skills (76%, n=148) and the chance to gain experience of the FE sector (73%, n=143). The bursary payment was a motivating factor for just over a third of the participants (36%, n=170), suggesting that although the payment is an incentive, the experience of teaching may be a more of a significant motivating factor for participants.

Figure 4: Motivations for applying to complete the programme (n=196)

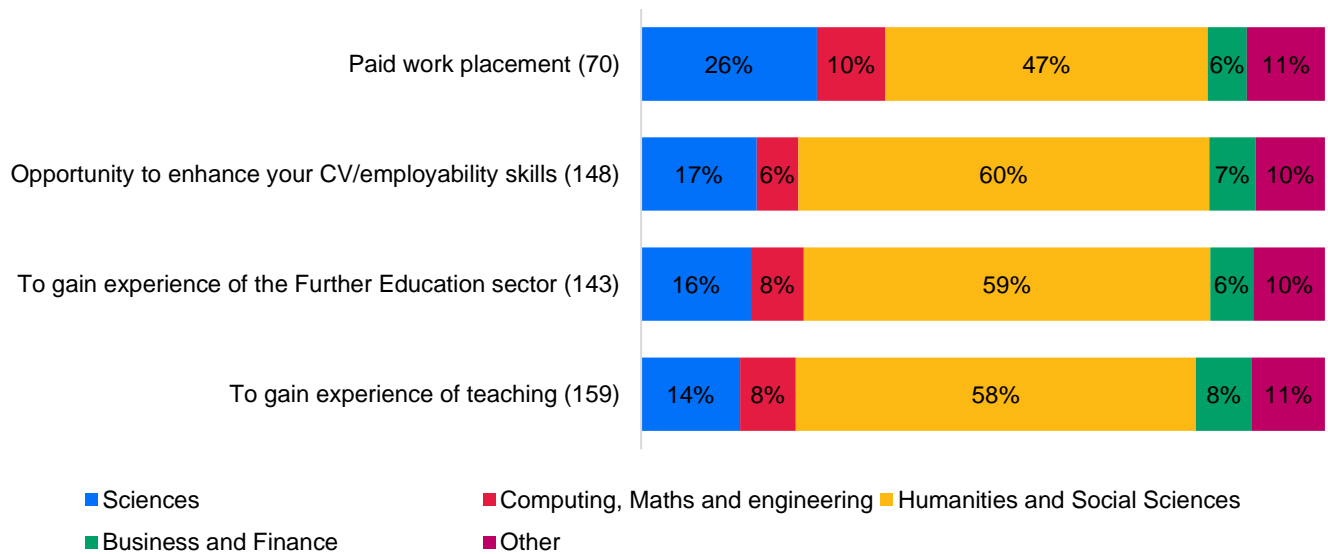


Source: Pre-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

However, for those participants who were completing a sciences or computing, maths and engineering degree, they were more likely to be motivated by the bursary that was attached to the placement, (26% and 10% respectively, Figure 5). That said, 83% of those completing a science degree reported that they were completing the placements to make a decision about their career,

suggesting the bursary was not the sole attraction.³

Figure 5: Motivations for applying to complete the programme by degree subject area



Source: Pre-programme survey of all participants completed placement

Both survey and interview responses illustrated that, for most placement participants, their main motivation in enrolling on the programme was to gain experience of working in the education sector. There were three main benefits discussed regarding gaining practical experience. Firstly, some participants said they were interested in a career in the teaching profession, but not sure at which level. They saw this programme as an opportunity to experience FE to help them decide whether to go into this sector, or to consider primary or secondary sectors.

“I’ve always known that I wanted to be a teacher and I thought I knew that I wanted to teach at secondary schools, but I thought I might as well give it a go and do further education and then primary school, so then I know for sure what I want to do.”

(Student, FE College)

Secondly, interview responses illustrated that, for participants, a valuable aspect of the opportunity to ‘try’ teaching before committing was the chance to gain insights and answers to their questions from the experience. This suggests that participants were particularly interested in hearing about the experiences of other teachers, as well as gaining direct FE experience themselves. For example, some participants explained that teaching is one of many career options they were considering, and that this programme would provide clarity and thus help them to make a decision regarding their future.

“I hoped this placement would help me to decide if I want to work with students and help them to decide what career they want to do in the future or whether I would rather go into the business and work with people on their self-development, well-being at work. So, that’s, kind of, getting an insight.”

(Student, Independent training provider)

³ Please see chart in appendix 2 (Figure a)

Lastly, interviewees recognised that practical experience was a necessity since many employers request this to be demonstrated. As demonstrated in the quote below, one participant felt by partaking in the placement it would enable them draw upon experiences during future job interviews, highlighting their commitment to the career. In doing so, the programme offers participants an unique opportunity to strengthen their application forms, increasing the likelihood of obtaining paid teaching positions.

“I thought that perhaps that would be useful in terms of demonstrating if I was going for employment at the conclusion of the degree, to say that actually, I've actually had a familiarisation session or I've had a placement and seen what it's like. So, I can tell you that my interest is there and genuine because of the fact that I've actually been and experienced it.”

(Student, FE College)

There were a few participants that reported they had not thought about a teaching career prior to hearing about the Talent to Teach programme. However, the placement presented an opportunity to find out about teaching, particularly within the FE context and whether it would be a viable career option for them. This illustrates that the programme has scope to influence prospective participants that have not previously considered a teaching career, by allowing them to make an informed decision based on first-hand experiences about pursuing a teaching career in FE.

“I hadn't really thought about going in to teaching, so when this opportunity arose, I thought I might as well see what teaching's all about and see whether it may be a potential career path for me.”

(Student, FE College)

On the contrary, for several participants, particularly younger ones, their reasons for applying were not inherently linked to any detailed considerations about their personal or professional development nor ambitions for their future career path. Rather they applied in order to benefit from a 'new experience' that was fully paid for or because it was recommended by their friends. This is unsurprising given that many placements are undertaken by young people who have not necessarily had the time or opportunity to consider their longer-term career plans.

Qualitative interviews also corroborated the survey findings in relation to attitudes towards the bursary. For some participants, the available bursary was an important factor in helping them to decide to enrol on the programme. The main reason behind this is that participants were either in employment or seeking employment to support their studies. Consequently, spending time to complete the programme would come at a cost if financial support was not available. For others, who were unsure whether to apply to the programme, the bursary acted as a successful incentive.

“If it wasn't there, potentially, I might not have actually done it as well, because that would've meant five days with no income whatsoever, certainly taking up, say, two to three weeks of my time, as well as the lectures.”

(Student, FE College)

2.3 Provider Involvement

Typically, all providers stated that they were approached by Cognition to take part in the programme and senior leaders made the decision about whether institutions would have the capacity to be involved.

2.3.1 Motivations for hosting placements

Providers expressed two main motivations for hosting placements with the Talent to Teach programme. The first reason was because the programme principles were in line with their organisation's ethos and broader approaches to providing practical learning opportunities for students. As vocational colleges, these providers highly value practical opportunities that help build young people's skills and recognise the importance of work experience since they work with local employers to seek similar prospects for their students. Therefore, they felt it was important to lead by example, and offer university students an opportunity to gain workplace experience.

"Not only do we want people to invest in our students and go out to work experience but we are also those people that say, we open our doors if you would like to see a typical day to day setting and how this works and what we do. That is why we got involved."

(Senior Leader, FE College)

"Whether they are on a study programme or a traineeship, whatever the vocational pathway, childcare, generic, mechanics, roofing, cladding. I think it is invaluable when you have worked and you realise the value of work experience."

(Senior Leader, FE College)

The second main motivation related to provider's desire raise the profile of FE and support workforce development to help address and overcome current challenges that they face when recruiting and retaining teachers. Typically, providers felt the Talent to Teach programme provides an opportunity to build interest in the FE sector and subsequently, increase the potential teaching capacity. For one provider, by expanding their network with prospective teachers, they stressed that these students may possibly do future placements at the college as part of their course and go on to actively seek teaching positions. Another education provider indicated that the programme gives placement participants insight into what the college offers in terms of further training and career progression. As a result, they are at an advantage to occupy positions since they are familiar with the college.

"I'm always looking for new talent to come into teaching. So, when I heard about the programme, I was, like, that will be good, because if they're local to us and thinking about going on to do a PGCE, they might then come to us for a placement so this might give me an in-road."

(Mentor, FE College)

"We have job vacancies become available, if we've had successful student placements with us then they are at a better position, they know the college, they know our types of learners. They're in a better position there to fill in the vacancies."

(Mentor, FE College)

2.3.2 Provider preparation

Overall, providers reported that they did not need to prepare extensively to host Talent to Teach placements since they were familiar with the process by working with employers and in many instances they delivered teacher training. Two education providers stated that they had most of the infrastructure and arrangements in place from similar teacher training placements.

“We were well prepared because of our background in teacher training. We’re used to people coming in, having no background in teacher training, and placing them in departments across the college. We have mentors who have undertaken mentor training”.

(Senior Lead, FE College)

Typically providers were positive about the support they received from Cognition. Some providers reported that, while they did not have regular communication with Cognition during their preparation to deliver placements, they did find that Cognition were responsive and helpful when contacted for help.

That said, Cognition recognised from the pilot and previous iterations of the programme that issues and dissatisfaction are likely to increase when placements are unorganised and have a lack of structured timetable. Therefore, in the Talent to Teach placement guide, designed by Cognition and shared with all providers, a request was made to submit a ‘work placement timetable’ to Cognition prior to placements commencing. However, information about students was not often shared with providers in a timely manner. For instance, one provider reported only receiving the information a couple of days before placements were due to begin.

Although providers received information about degree choice and availability of students, there were two aspects that made it difficult when arranging suitable timetables for students.

- A combination of students being unavailable on some days because of their university commitments along with the availability of host teachers being limited – some because of non-teaching commitments, such as marking and lesson planning, and others because of staff shortages at their organisation.
- Students changing their availability upon starting the placement did not give providers enough notice to amend their timetable to plan their placement.

“Staff have got the desk duty time where they can catch up on the marking, planning etc. So, logistically it’s difficult depending on the days that they want and what subjects they’re interested in because we obviously only run certain subjects on certain days of the week.”

(Mentor, FE College)

“It can be quite a challenge if we’ve got set days of when the student placements can come in and it might be a day, for example Wednesday we’ve probably got the fewest lessons taking place at the college because our Wednesday afternoon staff development team meeting slots.”

(Mentor, FE College)

Therefore, some providers found it challenging to ensure their placement offer to students provided the most relevant experience since they lacked sufficient information about the participants to effectively arrange their timetable. They would like to receive information that includes participants’ availability, what interests them, what they want to get out of the placement, and if they have any particular support needs such as dyslexia. One senior leader said that knowing a bit more detail about how they would prefer to work would help ensure participants were gaining the most from their experience.

2.4 Chapter key findings

- The main motivation among participants to apply for the programme was to gain experience of working in the education sector. The programme is key for providing participants an opportunity to experience the FE sector and make an informed decision about their future career pathways.
- The core principals of the programme raising awareness of teaching within FE with the added benefit of some participants returning to their placement provider to complete a teaching qualification and/or to teach were key motivating factors for providers hosting placements.
- The programme on the whole was praised for its' ease of implementation among providers whom are familiar with placements due to working with employers for vocational courses or delivering teacher training placements.

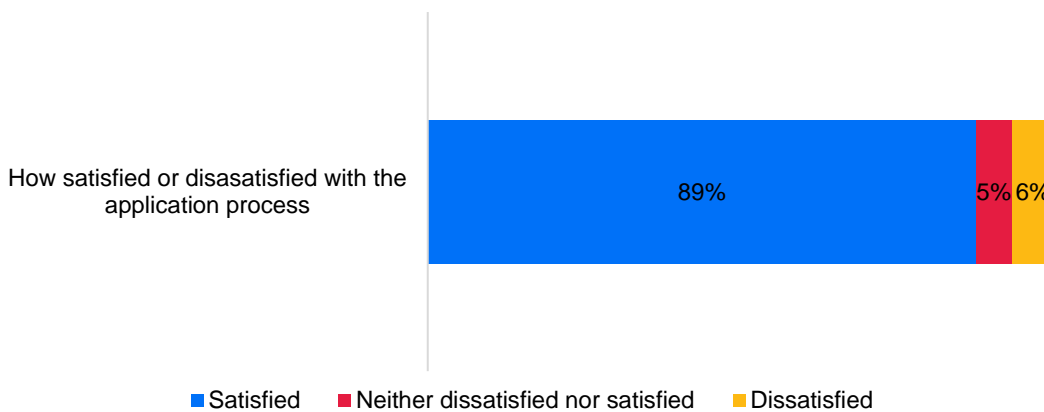
3 EFFECTIVENESS AND EXPERIENCES OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

This chapter examines the delivery of various aspects of the programme, including the design and structure of the placements. It draws on findings from the surveys and qualitative interviews conducted as part of the case studies.

3.1 Application process

Prospective placement students were required to complete an application form that covered questions seeking personal details, course and training provider information, social demographics, where prospective applications would like to complete their placement and motivations for applying. As shown in Figure 6, nearly nine-tenths (89%) of participants were satisfied with the application process, with only 6% who were dissatisfied.

Figure 6: Satisfaction with the application process (n=196)



Source: Post-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

Qualitative findings support these findings. Most participants spoke favourably about their experiences of applying to join the Talent to Teach programme. Interviewees felt the process was simple and straightforward making it clear and easy to understand. Furthermore, participants stated that the process was quick, with most of them receiving communication and confirmation about their placements from Cognition within a few days of submitting their forms, while a few said it took at most a fortnight.

“It was very clear and very straightforward. Sometimes you get application forms and they're so repetitive, and you think 'my goodness, I've just written that 5 times'. This was ever so clear.”

(Student, Independent training provider)

Some participants were surprised with how quick and easy the application process was, particularly because the placement came with a bursary, they expected the process to be far more complex. Some staff members suggested that the placement could offer a more enhanced and developed experience of working in FE by incorporating an interview as part of the application and preparation process. This would help ensure applicants genuinely wanted work experience and help sift those that were only motivated by the prospect of receiving a bursary. There were some inconsistencies reported in how placements hosts were selected for successful applicants. Those participants who had the opportunity to discuss their preferences of where they would like to complete their

placements and their availability with Cognition, were more likely to be satisfied with the application process since the arrangements met their needs.

However, for a minority of participants this was not the case and they indicated that they were either allocated an organisation or they were not consulted beyond their application about where they would like to go. One participant explained that they received an e-mail with details about the host organisation and the time when the placement would take place. There was no discussion about alternative locations or time. These few participants felt that the programme could have benefitted from some flexibility and understanding of the pressures of completing an undergraduate or postgraduate degree.

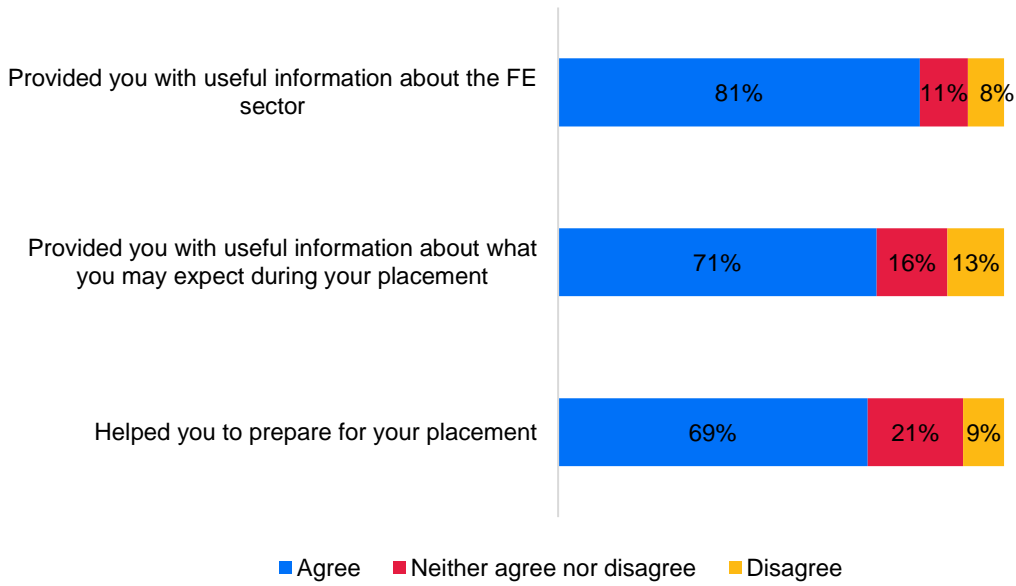
While the overall experience of the application process was overwhelmingly positive for participants, there were some elements of the process that participants felt could be improved. The few improvements reported were:

- To ensure participants are made aware that the placement experience may not be able to offer shadowing or teaching opportunities in the subject the participant has expressed an interest in.
- The process could be made more robust by ensuring DBS checks are offered which would mirror job applications in this type of sector.
- More information about the type of organisations that were offering placements.

3.2 Pre-placement information session

Prior to starting the placement Cognition offered all successful applicants a pre-placement information session via a webinar. This change was introduced from learning from previous cohorts reporting varied experiences of inductions, with some providers offering them whilst others adopting a less rigid approach. Therefore, the purpose of the pre-placement information session was to provide all participants an overview of the FE sector, the importance of safeguarding, the types of activities that may be offered during their placement and expectations and commitment required from the participants. Figure 7 below, shows typically most respondents found the session informative and insightful with 80% agreeing the session provided useful information about the FE sector and almost three-quarters (71%) agreeing that the session provided useful information about expectations of the placement indicating the session met its' objectives.

Figure 7: Attitudes towards the pre-placement information session (n=196)



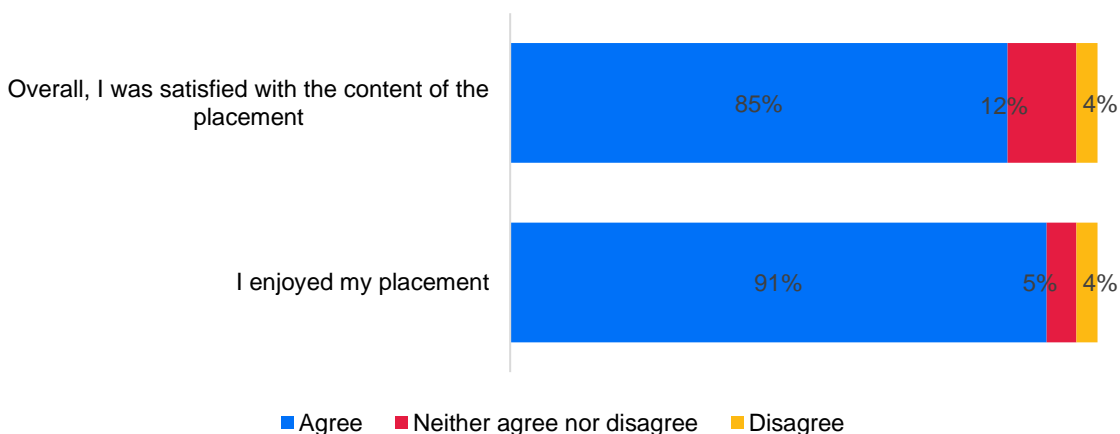
Source: Pre-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

Nearly a third of respondents (30%) disagreed or neither agreed or disagreed that the information session prepared them for their placement. Qualitative findings indicate that this may be due to the lack of placement specific information. That said, the intention of the pre-placement was not to offer individualised information but rather ensure all participants were provided with an overview of the purpose and programme elements. For example, an interviewee from the delivery partner indicated in previous cohorts it was time consuming to call each participant prior to their placement to answer any questions. The new approach was therefore, said to be an efficient way to provide all participants with consistent information and answers to frequently asked questions that were generated through delivering placements with previous cohorts.

3.3 Overall experience

Overall, most participants reported a positive placement experience, with nine-tenths (91%) stating they enjoyed their placement and over four-fifths (85%) indicating they were satisfied with the content of the placement (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Overall experience of the placement (n=196)



Source: Post-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

Interviews with participants indicated that the overall positive experience of the placement was due to the collaborative approach providers took when designing and offering placements. The majority of participants and staff from provider organisations said that they worked together to design placements. College staff explained further that ongoing conversations were held between the mentor and participant, which helped to focus and tailor the experience, to ensure placement activities met the expectations of participants. This often involved mentors and teachers advising participants what they could do and what would be useful for them to experience.

“It’s a good thing for the mentors and the mentees to actually decide what each wants. To keep it open to interpretation because I think that’s the beauty of it that it can actually comprise everything that the life of an FE teacher involves. We have a lot of issues with student well-being, mental health, all of the additional, kind of, accidental outcomes of this that aren’t academic at all. You know, getting to know students”.

(Senior Lead, FE College)

Additionally, this approach was particularly crucial for young participants who often have not previously worked in a professional setting and needed some time to settle in. As a result, participants reported staff were attentive which made them feel comfortable.

“When they first come they might be a little bit shy and a bit apprehensive to take ownership of their learning but once they have been here for a couple of days or whatever, once they have got to know the team, they normally tend to come out of the shell.”

(Senior Lead, Independent training provider)

Unsurprisingly then, for the minority (4%) who reported that they did not enjoy the placement or that they were not satisfied with the content indicated three main reasons:

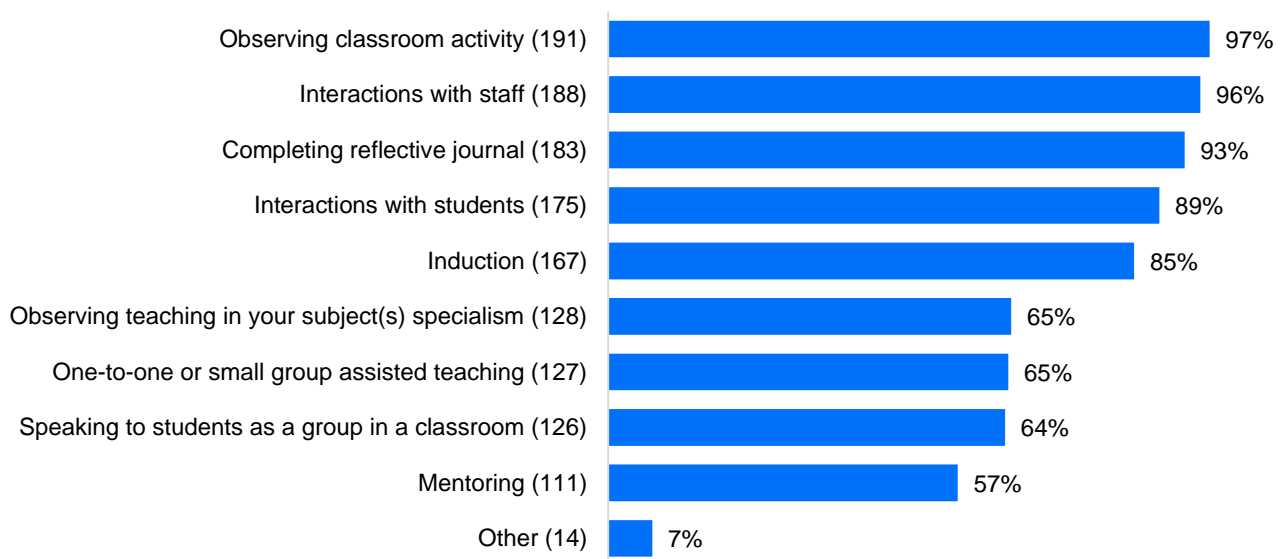
- The placement took place at the end of term or during exam period which resulted in a lack of varied experience, in particular no opportunity to observe lessons.
- The mentors and lessons observed did not match the interest of participants and therefore, they felt the experience was not applicable to the subject they were potentially interested in teaching.
- The placement was not very organised and participants felt it was burdensome for teachers to work with them.

3.4 Perceptions of design and delivery of placements

While overall experiences of the Talent to Teach placements were overwhelmingly positive, several factors relating to the way in which placements were organised contributed to varying viewpoints. In turn participants’ experiences influenced their perceptions of their placement’s value in helping them make a decision about their careers and their overall experience of FE. This section considers the various activities participants were offered and how these affected participants’ experiences.

3.4.1 Activities offered

Figure 9: Activities offered during placement (n=196)



Source: Post-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

The design of placements varied from provider to provider and included a range of different activities dependent on capacity to provide these activities and the way in which they were designed. As discussed earlier, some providers adopted a collaborative approach offered choice to students whilst others offered a more rigid placement structure. Almost all participants were offered the following three activities:

- Observing classroom activity (97%)
- Interaction with staff (96%)
- Completing a reflective journal (93%)

Qualitative interviews support these findings. Classroom observations was a prominent feature of the Talent to Teach placements among all seven case study providers. This mostly involved participants sitting-in on various subject classes with different teachers. Participants stated that this helped them to sample a range of teaching and learning styles – something that was encouraged by teaching staff.

“I would suggest (to the placement participant) you follow the students on one day, and a lecturer on the other, because then you will get to go to English and Maths with the group, and see maybe a tutorial, then you can see the difference in how the students are trained as well in teaching it.”

(Mentor, FE College)

Some placement participants were offered opportunities to teach if they felt comfortable doing so. The opportunities to teach in the classroom ranged from giving short presentations and taking a lead on class discussions, to leading a lesson with assistance from the class teacher. This range was dependent on the confidence levels, experiences, and subject knowledge of the participant. Participants praised staff who closely supported them if they chose to teach.

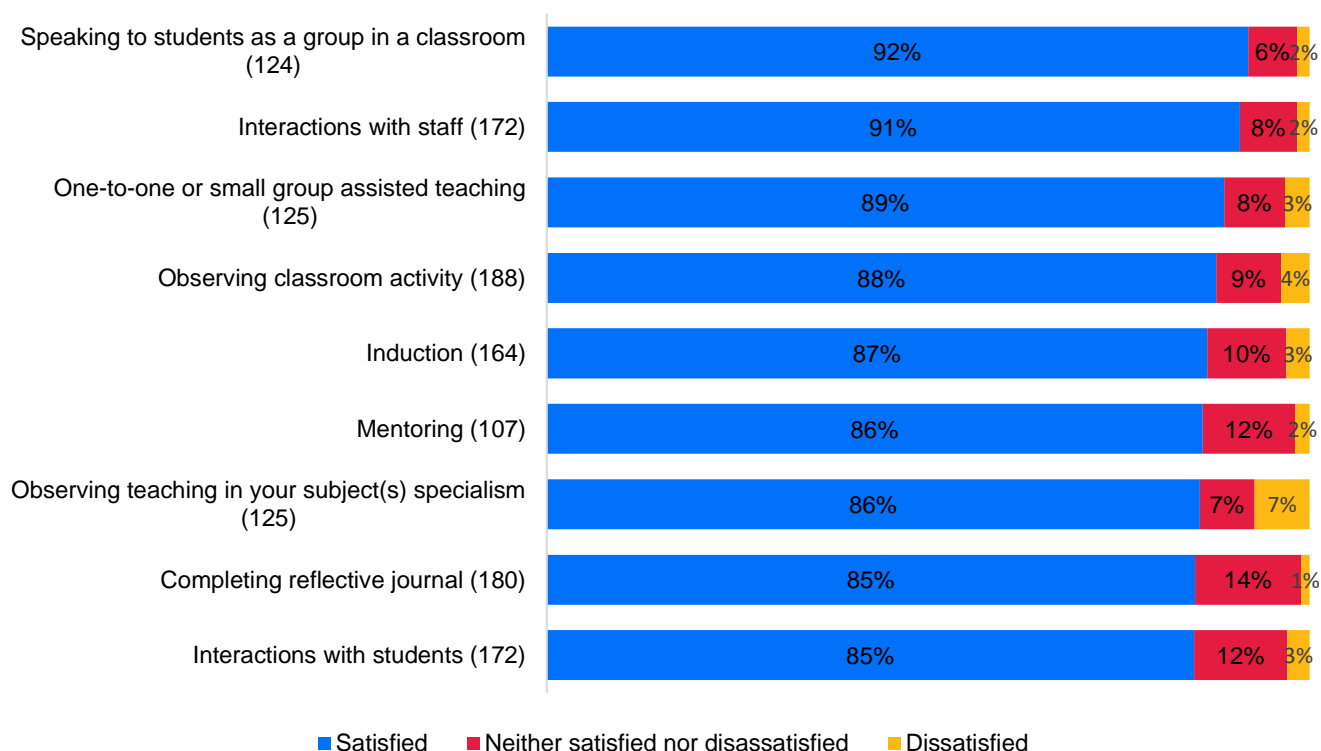
“Thursday and Friday, I led a few groups myself. Obviously, I spoke to the teacher first and he asked if I was comfortable to do it. I was handed some material and presented that. It was a natural flow. You’ve had your 3 days where you see how it works, what the communication types are like. Then you’re given the chance to apply yourself. I never felt pressured to do it. Everybody was there to help. They’ve got a really good system there. I’m quite impressed.”

(Student, FE College)

It is important to note, all providers were advised to provide a named mentor to the student who would ask as the link for the placement, be the key point of contact and provide support and guidance as appropriate. However, two-fifths (43%) reported that they did not have a mentor during their placement.

3.4.2 Satisfaction of activities

Figure 10: How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the following elements of the Talent to Teach programme? (n=196)



Source: Post-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

Although, speaking to students as a group in a classroom (64%) and one-to-one or small group assisted teaching (65%) was offered to nearly two thirds of placement participants, they were activities that participants were highly satisfied with. For example, as shown in Figure 10, nine-tenths (92% and 89% respectively) reported being satisfied. Interviews with participants indicated that the overall positive attitude towards these activities was due to undertaking activities that gave them the opportunity to feel like teachers. Interviewees felt welcomed, supported and integrated into their placement providers.

“I particularly enjoyed the one on one interaction I had with students, learning about what they find difficult and teaching it to them. Mathematics was a specific aspect of my placement that heavily related to my own education and therefore something I was very passionate teaching.”

(Student FE College)

Furthermore, participants also suggested that it was important for them to experience the daily routine of teachers since it gave them insight into what the role involves and helped to make decisions regarding their own interest in FE and teaching careers. In particular, participants valued the opportunity to join staff meetings, interact with staff in the staff room and observe non-teaching responsibilities. With these activities combined, they felt that the experience provided a well-rounded overview of working in the FE sector, since many roles exist outside of teaching.

“It was very comprehensive, because I was lucky enough to do a week with the head of department for law, which meant that I had a lot of exposure, not only teaching-wise, but behind the scenes, as well, of how everything’s run, what kind of queries you get from college students.”

(Student, FE College)

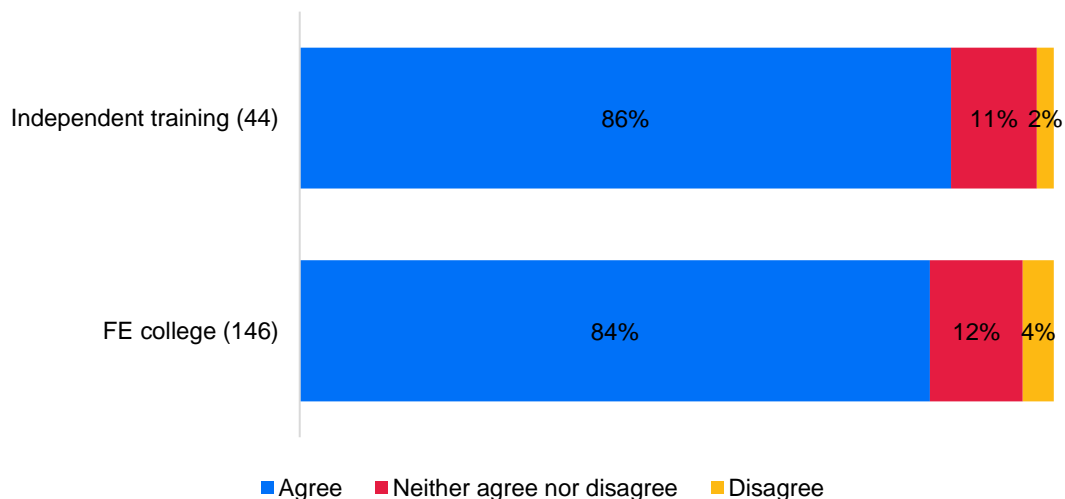
Additionally, some participants also indicated they enjoyed interacting with students and found it rewarding when they were able to ensure students understood small parts of the curriculum that they previously found challenging. Participants discussed that they had preconceived perceptions about teaching older students as opposed to primary and secondary education, and the opportunity allowed them make decisions about their future.

“I particularly enjoyed the one on one interaction I had with students, learning about what they find difficult and teaching it to them. Mathematics was a specific aspect of my placement that heavily related to my own education and therefore something I was very passionate teaching.”

(Student, FE College)

In some cases, experiences and exposure to certain activities also varied by provider type. While, one-to-one or small group assisted teaching was highly valued among programme participants (89%, Figure 10), it was only offered to over half of those who completed their placements at a general further education college (57%). Comparably, it was offered to nine-tenths (91%) of those who completed their placements at an independent training provider (see appendix 2, Figure b). Despite participants being offered different activities, there was minimal difference in the placement meeting participants’ needs or satisfaction. For example, as shown in Figure 11, over 8 in 10 participants who either completed their placement at an independent provider or FE college indicated they were satisfied with the content of the placement (86% and 84% respectively).

Figure 11: Satisfaction with the content of placement by provider type where placements were undertaken



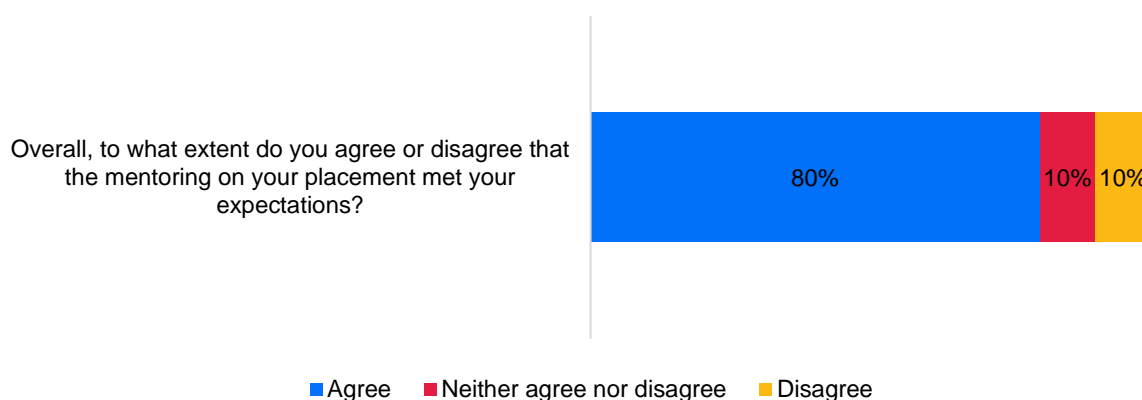
Source: Post-programme survey of all participants completed placement

While, the overall satisfaction among placements participants was high, lower satisfaction was typically linked to poor organisation of placements. Some common features reported were:

- Unclear purpose and structure of placements (23%)
- Lack of varied experience, including limited direct teaching experience offered (23%)
- Placements were misaligned to the academic year (12%)
- Placement experience was not linked to specialist subject area (8%)

3.4.3 Mentoring

Figure 12: Attitudes towards mentoring (n=196)



Source: Post-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

As part of the programme, Cognition shared a provider mentor guide and handbook with all providers. The guidance informed prospective mentors that they will play a critical role in the success of the programme, by acting as the key contact, and providing the right level of support and guidance to individual graduates who are placed in their organisation. While the nature of the

support provided was not prescriptive, Cognition outlined the types of support mentors could offer. These included:

- Helping graduates to reflect on their practice and to consider ways in which it relates to their higher education;
- Challenging graduates to explore and examine their own understanding and knowledge;
- Bringing graduates together as a group (where there are two or more placements) for induction; reflection; peer to peer learning; and other group activities as appropriate;
- Acting as a facilitator to ensure that graduates get opportunities to carry out specific tasks or to organise additional activities as required;
- Providing encouragement, acting as a sounding board and supporting when the going gets tough;
- Raising graduates' aspirations;
- Being available, where appropriate and relevant, to discuss or clarify issues with provider staff.

Despite, two-fifths (43%) reporting that they did not have a mentor during their placement (Figure 9), four-fifths (80%) of placement students reported that the mentoring they received during their placement met their expectations (Figure 12). Qualitative findings illustrate that mentors were a highly valued component of their placement and for many dictated their overall experience. To ensure participants are gaining the most out of the placement experience, it may help to make mentors mandatory.

Learner interviewees indicated mentor support was indispensable for three key reasons. Firstly, the most valuable element of the mentoring was generally reported to be the coaching. Most participants reported that they highly appreciated receiving one-to-one pastoral support which provided a 'safe space' to seek advice regarding a career in FE. The support enabled these learners to develop their knowledge on the various options available to pursue a career in FE influencing their capability to explore which route is the most appropriate for them.

"I really enjoyed the mentoring part of the placement as I feel as though my mentor was able to give me advice and guide me in FE as a career choice in the future. She provided me with loads of useful information on teaching in FE and the options available after my studies and provided me with PowerPoint presentations on teaching tips and lessons plans which I found really helpful."

(Student, FE College)

Secondly, some interviewees praised their mentors ability to facilitate teaching activities for them, for example providing the opportunity to micro teach learners. As discussed earlier, this was a pivotal aspect of ensuring learners gained a realistic experience of working in FE. As demonstrated in the quote below, some mentors shared resources and techniques which allowed learners to familiarise themselves with the entirety of teaching, namely planning alongside delivery.

“My mentors trusted me enough to let me offer one-to-one assistance right from the beginning of the placement. They were very supportive whilst keen to share teaching tools, techniques and approaches with me.”

(Student, FE College)

Lastly, interviewees typically valued having a consistent member of staff during the placement that made them feel welcomed, supported and relaxed in what was perceived as a daunting experience for those immersing themselves in a professional arena for the first time. Mentors were well-regarded for their attentive manner and helping to ensure the placement was well-structured and organised.

A small minority (10%) said mentoring did not meet their expectations. Their main suggestions to improve the experience were to ensure a mentor was present during the placement and that mentors were fully briefed as to the purpose and aims of Talent to Teach. The minority also felt that enthusiasm for mentoring was also necessary amongst those chosen for the role.

3.5 Recommended improvements

As illustrated in this chapter, overall experiences and satisfaction of the Talent to Teach placements were high among the majority of participants. The organisation and structure of a placement was central to its success and there were limited instances of dissatisfaction stemming from deficiencies in organisation. Unsurprisingly then, the four key improvements outlined by participants relate to refining how placements are organised in the future and are in line with reasons for dissatisfaction among a minority of participants that were listed earlier in the report. These in turn will be discussed below.

1. Structure

Just over one in five (23%) asked for a clearer structure, such as a specific programme timetable to work towards. A few participants also felt their relationship with mentors would have benefitted from a little more preparation from providers. A further one in ten (10%) believed that more detailed information prior to starting the placement would allow them to prepare themselves and understand what was expected of them, improving the overall structure of the placement experience.

2. Timing of the placement

15% of participants indicated placements that were adjacent to academic holidays could limit opportunities to interact with students and this distances participants from gaining a true experience of working in FE. A few students felt they would have got more out of the placement if it were at an earlier point in the academic year, as they did not see as much teaching as they completed their placement when assessments were happening. These students had placements in Dec 2019.

3. Limited opportunity to teach students

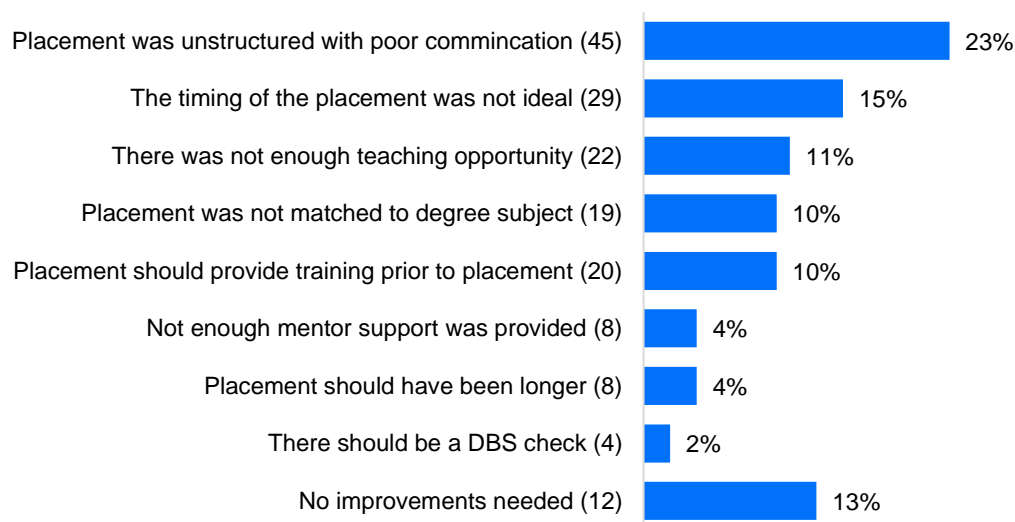
One in ten (11%) of placement students called for more opportunities for practical experiences of teaching. For the few who wanted to try teaching but could not, they viewed

such experience as central to making an informed decision about teaching.

4. Lack of specialist subject experience

One in ten (10%) think there should be an element of matching students to subject areas they might be interested in teaching. While most acknowledge that they still got something from the experience the belief is that it would have been more fulfilling if some of the teaching they observed was in a subject closer to their degree subject.

Figure 13: How could we improve future placements? (n=196)



Source: Post-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

3.6 Chapter key findings

- Most participants spoke favourably about their experiences of applying to join the Talent to Teach programme. Interviewees felt the process was simple and straightforward making it clear and easy to understand. Those participants who had the opportunity to discuss their preferences of where they would like to complete their placements and their availability with Cognition, were more likely to be satisfied with the application process since the arrangements met their needs.
- Overall experiences and satisfaction of the Talent to Teach placements were high among the majority of participants. The organisation and structure of a placement was central to its success and there were limited instances of dissatisfaction stemming from deficiencies in organisation.
- Participants were highly satisfied with activities that provided an opportunity to feel and gain first-hand experience of teaching, for example speaking to students as a group in a classroom (92%) and one-to-one or small group assisted teaching (89%). This was pivotal in helping learners make a decision about their future career in FE.
- Four key improvements were raised by a minority of participants all relating to improving the organisation and enhancing the experience of placements. These were to ensure placements were well-structured, with a timetable in place, ensuring placements were offered during term time where teaching can be observed, opening opportunities to micro-teach

students and tailoring activities in line with students' specialist subject area.

4 BENEFITS AND IMPACTS OF THE TALENT TO TEACH PROGRAMME

This chapter provides an overview of the benefits, outcomes and emerging impact of the programme on participants and host providers, against the expectations set out in the theoretical framework. The analysis presented in this chapter was informed by the COM-B model as a theoretical lens to interpret the thematic framework analysis, in terms of capability, opportunity and motivation for participant behaviour change, including attitudinal factors.

4.1 Organisational Impact

During the case study visits, interviews with senior leaders and staff at host provider organisations described various benefits and positive impacts of being involved in the programme. This section will provide an overview of the benefits at an organisational level, but also for staff and students at the providers. It is important to note there were no differences reported in impacts and benefits between FE providers and independent training providers.

A number of providers discussed the value of the programme for workforce planning and for assessing the capabilities of potential future teachers via the placements. The host education providers anticipated offering these types of placements will help to develop the wider further education sector workforce. Offering work experience helped colleges gauge likely local candidates for future teacher training programmes, and build rapport that is likely to be beneficial in the future.

“I ask the mentors to give them opportunities to show their skills. Those contacts between the project participants and the mentors are very important because when jobs come up, and they do frequently come up, you know, we want to have people that show promise and that we’ve made connections with.”

(Senior Lead, FE College)

Some interviewees testified that placement students were very helpful in lessons. Some teachers benefited from placement participants as they offered fresh ideas, new approaches to teaching and ideas about sharing resources. In return, staff were able to reflect on their practice and develop their attitudes towards teaching. Inherently, this is helpful in not only developing teachers’ skillset but also helps to engage learners with a novel teaching approach.

“Sometimes they come up with ideas as well, that you haven't thought of before, and because you're doing it, day-in, day-out, it can get a little bit like, 'What else can I do to make this a little bit more Interesting?' They would come with ideas as well, like, 'Ah, do you think-, ' or they might say, 'I've used this before,' or, 'from my personal experience, in my degree or whatever, I've used this,' and it's good, because they actually share resources with you that you think, 'oh, how come I haven't come across that before?'.”

(Senior Lead, Independent training provider)

Additionally, the process and experience of delivering placements helped mentors develop their own skills. In particular, they were able to enhance their pastoral skills, offer career advice to students and do independent research to answer any queries placement students had regarding a career in the FE sector.

“Because the mentors get to practice their skills in a short space of time and they also, you know, can work with somebody who maybe brings out other skills in them such as pastoral care.”

(Senior Lead, FE College)

Most staff members from colleges said that placement participants helped enhance the learning environment for their pupils in many ways. One senior leader said that their participant was a positive role model to students. It helped students to start thinking about what careers they could go into. Some college staff noticed a positive effect on the concentration levels of their pupils when a placement participant was in their class. In part this was explained as student getting more support with their learning. This support has come in different forms.

“They have been able to offer different levels of support for different students. Some of them have played more of an active role, like sitting with students. One of them, she jumped straight in. She wanted to do sessions and stuff with them. So she did energizers, she did little micro-teach sessions and things like that.”

(Senior Lead, Independent training provider)

4.2 Impacts for Students

4.2.1 Overall impact

The overall positive experience of the Talent to Teach programme among participants strongly contributes to the positive impact of the programme. Chapter 2 highlighted the most prominent motivation among learners to complete the placement was having the opportunity to gain experience of teaching before committing to it as a career (81%, n=159).

Over 8 in 10 (85%) participants felt the placement met their needs compared to one in 20 (5%) who disagreed⁴. As such, the majority of participants were satisfied that the experience enabled them to gain a realistic teaching experience contributing to their capability to make a decision about their career. Therefore, the placement was pivotal in enhancing knowledge and providing an experience that effectively challenges participants’ beliefs, capabilities and intentions towards teaching in FE.

The evidence derived from the qualitative interviews with participants supports these findings. The majority of interviewees reported the programme provided a valuable insight into the genuine experience of teaching in FE. Placements that were well-structured and incorporated diverse activities with both teaching (e.g. observation and micro-teaching) and non-teaching (e.g. attending staff meetings) exposure were reported as most beneficial in eliciting meaningful professional experiences in FE. In return, this increased the motivation among some participants, by reinforcing beliefs, capabilities and optimism to pursue a career in teaching.

“The thing I got most out of it was being able to talk to people. Teachers, workers, they were all very forthcoming, honest about the good and the bad about working there and why they do it and getting into the nitty-gritty and some of the details.”

(Student, FE College)

⁴ The remainder selected neither agree nor disagree

Alongside gaining first-hand teaching experience in FE, students were typically able to gain career knowledge and learn about teaching in more detail, including a range of teaching styles, approaches to planning lessons and subject areas. In doing so, students increased their knowledge and enhanced their teaching skillset contributing to raising their capabilities of becoming a teacher in FE.

“I think she's really appreciated the difference, seeing different styles, I've got teachers in their 20s and in their 50s and 60s. I've got lecturers who have doctorates, masters, degree plus PGCE. I've got a 30-year background in business, and she said she appreciated seeing all the different styles of teachings and experience of people bring in to the classroom, because we do take teaching from a very experiential perspective.”

(Mentor, FE College)

Senior leaders and teaching staff also recognised that the opportunity to try teaching before committing to a teacher trainee course was rare. They have witnessed appreciation among students and the rapport built with FE providers will help them to gain trainee opportunities in the future should they wish to go down this route.

“If she were to sign up to our PGCE, I look at her as a very strong candidate. She got a nice temperament and I'm sure would fit in. One of the benefits is forging a relationship with an institution who may well offer you a placement, because a good placement is gold dust.”

(Mentor, FE College)

To summarise, the overall benefits and outcomes for placement students discussed were:

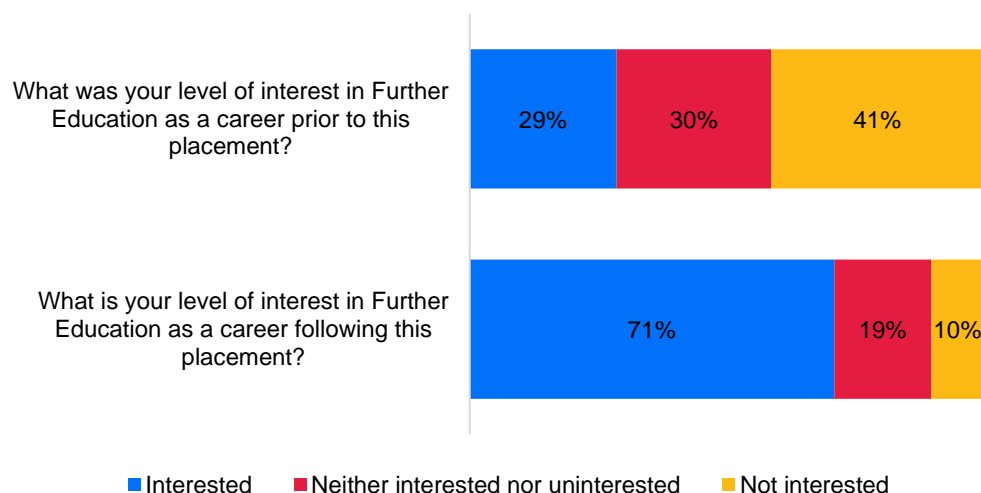
- Learning about teaching in FE;
- Gaining career knowledge, particularly the routes;
- Experience of working in a professional setting and building skills to behave appropriately;
- Communication, networking and building rapport with college contacts.

A minority of respondents (15%), did not agree that the placement met their needs. Qualitative findings indicate this was the case when placements were disorganised, offered a limited number of activities and/or lacked a sense of purpose and structure.

However staff reported dissatisfied with the placement was not due to a lack of opportunities, but their lack of presence and involvement in activities. Some staff indicated that students did not commit to the days they agreed on during the application process, or have a desire to get actively involved in teaching. Therefore, a few members of staff felt the onus was on students to engage and immerse themselves in the FE setting, particularly by stepping out of their comfort zone to gain the most out of the experience.

4.2.2 Interest in FE teaching

Figure 14: What was your level of interest in FE as a career prior and following the placement? (n=196)



Source: Post-programme survey of all participants completed placement (n=196)

The post-placement survey records a significant increase of 42 percentage points for interest in a teaching career in FE, with the level of not interested also decreasing by 31 percentage points. These positive attitudes were somewhat mirrored in the findings from the qualitative interviews. Some placement participants became more interested in a teaching in the further education sector. One particular aspect of their placement that helped was the opportunity to work with different students, and also to get a degree of freedom in what they wanted to do during their time at the college. Furthermore, some participants felt that the experience gave them a clearer idea about how to get into further education teaching.

“It was brilliant to see how it's possible. I didn't know what the ways into it were, apart from PGCE, so that was another one. I had a chance to look at how to do, and how to do teacher training. I understand some people do a college course as well and then go to university for 5 years.”

(Student, FE College)

However, this positive change was only recorded as an intention in the post-placement survey. A fall in the stated intention to enter FE teaching of six percentage points was found when comparing responses between the pre-programme survey and the post-programme survey. As illustrated in Figure 15:

- A quarter (26% a) of participants agreed with the statement ‘I am certain I would like to teach in FE’ at both waves (pre- and post- programme)
- One in six (16% b) moved into the ‘agree’ group from the ‘do not agree’ between waves.
- More than one in five (22%) moved into the opposite direction.

Figure 15: To what extent do you agree with 'I am certain I would like to teach in FE (n=184)

I am certain I would like to teach in Further Education	Pre-survey	Post-survey	Move into cell	No movement
Agree	48%	42%	16% ^b	26% ^a
Do not agree	52%	58%	22% ^c	21%

Source: Pre and Post-programme survey of all participants except prefer not to say (n=184)

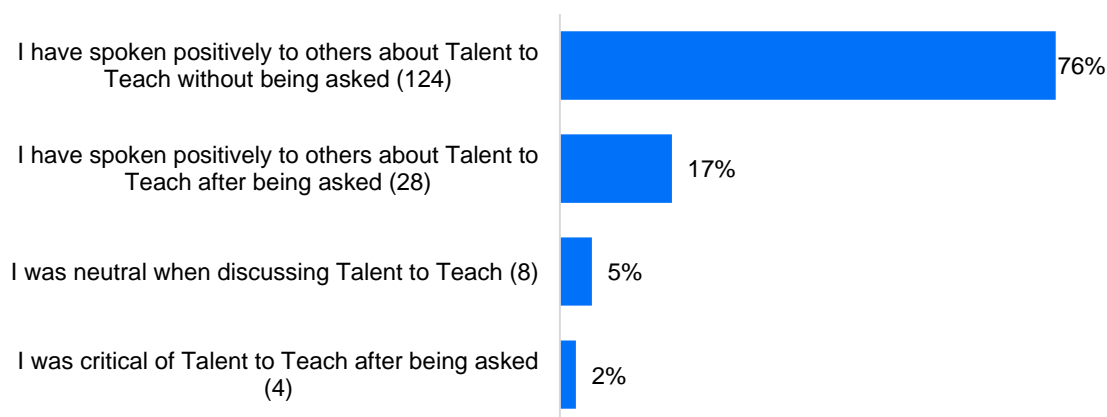
The figures showed a greater proportion of people becoming less certain that they would like to teach in FE. However, the impact of the programme is positive. Shifting attitudes is a critical component of the programme, since it has enabled participants to make an informed decision about their career. Despite a larger number of people suggesting they did not want to teach, this positively reduces the risk of uninterested applicants pursuing teacher training programmes to only leave in the first few years. Thus, the programme supports the retention agenda in the teaching sector.

Interviews with participants consolidated these findings. While there were numerous examples of participants being inspired to go into further education teaching, there were some experiences where placement participants felt the profession was not the right career for them.

4.2.3 Recommend placement to others

The majority of respondents (84%) indicated that they had spoken to others about their Talent to Teach placement experience. Of these 164 respondents, three-quarters (76%) stated that they had spoken highly of the programme without being asked (see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Which of the following best reflect how you have spoken to others about your Talent to teach experiences?



Many interviewees indicated that they would recommend the programme to other friends and have spoken highly of the placement experience since it was valuable in providing an overview of pursuing a career in the FE sector. In doing so, they were able to make a decision about their teaching career. Additionally, many participants including those who did not want to pursue teaching at the experience reported that it provided many other skills that would be helpful in future application processes and employment. These skills are further discussed below.

4.2.4 Soft skills

The majority of participants developed soft skills, in some form or other, as an outcome of their placement. Soft skills can be categorised as social skills, communication skills, and personal character attributes – all of which enable people to work well with others.

The majority of participants described how their social skills had developed. The placements necessitated meeting with and speaking to new and different types of people. Participants talked about the progress they made in their social skills as a result of being surrounded by people they had not met before. Several participants referenced how they moved from feeling shy, unsure, and/or uncomfortable around new people to feeling confident, comfortable and open.

Several participants described how their placement increased confidence in their own abilities. A number of participants reported how the placement provided the opportunity to develop public-speaking skills. As part of their placement, some participants were expected to deliver a presentation or micro-teach. Several of these individuals noted how they previously would have tried to avoid such a situation due to a lack of confidence. However, the fact that their involvement in the placement necessitated the delivery of a presentation or lesson challenged them to move out of their comfort zone.

“I delivered a fifteen minute, what do you call it, micro-teach lesson. That was good, that was the first time that I've ever taught in front of the class ... I've never done that before, so it was really fun, and I did really well, I think, so it was just amazing, because that was the first time I've done that, and I didn't get that chance at my internship.”

(Student, FE College)

A number of participants recognised that the development of these skills helped to improve their ability to perform in a professional environment and realised these are necessary skills to succeed in the labour market. Therefore, the programme provides placement participants the opportunity to develop their capabilities in their future careers, even if it may not be the FE sector.

4.3 Chapter key findings

- The Talent to Teach programme has a variety of drivers of impact on participants. It effectively challenges participants' views about teaching and provides experiences which help participants to make better decisions regarding FE careers and teaching. This includes creating enthusiasm and interest for teaching and helping others realise FE or teaching is not for them.
- While the programme has shown evidence of generating interest in FE as a career option within this graduate population, it has also enabled the development of soft skills that are crucial for future employment. Therefore, the programme has met the aim of providing

participants with the skills and knowledge they need to pursue a a career in FE as well as increase their employability skills.

- There were many positive outcomes for FE providers hosting placements. A number of providers discussed the value of the programme for workforce planning and for assessing potential future teachers via the placements. The process and experience of delivering placements helped mentors develop their skills.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 The relevance and need for the programme

The study found there is a strong rationale for affording graduates the opportunity to experience FE teaching. There is currently a reduction in the number of graduates training to teach and some subjects struggle to attract high quality entrants. The programme has the potential to contribute towards the recruitment and retention challenges faced in the FE, and teaching sector more broadly. The post-programme survey revealed a significant increase of 42 percentage points for interest in a teaching career in FE. The programme meets its aims of raising the profile of FE, generating interest in FE as a career option with the graduate population and establishes new pipelines of talent for entry to the FE sector. The programme also clarifies whether teaching is a career that is attractive to participants. While it is too early to determine impact on job applications from this evaluation, both quantitative and qualitative findings illustrate the programme has the potential for addressing the recruitment gap in the FE sector.

The demand of the programme has been strong in previous cohorts, but had yet to meet the 400 target set. It may be beneficial in the future to widen promotion and marketing strategies, by listing the opportunity on graduate career websites. Furthermore, there is a disproportionate number of FE colleges hosting placements compared to independent training providers. Further consideration and attention should be paid to encouraging independent training providers to get involved in the programme since they are a significant form of FE education.

5.1.2 Effectiveness of the programme delivery

Most participants spoke favourably about their experiences of applying to join the Talent to Teach programme. Interviewees felt the process was simple and straightforward. Participants who discussed their preferences of where they would like to complete their placements and their availability with Cognition were more likely to be satisfied with the application process since the arrangements better met their needs.

Overall experiences and satisfaction of the Talent to Teach placements were high among participants. The organisation and structure of a placement was central to its success and there were a few instances of dissatisfaction stemming from deficiencies in organisation. Participants were highly satisfied with activities that provided an opportunity to feel and gain first-hand experience of teaching, for example speaking to students as a group in a classroom (92%) and one-to-one or small group assisted teaching (89%). This was pivotal in helping learners make a decision about their future career in FE.

Four key improvements were raised by a minority of participants, all of which related to improving the organisation and enhancing the experience of placements. These improvements were: to ensure placements were well-structured, with a timetable in place; ensure placements were offered during term time where teaching can be observed; create opportunities to micro-teach students; and tailoring activities in line with students' specialist subject area.

5.1.3 Benefits and impact

Capability, motivation and opportunity

Overall, participants reported that the programme increased their knowledge on the avenues available to pursue a teaching career in FE. The programme also allowed participants to experience teaching styles and techniques within an FE setting and improved knowledge of non-teaching responsibilities. By increasing knowledge among participants, the programme enhanced their capability to actively pursue a teaching career.

While the programme has shown evidence of generating interest in FE as a career option for graduates, it has also enabled the development of soft skills that are crucial for future employment. Therefore, the programme has met the aim of providing participants with the skills and knowledge they need to pursue a career in FE as well as increase their employability skills.

The programme effectively challenged participants' views about teaching and provided experiences which helped participants make better decisions regarding FE careers and teaching. This included creating enthusiasm and interest for teaching and helping others realise FE if teaching is for them. For many, the placement verified their intentions to teach in FE and motivated participants to put the motions in place post-degree. However, for others this experience helped them decide whether teaching was for them.

There were many positive outcomes for FE providers hosting placements. A number of providers discussed the value of the programme for workforce planning and for assessing potential future teachers via the placements. The process and experience of delivering placements helped mentors develop their skills.

5.2 Recommendations

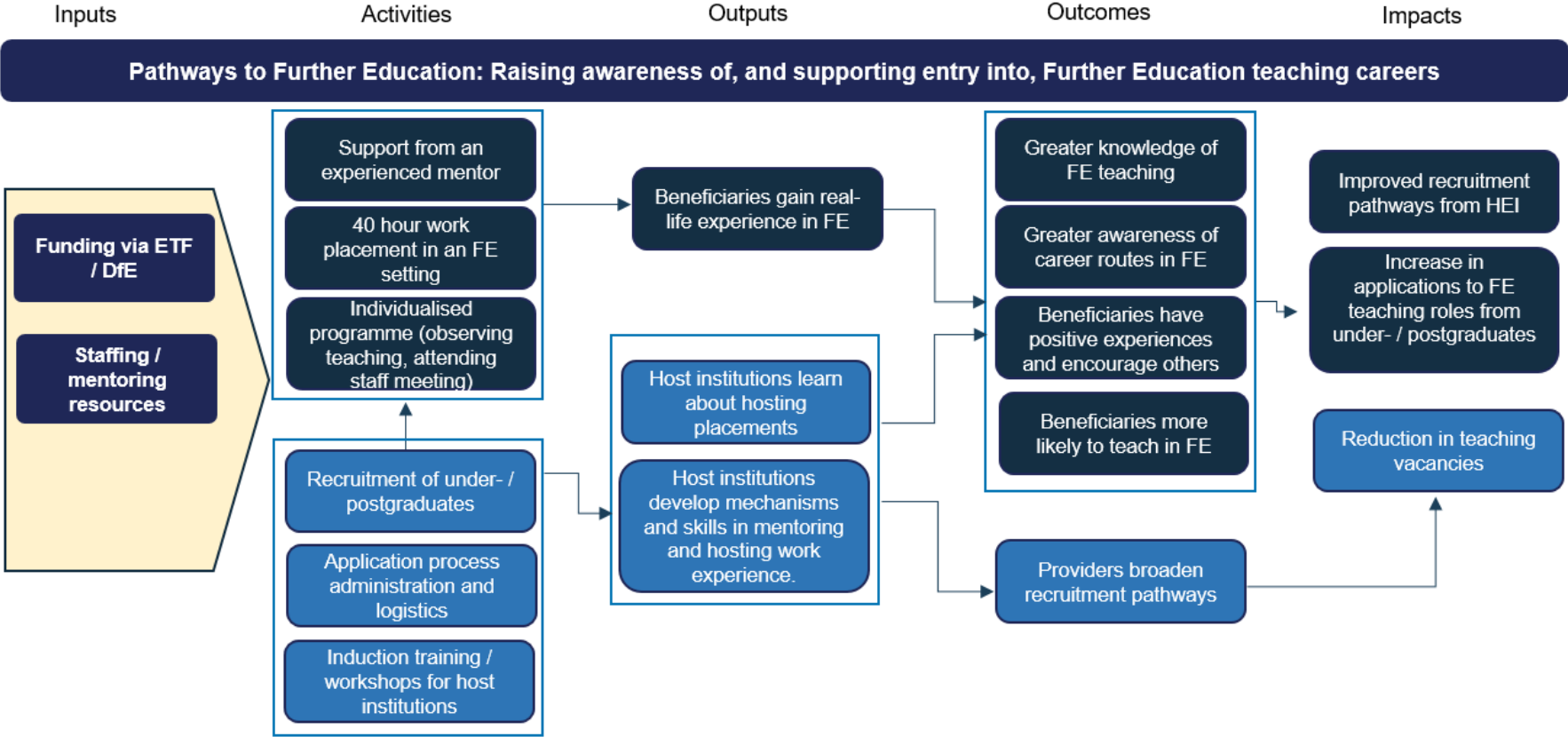
The evaluation identified the following recommendations for the ETF and the delivery partner to improve the Talent to Teach programme for future cohorts:

- **The ETF should continue to support the Talent to Teach programme.** There is a demonstrable impact from offering the programme to university students. The study found that by offering genuine, varied teaching experience in FE, potential teacher trainee applicants were able to make an informed decision about their career. The programme has the potential to reduce retention challenges.
- **In future cohorts, the delivery partner should ensure all students are offered a mentor during their placement experience.** This evaluation found that having a mentor was highly valued among students. Mentors ensured placements were well organised, offered guidance and pastoral support and the consistent presence of a member of staff supported graduates. While the design of individual placements was fluid, mentors strengthened the experience.
- **The programme should ensure all participants receive a varied placement experience.** Dissatisfaction of placements was reported due to placement timing and limited opportunities to interact with students and practical experiences of teaching, which made it less likely that students could observe teaching in their specialist subject areas. While most placement students acknowledged they still got something from the experience, some felt the experience would have been more fulfilling if some of the teaching they observed was in a subject closer to their degree. This would add context to the placement and make it easier for the participant to relate to the teaching experience. The participant can concentrate more on the role and less on understanding unfamiliar content.

- **The ETF should continue to provide bursaries for the placement.** For some participants, the available bursary was an important factor in helping them to decide to enrol on the programme. The main reason behind this is that participants were either in employment or seeking employment to support their studies. Consequently, spending time to complete the programme would come at a cost if financial support was not available. For others, who were unsure whether to apply to the programme, the bursary acted as a successful incentive. However, the bursary payment was a motivating factor for just over a third of participants (36%, n=170), implying that, although the payment is an incentive, the experience of teaching may be a more of a significant motivating factor for participants.

7 APPENDICES

1. Theoretical Framework



2. Charts

Figure A: Attitudes towards 'I am applying to undertake this placement to make a decision about my career by course subject

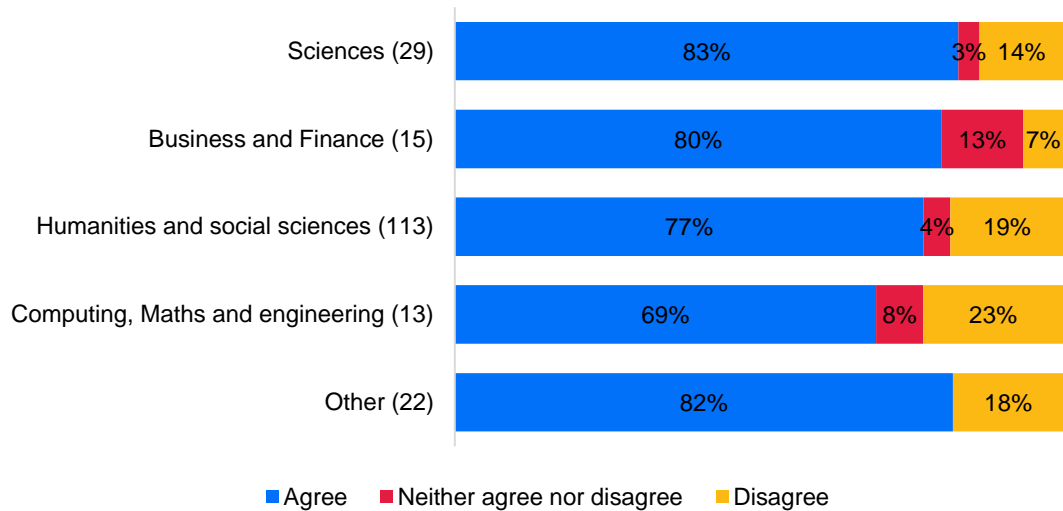


Figure B: Participants that were given the opportunity to partake in one-to-one or small group assisted teaching by type of provider

