DIGITAL SCHOOLHOUSE

Esports: Engaging Education

Digital Schoolhouse Esports Tournament 2018

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Foreword.

Esports is a fast growing and evolving industry, engaging millions of children across the globe both in competitive play and as a new form of entertainment, with the industry expected to surpass $2bn revenue by 2020. It is an amazingly inclusive form of entertainment, presenting opportunities for all regardless of age, physical abilities or gender. It is a very creative yet technical industry adopting existing skill sets across the video games, broadcast, media and sport industries all the while creating many new highly skilled roles.

The danger of the digital skills gap is very clear, hindering both the growth of esports in the UK and many other industries too. We urgently need more children to be inspired by technology and digital creativity and discover exciting and successful career prospects in a rapidly changing world.

For the past 4 years, Digital Schoolhouse has had a tremendous impact in doing just that. Not only inspiring children, but also educating teachers and parents about the endless opportunities digital skills create. By engaging directly with the esports industry, thousands of children have had hands on experience in a multitude of important roles developing and running a nationwide innovative esports tournament. They have benefited from teamwork, strategy and social improvements and heard directly from the industry for guidance and careers advice.

Most importantly, esports is enormous fun. The collaborative nature of an esports tournament and the creation of content for a wider audience puts real purpose to the project making it extremely engaging, interactive and inspiring, no matter what the role the student plays in the process. It also empowers teachers through the power of play to potentially have life changing effects on students during their education.

At ESL, we're extremely proud to support Digital Schoolhouse and hope to see the UK leading the way in creative and digital skills for the esports industry years to come. This report clearly shows the immediate positive affect esports can have on children in an educational environment and demonstrates an innovative and successful partnership between industry and schools.

James Dean ESL UK Managing Director

Executive Summary.

Ukie's Digital Schoolhouse, powered by PlayStation® programme, aims to engage learners and educators with computing to improve the quality and provision of digital skills within schools across the UK. As the flagship education initiative of the video games trade body Ukie (UK Interactive Entertainment Association Ltd.), the programme is able to bring schools and industry together to help effectively shape and deliver high quality inspirational opportunities for all students.

One of these opportunities is the Digital Schoolhouse esports tournament, which has just completed its second year. The 2017 - 2018 tournament saw 2222 students from 20 schools across the UK take part as either players or as part of the school's event management team. The aim of the tournament was to provide an immersive careers education experience, enabling students to realise the breadth of career opportunities available to them. Students aged 12 - 18 years participated not only as players but were also recruited to manage the tournament within their schools taking on valid industry roles such as event management, production, tournament administration, community management and on-screen talent. The value of the skills that students developed whilst participating in the tournament was recognised by the Duke of York's Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award (iDEA). Post tournament, students were able to claim digital iDEA badges which reflected the nature of their involvement in the tournament and the skills gained as a result.

An integral part of the tournament was to examine its potential impact on the participants. Digital Schoolhouse worked with Staffordshire University to develop a study that collected data using a number of methods, including questionnaires, case studies, discussion groups and informal feedback. The study focused on two key research questions:

A. Does participating in esports create positive behavioural change in young players that will translate into behaviour modification in other aspects of their lives?

B. Does participating in esports influence the career path and STEM interests of young players?

Key Findings

A. Does participating in esports create positive behavioural change in young players that will translate into behaviour modification in other aspects of their lives?

- All transferable skills increased with Communication (74%) and Team Working (80%) coming top
- 67% of respondents found that friendship bonds grew over the course of the tournament (and 94% of friendships were maintained or grew during the competition)
- Over 80% said that the competition had increased their interest in participating in other team sports

B. Does participating in esports influence the career path and STEM interests of young players?

- Just under 90% said it had increased their interest in a career in the video games industry
- Over 90% said it had increased their interest in computers and computing, but only 40% said it had increased their interest in studying it as a subject

Teachers consistently reported the broader impact of the tournament on students. Numerous reports were received of increased student confidence, improved attendance to school, cross year group friendships; and in particular engaging the 'forgotten middle'[1]. A number of schools spoke about how the tournament was able to successfully engage those students who otherwise wouldn't engage in extra curricular activities, for some it enabled them to find like minded people, and for others it helped them to 'come out of their shell'. All teachers reported high levels of excitement around the tournament amongst students, with teachers having to put a cap on the number of students allowed to participate for their own logistical purposes.

Additionally, we also found that participation in the tournament appeared to have significant wider school impact. Participation within the tournament helped upskill the teachers involved with key knowledge and insights into career opportunities available within the wider video games industry; thus enabling them to provide more relevant careers guidance to their students. Highlighting career opportunities and the value of video games and esports wasn't just limited to the participating teachers; the delivery and success of the tournament within the school helped tackle perceptions amongst wider staff and senior leadership teams. Additionally, parents who were able to attend an event were also given a chance to find out more about the opportunities available for their children.

1 This term refers to students that are not over or under achieving, and therefore don't appear on teachers' intervention lists

All participating teachers consistently reported that the tournament created a huge ‘buzz’ within the school. It was the singular thing that engaged the entire school community. From teachers showing the live Twitch stream of the knockout events on their classroom whiteboard during lessons, to school senior leadership teams coming together to acknowledge the success of their school teams; this tournament engaged the full breadth of the community.

Introduction.

What is Digital Schoolhouse?

Ukie’s Digital Schoolhouse, powered by PlayStation® programme, uses play-based learning to engage the next generation of pupils and teachers with the Computing curriculum. Digital Schoolhouse is funded by the UK games industry with sponsors including SEGA, Ubisoft and Warwickshire County Council and was originally seed funded by the Mayor of London’s London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF).

Each Digital Schoolhouse is based in a school, college or university environment, and aims to work with a growing network of local primary and secondary teachers to deliver creative and cross-curricular computing lessons using play-based learning. Through this, it supports the Computing programme of study for the national curriculum in a way that leaves pupils and teachers feeling inspired about, and engaged with, computing and the wider creative digital industries.

Digital Schoolhouse bridges the gap between industry and education, combining the innovation that the creative digital industry is known for along with the educational expertise of teachers to create a truly engaging experience that not only develops relevant skills and subject knowledge but also confidence amongst learners. It is with this in mind that we developed our national schools esports tournament in 2016. The tournament aims to immerse students with careers in esports and the video games industry by connecting them with industry professionals and facilitating work experience; enabling each student to put classroom theory into industry practice.

There are lots of ways to deliver careers education, so why choose an esports tournament?

99% of 8-15 year old children play games[1]

[1] As reported by http://ukie.org.uk/research, June 2018

It's a hook that has the ability to engage students in a way few other mediums can. Schools participating within the tournament find they are simply inundated with students who wish to enter the competition, with teachers having to cap their entry numbers for their own management purposes.

More than that, esports is an emerging sector in the UK with increasing opportunities for careers. Over 100 million viewers watch esports via popular live streaming video platform Twitch a month. Likewise, the global audience is estimated to be in excess of 400 million viewers, with global revenues exceeding $700m and prize pools in the millions of dollars, esports is a serious business.

It has been well reported that 65% of current primary age students will ultimately end up working in jobs that don't exist yet. It's a fair estimate to say that a large number of these new and emerging roles will be in the world of esports and the wider video games industry. However, with the digital skills gap currently showing no signs of decline, we run the very real danger that a large portion of these new careers will remain unfulfilled.

Students simply can't aspire to careers they don't know exist. It's a common misconception that you have to be a great programmer to get a job in the industry. Misconceptions such as these immediately rule out all those students who would have liked to work within the sector, but either aren't confident with their programming skills, or simply don't enjoy it. By showcasing the breadth of careers opportunities to students via an immersive experience such as the tournament, we are able to shine the light on these jobs.

Creating a tournament which immerses students within the world of esports has been a valuable way to get them to put into practice theory they have been learning in the classroom. For example, students who participated as part of the production crew were able to apply their knowledge of networking and communications when setting up and configuring their school systems to enable game play alongside the school technical support staff. Likewise, students were also able to apply their artistic and communication skills to creating a brand for their school teams.

Accrediting Students Skills

It was important to recognise the skills that students were applying and developing as part of their involvement in the competition. Given the breadth of work being done by students and the importance of recognising all roles equally, an innovative accreditation system was needed.

Digital Schoolhouse partnered with the Duke of York's Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award (iDEA) who developed digital badges for each of the roles involved in the tournament:

- Competitor
- UK Esports Champions 2018
- Event Manager
- Shoutcaster/Host
- Production Crew
- Tournament Admin
- Community Manager

Upon completion of the tournament each student was able to claim the digital badge to add to their online digital portfolio. With enough badges students are able to claim an award in recognition of what they have learnt. The scheme runs similar to the Duke of Edinburgh Award and is in effect it's 'digital version'.

Overcoming the Challenges

Industry input throughout the length of the tournament in its various forms has been essential to ensuring that students receive relevant experience, and that teachers have up-to-date knowledge of the opportunities available. However, delivering an industry standard tournament in schools has not been an easy task. Schools face a number of challenges which can prevent them from taking part in such initiatives. Failure to support schools in overcoming these obstacles can subsequently impact the quality of their wider provision and opportunities for students.

Hindrance can come from many forms and not just tight budgets. From school network/IT support staff resisting the idea, to local council Internet Service Providers preventing the schools from being able to access the game servers. A common obstacle is the old and low specification hardware that is commonly used by schools that are unable to run modern games. A school is unlikely to purchase new high spec machines to enable them to take part in the tournament and having games consoles onsite is virtually unheard of. This is one area where industry support is simply invaluable; from donating old machines or providing them on a loan basis, in kind support from industry enables schools to participate within the tournament.

In fact, industry support can help overcome a great many obstacles that schools may face in participating in innovative and engaging opportunities. It is Ukie and Digital Schoolhouse's continued aim to both gauge the support required and curate industry provision. It is through our continued collective support for schools that we can engage a diverse range of students with essential creative digital skills, providing them all with equal opportunities regardless of background.

Tournament Statistics.

2222 12-18 year old students, participated as either players or as part of the events management team

8% of players and **11%** of the student events management team were **female**

98K views on Twitch

Tournament Structure.

20 schools took part in the tournament across England and Northern Ireland. The tournament was broken down into three stages:

School Heats → Regional Qualifiers → Grand Final

Industry involvement was included at each stage of the tournament, with varying opportunities for students to apply their skills and connect with professionals.

Stage 1: School Heats

This is the initial stage of the tournament that saw the greatest number of students participating. The aim was to ultimately whittle down the competing teams to a single team to represent the school at the Regional Qualifiers.

Schools were encouraged to make this stage as student led as possible. Job descriptions were developed with industry guidance and were provided to enable teachers to recruit students to the roles of:

- Event Manager
- Shoutcaster/Host
- Production Crew
- Tournament Admin
- Community Manager

Digital Schoolhouse did not specify how the students should be selected, this was left to the schools to determine. However, it was recommended that schools encouraged students to 'apply' for the roles to provide the additional experience and practice surrounding job recruitment.

Schools were also partnered with esports coaches (games industry volunteers) at this stage. Each esports coach was there to provide careers insight and advice, as well as coaching, tips and tricks on gameplay to help the teams succeed. The coach and school both agreed the method and frequency of the interactions, and this varied school by school. The aim behind the coaches was to help engage and inspire students to take part in the tournament and wider careers. For some coaches, a large part of this relationship was around helping teachers overcome technical issues, for others their focus was engaging a greater number of girls to participate.

Stage 2: Regional Qualifiers

These were the first of the knockout stages. There were four venues, with 5 schools assigned to each one. Venues included:

- Belong by Game
    - Bristol
    - Manchester
    - Kingston
- Staffordshire University

Each qualifier had an audience mix of 80% students and teachers and 20% industry invites. Industry guests were invited and encouraged to mingle amongst the students and to initiate conversations. This small 'nudge' as part of our invitation process helped to establish a 'mingle with the pros' atmosphere and sparked dozens of individual and one to one careers conversations. Each qualifier was streamed live on Twitch and students were invited to try their hand at casting alongside professional casters who were there on the day.

Each event saw a single team being crowned 'Regional Champion' who then made it through to the Grand Final in London. Shoutcasters were recognised alongside the players, with the professional casters selecting the best student caster of the day (post event). These student casters were then invited to the Grand Final to once again cast alongside their professional counterparts.

Stage 3: The Grand Final

The Grand Final was held at the Gfinity Esports Arena as part of the London Games Festival. In attendance were the four regional champions along with their school supporters, parents and industry guests. The event was also streamed live on Twitch with over 1000 concurrent viewers at various key points. Much of the structure was similar to the Regional Qualifier and the event included:

- Inspirational keynote by industry professional
- Opportunities for all students to mingle with industry professionals
- Careers Q&A panel

Students played several roles on the day, including working alongside the production crew, casters, press officer and more.

The day ended with a prize giving ceremony for the winning team and a special prize being given to the best shoutcaster of the tournament.

Research Questions

A. Does participating in esports create positive behavioural change in young players that will translate into behaviour modification in other aspects of their lives?

B. Does participating in esports influence the career path and STEM interests of young players?

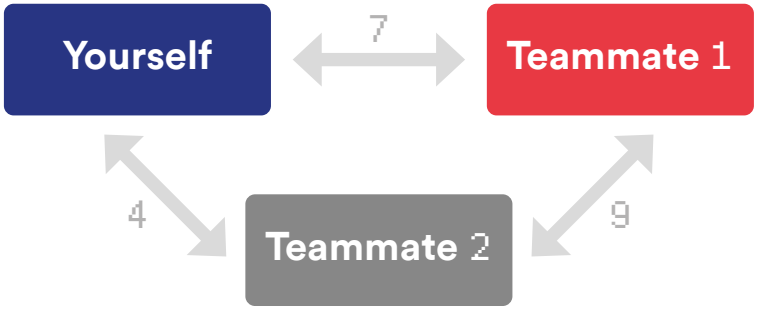
Methodology

Positive behavioural change is measured by the reinforcement of friendship bonds and the development of transferable skills. An autoethnographic approach using players' self-reflection was taken to study the types of communication which took place between the players during the tournament.

The framework used to capture this data was grounded in Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) developed by R.F. Bales (1950)[2]. The IPA was adapted by using relatable phrases that the players could see in themselves and their teammates.

1	Says "Well done good job"	5	Says "I've looked at the situation and I think we should....."	9	Asks "What should I do?"
2	When something goes wrongs laughs and jokes about it	6	Say "You should be...." Then repeats, clarifies and confirms	10	Disagrees, but doesn't suggests a way to help
3	Say "I agree, we should do that"	7	Ask "Where are...?" Then repeats the request and asks for confirmation	11	Doesn't ask for help, just does their own thing
4	Suggests "Perhaps you could ..."	8	Asks "What do people think about.....?"	12	Criticises other players and brings them down

Players were also asked to complete a sociogram of their team to indicate how strong the existing friendship bonds were within the team prior to the tournament. This was on a scale of 0 for those that didn't know each other and to 10 for those who were best friends. They were then asked to do the same for after the tournament to enable us to see how friendship bonds were increased or decreased by the act of playing within the team.



[2] Bales, Robert F. 1950 Interaction Process Analysis. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Does participating in esports create positive behavioural change in young players that will translate into behaviour modification in other aspects of their lives?

Friendships.

"Friendship is the most voluntary type of personal relationship" (Field and Carter, 1998)[3]. Mostly friendships are formed as part of regular ongoing social interactions where there are shared interests and commonality. Likewise, it was previously thought that friendships were most likely to occur when people lived near one another. However, the need for close proximity was for practicality and in today's digital world that no longer holds. More and more friendships are not only nurtured online but are also created online.

A total of 10 teams were analysed in depth. The teams were considered Positive if their friendships increased during the tournament, Negative if they decreased and Neutral if their friendships did not change.

66.67% of **friendships grew** during the competition

94.29% of **friendships were maintained or grew** during the competition

[3] Feld, S. and Carter, W. (1998) Foci of activity as changing contexts for friendships, Cambridge Press, Vol: Structural analysis in Social Sciences

The neutral teams were more likely to be good friends before the tournament began as compared to the positive teams, hence the insignificant change to the quality of their friendships.

Team behaviours were examined on several factors, and findings are summarised below:

	Positive Teams	Neutral Teams	Negative Teams
	No antagonism	No antagonism	Heightened degree of antagonism
	Tended to agree more than disagree on decisions taken	Tended to agree more than disagree on decisions taken	Equal amounts of agreement and disagreement
	Less likely to ask for a lot of opinions	More likely to ask opinions from other players	Less likely to ask for a lot of opinions
	Increased solidarity	Increased solidarity	
		Scored highly on effective communication	

Findings indicate that maintaining social relationships was more important to the positive and neutral teams than the task ahead, and that the lack of need to conform in the negative teams led to more friction.

Personal Growth.

The motivation to participate in sporting activities changes according to life stage. During the teenage years, participation seems to be affected by weight management and body shape. While these factors may encourage some teenagers to participate in sporting activities it can also serve to hinder others. Existing research indicates that opportunities to participate in a team activity in a safe environment and removed from their day to day activity would be favoured by young people and their parents. It also indicates that taking part is not only immediately beneficial but also helps develop their attitude towards a healthy and balanced lifestyle.

81.8% of players said they were **more likely to participate** in other team sports as a result of taking part in the **DSH esports tournament.**

The case studies within this report provide some context to the mental environments in which young people exist. With roughly 25% of students reporting being bullied in a school, joining a team could be a much needed source of social support.

Does participating in esports influence the career path and STEM interests of young players?

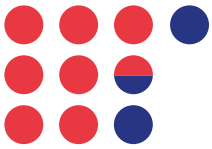
Transferable Skills.

Students were asked about their transferable skills and if they had improved as part of the tournament. Findings from this are below:

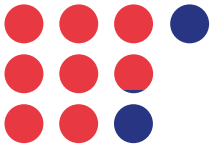
	Communication	Team Working	Perseverance	Resilience	Problem Solving	Social Skills
Yes %	73.53%	79.41%	58.82%	67.63%	67.65%	58.82%
No %	26.47%	20.59%	41.18%	32.35%	32.35%	41.18%

Results show that the highest gains were in communication and team working, but all showed significant increases.

75.53 % of students said that taking part in the tournament **improved their communication skills**



79.41 % of students said that taking part in the tournament **improved their team working skills**



Change in Aspirations.

Students were asked about whether or not participating in the tournament had an impact on their interest in computing and technology and careers within the video games and digital industries. Findings are below:

	Increase in Other Team Sports	Increase in Interest Computers/ Computing	Increase in Studying Computing	Increase in Career in Video Games	Increase in Career in Digital Industries
Yes %	81.82%	93.94%	39.39%	87.88%	45.45%
No %	18.18%	6.06%	60.61%	12.12%	54.55%

Findings show that participation within the tournament had a significant impact on the aspirations of students.

93.94%
of students said that taking part in the tournament made them **more interested in computer/ computing**

87.88%
of students said that taking part in the tournament made them **more interested in a career in the video games industry**

Almost all students became more interested in computing and technology after taking part in the tournament. The number of students more interested in studying computing also rose significantly by 40% but was noticeably less. This may be in part due to:

- the perception of GCSE Computer Science which is seen as a hard GCSE
- the impact of students' perception of the subject following the withdrawal of marks of the Non-Examination Assessment component
- the Key Stages 4 and 5 computing qualifications that schools currently offer
- the perception, promotion and visibility of computer science as a subject within a school

These issues have been reported in national reports. The Royal Society's 'After the reboot: computing education in UK schools' (Royal Society, 2017[4]) reported that only 11% of secondary students take GCSE Computer Science and recommended the introduction of a GCSE in Computing and that school governors should monitor whether and how schools are teaching computing.

The Roehampton National Computing Education Report (Kemp et al., 2018[5]) reported that despite a moderate increase in the number of students opting to study GCSE Computer Science, only 52.5% of secondary school currently offer GCSE Computer Science. Further work would need to be done to examine the reasons behind this difference reported in this survey.

One of the key aims for the tournament was to raise awareness and interest in career opportunities within the video games and wider digital industries. The results show a clear success, with 88% of students becoming more interested in the career opportunities available to them. The key consideration now, is to ensure that we follow up by providing the right advice and guidance to support students.

[4] royalsociety.org/computing-education
[5] Roehampton National Computing Education Report, https://www.bcs.org/upload/pdf/computing-education-report.pdf

Case Studies.

Student A

“The tournament has had an impact on one student in particular.

This student was a victim of some quite severe bullying at school which led to them to contemplating taking their own life.

They were invited to the Gfinity grand final and spent the day working with professionals, the effects of which have been literally life changing.

Working with professionals and being treated as an equal throughout the event gave them self-belief and confidence moving forward.

Back at school, the bullying has stopped.

Those responsible can see that their actions are no longer having the same impact, they know - and has seen first-hand - they are better than the bullies would have them believe.”

Student B

“I never knew what a shoutcaster was before the event and my mates kinda got me into it.

Doing it really pushed my confidence now I’m looking at courses in college where they might help me pursue this further and my mum thinks it’s great because I’m not as shy as I was.”

Student C

"The DSH 2018 Tournament was a rewarding experience for Joseph. Although primarily aimed at esports, many skills were covered including journalism, filming and the computer science industry as a whole.

It cemented Joseph's choice to study Computer Science for GCSE."

Student D

"When one of our students who participated in the esports competition first started, they were very anxious, really nervous about coming into the classroom, afraid to talk to new students.

Over the year we told them about the esports tournament with Overwatch - one of their favourite games. They had a lightbulb moment and were really determined to get into the final three.

They worked really hard, they started communicating more with students and also staff. Their attendance improved. They went to the event, participated and loved it.

Unfortunately they got knocked out, but they've come back, they've been a better person for it. They're just a different person.

Talking more, better communication, problem solving. They sit there and try to work out problems with their assignment, whereas before they would put their head in their hands. It's been a game changer."

A Teacher's Story.

Mark Ward
St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy

From the very beginning of my involvement with DSH (we are now coming towards the end of our second full year Shahneila's enthusiasm always shone through, so no matter what she wanted us to try, it was easy to get on board with.

What was trickier though was turning that enthusiasm, and knowledge that this was the right thing for our pupils, into actions at ground level. I had a lot of work to do convincing our leadership team that I wanted to get pupils involved in so much more than just 'playing games'.

In the first year of the competition, we had approx. 160 pupils involved out of a cohort of 1200. Alongside the lunchtime matches, I introduced what was happening with the wider Esports community into IT and Computer Science lessons, using the hook of Rugby League (we are a very successful RL school, with either county or national champions in every year group – both boys and girls) to look at the similarities between Esports and more traditional sports and also highlight the differences.

After our school was crowned the inaugural UK schools Esports champions in 2017, the whole thing blew up. Towards the end of the last academic year, I had to move our Esports club, started using our winners' prize, from 1 day a week to 5 days a week - every lunchtime! Pupils are now pretty much running this themselves and we've had extra funding for more hardware from our PTFA. At last count, we had almost 50% of the school cohort attend at least 1 lunchtime session.

This year, things again have been pretty crazy. We had over 200 pupils taking part in the tournament, I could've easily doubled that but just didn't have the hardware capacity or the time to accommodate more.

Last year's winning team are working with the British Esports Association as ambassadors for schools based Esports and are constantly being asked to attend various events. Two of the team are now actively seeking an Esports degree course for next year.

There's been much more focus this year on the potential career paths that Esports can present and as such we've had quite a large number of pupils with a wider interest than just the 'gaming' side wanting to be involved. Some of those pupils were invited to this year's grand final and were involved in 'shoutcasting' – commentating on the game, and 'observing' – being in charge of the in-game camera, essentially showing those watching what's going on in each game. In the classroom, there has been crossover with English as pupils have used shoutcasting as part of their 'speaking' assessments and with Media Studies, students have looked at social media platforms used to promote and stream Esports.

This year, we have been partnered with a professional from the gaming recruitment industry who has been into school and spoken to pupils about getting into the industry. Their organisation also financially supported our team in getting to the final by paying for our travel to London.

Obviously, with our successes, the leadership team has had no option but to sit up and take notice. I've been asked this year to look at ways to use Esports in raising standards in underachieving boys. Some quick research into attendance showed that there was an increase in attendance for participants over the time of the tournament this year – I think this is one reason why the head is allowing me to use my lunchtime to run a full time Esports club! In all seriousness though, I had been asked to look at running sessions with some of our more 'colourful' pupils. I now have a small number of those characters running a competition for me, with a waiting list ready for September. It is hoped that their participation in Esports will see dividends in other areas of the curriculum and more positive relationships with the school as a whole can be developed. I for one certainly am seeing these pupils in a totally different light.

So, to summarise, getting involved in the tournament has been amazing. I can bring the pupils' world into my lessons – I can use role models that they have heard of (some I hadn't until very recently!) and talk about careers that they are interested in and passionate about – all whilst 'playing games'.

...and the most amazing thing, this is a world that is open to everybody.

A Teacher's Story.

David Eley
Shire Oak Academy

We had great success with the Rocket League tournament the year previously and students were desperate to have another go at the tournament so we signed up straight away for the Overwatch tournament. Student involvement was brilliant. We had 16 students who helped to organise; they were scheduling games, logging on, installing the software before every game, setting them up, they did the refereeing, they were taking photos, they were managing social media and we had some that were hosting and shoutcasting. They were brilliant. They all said it was one of the best things they'd done during their time at school and they want to be involved next year.

We had 16 teams, we decided to just restrict it to 16 just because of the time constraints. Then for the regional finals we took the two teams that got to the final and we picked 8 out of the 16 student organisers who contributed the most. We all went to the Regional Final at Staffordshire University in Stoke. That was a really good day. It was great for all the students to see how games were dealt with at the university. To walk around the campus, they also met some professional esports players and saw an esports tournament.

It was absolutely brilliant and all the students keep asking "when can we have another tournament, when can we have another tournament?" so next year will be even bigger and better.

Qualitative Research Outcomes.

During the tournament and post-event verbal and written feedback was gathered in a number of ways, including roundtable discussions on the tournament and its impact. Discussions were held with participating schools and teachers, as well as industry supporters.

School Impact

Teachers consistently reported on the broader impact of the tournament on their school communities. Improved student confidence and the subsequent impact on academic performance was noted by many teachers. Additionally, teachers spoke about:

- The development of new friendships, particularly across a range of year groups
- Engaging a cohort of students that otherwise wouldn't usually engage with extra-curricular activities
- High levels of interest amongst the staff and student body
- Upskill teachers own knowledge of career opportunities available within the video games and creative digital industries
- Tackle existing stereotypes about the value of games

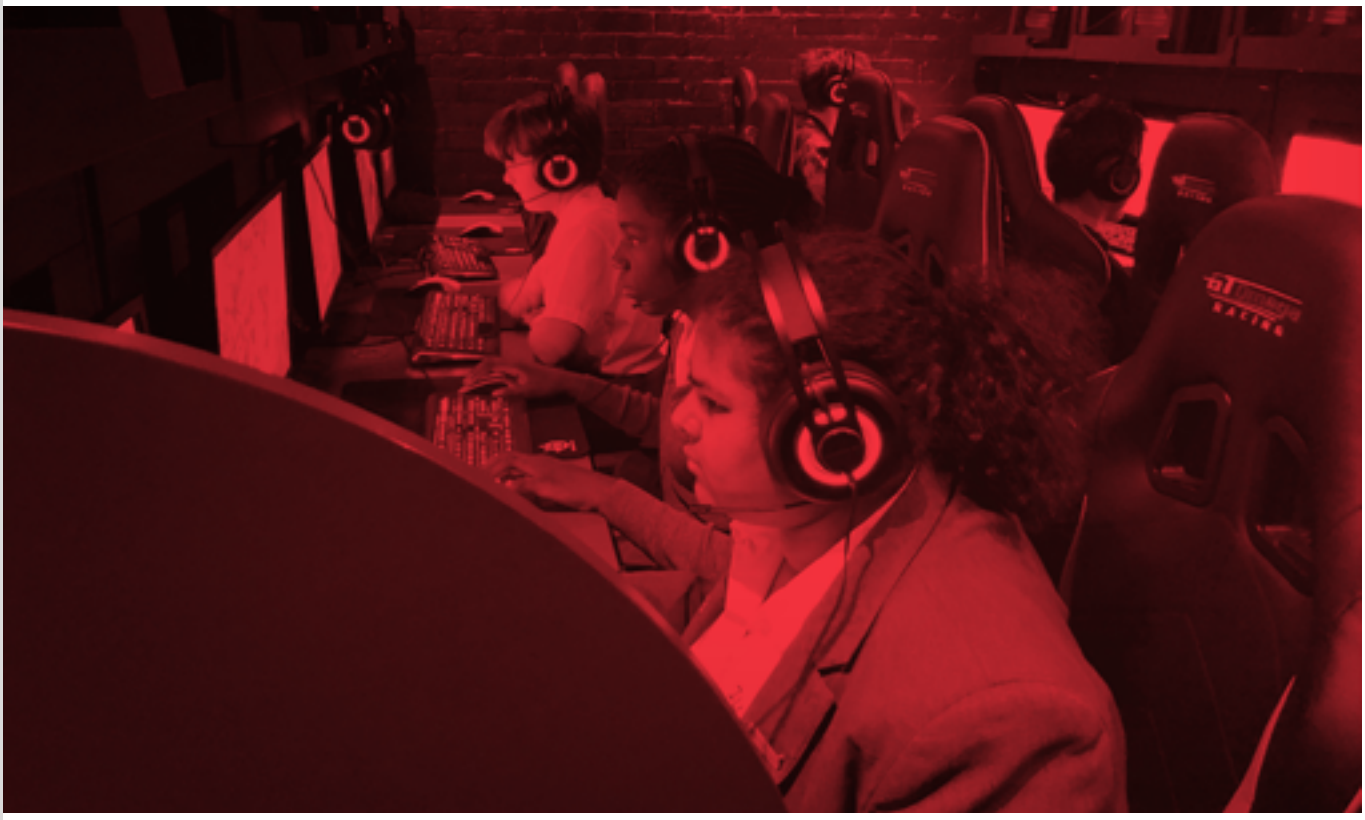
While the case studies highlight examples of impact on student confidence and self esteem, additional reports detail ways in which the tournament directly impacted students' further education choices, career decisions and opportunities. For example, these included:

- A student was offered a summer internship at an esports company as a direct result of their performance as a shoutcaster during the knockout stages
- Two students applied to Staffordshire University's esports degree after engaging with them during the regional qualifiers stage
- Students changing their GCSE option choices to include GCSE Computing, where previously they'd discounted this as an option for them

Girls in esports

The issue of how the tournament can engage more girls and inexperienced students with the 2019 tournament was discussed. The following conclusions and actions were drawn up as a result of all the feedback gathered.

Conclusion	Actions
Mixed teams should be implemented in the Esports Tournament 2019	Add 'behind the scenes roles' to the total team to encourage different pupils in friendship groups/girls to take part.
More awareness & visibility of esports in participating schoolhouses	Develop teacher resource pack with emphasis on encouraging girls, and advising teachers on how to recruit for those 'behind the scenes' roles across different subjects.
More familiarisation time should be given to schoolhouses for potential female participants	Encourage demo/ try-out areas for those students who aren't familiar with games/ esports.
	Develop esports iDEA badges & introduce in lessons.
	Incentivise mixed teams.
More female representation in the esports tournament in schools	Market esports coach role & talking heads to women in games, including at the Girl Gamer Esports Festival.
	Ensure a diverse representation of esports professionals in promo materials to distribute to schools.



Conclusions.

In conclusion, this study has found that involvement in esports team activities has a positive impact on interpersonal relationships and as a result builds confidence in young people to tackle other challenges. The perceived increase in their communication, team working skills and resilience has opened up the possibility of new activities and challenges which may not have been considered bef ore, thus allowing the positive impact of the tournament to penetrate other areas of their lives.

The impact of the tournament on the wider school community has been a significant finding of this study. Teachers reported consistently on high levels of interest, not just from the students involved, but also from the teaching staff and senior leadership teams. Providing an immersive experience into the world of esports and connecting schools directly with industry, enabled the teachers to upskill their own knowledge about the career opportunities available within the creative digital and video games industries. Additionally, it served to 're-energise' computing amongst the community, raising its profile as a subject and connecting with a diverse range of students, many of whom may not have otherwise engaged with extra-curricular activities.

It is clear that there is a place for esports in school education systems. Done well, it can help to not just engage our students with developing their digital skills and broader soft skills, but also enables them to aspire to career pathways that they may not have otherwise considered.

With Special Thanks.

- Ballyclare High School
- Cambridge Regional College
- Campion School
- De La Salle College
- Gildredge House School
- John F Kennedy Catholic School
- Kineton High School
- King Edward VI School
- Manchester Communication Academy
- Monkwearmouth Academy
- New College Swindon
- Pool Academy
- Shire Oak Academy
- Southend High School for Boys
- St John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy
- St Malachy's High School
- The Coleshill School
- The Crypt School
- The Studio Liverpool
- Townley Grammar

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- **PlayStation**
- **SEGA**
- **Blizzard Entertainment**
- **Creative Assembly**
- **Gfinity**
- **Belong by Game**
- **XMA-Viglen**
- **iDEA**

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