

**THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

**Developing the Quality of Personal and Social Education-Related Transition to Adulthood  
Courses for Young People with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities**

**being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the University of Hull**

**by**

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Abstract

The thesis examines the input offered to young people with LDD in further education, under the broad heading of transition to adulthood input. A range of research methods is used, combining to provide an understanding of what is offered in this work, and enabling suggestions to be made as to how transition to adulthood input might be judged, and improved. The thesis is in four parts:

Part One: Further Education: Chapter One describes the background to transition to adulthood input in FE. Chapter Two covers broader considerations, including philosophical and ethical issues, together with recent developments in FE and their impact upon the target courses. Chapter Three describes the present position in FE for young people with LDD.

Part Two: the PSE Foundations of Transition to Adulthood Studies: Chapter Four describes the theoretical and curricular influences upon this work. Chapter Five analyses PSE-related transition to adulthood curricular input, with a view to identifying common ground. Chapter Six attempts to clarify the difficulties surrounding assessment and evaluation in this work. Transition to adulthood's relationship to social psychology is confirmed, and Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive theory is suggested as the focal theory for this work.

Part Three: the Empirical Research: Chapter Seven provides an overview of the empirical research elements in the study. Chapter Eight describes a preliminary survey; Chapter Nine is concerned with the main survey, of transition to adulthood provision in three FE regions. Chapter Ten describes interviews with three Expert Witnesses, and Chapter Eleven describes interviews with two students groups.

Part Four: Discussion, Issues and Outcomes: Chapter Twelve provides interpretation and discussion of the empirical research. Chapter Thirteen takes this further, describing possible ways forward. These include a suggested curriculum for adulthood and a departmental quality profile to be used by course providers. Chapter Fourteen provides a summary of conclusions.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with the Personal and Social Education (PSE)-related courses in Further Education which are intended to advance the transition to adulthood of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), formerly referred to as special educational needs. Since the nineteen seventies there has been, for some young people, an element of post-sixteen education concerned with preparation for adulthood taught through distinct, now called discrete, courses or course elements. Such courses have come about partly as a consequence of a developing interest in social interactions through the nineteen seventies, and partly in continuation of an older tradition, that of training slower learners to be fit for work.

The courses and modules have developed pragmatically, in response to perceived needs on the part of the client group. Such courses and modules have continued to be offered against a background of social, economic, and educational changes. The client group has also changed; one outcome of the 1981 Education Act (DES 1981) was to bring young people with more extreme learning difficulties and disabilities into local Further Education colleges, when previously they might have attended post-sixteen facilities in schools, colleges for students with learning or other disabilities, training centres or day centres. The FE courses themselves have been viewed in different ways: as education for the world of work; education for a world of unemployment; education for morals, for health, for citizenship and currently, education for progression.

The social and educational changes of the nineteen eighties and nineties have had a considerable impact upon Further Education. All sectors of state-funded education are now subject to closer public scrutiny; issues of accountability relating to effectiveness and value for money are of increasing concern. Recent educational policies can be seen as important social interventions, designed to produce a workforce which has moved away from an earlier manufacturing and industrial base, towards a more technological and service-oriented one which is required to compete with global markets. Further Education has been

restructured in recent years to accommodate this new approach. PSE-related transition to adulthood courses have remained, and are now more likely to be subject to similar disciplines and scrutiny as are other, mainstream FE courses. This may prove to be a benefit, as it lessens the opportunity for poor quality courses.

An earlier study (Pavey 1994) showed that PSE for students with LDD was a variable provision dependent upon the resources, interests and involvement of individual lecturers. Since then materials for the teaching of PSE have become more widely available. However this study will show that because of fundamental difficulties relating to breadth, scope, and problems of assessment, there is reason to believe that this work still lacks clarity of structure and purpose, apart from that imposed by external accreditation requirements.

There is no agreed theoretical framework informing this area of work. Whereas at the time of the earlier study educators would find it necessary to develop their own understanding of PSE, with their own interpretation of content and means of delivery, this has now largely changed. The demands of accreditation, modularisation and accountability, have had a considerable effect on course structure and content, so that lecturers may not now be so free as they have been previously. However, the exposure of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses to scrutiny, accountability, and quality considerations may have the benefit of improving the quality of what is offered in this area.

Amidst the development of modularised, accredited, and progression-demonstrating courses, the basic issues of course content and assessment remain complex. The Tomlinson Report acknowledges the value of educational input to develop the skills for adult life, which is the remit of transition to adulthood courses, and identifies broad course areas or domains for young people with LDD (FEFC 1996, p.142). The Dearing Review of education for 16-19 year olds includes skills for adult life courses within the recommended structure (Dearing 1996c p.116-117). However, questions and issues concerning specific course content and assessment procedures are not discussed; they are left to those developing the courses.

The original assumption made by the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU 1981), that there is a common core of personal and social learning which can be clearly identified

and straightforwardly assessed, continues; however this study shows that this is not the case. There are a number of conceptual, philosophical and ethical issues which need to be addressed. Nevertheless, while theoretical and philosophical issues have remained unresolved, PSE-related courses have continued to be offered, following a development based on pragmatic and experiential lines.

In spite of theoretical and ideological difficulties, PSE-related transition to adulthood courses continue to be offered and are felt to be of value. Recent views of Further Education have assigned greater recognition and importance to them. If these courses are to be useful, then the limitations of learning difficulties and disabilities make it vital that the most relevant of learning experiences are offered. Students and lecturers deserve access to a better quality of provision than is made possible by reliance on an individual's resources. The questions of how relevant learning experiences are identified, and how the quality of transition to adulthood courses can be sustained and improved, have stimulated this study.

### The Purposes of the Study

The study explores the issues surrounding the question of quality in transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD, in Further Education. Two key questions are identified.

These are:

1. How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be judged?
2. How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD, be improved?

Transition to adulthood work in this context is seen as encompassing input, process and outcome.

These two key questions are related, since measures of success are needed before improvements can be identified. There have been many attempts to identify personal and social criteria pragmatically, without resolution of the wider issues. This study aims to arrive at a credible resolution of theoretical and ideological difficulties, and to offer a basis for improving the quality of PSE-related transition to adulthood (skills for adult life) courses, for

young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Within this broad aim, the purposes of the study are seen as, to:

1. Give an overview of the field, of the teaching of transition to adulthood skills to young people with LDD;
2. Consider the literature with a view to establishing the theoretical bases for personal and social education-related transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD;
3. Clarify the difficulties surrounding the assessment of transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD;
4. Consider recent approaches to assessment and evaluation and their possible application to the target courses, with a view to improving the quality of these courses;
5. Investigate through empirical research, and gather information about, the curricular content of transition to adulthood courses currently in place;
6. Investigate through empirical research, and gather information about, the evaluation and assessment processes used in transition to adulthood courses currently in place;
7. Investigate through empirical research, and gather information about, the quality measures used to maintain and improve standards in the target courses;
8. Identify from the research, directions for improving the quality of such courses.
9. Apply these findings in an attempt to construct a model of good PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

### The Plan of the Research

The research plan is structured to start from a broad enquiry, and then to narrow and sharpen in focus, with the intention of providing answers to the research questions, which are concerned with how the quality of the target courses may be judged and improved. The research is seen as taking place on three levels: a level based on the relevant literature, a level based on empirical, quantitative research and a level based on empirical, qualitative research.

The literature-based level draws on a wide variety of sources. The literature concerned with Further Education, and primarily the post-sixteen education of young people with LDD, forms the first literature source. The next major literature field is that concerning PSE, and transition to adulthood, and it becomes clear that this is an area in need of theoretical definition. Other literatures are involved; learning and moral development theory, curriculum theory, and socio-psychological theory all inform this study. The arguments against a

theoretical approach are also presented. Theory pertaining to research methodology informs the empirical research.

The quantitative research level is concerned with the outcomes of a range of postal surveys, carried out in established Further Education regions in England. These include pilot surveys and an initial, information-gathering survey. The starting point for this empirical research was a continuation of previous study, but its developed form as a comparative survey of three regions was influenced by the findings from the literature research, in addition to previous empirical research. The main quantitative research consists of postal surveys of three regions which share no common boundaries: Greater London, the East Midlands, and the North. In terms of their transition to adulthood input, no significant difference is found between the regions.

The qualitative research level considerably enhances the quantitative data by providing the views of Expert Witnesses and students. Transcriptions of two of the interviews with the Expert Witnesses are provided in the Appendices. These professionals were asked:

1. What needs to be borne in mind in the development of these (PSE-related transition to adulthood) courses? and
2. What do you see as the basis for quality in these courses; how can quality be judged, and improved?

Their answers were analysed according to a qualitative research procedure described in the literature. Discussion with the students took a more general tone, but included questions centred on their opinion of their courses, and what changes they would like to see in order for the courses to be better.

### The Structure of the Study

The study is organised into four parts:

Part One: Further Education. The foundations within Further Education of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses, up to and including the 1988 Education Reform Act (DES 1988), are described in Chapter One. Also described are the importance of key documents such as the Warnock Report (DES 1978) and A Basis for Choice (FEU 1979). The involvement of the Manpower Services Commission in changing the shape of Further

Education provision for young people with LDD is discussed, together with the impact of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) project on the transition from school to working life and adulthood (CERI 1983). The significant changes which occurred in 1981 are noted, including the 1981 Education Act (DES 1981), the International Year of the Disabled, the publication of the Macfarlane Report on Further Education (DES 1981a) and the publication of the Assessment of Performance Unit findings on the assessment of personal and social development (APU 1981).

By the end of the nineteen eighties the elements which inform transition to adulthood courses for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities were largely in place, but further changes were to come with the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992). Chapter Two discusses the present position of the target courses within the general context of Further Education, as it is now structured. The client group is described, and transition to adulthood as a curriculum focus is considered. Also discussed is the modern emphasis upon accountability and cost-effectiveness; aspects of assessment, performance indicators, and quality measures are discussed in the context of present day Further Education.

Chapter Three takes a wider view and considers in greater detail some issues concerned with the target courses. The research and the literature relating to transition to adulthood for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the courses designed to meet their perceived need, are examined. Criticism is made of some of the assumptions which underlie the target courses, and conceptual, philosophical and ethical issues are raised. The view ahead, based on initiatives originating with the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) and the Dearing Review of Education for 16-19 Year Olds (Dearing 1996c), and the current Inclusion debate, are considered.

Part Two: The PSE Foundations of Transition to Adulthood Courses: Chapter Four describes the theoretical background to PSE, presented in terms of background theory and focal theory. The range of theoretical associations is explored with the purpose of identifying a theoretical context for PSE, and its related field of transition to adulthood studies. The

contribution of Social Cognitive theory is discussed, and the possible location of PSE within the field of social psychology, as informed by social cognitive theory, is explored. Chapter Five analyses a number of curricula for PSE in order to identify common ground, and curricula for the transition to adulthood of young people with LDD are examined in detail. Chapter Six considers the difficulties surrounding the assessment of PSE, and seeks to clarify the issues in order to identify a useful approach. The particular implications for the client group and the target courses are discussed.

Part Three: Empirical Research: There are four elements to the empirical research. Chapter Seven provides an overview of these elements, describing the research literature, conceptual issues, and variables involved. The purposes of the study and the research plan are explored in greater detail in this chapter. Chapter Eight describes a preliminary, information-gathering study of transition to adulthood input; Chapter Nine takes this forward, providing a report of the main, information-gathering, quantitative research, encompassing surveys of three Further Education regions in England. The enquiry sets out to investigate practice in the field of transition of adulthood studies, and to make a comparison between the regions. Information is gathered about the nature and structure of PSE-related transition to adulthood input; assessment and evaluation, quality management, and curricula are explored. The results of the survey are reported and discussed concluding that, in terms of PSE-related transition to adulthood provision, there is no significant difference between the regions.

Chapter Ten describes the first qualitative element of the research, which reports interviews with three professionals writing or working in the field, termed Expert Witnesses. Bringing their own personal viewpoints to bear on the research questions, these respected professionals considerably enhance the understanding of transition to adulthood studies through their original perceptions and experience. A second qualitative element is described in Chapter Eleven in which two student groups discuss their experience of PSE-related transition to adulthood studies, within a Further Education college. Together the quantitative and qualitative elements of the research combine to provide a broad view of this complex field.

Part Four. Discussion, Issues, Outcomes and Conclusion. Chapter Twelve provides more detailed interpretation and discussion of the findings of the research. All the elements of the research are brought together in a consideration of the nature of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD in Further Education. The findings are applied to the nine objectives derived from the original research questions, and the outcomes of the research are summarised and analysed.

This analysis informs Chapter Thirteen, in which the findings are applied in order to determine suggestions for improving the quality of the target courses. There is further consideration of the theoretical context, the characteristics of quality are discussed in terms of Input, Process and Outcome, and there is discussion of some identified issues. A curriculum for adulthood is offered, together with a description of a possible quality evaluation process including a quality profile, for the target courses. Chapter Fourteen concludes the study with a summary of the conclusions from each chapter. Recommendations for further research are made, and the study closes with advice, derived from the research, to the teacher or lecturer practising in the field of PSE-related transition to adulthood studies.

From a combination of information-gathering approaches, some answers are provided as to how the quality of the target courses may be judged and improved. These, together with the embedding of the target courses in a theoretical and discipline context, the description of a curriculum for adulthood, and the formulation of an instrument for the assessment of quality in PSE-related transition to adulthood courses, fulfil the purposes of the study.

## CHAPTER ONE

### TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD COURSES IN FURTHER EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LDD: FOUNDATIONS

#### Introduction

For young adults with LDD, formerly described as special educational needs, the provision of mainstream Further Education has been relatively recent. This chapter shows how this development has come about, including the development of special transition to adulthood courses for this client group. Major items of educational legislation are discussed for their impact upon Further Education, and their influence upon the target courses in the study.

Also discussed are significant elements which informed the development of transition to adulthood courses in the nineteen seventies and eighties, such as the Warnock Report (DES 1978), the programme on the transition to adult and working life, originating with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (CERI 1983), and the influential Further Education Unit curriculum document, A Basis for Choice (FEU 1979). The changes brought about by the influence of the Manpower Services Commission including changes in curricular approach, are discussed.

The move towards the present position in the provision of transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD, is influenced by a number of relevant events in 1981, which are described in this chapter. The provision of such courses continues to develop until, at the end of the nineteen eighties, they are well established.

#### The Foundations of Transition to Adulthood Courses Within Further Education

The foundations for present-day post-16 PSE-related provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities were laid down in the 1944 Education Act, which declared the intention:

To afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and of the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including

practical instruction and training appropriate to their respective needs (Ministry of Education, 1944 Section 8.1(b), Taylor and Saunders 1965 p.91)

The 1944 Act provided for education in schools to the age of nineteen, if the student was not in another educational setting, and for county colleges to provide education for those not receiving it elsewhere.

The Crowther Report (Ministry of Education 1959) continued the call for the widespread setting up of county colleges and recommended broadening the range of courses on offer in order to attract more students. An early transition to adulthood curriculum may be discerned in the Report's affirmation that,

There are four strands that should be woven into the curriculum of county colleges: an appreciation of the adult world in which young workers suddenly find themselves; guidance for them in working out their problems of human relations and moral standards; development of their physical and aesthetic skills; and a continuance of their basic education, with a vocational bias where appropriate. (Ministry of Education 1959,p.455)

The Report continues,

There is not as yet enough experience to show in what proportions and by what methods these elements can best be combined into a satisfactory whole. (Ministry of Education 1959, p.455).

Part One of the study explores how the Further Education sector gained this experience, and the outcomes in terms of modern Further Education courses.

This broad, four stranded curriculum was recommended for the general student population; students with a wide range of LDD were not to be found in Further Education at that time. Johnstone (1995, p.1) points out that some opportunities, such as those provided by evening classes, had previously been available in Further Education for some young people with LDD. However, at the time of its publication the Crowther Report described Further Education as,

Basically a varied collection of plans for vocational training (Ministry of Education 1959 p. 370),

which it sought to develop into a coherent national system of practical education. Set in the context of education for trades, crafts and industries, the Report makes little mention of less able students. However, while county colleges themselves did not become a widespread service Further Education continued to develop, and the nineteen sixties and seventies saw

an increasing interest in, and expansion of, educational provision to meet the needs of young people with LDD.

McLure is dismissive of Further Education in the nineteen fifties and sixties, because of its failure to grasp the opportunity to develop a useful educational route encompassing vocational progression, as the Crowther Report had suggested (McLure 1991 p.8-9). During that period vocational training was seen as the business of industry rather than of education. McLure (ibid.) attributes change to the rise in unemployment, particularly among young people, which forced the government of the time to be seen to act.

The nineteen seventies saw an increasing awareness of the educational needs and potential of young people with LDD. The National Bureau for Handicapped Students (later called Skill, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities) was founded, providing a forum for educational discussion relevant to the post-sixteen client group. The Further Education Unit was set up providing curriculum guidance through its many key publications, which proved fundamental to the development of post-sixteen, PSE-related curricula in Further Education.

By 1977, Tudor describes a number of "interesting experiments" in Further Education courses for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, termed then as "mental handicap" (Tudor 1977, p.9). The courses were intended to reduce the disadvantage caused by handicap, and to offer an area of positive discrimination in favour of this client group. Tudor describes the setting up of such courses as frequently being in response to a crisis situation, where lack of provision for handicapped school leavers led to vocal objections from parents and voluntary support groups.

Baranyay describes similar input being offered in an Area Training Centre, where fifty percent of the time of younger trainees was spent in social training and recreation-type activities, described as Further Education (Baranyay 1976, p.52). Social training programmes in this setting included: basic academic skills; general knowledge; communication; sex education; training in relationships; simple citizenship; and community services. Other aspects of the programme included self help skills, and personal health training.

Although it can be seen that many of the elements of such a curriculum were already in place, Blake (1988, p.237-8) and Blake and Blake (1988p. 80-4) trace the development of the post-sixteen curriculum for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, through the initiatives arising from the involvement of the Manpower Services Commission which came into force in the nineteen seventies, and which included elements of social and related skills training. Blake and Blake (1988, p.83) see the social and lifeskills curriculum as developing from the liberal studies provision for traditional apprentices, with the term 'skills' replacing 'studies' so as to appear less academically biased.

This view may not take sufficient account of the 'experimental' bridging courses described by Tudor (1977), which sought to provide PSE for post-sixteen handicapped students. Nor does their view take account of the lifeskills work which had taken place in America, or of the influence of Hopson and Scally's Lifeskills Teaching Programmes (Lifeskills Associates 1979-1988); the importance of these are described in Chapter Four, or of the development of social psychology during the nineteen seventies. These all provided underlying concepts which influenced the development of PSE.

The development of social skills, or PSE-related curricula for young people with LDD in Further Education, arose therefore from a wide range of influences and attitudes which became more powerful through the nineteen seventies. A changing view of these students and of their educational potential was supported by the growing assertiveness of parents and voluntary organisations, who sought better opportunities for their children and client groups. Rising youth unemployment meant that older certainties about work and education were challenged. PSE-related input was developed partly with the expectation of making young people more employable, drawing on the ideas from within the lifeskills movement and developments in the fields of psychotherapy and of social psychology for inspiration.

By the end of the nineteen seventies the education of young people with LDD was changing considerably, for in 1978 the strands concerned with the education for adulthood of young people with LDD, were drawn together within the focus of the Warnock Report (DES 1978). More than two decades after its publication, this document is still seen as

instrumental in establishing the approaches which inform current provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, including PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses.

### The Warnock Report

The Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People, commonly known as the Warnock Report (DES, 1978), laid the foundation for special educational provision as it is presently understood. The Report considered the scope of special education, including the transition to adult life. The term 'special educational needs' came into use through the Report, replacing earlier categories of handicap with a focus on the individual learning needs of the particular child. The underlying philosophy and many of the recommendations of the Warnock Report formed the basis of the 1981 Education Act, which was a major item of educational legislation, changing significantly the approach to education for young people with LDD.

In taking a view of the whole range of special education, the Warnock committee considered Further Education, and the transition to adult life. Early in the Report the purpose of education and the definition of quality in education are described:

The criterion by which to judge the quality of educational provision is the extent to which it leads a pupil towards the twin goals which we have described, towards understanding, awareness of moral values and enjoyment and towards the possibility of independence (DES 1978)

This broad definition has links with the PSE-related curricula which were to develop within Further Education in the nineteen eighties.

Of Further Education itself, the Report is significant in advocating provision in local colleges for a much wider population of young people with special educational needs. While focusing on employability, it also considers the possibility of education for unemployment. The Report acknowledges the need for education in social competence for young people with special educational needs, in order to enhance their employability, calling for,

A positive approach to helping young people acquire the self-confidence and skill to manage their personal life as independently as possible and to cope with the conditions which they will find in Further Education or at work. (DES 1978)

The report therefore endorses a PSE-related approach in Further Education courses for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

### The OECD Initiative

An important stimulus for the developing interest in transition to adulthood input, was a project begun in 1978, by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This programme was concerned with the education, integration, and transition to adult and working life of handicapped adolescents. The project's findings were disseminated through the involvement of the Further Education Unit (CERI 1983, FEU 1987, FEU 1988, FEU 1989).

The OECD project generated a number of publications which informed the post-sixteen provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities. In terms of transition to adulthood, its conclusions describe "Coming of Age" as covering four main areas:

- Personal autonomy and independence;
- Productive activity;
- Social interaction, community participation, recreational and leisure activities;
- Roles within the family (CERI 1991, p.9),

areas which are clearly PSE-related. *Pathways for Learning* (OECD 1989 p.105-106), which focuses on curricular issues, emphasises the growth of personal and social educational input in the transition to adulthood. It notes the search led by the Further Education Unit in the United Kingdom, for a "new pedagogy" which would be student centred, and more suited to the needs of young adults. This "new pedagogy" was expressed in the key publication "A Basis for Choice" (FEU 1979).

### A Basis for Choice

Pring (1987) describes "A Basis For Choice" as,

One of the most influential curriculum documents to be written in the past few decades (Pring 1987, p. 13);

Other sources agree; Blake and Blake (1988, p.82) describe "A Basis for Choice" as setting the pattern for subsequent vocational training. Tribe considers the document to be the inspiration for the development of "core skills" as a curricular element (Tribe 1996, p. 13). The twelve aims offered as a core curriculum are shown in Appendix I.

Pring considers "the "ABC Curriculum" (A Basis for Choice) to have two significant features; the first being a focus upon personal and social qualities, including attitudes, experience and knowledge; the second being the positive response from schools and colleges, which greeted the publication of the document (Pring 1987, p.13). Confirming the impact of "A Basis for Choice" Pring says of these two features,

It is as though they have articulated an educational way forward that had previously been seen only dimly (Pring 1987, p.13-14).

A Basis for Choice received governmental support and therefore set the curricular tone for much of the work which was to take place with young people with special educational needs, in colleges of Further Education. Subsequent FEU publications continued and developed the theme.

#### The Involvement and Influence of the Manpower Services Commission

Further Educational provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities was considerably changed by the involvement of the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). This body had been formed in 1974, with the intention of bringing together all the main mechanisms within the labour market (Farley, 1985, p.76) and a remit to reform industrial training (Finn, 1985, p.115). The Youth Opportunities Programme was proposed by the MSC in 1977, and was replaced by the Youth Training Scheme in 1983. Gleeson notes that, as a result of MSC funding, and stimulated by a dramatic rise in youth unemployment, Further Education was able to widen its intake to include the "unemployed and unemployable" (Gleeson 1985 p.61);

The curriculum of which is largely given over to generic skills training, work experience and 'life skills' training (Gleeson *ibid.*).

While Blake and Blake (1985, p.80-4) note the MSC influence on the special needs curriculum in Further Education, Gleeson (1985, p. 67) and others consider the matter to

have greater implications. The involvement of the MSC in providing training for employment, promoted a political educational view of youth unemployment as a failure of the existing education system, rather than a failure of industry, investment, and the British capitalist system (Finn 1985, p.118). Gleeson points out that social skills and work skills training within MSC initiatives place responsibility for their unemployment with the unemployed; the emphasis is on adaptation and survival, and the social systems and economic circumstances leading to youth unemployment are not questioned (Gleeson 1985, p.65-66). Within this context, social skills and work skills training become mechanisms for control and behaviour management of the would-be workforce, a view reiterated by Hollands (1990, p.45).

However, for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, the MSC initiatives provided new opportunities. In a report on students with special needs in Further Education, HMI ( DES 1989b, p.2) point out that the MSC initiatives, such as the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative for fourteen to eighteen year olds in schools, and the Certificate of Pre Vocational Education (CPVE), were designed for young people with a wide range of abilities including those with moderate learning difficulties.

A greater emphasis on vocational training in colleges of FE brought other opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities through the new initiative represented by National Vocational Qualifications, in which transition to adulthood elements play a part. However, Pratley (1988 p.64-65) felt at the time that the competency-based approach of NVQs would operate against a view which was beginning to emerge, developing from the FEU core curriculum and including the broader view, that there was,

A consensus that employable young people should share certain insights, experiences and knowledge about the world (Pratley 1988 p.65).

She continues:

It would appear to be widely accepted by both employers and educationalists that the whole person is more than the sum of the individually accredited parts (Pratley 1988 *ibid.*).

## Changing Perceptions of Young People with LDD

Johnstone (1995, p.1-4) presents an overview of the development of Further Educational provision for young people with LDD. He considers this development, historically, to have progressed through three models, representing attitudes to the education of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

a) The medical care model, in which young people are viewed in terms of their disabilities, was the earliest model. This translates into a view of young people as medical cases, even as 'sick'; and in need of treatment (Johnstone 1995, p.4).

b) The needs and segregation-based model became important during the nineteen seventies. The Plowden Report on Children and Their Primary Schools (DES 1967) described the inappropriateness of contemporary categories of educational needs, which were defect based, and cited the 1966 report by the British Psychological Society, which recommended that the education of children in hospitals for the subnormal - and in many cases the children were not educationally subnormal at all - should be taken over by the Department of Education and Science (DES 1967, p. 298). Furneaux (1973) describes how this change took place with the Education (Handicapped Children) Act of 1970, implemented in 1971:

In consequence, a hundred years after the passing of the Education Act of 1870 (which set out to establish a national system of education), universal compulsory education became a reality and the absolute right to full education for all children without any exceptions was legally established (Furneaux 1973 p.13).

The Warnock Report (DES 1978) and the 1981 Education Act (DES 1981a) moved forward the debate about pupils' special educational requirements. Children's difficulties were to be seen in terms of their resulting learning needs, and provision devised to meet them through statements of special educational needs. The Warnock Report recommended that pupils previously described as educationally subnormal or in need of remedial education should be described as:

Children with learning difficulties (DES 1978 p. 338).

However even though the Plowden Report wished only to provide a descriptive function through the use of its recommended terminology, categorisation continued to exist with its

identification of pupils as having mild, moderate or severe learning difficulties, or specific learning difficulties (DES 1978 p.43). In some areas education became segregated along these lines. Although the processes and legislation following on from the Warnock Report represented an advance from the medical model, they continued to reinforce the view that learning difficulties were the result of within-child deficits.

Nevertheless, the 1981 Education Act (DES 1981a) was important for placing within educational legislation a concept of educational difficulties which enabled young people to be identified, discussed and provided for in terms of their learning needs rather than their differences and difficulties. This was a radical change, and subsequent educational legislation has not rescinded this view. Categories of difficulty and disability may still be used, but discussion continues to be framed in terms of individual learning needs and their effect on the pupil's access to the National Curriculum.

c) The rights-based model: Mittler (2000, p.3) points out that the within child, defect model, (which takes the view that the child is failing to learn because of his or her own deficiencies), is still influential, distilled within the existing SEN Code of Practice (DFE 1994). However the impetus provided by the Warnock Report and the 1981 Education Act towards rights-based equality of educational access has continued, with the development of the trend towards inclusion. The forthcoming SEN and Disability Rights in Education Bill, together with the new draft SEN Code of Practice (DfEE 2000) reinforce inclusive practice. However they draw back from the full inclusion model endorsed in the further education context by Barton and Corbett (1993 p.18), allowing for parents' choice regarding the education of their children in special schools.

Current educational legislation is still therefore based on the identification of weaknesses within the pupil, which are described and then compensated for; this is the needs and segregation based model, and it is likely that many people would not see anything wrong with it. However Barton and Corbett (1993, p.15) in discussing inclusion practice in FE, show that the rights-based model is different, because learner support is available as a result of a request from the learner and is available to all, without recourse to labelling or categorisation. The rights based model therefore represents a humanitarian step forward,

encouraging a view of pupils with wide-ranging learning needs as falling within the normal range, and having equal rights of access to opportunities and resources.

### 1981: Turning Points

The 1981 Education Act (DES 1981a) does not discuss Further Education as an entity. The Parliamentary Committee Review of the Implementation of the Education Act 1981 Third Report (DES 1987) recognised an anomaly in educational provision resulting from the exclusion of Further Education from the Act, since statements of special educational needs as instigated under the Act, applied to a pupil in school but not to one in Further Education (DES 1987, p.42). This meant that rights embodied in a statement of special educational needs would lapse for a pupil in Further Education. The Parliamentary Review Committee called for equal conditions to apply to all educational provision for young people with special educational needs, between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. A call for equality of educational provision is also made in the Tomlinson Report, where it is recommended that the establishment of a single post-sixteen funding agency should be explored (FEFC 1996, p.182). This is now set to take place with the establishment of the Learning Skills Council (DfEE 1999).

1981 also saw the publication of the Macfarlane Report on education for sixteen to nineteen year olds (DES 1981a), reviewing the relationship between school, Further Education and training. The call was then as it continued to be, for more, and higher quality, vocational training, at reasonable cost without dismantling the system of existing academic qualifications (DES 1987, Cunningham 1989).

The Macfarlane Report recognised the need for courses for young people with special educational needs, and expected these students to be in local Further Education or tertiary colleges. Tertiary colleges as such did not become a widespread provision; however, many other colleges perform a tertiary function, so that the breadth of courses originally expected in a tertiary colleges is similar to that covered in many local Further Education colleges today (DES 1989a).

1981 was significant for two further elements which informed PSE-related courses for post-sixteen students with learning difficulties and disabilities. The first was the publication of the findings of the Assessment of Performance Unit, relating to the assessment of PSE (APU 1981). This report concluded that PSE could not be assessed, but provided a 'map of the territory', or framework, to be of help to those working in this area. However, one effect of this report may have been to confirm the legitimacy of the work, while reducing concerns about assessing it.

A second, and more public influence on the development of post-sixteen educational provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, was the designation of 1981 as the International Year of the Disabled; this raised public and educational awareness. The years that followed saw a growth in educational provision for young people with LDD. By the time of the Education Reform Act (DES 1988), which provided the next major legislative change in Further Education, transition to adulthood courses were becoming more frequent in colleges of Further Education and tertiary colleges.

#### The Education Reform Act, 1988

Further education is addressed in part II of the Education Reform Act (DES 1988). Colleges were given greater powers of self-management, including disbursement of funding, and college governing bodies were required to be re-formed, with greater powers and greater involvement of local business representatives and employers. While they were still responsible to the Local Education Authority, colleges were given the opportunity to become corporate bodies, and limited companies. One intention was that colleges should become freer to respond to local education and training needs, accepting training contracts from a range of sources, and increasing their quality of provision through competition with other colleges for such contracts. Morris, however, describes the Act as having a particular political purpose:

The Education Reform Act has been only one of several pieces of legislation expressly designed to reduce the powers of local authorities (Morris 1988, p.21).

As Pratley points out,

There is little specific mention of the Further Education curriculum in the Act, and certainly nothing to parallel the arrangements being enacted to determine the school curriculum (Pratley 1988, p.61);

it remained for the Further Education Unit to indicate a curriculum framework.

Towards a Framework for Curriculum Entitlement (FEU, 1989) notes that the procedures described in the framework for entitlement had been proposed as early as 1981, but tended only to be used with disadvantaged learners, who had not previously been provided for. The document argues that all post-sixteen education should now include the following procedures: learner-centredness; maximised accessibility; integrated curriculum; guidance and counselling; personal development; optimised progression; and equality of opportunity and experience. The recommended post-sixteen curriculum emphasises PSE-related input. However, the implementation of such a curriculum was superseded by the effects upon Further Education curricula, of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992).

### Conclusion

The years from 1944 to 1988 brought about the integration of the education of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities into the mainstream educational system, an important educational advance which occurred within the context of other important educational changes. One aspect of this development in special needs education was the increased interest in, and deployment of, courses within Further Education which offered PSE-related elements, largely concerned with the transition to adult life. The idea of education for adulthood was not, of itself, a new one; what was new, was the increasing inclusion of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, within the mainstream Further Education sector.

Through the nineteen eighties there was considerable interest in this aspect of Further Educational provision. The young people themselves provided for the first time a significant client group in local sector colleges. Increased awareness of personal development issues in a range of settings contributed to, and informed, PSE-related

teaching. Courses were widely self-developed, and depended on individual initiative and resources (Pavey 1994). Transition to adulthood courses for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities became, during these years, a growth industry.

It is possible that the provision of such transition to adulthood courses was, to some extent, a response to the difficult problem of knowing what to offer students with LDD, since the usual type of Further Education courses would not seem to be available to them. This view is perhaps unfair to those teachers and lecturers who were, and are, sincerely trying to make independent daily life more accessible for their students. However, fundamental issues underlying this work remain for the most part, unexamined.

The next chapter considers transition to adulthood studies as a curricular element. The literature concerned with transition to adulthood initiatives in Further Education is explored, and fundamental ethical and philosophical issues are considered. The debate between an inclusive approach and one favouring discrete courses is reviewed, and the lead given to Further Education by the publication of the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) and the Dearing Review (Dearing 1996c) is discussed.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD COURSES:**  
**SOME BROADER CONSIDERATIONS**

Introduction

Chapter One describes the development of post-16 Further Education for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, up to the end of the nineteen eighties. This chapter considers the literature informing transition to adulthood studies, and the philosophical implications of some of its underlying tenets. There is little research directly addressing the issues of transition to adulthood; relevant research is drawn from a wider area, providing insights which help to develop understanding of the target courses.

The Tomlinson Report points out that there is an economic value to society in encouraging the personal and social independence of young people with LDD (FEFC 1996, p.137) . This chapter looks more closely at the transition to adulthood courses which purport to do this. Transition to adulthood as a curricular element is discussed, and the lead given to Further Education in 1996 by the publication of Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) and the Dearing Review (Dearing, 1996c) is considered.

As the present government develops the concepts and practices surrounding the inclusion in mainstream education of young people with LDD, the debate about educational inclusion is explored. The arguments for and against discrete courses for young people with LDD in Further Education, which are the subject of this study, are considered.

In discussing transition to adulthood input the difficulties with underlying concepts and with terminology, together with the difficulties regarding curriculum content and assessment, are noted. The chapter concludes with some general observations.

## A Consideration of Relevant Research

A considerable amount of literature has been generated as a result of interest in the developing curricular area of Further Education for young people with LDD, but as Bradley, Dee and Wilenius (1994) point out,

While a search of relevant literature yields a great number of references, it soon becomes clear that the field is dominated by discourse rather than research, by conjecture rather than evidence, by intuition rather than evaluation. The literature reveals a wealth of exhortation to action, but very little in the way of consensus as to the direction this action should take. (Bradley, Dee and Wilenius 1994, p. 53)

Zetlin makes a similar point in discussing the implications for education programmes, arising from a review of the literature on community functioning and adaptation of mildly retarded adults. She notes that research has not provided educators with many answers, to help them to prepare precise and relevant curricula (Zetlin 1988, p.87).

Bradley, Dee and Wilenius point out that matters are complicated by a lack of agreement as to the definitions and conceptual models which operate within this field, and by the lack of an adequate theoretical base for considerations of disability and learning difficulty Bradley, Dee and Wilenius (1994, p.1). This criticism may be construed as equally applicable to the more specific curriculum area of transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD. They also note that,

The most significant absentees in the literature's treatment of transition, particularly this country, are the young people themselves, their choices and their experiences. There is now a need for more research into what actually happens in transition, rather than the discussion of principles which has so far dominated. (Bradley, Dee and Wilenius 1994, p. 45)

Bradley, Dee and Wilenius call for more sustained development work on appropriate curricula for transition; Zetlin (1988) reaches a similar conclusion.

While several studies focus on the transition from school to college, or transition to the adult world, there is little available research which is directly concerned with transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD in Further Education. It therefore becomes necessary at times to draw information from research which pertains to a wider context. Some surveys and reviews of literature are of relevance, and there are also a number of reports on curriculum initiatives (Archer 1990, Corbett 1991, Burgess 1977, Diggles 1978, Gholam 1993, Harris and Whittaker 1991, Varley 1982). Early reports are sketchy,

describing the early stages in the setting up of transitional courses (Burgess 1977 and Diggles 1978); later reports are more detailed, exploring aspects of an established area of curriculum input. Such descriptions of curriculum initiatives could be considered as reports of a kind of action research, although evaluation may be weak. Both surveys and action research are hampered by the difficulties of assessing and evaluating the outcomes of intervention in the area of transition to adulthood for young people with LDD.

The research undertaken with the purpose of informing the Tomlinson Committee (FEFC 1996) is of considerable value, providing as it does the most comprehensive view to date, of the provision of Further Education for young people with LDD. The background research consists of: a study of the law relating to this provision (Beachcroft Stanleys 1996); a review of the research literature (Bradley, Dee and Wilenius 1994); a survey of the provision for young people with LDD in Further Education (Meager, Evans and Dench 1996); and a report of the views of students (SCPR 1996).

The most important and comprehensive review of the relevant literature is provided by Bradley, Dee and Wilenius (1994), who consider present Further Educational provision for students with LDD, including present funding arrangements. Also of relevance to this study are their discussions of the transitional process, the assessment process, and quality issues.

Zetlin's review is of importance because it identifies a number of points which have significant implications for educators and programme developers. The most important conclusions from the point of view of this study, are that: success or failure in adapting to community living are not inherent in the individual but are the product of many interacting variables; that different communities have different criteria for success (Zetlin 1988, p. 87); and particularly, that:

No simple formula for prediction has been established which can be relied upon to separate in advance those who will achieve satisfactory adaptations and those who will fail (Zetlin 1988, *ibid.*).

The implication for educators is that assumptions should not be made about how young people will perform as adults in the community; yet such predictive judgements may be fundamental to the transition to adulthood curriculum offered to young people with LDD, and

such judgements may be overt or covert. The nine points derived from Zetlin's review are listed in full in Appendix II.

Surveys of relevance to the study of transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD, include those by Harris (1981), Corrie (1984), Thomas (1988), Bradford (1990), and Stowell (1987). Closer studies of groups of colleges include Dee and Lee (1984), Dye and Morris (1991) and the HMI report, Students with Special Needs in Further Education (DES 1989b). Life skills or PSE are consistently identified as an important curricular element, although little mention is made of transition to adulthood courses themselves. Assessment processes are revealed as reliant upon professional judgement, with the development in some cases, of profiling.

A survey of the needs of young adults with physical disabilities, two thirds of whom had additional mental handicap, is reported by Thomas (1988). A comparison of health needs and social skills needs is made. The survey is rather unusual in this field of study, because it uses a control group of young people without LDD. Thomas found that young people with physical difficulties are significantly more likely to experience severe social difficulties than are their able-bodied peers. He concludes,

The extent of the social difficulties for people with disabilities is of sufficient magnitude to warrant intervention, yet structure(d) programmes for social training tailored specifically for these needs are not generally included as part of the educational curriculum. It is suggested that these training programmes should form an integral part of the programme of independence training available for young people with physical difficulties (Thomas 1988, p. 25).

Bradford (1990) surveys the demand for Further Education college courses, among school leavers with LDD. He finds that the greatest demand is employment led, for courses offering basic education and vocational skills with work experience. For those with moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties, the demand is for bridging courses, and for those with severe learning difficulties the demand is for link courses with a residential element, and part-time courses continuing after the age of nineteen (Bradford 1990, p.24). Bradford does not indicate whether 'demand', or take-up, is linked to the availability of courses, but he does report a strong wish for progression within courses (Bradford, *ibid.*).

HMI identifies a common curricular core of literacy, numeracy, personal care and social and life skills, among courses for young people with LDD, with an emphasis on preparation for adult life among courses for students with severe learning difficulties. (DES 1989b, p.19) HMI has found the written aims of many special needs courses to be vague, and to underestimate student potential (DES 1989b, p.18-19). The report describes the lack of curriculum models available for the provision of special needs courses, and a lack of confidence among professionals regarding curriculum development (DES 1989b, p.21). Descriptors of excellence are recommended as a means of developing evaluative rigour. Such weaknesses seem to be a continuing characteristic of courses for young people with LDD, since similar concerns about curriculum (FEFC 1996, p.96), assessment (FEFC 1996, p.73-86) and professional development (FEFC 1996, p.97-100; p.194-198), may be found in the Tomlinson Report .

#### Transition to Adulthood: A Focus for Learning

Fish (1990, p.4) considers that programmes for the transition to adulthood, particularly for those students with severe learning difficulties, should include opportunities for the development and sustaining of personal and social independence, and employment skills. Since earlier developments in the nineteen seventies, the Further Education curriculum for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities has largely been PSE-related. 'Special' curricula, and more recently curriculum modules, may not be described as personal and social development, but as curricula which bridge the gap between child and adult identity. In effect they constitute PSE, set now within the context of "progression".

PSE input within transition to adulthood courses was endorsed in many Further Education Unit publications of the later nineteen seventies and the nineteen eighties, some intended for students with moderate learning difficulties, and some for students with severe learning difficulties (FEU/DES/NFER 1975, FEU 1982, FEU 1984, Hutchinson and Tennyson, 1986). The importance, for the development of Further Education for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, of "A Basis for Choice" (FEU 1979) has been discussed in the previous chapter; the twelve aims offered as a core curriculum are shown in Appendix

I. The Further Education Unit publications were key documents of their time, presenting development to adulthood in terms of personal and social skills and understanding, and providing a foundation for the development of transition to adulthood input.

The nineteen eighties saw the exercise of a great deal of thought and commentary about the provision of Further Education for young people with LDD, much of this stimulated by, or related to, the above publications (Beazley-Richards and Bailey, 1986; Bradley, 1986; Huxley, 1986; [FEU 1992]). Overviews are given (Bradley and Hegerty, 1981; Society of Education Officers, 1986; Cooper, 1988; Lowe, 1988; Fish, 1989); curricular frameworks and models are offered (Johns, 1983; Dee, 1986; Mansell, 1986; FEU 1986; Squires, 1987; Galletley 1989) and management issues are discussed (Drysdale 1986; Dee, 1988). The emerging picture is one of professionals involved in constructing working practices within a new, developing sector. The value of social, adulthood and life skills within the developing curriculum is a common theme, as is the need for further professional training in order to meet the emerging, perceived needs of this client group. The students themselves are rarely heard from.

Fish (1990, p.3) identifies transition as taking place over the period between the last years of compulsory schooling, and the early years of employment and independent living. He draws upon the OECD conclusion described in Chapter One which describes "Coming of Age" as covering the four main areas of: personal autonomy and independence; productive activity; social interaction, community participation, recreational and leisure activities; and roles within the family (CERI 1991 p.9). These areas are clearly related to PSE, and their relevance to modern transition to adulthood courses within Further Education, is endorsed by Carpenter (1996).

During the nineteen nineties, the experience gathered in the previous decade provided a foundation for new curriculum structures, influenced by Further Education Funding Council requirements. While inclusive education is becoming an important feature within Further Education (Johnstone 1995, McGinty and Fish 1992), discrete, PSE-related transition to adulthood courses continue to be offered to young people with LDD. McGinty and Fish point out that,

Separate courses have often been very unclear in their aims (McGinty and Fish 1992, p. 60)

Their own model for transition to adulthood draws on the OECD model described, (CERI 1991 p.9) while seeking an inter-agency approach in order to ensure effectiveness and continuity in the provision of a transition to adulthood programme.

In discussing the educational setting of transition to adulthood input for young people with severe learning difficulties, Griffiths (1994) states,

When a young person reaches the age of sixteen and moves outside the framework of the National Curriculum, the skills and competencies necessary for living and working as independently as possible in the community will expand to take over a much larger part of the curriculum for transition (Griffiths 1994, p. 26)

As has been described in the previous two chapters, this expansion has been noticeable during the last twenty years, growing to occupy a particular niche in Further Education. The term 'transition to adulthood' is now clearly associated with special courses for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the area of work may now be considered to be established. However, there are a number of philosophical and ethical points about this work which remain unresolved. The assumptions and attitudes which may prevail within a generally approved transition to adulthood curriculum, deserve closer scrutiny.

### Philosophical Considerations and Ethical Issues

Amongst all the thoughts and words generated about the transition to adulthood of young people with LDD, there has been little discussion about the philosophical and ethical implications of this work. The teacher's right to teach, to intervene by increasing knowledge and skills and by changing attitudes, is based on social beliefs that the intervention offered will improve the quality of life both for individuals and for society as a whole. Underlying this is a conception of society which may or may not be considered or questioned by the teacher or lecturer, although most would probably claim to have, at heart, a concern for the well being of the young adult and society.

Corbett and Barton (1992) identify several philosophical and ethical issues, arising from special education in general and from transition to adulthood and social skills courses,

in particular. They consider that young people with LDD are marginalised in society, and that their experiences of adulthood are consequently impoverished (Corbett and Barton 1992, p.25-26). They note that education for "normality" which is offered to young people with LDD, is not offered to their peers, for whom adulthood is considered to be implicit, and they consider that the underlying assumption of "caring" is in fact oppressive, since the most intimate and personal aspects of the young people's lives are open to scrutiny in a way which may not be acceptable to others (Corbett and Barton 1992, p.27-28). The question of intrusion is also raised by Scott and Johnstone (1990), in discussing the ethics of researching into the lives and relationships of young adults with severe learning difficulties.

This question of intrusion, and its potential for oppression, is examined further by Corbett and Barton (1992). Of the type of courses which pursue aspects of learning concerned with social and emotional functioning, which would include PSE-related transition to adulthood courses, they state:

We maintain that such a curricular focus is oppressive for it forces an unreasonable notion of normality and fosters extreme self-consciousness. Under the guise of empowerment, individuals are exposed to revealing their innermost feelings in a context in which there is a relationships of unequals (Corbett and Barton 1992, p. 29.)

The 'unreasonable notion of normality' refers to a fundamental, if largely unvoiced, assumption in many such courses, that the responsibility for integrating successfully into mainstream society, rests with the individual. This removes from society the responsibility to adjust, or change established attitudes.

Corbett and Barton are critical of social skills training, noting that,

Too often the rhetoric may be empowerment, but the results are control (Corbett and Barton 1992, p. 44),

supporting the argument that the purpose of such input is to produce social compliance. They note also the professional urge to simplify learning into manageable proportions (Corbett and Barton 1992, p.30), and the judgements of inferiority which may underlie programmes based on teaching or training for acceptable behaviour (Corbett and Barton 1992, p.27-28).

In considering the assessment of PSE, which is also relevant to the transition to adulthood courses under study, Ryder and Campbell (1988) note the difficulties, but declare also that,

It is unethical to quantify students' dispositions and emotion according to predetermined criteria (Ryder and Campbell 1988, p. 130).

Although they do not discuss why this should be so, the comment may be illuminated by Corbett and Barton's (1992) identification of professional over-simplification, intrusion, and the possibility of assumption of inferiority on the part of the student (Corbett and Barton op.cit.). There is certainly a kind of manipulation involved, and this in itself may be considered as unethical, particularly where the individuals concerned may have limited understanding.

Ryder and Campbell's (1988, p.130-1) solution is that students should themselves develop the criteria for their own personal and social assessment, in negotiation with teachers and lecturers. Although this may be more ethical, it does not take account of the main reason why procedures to determine social and personal maturity and progress are used, which is to provide information for the management of resources.

The call for more involvement of students in the development and assessment of transition to adulthood courses is also a feature of more recent texts (Bradley, Dee and Wilenius 1994) Tomlinson, (1996) and Zetlin (1988). However, Corbett and Barton (1992) note that while the rhetoric of self-advocacy and empowerment is appealing, control largely remains with the professionals involved (Corbett and Barton 1992, p.44). It is likely that this will continue to be the case with current structures for assessing PSE-related transition to adulthood courses.

The transition to adulthood course is expected to be a source of empowerment for the young person. However, an early analysis of approaches to continuing education (Cunningham, 1982) identifies tensions between credit-bearing courses and those with the intention of liberating or empowering the student. Describing how accreditation requirements can influence the development of courses, Cunningham notes:

Educators can knowingly disregard a valued part of learning simply because it cannot be reduced to measurements. One may see humanists practising as behaviourists casting

nontraditional credit bearing programs in terms of competency- or performance-based models (Cunningham 1982);

Such tensions continue to be a concern in the current emphasis on accreditation requirements, and their influence on the structuring of modern Further Education. It remains an issue whether such courses are, in fact, empowering, or merely controlling.

Further criticism of social skills training comes from Hollands in studying the off-the-job element within Manpower Services Commission/ Youth Training Scheme Courses. This element is intended to counter youth unemployment by equipping young people for work, and includes PSE-related input (Hollands 1990, p44-73). As clients, the students involved are not identified as belonging within a particular category of special educational needs, but include those who have not gained qualifications in school, for a number of reasons. The study is of particular interest because it describes the students' own reactions to what Hollands refers to as,

The dreaded life and social skills class (Hollands 1990, p. 59).

Hollands notes that the students criticise the social skills and personal development courses from a common-sense point of view (Hollands 1990, p.63). They do not consider themselves deficient in the necessary skills and cultures for the work which they seek, which Hollands describes as "working class" jobs and which would presumably include factory, manual and low-scale retail or clerical work, and they find the courses boring and irrelevant (Hollands 1990, p.73). Hollands considers that such courses represent liberal-progressive forms which are "foisted" upon working-class young adults, and to which they are, understandably, resistant (Hollands 1990, p.72). He sees the courses as repackaging existing skills, reinforcing an inappropriate concept of deficiency among the young clients (Hollands 1990, p.48/49), and offering them the exchange of discipline for the chance of a job (Hollands 1990, p.60). He criticises,

The absurd categorisation of everyday activities into special work skills that one supposedly needs to learn (Hollands 1990, p. 63),

a criticism which succinctly describes much PSE-related transition to adulthood input.

Mittler and Serpell discuss the "benevolent support" needed by individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities, in order to live in the community (Mittler and

Serpell 1985, p.5). In education, PSE-related transition to adulthood studies are intended to be, and justified as being, an aspect of "benevolent support". An interesting point is raised by Mittler and Serpell in considering obstacles to the improvement of services for people with LDD. Among other concerns, they warn against excessive programming:

Despite the advantages of individual programme planning, it is important to allow scope for individual choice, including the choice not to be constantly climbing developmental ladders or achieving the next step on the task analysis (Mittler and Serpell 1985, p. 117).

This view does not sit easily amidst the rhetoric of progression. However the Tomlinson Report (1996 p. 144) points out that achievement is not only linear and developmental; a student's progress can also be lateral, or concerned with sustaining learning in the face of a deteriorating condition. Mittler and Serpell's comment is ahead of its time in acknowledging the student's right to decide how, or even if, their learning will develop.

Issues arise from consideration of the Further Education choices available to young people with LDD; such as whether the courses are worth the students' while or are merely time-fillers, even where these are designed to comply with accreditation or funding requirements. There is a fundamental question as to whether a significant purpose of Further Education courses available for students within this client group is mainly to occupy them. However, Hollands (1990, p.67) points out that for some students the value of attending college is that it provides them with a student identity in itself. The question of the purpose of courses is linked with the basic, but unresolved, question of whether students with LDD are realistically being educated for work, in an economic climate where jobs are scarce.

There has been a view, now largely discredited, that it would be more realistic to educate this client group for an adult life in which waged work is unlikely, except in its broadest contexts (DES 1978; Kent and Massie, 1981; Taylor, 1981). However as Corrie (1984) points out, there is a danger that an acceptance of this view would create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

McGinty and Fish (1992) find the concept of education for a life without work to be completely untenable. They declare that:

Time filling trivial activity, which is personally demeaning and handicapping, is no longer acceptable as an objective. The aim must now be employment for all (McGinty and Fish 1992, p. 14).

There are problems with this stance since it is likely that many people would be willing to do work which others considered trivial, without finding it demeaning or handicapping, provided it paid well enough. Further, the worthy aim of open employment for all depends on, but does not in itself lead to, a greater supply of jobs.

Rifkin (1995) does not see an increase in employment opportunities as imminent, because of the changing circumstances brought about by the development of a global economy:

Unused human labour is the central overriding reality of the coming era and the issue that will need to be confronted and addressed head-on by every nation...finding an alternative to formal work in the market place is the critical task ahead for every nation on earth (Rifkin 1995, p. 291).

Rifkin (1995) points out how closely ideas of self-worth and self-esteem are linked with paid employment; he considers that the idea of being a "productive" citizen is imprinted upon the character of his nation, the US. The same may reasonably be said of the national character of the UK, both nations being closely linked in their historical and contemporary social characteristics.

The argument that the main function of education is for the world of work is challenged by global economic developments, and may not be as straightforward as its adherents may wish. Nations can not arrange for themselves favourable employment levels when industrial, manufacturing and financial systems are developing on a global basis. There is also an argument that a large unemployment base is favourable to employers within the single nation, as it allows them a wider pick of employees who, with the current emphasis on qualification, are increasingly well qualified.

Within these contexts the prospect of open employment for all is not hopeful, and the employment prospects for young people with LDD do not look any better than for those without LDD. Sheltered employment might offer an alternative, in spite of McGinty and Fish's (1992) view of its triviality, but high unemployment together with changing technologies has ensured that much of the work that used to be done in these settings, is now either being done by workers in open employment, including outworkers, or has vanished with changing technologies.

## The Issue of Inclusion

It has been noted in Chapter One how the changing view of students and the growing assertiveness of parents and voluntary organisations, brought about the increasing integration of students with LDD into mainstream FE, during the nineteen eighties. Hegerty, reviewing the literature on integration in 1993, points out that,

Integration has been a key topic in special education for twenty-five years now (Hegerty 1993 p.195).

He continues,

The case for integration does not solely depend on empirical claims regarding its superior efficacy; there are also substantial moral arguments. If the verdict in the empirical case is open, the moral argument in favour of integration becomes all the stronger... the absence of a clear cut balance of advantage supports integration (Hegerty 1993 p.198)

The moral argument in question is concerned with the human right of equality of access.

Barton and Corbett (1993) identify 1992 as the point at which Integration became Inclusion. They see educational inclusion in FE as different from earlier integration models:

It focuses upon learner requests for support rather than the labelling of 'special needs' and is related to the notion of 'entitlement' to what is required in order to fulfil an educational programme ( Barton and Corbett 1993 p.15)

Support on this basis is seen by Barton and Corbett as being available to all learners, and therefore non-discriminatory.

In seeking full inclusion in FE, Barton and Corbett identify particular concerns with the type of provision which is the focus of this study:

We would wish to problematize notions of 'personal and social skills' and 'responsible citizenship'. The development of personal and social skills can be presented as valuable to specific marginalized groups in FE, as it can aid them in their progress into potential employment. Where it becomes a central component of the curriculum legitimated by unexamined notions of 'normality', it can involve elements of social control' (Barton and Corbett 1993 p.15)

Whether or not for reasons relating to these concerns, the empirical research in Chapter Nine shows that some colleges have moved away from this kind of provision. However, others have continued to develop it more strongly, and a recent edition of the Times Educational Supplement describes a forthcoming report from the Further Education Funding Council, which will be a,

Call for citizenship for every 16 to 19-year old (TES 4396, 2000).

Hornby is not convinced by the full inclusion model (Hornby 1999, 2000, Hornby and Kidd 2001). He is concerned that inclusion does not always bring about appropriate education for pupils with LDD, and in view of a lack of evidence that inclusion helps pupils with life outcomes, declares that

It therefore appears that proponents of inclusion are deluding themselves, and perhaps others, when they argue that greater inclusion will lead to more effective education for children with SEN (Hornby 1999 p.156).

Hornby (2000), and Hornby and Kidd (2001), describe a follow-up study of pupils integrated into mainstream education from special schools, a decade earlier. The focus of the research is the life outcomes of a group of twenty four former pupils, who were described educationally as having moderate learning difficulties. Of particular relevance to this study is the discussion of those pupils who had gone from school to a further education college. Nineteen of the twenty four had attended FE college, but only four out of the twenty-four rated this time as the most useful part of their education.

Hornby concludes that,

The focus of attention in special needs education needs to shift from promoting full inclusion to implementing responsible inclusion. This requires clarification of the major confusions surrounding inclusion and a commitment to a policy of working with a diversity of pupils, methods and settings. In order to improve the quality of the lives of young people with SEN much more attention needs to be paid to their transition from school to adult life and to the evaluation of programmes through outcome research (Hornby 2000 p. 10).

However, outcomes-based research is particularly difficult in the context of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses. With this work there are inherent difficulties of assessment which may be theoretical, conceptual, ethical, operational and/or practical, and which are discussed in detail in Chapter Six. A consideration of outcomes is particularly difficult, since a desired outcome may not be evident within the period being researched but appear much later in a person's life. Also it would be very difficult to disentangle progress as a result of teaching input, from progress as a result of maturation and wider ranging social experience.

Hornby's research shows that not all teachers see themselves as teachers of pupils with special educational needs (Hornby 1999, p.155). This contrasts with the view taken by the new draft SEN Code of Practice (DfEE 2000), which states that

All teachers are teachers of children with special educational needs. Teaching such children is therefore a whole school responsibility (DfEE 2000 p.27)

Mittler (2000) considers that the inclusion debate is over:

The endless debates and the streams of publications about 'integration versus segregation' for a minority of children have been overtaken by a new agenda, which is about human rights and about the kind of society and the kind of schools we want for our children (Mittler 2000, p.vii)

However, Johnstone (1995) sees discrete courses for young people with LDD as serving a purpose:

The enthusiasts for inclusive education have tended to overlook some of the advantages of the discrete course, which acts as a bridge to the ideal of autonomous learning in mainstream provision (Johnstone 1995, p.43).

### The Tomlinson Report and the Dearing Review

In spite of its content and assessment difficulties, the teaching of PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses remains more strongly than ever, part of the Further Education offered to young people with LDD. Prior to the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992), witnesses to the Parliamentary Education Science and Arts Committee, endorsed the importance of such courses (DES/DOE/Welsh Office 1991). The legitimacy of these courses has been further confirmed by two important publications: the Further Education Funding Council Report "Inclusive Learning", known as the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) and the Schools Curriculum Assessment Authority "Review of Qualifications for 16-19 Year Olds", known as the Dearing Review (Dearing 1996c).

The Tomlinson Committee was very thorough in considering whether current Further Educational provision met the requirements of the 1992 Act, and in making recommendations as to how deficits could be remedied. The Committee found considerable room for improvement, and was particularly concerned about the need for improvement in the quality of courses provided to this client group (FEFC 1996 p.159-164).

The Report's title, "Inclusive Learning" referred to the Committee's belief that Further Education teaching across a range of courses should take account of students' learning difficulties, or individual learning styles, so that they may be included in a wider range of courses, and therefore benefit from a wider range of opportunities (FEFC 1996, p.25-36).

. However, considerable attention was also paid to transition to adulthood courses:

For some students with learning difficulties or profound and multiple disabilities, achievement will be concerned with developing the knowledge, skills and understanding which will enable them to live a more independent, ordinary life in the adult community. We ascribe equal dignity and importance to these different types of achievement (FEFC 1996, p. 133).

The report did not advocate the full inclusion described by Barton and Corbett (1993) or Mittler (2000), and may therefore be representative of the confusion surrounding the use of the word 'inclusion', as described by Hornby (2000).

The Report recommended a third pathway for learning for adult life, the other two pathways being the academic and the vocational. This third pathway, incorporating Skills for Adult Life, should take the form of a pre-foundation level qualification, and be included among the core skills at GNVQ level (FEFC 1996, p.142). The Report recommended aspects of learning which are familiar from PSE and transition to adulthood curricula, including preparation for work, relationships and family roles, and understanding the community and the larger society, including its laws and the benefit system (FEFC 1996, *ibid.*). The Report recommended also that Schedule Two funding requirements should be broadened to accommodate courses concerned with, and providing progression in, the further development of life skills, particularly for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (FEFC 1996, p.144).

The Tomlinson Committee contributed its recommendations for the third pathway to adult life, to Dearing's review of post-sixteen qualifications ( FEFC 1996, p.142; Dearing, 1996c). The review went further, devoting considerable attention to the provision for young people with LDD. Within a framework of qualifications, the Dearing Review recommended Entry level courses for those not yet ready for NVQ level 1 (Dearing 1996c p.13). Progression to Foundation level (GCSE and GNVQ) and NVQ level 1 would be expected to follow from the Entry level courses.

The Dearing Review endorsed the value of transition to adulthood input, seeing post-sixteen education as providing an opportunity for young people with LDD to develop

skills for independence (Dearing 1996b p.35). It suggested that Entry level awards concerned with developing "Skills for Adult Life" might include:

- Personal skills and qualities valued in employment, for example team working skills and reliability (in terms of regularity of attendance, good time keeping, attention to detail, and steady application to tasks).
- Family and parenting skills, for example relationships between partners, the care of children, the responsibilities of parents, what is involved in setting up a home.
- Living independently, cooking, basic home maintenance, the care of clothes, understanding and managing money, and travelling.
- Understanding some of the structures of the society in which they live, for example transport services, social services, the Citizens Advice Bureaux and Job Centres (Dearing 1996c p.117)

This collection of common-sense suggestions is familiar. It resembles other PSE-related curricula, and suffers from the same weaknesses of vagueness and lack of consideration of inherent assessment problems. In calling for assessment by outcomes for Entry level courses, and for accreditation against a nationally accepted set of criteria, The Dearing Review unwittingly overlooked the pitfalls of trying to assess personal and social development. Taking another familiar position, it left the identification of such criteria to others, at some other time (Dearing 1996c, p.118). However, the review's recognition of the value of transition to adulthood input, and its inclusion of relevant courses within the recommended national framework, represented an advance.

#### Transition to Adulthood Curricula - Some General Observations

Discussion about transition to adulthood curricular input is often hampered by its terminology; some of the terms used are so broad as to be almost impossible to define, as is the case with 'adulthood' itself. Other terms may have different meanings but be used interchangeably, such as assessment and evaluation. Another example of this is the vague and variable use of the term 'training'. Input for transition to adulthood is often described as 'training'; however, given the need for transferability and understanding, a closer scrutiny of what is understood by training, as distinct from what is understood by education, is perhaps needed before the term is used quite so freely.

Calls for a structured programme of social skills training tailored specifically for the client group studied, are familiar and sound very reasonable. However, a closer study of the transition to adulthood learning needs of young people with LDD, suggests that such programmes are easier to call for than to produce, or to deliver, because of the range and breadth of situations in which an autonomous young adult may be expected to function. Training may be considered to apply to one or more specific situations; however what is required in transition to adulthood is learning which is generalisable and transferable to an extremely wide range of situations, some of which, as is normal in human daily living, are not foreseeable.

PSE-related transition to adulthood courses are intended to enable young people to develop as far as they can towards being 'fully realised' human beings. However, the characteristics that make up such an individual are open to debate at a profound level. It is possible that much of this curricular input may be delivered without a consistent philosophical or conceptual view as to the desirable characteristics of adulthood.

The content of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses has then to be decided. Whether or not teachers and lecturers possess clear principles or concepts in the matter, decisions about content are vulnerable to challenge by others with differing views. The teacher or lecturer is required to find a satisfactory answer to the question of which learning experiences, among a wide range of possibilities, should be offered in order to help the young person towards adulthood.

For some practitioners the starting point, and the main consideration, will be the identified needs of the students; however, students' perceived needs may be determined by the teacher's perceptions and prior vision (Johnstone 1995, p.75). There will be constraints of budget, time, resources, practicality, imagination, experience and teaching ability, any of which may contribute to the decision as to which learning experiences are offered. To these may be added the constraints produced by externally imposed course requirements. Somehow, content is decided; increasingly, it can be expected that content will be identified to meet externally imposed requirements.

Linked with the issues underlying decisions about course content and learning experiences is another issue, that of assessing development towards adulthood. The matter of how the PSE practitioner knows that his or her teaching has been effective, is a complex one. The personal and social development of the individual has been described as subject to a ' sleeper effect ' (Davis 1983, Wakeman 1984), suggesting that some of the teaching will not deliver results until later in the young person's life. It is therefore difficult to discern how the results of such input can be distinguished from learning that would have come about as a result of maturation, and general exposure to the adult world.

It is possible that such questions will be disregarded, in favour of assessment requirements based on simpler criteria such as the satisfaction of course requirements. As with the question of content, pragmatic decisions about the effectiveness of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses may continue to be made, while the underlying theoretical and conceptual issues remain unresolved.

Further questions arise from the problems surrounding assessment of the effectiveness of PSE-related transition to adulthood input. If the outcomes of this learning cannot be readily assessed, it becomes difficult to judge whether expenditure in this curriculum area represents good value for money.

### Conclusion

While much continues to be written about the transition to adulthood for young people with LDD, there is little empirical research informing this area. The research value both of surveys and of action research on this subject is weakened by the difficulty of evaluating the outcomes of intervention for the students concerned, since the objectives of the intervention are concerned with the development of adult behaviours. Adult behaviour and functioning are themselves very difficult to identify and define, and their development may be seen only over time. There is also a fundamental difficulty in determining when effects are the result of intervention, and when they are influenced by other factors. A further difficulty is presented by the lack of a clearly defined theoretical base, which could offer guidance to the practitioner in this area.

Lecturers in Further Education have attempted to deliver transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD for many years. There are however obstacles to the usefulness of these courses. Effectiveness may be limited by personal and educational resources, by the potential breadth and scope of the area of learning, and by the isolation in which lecturers may find themselves working. While recent developments in funding requirements may have introduced a greater degree of structure to the courses, a climate of competition for students has also developed, and this may operate against lecturers sharing their knowledge and experience of delivering such courses.

Transition to adulthood courses may be intended, overtly or not, for different client groups, principally those with either moderate or severe learning difficulties. However, there may be common characteristics originating from the OECD principles (OECD 1991, p.9) or the ABC curricular outlines (FEU 1979). Some of those individuals who helped to shape earlier transition to adulthood recommendations continue to make significant contributions to the development of this area of work, such as the involvement of Richard Pring in advising ASDAN (ASDAN 1997 p.2), and Lesley Dee's involvement in the research informing the Tomlinson Report (Bradley, Dee and Wilenius, 1994). The influence of earlier transition to adulthood developments therefore remains evident in the newer courses. The courses on offer are doubtless worthy, but fundamental difficulties with assessment make it hard to gauge their effectiveness. The prevailing rhetoric is that of education for employment.

It is in the nature of PSE-related transition to adulthood curricular input, that an examination of its aspects and issues leads mainly to further questions and an ever-widening range of considerations. The ramifications of the work are potentially limitless, since any aspects of human daily living within a social setting, can be considered as relevant. Nevertheless, to think in these terms is to run the risk of being overwhelmed, and it is likely that most curriculum delivery in this area takes place without such questions being given in-depth examination.

Transition to adulthood input has thrived, seemingly by avoiding fundamental, problematic issues and operating on a pragmatic basis. However the broader considerations underlying PSE-related transition to adulthood, remain. The next chapter explores the

present position of mainstream Further Education in general, and transition to adulthood courses in particular.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**THE PROVISION OF FURTHER EDUCATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**WITH LDD: THE PRESENT POSITION**

Introduction

Since the end of the nineteen eighties Further Education has undergone considerable change and development. Many of the changes have come about as the result of the Further and Higher Education Act, 1992 (DfEE 1992). This chapter describes these changes, and the characteristics of modern Further Education.

The education offered to young people with LDD, as they came to be known after the 1992 Act, changed with the implementation of the Act. Developments continue with the assimilation of the inclusion approach. This chapter considers the characteristics of Further Education through the nineteen nineties to the present. These characteristics include an increasing emphasis upon assessment, accreditation, performance indicators and quality control. Changes are discussed within the context of discrete, or separate, PSE-related transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD.

While there are precedents for the education of young people with LDD, their place within mainstream Further Education is recent, and increasing. The present client group of young people with LDD, is described. However, where PSE-related transition to adulthood courses are offered, the content of the courses and their assessment raise problematic issues. Approaches to assessment in Further Education are discussed, following the structure of input, process and outcome. These approaches include assessment of, and by the colleges themselves, performance indicators, quality measures, and the assessment of student outcomes in terms of competency. The chapter concludes by noting that, while a consideration of transition to adulthood courses reveals complex issues, by the end of the 1990s the courses had become well established within the mainstream Further Education curriculum.

### The Client Group

In preparation for the Report of the LDD Committee on Inclusive Education, commonly known as the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996), a survey of students with learning difficulties and disabilities in Further Education colleges was conducted. "Mapping Provision" (Meager, Evans and Dench, 1997) provides a comprehensive description of provision for young people with LDD in Further Education, and their participation in the college courses offered.

The survey estimates that among a population of approximately one and a half million students enrolled in Further Education, 5.7 percent have LDD. The students are distributed fairly evenly among Further Education, tertiary, art and design, and sixth form colleges, with rather more in agriculture and horticulture colleges, and noticeably fewer in specialist designated colleges. There are discrepancies between the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in different regions, with the smallest proportion (3.4 per cent) in Greater London and the largest in the West Midlands (Meager, Evans and Dench 1997, p.17).

The survey collected data about the characteristics of the students with LDD, enrolled in Further Education. The researchers found that female students are underrepresented, in comparison with the proportion of female students in the general Further Education student population. Just over half of the students with LDD are over twenty five years old, and almost one third are sixteen to eighteen years old. Where information is available, the survey shows that other groups of students have a range of ethnic origins, with the predominating ethnic grouping being white (79.8 per cent) (Meager, Evans and Dench 1997, p.60).

The survey gathered information about the college courses being followed by young people with LDD. At the time of the survey, just over 50 per cent were following programmes which are described as inclusive or integrated, while just under 50 per cent were following "discrete" courses. Part-time students are more highly represented on these "discrete" courses than they are on other courses (Meager, Evans and Dench 1997, p.22).

Johnstone (1996) observes that transition to adulthood courses form a considerable part of this "discrete" provision:

Most discrete courses are tied to the development of independence training as part of the general transition to adulthood (Johnstone 1996 p. 44).

And he warns:

There is a danger that provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities will be marked out by the emphasis solely on skills for independence and basic skills - those elements that are funded by the FEFC (Johnstone 1996 p.22).

The client group for the target courses would therefore appear to be nearly 50 percent of the students in Further Education who have been identified as having LDD, with more of these being in part-time than in full-time education (Meager, Evans and Dench 1997, p.22).

"Mapping Provision" (Meager, Evans and Dench 1997) also provides a broad analysis of the types of learning difficulty and/or disability, identified and recorded as being experienced by the students in this client group. The largest group of students (18.9 per cent) have moderate learning difficulties, with the next largest group having severe learning difficulties (14 per cent); there is also a large group of students (15 per cent) whose learning difficulties and/or disabilities are unspecified. Data are not completely clear, because of the way the research question has been answered in some cases. However it seems probable that students with moderate and severe learning difficulties will continue to form the main groupings. In addition students with specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, or dyscalcula, form a large group, of 9 per cent (Meager, Evans and Dench 1997, p.30).

There are, therefore, difficulties in describing young people with learning difficulties and disabilities as if they are a homogenous group, and similar difficulties in describing transition to adulthood courses. In spite of the earlier terminology of "special educational needs" and the more recent identification which, subsequent to the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act describes this client group as having LDD, Further Education has for many years distinguished between students with moderate learning difficulties and those with severe learning difficulties.

Although the Tomlinson Report states that students need not, and should not, be labelled (FEFC 1996, p 9), it is possible that these distinctions will continue to be used informally for some time. While the modern approach, post-1992, may identify students in terms of the course which they are following, such as Entry level or Foundation courses (Dearing 1996c p.13), new materials may sometimes still employ some of the earlier terminology (ASDAN 1995). Distinctions may continue to be drawn between transition to adulthood courses for students within each of two main groups, those with moderate and those with severe learning difficulties. Consequently transition to adulthood curricula may be related to expectations of futures and lifestyles which are not defined by the young people in question, but by those around them.

This attitude is countered to some extent by developments in advocacy and self-advocacy, which are intended to encourage and enable young people with LDD to express their own views, beliefs, and wishes, particularly in relation to life choices. However, the workshops convened to gather student views for the LDD Committee (SCPR 1996) found low awareness of self-advocacy as a concept.

While self-advocacy is valued in principle (Mittler and Serpell 1985; FEU 1989a, Grindrod, Haji and Latham 1989), in practice it is harder to achieve:

It cannot be assumed that physically including young people in inter-disciplinary meetings about their post-school futures will actually involve and empower them (Tisdall 1996, p.31).

Young people with LDD may not find it easy to express ideas; they may have a simpler vocabulary, need more time than listeners expect to allow a speaker, and may lack confidence. They may be used to allowing others to speak for them, and their carers and helpers may be used to filling the silence caused by their hesitation, or interpreting and explaining what they think is the intention of the young person.

Inexperienced young people with LDD may be intimidated by settings, room arrangements and representations of authority that others may take in their stride (Tisdall 1996, p.24). The inherent difficulties which exist for young people with LDD when asked to speak for themselves, are borne out in the student interviews described in Chapter Eleven. The tendency described by Tisdall (ibid.) for students in such situations to speak with single

word or short sentence answers, is manifested in many of the student responses to the interviewer, making it difficult to determine the student's views.

Students with LDD may be dependent, or be viewed as dependent, to an extent which is not experienced by their peers. Consequently the views and actions of parents, carers and helpers may have greater impact and influence upon the daily life of a student with LDD, than upon that of their peers.

Johnstone (1995) points out that for some parents the concept of their child's self-advocacy presents a challenge:

'Control' has frequently served for some as the only tool in the development of their coping strategy (Johnstone 1992, p.136)

He refers to the way in which young adults may continue to be treated as childlike (Johnstone 1995 p. 135).

Daniels considers that there are four major areas in the conflict between parental advocacy and self-advocacy: independence; peer group identification; sexuality; and goal setting for adult life (Daniels 1982, p.28). These are all areas which may fall within the content of transition to adulthood courses, and suggest that the transmission of values and setting of targets within such courses may be more complex than is realised.

### The Changing Characteristics of Further Education

Reeves (1995) offers an overview of a Further Education system which has undergone considerable transformation as a result of profound changes in management styles and structures, following the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992). Under the Act the Further Education Funding Council became the major purchaser of Further Education, with the Training and Enterprise Council, which replaced the Training Agency in 1991, as a minor purchaser (Reeves 1995, p.6). Reeves points out that,

Further Education has developed at the intersection of education and training and can only be fully understood by reference to both processes ( Reeves 1995, p. 71).

The 1992 Further and Higher Education Act continued to emphasise a model of training which relates to business, and which includes a focus on accountability, value for money, and management of learning and training through objectives and outcomes.

Reeves notes that the restructuring of Further Education under the 1992 Act is based on the belief that the standard of general education and basic skills in the population as a whole is low, and must be improved in order for the country to be able to compete economically. The role of Further Education is described as having a primary function of serving the national economy, directly through occupational and vocational training, and indirectly, through enabling other students to advance to higher education (Reeves 1995 p.27). Further education has another, secondary function, that of,

Acting as a staging post for those with learning difficulties and disabilities (Reeves *ibid.*) Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities are therefore to be considered as working towards something further; supporting the concept of 'progression' which informs modern Further Education (Reeves 1995, p. 78).

The belief that young people with LDD should work towards progressively advancing goals fits within a contemporary ethos of self-advancement. Within modern Further Education, however, the concept of progression developed practical, administrative importance, since part of the funding provided by the Further Education Funding Council is linked to the students' achievement of learning aims (Reeves 1995, p.62).

Reeves considers that this has led to a levelling off in the range of courses offered to young people with learning difficulties and disabilities (Reeves 1995, p.28). Courses which would fit the funding criteria were those described under Schedule Two of the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act. Although Local Education Authorities were able to fund courses other than those which qualify for Schedule Two funding, there was a likelihood is that such courses would become increasingly rare, as LEA resources become scarcer, and as funding under Schedule Two became established as the norm.

The result of an emphasis on progression has been the development of a complex network of courses and levels, often modularised, which are intended to provide a range of pathways through which the student may progress. Reeves points out that colleges receive incentive payments linked to students' successful completion achievements (Reeves 1995, p. 62). Further education for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, now more

than ever before has become linked with outcomes, successful completion of predetermined course elements, and funding structures. These must necessarily affect the courses offered to students with LDD, including those courses concerned with personal and social-related transition to adulthood knowledge and skills.

Assessment and corresponding accreditation have therefore become features of the transition to adulthood curriculum. However there are now other changes ahead for post-sixteen education. The White Paper 'Learning to Succeed' (DfEE 1999) proposes to provide all post-sixteen funding under one supervisory and administrative body, the Learning and Skills Council (DfEE 1999, p.7). The White Paper promises to follow the principles of the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996), that is, to support inclusive learning, and to widen the funding framework for young people with LDD (DfEE 1999, para 4.14). The White Paper suggests a change of philosophy so that the funding follows the student's needs, rather than administrative needs (DfEE 1999, para 4.6). Quality is a significant issue, and under the new arrangements, the government expects an improvement in the quality of post-sixteen education and training (DfEE 1999, para 5.4). Quality in this instance is seen as quality assurance (FEFC 1996, p.153-164), aimed at improving standards through college policy, action, development and good practice, and reinforced through inspection. However as Bottery points out, quality assurance is only one of several different definitions of quality (Bottery 2000, p.85), and these are explored further on pages 55 and 56 of this study.

### Student Assessment: Input

For the young person with LDD who wishes to attend the Further Education college, an assessment of needs takes place (FEFC 1996). This enables the college to consider whether it could meet the educational needs of the pupil; although additional funding may be available, this is effectively a matter of resources matched to the availability of courses within the college. If the college is unable to meet the student's needs, the student may seek FEFC funding for placement at a specialist college. However, it is part of the changing character of Further Education, that mainstream courses are now available to meet the educational needs of a much wider range of students than was previously the case.

The assessment of needs influences the courses which the students will follow in Further Education. Whilst in school the students will have met the Careers Adviser, and possibly the college Special Needs Coordinator will have discussed with the school, or with the student, a range of suitable courses. These could include courses with elements to remediate basic skills, or to allow for the sampling of a range of vocational possibilities, or vocational access training. Courses may also have a significant focus on transition to adulthood skills.

It is possible that students are 'guided' towards certain courses, which means that the professional judgement of those involved may play a large part in determining which courses the students will take. However the requirement of progression, and the move towards inclusive education, should operate against the marginalisation of students with learning difficulties and disabilities into specialist courses designed for their accommodation. It remains to be seen whether in fact this is the case, or whether such courses remain separate, legitimised and inflated by a range of accreditation and module titles.

### College Assessment

Assessment in Further Education now has a higher profile than was previously the case. Colleges themselves are subject to assessment measures, both externally and internally imposed. Following the Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992), a new inspection framework was introduced, wherein colleges are to be inspected in a four year cycle (Melia, 1995, Huxley 1996). Colleges are assessed under a range of headings:

- responsiveness and range of provision;
- governance and management;
- student recruitment, guidance and support;
- teaching and promotion of learning;
- student achievements;
- quality assurance ;
- resources (Melia, 1995, p. 41).

With regard to provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, the present position is described succinctly by Huxley (1996). Summarising a number of inspection reports she finds that although there is strong commitment in some areas, this is generally where college leaders share that commitment. In other areas, the provision is poorer:

There has been little analysis of the level of demand or the nature of programmes that are needed for students with LDD.

It is clear that there is a need to provide a greater range of programmes at pro-foundation and foundation level to enable access to vocational training and there remains little provision for students with profound and complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities (Huxley 1996 p.10)

Huxley found that the quality of learning and teaching is variable. Targets and objectives are absent from individual learning programmes, or are not framed in ways allowing for progress to be measured. While PSE-related transition to adulthood/skills for adult life courses are not described directly, some elements of this criticism are applicable to them, such as the criticism of an over-reliance upon simulation in place of real-life experiences. Other criticism includes over-reliance upon written materials, or on teacher-led design of learning experience, so that students lack the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning (Huxley 1996).

The findings relating to achievements and quality assurance give cause for concern. The inspectors note that some students may attend college for many years, with little evidence of progress. Experience of the field suggests that many of them would be following the type of courses which are the subject of this study. Of quality assurance, Huxley says:

Provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is, and must be an integral part of the college's quality assurance system. However, inspectors found that often these arrangements have little impact on the quality of teaching and learning or on students' achievements (Huxley, 1966 p. 11).

There is a lack of staff training, particularly concerned with developing understanding of students' learning needs (Huxley 1996). Also identified is,

A lack of rigour in setting and monitoring performance indicators such as enrolment targets, retention rates and students' achievements (Huxley 1996 p.11).

The overview presented by this report on Further Education inspections, suggests that provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities is generally in need of improvement.

### Performance Indicators

Huxley's (1996) reference to performance indicators highlights another area of assessment which has come to the fore in recent years. Indicators had already been in use as a means of measuring, analysing and understanding educational services; Johnstone cites their development as originating from a UNESCO research programme of 1969-76 (Johnstone 1981, Foreword). Nuttall describes indicators as quantitative, possibly including the quantifying of subjective qualities; they can be quoted alongside other similar indicators, to effect a comparison; and they are part of a set, or system, so that they do not provide information in isolation. Indicators are linked to policy, and are used to evaluate quality (Nuttall 1994, p. 19).

Johnstone categorises indicators for education systems into input, process and output, now more commonly described as outcome, indicators (Johnstone 1981, p. 24). The Further Education Funding Council (1994) also links its performance indicators with entry, on-programme, and achievement elements of students' education programmes. In Circular 94/12, Measuring Achievement, the FEFC (1994, p.5-6) proposed six performance indicators covering aspects of student enrolment, continuation of course, and achievement. Of most relevance to this study is the proposed indicator of student achievement, which is subdivided into two parts, concerned with:

- a) the number of students achieving their primary learning goals expressed as a percentage of students completing their learning programmes, and
- b) the number of qualification aims achieved, expressed as a percentage of the total number of qualification aims for which programmes have been completed (FEFC 1994 p.5).

The circular notes the link with funding arrangements (FEFC 1994, p.10).

This approach makes it necessary for student progression to be identifiable in terms that can be expressed within the performance indicator. The criteria for funding

through Schedule Two to the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act, required courses for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which were concerned with independent living skills and communication skills, to show evidence of progression towards other courses listed within Schedule Two (FEFC 1996, p.43). It is not surprising, therefore, that transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses should, in the nineteen nineties, show an increased concern with modularisation, assessment and accreditation, characteristics which allow for comparison against targets and indicators. Evidence of this is provided by FEFC Circular 99/40, in which it is considered necessary to make the point that accreditation is not compulsory:

Colleges are reminded that programmes of literacy, numeracy, ESOL and those for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which fall under schedule 2(j) are not required to have external accreditation. Colleges, however, are expected to retain rigorous evidence of progression for students whose programmes fall within schedule 2(j). (FEFC 1999 p.18).

In one respect satisfactory performance on the course, and progression, may be simply shown, following satisfactory completion of the course through the tasks set within it. It is much harder to assess the personal qualities relating to maturity and adulthood, which are intended to result from the educational input. There is a difficulty in measuring qualitative factors although Johnstone (1981, p.55) and Gray and Wilcox (1994, p.78) consider these to be measurable if operationally defined, and assessed in terms of nominal or rating scales.

The operational definition of the qualities of adulthood is both problematic, and the central issue. The Rathbone Society, concerned with young people with learning difficulties, proposes a distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' performance indicators. (The Rathbone Society 1990 p.1-10; House of Commons Education, Science and Arts Committee, 1991 p.143). Writing in terms of consumer satisfaction, which he applies to the educational setting, Sallis (1993) similarly describes 'soft' indicators as important:

Intangibles or 'soft' measures are often as important to success and to the customer as are hard and objective performance indicators. 'Soft' indicators - care, courtesy, concern, friendliness and helpfulness - are often uppermost in customer's minds (Sallis 1993, p.30).

'Hard' indicators are those conventionally used, such as the performance indicators described by the Further Education Funding Council (1994 p.5-6). 'Soft' indicators are concerned with qualities which are less easily quantifiable, but which, in the context of Further Education for young people with LDD, may help the young person towards employment, without having achieved the qualification levels required by 'hard' indicators. 'Soft' indicators are linked in the Rathbone Society document with the results of a survey investigating which characteristics employers look for in school leavers. The list of characteristics includes qualities such as reliability, trustworthiness, punctuality, willingness to learn, and teamwork. It is notable that 'hard' indicators such as qualifications, rate poorly on this list (The Rathbone Society 1990, Appendix I).

The Rathbone Society has a worthwhile objective in seeking to include less easily quantifiable characteristics within indicators of good practice. However, the expectation is that such indicators might be developed; the document itself only extends to offering a checklist of competency statements in these areas, for the assessment of the individual (The Rathbone Society 1990, Appendix III). As a useful tool for assessing and improving the quality of Further Education for young people with LDD, the concept of 'soft' indicators requires further development.

### Quality Measures

Sallis notes that quality can be an absolute or a relative concept (Sallis 1993, p.22-23). Quality concerns in education are frequently linked to the findings from performance indicators. This approach owes its origin to industrial and manufacturing concepts of quality control; quality assurance is a process which aims to prevent faults occurring (Sallis 1993, p.26). Quality measures in this sense are relative, a means by which the product is judged. Sallis points out, however, that the producer and the consumer may not have the same idea of quality (Sallis 1993, p.23).

The Tomlinson Report notes the requirement under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, and the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995, that provision is made for quality assessment within Further Education (FEFC 1996, p.40). As a contribution towards

high standards, the Charter for Further Education (DfEE 1993, Hulse 1994) makes commitments to students, employers and the local community. However, the Tomlinson Report found, as did Huxley (1996), that within the context of provision for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, quality assurance is distinctly variable (FEFC 1996, p.160). The Tomlinson Report notes as main weaknesses in mainstream Further Education, the absence of comprehensive quality assurance arrangements and the lack of high standards for provision designed specifically for students with learning difficulties (ibid.).

Melia (1995), Huxley (1996) and the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) view the quality challenge for FE as being concerned with quality assurance. However Bottery (2000) identifies this as only one of seven different versions of quality:

- a. Traditional quality
- b. Expert quality
- c. Bureaucratic quality
- d. 'Cold' management quality
- e. 'Hot' management quality
- f. Consumer quality
- g. Civic quality (Bottery 2000, p.85)

Quality assurance falls at the 'cold' end of the continuum from 'cold' to 'hot' management, 'cold' management being externally localised:

The kind of organisational practice which aims at compliance, at the capture and utilization of the time, the motion and the body of the individual (Bottery 2000, p.89)

Targets, outcomes and performance indicators all fall towards the 'cold' end of the continuum, and are familiar in the discussions concerned with improving FE provision.

Bottery contrasts this approach with 'hot' management, located internally:

This kind of organizational approach argues that in the long run it is more efficient and effective to capture the mind, the motivation and the commitment of the individual, for from these will follow the time, the motion and the body (Bottery 2000, p.90),

while pointing out that this is also driven by management.

The empirical research question to the three Expert Witnesses (Chapter Ten) as to how the target courses can be improved, is a question about quality, and the responses

espouse both 'cold' and 'hot' management styles. There is a concern for outcomes, but also a suggestion that quality assurance could be applied to the course rather than the curriculum process of matching learning to student, resulting in desired outcomes. There is also a concern for developing quality through staff development and commitment, and all three make recommendations for student involvement, corresponding to Bottery's identification of consumer quality (Bottery 2000, p.85)

Sallis describes external quality 'kitemarks' and validation standards which may be used by education establishments to indicate their quality, but considers that these are not necessarily better than systems which have been internally devised (Sallis 1993, p.77). They are, of themselves, not a guarantee of continuing quality; this requires maintenance of the quality procedures and measures, through processes of review and improvement. However, an important part of this process concerns outcomes, or product (Sallis 1993, p. 63), and this, as has been described, presents particular problems in the context of transition to adulthood courses.

One approach has been developed in Scotland, where there are similarities to the English Further Education system (HMSO 1991). In Scotland, Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI 1990 p.6, p.18-25) recommend that one indicator of quality in Further Education should be the use within the college, of the Quality of Learning and Teaching (QLT) Profile. This is a composite instrument, devised to supplement other performance indicators and consisting of seventeen quality statements, together with ten evaluative instruments. The evaluative instruments (CAST 1990) are designed for general rather than specific curriculum use, and could be applied in the context of transition to adulthood/skills for adult life, courses for young people with LDD.

#### Student Assessment : Outcomes Viewed in Terms of Competency

The Further Education Unit proposed that quality should be related to competency (FEU 1987). Competency had earlier been described as,

The possession and development of sufficient skills, knowledge, appropriate attitudes and experience for successful performance in life roles (FEU, 1984, p.3).

This definition built upon and broadened an industrial and manufacturing model of competence, which was concerned with equipping workers with necessary skills, possibly including personal and social skills. However, the concept of competence in present day Further Education courses has become related to the requirements of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). Within this setting, as Johnstone (1995) points out,

Competence is identified as the ability to perform a job in employment, measured against standards laid down by industry (Johnstone 1995, p. 60).

However, the potential for progression inherent in the NVQ system is felt to be of value to young people with LDD.

From the standpoint of educational philosophy, Hyland (1993) is particularly scathing about the competency model. He considers that such an approach attempts to separate knowledge from performance, and seeks to include only such knowledge as is thought to improve performance (Hyland 1993, p.63-64). In acknowledging that the influence of competence-based approaches is spreading into other aspects of education, he offers a warning:

Competence-based approaches to education have a weak and confused conceptual base, are founded on dubious and largely discredited behaviourist principles, and display systematic ambiguity in their treatment of knowledge and understanding. It would be a great pity if such an impoverished conception of the educational endeavour came to influence the work of teachers and students simply because of the superficial appeal of a popular educational slogan (Hyland 1993 p 66).

In the context of assessing performance in transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses, the competency approach presents particular problems, as has been shown in attempts to assess related areas of PSE and development. Several such attempts have resulted in crude performance criteria which say little about the ability of the student to transfer learning across a range of situations, or to respond outside of those narrow areas described by the criteria.

Hyland is sceptical about the idea that competence in a task indicates underlying knowledge and understanding (Hyland 1993, p.60). General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) have been introduced to counteract such concerns by covering the skills, knowledge and understanding relating to NVQs. GNVQs are designed to allow progression towards vocational qualifications, and include some elements of PSE-related

input, among their "core" skills (DES/DOE/Welsh Office 1991). The need to specify necessary knowledge and understanding in the context of GNVQs is noted by Sir Ron Dearing, in providing evidence to the House of Commons Education and Employment Committee (House of Commons 1996, p.10).

Recently there has been a growth in accredited modules or courses with a strong PSE, transition to adulthood content. Such courses are intended to contribute towards the progression within Further Education, of the young person with LDD. Accreditation is related to outcomes; however, the Tomlinson Report finds a lack of consistency in the standards by which students' achievements are assessed. The Report notes that there are a number of bodies providing courses for this student population, and a wide range of accreditation systems (FEFC 1996, p. 137-138).

It is likely that many of these courses are represented as transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses; however the assessment of progress in personal, social and emotional development is not a simple matter. Wider aspects of competency may inform transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses. Gresham describes personal competence as consisting of academic competence, social competence and physical competence (Gresham 1988, p.284). Buchanan and Brock (1989) explore decision-making competence, which has particular implications for young people with LDD. Many such students will often have decisions made for them.

### Conclusion:

The process begun in the nineteen seventies, to include students with LDD within the mainstream Further Education sector, has by the end of the nineteen nineties, advanced considerably. The young person with LDD can today, in theory at least, choose from a range of possibilities: open employment, training, or Further Education. Within mainstream Further Education the concept of progression, advancing to higher levels of qualifications is built in to the range of courses available. The policy of inclusive education encourages course deliverers to offer a wider range of courses, and to match delivery methods with students' individual learning styles and requirements.

In practice, many students with LDD may find themselves enrolled upon courses concerned with aspects of transition to adulthood, or skills for adult life. In spite of the difficulties inherent in this area, some of which have been briefly described, conviction of the value of this work has grown so that it has now been brought within the national framework of qualifications. There remain, however, questions underlying the values and objectives of this work, and other questions relating to evaluation and effectiveness.

It is interesting to consider how the changes in Further Education affect transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD. The ethos of accountability affects all the sectors of education, including Further Education. Accountability is linked with effectiveness, which is judged by outcomes, including qualifications and progression. This has given rise to a greater emphasis on accreditation, itself requiring a greater emphasis on assessment. An adjunct of this focus on accountability and effectiveness, is the development of interest in indicators of effectiveness as demonstrated by performance, and in quality as demonstrated by quality measures. There is an expectation that proof will be offered to show that the system is working, and should therefore continue to be publicly funded. The difficulty with the courses of concern to this study, is that such proof is extremely difficult to provide.

It is characteristic of PSE-related transition to adulthood work that matters which may seem fairly straightforward or obvious, appear considerably more complex on examination. In spite of these complexities, numbers of teachers and lecturers have considered this work to be worth their time, commitment and effort. This belief has led to a significant transformation of the mainstream Further Education curriculum. However, underlying issues remain unresolved.

In formulating empirical research in the area of transition to adulthood courses, it is useful to examine the background theory informing the PSE-related aspects of the work. The next chapter begins Part Two of this study, focusing on the theoretical influences on transition to adulthood and their translation, to a greater or lesser degree, into curriculum content.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**THEORY AND CURRICULA INFLUENCING**  
**PSE AND TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD**

Introduction

Part One of this study describes how transition to adulthood curricula have developed within Further Education. Part Two examines more closely the area of learning which is described as PSE, and its manifestation as transition to adulthood input. PSE as a curricular, or cross-curricular, area has developed largely independently of any significant discussion about its theoretical bases. This chapter aims, through an examination of the relevant literature, to identify the theoretical strands which have contributed to the development of this area of teaching and learning.

The nature of PSE, including transition to adulthood input, ensures that many different theoretical aspects can be considered as of relevance. Different strands may be recognised. A humanitarian influence developing from nineteenth century liberal philosophy provides one such strand; psychodynamic principles developed from the theories of Freud and Adler form another, and learning and cognitive theories provide a third. Further strands involve health, including mental health, moral development theory, and theory derived from social systems.

The theoretical and philosophical roots of PSE and transition to adulthood teaching can therefore be traced back to a concept of education given expression by educational writers this century, but which has earlier philosophical origins in a view of the learner as one who needs, or is entitled to, learning which develops emotional, spiritual, philosophical and moral realms as well as experiencing the teaching of facts and inculcation of attitudes. This is linked to ideas about how the good citizen, or the good person in society behaves, and to discussion regarding what is of value in education.

The understanding of mental processes and learning have had a considerable bearing on the development of PSE. Contrasting theories of Behaviourism and Social

Cognitive Development, both concerned with cognitive processing and learning, have each influenced the development of PSE-related curricula, as demonstrated in curricular proposals formulated during the 1980's, and discussed further in Chapter Five.

The establishment of a theoretical basis for PSE and transition to adulthood is therefore a complex matter, which may be further complicated by personal preference and belief on the part of the teachers or lecturers delivering the input. There are also arguments that to search for a single, over-arching theoretical construct informing PSE is unhelpful. In spite of these theoretical difficulties, PSE and transition to adulthood courses continue to be developed and delivered, and have gained acceptance within the curriculum both in schools and in Further Education. The growth of PSE and transition to adulthood input has also been boosted by other curricular influences and initiatives. A review and analysis of the literature will continue in Chapter Five, with an examination of curriculum models.

#### Some Theoretical and Philosophical Origins

Dearden (1968) considers the concept of personal growth as an educational aim, to be a reaction against the authoritarian and utilitarian bases of the earlier, elementary education. He traces a concern for personal growth to Rousseau, Froebel, Holmes and Dewey (Dearden 1968, p.25), and via Maslow's work on growth motivation, further back to Spinoza and beyond, to Aristotle (Dearden 1968, p.36). Dearden notes the variety of terminology used in discussing personal growth, including self-development, self-realisation, self-actualisation, maturity, and positive health (Dearden 1968, p. 37). These are terms which remain familiar in discussions of PSE and transition to adulthood, confirming the link between this curricular area and the earlier concept of 'personal growth'.

Curricular approaches to PSE, as they developed in the nineteen seventies and eighties, were strongly influenced by American initiatives. Taba (1962, p. 396) sees these developments as rooted in the concept of social processes or functions of life discussed by Herbert Spencer. Dearden (1968, p. 38) also identifies early philosophical links concerning the educational concept of development of the self, tracing American and English approaches early in the twentieth century to a common source in the work of the eighteenth

century German philosopher Hegel, a contemporary of Froebel. There is a considerable humanistic background to the development of the philosophical beliefs underlying PSE and transition to adulthood. PSE and transition to adulthood curricula can therefore be seen as developing from an educational and philosophical aim concerned with personal growth, which predates compulsory education, which has gained in importance during the twentieth century and which now forms an accepted part of the state education system.

Dearden considers that the tradition of personal growth as an educational aim is confined to liberal democracies (Dearden 1968, p.49). Rosenow (1992, p.48) describes the democratic belief that people are both social and rational by nature. The expectation within democracy is that people not only have existence, including rights and responsibilities, within the public domain, but also are permitted and encouraged to express their own, private identities. It is expected that these public and private identities are reconciled within the democratic society. Kann (1993) considers that children are not born democrats but must be educated for democracy, stating that.

"Citizens in a democracy must have a strong sense of personal and social power - what philosophers call 'agency' and political scientists 'efficacy' - if they are to take responsibility for self-government and cooperate with others to achieve it" (Kann 1993 p.28)

PSE, including transition to adulthood, may therefore be viewed as a manifestation of a particular social and political philosophy. Political parameters are described, and noted as unacknowledged, by Quicke (1985, p.95). Education for democracy, and political awareness however, are rarely articulated as outcomes of courses for young people with LDD.

### The Influence of Psychodynamic Practices

Psychodynamic practices derived from the theories of Freud and Adler have influenced PSE. Transactional Analysis, developed in America initially by Berne (1974), a Freudian psychiatrist, is concerned with the ways in which people structure their lives, and communicate with each other. Transactional Analysis is cited as a source by Hopson and Scally (1981), and other sources within Transactional Analysis are cited by Wakeman (1984) and McConnon (1988).

A further influence from the field of psychotherapy is the work of Rogers, also known as the humanistic approach. This is concerned with client-centred counselling techniques, personal empowerment and the importance of non-judgmental attitudes. The humanistic view accords with a child-centred philosophy of education which places the individual at the centre of the learning process, a philosophy reflected by writings on PSE. Rogers' work is cited by Hopson and Scally (1981), Pring (1984) and Ryder and Campbell (1988).

### Behaviourism

The Behaviourist approach contrasts with that of Rogers, seeking to analyse the learning process in order to understand, control and facilitate it. Skinner (1974, p.17) rejects the ideas embodied in the psychotherapeutic theory of humanists such as Rogers, that what is felt or introspectively observed reflects a non-physical world of consciousness, 'mind', or mental life. Instead the environment, including the social environment, is considered as a source of stimuli, the responses to which can be trained. Traditional Behaviourism developed in the early part of this century; Radical Behaviourism, as developed by Skinner, differs from the original form in allowing for the possibility of self-observation and self-knowledge (Skinner 1974, p.16). Radical Behaviourism does not ignore consciousness, feelings or states of mind, but views them in terms of the impact of the environment upon the observer's own body.

In order for accurate learning to take place, the Behaviourist approach seeks to analyse and understand tasks in terms of a sequence of objectives, through which there is progression via specific techniques, towards the goal of autonomous performance. Skinner's theory has been an extremely powerful influence upon educational theory and practice, and may be seen in the development of social skills training. This has been of particular interest in the fields of mental handicap and mental illness, holding possibilities for increasing the coping skills and capabilities of patients, and also having implications for their assessment and subsequent management (Warzack and Kilburn, 1990). Whelan's (1984) Copewell curriculum, intended for the clients of Adult Training Centres, is a good example of this

approach, containing nearly two hundred separate objectives concerned with personal and social functioning. Another example is the Social Learning Model developed by Brown and Christie for use in a residential child care setting; this model would, however today raise questions about ethics, with its use of 'punishment training' (Brown and Chirstie 1981, p.18) and family intervention techniques.

While Behaviourist approaches have the attraction of logical progression, precision and individually-tailored learning, their treatment of the task in isolation raises concerns as to whether such learning is transferable across a range of situations. The question of transferability is important, since PSE seeks to accomplish learning in, and about, a complex variety of social situations. There has also been reluctance to give up the concept of input from mind, thought, or emotion in determining the actions of the individual (Carpenter 1974, Bandura 1986, Hager 1995). However, the objectives-based approach derived from Behaviourism continues to have adherents and can be found in a concern for 'outcomes', particularly where these are quantifiable.

### The Development of Social Psychology

Quicke identifies the Social Psychological origins of some PSE courses, particularly those which he considers to be worthwhile, stating that:

The academic subject which arguably forms the theoretical backdrop here is clearly some version of phenomenologically informed Social Psychology or Sociology (Quicke 1985, p. 98).

Social Psychology is the field of study, experiment and theory concerned with the functioning of the individual in society. There is overlap with other fields which study human behaviour, and as a field in its own right it draws on many theories which are relevant to PSE and transition to adulthood. Social psychology as a field is therefore concerned with those areas which are also the concern of PSE and transition to adulthood.

Argyle and Trower were influential in making social psychological concepts accessible, as in their text "Person to Person: Ways of Communicating" (Argyle and Trower, 1979). The influence of Argyle is noted by Tones (1988). Trower was also involved in the development of social skills training (Trower 1984). The dissemination of social psychological

ideas among teachers in the nineteen seventies is likely to have informed the development of PSE.

Modern social psychology is described by Deaux, Dane and Wrightsman (1993) as originating in the late nineteenth century. They note that theories which have contributed to this area include psychoanalytic theory, Behaviourism, field theory and attribution theory, among others. The authors identify three significant theoretical perspectives within social psychology to be: role theory; learning theory; and cognitive theory (Deaux, Dane and Wrightsman 1993, p.3-7), and note the influence of Bandura's social learning theory (Deaux, Dane and Wrightsman 1993, p.12).

In describing major areas within social psychology, Sabini covers much of the ground with which PSE and transition to adulthood are concerned: group dynamics; the self; social motives; enduring relationships; and attitudes Sabini (1992, p.ix-xviii). Similar areas are covered in Deaux, Dane and Wrightman (1993). PSE curricula can therefore be seen as having developed alongside, and as a result of, the interest in social psychology. The two fields are concerned with the same processes and content, without being directly interlinked through curricular input; social psychologists do not appear to concern themselves with the teaching of social psychological experience and understanding to those who lack them. Social psychology is not therefore concerned with directly influencing the individual to change, while PSE as a subject seeks to apply the insights gained through social psychological investigation, for the benefit of the individual and society.

A further recent development is the claim to a new field in the form of the social psychology of education. Feldman (1986, p.1) sees this as the amalgamation of the two fields of social psychology and education, forming an area which is concerned with the functioning of individuals within the social context of education. It is not seen, at this stage, as being directly concerned with educating the individual to function within, and make a contribution to, society.

## Social Cognitive Theory

A recent major contribution to the understanding of human thought, motivation, learning and action, comes from the Social Cognitive theory developed by Bandura (1986). Bandura's contribution is recognised by McGuire and Priestley, who attribute the theoretical roots of social skills training to Bandura's contemporary work in Social Learning theory (McGuire and Priestley 1981, p. 10), which later became Social Cognitive theory (Barnett and Zucker 1990, p.7). Barnett and Zucker note that,

A substantial base of research currently supports social cognitive theory. The advantages at the outset are the ties to a full range of human functioning, and especially, to the processes of psychosocial change (Barnett and Zucker, *ibid.*)

The advantages described are clearly of fundamental importance in identifying a theoretical base for PSE-related transition to adulthood studies.

Barnett and Zucker are strongly supportive of Bandura's work as a basis for understanding the personal and social development of children, and consider that assessment procedures could and should be developed from a theoretical basis of psychosocial change rather than personality (Barnett and Zucker 1990, p. 15 and p.31).

A useful summary of Social Cognitive theory is given in Mann (1990), who considers that the theory provides,

A context for our understanding of the manner in which humans learn and function in interaction with their environment. It also underlines the uniqueness of individual learners which results from these capabilities. It provides a framework for the types of learning experiences that we provide, and enhances our understanding of the content within which learning, including that enhanced by our education programs, occurs. (Mann 1990, p.181)

Bandura (1986) states that, in social cognitive theory,

Human functioning is explained in terms of a triadic reciprocity in which behaviour, cognitive and other personal events, and environmental events all operate as interacting determinants of each other. (Bandura 1986, p.18)

These three classes of determinants influence each other reciprocally, but not consecutively; they also influence each other before or after any given event or manifestation of behaviour, by means of certain capabilities (discussed below), so that a continuous dynamic process occurs (Figure 4:1).

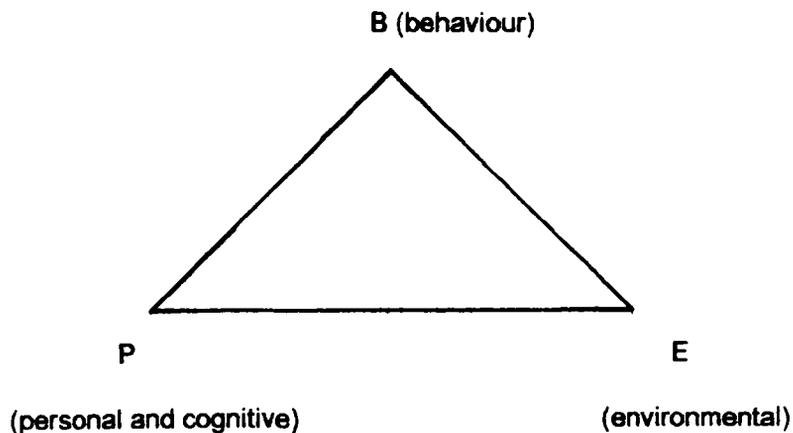


Figure 4.1: Triadic Reciprocal Causation (Bandura 1986, p.24)

The nature of the person is explained in terms of five basic capabilities:

- Symbolising capability: the ability people have to process and transform experience into internal models, which can then be used as guides for future action:

People usually test possible solutions symbolically and discard or retain them on the basis of estimated outcomes before plunging into action (Bandura 1986, p. 18);

- Forethought capability: the ability to anticipate, so that images of future events shape behaviour:

Images of desirable future events tend to foster the behaviour most likely to bring about their realization (Bandura 1986, p.19);

- Vicarious capability: social cognitive theory supports the concept that powerful learning can occur vicariously, through the observation of modelled behaviour and its consequences:

The capacity to learn by observation enables people to acquire rules for generating and regulating behavioural patterns without having to form them gradually by tedious trial and error (Bandura 1986, p.19);

- Self-regulatory capability: internal standards and self-evaluative reactions to their own actions are a motivator of much of people's behaviour:

An act, therefore, includes among its determinants self-produced influences (Bandura 1986, p.20)

- Self-reflective capability: the capacity of individuals to analyse their own experiences and to think about their own thought processes in reflective self-consciousness is an important determinant of their subsequent actions:

Among the types of thought that affect action, none is more central or pervasive than people's own judgements of their capabilities to deal effectively with different realities. (Bandura 1986, p.21).

These capabilities act on three sources of information:

- **The Enactive:** that is, personal experience of interaction with the environment, including the other people in it;
- **The Symbolic:** in which information which we are told about or shown, is interpreted in terms of visual or verbal symbols in our minds, and our understanding is affected thereby;
- **The Vicarious:** in which we learn from what we observe happening to other people (Bandura 1986).

The social cognitive model of reciprocal causation (Figure 4:1, Bandura 1986 p.24) contrasts with the sequential Behaviourist concept of Antecedent, Behaviour, and Consequent. Primarily, Social Cognitive theory is concerned to understand and acknowledge the power and importance of thinking in the learning experience, in contrast to the operant conditioning model of Behaviourism, in which environment provides a stimulus which triggers a response.

### The Influence of Piaget

In education an important influence upon the understanding of how children learn has been the work of Jean Piaget. His concept of the child's thinking and learning is developmental, taking the view that intellectual development is dependent upon biological organisation. Piaget proposes a developmental sequence, divided into stages or periods and linked to chronological age (Richmond 1970 p.7). The final stage is that of formal operations which represents mature thought, in which problems and events may be considered, and information combined and reclassified, abstractly (Richmond 1970, p.54-56).

In the years since Piaget's publications (1950-1967), the theory has been questioned. Bandura (1986) points out that,

It is the notion that thinking undergoes discrete global changes that is in dispute and that has come under increasing criticism from several quarters (Bandura 1986, p.483).

Bandura notes that there are common characteristics shared by Piagetian theory and social cognitive theory in their emphasis upon the development of cognitive structure. However, he criticises Piaget's theory, considering Piaget's construct to be deficient because it does not take into account learning through the observation of modelled behaviour (Bandura 1986, p.483-8). Piagetian theory therefore does not sufficiently acknowledge the impact of vicarious learning, with its implications for self-referent and self-regulatory thought, which

allows people the capacity to function as agents in their own learning, and to respond to socially-guided learning. Bandura finds that cognitive functioning does not remain static in a particular stage, but may decline or increase at different points in a lifetime (Bandura 1986, p.485). He finds that an understanding of cognition founded on stage-based cognitive theory may be limiting for some learners:

Deficits in learning from consequences, commonly attributed to stage-dependent immaturity, can be improved if young children are taught the constituent cognitive skills for processing information...it is more fruitful to explore the cognitive subprocesses that underlie learning than to ascribe learning difficulties to global cognitive deficits (Bandura 1986, p.128).

### The Affective Domain

The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (Bloom, 1956; Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia 1964) has been of importance in educational theory, and is of particular relevance to PSE and transition to adulthood through its description of the Affective Domain. The Taxonomy sets out to provide the teacher with a set of standard classifications for teaching and learning, to aid effective teaching, curriculum development, and the effective assessment and evaluation of student learning. It divides learning objectives into three Domains: the Cognitive, the Affective and the Psychomotor (Bloom, 1956, p.7).

The Cognitive Domain is divided into six major classes describing ways of thinking, which represent a hierarchy, or progression, with each class subdivided into constituent elements (Bloom, 1956). The Affective Domain is divided into five categories, which are also hierarchical, and subdivided. The Affective Domain aims to cover:

Objectives which emphasise a feeling tone, an emotion, or a degree of acceptance or rejection (Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia, 1964, p.7).

However, the authors are aware that there is considerable overlap between the cognitive and affective areas, and that too sharp a distinction between the two may be unhelpful (Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia, 1964, p.85). They also note the beliefs of some educators that appropriate affective behaviours will increase the learning of cognitive objectives, while others believe that the gaining of cognitive skills will bring about the development of affective behaviour (Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia, 1964, p.85-86).

The importance of the Affective Domain is highlighted in Pring (1984). In discussing the expressive arts within the curriculum, he states:

"Too much emphasis upon self-expression has distracted us from the cognitive aspect of our feelings (the affective is so often seen as something quite separate from the cognitive, and indeed something which gets in the way of educational progress) and has thus distracted us, too, from the educational task of refining our emotions and feelings as a form of knowing" (Pring 1984 p.133).

Educators need to be reminded to attend to the Affective Domain, in order to counter the erosion over time of the affective elements in educational programmes, as described by Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia (1964, p.16).

The categories within the Affective Domain are described as: receiving (attending); responding; valuing; organisation; and characterisation by a value or value complex (Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia (1964, p.x-xii). Sprinthall considers that Bloom's Affective Domain lacks the structural coherence of the Cognitive Domain and is therefore of less use as a means of understanding the development of affective processes (Sprinthall 1986 p.148). However, he does not believe that the humanistic view characterised by the work of Rogers represents a coherent alternative, because it leans too far towards interpretations based on the subjective, the experiential and the emotional (Sprinthall, *ibid.*).

Sprinthall's (1986) view is that the development of the person occurs through intellectual, interpersonal and moral domains, and that these are not interdependent (Sprinthall (1986, p.158):

Growth may occur differentially across different domains (Sprinthall 1986, p.149). He considers that schools should pay as much attention to interpersonal and emotional development, that is the Affective Domain, as to more academic aspects of the curriculum (Sprinthall 1986, p.164). Affective elements in PSE and transition to adulthood curricula are discussed in further detail in Chapter Five.

### Moral Development Theory and Values Education

Some PSE-related input is described as personal, social and moral education (PSME). An emphasis upon values informs PSME, since the values held govern the actions of the individual in personal and social contexts. Pring makes the point that, while education to

clarify values may help the child to develop towards personal maturity, it is not sufficient in itself; there is also a question of moral content (Pring 1984, p.76). However, the consideration of moral content brings teachers into difficult areas.

In considering the question of moral education within PSE and PSME, Kohlberg's theory of Moral Development has often been cited (Kohlberg 1984), for example by Pring (1984), Thacker, Pring and Evans (1987), Hargreaves et al. (1988), Ryder and Campbell (1988) White (1989), and Bottery (1990). Kohlberg's research and theory developed from Piaget's work on the moral judgement of the child (Langdale 1986, p.18). Kohlberg's full statement of the theory given in 1976 stated that the moral judgement of the young person develops through six stages, covering three levels:

Level I: Preconventional

Stage One: Heteronomous Morality

Stage Two: Individualism, Instrumental Purpose, and Exchange;

Level II: Conventional

Stage Three: Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, relationships and Interpersonal Conformity;

Stage Four: Social System and Conscience

Level III: Post-Conventional or Principled

Stage Five: Social Contract or Utility and Individual Rights

Stage Six: Universal Ethical Principles (Kohlberg 1985 p.488)

However, Kohlberg continued to develop and update his theory. In its formulation of 1984 Kohlberg (1984, p.654) made a distinction between 'hard' and 'soft' stages; hard stages having structural, formal properties, such as those described by Piaget, while soft stages included elements of affective or reflective characteristics. This formulation concurred with the challenge made by Loevinger, who considers the field of moral development to be more complex than that originally described by Kohlberg (Loevinger 1985, p.191). In the 1984 formulation Kohlberg considered that the formal properties of the stages were divided into two components: a social perspective level and a more specifically moral or prescriptive level. In addition Stage Six of the original theory had disappeared as it had not been borne out by research findings (Kohlberg, 1984, p.270).

Bandura's critique of stage theories applies similarly to Kohlberg's stages-based theory of moral development (Bandura 1986, p.488-491). Bandura believes that

categorisation into stages of moral thinking does not reflect the way in which people actually make moral judgements. He considers that,

Rather than exhibiting wholistic reorganisation of their moral thinking, people gradually adopt new moral standards, eventually discard simpler ones, and draw from among a co-existing set of standards in judging different moral predicaments (Bandura 1986 p.491).

Bandura differs from Kohlberg in allowing for the coexistence of different modes of moral judgement and offers instead the social cognitive view, that moral thought affects conduct through a reciprocity of influence between thought, conduct, and social factors (Bandura 1986).

### Adolescence Theory

A significant part of the content and process of PSE in general, and transition to adulthood input in particular, is concerned with adolescence. In a review of European research on adolescence, Jackson and Bosma (1992 p.331) conclude that Coleman's focal theory of adolescence (Coleman, 1974) is the only influential theory of adolescence to emerge in recent years, apart from Piagetian stage theories.

Coleman's theory suggests that different difficulties regarding relationships come into focus at different times in adolescence, a concept which has similarities with stage theories (Jackson and Bosma 1992, p.331), but which also has links with more recent approaches in its concern with transition, personal development, and continuity. The influence of Coleman's theory is acknowledged by McNiff (1986) and Ryder and Campbell (1988).

Jackson and Bosma describe a growing interest in the part played by information-processing and personal decision-making in helping or hindering developmental change in adolescence (Jackson and Bosma 1992, p.320). They see recent developments in the field of cognition as offering a challenge to the Piagetian stage theory which has dominated the understanding of adolescent cognitive development (Jackson and Bosma 1992, p.329). They endorse the increased value placed upon the social cognitive approach, offering the opinion that,

Surprisingly little attention has been given to what might be described as the social cognitive approaches to relationships in adolescence (Jackson and Bosma 1992, p.327),

concluding that,

Developments in the area of social cognitive research could well prove to be an important growth point in future adolescent research (Jackson and Bosma 1992 p.327).

In spite of their acknowledgement of its importance, Jackson and Bosma find inadequacies in Coleman's theory of adolescence, particularly in the lack of attention given to social cognition (Jackson and Bosma 1992, p.332). In seeking a more satisfactory model of adolescent development in the nineteen nineties they look for,

A theoretical view which more adequately incorporates cognitive and emotional processes relating to self and social development in adolescence and which also takes account of the individual's interactions with a variety of environmental contexts (Jackson and Bosma 1992, p. 332);

they continue,

The transitions of adolescence may be broadly similar for the majority of young people but the nature of the pathways followed through these transitions may vary widely. A new perspective on adolescent development must also be able to take such variability into account ( Jackson and Bosma 1992 *ibid.*)

Such a view is in sympathy with the aims of education for transition to adulthood, intended for a client group which includes young people with a wide range of LDD. It is apparent that Jackson and Bosma consider that Social Cognitive theory may offer a framework through which adolescent development may be better understood.

### Curricular Initiatives and Influences

Since the nineteen seventies the growth of personal and social development as a curricular area has been continuous. It relates to, and is influenced by other curricular input. One of the most important influences has been Hopson and Scally's work on Lifeskills (Hopson and Scally 1981), including the Lifeskills programme. The use of life experiences as a basis for learning was derived from the development of lifeskills programmes such as the Saskatchewan New Start programme of 1969 from Canada, cited by McGuire and Priestley (1981, p.15); Taba (1962, p.398) cites earlier North American examples from 1934 and 1957. Hopson and Scally's Lifeskills teaching work acknowledges American sources. The Lifeskills Programmes were developed by the Careers and Counselling Unit of Leeds University

(Hopson and Scally 1979, 1982, 1986, 1988), and were designed to supply a perceived need for published work in the area of life skills, aimed at older adolescents.

PSE is concerned with the individual's well being, mental and emotional as well as physical, and health matters have been an additional influence upon the early development of PSE. Health issues, including those concerned with mental and emotional health, led to the development of pastoral care and tutorial work in schools which became a precursor of PSE (Hamblin 1978, Button 1981a, 1981b). Hamblin's work on counselling and pastoral care is cited or acknowledged by Baldwin and Wells (1983), Pring (1984), Wakeman (1984), McNiff (1985), Ryder and Campbell (1988), Hargreaves et. al. 1988) and White (1989). Button's Developmental Group Work provided a source for Baldwin and Wells (op.cit.) and continues to be of influence through the concept of the delivery of PSE through tutorial groups in schools and colleges.

Another medically-oriented project of direct influence on the development of PSE is the work of the Teachers' Advisory Council for Alcohol and Drug Education. Skills for Adolescence (TACADE 1986), is a programme concerned with maintaining the health and well being of young people not only through the drug and alcohol awareness suggested by the Council's name, but also by addressing issues of confidence, relationships, self-esteem and coping strategies, with the expectation that young people would be less likely to turn to drugs and alcohol to compensate for the lack of these qualities in their lives.

More recent curricular influences include the National Curriculum introduced by the Education Reform Act (DES 1988). This does not include PSE as a subject area in its own right; however it requires schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum which:

- a) Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and
- b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (DES 1989a para 2.1)

These ideas are couched in terms which are familiar in PSE, providing a link between PSE-related input and the educational needs of all children, including those with LDD.

Within the original National Curriculum PSE was presented as a "cross-curricular dimension" (DES 1989a, para 3.8). PSE was also seen by some as a means of delivering

the five "cross-curricular themes" identified within the National Curriculum (Foster, 1993; Buck and Inman 1993; Powell 1994). However, in spite of a view of PSE as pervading, or being embedded in, other aspects of the curriculum and being delivered through them, many schools prefer to timetable a lesson to focus on PSE issues. By the end of the nineteen eighties PSE had become firmly established in the mainstream sector, as well as in the 'special' curriculum.

Other curricular influences include the Humanities Curriculum Project, which Stenhouse (1971, p.336) describes as being concerned with human behaviour and human experience, and which was aimed at adolescent pupils of average and below average ability; the development of Thinking Skills (de Bono 1973 and 1989) and the development of Citizenship (HMSO 1990; NCC 1990; Fogelman 1991, Heater 1992), which is seen as being underpinned by PSE. The interest in Citizenship as an area of learning has been rekindled recently, the revised National Curriculum providing a framework for PSHE and Citizenship. Citizenship becomes a statutory subject for Key Stages Three and Four in 2002 (Mittler, 2000).

In the USA the theoretical influences which gave rise to PSE, PSHE and PSME in England took a similar, but slightly different direction, to bring about areas of learning known as Character Education, and Quality of Life. These movements are concerned with the development of empowerment, autonomy and self-determination, as is PSE.

Character Education is concerned to bring about democratic citizenship through the development of mature and responsible social attitudes, and the repudiation of a victim mentality which lead to political apathy (Kann, 1993). Bottery, however, points out that Character Education can cover a wide range of ideologies (Bottery (1999, p.113).

In challenging political apathy, Kann asks:

How are liberty, equality and self-government possible if citizens refuse to participate in the democratic discourse that defines our political community and the democratic decision-making processes that define our public policies? (Kann 1993 p.29)

He describes the work of the Jefferson Centre for Character Education in California. The Centre promotes curricula which focus on 'Twelve Steps to Success', which are: be confident; be responsible; be here; be on time; be friendly; be polite; be prepared; be a

listener; be a doer; be a tough worker; be a risk taker; be a goal setter (Kann 1993, p.30-31). These exhortations are clearly similar to PSE curricular interests, but with a more robust link to the requirements of responsible and democratic participation in society.

The Quality of Life movement developed following a USA federal initiative of 1984, concerned at first with employment. This developed into a wider concern to maximise the opportunities for young people with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, as they progressed through the later stages of education and into adult life. Quality of Life moved transition considerations away from employment and post-secondary education, towards other aspects of adult life, recognisable as PSE and transition to adulthood themes (Dennis, et.al. 1993; Halpern 1993; and Sittlington 1996).

#### A challenge to the traditional approach to theory

In a discussion of theoretical influences upon the development of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses, it should be noted that there have been recent challenges to the underlying concept that theory is itself necessary for a proper understanding of cognitive development.

Standish describes how Post-Modernism rejects the idea of the 'grand design', the overarching theory which provides all the answers (Standish 1995, p.133). He sees the idea of the 'whole person' embodied within much of education and within PSE in particular, as unhelpful and inaccurate, suggesting as it does that education is a process which moves the individual towards a state of completeness. Standish argues that there is no analogy between a person's fully developed state of physical health and his or her development as a person, and that it is therefore inaccurate to think of a sense of closure or completion for the personal development of the individual (Standish, *ibid.*). PSE should therefore be viewed as an 'open-ended' process.

In an analysis of post-formal theory, in which Postmodernist thinking is applied to the educational context, Kinchloe and Steinberg consider forms of knowing. They support a 'socio-cognitive' approach, by which knowledge is embedded in, and cannot be separated from, social contexts (Kinchloe and Steinberg 1993, p.297). Previously established concepts

of the development of cognition towards a zenith of abstract, logical, objective thinking are seen not as absolutes, but as reflections of the ideas and ideals of their time, which are subject themselves to contextual understanding (Kinchloe and Steinberg *ibid.*).

Challenging established views of cognitive development in this way allows for a new approach, in which views of the cognitive process as separate from and superior to emotion, are replaced by a view which unites reason and emotions. Viewing emotional 'knowing' as a kind of thinking with value equal to logic and abstraction involves a move away from a traditional understanding of thinking. Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia acknowledge relationships between the Cognitive and Affective Domains, although they also find support for clear distinctions between thinking and feeling (Bloom, Krathwohl and Masia (1964, p.7). Kinchloe and Steinberg (1993) go further, advocating a new understanding of what is meant by the term 'knowing' to include emotional knowledge. They state,

Post formal teachers admit that, indeed, emotions do exert a disorganising effect on traditional logocentric ways of knowing and traditional rationalistic cognitive theory. But, they argue, such disorganisation is a positive step in the attempt to critically accommodate our perceptions of ourselves and the worlds around us. Emotions thus become powerful thinking mechanisms that, when combined with logic, create a powerful thinking process that extends our ability to make sense of the universe (Kinchloe and Steinberg 1993. p.313)

Kinchloe and Steinberg therefore propose an understanding of thinking which repudiates the linear progression of established theories of learning and cognition. The reintegration of emotion into cognition suggests a model which is intended to reflect more accurately people's actual thinking and learning experiences, suggesting that theories are artificial constructs, with limited value.

Postmodernism acknowledges partiality, thereby undermining its own central concept. However if the Postmodernist view is correct, then it could provide an explanation for why, while there appears to be no overarching theory which informs PSE and transition to adulthood, the work continues to take place and to be considered of value. Pearson (1985) describes the situation succinctly when, in discussing Social Skills Training (SST), which is allied to PSE, she states,

"At an unsophisticated level there are indications that it is practicable, acceptable to clients, welcomed by teachers and others. SST is apparently changing constantly, and currently emphasising non-behavioural aspects, including cognitive strategies. It is

difficult to envisage a major theory or model or its validation - it may not even be appropriate to envisage other than piecemeal developments for some time" (Pearson 1985, p. 327)

### Social Cognitive Theory as a Focal Theory for Transition to Adulthood Studies

Postmodernism questions the necessity and value of over-arching theory viewing it as an artificial construct, the unacknowledged purpose of which is to impose the reassurance of order upon the essentially more chaotic experience provided by reality. It may be easier to consider that theory need not be a major factor in structuring learning experiences for transition to adulthood. Theories change, and ones' own professional judgement is more accessible; however it is the opinion of this researcher that professional judgement is not of itself sufficient to determine learning experiences.

A theoretical basis is needed to provide guidance for understanding, controlling and maximising the delivery of PSE-related transition to adulthood learning experiences. Without such guidance this work is undermined by a 'pick and mix' approach which may not, ultimately, benefit students very much. In support of the theoretical approach, Bandura states that;

"The value of a theory lies in its explanatory and predictive power, and the power of the measures derived from it, to accomplish change." (Bandura 1986 p.4),

change being a fundamental purpose of education in general, and transition to adulthood studies in particular.

Pring emphasises why theory is important to educators when he states:

The value of any theoretical perspective...is that it reminds us of key elements in the situation which otherwise, even at the relatively common-sense and practical everyday context in which teachers are working, we are in danger of ignoring (Pring 1984, p.48).

While Pearson (1985, p.327) considered that the arrival of a major theory or model for social skills training was not imminent, the following year saw this gap potentially filled by Bandura's major contribution. Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive theory is extensive, detailed and rigorous, offering much of interest to the special needs educator. However the text itself is quite difficult to read because of its density, and possibly this has operated against a widespread acknowledgement of its value. Nevertheless its insights are crucial for the young person with LDD, because they remove the limitations of under expectation, and

show how the cognitive and performance skills of slower learners may be improved. Bandura warns that,

"Given the evidence for social determination of cognitive functioning, care must be taken that faulty performance not be attributed too readily to cognitive deficiencies" (Bandura 1986, p.487)

This warning suggests a need for reassessment by teachers and lecturers of the expectations and assumptions made about the young people they teach.

As described earlier in this chapter, Social Cognitive theory is a social psychological theory which explains human functioning in terms of the reciprocal influence of three areas: behaviour; personal and other cognitive events; and environment (Bandura 1986, p.24). These all act as determinants of each other, in a continuous dynamic process. The individual receives information through three sources: the Enactive, being personal experience of interaction with the environment, including the other people in it; the Symbolic, in which information we are told about, or shown, is interpreted in terms of visual or verbal symbols in our minds, so that our understanding is thereby affected; and the Vicarious, in which we learn from what we observe happening to other people. These areas of influence and sources of information act upon five basic human capabilities: the capabilities for symbolising, forethought, vicarious learning, self-regulation, and self-reflection (Bandura 1986, p.18-21).

For the transition to adulthood teacher Social Cognitive theory offers a focus for the design of learning experiences which will improve the students' cognition. Barnett and Zucker point out the value of Social Cognitive theory for this educational context, when they state that:

Social cognitive theory addresses the professional practice challenges represented by children with severe developmental disabilities by shifting the unit of analysis. The focus becomes the plans, self-regulatory behaviours, and self-efficacy of care providers such as teachers and parents in implementing change programs, or what may amount to programs for coping with overwhelmingly impaired children (Barnett and Zucker 1990, p.15),

giving as an example those pupils with degenerative disorders. The teacher's or lecturer's role is therefore concerned with offering learning which addresses the development of these cognitive capabilities, and ensuring that these increased capabilities are translated into confidence and action in the student, in a continuous spiral of progress and improvement.

By focusing upon these five basic capabilities Bandura holds that cognitive skills can be developed, so that the individual's functioning, including functioning in the social setting, can be increased. Countermanding the basic dichotomy of whether teaching should favour practical or emotional aspects of learning, Social Cognitive theory introduces a third, overarching element, that of the power of thinking to influence and enhance all learning. Social Cognitive theory is essentially concerned with the thinking process, how it is used in learning, and how by understanding and applying its insights, better functioning can be achieved. These processes apply to the whole range of cognitive ability.

The power of thought to represent real events, to manipulate them on the level of thought, and to use them to formulate bases for action in the real world, which are then put into practice, is referred to as symbolising capability. This refers also to the human capability of transmitting ideas, to each other and to ourselves, by way of symbols; pictorial, written, spoken, mathematical, signed, gestured, or by way of other communication methods such as those based on symbols and signs, and also through commercial media - news, pictures, television, etc. Through symbols people process and transform experience into internal models that guide future action. People can test possible solutions to problems symbolically, estimating the outcome before committing themselves to possibly dangerous courses of action. However thought is not only rational; poor judgements can be made (Bandura 1986, p.462-463).

Bandura (1986) makes a strong case for the power of observational learning, which counteracts to some extent the view that concrete, practical learning is best. He points out that observational and vicarious experience of behaviour modelled by others enables us to infer rules for our own actions without having to experience those events ourselves; in other words, second hand learning can be a powerful vehicle if used properly. This can be applied to all learning tasks; in addition to imparting practical skills, all learning whether practical, vicarious or abstract should aim to develop thinking skills, including analysis by students in terms of finding rules and predictive factors, extrapolation, forethought, review, the consideration of alternatives and their application to oneself, followed by practice, rehearsal, and action in the real context. Optimum learning is achieved when these thinking processes

are applied to practical learning situations, in a cycle of observation, thought and analysis, and action.

### Conclusion

PSE has broad philosophical and theoretical antecedents. Its philosophical origins considerably predate compulsory education, being embedded in humanistic concerns regarding the good person in society, and the nature of worthwhile education. Its twentieth century theoretical origins are wide ranging, and reflect the eclectic nature of PSE.

As the curriculum area of PSE and transition to adulthood has developed, it has included the two strands of self knowledge, and the equipment of the individual for life as a member of society. The distinction between the two is not a clear one, since the preparation for life in society can include abstract qualities as well as practical capabilities. Social Cognitive theory has significant potential for providing a theoretical basis for PSE, in its consideration of reciprocal rather than linear influences, and in the support it receives from sources concerned with PSE-related input.

Theoretical differences give rise to diverging views of PSE and transition to adulthood, and the development of its curricular content. Some may view practical knowledge as a priority for the survival of the young adult, with conceptual development taking place through the mastery of increasingly complex tasks; this outcomes-based approach corresponds to the Behaviourist model. However, it is also argued that learning can take place vicariously, and that an increasing sophistication of understanding can bring about the coping skills required; this would correspond to the social cognitive approach.

While learning difficulties and/or disabilities may prevent the actual performance of tasks, they do not remove the students' rights to have control of the events in their lives; such control and involvement may be achieved through the students' interaction with and direction of, others on their behalf, making use of vicarious capabilities on the part of the student. It can therefore be argued that for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities the social cognitive approach is perhaps the more helpful. However, this does not negate the value of structured teaching and objectives-based approaches gained from Behaviourism.

There are arguments that a single, overarching theoretical construct is neither necessary, desirable, nor immediately achievable in social skills and PSE and other areas, and that the concept of the 'whole person' is a mistaken, unhelpful one. However, these views are not accepted as sufficient by the present writer, since it was a search for the guidance of an underpinning foundation and structure for PSE-related transition to adulthood which brought about this study in the first place, the writer having experienced many years of teaching PSE whilst trying to find her own way through this difficult area.

While a Postmodernist view allows for the variety of ideas and approaches encompassed by the concepts and curricula within PSE and transition to adulthood, a supporting theoretical structure aids the educator in selecting the most relevant of learning experiences. Transition to adulthood studies need such guidance in order to chart a course through the enormous range of possible input. Social Cognitive theory can provide the necessary focal theory for transition to adulthood work. In order to fulfil the potential that this holds as a theoretical foundation for transition to adulthood studies, this area of learning must become much more rigorous, and attuned to the development of thinking skills.

As an area of the curriculum, PSE has suffered from ambivalence, some theorists and programme writers favouring one approach, others an alternative. There have been repeated attempts to come to a complete understanding of what is, or should be meant by PSE and transition to adulthood. Attempts to determine the nature, purpose and content of PSE and transition to adulthood input, through an analysis of relevant literature, are discussed in Chapter Five.

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**IDENTIFYING, DEFINING AND ANALYSING**  
**THE PSE AND TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD CURRICULUM**

Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the influence of theory and curricular developments in shaping PSE-related transition to adulthood input. Chapter Four also posited that this work needs the supporting structure of a guiding theory, and identified Social Cognitive theory as the focal theory for transition to adulthood studies.

This chapter continues the discussion of PSE and transition to adulthood curricula, including a consideration of the link between social skills difficulties and academic difficulties, and the possibility of a functional relationship between the two. If social skills deficits can be improved by effective intervention, the key question becomes that of identifying or deciding what form such intervention should take; that is, how social skills input, which is included in transition to adulthood and PSE, is operationalised.

For some of its advocates, PSE is part of almost any area of learning. For others it is viewed as a list of competencies, which may be linked to practical efforts to define functional maturity and adulthood. The literature contains a wide range of attempts to answer the question of what PSE is, should, or might be, and although there may be some common ground among these attempts, there are also considerable discrepancies.

This chapter reviews the literature of PSE and transition to adulthood. Definitions of PSE are considered, and writings in the field together with published schemes, are examined in order to identify, firstly, domains, areas or skills, and secondly, themes and topics. Understanding of PSE and transition to adulthood is hampered by the variety of assumptions and meanings, shared or not shared, underlying the terminology used.

Transition to adulthood as a term in its own right has come to represent the type of PSE which is offered to post-sixteen students with LDD. Published PSE programmes may be considered as accessible to a broad range of student ability levels. There is however a

question of where priority should be assigned in the selection of learning experiences for young adults with LDD.

In order to come closer to identifying the nature, business and good practice of PSE and transition to adulthood, the classification of this learning into domains or areas of content, and the proposals for themes and topics in PSE, are examined more closely. The analysis provides indications of the support for different elements of course input. Transition to adulthood courses and the twelve core aims of A Basis for Choice (FEU 1979) are considered in the light of these.

#### Considering the Relationship Between Social Skills Difficulties and Academic Difficulties

The link between social skills difficulties and academic difficulties has been examined by Swanson and Malone (1992), Gresham (1992) and La Greca and Vaughn (1992). Swanson and Malone review the literature related to the social skills deficits of pupils with learning difficulties, and identify several conceptual issues. They find that the degree and nature of social skills deficits differ with the instrumentation or measurement system used, and the age, gender and ethnicity of the children (Swanson and Malone 1992, p.438-439) They also warn that social skills is not a unitary construct because it might be interlinked with other skills (Swanson and Malone 1992, p.439).

Gresham (1992) makes a distinction between social skills and social competence:

"Social skills represent specific behaviours an individual exhibits in specific situations in order to perform competently on social tasks. Social competence represents an evaluative term based on judgements (given certain criteria) that a person has performed competently on a social task" (Gresham 1992 p.349)

He points out that these terms have been used interchangeably, and are difficult constructs to define (Gresham 1992 p.350).

In considering the relationship between social skills deficit and academic skills deficit, Gresham (1992) finds that while one deficit does not cause the other, there is a functional relationship between the two, so that they are frequently found together. Gresham advocates a functional analysis approach to social skills deficit (Gresham 1992 p.356). However La Greca and Vaughn (1992) point out that other sources disagree, and consider

that future research will show a stronger link between social skills deficits and central nervous system dysfunction (La Greca and Vaughn 1992 p.342).

Gresham and La Greca and Vaughn describe an area of research concerned with a successful form of social skills intervention, which is described as a "contextualist model".

This suggests a social cognitive approach, since the contextualist model assumes that:

A child's social functioning is determined by several factors, including the interaction between the child and others in the environment. Within a contextualist model, teaching social skills is insufficient unless interactions with peers, teachers and significant others are also considered (La Greca and Vaughn 1992 p. 345)

If the contextualist model is successful, this would appear to offer support to the social cognitive view of a reciprocal influence between the cognitive or personal element, the environmental element, and behaviour. If there is a functional relationship between social skills difficulties and academic difficulties, and if social skills input is valued, there begins to be a case for a consideration of the social cognitive approach as a basis for social skills input, which in the context of modern Further Education, becomes transition to adulthood input. There remains, however, a central issue concerning how ideas about social skills training, or transition to adulthood, are operationalised. The broader field of PSE is examined in order to seek conclusions about the content of such courses.

### Differences of Approach

Much PSE work has developed without a significant theoretical base. Notable background theory has been discussed in Chapter Four, and significant antecedents of PSE have been identified in humanistic philosophy, psychodynamic practices and cognitive and learning theory. PSE and transition to adulthood curricula have also been influenced by curriculum theory. While some programmes follow a stepwise curriculum, others, such as Foster with Stewart (1988) and Gurney (1991) follow a spiral curriculum, whereby topics are revisited with increasing degrees of knowledge, awareness and complexity.

An examination of different PSE and transition to adulthood curricula reveals differences of approach. PSE has been described as being beset by a 'process and content' debate, embodying different approaches towards the work (Quicke 1985, Ryder and

Campbell 1988,). The Process approach would be concerned with the guidance of the young person towards maturity and would perhaps bear a relationship to the psychodynamic approach, and that of the identification of domains. Content would perhaps be concerned with what is taught, and with outcomes.

Given the variety of sources informing PSE, it is understandable that PSE has developed some differences of direction. Ryder and Campbell (1988,p.122-124) distinguish six different elements to PSE in practice. These are: social education; health education; moral education; careers education; political education; and the pastoral curriculum. There is a wide range of course titles under which the work is delivered, such as: lifeskills; social skills; personal (and social) development; independent living skills; personal effectiveness; tutoring; community studies, and many more.

Ryder and Campbell (1988) consider that the concept of a healthy school or a healthy individual is connected with the values held by the school or the individual (Ryder and Campbell 1988, p.198), and values education is included within some PSE curricula. The Schools Council Moral Education project "Lifeline", has itself been influential in the development of earlier PSE programmes, being recognised by Wakeman (1984), Pring (1984), and McNiff (1986) as an important resource; Wakeman stresses its value for the development of PSE/PSME curricula.

Personal and social education (PSE) has perhaps emerged as a generic term, but this area may also be called personal, social and health education (PSHE), or personal, social and moral education (PSME). While it would be difficult to find a current PSE curriculum which did not consider health and moral education issues together with careers, pastoral and other concerns, PSHE and PSME both suggest a greater emphasis on a particular dimension.

### Defining Personal and Social Education

In 1976 the Assessment of Performance Unit established an Exploratory Group to consider and advise on the feasibility of assessing and monitoring the personal and social development of school-age children. This was to be an extension of national monitoring

work being carried out by other APU committees, and drew inspiration from the National Assessment of Educational Progress Project in America. The group had two tasks, the first being to map the area of Personal and Social Development (PSD/PSE), the second being to consider and recommend whether it would be possible and profitable to define criteria for assessment in the identified PSD area.

Both the British and the American experience showed that the task was difficult. Schofield (1980) concluded that assessment measures of PSD were being developed without acceptable reliability and validity; a criticism which may still be levelled today. While Schofield noted the amount of interest in the PSE area (Schofield 1980, p.27), he found the quality of many existing measures to be inadequate (Schofield 1980, p.33-35). It became evident that existing, ready-made tests could not be fitted to the general, let alone the specific aspects of PSD, and there was no agreement in the literature as to which were the best tests. Like many others to follow, Schofield called for further research and the development of better assessment measures:

It was suggested that from the perspective of the literature, there were pressing needs for research policy and planning support which went beyond the issue of national monitoring to that of developing measures of general personal and social competence for use in evaluating educational outcomes to guide discussions at all levels (Schofield 1980, p. 62).

In drawing this work to its conclusion the APU (1981) did not offer a definition of PSE, although it attempted to analyse the content of PSE, taking as its starting point a curriculum concept based upon lines of development rather than subject areas. A "map of the territory" was outlined, dividing the area into General and Specific aspects of development, which were analysed further. General development included: persons and personal relationships; morality, and social awareness. Specific development included: occupational; political; legal; environmental; health; and community aspects (APU 1981, p.4-7). It could not be decided where to assign religion and philosophies of life, since these could be attributed to either area according to personal belief; accordingly they were given a sector of their own (APU 1981, p.14). Each of the three sectors were understood in terms of four domains: knowledge; understanding; practical application, and attitudes (APU 1981, p.4-

7). The Exploratory group acknowledged an awareness of some overlap between the domains of knowledge and understanding (APU 1981, p.5).

Subsequent to the APU (1981) report there have been a number of attempts at definition, each of which may have contributed something towards the understanding of PSE, although a complete account may not yet have been reached. One of the first is from David (1983). In the Report of the Schools Council Working Party on PSE, concerned with young people up to the age of eighteen years, he offers the following definition:

Personal and social education includes the teaching and informal activities which are planned to enhance the development of knowledge, understanding, attitudes and behaviour, concerned with:

- oneself and others;
- social institutions, structures and organisation;
- social and moral issues (David 1983, p.18)

David's concept of PSE may be compared with that of MacBeath (1988), who also defines three basic objectives for PSE, although with a different emphasis:

1. Coming to terms with yourself;
2. Coming to terms with other people;
3. Coming to terms with society (MacBeath 1988, p. 57)

These may seem similar but reflect a difference of approach; MacBeath's seems more personal. His inclusion of "coming to terms with" these areas is an important one which is not always clearly articulated; implying internalisation and application of personal and social learning, it may suggest compromise but in a stronger sense may also suggest synthesis and evaluation, higher order cognitive skills described by Bloom (1956).

A definition of PSE by HMI (1989) is more detailed:

Personal and social education is concerned with qualities and attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and abilities and skills in relation to oneself and others, social responsibilities and morality. It helps pupils be considerate and enterprising in the present, while it prepares them for an informed and active involvement in family, social, economic and civic life. It plays an important part in bringing relevance, breadth and balance to the curriculum (HMI 1989, p.1)

This suggests support for areas of content within PSE, but also makes recommendations regarding that content.

Inman (1992) attempts to define good practice in PSE in such a way as to provide criteria against which any model of PSE may be measured. She states that good practice in PSE:

1. Has a good relationship between content and process, including an explicit knowledge base;
2. Places the development of personal and social awareness within real social contexts;
3. Should be based on issues that are relevant to pupil's daily lives;
4. Promotes the development of a critical perspective, enabling pupils to ask questions, seek explanations and look for evidence;
5. Enables pupils to be active participants in the social world. (Inman 1991, p100)

Inman acknowledges the process and content issues, without providing further information as to the nature of the 'explicit knowledge base' or the 'real social contexts'. No reference is made to assessment or evaluation processes. As in other cases, a key concern is how these criteria, and the characteristics which they describe, should or would be translated into practice.

#### Areas of Content and Concern within PSE

The APU report (1981) was an important early attempt to conceptualise PSE as a curricular element in its own right. Its analysis of the area into aspects of development, corresponding to areas of content or concern, and dimensions or domains (APU 1981, p.7), is emulated by other writers, although the preferred domains are not always the same. The boundaries between domains are by no means clear, and as in any discussion of PSE, clarity is compromised by terminology. The APU (1981) records reservations regarding an overlap between Knowledge and Understanding (APU 1981); and Pring's (1984) concept of Practical Application cannot be seen as the same as Skills, since it includes behaviour, together with habits and skills required to behave appropriately. The range of domains or domain-like areas which five different sources (APU 1981, David 1983, Pring 1984, Ryder and Campbell 1988, HMI 1989), recommend as the concern of PSE, are shown in Table I.

**Table I: Comparison of Suggested Domains Within PSE**

	APU 1981	David 1983	Pring 1984	Ryder & Campbell 1988	HMI 1989
Abilities					X
Attitudes (inc. feelings)	X	X	X	X	X
Behaviour		X			
Cognitive capacity			X		
Concepts				X	
Facts to be known			X	X	
Knowledge	X	X			X
Practical application	X		X		
Qualities (personal)					X
Skills				X	X
Understanding	X	X			X

Setting aside questions of overlap there is only one area, that of Attitudes, including feelings, which is common to all five sources. If facts and knowledge were subsumed into one category, it would represent another common area. Table I therefore suggests support for a common body of factual knowledge and agreed attitudes to be taught in PSE; however, identifying such knowledge and attitudes is problematic. While fewer sources identify domains, many offer an opinion about knowledge and attitudes, including feelings; these may correspond to earlier concepts of cognitive and affective learning, described in Chapter Four.

**Themes and Topics in PSE.**

Quicke considers that PSE is hampered by its theoretical difficulties:

Partly because of its failure to adequately theorize its content it represents a weak force for change in the direction intended by some of its supporters (Quicke 1985, p.93).

However, the identification of necessary content in PSE and transition to adulthood has been the subject of considerable efforts on the part of writers in the field. Wakeman (1984) cautions:

There is always a danger of writing out lists of content that teachers should cover in their lessons without thinking long and hard about our aims. Lists of topics by themselves are insufficient. We need to break down the content into concepts and cognitive capacities, into attitudes, feelings and dispositions, as well as into facts to be known (Wakeman 1984, p.54).

However, in spite of this warning, lists of topics persist. An examination of the declared themes and topics of twenty seven different PSE and PSE-related schema published since the 1981 APU 'map of the territory' reveals wide ranging variation, shown in full in Appendix III. Some offer a detailed list of topics, others a few broader areas.

Of the twenty seven schema examined, six are grounded in moral education and personal, social and moral education (PSME): (Pring, 1984; Wakeman 1984; Plant 1987; Scrimshaw 1987; Bottery 1990, Hitchin and Hunt 1988). Four are from PSE-related writings (APU 1981; McGuire and Priestley 1981; Ryder and Campbell 1988; Whitfield 1993). Three are from a background of post-sixteen special educational needs (Whelan 1984, Hutchinson and Tennyson 1986; Beaumont College, undated), and two are taken from tutorial sources (Button 1981a, 1981b; Baldwin and Wells 1983). Two link PSE with National Curriculum cross-curricular themes (Buck and Inman 1993; Foster 1993); and one is taken from the emerging Quality of Life movement in America (Halpern 1993).

In addition to Foster 1993, six further schema are taken from commercially published PSE programmes (TACADE 1986; Foster with Stewart 1988; McConnon 1989; Gurney 1990; Wolfenden 1991; Wilson 1992). One is from a television series (Settle and Wise 1986) and one from the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (Sweeney 1986). Many are straightforward listings in varying degrees of detail. While most writers intend these to be comprehensive, some recognise that the teacher will need to select according to specific needs within particular learning situations. Some also consider that it is worthwhile for teachers to devise their own PSE curriculum to meet the needs of their particular school.

The examination of the twenty seven PSE and PSE-related sources reveals some common themes and topics. Over one hundred and fifty suggestions are made regarding the

content of PSE, listed in Appendix III. From these, thirteen broad categories have been derived. The comprehensiveness and nature of these themes and topics varies from source to source. Some declared themes are broader than others, and an item nominated by one source, such as "parenthood", may be subsumed but not named, within another. The choice of theme or topic also reflects the approach to PSE taken by the writer; for example the nomination of "money" by one writer reflects a different approach to the "economic awareness" nominated by another.

Some nominated themes or topics, such as "personal awareness" are so broad as to encompass almost anything. Further, by including items within the broad categories described, it is possible unintentionally to move away from the original purpose intended by the writer. However, if broad categories were not identified, the analysis would become an exercise in fine shades of meaning. Some items might reasonably be assigned to other categories than the one chosen, or be relevant to several categories at once. The placing of a source theme or topic in a particular category therefore must be seen as reflecting only the area for which it seems to have most relevance.

With these reservations acknowledged, the categories are shown in the order in which they attract support. The category attracting the greatest amount of support is shown first:

1. Social awareness, including: place in school; place in society; social issues; prejudice and stereotypes; race; women (gender); disability; social services; community; political development; legal development; law and juvenile crime; power relationships; public policy and private life; resisting social pressures; controversial issues; media; citizenship; compassion; conflict; voting; social responsibility; empathy.
2. Health, including: hygiene; sex education; stress management; personal care; puberty; harmful substances; human development.
3. "Embrace life and accept its challenges" (quality of life, as described by Fish 1990, p.4), including: self-confidence; courage; assertiveness; self-motivation; determination; self-respect; perception of self; self-knowledge; self-esteem; being a person; personal development; self-awareness; personal management; self-knowledge; willingness to learn; self-assessment; one's own limitations and aspirations; reconcile personal demands and external goals; enterprise; learning from experience; feelings; emotions.
4. Personal relationships, including: friendship; family; boyfriends, girlfriends; domestic feuds and dilemmas; education for parenthood; separation; loss, bereavement; maturity; effective interpersonal relationships; marriage.

5. Occupational development, including: academic guidance and careers education; work; employment; unemployment; vocational; study skills; basic education; learning development; economic and industrial awareness; economic and industrial understanding; independent study; social academic aspects; reflect on learning and plan future developments.
6. Communication, including: interaction; interpersonal aspects; group work; group identity; group dynamics; cooperation; helping each other; giving and receiving feedback; working collaboratively.
7. Independence preparation, including: post-sixteen environment; self-help; leaving school; decision making; coping skills; self-sufficiency; use information; survival skills; food, clothing, lodging; mobility; physical and technical environment; development of physical and manipulative skills; self-organisation; time-and-task management; initiative; assess future life-pattern; entering the teenage years- the challenge ahead; acquiring skills; applying skills; safety from harm.
8. Morality, including: honesty; ethics; values of self and others; social responsibility; rights and responsibilities; principles; fairness; justice; ideals; moral dilemmas in relationships.
9. Critical faculties, including concentration; rationality; accept and use criticism; open-mindedness; questioning; flexibility of attitude; assimilate knowledge effectively; critical thinking skills; be critically informed about the world.
10. Personal interests, including: leisure; recreation.
11. Environmental development, including: ecology; personal environment.
12. Money, including: economic awareness; [personal finance; financial security.
13. Religion, including: philosophies of life; spiritual fulfilment.

The categories described above illuminate discussion about the content of PSE and transition to adulthood courses. The HMI (1988) survey, PSE Courses in Some Secondary Schools (HMI 1988), used a small sample of twenty one schools, examining provision, delivery and content. The survey suggested that there was a discrepancy between what recommended in the literature and what was being taught at that time with a strong emphasis upon health and hygiene, and little attention to the area of work described by the category "embrace life", or quality of life.

The PSE literature does not often differentiate between pre- and post-sixteen groups but aims to be applicable across a range of settings. These categories are therefore considered to be relevant to a study of the content of transition to adulthood courses, and are used in an examination of content in the empirical research.

### Comparison of ' A Basis For Choice' and Themes and Topics in PSE Curricula

The importance of A Basis for Choice (FEU 1979) in setting the tone and pattern of vocational education for young people with LDD in Further Education, has been discussed in Chapter One. This document makes a link between PSE curricula, transition to adulthood, and the Further Education of young people with LDD. A comparison of the twelve core aims of A Basis for Choice (Appendix I), and the categories identified from the PSE literature, show how closely they are matched.

On examination the twelve core aims are revealed to be complex, incorporating several elements within each aim. To separate these out and discuss them in terms of objectives, derived only from the wording of the core aims and without reading further into what may be implied, reveals thirty seven objectives, some of which are related; these are shown in Appendix I. Table II shows these objectives distributed against the thirteen broad categories of themes and topics derived from the examination of PSE and PSE-related curricula:

Although health and hygiene, and religion or philosophies of life, are not mentioned directly they could be inferred from others among the twelve core aims. Health and hygiene could be subsumed among concepts of self-sufficiency or the impact of the physical environment; religion and philosophies of life are likely to have a close relationship with the development of a moral code. Table II shows that there is a close relationship between PSE and PSE-related curricula, and the curricular aims devised for young people with LDD in the key document ' A Basis for Choice' (FEU 1979).

**Table II: Comparing A Basis for Choice Core Aims and PSE-related Themes and Topics**

<u>Core Aims</u>	<u>Themes and topics</u>
role and status of young person in society and in work; relationship of physical/technological requirements, and needs of people and working life;	Social awareness
	Health, hygiene
flexibility of attitude, willingness to learn	"Embrace life and accept its challenges"/ quality of life
satisfactory personal relationships with others	Personal relationships.
literacy, numeracy, graphicity objectives; competence in study skills	Occupational/academic development
satisfactory social relationships with others	Communication, interaction
informed/realistic decision about future; manage future changes in technology and careers; develop coping skills necessary for self-sufficiency	Independence preparation
acquire moral values, applicable to contemporary issues	Morality
approach problems methodologically, plan and evaluate courses of action	Critical faculties
	Personal interests/leisure
political understanding of, and participation in, the environment; appreciate physical and technological environment	Environmental development
economic understanding of, and participation in, the environment	Money, economic awareness
	Religion/ philosophies of life

**Examination of a Subset**

The three schema for young people with LDD (Whelan 1984, Hutchinson and Tennyson 1986; Beaumont College undated) are compared as a subset, with the themes and topics identified from the range of PSE and PSE-related schema (Table III). The purpose is to enquire whether there are any obvious differences of emphasis when the courses are intended for young people with LDD.

Table III: Comparison of a Subset

<u>Themes and topics</u>	<u>Whelan (1986)</u>	<u>Hutchinson and Tennyson (1986)</u>	<u>Beaumont Coll. (1988/89)</u>
Social awareness			social confidence; individual contributing in the comm.
Health, hygiene		personal care	
"Embrace life and accept its challenges"/ quality of life		personal development	quality of life; perception of self; accept responsibility
Personal relationships.			maturity
Occupational/academic development	social academic aspects, vocational aspects.	basic education, work	
Communication, interaction	interpersonal aspects		interaction concentration
Independence preparation	Self-help	mobility	decision making; survival skills; self-organisation; acquire skills; independence in the wider comm.
Morality			
Critical faculties			
Personal interests/leisure		recreation	
Environmental development			
Money/economic awareness			
Religion/ philosophies of life			

The limitations of the allocation of items to cells in Table III must be acknowledged, since several items could be legitimately ascribed to different categories. However, the Table shows that the three schema intended for use with students with LDD are much narrower in scope than the full range of curricular elements ascribed to PSE. Interestingly, the items which are not nominated could be described as those encompassing a wider view of the

world, although this is perhaps unfair to some of the broader terms, such as social confidence, which could be said to include these elements.

To conduct this analysis basing Whelan's (1986) contribution upon broad headings, rather than on the large number of objectives derived from them, may also be unfair. Nevertheless it is interesting to note a difference of emphasis between the more general PSE curricula and those intended for students with LDD; the latter are narrower, and more self-centred. It is also interesting to note that the only common ground among the three 'special educational' schema is that of independence preparation. This area perhaps characterises the difference between general PSE input and that intended for use with young people with LDD.

More recently PSE-related transition to adulthood materials have been linked to accreditation schemes, such as those produced by The Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN 1995, 1997). Applying the analysis of PSE Themes and Topics to the Further Education Award Scheme modules (ASDAN 1995) reveals the following matches:

Social Awareness = the community, international relations

Health and hygiene = health and fitness

Occupational/academic development = vocational study, vocational training

Independence preparation = independent living

Morality = rights and responsibilities

Personal interests/leisure = creativity, recreation

Modules are not offered for "embrace life and accept its challenges" i.e. quality of life issues, or for personal relationships, communication and interaction, critical faculties, environmental development, (although 'the community' or 'international relations' could fit in here), money and economic awareness, religion and philosophies of life.

Personal, interactive and emotional issues may not play a large part within the structure of the FE award scheme, however ASDAN aims to offer resources for a wide range of post-sixteen learners. Among its other materials it includes Towards Independence and Transition Challenge (formerly Working Towards Independence) materials, and these cover

independent living skills, self-advocacy, positive self-image, personal development and personal autonomy. Unfortunately modularisation allows learners to participate in groups having access to one or another of the schemes, without benefiting from the broader range of PSE-related input.

### Conclusion

Although a definition of PSE would be useful in identifying the content and concerns of PSE, there are considerable difficulties in arriving at such a definition. Firstly, there is potential for discrepancy in underlying philosophy or theory, which may include ideas about how the work should be offered, as well as what it should be. Secondly, the literature holds discrepancies as to the domains or areas of content with which PSE-related input should be concerned. Thirdly, there are difficulties in deciding how the ideas, theories or principles, with or without the framework of domains, should be transformed into content. Fourthly, there are differences in understanding how this curricular element is affected by the educational needs of young people with LDD.

There are considerable differences of approach in identifying the purposes of PSE and transition to adulthood courses, and in recommending how those purposes will be met through education. For some writers it is about the gaining of practical skills, for others it is about the education of the emotions. The discrepancy suggested in the literature between what is recommended and what is taught, gives rise to questions in the empirical research regarding the content of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses.

In seeking a clear understanding of the purpose of PSE-related input and transition to adulthood, and its transformation into content, there is little agreement or consistency, and rarely is there any consideration of the ethical implications of this area of work. Many writers have interesting and relevant ideas about the purpose and the process of PSE and transition to adulthood, but it is very hard to identify a significant core from amongst them. There seems to be a common belief that knowledge and attitudes are important.

The analysis of PSE and transition to adulthood materials conducted in this chapter, shows that PSE-related transition to adulthood curricula devised for young people

with LDD are narrower than those intended for mainstream use. However, perhaps the most significant conclusion drawn from the study of the PSE literature in this chapter, is concerned with the importance attributed to the education of the emotions, or affective education, and the seeming lack of attention given to this area in practice. This and other questions of content are explored further in the empirical research.

## CHAPTER SIX:

### ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION IN PSE AND TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

#### Introduction

An examination of the PSE literature reveals problems with the definition and consequent assessment of PSE, leading to difficulties in defining its content. Chapters Four and Five have focused upon the theoretic and curricular aspects of PSE. This chapter considers in more detail the issues surrounding the assessment and evaluation of PSE.

The assessment problems noted by the Exploratory Group of the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU 1981) have been described in Chapter Five. The approach at that time was based on seeking measurement of student outcomes, and the intrinsic difficulties of this approach where PSE is concerned, are examined further. The different approaches to assessment which have developed since that time, including profiling, competency statements, and performance indicators, have been discussed in Chapter Three.

This chapter broadens the discussion and clarifies the issues surrounding the assessment and evaluation difficulties of PSE. The requirements placed upon assessment and evaluation procedures following the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992), and their implications for transition to adulthood studies, are described. The multi-dimensional approach to the assessment of PSE within Scottish Further Education, is considered.

The difference between assessment and evaluation is explored, and the view of assessment in the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996), together with its inherent difficulties, is examined. The chapter ends by showing how areas of enquiry in the empirical research have developed from the discussion and analysis of PSE-related transition to adulthood curricula and assessment issues.

## The Assessment and Evaluation of PSE and PSE-related Transition to Adulthood Courses

In 1981 the Assessment of Performance Unit reported on the assessment of personal and social development (PSD) in the curriculum (APU 1981). It may at first have seemed a fairly straightforward task to assign existing assessment measures to each area of the 'map of the territory' formulated by the APU, and to construct new measures where they did not already exist. The aims were to identify measures which would be suitable for monitoring of a large, sampled cross-section of pupils, which could be administered by teachers in an individual or group context, and which could call on other methods of assessment than those relying upon pencil and paper tests (Schofield, 1980). The Exploratory Group thought that assessment at ages eleven and fifteen would be appropriate, and were also interested in assessing younger pupils, with a view to measuring progress over time between one target age and the next.

As described in Chapter Five Schofield, the researcher, found that while there was a great amount of material indicating the level of research interest in the area, it was not of sufficient validity and reliability to serve the purpose of the project, and there was much that was trivial (Schofield, 1980, p.33). The difficulties with terminology and definition, and the range of variables in PSD, were noted. Schofield concluded that it would not be possible to fit ready-made tests to PSD, and that there was no agreement as to which were the best tests. Measures that he found potentially useful were identified by Schofield, with special mention being given to the social reasoning scales in the British Ability Scales published in 1980 by Pearson and Elliott (Schofield 1980, p.36). It was with apparent frustration that Schofield noted that:

Testing programmes in America and Canada, and research testing there and in this country, have uneventfully included areas considered too sensitive for monitoring in this country (Schofield 1980, p.43).

and that there was an underlying mistrust of national testing and monitoring (Schofield 1980, p.38).

It was concluded that while, with a significant amount of research and development appropriate measures for testing and assessing the Affective Domain might be developed, this was not the business of committees such as the Exploratory Group (Schofield 1980,

p.36). The need for theoretical discussion and conceptual clarification, particularly in the area of construct validity, was noted. The devising of measures to assess, for example,

A working grasp of concepts such as fairness (APU 1981 p.11), especially where 'fairness' had yet to be defined, was a task beyond that envisaged by the Exploratory Group. Having concluded that personal and social development could not easily be assessed, the work of the Group and the results of the research were published for the use of educators (APU 1980, Foreword).

This admission of difficulty on the part of the APU (1981) is perhaps the first significant acknowledgement of the problems inherent in the assessment and evaluation of PSE. As Schofield shows (Schofield 1980) these are partly owing to the broad and indefinite nature of the field, the range of variables, and the lack of theoretical and conceptual definition, and partly owing to the limitations of procedures purporting to measure aspects of social functioning or maturity of thought.

Cronin's view (Cronin 1996 p.58-59) is that work should go forward to develop measures for the assessment of individuals' social learning outcomes and the impact upon them of different types of educational input. However, others are more cautious. Ryder and Campbell acknowledge the inherent difficulties in assessment, pointing out the risk of trivialisation in criterion-based lists of competencies, and they are concerned that this approach takes no account of motivation or transferability (Ryder and Campbell 1988 p. 129/130). Ryder and Campbell pose a number of unanswered questions, among which are those concerning the place of formal assessment in personal, social and health education, and the criteria for evaluating student performance in PSHE (Ryder and Campbell 1988 p.128). Their own doubts are clearly stated and, as do other sources, they call for further research to clarify the issues:

Our own view on the issue of student assessment in PSHE is far from settled. Much fuller research and debate is required. At present, the best approach seems to be via strategies which involve students in monitoring their own performance. However, we are unable to recommend techniques for so doing (Ryder and Campbell 1988 p.131).

Within the literature studied, Ryder and Campbell alone question whether it is ethical to quantify students' emotions and dispositions according to predetermined criteria, as

noted in Chapter Three. They acknowledge that the assessment and evaluation of PSE contains considerable obstacles, some of which are ethical:

The assessment of attitudes is even more open to question. We believe a) that such assessment is difficult and b) that it is unethical to quantify students' dispositions and emotions according to predetermined criteria. Perhaps the best we can hope for is that PSHE teachers, like those in the arts and humanities generally, will use their sensitivity in responding to students' developing views (Ryder and Campbell 1988 p. 130).

To identify what is wrong with quantifying students' dispositions and emotions according to predetermined criteria, it is necessary only to consider how we would like ourselves to be assessed in such a way. We might find it acceptable in the context of a magazine fun quiz, the kind which purport to tell us about ourselves, but if real life chances were attached to the outcomes we might well consider them presumptuous, intrusive, inappropriate and completely unacceptable. We would want to have the same opportunities as others and not to be ruled out because of another person's views about our attitudes; such assessments offer a different yardstick for the assessed than for other people. We might also, if we knew how to do so, question the validity and reliability of the instrument being used to assess our attitudes and might find them lacking. There is a strong possibility that we would be unhappy about having our attitudes and emotions assessed, and demand the right to appeal to a higher authority when we do not agree with the outcomes.

McGinty and Fish (1992) consider such assessments to be discriminatory and oppressive. Speaking of 'skills for living' courses, which are the type of courses which form the subject of this study, they say:

When the curriculum calls for the assessment of such displays of 'normality' caring can be seen to be oppressive (McGinty and Fish 1992 p. 28).

Describing how most of us do not have our attitudes and emotions questioned because we can present the appearance of competence in other aspects of our lives (McGinty and Fish 1992 *ibid.*), they continue:

For disabled people or people with learning difficulties, however, the professional gaze extends into the most intimate aspects of their lives. It is this power to conflate the public and private spheres and make them the legitimate concern of professional judgement which demonstrates the degree of exposure which disabled people have to endure (McGinty and Fish 1992 p.28).

McGinty and Fish are concerned that this focus can itself lead to a damaging lack of confidence:

We maintain that such a curricular focus is oppressive for it forces an unreasonable notion of normality and fosters extreme self-consciousness. Under the guise of empowerment, individuals are exposed to revealing their innermost feelings in a context in which there is a relationship of unequals (McGinty and Fish 1992 p.29).

The authors are arguing in opposition to the kind of courses which are the subject of this study (McGinty and Fish op.cit.), and their arguments are convincing. Nevertheless the empirical research described in Chapters Nine, Ten and Eleven shows that there remains considerable support for such courses, and experience indicates that PSE-related assessments of attitudes and emotions continue to be made.

### Defining Assessment and Evaluation

The terms 'assessment' and 'evaluation' are sometimes used interchangeably, but there have been attempts to distinguish between them. David (1983) makes such a distinction, pointing out the difficulty and sometimes inappropriateness of applying standardised measures in the context of personal and social education. He acknowledges the additional requirements placed upon teachers in the attempts to assess and evaluate PSE, and recognises also the part played by professional judgement.

Wakeman (1984) seeks to clarify the distinction between assessment and evaluation, stating,

By assessment I mean the process of determining what a pupil has learned, noting a student's level of performance in relation to a particular aim or process. It may be the recall of factual knowledge, the understanding of concepts, the grasp of mental processes, the attitudes, dispositions and values of the learner, or it may be the practical application of skills, habits beliefs or behaviour.

Evaluation is the description and gathering of information about the effects and value of educational activities. The observation of learning and teaching in schools, with careful recording and analysis, is the process of evaluation. Judgements about the worth of these activities may be made by the teachers involved, with a view to improvement. (Wakeman 1984 p. 67)

Wakeman describes this process of evaluation as 'formative' while 'summative' evaluation is the term used when describing a judgement of the worth of a programme at its completion. Interestingly, he uses the terms of formative and summative evaluation to describe the value

of the course, whereas in present usage they are more commonly employed to describe the progress of the student.

In contrast to evaluation, it can be seen from Wakeman's definition that assessment means measurement against a predecided standard or objective. He suggests that a partial solution to the problems of the assessment of PSE may be found in using assessment procedures such as tests of knowledge and skills, and suggests that the assessment of moral education should be linked with moral developmental stages. Schofield (1980) also takes this view, however its value as an approach is based upon an acceptance of Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development, and there are criticisms of this from Bandura (1986) and ultimately from Kohlberg himself, in his later version of his theory (Kohlberg 1985). Wakeman (1984) recommends a profiling style for other areas, and notes as do others, the need for further research into ways of measuring personal, social and moral education.

#### Measures of Adaptive Behaviour and Social Functioning.

Measures of adaptive behaviour and social functioning have a role in the management of provision for children and adults with LDD. For example, the question of whether or not people are trainable for open or sheltered employment has governed life decisions made on their behalf.

The development of tests and assessment procedures is derived from psychological theory, and tests of adaptive behaviour are derived largely from theory pertaining to the psychology of personality (Barnett and Zucker, 1990, p.42). Berger and Yule point out that psychological processes and attributes are not directly observable but are inferred from observed behaviour, so that most tests consist at least partly of tasks and questions especially designed to provoke the expression of the attribute or process (Berger and Yule 1987, p.14-15). The type of task selected depends on the test designer's understanding of psychological theory, which itself will be related to his or her underlying philosophies, beliefs and value judgements (Barnett and Zucker, 1990).

In a critique of adaptive behaviour scales, Raynes (1987) says of their underlying concept,

Its development was in part a reaction to the felt inadequacy of IQ as a measure of human performance and in part a response to the need to find a basis for the overall functional classification of people with mental handicap (Raynes, 1987 p.81)

Raynes considers Doll's work, begun in the 1920s and published in 1935 as the Vineland Social Maturity Scale to be the first of such adaptive behaviour scales, and identifies the subsequent development of such scales as following an American lead (Raynes 1987 p.82-83). The American interest may be interlinked with the development of early lifeskills work in America, which is discussed in Chapter Four, and American assessment of PSE-related areas, which Schofield (1980, p.43) noted in his review of the research literature.

Raynes is careful to issue warnings about the uses and abuses of measures of adaptive behaviour. She comments upon the difficulties of establishing reliability, validity and standardisation:

Trying to assess the reliability of adaptive behaviour scales is not easy. The content of these scales is rarely homogenous because they sample a wide range of behaviours. Additionally many of the scales use a variety of item formats (Raynes 1987p.96).

and recommends that reliability is linked to consistency of agreement between observers, since many of the scales rely on their judgement (Raynes *ibid.*). She continues:

It is also difficult to establish the validity of measures of adaptive behaviour (Raynes 1987 p.96)

citing Hill and Bruininks' summary of reasons, which are concerned with the lack of definitions for this area, the complexity of the concept, and the lack of objective criteria (Raynes 1987 *ibid.*)

She warns that, regarding reliability and validity:

It is hardly worth using tests in which these issues have not been addressed (Raynes 1987 p.103)

and points out, as do Barnett and Zucker (1990), the necessary reliance on the observer's judgement of what the person being assessed can or cannot do.

Finally, while accepting their value as one of a battery of assessment measures, Raynes warns that adaptive behaviour scales should not be used as substitutes for information which should be sought in other ways:

They are not surrogates for information either about IQ, motivation or personality and should not be used as if they were a total statement about a person's abilities, aptitudes and adaptability. As descriptors of an individual's performance characteristics, and as the data base for individual performance plans, measures of adaptive behaviour can be used in their own right (Raynes 1987 p.103).

However in spite of reservations, both psychometric, norm-referenced measures such as the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale (Sparrow, Balla and Cicchetti, 1984) and criterion-referenced measures such as the Star Profile (Williams 1986) may still be found in use as a means of gauging the social functioning of a young person. Decisions made as a result of the use of such measures may not, however, take sufficient account of questions of validity and reliability.

#### Professional Judgement in Personal and Social Assessment

Tests of intelligence quotient, personality, motivation or adaptive behaviour did not match the concept of personal and social development as defined by the Assessment of Performance Unit (APU 1981) and the question of how to assess this area remains unresolved. Without a framework for assessment, a reliance upon professional judgement is the frequent, pragmatic solution to the problem of how to assess and evaluate PSE-related input. Self-evaluation is also seen as significant.

Throughout its development as a curriculum area, PSE has been dependent upon professional judgement. Even when assessment measures are framed as a series of objectives to be met, professional judgement as to their successful accomplishment is required from the tester or observer. Some test procedures, such as those described in Hutchinson and Tennyson (1986) aim to eliminate bias by having a task repeated over a series of assessment periods. However there are drawbacks to this approach, including isolation from social context, concentration upon a small, testable element of what might be a larger and more complex learning experience, and expense in terms of time and effort for what might be a small return in terms of educational information.

Barnett and Zucker (1990) state that personal and social assessment of children is all-pervasive;

Personal and social assessment is at least implicit in all assessments, all clinical decisions and all educational decisions (Barnett and Zucker 1990 p.xi)

They point out the role played by professional judgement among test designers, testers and observers in a field which seeks to display objectivity, stating that,

Professional judgement is the pervasive term that is applied to a private decision process - one that is loosely tied to a foundation in behavioural sciences and to specific dilemmas associated with a wide range of practices in the field of psychology...often practitioners are right in their decisions, but we need to know when this occurs and the processes involved (Barnett and Zucker 1990 p. 141)

Barnett and Zucker consider that even within psychological assessment measures, professional judgement is called upon.

Professional judgement, including personal concepts and values, is also likely to play a significant part in guiding the choices of the PSE teacher or lecturer in deciding and delivering the PSE curriculum (Johnstone 1995, p.75). Professional judgements of this kind may also be affected by broader, less easily acknowledged influences such as budget limitations. A more subtle influence is the requirement upon the PSE practitioner to produce 'good citizens', when the good citizen is, perhaps unconsciously, identified as one who behaves him or herself and who does not disrupt society (Tomlinson 1981; Corbett and Barton, 1992).

### Evaluation Strategies

Profiling is supported by David (1983) and endorsed also by Pring (1984), and by McNiff (1986) who values its potential for negotiation and continuous assessment. Profiles may include descriptions of the individual student based upon teachers' or pupils' personal judgement, or may refer to materials which are published commercially as measures of adaptive behaviour. Either type of profile would be affected by the difficulties described by Raynes (1987), of establishing reliability, validity and standardisation.

Hopson and Scally take a broad view of evaluation, relating this directly to specific teaching techniques, and including testing as one of a range of data-gathering methods

(Hopson and Scally 1981, p.197-199). They suggest a number of 'evaluation questions' which should be asked by the lifeskills teacher. The first among these suggests that the teacher should ask;

What will be my criteria for deciding whether the work has been effective? (Hopson and Scally 1981 p.199)

and this remains the key question in the assessment and evaluation of PSE-related input. Framed as it is, the question applies to assessment and evaluation of both the pupil and the course.

MacBeath (1988) also has questions regarding the assessment of PSE. He sees the assessment of PSE as a fundamental part of PSE within a school, where it could be linked with staff development and appraisal, and thereby facilitating staff commitment.

Regarding assessment procedure, MacBeath asks,

- Is it for all pupils?
- Is it useful?
- Who owns it?
- Does it recognise achievement?
- Does it offer encouragement and motivation?
- Does it help the pupil develop his/her own skills in self-assessment?
- Is it negotiable?
- Is it forward looking?
- Who coordinates it? (MacBeath 1988 p. 127)

These questions may be seen as applicable not only to the evaluation of assessment procedures in PSE, but to the structure and evaluation of the course itself.

Developments in the nineteen eighties such as profiling and records of achievement offered alternatives to the traditional, test-based view of assessment. PSE was identified as a central concern of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI) which also developed at that time. Clough and James (1988), Reynolds (1989), and Talbot (1990) describe how the demands of TVEI brought about the development of new assessment procedures similar to the formative, summative and evaluative approaches

favoured in PSE, and applied in the Record of Achievement structure. Another TVEI development was that of Unit Accreditation, which gave recognition to short courses and courses falling outside the General Certificate of Secondary Education, such as PSE-related courses. Many of these courses would be provided for pupils with special educational needs.

The demand for accreditation was to become a factor in the development of PSE-related courses in Further Education towards the end of the nineteen eighties, when notice of changing patterns of funding in Further Education led to concerns for proof of effectiveness. The problems arising from the assessment of PSE gave rise to a need for solutions that would meet the developing requirements of accountability in Further Education.

Prior to the accreditation requirements brought in by the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992), few published PSE programmes paid significant attention to the difficult area of assessment or evaluation. Two programmes of that time made a noteworthy attempt to help the pupil or student to evaluate his or her work. One is Gurney's (1990) five year PSE programme which is structured into topics; each topic includes a review of learning including self-evaluation which, with the Review of Topics, leads to a Personal Evaluation.

The other programme is the Whitbread Initiative Options for Special Needs (COIC 1990), now out of publication. This provided a simple evaluation sheet for each topic which helped students define and evaluate their own learning, with further evaluation based on student contribution within groups, questionnaire response, or personal presentation. Neither of these programmes, however, provide guidelines as to how the quality of student contribution should be assessed or evaluated.

The present position, subsequent to the FEFC funding arrangements, is that new courses have developed which meet the criteria for funding under the new arrangements, and which aim to follow the recommendations of the Tomlinson Committee and the Dearing Review (Dearing 1996). The ASDAN Further Education Awards Scheme based on NCVQ Core Skills (ASDAN 1997), is one of the new generation of PSE-related transition to adulthood resources, and includes self-evaluation materials for students.

## The Scottish Experience

In developing Unit Accreditation and the assessment of PSE-related courses, Further Education could look to its counterpart in Scotland, where accredited modules have been used in Vocational Qualifications since 1985. The thinking behind the content and assessment of Scottish PSD(E) modules seems to have been clarified sooner than in England, and deserves some attention. The reason for this clarity seems to lie with the view of PSD as valued learning experience within the National Certificate. PSD modules could be included in a wide range of programmes, and were based upon established design principles.

The Scottish approach describes assessment procedures for the modules. A range of techniques is used to gauge the level and progress of a student:

- Practical Exercise
- Folder of Assessment Evidence, including:
  - Self assessment sheets
  - Planning sheets
  - Log sheets (minimum of two)
  - Tutor's/supervisor's reports (corresponding to the log sheets)
  - Review sheets
- Personal Interview (SCOTVEC 1988 p.12)

Assessment of satisfactory performance in a module is therefore linked to the satisfactory completion of a range of evaluation processes which include evaluative, criterion-referenced measures and may or may not include the testing of specific knowledge, corresponding to Wakeman's model (Wakeman 1984). This emphasis upon assessment ensures its inclusion in the logistical planning of the module.

The 1991 HMI report on the teaching of personal and social development (HMI 1991) views the integration of assessment with the learning process as a strength of PSE. Further assessment methods have been developed to this end. The Personal and Social Development Handbook (SFEU 1989) sees reviewing, described as a process of analysing

group or individual experience, as an important method of assessment, providing feedback information for the lecturer.

A further approach to assessment in Scottish Further Education is the Quality of Learning and Teaching Profile mentioned in Chapter Three, a performance indicator devised by, and on behalf of, Her Majesty's Inspectorate in Scotland (HMI 1990, p.18-25). The purpose of the Profile was to supplement other performance indicators by providing a more detailed analysis of quality issues, and to offer colleges a flexible system of evaluation. The Quality of Learning and Teaching Handbook (CAST 1990) was developed from this, and presented seven evaluation instruments linked to seventeen Quality statements. The Quality of Learning and Teaching Profile does not address the question of content.

The Scottish approach to assessment in the area of PSD is to assess by means of the successful completion of a range of pre-decided, agreed and standardised, evaluation instruments, which may or may not include the testing of a knowledge component. Inclusion within the design of PSD-related modules helps to clarify and structure assessment procedures, while the use of a range of techniques helps to mediate against the difficulties inherent in the assessment of PSE-related input. The Scottish system gains the approval of Johnstone (1995) and the Tomlinson Committee (FEFC 1996).

#### Assessment in the Tomlinson Report

Although the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) approves of the Scottish experience of the design of new qualifications and the provision of courses for young people with LDD, the Report points out the dangers of too close a relationship, where:

In effect, the assessment and record-keeping systems for accreditation are used as an inadequate substitute for the curriculum (FEFC 1996 p. 137).

The Report notes the impact upon the design of transition to adult adulthood and skills for adult life courses of the requirements for accreditation and funding, and describes as inadequate a system which lists student achievement in terms of a list of completed modules (FEFC 1996, p.138). The recommendation of the Tomlinson Report is to call for,

A nationally recognised and quality assured third pathway for independence skills for adult life FEFC 1996 p. 141)

The Report recommends an assessment procedure which will recognise small steps in learning; however the Dearing Review (Dearing 1996c p.116-118) avoids the issues of attempting to assess development towards personal and social maturity, leaving the identification of criteria to others at a later date.

The Tomlinson Report says a great deal about assessment within Further Education, much of it concerned with PSE-related, transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses, funded under Schedule 2(j) of the Further Education Funding Council requirements. In general, the Report recommends greater consistency of assessment arrangements and greater flexibility of assessment procedures, including a reduction in the reliance upon written tests. More specifically, it aims to define progress within the learning programme as an indicator of a student's likelihood and ability to move on to higher study, and offers guidelines as to how this progress should be identified.

In the context of courses subject to funding arrangements under Schedule 2(j), three definitions of progress are offered:

- i. Incremental progress, relating to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding which build on the student's existing achievements;
- ii. Lateral progress, which relates to the student's ability to transfer the knowledge, skills and understanding they already have, in a range of new settings;
- iii. Maintaining knowledge, skills and understanding, when these are threatened by degenerative illness or medical trauma. (FEFC 1996, p.144)

The identification of knowledge, skills and understanding as the aims of these courses accords with the analysis of domains conducted in Chapter Five. The importance assigned to the concept of transferability, described as 'lateral progress' is also noted.

In considering the assessment of students' progress, the Tomlinson Report considers that it is necessary to:

- assess students' existing knowledge, skills and understanding (identify 'the baseline' (FEFC 1986, p.145);
- assess the student's individual approach to learning;
- identify the student's learning goals;
- assess the learning environment that matches each of the elements of the learning environment (this is the text p. 145. para 9.45, but it may be in error; the correct final word may have been intended to be 'goals' or 'outcomes' - BEP) ;
- record arrangements for regular assessments and reviews;

- ensure arrangements for systematically recording the outcomes of assessment, relating them to progress;
- ensure arrangements for assessing and recording the student's standard of achievement at the end of their programme either through accreditation within the GNVQ framework, other quality accreditation, or through the national record of achievement;
- describe how the learning programme fits in with, and is affected by, any care, transition, rehabilitation or nursing plan or with services provided by other agencies;
- ensure that the student is involved in the assessment, review and recording of their learning; (FEFC 1986, p.145).

However there are difficulties with this sensible-sounding set of recommendations.

### Difficulties with the Approach to Assessment in the Tomlinson Report

The difficulties identified with these recommendations are those of definition:

1. Assess the student's existing knowledge (to provide a baseline): when concerned with personal and social functioning, it is difficult to know how this should be assessed. Assessment by means of a standardised test of social maturity is unlikely because of the requirements of time, expertise and resources; lesser measures such as those available to the teacher and lecturer, or home grown collections of questions, are even less satisfactory. Existing knowledge is not the same as existing ability - or willingness - to put knowledge into practice, or to transfer it across a range of situations. Therefore, assessing the students' existing knowledge is far more difficult than it sounds.

2. Assess the student's individual approach to learning: on one level, concerned with matters such as, for example, whether the student need the use of a communication aid or an amanuensis, this could be straightforward. In matters of transition to adulthood or skills for adult life it could be rather more complex, since the student's individual approach to dealing with personal and social elements which directly affect his or her life, may be a more delicate matter.

3. Identify the student's learning goals: what the student wants and needs both in the short and the long term; identify desired learning outcomes. Identification of what the student

needs in terms of goals relating to personal and social maturity may be subjective on the part of the teacher or lecturer, and may differ from the subjective perceptions of the student in question, or of significant others. Personal and social matters can need careful handling. The inadequacy of measures purporting to assess personal and social functioning has already been mentioned, as has the difficulty of identifying outcomes for this work. Once again, the task may be far more difficult than it sounds; it depends what is understood by this aim. If it is to be viewed in terms of the acquisition of independence skills, such as being able to make a hot drink on one's own, it becomes a simpler matter. However, the approach taken depends on a point of view about the purpose and content of the transition to adulthood or skills for adult life course and this, too, may be subjective.

4. Assess the matching learning environment: assessing it is not the same as providing it.

Again, it depends what is meant by this, since if the concern is only with the provision of, for instance, a certain amount of in-class support or a particular piece of equipment, then the matter is more straightforward and mostly a question of financing. However, in the context of transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses, providing an environment which matches the identified learning need depends first upon good identification of the need, which itself is no simple matter, and then upon the scope, resourcefulness, and imagination of, and environmental limitations upon, the course providers.

5. Record arrangements for regular assessment and reviews: the fact that this says nothing about actually carrying them out is presumably owing to a poor choice of phrase. What is possibly meant is that regular assessment and reviews should be held and properly recorded. Once again, there are significant difficulties in identifying standards or markers against which progress can be measured.

6. Ensure arrangements for systematically recording the outcomes of assessment: in order to establish whether progress is being made. This carries the same difficulties as above of

identifying appropriate standards or markers, with the additional difficulties of identifying further learning objectives in this subtle and complex area.

7. Ensure arrangements for assessing and recording the student's standard of achievement at the end of their programme: the value of this procedure depends upon the satisfactory quality of the course in question, which will be subject to the hindrances already described, including difficulties of definition, identification of learning goals, operationalisation of learning goals, subjective judgements, and limitations of resources, experience or imagination.

8. Ensure that the student is involved in the assessment, review and recording of their learning: with proper involvement of the student, this could be a procedure which provides an important opportunity for the student to make progress in maturity, identifying and helping to formulate his or her own personal and social learning goals. Once again, one factor is the understanding behind the transition to adulthood or skills for adult life course; it can be conducted upon the level of a series of practical, possibly unrelated independence skills, or it can be concerned with a more thoughtful understanding of the world and the ways of operating within it as an adult. The underlying approach will have a bearing upon the assessment, review, and setting of further goals.

The inherent difficulties of assessment within transition to adulthood and skills for adult life are not acknowledged in the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996). The Report takes the familiar approach of making recommendations which seem to be based on confident assumptions that somebody, somewhere, knows just how to perform such assessments in order to obtain true and helpful results. An examination of the literature reveals this to be easier said than done, although as has been discussed, it depends what is actually understood by the purpose of the course, and the way in which this understanding is operationalised.

Many of the recommendations of the Report regarding assessment are genuinely helpful. The Report calls for: professional judgements about the students' progress to be

made by those most closely associated with him or her; rigorous and systematic assessment and recording procedures, which are able to take account of small steps in progress; accessible and consistent assessment; the development of alternative, rigorous and flexible approaches to assessment, rather than relying exclusively upon written tasks; and the encouragement of accrediting bodies to find a common language with which to describe students and their assessment requirements (FEFC 1996).

### Conclusion

The problems relating to assessment of PSE-related input, including transition to adulthood, became apparent at the time of the emergence of PSE as a curriculum area in its own right, in the late nineteen seventies and early eighties. Since then PSE has continued to develop, assessed and evaluated or otherwise. Respected authors in the field have commented upon the difficulties inherent in the assessment of PSE-related input. Some have offered possible solutions based upon different theoretical approaches, or based upon professional judgement and expertise; many have commented upon the need for further research in the area.

The assessment and evaluation difficulties with PSE-related input may be theoretical, conceptual, ethical, operational, and/or practical. The strategies developed to meet assessment and evaluation needs may, at best, be partial. The Scottish approach attempts to overcome these difficulties by constructing an assessment from a range of smaller evaluative measures included in the design of the module, and this approach may be emulated by the newer PSE-related transition to adulthood, or skills for adult life, programmes and modules. However, there are also dangers in this approach, as described in the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996), when the curriculum becomes over reliant upon assessment requirements.

Although there are inherent difficulties in relating assessment and curriculum structure in transition to adulthood or skills for adult life studies, a focus upon the quality of the course might prove to be useful, reflecting current concerns about quality and accountability and drawing on techniques developed for their assessment and evaluation.

This is a different position to that of Schofield (1980) and the Assessment of Performance Unit (1981), with their concentration on individual social maturity outcomes in the student. However, before any such assessment procedures can confidently be put in place, certain fundamental questions about the purposes of transition to adulthood courses must be resolved. An attempt to clarify and understand PSE-related transition to adulthood input forms the next section of this study, the empirical research.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

#### Introduction

The previous chapters in this study have identified the origins and influences underpinning PSE-related transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD in mainstream Further Education. A number of theoretical, conceptual, ethical and practical difficulties have been identified. However in spite of these, transition to adulthood courses continue to flourish and have been given increased legitimacy by recent educational guidelines and legislation.

This chapter gives an overview of the research conducted in the course of the study. The research plan identifies this as taking place on three levels: that of literature, that of quantitative research, and that of qualitative research. The overview includes a summary of the conceptual difficulties found in researching transition to adulthood courses in Further Education for young people with LDD. An outline of the research plan is given, and the stages of the empirical research are described in greater detail. Sources which informed the planning of the research are noted, and weaknesses are identified and discussed.

#### Research Literature

Schindele gives an overview of the philosophy and aims of special educational research. He takes the view that, for the education of the young person with LDD, research is needed which clarifies the development of the young person, and which evaluates special educational programmes and processes (Schindele 1985, p.5). He considers that research must try to analyse and evaluate the whole complexity of problems, situations, procedures and programmes involved, particularly in the area of the evaluation of teaching methods, materials and programmes, for the young person with LDD (Schindele, *ibid.*). An attempt to begin to perform this task for the area of transition to adulthood studies in Further Education

informs this study, with its focus on transition to adulthood programmes, processes, resources and evaluation.

Bradley and Hegerty identify sixteen possible areas of research concerning the Further Education of young people with LDD. These include areas of interest to this study: the organisation of provision; the FE Sector; the curriculum; attainment; social and emotional development, and assessment (Bradley and Hegerty 1981, p.30-32).

Elliott questions why research generally remains unvalued in Further Education, although he acknowledges that the volume of research in recent years has increased (Elliott 1996, p.102-3). He considers that there is no model for research in Further Education, so that much of what is done follows a higher education model, showing a strong learning towards statistical and evaluative studies. He states:

"There is no research reported which appears to address theoretical, qualitative, philosophic or political questions about the purpose and direction of FE" (Elliott, 1996, p.108).

He calls for the development of a research culture within Further Education, which will enable the sector to redefine conceptual issues. In accordance with Elliott's recommendations, this study attempts to address theoretical, qualitative, philosophical and some political questions about the purpose and direction of the part of modern Further Education which is concerned with transition to adulthood courses.

In seeking to explore the area of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses, there are, therefore, a number of problems. However, much of the need for background information has been met by the research publications informing the Tomlinson Report. Bradley, Dee, and Wilenius (1994) provide a review of the research concerned with aspects of further education for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Meager, Evans, and Dench (1996) provide a description of the Further Education provision for young people with LDD in England. Beachcroft Stanleys (1996) describe the legal framework for this aspect of education, and SCPR (1996) reports the students' views.

Prior to this the most relevant research had been "Catching Up" (Stowell 1987), a study of the courses taken by students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Further Education colleges. Stowell's concern at the time of his research was with identifying the

number, proportion, and type of LDD students and the nature of their courses, rather than with those courses which are the subject of this study, and which he identifies as "other" or "minor" courses in his research. The existence of excellent, up to date background information meant that the research reported in this study could focus on elements of PSE-related transition to adulthood programmes, which had not been covered by Stowell.

### Conceptual Difficulties

The provision of Further Education for young people with LDD has become an accepted part of mainstream Further Education, and transition to adulthood courses are now established within its accreditation and funding arrangements. There continues to be support for these courses among educators, and yet there are considerable conceptual, philosophical, ethical and practical difficulties which hamper a clear understanding of this element of the curriculum.

Without this clear understanding, assessment and quality procedures are compromised. It is hard to be certain whether such courses actually achieve anything other than a place for such students to be; however the courses develop and thrive, and are taught in good faith. Worthwhile attempts are made to deliver and assess good quality input, although solutions to the inherent difficulties may be varied or partial.

A major question is whether a range of partial solutions can add up to a satisfactory solution to the inherent problems within education for transition to adulthood, and the answer is possibly that it may have to; for the essential, underlying question of how one knows that the PSE-related input has been successful, may be unanswerable. It may be that the transition to adulthood input may not yield rewards until a later, perhaps much later, date; this is the sleeper effect described by David (1983, p.43). The question of whether input is successful may be unanswerable for ethical reasons, as noted by Ryder and Campbell (1988, p.130), since the work impinges upon essentially private matters, including those of emotions. There are questions about the justifiability of the inclusion of private matters, conflicting with the right to privacy, yet if such items are not included, there may be omissions in the young person's ability to cope with the adult world.

The question of how to know whether the input has been successful may also be unanswerable because of the limited availability, or the quality, of assessment instruments, whether concerned with matters of input, process, or outcome. The difficulties of assessing the young adult's personal and social development affect all these areas. Partial solutions include assessing the student's practical needs, assessing the course, or having assessment procedures linked to the completion of a range of assessment and evaluation techniques or course requirements. Assessment and evaluation are terms which may be used interchangeably, although they have different meanings; assessment being concerned with determining outcomes, and evaluation being concerned with judgements of the worth of educational activities (Wakeman, 1984, p.67). Further partial solutions may therefore be found in settings where there is assessment without evaluation, or evaluation without assessment.

There is a fundamental difficulty in identifying the purpose of PSE-related input, which Ryder and Campbell (1988, p127-8) refer to as the debate between process and content. There are those who see transition to adulthood as concerned with the practical skills needed to improve levels of independence. Others see it as concerned with developing the qualities, attitudes, and understanding that represent an emotional development which it is hoped will be transferable across a range of situations. The matter of transferability is itself difficult, since learning theory cannot yet offer such conviction as to how this happens, that it can be clearly translatable into successful educational input.

Each view, process or content, is open to challenges of inadequacy. Those who favour practical skills may see an attention to emotional factors as overlooking the necessities for independence; and those favouring a process approach may see an attention to practical skills as failing to deal with essential matters of social and emotional maturity. Quicke (1985, p.93) considers that process has been over emphasised at the expense of content, and Wakeman (1984, p.19) sees a need to balance the two. However this may be difficult to do satisfactorily. While a course may attempt to include something of both approaches, this raises issues of selection of content and availability of resources.

The scope of the potential areas of educational concern in transition to adulthood, also presents a conceptual difficulty. Somehow, content has to be decided. Content may be influenced by the requirements of accreditation; it may also be based on wider reading, official recommendations, personal conviction, or professional judgement. Within the PSE curriculum, Pring identifies five kinds of problems: conceptual, political, ethical, empirical and organisational (Pring 1984, p.4-7), and these also hold true for transition to adulthood curricula.

The potential breadth of the curriculum ensures that any course content can only provide a partial solution to the educational demands raised by the content of transition to adulthood. Matching learning experience to learning targets or goals, even when both are well understood, may be affected by the availability of resources including budgets, locale, provision of teaching aids, staffing and staff training, availability of information and professional contact with others working in the field. These factors may also interact with personal preferences on the part of the teacher, learner, or course manager.

Transition to adulthood has a considerable problem in the terminology with which it describes itself. There is a vast range of course names and titles, and this may imply a lack of definition in this area. There is a further difficulty in that many of the terms and vocabulary used are by necessity terms which carry theoretical and philosophical overtones; terms such as fairness, maturity, adulthood, independence, to name only a few. The field is thus described in words which themselves could each need extensive debate in order to establish whether the understanding of the terms was shared by those using them. There are considerable assumptions surrounding the terminology used in transition to adulthood input.

There are further considerations, such as those concerning the funding arrangements made in support of people with LDD. If a student's increased independence demonstrates that they are no longer in need of benefit, their parents may lose their carer's allowance. Johnstone (1995, p. 66) points out also that loss of benefits means that it is not advantageous for the young person to move into full-time employment. A person with a learning difficulty or disability who takes open employment will lose their disability living allowance, and will not get it back if the job disappears, since they have demonstrated that

they are able to work. There is also a monetary cost to society in providing the means for students to live independently, and this may be increasingly difficult in the current social climate, which includes a concept of care in the community which effectively means staying at home.

There is a question as to how far society would be able or willing to resource increased independence for people with LDD, and whether there are underlying mechanisms which operate for or against this taking place. There is therefore a further question as to whether transition to adulthood can realistically operate outside these considerations; whether it aims to encompass some definitive truths about how the socially mature person lives, or whether it is effectively separated from the kind of adulthood that many students will have, and is therefore in danger of irrelevance.

Another conceptual issue lies in how the person with LDD is viewed in society. There is a dichotomy, familiar from other contexts such as racism and feminism, as to whether that person should 'fit in', having the same social regard and being treated in the same way as others, or whether because of the increased difficulties with which they have to deal, they should be given increased attention and opportunities; this is the 'positive discrimination' view referred to by Johnstone (1995 p. 78).

The key difficulties involved in transition to adulthood therefore seem to be: a difficulty with agreeing the purpose of the work, which may include philosophical, conceptual and theoretical aspects of considerable depth; a difficulty in deciding content, which is unavoidably hampered by the difficulties of settling upon its purpose; and a difficulty in assessing and evaluating the work, which is affected by the difficulties with content. In the meantime, transition to adulthood courses continue to be taught on a general basis, and have become a normal part of post-sixteen provision for young people with LDD. The empirical research has therefore been devised to explore what is taking place in transition to adulthood courses in mainstream Further Education, with a view to clarifying the educational construct represented by transition to adulthood, and the characteristics of quality in that context.

## Variables

The scope of transition to adulthood courses, and the conceptual difficulties described, ensure that there are a great many variables embodied in this field of study. There are broad variables concerned with the student, the lecturer or teacher, the course and its outcomes. It is understood that these broad variables could be further analysed in much more detail. However this would ultimately become the task of describing the variability within the daily life and experience of the individual. For the purpose of this study it is more helpful to consider the broader variables, which may usefully be grouped as input, process and outcome variables.

Input variables would include those connected with students and lecturers. Within the student these would be: cognitive ability; skills; knowledge; understanding; attainment; personal goals and targets; nature of learning difficulty and/or disability; and learning style. Input variables associated with the teacher or lecturer would be: skills, knowledge; understanding; training; attitude or philosophy; effort (for example, in preparing the lecture).

Process variables would be those concerned with how the course is delivered. They would include: length, duration, frequency, timetable allocation and location of the lessons or lectures; allocation and variation of lecturers; course materials used; other resource materials used; funding level and source; client group; curriculum followed; accreditation scheme employed; assessment/evaluation procedures used; tasks set; links with others such as parents, carers, or employers.

Outcome variables would be concerned with qualification, progression, and independence. Qualification outcomes relate to accreditation, qualification, or recognition gained as a result of completion of the course. Progression outcomes are concerned with moving to the 'next step', and could be in the area of education, employment or living circumstances. They include: a move to an alternative course, either 'higher' or 'broader'; a move to employment, which could be open, supported, sheltered, part time, or voluntary; a move to another setting outside of the college such as home, a day centre or another daily living context. This may be thought by some not to indicate progression, however the intention of the course is that the student should move to these settings with a higher level of skills, knowledge and

understanding than when they embarked upon it. Progression may also be indicated by a reduction or change in benefit level.

Independence outcomes are concerned with the individual taking control, or taking greater control, of his or her personal life. Broad outcome variables would be: control of personal finances; control of personal environment (the concept of personal environment becoming wider with experience and knowledge); control of personal well being; and social control, including social life, social relationships, and the ability to cope with the social structures and institutions which inform daily life in the community. The operationalisation of these variables in terms of PSE-related curricula and stimuli is not consistent, as shown in Chapter Five.

### The Purpose of the Study and the Plan of the Research

This study explores the issues surrounding quality in transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD, in mainstream Further Education. Its main concern is with the process variables described earlier. Two key questions are identified. These are:

1. How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be judged?
2. How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD, be improved?

The research plan is structured to begin with a broad enquiry, and then to narrow and sharpen in focus to provide answers to the research questions. As already stated, the research is seen as taking place on three levels: a level based on the relevant literature, one based on empirical, quantitative research and one based on empirical, qualitative research.

### The Literature Based Level

The literature research has been described in chapters one to six, and covers three broad areas. PSE is one such area, drawing on all the components of successful daily living. The education of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities is a second area with a literature of its own, and Further Education provides a third area .

A review of the literature of these areas does not of itself provide the substance for the construction of a theoretical and practical understanding of PSE-related transition to adulthood for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities in Further Education. Literature sources are therefore explored in an attempt to define background theory and focal theory for this area. Social Cognitive theory is identified as providing the focal theory for this work.

### The Quantitative Research

This aspect of the research is focused on the nature, content and quality measures of the target courses. Guidance regarding the design of the quantitative research is provided by Cohen and Manion (1989) and Wolf (1993), These sources provided information on survey and questionnaire design, and on judgement in educational research.

The quantitative research consists of two postal surveys of transition to adulthood courses, one in the local region and one across three other Further Education regions. For each of these, small pilot studies were made. There are acknowledged weaknesses in the use of postal questionnaires, concerned with the necessary structuring of the questions, the lack of opportunity for probing, clarifying or extending responses, and the lack of information about what is represented by a nil return. However Cohen and Manion consider that,

Frequently, the postal questionnaire is the best form of survey in carrying out an educational enquiry (Cohen and Manion 1989, p.109).

because the number of respondents who can be reached is extensive, the reliability is fair, and the potential for error is largely limited to the instrument and the sample (Cohen and Manion 1989). Since what is sought is essentially a description of the PSE-related transition to adulthood provision in modern Further Education, a descriptive survey using a postal questionnaire was considered to be the best method of gaining the necessary information.

The initial, smaller survey is described as the 'preliminary survey'. The purpose of this survey was to gain updated information about PSE-related transition to adulthood courses in post-sixteen education, and to identify areas for further empirical research. The preliminary survey describes PSE-related courses in Further Education and tertiary colleges.

Conclusions about transition to adulthood provision are drawn from this survey, and items for further research are identified. The broad purposes of this element of the research are therefore information gathering, and preparation for further research.

The preliminary survey showed that there have been noticeable changes in recent years, in the way transition to adulthood provision is described. However, in spite of these changes, there seemed a question as to how far the new practices were affecting the actual work that was being done or the way in which it was evaluated or assessed. It was therefore decided to conduct a postal survey in three Further Education regions, in order to investigate the content, evaluation and assessment practices, and quality measures, of the target courses as they are currently taught.

The publication of the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) influenced the development of the main survey, so that this took a slightly different direction from the preliminary survey, although still concerned with the target courses. The report and its associated publications provided much of the information about students with LDD and their courses, which might otherwise have been sought through the research, such as numbers, age ranges, and background. With this information in place it became possible for this research to focus more closely on the nature of the courses themselves.

Three regions were surveyed; the North of England; the East Midlands; and Greater London. These regions were chosen because they had not previously been used in enquiries and surveys by this researcher. One aim was to see whether there were any regional differences, or whether courses were particularly different in London, when compared with the more outlying regions.

The preliminary research is described in chapter eight and the main survey in chapter nine.

### The Qualitative Research

It was decided that useful qualitative input could be gained from two sources; the students, and authoritative figures writing or working in the field, described in this study as Expert Witnesses. Guidance for the qualitative research is provided by Finch (1986); Cohen and Manion (1989); and Miles and Huberman (1994) who describe the rationale, advantages and

methods of qualitative research. Particular guidance is provided by Hycner's (1985) methodology for processing interviews.

The qualitative research consists of interviews with three Expert Witnesses who have contributed significantly to the understanding of PSE-related input, and visits to an individual college to talk to the students about their transition to adulthood courses. Students' teachers and lecturers were not interviewed because this avenue had been explored in this writer's earlier research (Pavey 1991) and the preliminary research and informal discussion with the teachers/lecturers did not suggest significant changes to the outlooks described earlier. It was felt to be more fruitful to identify and consult Expert Witnesses, with the intention of gaining highly-informed opinions which would provide a balanced overview of the provision, and lend meaning to the information gathered through the surveys.

It was felt that a useful view of the target courses could be gained by focusing discussion upon some pertinent questions. To the Expert Witnesses these questions were:

1. What needs to be borne in mind in the development of these courses?
2. What do you see as the basis for quality in such courses, and/or, how can the quality of such courses be improved?

The interviews with the Expert Witnesses developed from a desire to know what these respected sources thought of the matters and issues concerning transition to adulthood courses. Many of the literature sources remark on the lack of input from the students themselves, and this was also felt to be an important aspect in seeking a complete understanding of the nature of transition to adulthood courses.

It was intended to ask questions to the students which were similar to those for the Expert Witnesses but couched in simpler terms. However when visits to a college took place this did not prove possible. It transpired that while visits from a stranger, the researcher, stimulated politeness and some frankness among the students, they did not enable the required level of detail or depth to be reached in order to gauge what students really thought of their courses. Nor was there the opportunity to develop with the students an

understanding of the concepts being probed, increasing the students' confidence in answering, and establishing a shared level of communication and discussion.

Nevertheless these visits were considered worthwhile because the students were a primary source. Their opinions would not necessarily be those of their teachers and lecturers, and sources in the literature stressed that students' own views were not sufficiently included in research. Fundamental concepts concerned with student self-advocacy, respect for their views, and equality of treatment, indicated that they should be interviewed and their views respected.

### Conclusion

The research in this study began from personal interest, involvement and conviction, and developed in accordance with issues arising in the relevant literature. One of the most taxing aspects of the research has been to find a way of placing limits upon the literature studies, when so much can be deemed relevant. Analyses of themes and topics within the literature have proved valuable, and it has also been helpful to understand how the target courses have developed over time, and what they have been intended to achieve. The guidance gained from a study of the literature has proved important, as it countermands the subjectivity which is often found in this field.

The approach to the research changed somewhat with the publication of the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996), which added greatly to the understanding of this area of work, providing much useful data and information about current provision for young people with LDD in Further Education, including transition to adulthood input. However, examination of the report shows that it rests on many long-standing, unresolved assumptions about the nature and assessment expectations of transition to adulthood.

The study is informed by the research literature, in addition to the subject literatures. Note is taken of Schindele's recommendation that research is needed which clarifies the development of the young person and evaluates special educational programmes and processes in their complexity, particularly concerning teaching methods, materials and programmes (Schindele 1985, p.5). The research also supports Elliott's view

that research in Further Education should address theoretical, qualitative, philosophical and some political questions (Elliott 1996, p.108). Pring's identification of conceptual, political, ethical, empirical and organisational difficulties in defining PSE curricula, informs the questions asked about content of PSE-related transition to adulthood studies (Pring 1984, p.4-7).

The quantitative research uses descriptive statistics to describe how transition to adulthood input is currently delivered in Further Education, and the qualitative research seeks to clarify the issues surrounding quality in this area. The qualitative research enhances the quantitative research by supplying an insiders' point of view from three respected contributors to the field, and by exploring the possibility of alternative views and interpretations to those of the researcher.

Schindele's (1985) overview of concerns in special educational needs research reflects a move away from "within child" models of special educational needs, to a position which takes more account of environmental factors and interactions (Wedell 1985, p.1), corresponding to the Social Cognitive theory of learning (Bandura 1986). The next chapters will indicate how far this is also the view of those involved in the delivery of transition to adulthood input to young people with LDD.

**CHAPTER EIGHT**  
**PRELIMINARY RESEARCH INTO**  
**PSE-RELATED TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD COURSES**

Introduction

The research in this study is intended to move towards the clarification of the understanding of what is taught within the generic term of transition to adulthood input, and a consideration of how quality can be improved in courses delivering such input. The empirical research takes a broad view in seeking to establish how current provision is understood and delivered, through a range of techniques including qualitative and quantitative procedures. The quantitative research consists of two postal surveys of transition to adulthood courses, one in the local region and one across three other Further Education regions. The qualitative research consists of interviews with three Expert Witnesses who have contributed significantly to the understanding of PSE-related input, and visits to individual colleges to talk to the students about their transition to adulthood courses.

This chapter describes the preliminary survey. The purpose of this survey was to begin to gather updated information about PSE-related transition to adulthood courses in post-sixteen education, and to identify areas for further empirical research. In this sense it may be viewed as a pilot study with the resulting, more detailed empirical research differing in several respects following the pilot study findings, and the publication of the Tomlinson Report (1996). The initial survey describes PSE-related courses in local Further Education and tertiary colleges. Conclusions about transition to adulthood provision are drawn from this survey, and items for further research are identified.

The Preliminary Survey

The initial research aimed to provide an overview of transition to adulthood courses, in the light of changes in the funding and delivery of Further Education following the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992), and to provide an update for the researcher. The

broad purposes of this element of the research were therefore information gathering, and preparation for further research.

The information-gathering research was conducted amongst thirty-seven post sixteen colleges in the Yorkshire and South Humberside Region. These included Further Education colleges, tertiary colleges and specialist colleges such as those for the arts, or horticulture. Not all of these colleges make provision for young people with LDD, and among those who do provision is not always similar, owing to the individual nature of the colleges and their student groups.

#### Method of the Preliminary Survey

This element of the empirical research uses descriptive statistics to gather general information regarding the delivery of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses. Local Further Education at the time of this study was divided into regions, each of which with perhaps the exception of Greater London, contained urban and rural areas and a range of post-sixteen colleges differing in size and purpose. It was thought reasonable to view one such region as a representative sample, and a postal questionnaire was circulated to the colleges in the region.

A small pilot study was made in advance, submitting the questionnaire to six colleges in a separate region of England, the North West. As a result some small changes were made to the questionnaire; two similar questions being collapsed into one. Returns from the pilot study showed that the questions were considered relevant by respondents, and suggested that respondents were still seeking a satisfactory solution to the difficulties of assessment and accreditation in PSE-related curricula.

The questionnaire, shown in Appendix IV, has ten questions covering a range of approaches including closed and open-ended questions, ranking, and an opportunity to add the respondents' own comments. It includes questions about possible budgetary difficulties, resources, and the value, structure and purposes of PSE-related input. There is a question concerning possible administrative characteristics of a PSE-related course, and two questions concerned with the possible changes which respondents would like to see. A

further question was concerned with the possible broader application of PSE-related input, and the last gave the opportunity for further comment, if wished.

### Weaknesses in the Preliminary Survey

As a result of the pilot study some weak questions in the questionnaire were identified and removed. Remaining challenges to the validity and reliability of the method and the generalisability of the outcomes arise from the sample, which in this instance is only concerned with the local region, and from the limitations of postal questionnaires as a method of data collection.

It may be argued that there are threats to objectivity in the value placed upon PSE-related input by the researcher and the respondents, influencing the selection and wording of questions. The questions were directed at special needs coordinators, whose conception of the PSE-related provision might differ from the understanding of others who deliver or receive it. Questions about the value of the courses are bound to reflect SENCOs' commitment.

As a method of information gathering the limitations of postal questionnaires are recognised (Cohen and Manion. 1989 p.308), and are discussed in Chapter Seven. These include the lack of opportunity for deeper or extended responses; the restrictions of closed questions which are framed as a small number of category choices, and the range of categories offered; all these limit respondents' choices. Questions designed for a quick and easy response, and the resulting answers, may be superficial. Nil returns are significant but it is difficult to be sure what they represent. There are opportunities also for misunderstanding in the interpretation placed upon the questions by respondents, and in the interpretation of data by the researcher.

However, acknowledgement of these threats to objectivity are not felt to invalidate the usefulness of collecting data in this area. The preliminary survey set out to gather simple, quantifiable information in order to provide an update to previous enquiry and a starting point for further research, and this purpose is served appropriately by the postal survey.

### Results of the Preliminary Survey

Returns: Percentages throughout this report are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number. Following two postal applications, a usable return of twenty-eight colleges was received, representing 76% of colleges approached. The respondents were all Further Education and tertiary colleges. The lowest number of colleges completing any question was eighteen. These were the respondents to question eight, which is the open question regarding desired change, these respondents represented 64% of the usable return of twenty-eight colleges. The number of returns was considered sufficient to draw generalisable conclusions for the region, from the data.

The Relevance of Courses and the Implications of Funding Arrangements: Further Education is essentially a local provision. However, changes in funding arrangements brought about by the Further and Higher Education Act (DfEE 1992) have led to changes in the kinds of courses on offer. Respondents' views were sought as to whether PSE-related courses for young people with LDD were considered valuable in this context, and whether funding difficulties were anticipated.

All the colleges agreed that even in a funding structure where funding followed individual student needs, there was a need for PSE-related courses for young people with LDD. High value was placed upon these courses by twenty-six out of twenty-eight respondents to this question (93%).

There was a broader range of opinion regarding the possibility of funding difficulties. Eleven out of twenty-eight colleges (39%) anticipated budgetary problems, while eleven did not, and six (22%) were not sure whether or not there were likely to be funding difficulties for the target courses.

PSE-Related Courses in Post-Sixteen Education: of the total number of respondent colleges, Twenty-seven (96%) offered PSE-related courses to post-sixteen students with LDD. Previous research (Pavey 1994) showed that PSE-related courses for young people with LDD were most commonly delivered as a taught component. A wide range of resources and

materials were used, and most frequently colleges chose to use a combination of, or to develop their own, materials. At the time of the preliminary survey, this was still the situation. Table IV shows the courses and broad categories of source material.

Table IV: PSE-type courses for young people with LDD in FE, and their sources

College has no PSE-related course	1
Uses published scheme of work	2
Uses published guidelines, e.g. FEU	2
Uses self-developed or composite materials	23

N=28

The Purposes of PSE-Related Input in Post-Sixteen Education: respondents were asked to rank choices from among a possible five functions of such courses, drawn from the literature and from current post-sixteen educational trends. There were a number of respondents who did not place their choices in rank order, reducing the size of the sample to twenty-one colleges.

The ranking of the choices was calculated by awarding points according to the importance assigned; five points were given to a first choice, and one point to a fifth choice. For those colleges where the ranking was not performed as requested it was interpreted if possible, and if not the responses were not used. Table V shows the usable responses, with the points scored.

Table V: The Purposes of PSE-related Courses: Weighted Importance Assigned by Ranking

<u>Purposes</u>	<u>Ranked 1st</u>	<u>Ranked 2nd</u>	<u>Ranked 3rd</u>	<u>Ranked 4th</u>	<u>Ranked 5th</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Overall Rank</u>
Transition to Work	17.5	36	18	2	1	76.5	2
Transition to GNVQ	-	2	3	9	13	27	5
Transition to NVQ	-	4	12	27	1	44	4
Transition to Adulthood	82.5	8	3	-	-	93.5	1
Acquisition of Core Skills	5	28	24	6	2	65	3

N= 21

The distribution of weighted scores in Table V shows that the overall rankings derive from high levels of support in the categories.

Defining Core Skills: The use of terminology in PSE-related input is broad, so that similar terms may be understood to have dissimilar meanings, depending on the respondent's view. Equally a range of different titles and definitions may have a common understanding. It was therefore decided to investigate what was understood by the term 'core skills' in the context of post-sixteen education for young people with LDD.

From among twenty-four respondent colleges, results showed a wide variety of definitions. Only three colleges gave the same definition, that of English/literacy plus mathematics/numeracy plus Information Technology, while twenty-one colleges gave twenty-one other definitions. These could however be identified as belonging to six broad groups, falling between the general and the specific, with most offering variations upon the literacy/numeracy/information technology pattern, either with additions, or with one of these items excluded and others included. Respondents' actual answers are shown in Appendix V:

- Six colleges thought Core Skills described a broad mix of curriculum areas,
- Five thought Core Skills meant literacy and numeracy and more, but not IT;
- Four thought Core Skills meant literacy, numeracy, IT and more;
- Three thought the term meant literacy, numeracy and IT only;
- Three thought it meant GNVQ-related areas;
- One thought it meant literacy and numeracy only;
- Sixteen out of twenty-four respondent colleges (67%) thought that the term Core Skills included PSE-related items. Two colleges actually named Personal (and Social) Development and two named Life Skills as Core Skills, while Personal Effectiveness and Personal Skills were nominated by one college each.

Assessment and Evaluation in the Target Courses: Respondents were asked to comment upon the desirability of certain administrative characteristics for their courses; twenty-four colleges answered this question. Colleges were asked whether they thought the courses

should be: modular; accredited; able to be assessed/evaluated; and inclusive of some provision for quality assurance. Table VI shows the support for these different administrative characteristics.

**Table VI: Desirability of Some Administrative Characteristics in the Target Courses**

	<u>No</u>	<u>Unsure</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Should the Course be Modular?	1	4	19
Should the Course be Accredited?	1	-	23
Should the Course be Assessed/Evaluated?	-	3	21
Should the Course include Quality Assurance?	-	1	23

N = 24

While it may not be surprising that there is support for these characteristics the high level of support, as demonstrated by the percentages shown in Table VI, is of interest. Accreditation and quality assurance receive the most support, followed by assessment and evaluation. There is least support for the idea that PSE-related transition to adulthood input should be modular, although the level of support is still high. The concept of modularisation follows an educational trend, and is linked to modern accreditation structures.

Potential Change in the Target Courses: two questions offered respondents the opportunity to comment upon their courses. The first asked respondents whether their current PSE-related course matched up to the specifications which they had described in answering previous questions, and if not, whether they could identify any missing elements. The second, broader question asked respondents whether they would like anything to be different about their courses.

Sixteen out of the twenty respondents answering the first of these two questions, question seven, felt that there was nothing missing from their course. Of missing elements which were identified, two colleges would have preferred their course to be modular, while one mentioned accreditation. Another college felt that information technology was an element missing from the course.

Eighteen colleges also responded to question eight; this question asked what respondents would like to change. Of these respondents, fourteen expressed dissatisfaction. Table VII shows the sources of dissatisfaction.

**Table VII: Desired Change in PSE-related courses**

Changes sought	Number of colleges
More practical/realistic work	5
Better timetabling (more time)	3
More structure /modularisation	2
Status	1
Accreditation	1
More opportunity for progress to NVQ/GNVQ	1
More self-advocacy	1

Some of the areas of dissatisfaction are explored further in the empirical research, in particular time tabling, quality, evaluation and assessment, and accreditation. The question regarding the possibility of doing things differently, is also carried over into the next stage of the empirical research.

A Broader Application: PSE seems to give rise to a strong commitment among many of its deliverers. There was support for the value of such courses to the general post-sixteen population from twenty-one (84%) of the twenty five respondents to this question, while two (8%) did not consider it to be of value, and two were unsure. One of the favourable respondents supported the type of provision (PSE-related), but considered there to be various levels, suggesting that some aspects of PSE were relevant and some were not. The idea of separate levels was also supported by one of the respondents who was unsure of the value of the courses in a broader post-sixteen context.

Other comments came from four more respondents who endorsed the value of PSE-related input for post-sixteen students generally, but who wished to qualify or add to their affirmative answers. One gave details of their own course, and two more wished to

qualify which groups did or did not need this input. Of these two, one felt that full-time students did not need such courses, while another saw them as valuable for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In addition there was a comment stating that many students needed "bridging" provision before doing "mainstream" courses, and presumably seeing this as a function of the PSE-related course for young people with LDD.

General Comments: respondents were offered the opportunity to add any further comments they wished. The layout of the questionnaire directed all respondents to this question, returning the sample to twenty eight colleges. Of these, five (18%) took the opportunity of commenting further.

The comments themselves are varied. One criticised the questionnaire, one criticised questionnaires and researchers generally, while another sent good wishes for the research. Two sent invitations to visit their colleges. Perhaps the most telling comment came from the respondent who used the opportunity to emphasise the importance of the courses:

"We feel the transition to adulthood (including the development of self-advocacy, being responsible for oneself, etc.) is by far the most important aspect of our course both for students with learning difficulties and disaffected mainstream students. Vocational skills/ experiences can be acquired afterwards" (Anonymous questionnaire response)

### Discussion

It is not surprising that Special Needs Coordinators value PSE-related courses for their students. It is interesting that the support for these courses is so strong since as the literature shows, it is far from clear what the content of such courses should be. Respondents generally are not always sure that these courses will be supported financially.

The research shows that most respondents see PSE-related input as well worth providing, and of relevance for the entire post-sixteen sector. Some respondents feel that while the courses may be relevant to the general post-sixteen population, differences in level are desirable, although no further information is given as to what these might be. It is possible that the idea of different levels may be a further example of one of the problems with

personal and social education, where a seemingly common sense approach does not seem clear at all upon closer examination.

Most of the respondent colleges in the sample offer a PSE-related course to post-sixteen students with LDD. The majority of these courses are described as self-developed or are constructed as a composite of a range of sources. The publications of the Further Education Unit are infrequently nominated as a source for PSE-related courses. This is puzzling in view of the many excellent publications prompting the self-actualisation of young people with special educational needs produced by the FEU since the late nineteen seventies, some of which are acknowledged as key texts in the development of PSE and the transition to adulthood. The question therefore arises as to how far official, government-originating advice is respected. Perhaps Governments' recourse to legislative force and earmarked funding to carry through their educational will, are understandable in the light of this.

Research of the PSE and transition to adulthood literature demonstrates a high level of educational respect for the FEU publications, as shown in Chapters One and Two. Although in 1995 the FEU became the Further Education Development Agency, a question about the use of FEU publications is carried over into the main survey, described in Chapter Nine.

Regarding the ascribed purposes of the PSE-related input, the analysis of the ranking of respondent's views presented some difficulties since not all respondents performed the ranking in the expected way, and compromise solutions had to be found. The strongest support suggested that the purpose of the PSE-related input is to effect the transition to adulthood, independently of progression towards qualifications. There is strong support for the view that the purpose of the input is to effect a transition to work, and relatively little support for the view that its purpose is to effect a transition to NVQ and GNVQ.

The research reveals general as well as specific meanings of the term 'Core Skills'. It is possible that those who use the term imagine that they are drawing upon a common understanding as to its meaning. However the wide variety of responses to this question in the preliminary survey show that this is not the case. The situation has since been clarified with the Dearing Review, which explored definitions of Core Skills including the Scottish

version (Dearing 1996a p.19; 1996b p.36; 1996d p.64). Following the Dearing Review Core Skills became transformed into Mandatory Key Skills, which are now identified as communication, application of number and information technology, although colleges may offer more (FEFC 1998).

Respondents were asked whether PSE-related courses should be: modular; accredited; able to be assessed/evaluated; and able to include provision for quality assurance. Results showed a very high level of support for all these characteristics. This perhaps reflected the developing trends for accreditation and modularisation, and the question arises as to whether these characteristics changed PSE delivery because they benefited the work, or because they were simply required by college management. The survey did not probe these issues further, but they provided further questions for the main quantitative research described in Chapter Nine.

There is, as has been discussed, no firm consensus regarding the content of PSE-related courses, either generally, or more specifically where they are offered to young people with LDD. PSE-related courses were at the time of this survey accredited through small, possibly local accrediting bodies who would offer a suitable framework for validation. In recent years accrediting bodies have become more widely used, owing to the recognition of the value of transition to adulthood and skills for adult life courses in the Tomlinson Report (1996) and the Dearing Review (Dearing 1996b p.35), and the necessity for colleges to meet the funding criteria of the Further Education Funding Council.

Quality assurance may relate to accreditation, since compliance with the standards of accreditation implies that a certain level of quality exists, and the number of students achieving accreditation can be used as an indicator of quality. PSE-related courses may also be subject to college quality audit processes, or internal judgements. Wider investigation of the question of quality assurance was not included in the survey, and forms a part of the main empirical research described in Chapters Nine and Ten.

Difficulties regarding the assessment and evaluation of PSE-related input have been discussed in Chapter Six. In PSE-related work, and in education generally, the terms 'assessment' and 'evaluation' may be used as if they have the same meaning. Owing to the

difficulties inherent in assessment procedures, it is likely that assessment and evaluation in PSE-related transition to adulthood courses would rely on an evaluative approach, linked to overt or covert value judgements. Questions relating to how this work is assessed or evaluated form a part of the empirical research (Chapters Nine, Ten and Eleven).

Most respondents are generally satisfied that their PSE-related transition to adulthood courses meet the specifications described by their answers in the questionnaire. There is little support for any idea that there is a need for improvement in quality and development. From this it might be concluded that all is generally well in these areas. Against this can be set the understanding of a provision operating in some degree of isolation, with few opportunities for in-service training. It is possible that the quality of a course might be considered as satisfactory because there is a lack of awareness of what a higher quality of course might be like. If internal quality assurance models have been designed around existing provision, they may only serve to maintain those conditions.

There are some areas of dissatisfaction held in common. Three of the Further Education and tertiary colleges sought for more practical and realistic work in their courses, while three others sought for more time. Other dissatisfaction is identified in single cases covering a range of topics.

### Conclusion

The information-gathering research described in this chapter begins to define some of the characteristics of PSE-related courses in post-sixteen education. The findings show that:

1. The primary purpose of PSE-related courses for young people with LDD is the transition to adulthood; with strong support also given to the view that its purpose is the transition to work. The courses are therefore seen as having a primarily practical function;
2. Such PSE-related courses are considered to be important by the course providers, for young people with LDD, and also for other students;
3. Most of the PSE-related courses are designed within the colleges and rely upon a range of sources and resources;
4. PSE is not generally specifically nominated amongst Core Skills, however a range of PSE-related elements are included within Core Skills by a large number of respondents;

5. There is strong agreement that the target courses should be accredited, should be subject to quality assurance measures, should be able to be assessed and evaluated, and should be modular. The strongest support is for accreditation and quality assurance;
6. There is a certain amount of concern regarding funding and budgeting for these courses;
7. There is not much dissatisfaction with the courses in their current form.

From the preliminary research, further elements for research are identified and these, together with issues drawn from the literature, form the basis of a further set of questions about transition to adulthood provision as it is offered in mainstream Further Education. These include questions about the structure of the provision, and about quality, assessment and content. The question regarding preferred change in the courses is carried over into the larger survey forming the next stage of the research. This further research is described in the next three chapters.

**CHAPTER NINE**  
**PSE-RELATED TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD COURSES IN THREE FURTHER**  
**EDUCATION REGIONS: A SURVEY**

Introduction

This chapter describes the main quantitative research, which takes the form of a postal survey of three Further Education regions in England. The purpose of the research is to collect information about courses offered in the area of PSE-related transition to adulthood. The method, including questionnaire design, administration, analysis and limitations, and the results of the postal questionnaire, are described.

While the intention is to gain a generalisable picture of transition to adulthood provision, similarities and differences between the three regions are also examined. It is found that although there are differences between the regions none of these is very great, and there are more similarities than differences between the regions. The conclusion is that the overall picture which emerges from the survey, is likely to be representative of transition to adulthood input for young people with LDD throughout England.

The overall research design began with a broad literature survey, narrowing and sharpening its focus by means of the regional quantitative survey with an empirical exploration of how, or whether, theoretical aspects are translated into practice, and gaining detail, context, and more specific information through the qualitative enquiry, to give a comprehensive view of the target area of provision. The main survey forms an important part of the overall research design, providing a factual basis for understanding how transition to adulthood input is provided. Details pertaining to each question, and the details of the regional differences, are examined throughout the chapter. Further discussion of the findings of the survey, together with the findings of the qualitative research, take place in the chapters which follow.

## Method

In seeking to discuss quality in transition to adulthood courses, it was felt necessary to gain information about how this input takes place in modern Further Education. A postal questionnaire was chosen because of its capacity to collect consistent data from a wide range of sources, and because it is cost effective. Cohen and Manion point out that in addition to these characteristics postal surveys are a useful method of data collection because the opportunities for error are limited to the instrument and the sample, rather than interpretation or coding (Cohen and Manion (1989, p.308), and because data can be processed without relying on the more intensive data reduction necessary in the coding of responses to interviews.

The use of postal questionnaires as a method of collecting data is limited by its dependency upon the respondents; the point is often made that a nil return is also a form of data, and only those who are interested enough to respond have their views taken into consideration. The interests of the researcher and the respondents may reduce impartiality and affect objectivity, since responses are sought by, and from, people who are involved in the area of study.

There are difficulties in seeking to clarify the responses, or to guarantee their accuracy. There may be a question of interpretation; although the meanings of questions are intended to be clear, returns show that this is not always the case. Sometimes respondents do not respond in the manner requested, as in the ranking questions so that it becomes necessary for the researcher to interpret results to some extent. In contrast the researcher can expect information to be quite accurate because it is contributed by knowledgeable respondents, and the potential for bias may also be counteracted by the quantity of data gathered through a high rate of returns.

For the main survey the Further Education regions were taken from Meager, Evans and Dench (1996); the individual colleges were identified from the Education Year Book for 1996-97. The choice of regions was affected by the fact that two, the North West and the Yorkshire and Humberside areas, had already been used by the researcher in investigating PSE-related transition to adulthood courses. The regions in the current survey were chosen

as being distant from each other with no shared borders; they were also within travelling distance of the researcher. Three regions were used in order to make a comparison; these are the North, the East Midlands and Greater London. There was a query as to whether there might be differences of provision in London, as the Capital; it was felt that if transition to adulthood courses in London and the other regions were similar, then generalisations might be more safely made about provision of such courses in the country as a whole.

Two small pilot studies, each of six colleges, were conducted in two other regions, the South East and the South West. The purpose of these was to check the format of the questions, the first pilot study leading to changes which were then checked in the second. As a result of the first pilot study the number of questions was reduced, wording was clarified, and the layout changed. The second pilot study resulted in more information being sought about the nature of the transition to adulthood sessions. The two pilot studies did not reveal the difficulties which would arise in the data collection when respondents answered questions in ways other than expected, particularly where ranking was carried out by respondents in the main survey. In the pilot studies the problems with ranking did not appear.

For the main postal survey, sixty-nine mainstream Further Education and tertiary colleges, in three regions, were circulated with postal questionnaires. A covering letter and a first class stamped, addressed envelope were provided. Respondents were assured that their replies would remain anonymous, and confidential. Following the first round of responses, a further copy of the questionnaire was circulated to colleges who had not answered, with a courteous reminder letter and pre-paid, addressed envelope; this resulted in further returns.

### Questionnaire Design

Following the earlier, preliminary survey it was decided to restrict this enquiry to mainstream Further Education and tertiary colleges. A postal questionnaire was designed with questions aimed at determining the nature of PSE-related transition to adulthood provision. Some questions followed on from the preliminary survey described in Chapter Eight, such as the

desire to know more about how the PSE-related transition to adulthood provision, which was widely supported, was actually delivered; what exactly were the respondents describing when they talked about their provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and whether there was a common understanding of this provision. Other questions arose from an overview of the literature, taking into account Schindele's recommendation that research should evaluate special educational programmes and processes in their complexity (Schindele 1985, p.5). Aspects of complexity and confusion identified within the field of transition to adulthood include: assessment and evaluation: quality assurance, and content. Pring's (1984, p.4-7) identification of conceptual, political, ethical, empirical and organisational difficulties in defining PSE curricula, informs the question about the content. There was a particular concern to discover whether educational aspects concerned with the emotions, identified as important in the literature and in the researcher's own experience, were acknowledged in the general delivery of transition to adulthood-related input.

The questions are concerned with input, process and outcome variables; the final questionnaire is shown in Appendix VI. The questionnaire is designed following recommendations by Cohen and Manion (1989, p. 106-112) citing Hoinville and Jowell. Most of the questions in the questionnaire are closed, and many use 'tick' boxes and ranking as a means of gathering data.

The design of the questionnaire, with its need to be able to collect the data in a manageable form and to process it without further reference to others, affects the formation of the questions and may therefore be seen as an area of potential weakness. These possible criticisms are offset by the ability of questionnaires to provide data from a wide range of sources, minimising the importance which may be placed on any individual response. The questions were formulated carefully and with reference to the pilot and previous studies. The questions were intended to be simple and factual, based on a desire to delineate PSE-related provision, and drawing their content from the literature, and from other research. The researcher attempted to keep the questions value-free, leaving matters of value to the respondents. Respondents themselves were also free to comment if the categories were not the right ones, and experience of the pilot studies suggested that

respondents would not hesitate to mention it if they found the questionnaire to be poor or unhelpful. The questionnaires throughout this study were intended to be fairly quick and easy to complete, without the need for great effort on the part of busy respondents. To aid this the pathway of the questionnaires moves from the simplest to the most complex question.

While speed and ease of completion may make for spontaneity and, hopefully, honest answers and may bring about a high return, they may also operate against allowing for more reflective thought and more complex answers. For this reason the final question, fourteen, is an open-ended question in which respondents are invited to say what they would like to change about the PSE-related transition to adulthood input in their own college. Cohen and Manion (1989) advise against using open-ended questions, however it seems to this researcher to be a useful way of asking respondents whether they have anything further they wish to add regarding the area of enquiry.

In the questionnaire, the questions identify discrete provision but go on to explore PSE-related input generally. Questions one to three (Figure 9.1) seek to identify the level and type of provision of discrete PSE-related, transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses for young people with LDD, in mainstream and tertiary colleges.

1. Does your college offer a discrete, PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life course for young people with LDD?		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	No-but PSE-related input offered via other courses	No PSE related input offered to LDD students
Please return questionnaire		
2. Is/are the course(s)/module(s) accredited, and if so by whom?		
.....		
3. What is/are the course/module title(s)?		
.....		

Figure 9.1: Courses, Titles and Accreditation

Questions four to fourteen are concerned more generally with PSE-related input in the colleges, and do not seek separate data about discrete courses.

Questions four and five (Figure 9.2) seek to establish the frequency and duration of the PSE-related input.

4. Generally, how often are PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life lectures/lessons/sessions held?

Fewer than once a week

Once a week

More than once a week

Other (please give details).....

5. For how long does the average PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, lecture/lesson/session last?

1 hour or less

1-2 hours

Approx. 1/2 (half) a day

Approx. 1 day

Other (please give details).....

Figure 9.2: Frequency and Duration of PSE-related Input

Questions six to thirteen cover more contentious aspects of this provision. Respondents are asked how the work is assessed, and what is most important in its assessment (Questions six and seven, Figure 9.3).

6. How is the quality of PSE-related work or courses assessed (tick as many as you wish)

By the Special Needs Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/>
By tutors/lecturers teaching PSE-related work	<input type="checkbox"/>
By those with quality responsibility	<input type="checkbox"/>
By a regular review/evaluation process	<input type="checkbox"/>
By student satisfaction feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>
By external assessment, e.g. inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>
In accordance with accreditation requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
By feedback from other involved persons	<input type="checkbox"/>
By matching previously decided criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please give details).....	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Which of the above do you think are most important, in assessing quality?  
Please put 1,2,3 next to those items which you consider to be most important  
(1= of greatest importance)

Figure 9.3: Assessing the Quality of PSE-related Input

Questions eight and nine address how content is decided and what is most important among the ways of deciding it (Figure 9.4).and questions ten and eleven consider the relative importance of elements of curricular input, derived from the literature (Figure 9.6).

In questions eight and twelve respondents are invited also to indicate what was not important in these areas.

8. How important are each of the following in deciding content of the course/module/PSE-related input?	Very important	Quite important	Not very important	Not at all important
Professional judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Input from others (parents, carers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schedule 2 funding requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' suggestions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
College development plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment of students' needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Requirements of accrediting body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation of a previous course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FEU publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other input, inc. books, schemes, audio-visual media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Requirements of quality measures in college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student satisfaction feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please give details).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Which of the above do you think are most important, in deciding content? Please put 1,2,3 next to those items which you consider to be most important (1- of greatest importance).				

**Figure 9.4: Ways of Deciding Content**

Questions ten and eleven are concerned with how satisfactory completion of the input is judged, and what is most important in judging it (Figure 9.5).

<b>10. What tells you whether the student has completed the PSE-related course/ module/element satisfactorily? (Tick as many as you wish)</b>	
Students' level of attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lecturer's professional judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' mature behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completion of specific assignments or tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' self appraisal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completion of time on course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' appraisal of each other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting of particular criteria, e.g. competency	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parents'/carers' judgements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please give details).....	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>11. Which of the above do you think are most important? Please put 1,2,3 next to those items which you consider to be most important (1- of greatest importance)</b>	

Figure 9.5: Successful Completion of the Course

Questions twelve and thirteen aim to identify preferences for aspects of curricular content. In the questionnaire these are grouped into four blocks of five items, to ease visual identification of the corresponding 'tick' boxes. The items within each block are not listed in any order, but within each block is one item that might be viewed as more contentious or difficult to teach, either because they are less likely to be neutral for the teacher or lecturer personally, or because they include difficult or sophisticated concepts. These items are derived from the analysis of themes and topics in Chapter Five, and include: controversial issues; political awareness; religious and philosophical awareness; and education of the emotions (Figure 9.6).

12. How important are the following items, in a PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, course/module/element?

	Very important	Quite important	Not very important	Not at all important
personal identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
controversial issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
environmental awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
morality/moral code	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
parenthood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
analytical/thinking skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
independence preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
political awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
occupational development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
economic awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
prejudice and stereotypes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
religious/philosophical awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
personal relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
disability issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
social awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
students' personal interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
education of the emotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please give details).....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Which of the above do you think are most important?  
Please put 1,2,3 next to those items which you consider to be most important (1- of greatest importance).

Figure 9.6: PSE-related Content in Transition to Adulthood Input

## Analysis

Data derived from the answers to the questions are presented as descriptive statistics, relating to individual regions and aggregated across all three regions. Simple statistical procedures are used, whereby categories are counted and then expressed as a ratio scale by conversion to percentages. A chi-square test of significance was used for the rate of returns from the regions, and for the regional differences in provision shown in Table IX. More complex statistical procedures were not felt to be necessary in this broad information-gathering survey. For some questions the number of nominations in each category, within each region, is expressed as a percentage of the total nominations in that category. Further information about how the data are processed is given in the report of the results.

Returns; there were fifty-two returns which were usable because of their answers to the first question, about the offer of PSE-related courses in mainstream Further Education. This represents 75% of the of the original sixty-nine questionnaires sent out. Some of these colleges answered that no such courses were offered. The subsequent qualitative enquiry described in Chapter Ten, confirmed that some colleges choose to have a total inclusion policy with no discrete courses. The survey was not followed up with enquiries regarding the basis for colleges' lack of discrete courses so it is not known if this approach is the result of inclusion policies in all cases, although this would make a useful line of enquiry for further research. Reduced by those colleges who do not have discrete courses, the number of usable returns for subsequent questions was forty-seven, representing just under 70% of the original sixty-nine questionnaires. Since some of the respondents did not answer all the questions, for some questions the return is smaller. Usually this occurred in the instances where respondents were asked to rank their choices, as in questions seven, nine, eleven and thirteen.

The regional distribution of returns was: eleven out of sixteen colleges responded from the North; nineteen out of twenty-four colleges responded from Greater London; and twenty-two out of twenty-nine colleges responded from East Midlands. A chi-square test was performed to consider the difference in the rate of returns for each region. No significant difference was found.

Discrete, PSE-Related Transition to Adulthood or Skills for Adult Life, Courses in Further Education

Table VIII shows how PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, courses for young people with LDD, are offered across the regions.

**TABLE VIII: THE COURSES OFFERED**

<u>Regions</u>	<u>Colls</u>	<u>Yes: courses offered</u>	<u>PSE input via other courses</u>	<u>No PSE-related input</u>
North	11	8 (73%)	2 (18%)	1 (9%)
Greater London	19	12 (63%)	4 (21%)	3 (16%)
East Midlands	22	13 (59%)	8 (36%)	1 (5%)
Total	52	33	14	5

N= 52

Among the mainstream Further Education and tertiary colleges answering this question, results show that:

1. 63% offer discrete, PSE-related courses for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (thirty-three colleges);
  2. 27% offer PSE input via other courses (fourteen colleges);
  3. 10% offer no PSE-related input (five colleges).
- PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life input is therefore offered to young people with LDD, in some form, in 90% of the respondent mainstream Further Education and tertiary colleges.

A chi-square test was performed to consider the difference between PSE-related input offered as discrete courses and PSE input delivered through other courses and curricular elements. The result showed that while input is mostly through discrete courses, there is no significant difference between the number of colleges offering discrete input and those favouring a more pervasive style of PSE delivery.

## Accreditation of courses or modules

Table IX shows the distribution of accredited and non-accredited, shared and discrete, courses across the regions.

**TABLE IX: ACCREDITATION OF PSE-RELATED INPUT**

<u>Regions</u>	<u>Coll</u> <u>s</u>	<u>Accredited</u>		<u>Not accredited</u>	
		<u>discrete</u> <u>course</u>	<u>shared</u> <u>course</u>	<u>discrete</u> <u>course</u>	<u>shared</u> <u>course</u>
North:	10	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	0
Greater London	16	9 (56%)	3 (19%)	3 (19%)	1 (6%)
East Midlands	21	12 (57%)	5 (24%)	1 (5%)	3 (14%)
Subtotal		27	10	6	4
Total	47	37		10	

N = 47

Among the mainstream Further Education and tertiary colleges answering this question, results show that:

1. Of all the colleges offering some PSE-related input, 79% offer accreditation for this input (thirty -seven colleges);
  2. 21% of these courses are not accredited (ten colleges);
  3. Of the accredited courses, 73% are discrete courses (twenty-seven colleges).
- Discrete, accredited courses therefore form 57% of the PSE-related, transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, offer to young people with LDD, in the respondent mainstream Further Education and tertiary colleges. There are no regional differences evident.

## The Accrediting Bodies

The full range of accrediting bodies nominated is given in Appendix VII. Table X shows the range of accrediting bodies and the number of nominations they receive in each region, arranged in ranking order with the most frequently nominated listed first.

**TABLE X: ACCREDITING BODIES USED IN EACH REGION**

	North	Gtr. London	E.Midlands	Total
Open College (local variants)	2	1	15	18
ASDAN	3	11	2	16
City and Guilds	4	2	1	7
RSA	2	4	1	7
LCCI (EB)	1	3	-	4
NCFE	3	-	-	3
CENTRA	1	1	-	2

The following accrediting bodies received single nominations: NSP; NELAF; NRAB; TRAC; National Proficiency Test Council; Open University; College Certificate (Own accreditation).

- Overall, the preferred accrediting bodies are shown to be the Open College and ASDAN, with both organisations in use in all three regions. These account for over two thirds of all accreditation.

### Course Titles

There is a wide range of course titles, some of which reflect the names of accredited modules. Others describe particular subject or subject-related areas of learning, whilst some titles reflect a function related to progression, for example, Pre-Vocational, Transition to NVQ, etc. The full range of titles provided, including some identified only by initials, is shown in Appendix VIII; course titles suggesting strong PSE-related input in the study are shown in italics. Even allowing for the crudeness of this identification, which is hampered by the lack of clear information about the courses, there are over fifty variants suggestive of PSE-related input.

- More frequent nominations include: Independent Living, Personal Development; Self Advocacy, and Work Preparation. Many titles seem to reflect assumed or identified inadequacies among the client groups.

## Frequency of Input

Table XI shows how frequently PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life lectures, lessons or sessions, are held:

**TABLE XI: FREQUENCY OF PSE-RELATED INPUT/LECTURES/SESSIONS**

	<u>Northern</u> (10 Colls)	<u>Gtr London</u> (16 Colls)	<u>E.Midlands</u> (21 Colls)	<u>Total</u> (47 Colls)
Less than 1 a week	-	-	1 (5%)	1 (2%)
1 a week	-	6 (38%)	5 (24%)	11 (23%)
More than 1 a week	7 (70%)	6 (38%)	13 (62%)	26 (55%)
Other	3 (30%)	4 (25%)	2 (10%)	9 (19%)

N=47

Use of the Category of 'other' in question four: not all colleges were able to answer within the framework provided; consequently there is a high proportion of responses in the 'other' column. Explanations noted on the questionnaires, are:

North: PSE-related input is considered to be offered more frequently, within all modules, and therefore is not described sufficiently by the categories;

Greater London: in one college input is provided as required; in another college details are not given; and in a third college, PSE-related input is described as given daily for three hours each day; this last may be similar to those colleges in the North where input is provided as part of all, or most, modules;

East Midlands: one college describes PSE-related input as being provided through tutorials, and another describes it as given generally, which may be considered as consistent with similar explanations in the Northern and Greater London regions.

- Overall, provision of PSE-related input usually occurs more than once a week.
- Nine of the respondent colleges (19%) deliver PSE-related teaching through input other than discrete courses, suggesting no formal provision of this kind.
- Within the limitations of the small regional samples, no between-regional variations in the frequency pattern of provision are identified.

## Duration of Input

Table XII shows the duration of PSE-related lectures, lessons or sessions, within each region.

**TABLE XII: DURATION OF PSE-RELATED LECTURES/SESSIONS**

	<u>Northern</u> (10 Colls)	<u>Gtr London</u> (16 Colls)	<u>E.Midlands</u> (21 Colls)	<u>Total</u> (47 Colls)
1 hour or less	-	-	2 (10%)	2 (4%)
1-2 hours	7 (70%)	12.5 (78%)	14.5 (69%)	34 (72%)
Half a day	1 (10%)	2.5 (16%)	3.5 (17%)	7 (15%)
1 day	-	-	-	0
Other	2 (20%)	1 (6%)	1 (5%)	4 (9%)

N = 47

Use of the category of 'other' in question five: Some colleges were unable to answer in terms of the categories offered, responding by choosing the 'other' column. Notes on the questionnaire indicate that this was because PSE-related input was offered within existing modules (North), or on occasion as required (Greater London). or integrated into other work (East Midlands).

- Overall, the most general duration of the PSE-related input is one to two hours, accounting for approximately 70% of the sessions reported.

## Method of Assessment of the Quality of PSE-related Work or Courses

Table XIII shows how the quality of PSE-related work is assessed. When considering the returns, a weakness was identified in the wording of question six, which was shown with hindsight to be unclear. In asking colleges to comment upon how the quality of PSE-related work is assessed, it was not made clear whether the work in question was that produced by the pupils in response to the course, or the work of the teachers or lecturers in delivering the course, or the quality of the course as a whole, relating to both teacher input and student output. It is assumed that respondents viewed the question as applying to the course as a whole, but this cannot be verified from the questionnaire responses.

Respondents did not challenge or comment on the wording, so it is not as clear as it should be as to what they thought they were describing in their answers. Nevertheless answers were provided, and are perhaps best taken as giving a general understanding of how quality is assessed in this area. Proceeding on this basis, the number of nominations in each category is shown as a percentage of the number of colleges responding within each region, and also as a percentage of the nominations of all colleges. The rank order of preferred categories is also shown.

The categories describing ways of assessing the quality of PSE-related work can be further defined within three broad groups: the expert model, the managerial model and the consumer model. Using this framework the SENCo and the teachers or lecturers would be considered as the experts; students, parents or carers would be the consumers, and the remaining categories would mostly be concerned with managerial considerations. The responses to this questions are considered in terms of these models.

**TABLE XIII: FREQUENCY OF WAYS OF ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF  
PSE-RELATED WORK**

	<u>Northern</u> (10 Colls)	<u>Gtr London</u> (16 Colls)	<u>E.Midlands</u> (21 Colls)	<u>Total</u> (47 Colls)	<u>Total</u> Rank
by Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo)	4 (40%)	9 (56%)	7 (33%)	20 (43%)	7
by tutors/lecturers delivering input	9 (90%)	15 (94%)	19 (90%)	43 (91%)	1
by those with quality responsibility	6 (60%)	7 (44%)	7 (33%)	20 (43%)	7
by regular review or evaluation	10 (100%)	13 (81%)	18 (86%)	41 (87%)	2
by student satisfaction feedback	9 (90%)	15 (94%)	5 (24%)	39 (83%)	3
by external assessment (e.g. inspection)	8 (80%)	10 (63%)	14 (67%)	32 (68%)	5
in line with accreditation requirements	9 (90%)	12 (75%)	15 (71%)	36 (77%)	4
by feedback from others (parents, etc.)	6 (60%)	9 (56%)	8 (38%)	23 (49%)	6
matching to previously decided criteria *	1 (10%)	3 (19%)	8 (38%)	12 (26%)	9
other	1 (10%)	-	-	1	10

N = 47

Previously decided criteria: where this category was chosen, respondents were asked to state who decided the criteria. The answers were:

North: the awarding body; the internal and external verifier;

Greater London: student and tutor; ASDAN and team;

East Midlands: tutors and internal and external verifiers; tutors and students; themselves (the respondent tutors and students); the accreditation system; the accrediting bodies - ASDAN, GMDCF, Open College Network.

Use of the category of 'Other' in question 6: where this category was chosen, respondents were asked to say what the other means were. The single example was in the North and was named as the internal and external verifier.

- The top three categories of teacher evaluation, regular review and student satisfaction feedback, are all among the top three choices in each region.

#### Ascribed Importance in the Assessment of Quality

Respondents were asked to rank the first three categories of their choice, in order of importance, for describing the assessment of quality. This provides an opportunity to focus more closely upon what the colleges consider to take priority among a number of potentially important categories. Fewer colleges responded to this question, so that those ranking may be seen as forming a large sub-set of the total respondents.

The rankings were determined by awarding three points for a first choice, two points for a second choice and one point for a third choice. Where the same rank was awarded by a college to two categories, the rank was accepted and split. Where colleges awarded the same rank to a number of categories, as happened in three cases, the returns were considered to be unusable. Table XIV shows the distribution of points accrued in this way.

**TABLE XIV: WEIGHTED IMPORTANCE ASSIGNED THROUGH RANKING, OF WAYS OF ASSESSING QUALITY**

	Ranked 1st			Ranked 2nd			Ranked 3rd			Total alloc.	Total Rank
	Nor (7)	GtL (9)	EM (16)	Nor (7)	GtL (9)	EM (16)	Nor (7)	GtL (9)	EM (16)		
by Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo)	-	3		-	2	2	2	1		10	6
by tutors/lecturers delivering input	-	6	7.5	2	9	9	2	0.5	3	39	2
by those with quality responsibility	-	3	-	2	-	1	-	-	1	7	8
by regular review or evaluation	13.5	6	6	1	-	5	-	1.5	2	35	3
by student satisfaction feedback	4.5	7.5	15	6	2	7	-	1	2	45	1
by external assessment (e.g. inspection)	-	-	4.5	-	-	2	-	1	1	9	7
in line with accreditation requirements	3	1.5	9	2	3	-	1	1	1	21.5	4
by feedback from others (parents, etc.)	-	-	-	2	3	2	3	-	1	11	5
matching to previously decided criteria *	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	3	9
other	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	10

N = 31

The use of the category of 'Other' in Question 7: this refers, as described above, to the internal and external verifier.

- While similar ways of assessing quality in PSE-related work are chosen by all the regions with the exception of 'feedback from others' in the North, the order in which they are ranked is different:
- Student satisfaction clearly attracts most overall support from colleges ranking their choices, being one of the top two choices for all three regions.

Comparing the total, non-ranking group and the ranking colleges: Table XV shows two sets of ranked results; those which colleges say are the most important (ranked choices) and

those which they show to be most important (unranked choices, subsequently ranked by attributing value to the choices). The larger group of colleges, being all those which answered question six, includes the smaller group of colleges which chose to rank their choices, so it is not surprising that the first three choices in each group are similar. Those who chose to respond by ranking their choices are keener to make a point about the relative importance of the categories. There is some difference between what respondents tell the researcher through explicit information (the ranking group) and what they show the researcher through implicit information (the total group). However the differences in the first three choices of categories are only those of order of importance.

**TABLE XV: COMPARISON OF CHOICES FOR WAYS OF ASSESSING QUALITY**

	<u>Chosen by all colleges (non-ranking): N=47</u>	<u>Chosen by colleges ranking: N=31</u>
1st choice	tutors/lecturers	student satisfaction feedback
2nd choice	regular review/evaluation	tutors/lecturers
3rd choice	student satisfaction feedback	regular review/evaluation

- While the same three ways of assessing quality in PSE-related work are chosen by all the colleges, the order in which they are ranked is different. It may be noted that these outcomes are based on aggregated totals, and that there are some individual differences among the third choices between the regions. Among the total of colleges (non-ranking) the third choice in the North was 'external assessment' and in Greater London and the East Midlands, the third choice was 'in line with accreditation requirements'. As noted, among ranking colleges the North included 'feedback from others' as its third choice.
- The differences between the third choices among the regions are based on small numbers of respondents, and do not invalidate the overall findings reported in Table XVI.
- The first three choices for ways of assessing quality include one example for each of the expert, consumer, and managerial models, which suggests a balance of considerations.

Ways of Deciding Course Content

Table XVI shows the number of nominations from respondent colleges, within each region, for categories describing ways of deciding the content of PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life courses.

**TABLE XVI: FREQUENCIES IN WAYS OF DECIDING THE CONTENT OF PSE-RELATED COURSES/MODULES**

	very important			quite important			not very important			not at all important		
	Nor (8)	Gt (16)	L (21)	Nor (8)	Gt (16)	L (21)	Nor (8)	Gt (16)	L (21)	Nor (8)	Gt (16)	L (21)
professional judgement	5	12	12	3	4	6	-	-	1	-	-	-
input from others	3	3	9	5	8	8	-	5	2	-	-	1
Schedule 2 funding	4	4	9	3	7	5	-	1	3	-	1	3
students' suggestions	5	11	16	3	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
college developmt. plan	5	3	5	2	9	10	-	1	3	-	1	1
assessment of student needs	8	15	19	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
requirements of accrediting body	3	4	6	5	9	11	-	1	1	-	2	2
evaluation of previous course	4	5	11	4	9	5	-	2	2	-	-	-
FEU publications	-	1	1	6	5	8	1	7	7	-	1	4
other media input	-	1	1	5	11	8	3	2	7	-	2	3
quality measures in coll.	5	3	5	3	9	10	-	3	2	-	1	2
availability of resources	3	6	6	4	6	8	1	3	3	-	1	3
student satisfaction feedback	6	8	13	2	7	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
other	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

N = 45

Table XVI shows individual nominations. To arrive at a figure indicating the overall level of importance, three points were allocated to a choice in the 'very important' category, two points to the 'quite important' category, and one point to the 'not very important' category. It was considered that 'not very important' constituted some degree of recognition of importance, since respondents could choose the 'not at all important' category or omit a choice, if it was felt that a category was of no importance whatsoever. The category of 'not at

all important' is considered separately. Table XVII shows the totals of points accrued in this way, expressed also in terms of rank order.

**Table XVII: SCORED RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF WAYS OF DECIDING CONTENT**

	very important			quite important			not very important			Total	Rank
	Nor (8)	Gt (16)	L EM (21)	Nor (8)	Gt (16)	L EM (21)	Nor (8)	Gt (16)	L EM (21)		
professional judgement	15	36	36	6	8	12	-	-	1	114	3
input from others	9	9	27	10	16	16	-	5	2	94	6
Schedule 2 funding	12	12	23	6	14	10	-	4	3	88	8
students' suggestions	15	33	48	6	10	8	-	-	-	120	2
college developmt. plan	15	9	15	4	18	20	-	1	3	85	11
assessment of student needs	24	45	57	-	-	2	-	-	-	128	1
requirements of accrediting body	9	12	18	10	18	22	-	1	1	91	7
evaluation of previous course	12	15	33	8	18	10	-	2	2	100	5
FEU publications	-	3	3	12	10	16	1	7	7	59	13
other media input	-	3	3	10	22	16	3	2	7	66	12
quality measures in college.	15	9	15	6	18	20	-	3	2	88	8
availability of resources	9	18	18	8	12	16	1	3	3	88	8
student satisfaction feedback	18	24	39	4	14	12	-	-	-	111	4
other	3	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	14

N = 45

Use of the category of 'Other' in question eight: Where colleges chose this category they were invited to describe their other means of deciding PSE-related content. These were reported as:

North: relevance to students (although this may be considered as a principle rather than a means, depending upon how the information is collected);

East Midlands: in one case, student/lecturer negotiation, and in one case other details were not provided.

- There is overall agreement about what constitutes the most important factor in deciding what the content of PSE-related input is to be, which is the assessment of student needs. This is taken to refer to the assessment which colleges carry out before, or on, admission to further education when students are identified as having possible special educational needs. It may include both professional judgement and student feedback.

#### Ascribed Importance in the Ways of Deciding Content

Respondents were asked to rank the first three categories of their choice for ways of deciding content, in order of importance; as before, fewer colleges responded to this question. The rankings were again determined by awarding three points for a first choice, two points for a second choice and one point for a third choice. Where the same rank was awarded by a college to two categories, the rank was accepted and split. Where colleges awarded the same rank to a number of categories, as happened in a small number of cases, the returns were considered to be unusable. Table XVIII shows the distribution of points accrued in this way.

**TABLE XVIII: WEIGHTED IMPORTANCE ASSIGNED BY RANKING,  
FOR WAYS OF DECIDING CONTENT**

	<u>Ranked 1st</u>	<u>Ranked 2nd</u>	<u>Ranked 3rd</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rank</u>
	<u>Nor</u> <u>GtL</u> <u>EM</u> (8) (10) (15)	<u>Nor</u> <u>GtL</u> <u>EM</u> (8) (10) (15)	<u>Nor</u> <u>GtL</u> <u>EM</u> (8) (10) (15)		
professional judgement	- 12 4.5	- 4 7	1 1 3	32.5	2
input from others	- - -	1 - 3	- 1 1	7	7
Schedule 2 funding	1 - -	- - 4	1 - 2	10	5
students' suggestions	- - 6	- 4 2	1 2.5 1	16.5	4
college development plan	- - 3	- 2 -	- - -	5	9
assessment of student needs	9 4.5 13.5	4 8 6	- 1 1	47	1
Requirements of accrediting body	- 3 -	- - .5	1 - 2	6	8
evaluation of previous course	- 3 -	1 - 1.5	- - -	8	6
FEU publications	- - -	- - -	- - -	-	-
other media input	- - -	- - -	- - -	-	-
quality measures in college	- - -	- - -	1 1 1	3	11
availability of resources	- - -	- 2 -	- 2 -	4	10
student satisfaction feedback	3 1.5 3	2 - 4	- .5 3	17	3
other	- - -	- - -	- - -	-	-

N=30

Students' suggestions and student satisfaction feedback: it is not uncommon for colleges to seek feedback from students by asking them to complete a student satisfaction questionnaire at the end of a course. With this in mind, questions eight and nine include student satisfaction feedback as a separate category. Students' suggestions are considered to be more informal, perhaps arising during the course. The closeness of the ranking of these two categories in Table XVIII raises questions as to whether respondents made the same distinction as the researcher between the two categories.

Comparing the total, non-ranking group and the ranking colleges: the first three choices derived from gathering data through the ranking and the non-ranking methods are similar,

varying only in that the second choice for all the colleges (non-ranking) is 'student suggestions', and for the ranking colleges 'student satisfaction' .

- These choices for ways of deciding content could therefore be described as:
  1. Assessment of student needs;
  2. Student input (suggestions, satisfaction);
  3. Professional judgement.
- While there is considerable support for the assessment of student needs as the principal way in which content is decided for PSE-related input, there are differences between the choices of regions when the colleges do, and do not, rank their choices among the subsequent categories.

Choosing the category of 'not at all important' in question eight: few colleges chose to take advantage of the opportunity to describe any of the ways of deciding PSE-related input as 'not at all important'; the ten colleges responding formed 22% of those answering question eight. Results shown in Table XVI indicate that the categories most frequently chosen as of no importance are, with the most often chosen, i.e. of least importance, shown first:

1. FEU publications; other media input;
  2. Accreditation requirements; availability of resources;
  3. College quality measures; Schedule Two funding requirements;
  4. College development plan.
- The lack of interest in the FEU publications confirms the findings of the preliminary research (Chapter Eight, p.142) and this writer's earlier research (Pavey 1991, p.50), that these publications are not widely used to guide PSE-related transition to adulthood studies, in spite of the high esteem with which they have been regarded by writers in the field.
  - Although input from external sources such as FEU publications and other media input are strongly considered not to be important by the respondents choosing this category, the regional choices in Table XVI show that some respondents find them helpful. This may be placed into context by that fact that together these external resources received

seventy-four nominations for some degree of importance, and ten nominations for no importance.

### Successful Completion

Table XIX shows support for a range of ways of gauging the student's successful completion of the PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, course, module or element. Results are expressed as a percentage of colleges nominating, and are expressed also in rank order.

**TABLE XIX: FREQUENCIES IN WAYS OF GAUGING SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF COURSE/ELEMENT**

	<u>North</u> (9)	<u>Gtr L.</u> (15)	<u>E. M.</u> (21)	<u>Total</u>	<u>Total Rank</u>
student's attendance	7 (78%)	9 (60%)	9 (43%)	25	5
professional judgement	9 (100%)	11(73%)	16 (76%)	36	2
student's mature behaviour	5 (56%)	10 (67%)	7 (47%)	22	6
completion of assignments	7 (78%)	9 (60%)	17 (81%)	33	3
student self appraisal	8 (89%)	13 (87%)	16 (76%)	37	1
completion of time element	2 (22%)	6 (40%)	3 (14%)	11	9
student peer appraisal	3 (33%)	5 (33%)	10 (48%)	18	8
meeting of criteria	6 (67%)	10 (67%)	11 (52%)	27	4
parent/carer's judgement	6 (67%)	6 (40%)	9 (43%)	21	7
other	1 (11%)	-	-	-	10

N = 45

Use of the category of 'Other' in question ten: The 'other' nomination was described as 'accreditation'.

One college appended the following comment to their response to this question:

Student maturity etc. although measurable throughout the year in terms of behaviour etc. is rather difficult to translate into accredited course work. This is an ongoing problem for us. (Anonymous questionnaire response, 1997)

- There is only a difference of one nomination between the overall first and second choices for ways of gauging successful completion in Table XIX. The overall second

choice is in fact the first choice of the North and Greater London, but takes second place as a consequence of the larger number of East Midlands colleges in the sample.

#### Ascribed Importance in Ways of Gauging Successful Completion

Colleges were invited to show their first, second and third choices among the criteria described for recognising the successful completion of the course. Once again, fewer colleges chose to answer this question, providing a total of twenty-three (49%) respondents to question ten. As before the ranking was determined by allocating three points for a first choice, two points for a second choice and one point for a third choice. Table XX shows the distribution of points resulting from this method, and the overall totals are also shown in rank order.

**TABLE XX: WEIGHTED IMPORTANCE ASSIGNED BY RANKING, FOR WAYS OF GAUGING SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION**

	<u>Ranked 1st</u>			<u>Ranked 2nd</u>			<u>Ranked 3rd</u>			<u>Total</u>	<u>Rank</u>
	<u>Nor</u>	<u>GtL</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Nor</u>	<u>GtL</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Nor</u>	<u>GtL</u>	<u>EM</u>		
	(6)	(8)	(9)	(6)	(8)	(9)	(6)	(8)	(9)		
student's attendance	-	3	-	-	2	-	1	-	2	8	7
professional judgement	-	6	3	2	3	8	2	2	2	28	1
student's mature behaviour	-	3	3	-	4	-	1	1	-	12	5
completion of assignments	6	3	6	2	-	6	-	3	-	26	2
student self appraisal	-	3	6	4	5	2	2	-	3	25	3
completion of time element	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
student peer appraisal	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	9
meeting of criteria	9	6	3	2	-	2	-	-	2	24	4
parent/carer's judgement	3	-	6	-	1	-	1	1	-	12	5
other	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2	8

N = 23

- The top three choices for ways of gauging successful completion, among non-ranking and ranking colleges are similar, although the order is different. These are: professional judgement, completion of assignments and student self appraisal.

### PSE-related Curricular Content

Recommendations as to what should be the content of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses are varied. Twenty items of possible curricular input are identified, with some being broader based and others more specific. As discussed earlier, some areas may be considered as contentious or difficult. These are: controversial issues; political awareness; religious or philosophical awareness; and the education of the emotions. From among the nominated categories Table XXI shows the relative importance of items of curricular input.

**Table XXI: SCORED RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF ELEMENTS OF CURRICULAR INPUT**

	<u>very important</u>			<u>quite important</u>			<u>not very important</u>			<u>not at all important</u>		
	<u>Nor</u> 10)	<u>GtL</u> (16)	<u>EM</u> (21)	<u>Nor</u> (10)	<u>GtL</u> (16)	<u>EM</u> (21)	<u>Nor</u> (10)	<u>GtL</u> (16)	<u>EM</u> (21)	<u>Nor</u> 10)	<u>GtL</u> (16)	<u>EM</u> (21)
personal identity	8	12	16	2	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
communication	9	11	15	1	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
controversial issues	2	2	2	6	6	12	3	4	5	-	-	1
environmental awareness	2	2	2	7	8	13	1	3	4	-	-	1
morality/moral code	5	2	7	5	9	13	-	3	-	-	-	1
parenthood	4	1	5	6	11	11	-	2	4	-	-	1
analytical/thinking skills	4	5	7	5	8	10	1	-	3	-	-	-
independence preparation	8	12	20	2	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
political awareness	-	2	1	7	8	9	3	4	9	-	-	2
occupational development.	5	2	3	4	10	11	1	3	3	-	-	3
economic awareness	3	2	2	4	8	13	3	3	5	-	-	1
prejudice/stereotypes	7	10	12	3	5	8	-	1	1	-	-	-
religious/philosophical awareness	-	-	-	7	8	10	3	6	8	1	-	3
personal relationships	8	11	18	2	4	3	-	1	-	-	-	-
disability issues	5	6	11	5	8	9	-	1	1	-	-	-
social awareness	8	9	16	3	5	5	-	-	1	-	-	-
personal interests	6	11	14	4	3	6	-	-	1	-	-	-
education of emotions	5	6	12	5	6	7	-	1	1	-	-	-
health issues	7	8	11	3	7	9	-	1	-	-	-	-
other	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(N = 47).

Use of the category of 'Other' in question twelve: the entry in the category of 'other' is referred to as 'self-esteem'.

Results show that several categories attracted similar numbers of nominations. In order to gain a clearer understanding of relative importance, points were again allocated to

categories according to their relative importance. Three points were allocated for 'very important', two points for 'quite important', and one point for 'not very important'. As previously, this last category was felt to represent a degree of importance, as respondents could place a nomination in the column headed 'not at all important', or ignore the category altogether. The category of 'not at all important' is considered separately .

Table XXII shows the scores attracted by each category, giving the number of points allocated in each category, for each of the regions, with the overall total for each category expressed in terms of its rank.

**TABLE XXII: WEIGHTED RELATIVE IMPORTANCE SHOWN BY VALUE AWARDED, FOR CHOICES OF CURRICULAR INPUT.**

	very important			quite important			not very important			Total alloc	Rank
	Nor (10)	GtL (16)	EM (21)	Nor (10)	GtL (16)	EM (21)	Nor (10)	GtL (16)	EM (21)		
personal identity	24	36	48	4	6	10	-	-	-	128	3
communication	27	33	45	2	10	10	-	-	-	127	4
controversial issues	-	9	6	12	12	24	3	4	5	75	17
environmental awareness	6	6	6	14	16	26	1	3	4	82	16
morality/moral code	15	6	21	10	18	26	-	3	-	99	11
parenthood	12	3	15	12	22	22	-	2	4	92	13
analytical/thinking skills	12	15	21	10	16	20	1	-	3	98	12
independence preparation	24	36	60	4	8	2	-	-	-	134	1
political awareness	-	6	3	14	16	18	3	4	9	73	18
occupational development	15	6	9	8	20	2	1	3	3	87	14
economic awareness	9	9	6	8	16	26	3	3	5	85	15
prejudice/stereotypes	21	30	36	6	10	16	-	1	1	121	6
religious/philosophical awareness	-	-	-	14	16	20	3	6	8	67	19
personal relationships	24	33	54	4	8	6	-	1	-	130	2
disability issues	15	18	33	10	16	18	-	1	1	112	9
social awareness	24	27	48	6	10	10	-	1	-	126	5
personal interests	18	33	42	8	6	2	-	-	1	120	7
education of emotions	15	18	36	10	12	14	-	1	1	110	10
health issues	21	24	33	6	14	18	-	1	1	117	8
other	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	20

N=47

- The top three choices for curricular input in each region include independence preparation, personal relationships and personal identity. The North also ranks communication and social awareness highly.

Ascribed Importance in PSE-related Curricular Content

Colleges were invited to show their first, second and third choices from among the course elements listed. Again, fewer colleges chose to answer this question; those answering represent twenty-two (47%) of the respondents to question twelve.

As previously the preferences were determined by allocating three points for a first choice, two points for a second choice and one point for a third choice. Table XXIII shows the distribution of points when this method is employed, the overall totals and their rank amongst the categories chosen.

**TABLE XXIII: ITEMS OF CONTENT - WEIGHTED IMPORTANCE ASSIGNED BY RANKING**

	Ranked 1st			Ranked 2nd			Ranked 3rd			Total	Rank
	Nor	GtL	EM	Nor	GtL	EM	Nor	GtL	EM		
	(4)	(6)	(12)	(4)	(6)	(12)	(4)	(6)	(12)		
personal identity	3	6	12	-	2	-	-	-	2	25	2
communication	6	3	-	2	4	4	-	-	2	21	3
morality/moral code	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1	3	8
analytical/thinking skills	-	-	-	2	-	6	-	1	-	9	6
independence preparation	3	3	12	-	2	6	-	2	1	29	1
occupational development	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	4	7
personal relationships	-	3	9	2	2	2	-	-	2	20	4
disability issues	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	8
social awareness	-	-	3	-	4	-	2	1	1	11	5
personal interests	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2	1	5	10
education of emotions	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2	11

N = 22

The following categories received no nominations: controversial issues; environmental awareness; parenthood; political awareness; economic awareness; prejudice and stereotypes; religious/philosophical awareness; health issues; other.

Table XXIV shows that respondents who chose to rank their choices,

favoured a similar pattern for what they considered to be important in curricular content, to the overall view of the total respondent colleges. Only one point placed communication over personal relationships in the aggregated third choice of ranking colleges. If this had not been the case, the choices would have been the same among ranking colleges and the total number of respondent colleges, although not in the same order. Table XXIV compares the choices of important content as shown by all the respondent colleges, and the ranking colleges.

**TABLE XXIV: COMPARISON OF CHOICES OF IMPORTANT CONTENT**

	<u>Chosen by all colleges (non-ranking)</u>	<u>Chosen by colleges ranking</u>
1st choice	Independence preparation	Independence preparation
2nd choice	Personal relationships	Personal identity
3rd choice	Personal identity	Communication

Choosing the Category of 'Not At All Important' in Question Twelve: few colleges chose to take the opportunity to describe any of the elements of the PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life course as "not at all important". Fifteen colleges responded (32% of those answering question twelve). Respondents were free to nominate as many categories as they chose.

The items most frequently chosen as of no importance are shown to be,

1. Religious/philosophical awareness, and occupational development;
3. Political awareness;
4. Controversial issues; environmental awareness; moral code; parenthood; economic awareness; health issues; (all received one nomination each).

Curricular areas which might present some difficulties to the teacher/lecturer: All the curricular items were drawn from the analysis of themes and topics in Chapter Five. It is not surprising that items which attracted little support in the materials analysed as themes and topics, also attracted little support within respondents' preferences for curricular content. However this researcher was concerned that some of the more troublesome, or difficult to impart, aspects of mature daily living might be avoided. Four items which might present the

teacher/lecturer with some difficulties were selected, one within each group of five questions. These were: controversial issues, political awareness, religious and philosophical awareness, and the education of the emotions.

The first three categories score very poorly in the totals drawn from the general, non-ranking body of respondents, being scored at the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth position out of twenty. The colleges which rank their choices do not include controversial items, political awareness or religious and philosophical awareness in their choices at all.

The fourth category which might present difficulties, education of the emotions, is strongly emphasised as being of importance in the literature. This does rather better than the other three selected categories, being scored tenth out of the twenty items. Among the ranking colleges education of the emotions is scored eleventh out of eleven items. Among teachers and lecturers responding to the questionnaire this area does not attract the recognition or importance ascribed to it in the analysis of themes and topics taken from the PSE literature.

However, education of the emotions at least does not attract nomination as "not at all important". The items which are chosen as being of no importance, include the other three categories which are selected as possibly causing some difficulties to teachers. Items described as of no importance, with the item attracting most nominations, that is seen as least important shown first, are:

1. religious and philosophical awareness;
  2. political awareness;
  3. controversial issues; environment awareness; morality/moral code; parenthood; economic awareness.
- The top four choices for items of curricular input among ranking and non-ranking colleges are: independence preparation, personal relationships, personal identity, communication.
  - Among the items of curricular input, the broader, vaguer categories attract higher scores while the more specific and sometimes controversial categories, attract low, or

lower, scores. The exception is the category of prejudice and stereotypes, which falls sixth among the general group of colleges.

- Among teachers and lecturers responding to the questionnaire, education of the emotions does not attract the recognition or importance ascribed to it in the analysis of themes and topics taken from the PSE literature.

### The Desire for Change

Respondents were asked what, if anything, they would like to be able to do differently within their college PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life course/module/element. Twenty two colleges responded to this question, their answers are shown in full in Appendix IX. Table XXV shows these responses in terms of broad categories; some respondents nominated changes in more than one area. The total number of nominations in each category is shown together with their rank among the categories chosen.

**TABLE XXV: DESIRED CHANGES**

	<u>North</u> (4)	<u>Gtr L.</u> (5)	<u>E M.</u> (13)	<u>Total</u>	<u>Rank</u>
Content, inc. vocational elements	2	1	3	6	2
Administrative aspects	-	1	-	1	5
Community involvement	-	2	3	5	3
Resourcing, resources, funding	-	2	5	7	1
Quality issues	-	-	1	1	5
Evaluation procedures	-	-	1	1	5
Client group concerns	-	-	3	3	4
Staff development	-	-	1	1	5
Accreditation	1	-	-	1	5
Other	1	-	-	1	5

N= 22

Use of the category 'Other' in question fourteen: the respondent wanted to see a 'more integrated approach' This could be construed in terms of a number of the broad categories, and so is given as a separate category in Table XXV.

- The area giving rise to the greatest desire for change is that of resourcing and resources, although this is not nominated in the North.

### Regional Variation

In seeking to compare regions a problem arises from the different size of the samples, because for example on some occasions the East Midlands response is twice the size of that of the North. Since for many findings a close agreement is found between the main findings and the largest sample, this would suggest that the outcomes are strongly influenced by this group. However since a chi-square test of significance found that there was no significant difference between the pattern of provision in the regions, the main findings may be considered as representative of the groups, and generalisable across the wider FE population.

However to compensate for the different sizes of the samples a further statistical procedure was carried out, the responses being weighted so that each nomination carries the same power to affect the total. This makes it possible to examine whether the outcomes would be significantly affected, if the sample sizes were, at least hypothetically, the same. The weighting was done by treating each East Midlands nomination as one, and inflating proportionally the numerical value of nominations from the North and Greater London. Since the number of respondents varies from question to question, this numerical upgrading has to be performed for each question. The limitation of this procedure lies in its assumption that if the samples from the North and Greater London had been larger, the responses would have matched the outcomes shown by the weighting process.

Using this method Table XXVI shows a broad comparison of whether the regional preferences match the overall preferences. The ranked totals are compared with overall totals within Chapter Nine, but are not shown in Table XXVI. They are omitted because there is little variation between the ranked and unranked choices and preferences, the

differences between ranked and unranked choices tending to be those of priority of importance, or place in the order of choices. Also, since a certain amount of variation occurs in the ranking of the first three preferences among the regions, it was decided to clarify the process by choosing the three most favoured choices without defining them as first second or third rank. Place order therefore is therefore treated as less significant in making the broad comparison of the regional and the main findings.

Where there is some agreement with the main finding, but the region also gives equal importance to another item or items in the question series, this is shown as 'yes/split' to record the split response. The split may be between a number of categories, and may also refer to choices in categories which are not in the final preferred three. This can happen because the main findings are taken from aggregated totals, which may mask the fact that regional choices have awarded the same number of nominations to two or more categories. An example is found in responses to question six, where the regional choices for assessing quality include three categories attracting the same number of nominations in the North, and two in Greater London. Agreement between the regions is therefore only partial in such cases, since such responses also contain an element of disagreement. This makes the analysis less certain.

**TABLE XXVI: COMPARISON OF REGIONAL FINDINGS WITH MAIN FINDINGS**

<u>Q.</u>	<u>Main Finding</u>	<u>North</u>	<u>Gtr London</u>	<u>E Midlands</u>
1	Most colleges offer discrete PSE-related input	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Most discrete courses are accredited	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Input is mostly more than 1 session per week	Yes	Yes/split	Yes
5	Input mostly 1-2 hour sessions	Yes	Yes	Yes
6	<u>Unweighted</u> Quality assessed in all colleges: by teachers/lecturers delivering	Yes/split	Yes/split	Yes
	by regular review/evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes
	by student satisfaction feedback.	Yes/split	Yes/split	No
	<u>Weighted:</u> Quality assessed in all colleges: by teachers/lecturers delivering	Yes/split	Yes	Yes
	by regular review/evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes
	in line with accredit. req'ments	Yes/split	No	Yes
8	<u>Unweighted:</u> Deciding content: all colleges assessment of student needs	Yes	Yes	Yes
	student suggestions	Yes/split	Yes	Yes
	professional judgement	Yes/split	Yes	No
	<u>Weighted:</u> Deciding content: all colleges assessment of student needs	Yes	Yes	Yes
	student suggestions	Yes/split	Yes	Yes
	professional judgement	Yes/split	Yes	No

**TABLE XXVI: COMPARISON OF REGIONAL FINDINGS WITH MAIN FINDINGS CONT**

		North	Gtr London	E Midlands
10.	<u>Unweighted:</u> Successful completion: all colleges student self-appraisal	Yes/split	Yes	Yes
	professional judgement	Yes	Yes	Yes
	completion of assignments	Yes	No	Yes
	<u>Weighted:</u> Successful completion: all colleges student self-appraisal	Yes/split	Yes	Yes
	professional judgement	Yes	Yes	Yes
	completion of assignments	Yes	No	Yes

		North	Gtr London	E Midlands
12	<u>Unweighted</u> Curricular elements: all colleges independence preparation	Yes/split	Yes	Yes
	personal identity	Yes/split	Yes/split	Yes/split
	personal relationships	Yes/split	Yes/split	Yes
	<u>Weighted</u> Curricular elements: all colleges independence preparation	Yes/split	Yes	Yes
	communication	Yes	Yes	No
	personal relationships	Yes/split	Yes/split	Yes

14	<u>Unweighted:</u> Desired change: resources/ resourcing, funding	No	Yes	Yes
	content	Yes	Yes/split	Yes
	community involvement	No	Yes	Yes
	<u>Weighted:</u> Desired change: resources/ resourcing, funding	No	Yes	Yes
	content	Yes	Yes/split	Yes
	community involvement	No	Yes	Yes

Agreement between unweighted and weighted findings: There is a considerable level of agreement between the unweighted and weighted regional choices, once the order of ranking between first second and third choices is removed. The unweighted/weighted comparison is used for questions six, eight, ten, twelve and fourteen, and of these, questions

eight, ten and fourteen show the same outcomes whether responses are unweighted or weighted.

The weighting generally does not make a great deal of difference to the preferred choices, usually giving rise to a change in the order of one or two items only, and not usually affecting the top two or three choices. Questions where the unweighted and weighted responses differ are: six and twelve.

Table XXVII shows the number of occasions on which the three regions agree or disagree with the overall total of the findings, unweighted and weighted, for questions six, eight, ten, twelve and fourteen. There are fifteen such findings.

**TABLE XXVII: COMPARISON OF WEIGHTED AND UNWEIGHTED REGIONAL CORRESPONDENCE WITH MAIN FINDINGS**

All colleges	<u>North</u>		<u>Gtr London</u>		<u>East Midlands</u>	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Unweighted	13	2	14	1	13	2
Weighted	13	2	13	2	13	2

It should be noted that these scores do not take account of the fact that the actual items with which the regions disagree may not be the same, even between unweighted and weighted scores, and are generally not the same between region and region. The scores also do not take account of the fact that some agreement is only partial (shown as a 'Yes/split' in Table XXVI).

#### Discussion: The Outcomes of the Regional Survey

The purpose of the postal survey was to gain information about PSE-related transition to adulthood input, for young people with LDD in mainstream Further Education. The three areas surveyed are in geographically separate areas, with the intention of examining whether provision varies across the regions. The high participation rate indicates the involvement with, and commitment to, this curriculum area among teachers and lecturers working within it.

The three areas chosen do not share the same level of provision, because they are of different sizes and populations and these characteristics, together with the differences in

the rate of return, cause the size of the samples to become unbalanced. Responses from the North are at times half the number of those from the East Midlands, with Greater London falling between. In order to counteract this, results of the survey were recalculated with a weighting, intended to provide each region with equal power of influence when comparing regional outcomes with each other and with overall totals.

There is little difference between weighted and non-weighted choices among regions. Where there is variation it tends to be an effect of smaller numbers. When representation within the top three preferences are examined, it also becomes clear that for most questions variation occurs within the ordering of these choices, rather than their representation within them. When the order of the top three choices in the questions is removed, there is considerable accord between the choices of the total, non-ranking colleges and those which ranked their choices. Variation is therefore, in most cases, a matter of degree rather than absolute difference of choice.

The main findings of the survey are shown in Table XXVI. They indicate that:

1. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of mainstream Further Education colleges offer discrete, PSE-related transition to adulthood input;
2. Within these colleges a high proportion (79%) of the discrete courses are accredited;
3. In over half of all the colleges in the sample (55%) PSE-related transition to adulthood input is delivered mostly in sessions which take place more than once each week;
4. A high proportion (72%) of this input is delivered in sessions of one to two hours;
5. Quality in this curriculum area is assessed: by the teachers or lecturers delivering the input; by regular review and evaluation; by student satisfaction feedback and, for some colleges, by comparison with the requirements of accreditation;
6. Content in this curriculum area is decided: by the assessment of student needs; by professional judgement; and by student satisfaction feedback;
7. Successful completion of the course, module or element is gauged: by student self-appraisal; by professional judgement; and by the completion of assignments; and for some colleges, by the meeting of pre-decided criteria;
8. PSE-related transition to adulthood curriculum elements scoring most highly in terms of identified importance are: independence preparation; personal identity; personal relationships; and communication.
9. Practices in Greater London in transition to adulthood, do not differ greatly from practices throughout all three regions.

10. Practices in the North show a slightly greater variation from the overall practices, in the following ways:

- a) by offering the highest proportion of discrete courses for transition to adulthood;
- b) by offering the highest proportion of accredited, discrete courses;
- c) by using a greater range of accrediting bodies;
- d) by limiting the frequency of transition to adulthood input more than the other two regions;
- e) by disagreement with the other two regions in:
  - i. one of the characteristics of assessing quality;
  - ii. one of the characteristics of deciding content;
  - iii. one of the characteristics of successful completion;
  - iv. two of the characteristics of desired change.

It should be noted, however, that it is difficult to be certain about these differences, since the sample from the North is the smallest and may not be completely representative of the region. In addition, the difference from the overall totals may be strengthened by the differences in the area of change (question fourteen); yet these only represent a very small number of responses.

### Conclusion

The main findings, and the regional variations, are shown in tables and discussed in detail throughout Chapter Nine. As described, regional variations tend to occur within the relative degree of importance awarded to choices, rather than in absolute differences between choices. It is therefore likely that the outcomes of the research are representative of the provision of transition to adulthood courses, modules and elements in mainstream Further Education throughout England. The outcomes are discussed further in Chapter Thirteen.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THREE EXPERT WITNESSES

#### Introduction

The quantitative research uses postal surveys to ask direct questions to colleges about some of the issues concerning transition to adulthood work. To supplement this, the opinions of individuals who might reasonably be expected to have an especially educated knowledge of the area was sought; these three individuals can be described as Expert Witnesses. The purpose of this aspect of the enquiry was to ask the Expert Witnesses about evaluating and improving transition to adulthood courses, and gain a more specific, detailed view based on their own professional standpoint.

This in-depth discussion was carried out with three people who provided an 'opportunity sample' by being willing to talk to the researcher, and who covered a range of professional expertise having an impact on transition to adulthood studies. These are: a respected writer and teacher trainer in the field of Further Education for young people with LDD; a senior inspector in Further Education, concerned with young people with LDD, and a special needs coordinator in a community college whose OFSTED Inspection had resulted in the grade of 'exemplary'. There was a deliberate intention of seeking a range of viewpoints, so that the maximum insight could be gained about the field, from the interviews.

The interviews are reported and processed according to a protocol described in the research literature, and discussed below. The interviews are summarised and analysed, general and unique themes are identified, and outcomes are described. However it should be noted that one of the Expert Witnesses did not wish their actual words to be used. For this reason the transcribed and edited interview with Expert Witness Two is not shown in an Appendix nor are there any direct quotations from Expert Witness Two in the text. Despite these restrictions, the research project as a whole is shown to be considerably enriched through the perspective provided by the interviews.

## Method of the Qualitative Research

Finch (1986, p.164) describes the ability of qualitative research to reflect the subjective reality of the participants. The interviews were carried out with the intention of investigating this subjective reality, in order to gain further understanding and supplement the data gathered through the quantitative research. The initial contact to request a meeting was by letter, outlining the area of research and asking for a meeting of at most one hour. Two preliminary questions were asked:

1. What needs to be borne in mind in the development of these courses?
2. What do you see as the basis for quality in such courses, and/or, how can the quality of such courses be improved?

While the initial stimulus questions were consistent, discussion was arranged to allow for the development of individual directions according to the interests and views of the interviewees. This was felt to be acceptable, since the interest for the researcher was in the interviewees' own opinions. There seemed little point in seeking the personal viewpoints of these important professionals, imposing on their highly valuable time and effort, and then over-restricting their responses.

The discussions took the form of focused interviews, as described in Cohen and Manion (1989), citing Merton and Kendall. In focused interviews the interviewee is known to have been involved in a certain situation, and prior analysis of the situation by the researcher is a key characteristic. Elements in the situation are analysed to provide an interview guide, in this case provided by the stimulus questions and the knowledge of key issues in the field understood by both interviewer and interviewees, such as inclusion, curriculum and assessment difficulties. The interviewer evaluates the interview continuously while it is in progress, in order to gain the relevant insight and information; however the interviewer's direction of the discussion must be minimal. The intention is to gain information which is specific, which covers a range, and which has depth and personal context; a truly authentic response (Cohen and Manion 1989, p.326-327).

When the initial interviews took place they were taped on a Dictaphone, with the interviewees' permission. They were then processed and analysed in accordance with a

slightly modified version of Hycner's method of phenomenological analysis of interview data (Hycner 1985, Cohen and Manion 1989). Cohen and Manion describe this approach as follows:

The phenomenologist advocates the study of direct experience taken at face value and sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality (Cohen and Manion 1989, p.327)

The study of experience at face value is a good description of the insights and information provided by the Expert Witnesses, complementing well the objective information gained in the surveys. Following Hycner's (1985) method, each interview was processed as follows:

1. The interview, recorded on audio tape, was transcribed verbatim;
2. The transcript was lightly edited to remove some verbal hesitations such as "er" and "and", since these hesitations could extend shorter phrases and sentences so that they lasted for whole paragraphs;
3. The interviewee's words and phrases were condensed and listed into units of meaning, determining clusters of meaning and eliminating redundancies. This was done by listing verbatim words, phrases and sentences down a page, and then deleting those where the interviewee repeated him or herself. Working on the text in this way allows the researcher to become more familiar with the meaning of what has been said, and to identify clusters of meaning, for example where the interviewee has wandered away from what he or she was first saying and then returned to the matter, perhaps with a slightly different form of wording.
4. These were further transcribed as a text which presented clusters of meaning in terms of paragraphs using the interviewee's words, shown in Appendices XI and XII. The familiarity gained through listing and reducing the clusters of meaning allows for the identification of common themes, which are then reported together. This avoids possible circumlocution or the leaving and returning to the subject which may occur in general discussion, allowing the main themes to be identified more strongly and succinctly, and the relevant views to be grouped together so that the interviewee's points can be more clearly understood.

5. A summary of each interview was written, drawing on the understanding gained from the above processes;
6. A summary applying the interviewee's thoughts and ideas to the research questions was written;
7. The texts proposed for use in this chapter and in the Appendices were returned to the interviewees for further comment and for permission for their use;
8. The interview reports were modified according to the information returned by the interviewees; in the event this was for one case only;
9. General and unique themes for all the interviews were described and contextualised;
10. A composite summary was prepared.

The variations from Hycner's (1985) procedure were that independent judges were not trained to verify the units of relevant meaning. This was not felt to be necessary since lightly edited transcriptions of two of the interviews are provided in the Appendices, so that readers can check for themselves the accuracy of the analysis. Also, a second interview was not conducted to verify the information drawn from the first interview. It was considered that accuracy of reporting and returning the transcript to the Expert Witness with an opportunity to comment would obviate the necessity for a second, checking interview. Comments were received from one Expert Witness, and the transcriptions and summaries of all three were subsequently revised to make them more impersonal, and the contributors less identifiable.

A third variation from Hycner's (1985) methodology was that the researcher did not write down her presuppositions nor discuss them with anyone before conducting the interviews. The researcher approached the interviews out of interest in what the interviewees might say, rather than with conscious presuppositions. The fact that the interviews themselves revealed to the researcher that she had held underlying expectations that the interviewees would be thinking along the same lines as herself, was of itself one of the insights resulting from the interviews.

It is clear that each individual witness has his or her own personal style and concerns. There is no immediately obvious relationship between the three interviews even though they are based on the same subject, with the same starting point of the two questions

devised for the qualitative enquiry, as to how PSE-related transition to adulthood input may be judged, and improved. It is not easy to discern themes in common. However, it can be seen that Expert Witness One's concerns are philosophical, Expert Witness Two is concerned with an overview of provision, including strategic considerations, and Expert Witness Three is concerned with the operation of the courses providing social maturity learning and teaching. Further, the philosophical element can be viewed as input, the strategic element as process, and the operation element as outcome, since outcomes for students, staff and the college are discussed.

In the three sections following, a summarised transcription is given for each Expert Witness. The reported views of each are applied to the research questions.

#### Summary of an Interview with Expert Witness One: Philosophy and Input

The interviewee was a respected author, and course leader of disability and community studies in Higher Education. A fuller version of this interview, using the interviewee's own words presented in terms of clusters of meaning, is shown in Appendix X. The interview began with a re-statement of the two questions identified for the qualitative research:

1. What needs to be borne in mind in the development of transition to adulthood courses?
2. What do you see as the basis for quality in such courses, and/or, how can the quality of such courses be improved?

A principal theme in this interview was the concern for the limiting effect of old education ideas, and the struggle to develop newer, more empowering attitudes to meeting the Further Educational needs of young people with LDD.

The lingering into Further Education of attitudes and ideas originating, at an earlier date, in special schools causes some concern to the interviewee. These ideas may be carried over by teachers who have worked in special schools, and may create tensions within Further Education:

In FE there's a danger that it's not very clear as to what its vision is, what its philosophy is; unless the teachers are clear about their vision, they are not going to be doing anything other than a replication of some of the things which have gone on in some of the activities in special school education (Appendix X).

Meanwhile the special schools themselves have changed, following the requirements of the National Curriculum. Older educational attitudes may linger within Further Education while in the schools attitudes to learners have moved on, stimulated by the expectation that all learners should have access to the National Curriculum.

The interviewee feels that quality of provision for students with severe learning difficulties may be varied, even poor, because teachers are not clear about what they are trying to achieve; however, the Further Education Funding Council is trying to raise quality. Old ideas which may still linger, to the detriment of Further Education, include a concept of the special needs teacher as a remediator, whose purpose is to put things right and then withdraw. A view of LDD as a tragedy is an outdated attitude, as is a view of students with LDD as passive and accepting.

Input for students with LDD should not be viewed as separate from the general work of Further Education; this outlook is not helpful to Further Education or to the student. Further Education should take a different view to school, since schooling may perpetrate a form of oppression. Further Education is interested in negotiating the curriculum with the students, however students themselves need to have had previous experience of doing this, for it to be most effective. Negotiation can offer opportunities for interaction which extend the experience of both the teacher and the student; however it does not always take place. The concept of inclusion means that teachers must rethink their approach to delivery of input:

We still categorise, rather than thinking in terms of the individual, so whilst on the one hand we have inclusion, at the same time we're also caught up in thinking of a group of individuals that require a special sort of curriculum (Appendix XI).

The climate of inclusion notwithstanding, the interviewee considers that there will always be a group of young people who need more specialised, discrete courses, and this necessitates a discrete curriculum, which is more than a remedial curriculum. Students with severe learning difficulties would perhaps constitute such a group, although describing such students as a group is in itself a throwback to earlier attitudes of categorisation. In spite of best efforts to think of students as individuals, this still does not happen. Further Education has an additional requirement of presenting itself as desirable to young males who, with returning employment opportunities, may prefer to seek open employment.

The interviewee believes that PSE has a role in meeting the more specialised needs of such student groups, although there is debate about its function. Social disadvantage is seen to be expanding, and may be considered as an aspect of the gap between the very able and the less able; PSE has a place in alleviating this. However, PSE may also represent an element carried over from the school model. Ideally it should not be needed, but Further Education may have to provide input which might otherwise be expected to have been taught in school or in the home, and which may have been reduced in schooling because of the demands placed on school time by the National Curriculum. There has also been another view of PSE-related courses in Further Education, suggesting that they have existed to fill the gap created by low employment.

Regarding the target courses, when students seek Further Education they may be offered discrete, specialised courses because that is all that is available for them, but they may be resistant to such an offer. The interviewee believes that a more empowering, less restricting provision is required in Further Education. The increasing willingness of students to voice their own views and preferences is an important development towards this empowerment:

One of the biggest changes I've witnessed over the course of the last ten years is the emergence of the voice of the student, and the participation of the student in the design of the curriculum, and also even in such activities as staff development (Appendix XI).

The student voice provides new insight and is informative; this may however represent a challenge to staff. For the students themselves, self-confidence is developed through being valued for the views which they hold.

The interviewee feels that PSE-related courses are still needed, but that their application to particular groups should be carefully considered. PSE may not need to exist separately; it is cross curricular rather than subject based, which makes it difficult to teach. As part of a broader offer, all teachers could participate in its delivery. In evaluating such work, there needs to be a concept of value added, of distance travelled, and of progression towards a qualification. There needs to be an understanding of what has gone before; the idea of a 'fresh start', whereby a student effectively enters college as an unknown quantity, is therefore felt to be unhelpful, representing a denial of previous experience.

Regarding assessment and evaluation of PSE-related input: the interviewee is aware that there are difficulties of assessment and evaluation of the quality of PSE-related input, in a context where effectiveness is increasingly judged in terms of outcomes. The Further Education Funding Council Inspectorate would need to be sensitive to this, understanding that not everything can be assessed in terms of quantifiable data. There is a need for a means of considering progress, which may include record keeping, prior to and during the course. As a curriculum area which does not assess outcomes by way of examination, PSE is felt to be at a disadvantage in an educational system dominated by examination; it may be seen as having low status. There is a need for an evaluative method or vehicle, whereby students can also contribute input about what they have learned, and a need to consider the affective aspect, which is concerned with how people respond.

The benefit of a course is not easily identifiable; the value to oneself may not be identified until much later:

It's reflectiveness that comes from it, it's about coming to terms with oneself, and that's jolly difficult for kids of that age - they never admit that it might take some time, maybe even half a generation, before they really look back on their experience (Appendix XI).

The teacher has the responsibility to offer lifestyle alternatives, backed by good arguments, to the student. The teacher may see consequences which the student cannot, but also the teacher's view is affected by his or her own experience. Freedom of choice is important, and the student may choose a different lifestyle which is right for them, even though the teacher considers it unhelpful to the student.

Quality outcomes are difficult to measure in PSE-related input. The work should enable students to see resources within and outside of themselves, to gain better understanding and control, and to understand themselves; these are aspects of quality. Self confidence and well-being are two of the indicators of quality in this area:

Quality is increasingly judged on outcome measures, and those outcome measures are going to be judged in terms of employment, in terms of progression, in terms of a qualification. If there's some way in which we could get at the affective aspect of how people are responding, how they are better made able to see the huge resources within themselves and outside themselves, to better understand and control, and to come back and understand themselves, then we're beginning to get at some aspects of quality (Appendix XI).

## Applying the outcomes of the interview to the research questions: Expert Witness One

How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be judged: this is problematic; assessment is generally linked to outcomes: of employment; of progressions, of qualification. In assessing PSE-related input it is necessary to consider the affective aspect, concerned with how people respond. The Further Education Funding Council Inspectorate needs to be sensitive to the difficulties of producing quantifiable data in some areas; the concepts of value added, distance travelled, and progression towards qualification, need to be included within assessment and evaluation.

PSE is not examination-based; in an examination-based system it therefore has low status, and may need an examination for that reason. Record keeping prior to and during the course, in a suitable format, is important. An evaluative vehicle is needed, to which students can contribute, although it is noted that the benefit of the course to students may not become apparent to them until much later.

Quality in PSE-related transition to adulthood courses is related in part to the development of self-confidence and well-being in the student; how these are to be judged is a key question. The teacher has a responsibility to offer lifestyle choices to the student, but the student also has a right to freedom of choice, and may ultimately make choices which are right for them, but which may differ from the teacher's recommendation.

How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be improved: there is a need for a clear vision or philosophy about the purpose of Further Education for young people with LDD, particularly where these are severe. This vision or philosophy must not merely be a replication of earlier, school-based ideas, and it must offer more than a remedial function. Part of the function of transition to adulthood courses must be to narrow the gap of social disadvantage, particularly where that is bound up with a young person having severe LDD. The improvement of these courses may therefore be linked with developments and changing attitudes within Further Education itself. Examples of such changes would be inclusion, and the move away from categorisation.

There is a question as to whether PSE-related input needs to be taught separately, or whether it would function better as cross-curricular input, with all teachers involved in its

delivery. However, PSE-related input may still have a function in a climate of inclusion. There will always be a need for some discrete courses, but these need to be more carefully considered in their application to particular groups.

Negotiation with the student, and taking account of the student voice, is of general benefit to Further Education, and develops students' self-confidence. There is an implication that courses would benefit from these factors. The importance of record-keeping, both prior to and during the course, and including student input, is noted. This has implications both for assessing and improving the quality of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses.

The conclusion is that quality is based on teachers having a clear vision or philosophy about their Further Education offer, including PSE-related input. Effective input is not based on outdated ideas derived from schooling, but must include a consideration of the student as an individual, moving away from categorisation and towards inclusion.

While there will remain a need for some discrete courses, these must be carefully considered. PSE-related input may be better delivered as cross-curricular input, but it also has a part to play in diminishing social disadvantage, and this may be of particular relevance to students with severe learning difficulties.

Quality in PSE-related transition to adulthood work is partly concerned with the students' self-confidence and well being, and these are difficult to assess or evaluate. Assessment procedures need to have some way of acknowledging learning which is not easily measured in quantifiable terms. A suitable vehicle for the assessment of PSE-related input is needed, one to which students can contribute.

The importance of the voice or place of the student in contributing to development and assessment, within PSE-related transition to adulthood input for young people with LDD, is considerable. This may represent the difference of approach between Further Education and schooling which this expert witness wishes to see, and may offer criteria towards the recognition of a good quality course in this area.

## Summary of an interview with Expert Witness Two: Strategy and Process

The interviewee was a senior inspector for the Further Education Funding Council. The principal theme throughout this interview was the concern with standards.

The interviewee offered indications as to how standards in the target courses might be improved. A number of reasons were identified as to why standards in transition to adulthood courses in Further Education might be low. The first is that there is no curriculum, as such, for this area of work. There are different approaches to the design of such a curriculum; some take a remediating approach which may focus on student's inability to do something and thus restrict them to doing what they have already shown that they cannot do. Another approach is to carry on following the National Curriculum, a third approach is to follow the lead provided by the accreditation system selected by the college; that is, working towards the accreditation targets. This approach is linked to the funding arrangements, so is partially driven by these requirements.

It is suggested that a preferable approach would be to focus on desirable outcomes for the student in two, three or five years, and work towards those. It is felt that it should be possible to identify such outcomes, as there is now previous experience in this work. The initial assessment, at the start of a student's Further Education, should lead to an understanding of the student's learning needs, which leads in turn to the curriculum delivered. The curriculum process itself should include checking, and monitoring of learning, and adjusting of the input accordingly, and accreditation should be linked to this.

It is possible to identify what are the basic skills needed in transition to adulthood courses; one would be self-advocacy, another would be basic skills input. However, we should think further ahead, about what might be needed in the future. There may be an emphasis on speaking and listening and personal effectiveness, rather than on reading and writing, and there will be a greater emphasis on information technology.

People need help to live as independently as possible and contribute to community groups and networks. However, too often learning gets translated into tasks which downgrade the learning from first hand to second or third hand experience, such as when

input about learning to swim becomes an exercise in cutting out and sticking in a book, pictures of bathing wear.

If it were possible to map the knowledge, understanding and skills students needed, and apply those in a range of different contexts according to the student, a second difficulty would then arise. This is that educators need to become more skilful and adept in understanding and applying the learning process.

The interviewee believes that the emphasis has moved from learning to teaching, and there has been a loss of direction or of confidence. The focus needs to return to how students are going to learn, not just what they should learn, particularly for students with LDD, who have more difficulty in learning. This is why inclusive learning has gained momentum. Inclusive learning means more than differentiation, it includes the need to rethink the learning environment and in turn, rethink the priorities, the management, and the structure of Further Education.

The funding structure requires progression to be shown, and this usefully puts the responsibility back upon the teacher, to produce evidence that the student is making progress. The interviewee considers that there is a prevalent idea that to have done something is to have learnt it, but this is not the case; it needs to be demonstrated that the students could apply that new understanding or practical skill in a new situation, or to extend the situation they are already in, as a result of their activity. Showing progression is difficult, and teachers may be deflected into considering progression to be described by a record of the units which the student has covered within the accreditation scheme.

Funding is supposed to follow the learner, and to show progression. Funding is in three parts; part for the assessment of the students, so that they follow the right track, part for the course, and part for the outcome. When courses for students with LDD do not lead to a qualification, this last part is not given. There is additional funding so that the ability of a student to learn is not impeded, or a barrier raised because of a students' lack of ability to learn.

The interviewee pointed out that an average of five percent of funding in Further Education is in additional funded units to support learning. This has been used to help

students fit into ordinary classes; the students would arrive with 'extras', which might mean a helper, or special equipment. What is needed now is a change of approach, with the teacher redefining the learning to take account of the whole range of learners. Funding may have created barriers, but it has also improved standards. There have since been further changes, and the Council now has powers to fund non-Schedule Two work.

Transition to adulthood means the change from a child to an adult, it also means the change from learning basic skills to making a decision about work, one's role on society, and in the community. The interviewee feels that the focus should be on what the student needs to learn to get on in society. Too often there is a mismatch between what comes out from the assessment of students' needs on entry to the college, and the courses that are available. Students need a varied individual programme, with opportunities to learn by being, imitating, simulating, and experiencing real life situations.

There is too much paper and pen work, which is the medium which is most alienating; they have already experienced it from three to nineteen, and told us that they are not very good at it. There may be a repetition of what was done in school, rather than thinking about how we actually do things in real life, and teaching that, such as reckoning up prices and money when shopping. There is too much copying and repetition; students can be much better in practical tasks.

The interviewee considers that there is an intellectual debate about the status of knowledge and relative value of methodology, which operates against recognition of the worth of courses for young people with LDD. Students with LDD need to do things in order to learn them, and the existing intellectual hierarchy operates against recognition of this.

However, the interviewee understands teachers of students with LDD to be deeply committed individuals. Nevertheless they need more guidance about what to teach, how to teach it, and how to evaluate that learning has taken place and that students are progressing. A highly complex set of issues comes into play; it has come to be realised that inclusion does not just mean placing the student in the classroom, but means adjusting the learning to meet the students' needs, including opportunities for real experience. Residential colleges have an advantage in being able to capture the real life setting.

The interviewee is convinced that self-advocacy is a major element in PSE-related transition to adulthood courses, because the work should be about the teacher giving up power, and empowering the student; some teachers value the dependency relationship with students, and this is not helpful. The students' learning needs should be linked to the process of devising an appropriate curriculum. The learning or curriculum process includes assessment, the setting of individual goals, understanding a student's individual learning style, and recording, evaluating and reconsidering the input. This process may differ from the actual course on offer; it may take time to connect the learning process to the course.

Quality arrangements may only be concerned with the course, rather than the learning or curriculum process; this requires more thought, and may contribute to a low quality of work, since the focus is on the course rather than the quality of the learning experience. The interviewee points out that students will not learn if they are confronted with methods of learning which are not sensible. Knowing the PSE repertoire is not enough; the difficult part is to match methods to the student's individual learning needs. Too often people think that when a student has completed a worksheet they have learned something; this is not so - all they have done is to complete the worksheet.

The interviewee challenges much established practice by pointing out that often, in the courses and input under discussion, the approach is to start at the beginning and try to work incrementally. It may be more helpful to turn this around and start from the other end; to identify where students need to be at a certain stage and then work backwards to ask why they are not there, and what is needed to make that learning happen.

Much of 'adulthood' is in our heads and our feelings; it is about status as well as practical skills; it is about environment, and that relates to status, for instance in how people respond to and develop expectations in accordance with, what others wear. As young people grow up their expectations, behaviour and language change; they do not need so much direct guidance. The interviewee considers that young people with LDD may not have the experience of usual teenage interactions, and asks, how do they learn to be adult? Some times it is also nicer and more comfortable to remain within the child role; we all enjoy

that sometimes and the important part about being an adult is knowing when it's OK to be the child and when it's not, when it's time to be the adult.

This way of knowing when and how to respond needs to be taught, and sometimes students who need this input, who may have been constrained quite a lot while growing up, may go too far, testing the boundaries. What is needed is a curriculum that takes this on board, including relationships, sexuality, and understanding one's own difficulties. It is important to focus on the individual's needs as a young adult:

The interviewee draws attention to the Kennedy Report, 'Learning Works' (Kennedy 1997), which points out that learning for work and learning for life are inseparable. Transition to adulthood work concentrates on learning for life; many students won't have work, but they are still learning for life.

Current thinking in Further Education is focused on making colleges think about learning rather than about funding, management, buildings, or timetables and vacations. It is about drawing resources onto individual learners and seeing whether that helps people to engage and move on. The interviewee declares that it needs more than just operational changes, it needs rethinking, and the best this present study can do is to help people to rethink and make those changes. There need to be little operational examples of how change can be brought about.

The transition to adulthood curriculum does not need to be long lists of what should be taught, but rather it should identify that there are some things the student needs to acquire, and these may translate into individual aspects, with a focus on two or three things the students needs to know or be able to do. The young person becomes an adult when he is treated like an adult and required to behave like an adult; if not, he remains a child.

#### Applying the outcomes of the interview to the research questions: Expert Witness Two

How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be judged: national accreditation gives value to learning but has led to the curriculum being driven by awarding bodies. There is a need for more guidance regarding evaluation and the evaluation process. A highly complex set of issues is involved. There is a need to map what

students need to learn, based on what they need to be able to do in three or five years' time; there is enough knowledge and understanding available for people to be able to do this. This should form the basis of the (post sixteen transition to adulthood) curriculum. The learning programme should be designed around what the students need to understand in order to be where they want to be in three or five years time; if accreditation matches it that is worthwhile, but there is no value in distorting what students need to learn in order to match the accreditation programme. The progress made by students may be difficult to judge in terms of accreditation requirements, however accreditation should match the learning programme devised for students, not vice versa.

The curriculum process involves setting individual learning goals, assessing and recognising progress against these, moving on, setting new goals, and repeating the process. Progress can be judged by the application of learning in a wider range of settings; outcomes for judging learning include the application of new knowledge, skills, or understanding in new contexts, or by extending an already familiar situation. It is necessary to monitor that objectives (individual learning goals) are met. It should be remembered that a list of things done is not the same as a curriculum, and a description of units covered is not a description of the learning. The curriculum process should begin as the student starts college, with the initial, careful assessment; however, there may be a mismatch between the course goals and the initial assessment, and students may lose heart.

#### How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be improved:

Learning has to match the requirements of the students' needs and must be based on real experience. The curriculum needs to relate closely to reality and not be repetitive of school work; there should not be an over reliance on worksheets and pencil and paper tasks.

There should be opportunities to allow for and include self-advocacy; the course must empower the students and this necessitates teachers giving up power. It must be recognised that the learning or curriculum experience is not the same as the course, it must be more than the course; time, opportunity, and knowledge and understanding are needed to

connect the learning process to the course. Focusing on the course rather than the learning process (the curriculum) may lead to poor quality.

Most people start at the beginning and try to work incrementally; it would be better to start with the desired outcome and work backwards, delivering what is necessary to bring about the desired outcome. There is a need to get back to understanding the learning process, especially for slower learners; there is a need to create a learning environment that matches what the students want to do, rather than matching students to courses. Teachers need to redefine learning to take account of the learners, they need to identify the things people need to learn to get on in society, and in thinking about outcomes, it is necessary to consider whether by working backwards from the goal, standing the process on its head, it might get a better result.

It should be possible to gauge what is needed for successful transition to adulthood, the things that one needs to learn in order to get on in society, and map out a the knowledge, skills and understanding needed across a range of contexts. In addition to Basic Skills, it is likely that there will be more emphasis on speaking and listening, than on writing, and a bigger reliance on information and communication technology. In order for students to gain necessary independence and make a social contribution, the curriculum emphasis may need to change. Teachers are deeply committed, but they need more guidance about what to teach, how to teach it, and how to evaluate it. They need to become more adept at understanding how students learn. Quality assurance in colleges may refer to the course, rather than the curriculum process; there is more to be done in this area. Reliance on existing courses may reduce quality. In order to create a learning environment for the community of learners, it may be necessary to redesign the management of establishments, and the thinking of managers about the priority of needs.

#### Summary of an interview with Expert Witness Three: Operation and Outcomes

The interviewee was a lecturer and department leader for students with LDD, in a community college. The college gained an assessment of 'exemplary' in its OFSTED inspection. A fuller version of this interview, using the interviewee's own words presented in terms of

clusters of meaning, is shown in Appendix XI. The discussion included many stories, individual experiences and insights gained from working with the students. A main theme of this interview was the need for staff training, flexibility and responsiveness, together with a broad and imaginative understanding, supported by management, of the need to provide an array of educational opportunities for young people with LDD in Further Education.

The interviewee was directly involved on a daily basis with carrying out the Further Educational input designed to bring about the maturity and adulthood of a range of students with LDD. Much of what takes place seemed to be the result of, and dependent on, her personal vision of how the provision should be made, and was reliant upon her personal direction for its effectiveness. The interviewee had been a member of staff at the college over a number of years and during that time her role and influence had increased. The college found it in their interest to award to this staff member a considerable amount of trust in the matter of courses for students with LDD. The college was rewarded by support from OFSTED, the Local Authority, and other professional agencies such as the local Directorate of Social Services.

It seems likely that the personal control exercised by the interviewee had much to do with the successful operation of LDD matters. Each incoming student was taught for a period of time by the lecturer, so that she had first-hand knowledge of him or her. The college was able to support flexibility in staff distribution and development, course structure and development, and curriculum. Flexibility is a theme returned to again and again, in different contexts, by this lecturer: An important insight occurred when she realised that there was a need to adapt input to the students, rather than fit students to the input. At the same time she acknowledged her privileged position in being able to do this, which was a consequence of the support received from those managing and funding the provision.

Where I'm really, really, really lucky is, because we were very well thought of by the Local Education Authority, they've backed this - they're very proud of the work that goes on with people with learning difficulties here. They have continued to fund, which means I am not having to jump through FEFC funding hoops. I can run a course when the need arises. (Appendix XI).

A key theme in the interview is responsiveness to the students' learning needs, demonstrated in the adaptation of approach to their individual learning styles, and an

understanding of their right to individuality even when their behaviour may seem a little strange to those not used to it. Tolerance and acceptance of individual characteristics, rather than an insistence that the students come as close as possible to an imagined social norm, enables a clearer understanding of students' learning needs and styles. It is explained to students what is expected in certain situations when in public.

The students encompass a complete range of client needs; some have moderate or severe learning difficulties, some have mental health problems, some have autism, some have disabilities. The work provided at this college is tailored to meeting individual learning needs and styles, and is considered able to cater for them all. The value of the arts in providing a vehicle for a developmental approach, moving toward the functioning of the young person in a wider society, is described. The potential for applying this approach to support and develop the Further Education of disaffected young people is discussed, but it is acknowledged, once again, that this depends on the insight, understanding, and changes to the work methods on the part of the lecturer.

That some lecturers are unable to see potential beyond the regular curriculum content of their subject is a matter of some sadness and frustration. However, in the opinion of the interviewee, where this insight has developed it represents a key feature in the effective education of young people with LDD. This insight is best developed through exposing lecturers to the direct experience of working differently. The college encourages the crossover of mainstream and 'special' staff, and this is felt to be a major asset in developing more insightful ways of working;

We do a lot of staff development. I still teach on a couple of courses because I think it's important in managing staff that you can't be unaware of what they're doing, and what it's like to be a tutor. I invite mainstream members of staff to come and join my classes, to come and see, and have a feel, and they then think, well, alright I might have a go, you know, it might be alright, it might be alright. They come and they're interested, so that works as staff development (Appendix XI).

Staff development, promoting the quality of the staff and their approach to the students, is an important part of improving the quality of the input. This is partly related to flexibility, and partly to intentional broadening of staff experience, as the students' experience is also broadened. Personal qualities and insight also play an important part. Developing

the necessary insight and experience may be a slow process, but the ethos of the college recognises this and allows it to take place. Staff have to find their own way of applying the lessons learned, and once again, flexibility is the key:

It's the practical doing of it, the sharing, the working, being allowed to be creative; it's that creativity that allows your personality to grow, and allows everything to happen (Appendix XI).

The outcome is improvements not only in the skills of teachers and students, but in the confidence that allows individuals to continue to progress.

Some discrete courses are felt to be necessary, to allow students to be themselves, to explore issues that concern them in ways which may not be possible within the general range of Further Education courses, and to fill some of the gaps which may have occurred during their schooling. Some of these experiences may be of a developmental or interactive kind. Discrete courses also offer the opportunity to focus on particular aspects of social learning, such as lying, sharing a living space, or sexuality.

Some learning packs, providing packaged courses, may be used. While it is felt that learning can be accomplished simply by following through the pack, as a resource this is felt to be more effective when used and applied at the discretion of the lecturer, in response to developing student needs. The importance of fitting the scheme to the pace of the students, rather than timetabling the input to the requirements of the scheme, is discussed.

It is important to take into account the experience of parents and carers in understanding the learning needs and progress of the students. The point is made that the lives of the young people in question can be very complicated. Discrete, PSE-related transition to adulthood courses have an important function in allowing the issues arising from daily lives to be discussed, and resolved; however, it is important not to think of them simplistically, or in isolation. Sensitivity and flexibility of the staff is important in this, so that they are able to identify a learning need from what is not said as much as from what is said and done, and able to address the identified learning need appropriately:

Because it's the thing that's sometimes not said, or things said out of context, that are very often the issues that need to be dealt with (Appendix XI).

The characteristics of a good course are strongly linked to the quality of the staff, and staff development. The characteristics of being a good tutor are in turn linked to the willingness to consider new perceptions and new ways of doing things. There is also a need for staff to be able to know the students and respond to them as individuals; personal and social developmental learning cannot be separated from the rest of students' lives, and tutors are therefore unavoidably involved to a certain extent. Successful integration of students into other courses within the college is aided by tutors' individual knowledge of students. When tutors are interviewed, the possibility of working with students with LDD, is raised in the interview. The question of involvement and expectations is not only restricted to academic staff, there is recognition that all the staff within the college establishment have a part to play.

Flexibility and responsiveness are important not only among the staff, but in the delivery of input. The importance of adopting a pace that benefits the students is highlighted. While it is possible to achieve outcomes by following a scheme or course plan, more can be achieved by adapting the course to meet the needs of students as they are identified. The value of experience shared between staff, and experience shared between students, is stressed. The placing of students in new, practical situations such as a residential course, can bring about extensive developments for staff and students alike.

The value of the arts, and particularly drama, as a vehicle for personal and social-related development, is stressed. For this to be realised, however, may involve a change in perceptions of the staff involved, as to what is the function of their subject in students' lives. The focus is on the arts as a means of developing maturity, as well as developing the skills of the subject. The potential of drama lies in its interaction with others, both in the production of finished work and workshops, and in the necessary relationship with the audience:

Drama is personal and social development, without having to teach it (Appendix XI).

It is important in many ways that tutors are not afraid. They must not be afraid to listen to the students and allow this to inform their curriculum delivery. It is also mentioned that some students with LDD may be rather alarming, or off-putting, and tutors need to be able to cope with this. In addition there may be elements of the input - masturbation is

mentioned - which some tutors could find worrying. However, the description of students' ignorance about sexuality and gender show the necessity of being able to deal with aspects like these; to avoid such issues would be to fail to deliver the learning that students need.

Courage is required for tutors to evaluate their own work, jettisoning elements which are not 'working', without losing confidence through a sense of failure. Tutors must also not be afraid to let others see their work with the students. Overall, it is important to encourage self confidence in the staff as well as in the students, and the key to the success which has brought the College its success, in the opinion of the interviewee, to reside in staff development and the quality of the staff.

But it is that, that being able to be critical and change what you do. ...If you're doing a true personal and social development course, and you're truly responding to those students and looking at their development, it has to be what they need at that particular moment. But it is staff development (Appendix XI).

plus,

And it's finding bloody good tutors, that's what it is. (Appendix XI).

#### Applying the outcomes of the interview to the research questions: Expert Witness Three:

##### How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be judged:

assessing the effectiveness of the input, and the student's progression, depends on close personal knowledge of the student by the tutors. Individual students are 'vetted' personally by the tutor in charge of courses and support for students with LDD, to see whether they would be appropriately placed in other courses, and what kind of support would be needed. Students' readiness for progression is also aided by the practice of having mainstream tutors teaching some of the 'special' courses. In this way the tutor comes to know the students personally and assesses his or her readiness to move into the mainstream courses taught by that tutor, from personal knowledge. This helps the tutor in delivering the course, as well as helping the individual student moving into the course.

The main method of assessment and evaluation would therefore seem to be professional judgement. The interdepartmental meeting provides a forum for discussion of college and pupil matters in which mainstream and 'special' staff are present together, and

this supports communication about students' learning needs, promoting the college ethos of inclusion.

Professional judgement may therefore be characterised as fairly intense, personal, individual, and involving the perceptions of a range of staff. Students are also represented at the interdepartmental meeting. The concern with listening to the students suggests that their views would also be taken into consideration, and the point is made that the experience of carers and parents should also be acknowledged. The college uses some courses which are modules from external accreditors, and the accreditation assessment scheme would be used in these instances.

How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be improved:

the point is consistently made that quality in these and other courses for young people with LDD depends on the quality of the staff. In turn, the quality of the staff depends on flexibility, responsiveness, and a willingness to consider new ways of learning. A certain level of courage is also needed, particularly the courage to scrutinise one's own work for relevance, and to have it scrutinised by others. Staff benefit from this process; the personal and social development affects staff as well as students.

A further contributing factor to improving the quality of the staff is the colleges' apparent flexibility in deploying staff members. Input works best when the 'special' courses are taught by mainstream tutors, who learn and grow as a result of the experience, and consequently become better teachers. The college is willing to allow tutors and other members of staff to change their role in accordance with their strengths and what they can offer to the college. This may represent a considerably enlightened employment policy, and one which adds to the flexibility and responsiveness towards students' learning needs.

In the delivery of curriculum input, the tutor is required to take note of the learning pace of the students, and to adapt the input to current learning needs. Another characteristic of the good tutor is the ability to seize the opportunity of tackling relevant issues when they arise. This requires considerable self-confidence, as well as the confidence of being supported by the college managers. The college is fortunate in having the support of its

managers and funding bodies in its flexibility; courses are not restricted by having to link course content and structure to the funding requirements of the Further Education Funding Council.

In managing the learning needs of young adults with LDD, the interviewee has identified for the college a number of strategies which have aided the development of personal and social maturity among its students, in addition to direct teaching input and inclusion in existing mainstream courses. These strategies include the use of drama in a range of forms, and other arts input such as pottery and sculpture. Residential courses away from the college and especially abroad have been found to be valuable, as have arts-based, working projects shared with other student groups. While funding of the out-of-college experience remains an issue, the outcomes are felt to outweigh the organisational difficulties.

A further strategy developed by the college is to provide short courses in support of particular elements of mainstream courses which have hampered students with LDD. In this way the students are able to sustain inclusion in mainstream courses which would perhaps otherwise prove too difficult. Flexibility, responsiveness, imagination and management flair seem to be the key concepts in the college's exemplary provision.

### The Main Themes

Hycner's (1985) methodology calls for the identification and placing into context of general and unique themes. The themes within each interview have been collapsed into six main categories, differing with each interview. PSE is shown as PSD(E) because of its use in the form 'Personal and Social Development' by one individual witness. The main themes are:

#### Expert Witness One:

- The question is whether PSE-related courses are still needed, in an inclusion climate; consideration of the value of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses;
- The unhelpful perpetuation of earlier, school-based ideas; the tension between older and newer approaches in FE; the need for earlier personal and social experience, e.g. independence, and the place of PSE courses in this setting; the sometimes unwanted guidance of students towards discrete LDD courses;
- The emergent 'voice' of LDD students

- The question of how to determine quality of the work; the assessment and evaluation of PSE-related courses;
- The rights and responsibilities of teaching the courses.

### Expert Witness Two

- Standards in the Transition to Adulthood curriculum;
- Devising the curriculum; curriculum development; creating the learning environment;
- Funding structure;
- The nature of transition to adulthood teaching; teaching methods;
- The content of PSE-related transition to adulthood input; defining adulthood;
- Current thinking about Further Education.

### Expert Witness Three

- The need for flexibility in staff and student arrangements; responsiveness;
- The need to take into account experiences of parents and carers; omissions in students' learning backgrounds; potential to help disaffected students;
- PSD(E) to be responsive to needs of students; the value of the arts in facilitating PSD(E) and learning; the value of drama in PSD(E);
- Funding considerations; the value of mainstream and 'special' crossover; the relationship between discrete provision and inclusion;
- The importance of staff growth and development; the need for a positive approach to staff development; recognising and using staff strengths;
- The characteristics of a good course focus not only on subject content; the value of shared staff experience and shared student experience; the importance of allowing students to be themselves.

It is noticeable that there is a difference between the responses of each of the Expert Witnesses to the interview questions, reflecting their own experiences, values and concerns. Expert Witness One comes across as a theoretician, and this reflects his role as a trainer of teachers. Expert Witness Two is concerned with the management of the system, reflecting her position, and Expert Witness Three's focus is related to her function as a deliverer of educational input to students with LDD.

It is difficult to identify common themes, however there is a relationship present, wherein the contributions of the Expert Witnesses can be described as philosophy and input; strategy and process, and operation and outcome. The main themes contributed by each

Expert Witness are shown below, condensed and analysed, and expressed in these terms of philosophy/input, strategy/practice, and operation/outcome.

<u>Expert Witness 1</u>	<u>Expert Witness 2</u>	<u>Expert Witness 3</u>
<u>Philosophy/Input</u>	<u>Strategy/Process</u>	<u>Operation/Outcome</u>
Relative value of courses	curriculum process	flexibility and responsiveness
unhelpfulness of earlier educational concepts	standards	relevance of students' other life experiences
guidance of students	transition to adulthood content	facilitating learning
self-advocacy	methodology	relationship between inclusion and discrete
quality, assessment and evaluation	funding structure	staff growth and development;
rights and responsibilities	current thinking	characteristics of a good course

#### Identifying and Contextualising General and Unique Themes

Although a broad overview may categorise the views of the three expert witnesses in terms of input, process and outcome, in fact each of the experts contributes to each of these areas, in different ways and with different emphases. From their individual contributions, general and unique themes may be discovered.

General themes include the recognition that there is a place for discrete transition to adult-related input or courses for young people with LDD in mainstream Further Education. In delivering these courses, modules or input, teachers or tutors need to be provided with skills and understanding, in approaches that are not the same as those informing National Curriculum-based pre-sixteen schooling. The importance of the student view, or 'voice' should be recognised. Inclusion of students with LDD in a range of mainstream courses is an agreed target. Assessment and evaluation issues however, remain under-resolved.

Of the three Expert Witnesses, the assessment and evaluation issues are understandably given greatest attention by the FE inspector. The advice offers guidance for transition to adulthood input, which could be effectively deployed by colleges to improve the

quality of the courses. There is a strong emphasis on practical application, and 'concrete' learning, including learning by doing, and by using real things, or even pictures of real things. The existing over-emphasis on written tasks is a cause for concern.

The teacher-trainer's discussion of underlying issues and philosophies provides a reminder that effective provision needs to be underpinned with theoretical and conceptual understanding. It should be a self questioning and self-evaluating process, and should respect the rights of the individual. Older and newer approaches to Further Education may cause a tension in provision content and delivery. The actual Further Education of the students towards skills and maturity may be hampered by 'old' approaches, which find teachers and tutors of students with LDD repeating the activities and ideas of the special school.

The lecturer provides an exciting view of the possibilities which exist in this work, particularly when it can be linked with arts-based input. The potential for this approach to other areas of provision is identified, although it is acknowledged that a certain amount of staff education needs to take place before this potential is fulfilled. Staff development and training is seen as very important part of effective provision, and includes the useful concept of staff being deployed in crossovers between mainstream and 'special' courses. A particular insight is required, which recognises the power of the subject to be a vehicle for a wider PSE, allowing skills and maturity to develop within the subject and in a wide context. This approach could also be used to help disaffected students. The personal insight of the teacher or tutor is therefore an important factor, as is the support of imaginative management.

### Composite summary

If Finch (1986, p.164) describes the ability of qualitative research to reflect the subjective reality of the participants, there is also a question of how far it reflects the subjective reality of the researcher. The interviews were carried out as a result of a wish for different viewpoints; the three interviewees were chosen because of opportunity, although the range that they would offer was a significant feature. A question therefore remains as to how far the

outcomes are directed by the questions and prompts to the interviewees, and to the editing of the transcripts. However, while there may be weaknesses in this approach, the insights provided by these interviews add considerably to the overall understanding of this provision.

There are clear differences in the tone, style and content of the interviewees' responses, as shown by Appendices XI and XII. One of the lessons resulting from this part of the research is the realisation that if people are asked for their views on a matter, they may not necessarily say what the interviewer wants to hear, may not share the same understanding of what is meant by the subjects, and may become diverted towards matters or viewpoints of more direct concern to themselves. This contrasts usefully with the seeming consistency provided by the quantitative, questionnaire-based data. The reminder that different individuals may have a different understanding of messages which were thought by the researcher to be clear and consistent, is particularly valuable.

Being interested, the interviewee was at times diverted in the interviews, so that the delivery of the stimulus questions, the probing, and the minimal redirection, was not the same every time. The categorisation into main themes, and further into the broad areas of philosophy/input, strategy/process, and operation/outcome, may reflect the subjectivity of the researcher, in addition to the subjectivity of the interviewees. However, the researcher's subjectivity also includes the skills, knowledge and understanding gained through experience of the field and of the research process. For the researcher seeking to conduct focused interviews, these are necessary attributes and this subjectivity is therefore justified.

If the results of the qualitative research can be considered as valid, the discerned philosophy/input, strategy/process, operation/outcome framework can be applied to the question of what a good quality transition to adulthood course, module or input, would be like. The combination of the advice of the Expert Witnesses, together with the data provided by the qualitative research, provide different perspectives in addressing this question. The characteristics of good quality in the field of Transition to Adulthood work for young people with LDD, as identified by the research, will be explored in detail in Chapter Thirteen.

## Conclusion

The process of interviewing, transcribing, editing and analysing the results in this element of the research is extremely labour intensive, but provides an invaluable enrichment of understanding of the field. As a result it is possible to begin to discern what the characteristics of a good quality transition to adulthood course, module or input for young people with LDD, should be like. This involves focusing on staff, students, curriculum, management, and resources, but also requires a foundation which provides theoretical and philosophical underpinnings which will inform the practitioner in the selection of appropriate learning experiences.

Ways must be found of matching learning experiences to the wishes, needs, and requirements of individual learners; this sounds obvious, but may be easier to say than to do. There may need to be a rethinking of the whole underlying administrative understanding, and educational understanding, of this provision. For maximum effectiveness, the education delivered to young people with LDD should be practically based, and this may carry resourcing and organisational implications. The education delivered needs to be evaluated consistently on all its levels.

To state that evaluation should inform the development of new learning goals can be misinterpreted. It can indicate that the evaluative structure provided by an accredited module might reasonably drive the curriculum, and in practice it is likely that this often happens. The concept of responsiveness is needed, to allow for individualised learning to meet students' individual needs, and this needs to be backed by the concept of flexibility: of staff, management and resources.

Staff development is an important factor in developing insight, responsiveness, flexibility and necessary skills in the delivery of transition to adulthood-related input. There are ways in which learning can be expanded beyond subject boundaries to bring about a wider social and emotional learning. While in this chapter delivery through the arts has been discussed, it is an approach which could be explored within any subject. This relates directly to the understanding and willingness of individual teachers, and raises wider questions as to what the teaching is for, and what are the fundamental purposes of Further Education.

Alongside the understanding of teachers as to the purpose of their work, there are questions raised about their perceptions of their students, and this also relates to theoretical and philosophical understanding. Stage theories permit teacher expectation to influence outcomes. However, self-advocacy may challenge the expectations arising from stage theories; these issues will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Thirteen. The following chapter seeks to complete the research design by investigating student's views of their college courses in general, and personal and social transition to adulthood input in particular.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### SEEKING THE STUDENT VOICE

#### Introduction

Throughout the literature concerning transition to adulthood for young people with LDD, there are calls for students' actual views and experiences to be included in research; however, this is not easily achieved. Students with LDD may be hampered in their communication skills, even where they do not have actual speech and language difficulties. In addition there are other hindrances, some of which are subtle and pervasive, in seeking to identify students' real opinions. This chapter discusses some of these difficulties together with some developments and attempts to overcome them, in what may be a changing, rights-based educational environment. The rise of self-advocacy is described, and the value of the social cognitive approach is discussed.

Visits to a mainstream college of Further Education are described, together with the outcomes of discussion with two student groups, one group with moderate learning difficulties and one group with severe learning difficulties. Two discussions with students about their college courses are described, and the research questions are considered in the light of the interviews.

#### The Call For the Student Voice

A study of the background literature informing a study of transition to adulthood courses reveals concern for the lack of actual, direct student input. The developing climate of advocacy, self-advocacy and inclusion encourages the expectation that judgements which are made about young people with LDD should involve the young people themselves, although this view has not always been prevalent.

There are a number of difficulties in achieving the authentic views of the client group. Some of these are obvious, such as when the students themselves have communication difficulties, or when students have dispersed following the end of their

course. Others are more subtle, linked to underlying attitudes which reflect the expectation that young people with LDD cannot speak for themselves. In addition, achievement for students with LDD is closely linked to confidence. Gaining the confidence to attempt something new, including communication on demand and conversation with strangers, is as important and as difficult as gaining the actual communication skills themselves.

Historically, the voice of this client group has been neglected. There may be attitudes based on views of such students as deficient and lacking, and therefore needing the superior knowledge of professionals to speak for them, or beliefs that such students are childlike and need adults to speak for them. Tisdal (1996) describes the well-meaning medical model, (wherein learning or physical disability is viewed as a deficit, described in medical terminology) as itself disabling, while younger disabled people have additional difficulty:

If the medical model silences disabled adults, the silencing is even more binding for disabled young people. Not only their disabilities but also their age are taken as reasons to discount young people's views (Tisdal, 1996 p. 18).

The concepts of advocacy, self-advocacy and empowerment developed during the nineteen eighties is attributed by Daniels (1982) to the influence of Wolfensberger, and linked by Tisdal (op.cit.) to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. These principles have aimed to give voices to otherwise voiceless, and consequently powerless members of the community (FEU 1989, Latham et.al. 1989, Griffiths 1994, SCPR 1996, Johnstone 1998). Their influence is carried through into public initiatives and legislation, such as in the new draft SEN Code of Practice (DfEE 2000). Their influence is also seen in current trends which attempt to reduce bureaucracy, make public services and information more accessible, and present information in simpler and clearer language and format.

However, even the concepts of 'giving', 'enabling' and 'empowering' betray the underlying subordinate status of the client group. Johnstone (1995) identifies the modern approach to disability as rights-based, and this is confirmed by the current emphases on lobby groups and interest groups fighting for recognition of their own issues. However, when it comes to young people with LDD, rights-based activists do not always gain sympathy or

approval. Others may see the social inclusion of this client group as being concerned with 'fitting in', including staying quiet and not being a nuisance.

The belief that sophisticated concepts and adult issues are beyond the comprehension of young people with LDD, has operated against their being included in discussions and decisions which may be complex and difficult. A kind of 'negative transferability' can take place; the belief that a person cannot accomplish tasks, whether these are academic, personal or social, means that they are disqualified from considering for themselves these more complicated or sophisticated issues.

This view may be based on a seeming common sense view, or may result from a belief in linear, developmental, stage-based theories about cognition, which indicate that the student's understanding is insufficient until he or she has passed through the requisite stages. The prevailing educational theory in the second half of the twentieth century has been linear and stage based. Resulting attitudes in turn reinforce an already existing lack of confidence among the students, operating against involvement and achievement, and bringing about a self-fulfilling prophecy of inadequacy.

It is quite possible that more could be achieved if more was expected, and if greater efforts were made to express sophisticated, adult concepts in simple language and in terms of personal relevance. As Mittler points out,

Research from many sources has suggested that people respond to the demands made on them; if we expect little or nothing from the handicapped, then that is all that we shall get (Mittler 1979, p.21).

Social Cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) may be valuable in this context because it does not limit development to linear, stage-based progression. This allows for a wider range of expectation and input, since students with LDD are not confined by teacher expectation to lower stage levels where they may be presented with childish work (Johnstone 1995, p.110). Social Cognitive theory can be applied to learning experiences across the whole range of cognitive ability, which not only means it can be applied to any client learning group, but also that it is non-discriminatory, in Corbett and Barton's (1992) analysis. Social Cognitive theory's use of observation, forethought, and self-reflection as tools to support social

functioning can aid the autonomy of a group of learners who may not have the same range of social access as some of their peers.

Even a liberal view which attributes autonomy to the client group, may be betrayed by inherent attitudes of which educators may not even be aware. To observe reviews and interviews with young people with LDD which touch on their thoughts, wishes, ideas and feelings is to witness any number of prompts, cues and suggestions from the professionals involved. The use of such prompts is noted in Hutchinson and Tennyson's (1986) project report. Young people with LDD are well-used to following such cues. To be able to disagree may be a considerable freedom for this client group, but one which requires a great amount of confidence. As Griffiths (1994), speaking of students with severe learning difficulties, points out:

If young people are to have a quality of life as adults they should be able to hold their own preferences even when these are disapproved of by others (Griffiths 1994 p.25),

but this may be hard for young people to achieve.

### Researching Student's Views

Some research projects have sought the direct opinion and experience of young adults with LDD. As part of an action-based curriculum research project, Hutchinson and Tennyson (1986) interviewed a small sample of eleven, sixteen to twenty-year old students who were severely physically disabled and who had moderate to severe learning difficulties.

This FEU publication was very influential in its time, but in modern terms, the student's' own voices are missing. The students' experience is filtered through the perceptions of the researchers; the students' passivity is noted, together with their immaturity and lack of preparation for the responsibility of adult life. The students' views and personal understanding of their own experience does not form the basis for developments within the project, as they might be expected to do now. As Johnstone (1998) points out,

"Until recently there has been a tendency to shy away from discussions of the subjective experiences of disabled people" (Johnstone 1998, p.108)

an emphasis on quantifiable results perhaps being seen as signifying more rigorous research.

Probably the most significant piece of research into students' own views and experiences in recent years has been that carried out by the Social and Community Planning Research group (SCPR 1996) to provide background information for the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996). "Student Voices" reported findings from a series of student workshops, covering different aspects of the post-sixteen learning experience of young people with LDD.

The findings were that students want:

- more opportunity to give their views about Further Education;
- more opportunities to develop self-advocacy skills;
- to be valued and welcomed by their colleges and feel as if they belong;
- not to be labelled as having a learning difficulty and/or disability;
- to be understood as attending college for the same reasons as other students;
- teachers to listen to their aspirations and take them seriously, and for learning programmes to help them to achieve their ambitions;
- to find out about the college courses before they arrive;
- to understand when assessment is taking place and what is its purpose;
- not to be made to feel different through the way support is provided;
- teachers to know about their learning needs and understand how these might influence their learning, as staff attitudes and behaviour have an impact;
- teachers to use a variety of approaches in teaching and constructive feedback to the student;
- opportunities to learn alongside other students;
- to access and move around college with the same freedom as other students (SCPR 1996, p. v-vi).

Of particular concern is the discussion regarding the initial assessment of students by the college (SCPR 1996, p.25), which as one of the Expert Witnesses points out, is the process upon which educational decisions are made by the course providers. One of the Expert Witnesses describes how students sometimes lose heart as they are directed into existing courses, rather than being enabled to follow courses closer to their aspirations. Observation also suggests that students' suitability for college placement, and the course to be followed, are sometimes quietly sorted out between the relevant professionals beforehand.

Taken together, the views derived from the 'Student Voices' workshops (SCPR 1996) suggest an approach where much of what the students do is organised for them. As one of the Expert Witnesses points out, students with LDD are the only group of whom we demand justification for doing what they want to do, so that they are controlled in ways that other students are not. It seems likely that while students with LDD are *in* the college, for some there need to be progress in management structures and attitudes before they are truly *of* the college.

### Three Visits to a Mainstream Further Education College

One of the intentions of this research was to discuss with students the characteristics of quality within their transition to adulthood courses. This has proved difficult to accomplish; to approach a college as an outsider with the intention of discussing, however tactfully, the quality of what goes on inside it, is not a position of strength for the researcher. The difficulty of achieving anything like the honesty and insight hoped for in order to represent the students' views of transition to adulthood courses, was brought home through three visits to a mainstream Further Education college.

The first visit came about as a result of a written request to the college Special Needs Coordinator, to be allowed to meet the students and discuss the courses with them, and an arrangement was made to liaise with the special needs teacher/lecturer who oversaw this input. On the day of the visit, the researcher arrived to find that the lecturer was absent. There was a short, informal chat with the SENCo, who discussed the relative merits of the accreditation schemes in use in the college. One had recently been rejected in favour of another, which, as one of the Expert Witnesses' identifies, is a common response to the difficulty of matching the curriculum to the students.

A second visit was arranged when the teacher was well again. To the researcher, this was to be a discussion about the research and how it might usefully fit in with the students' and college's requirements. For example, transition courses often include the element of providing experience in how to deal with a visitor, and for this a visitor is required to practice on. The researcher hoped to be able to perform this service and at the same time

gather information about how the students felt about their courses. In the event the researcher arrived just at the time when a student experienced a major epileptic episode, and dealing with this necessarily took priority over other considerations. Half an hour remained of a session during which students had been completing their accreditation portfolios, and without a great deal of preliminary discussion the researcher was presented to the group to usefully fill in the time until lunch.

This had not been the research plan and did not seem to lend itself to a discourse on whether the students thought their course was a good one, or how it could be improved. It was decided to offer simpler questions to the group as a whole, letting the group interview take its course, and working round to achieving answers to the questions, rather than asking them directly. It was only possible to begin to establish a good communicative relationship with the students, although rapport was developing by the end of the session. The teacher introduced the students, prompting them to talk about the course they were following and what activities had developed from it; she explained or interpreted for them as she considered appropriate.

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator and staff at the college were kind and welcoming, and a second visit to talk to students was offered with the intention of meeting a different, more able and more vocal group, described as having moderate learning difficulties. This visit was longer, taking approximately an hour, and the communication was more free and more personal, as the students generally were more talkative. In this second visit to students the member of staff, after reassuring herself that the researcher and students were comfortable with each other, left the room. The researcher fed back the general comments of the students to the member of staff. Both visits were viewed as having gone satisfactorily.

#### Interview with the First Student Group

The students were a group of seven identified as having severe learning difficulties. They were seated in a horseshoe formation behind normal lecture room tables, on which they had been working on their portfolios. A few safety posters designed and produced by the

students provided a small display; the slogan of one was "Don't kiss on the stairs", which seemed somehow representative of the kind of confused messages to which transition to adulthood work may give rise.

The group was of students in their third year, who were following the ASDAN Level Up course. One of the students had Downs Syndrome, another did not speak, by choice. The researcher was introduced as being interested in how college courses were different from school. The questions asked of these students were:

- What do you think of the course?
- What's different to school?
- Is there anything that you would like done differently, or better - anything you are not happy with?
- Could you walk out?

What do you think of the course?: apart from one who never really spoke, the students made a range of favourable comments: Fine; OK; Alright; Good. R. liked coming to college on his own. He liked life skills, recreation, walking. S. liked meeting different people. and enjoyed the work, such as cooking, computers, job search, speaking (making a presentation for the English Speaking Board accreditation). B. liked coming in and mixing with other people. Some students (especially one) kept tormenting her. Ma. thought college was rather good. He comes to college, and likes going on country walks. Mi. had had enough of coming, and was not coming back; she has done three years, and it's enough. The tutor spoke for her; Mi. did not offer any words, only concurring noises and expressions; she would not speak in front of a stranger, and spoke very little while in the group at other times, however she could talk when she chose to.

What is different to school?: K. thinks the work's different, you do cooking. Prompted by the tutor, the group remarked on the fact that staff use first names in college, and that students were treated as more 'grown up'. One student preferred college because she had found school distressing; she did not like other children fighting and shouting. The tutor prompted the idea that the general atmosphere in college is more mature, and the students agreed.

There is more freedom in college. S.: there is a choice of activities - you can choose who you sit with, and what you have for dinner. The canteen is mixed.

Is there anything which could be done differently, or better, or that you're not happy with?:

No: the students claimed to be happy with the way things are (apart from the one who did not intend to return). When asked by the tutor if was too babyish, the students replied that they did not know.

Could you walk out?: The students' reply was No; but they did not want to. The tutor said that parents are supportive of the students coming to college, and the students said that they came because their parents wanted them to.

#### Comment on the Interview with the First Student Group

The students did not distinguish between coming to college and the course they were on; there was no talk of other courses. There was considerable prompting from the tutor, especially about country walks, which provide an aspect of the leisure module in the ASDAN accredited course. The impression given was that the college organises the trips and provides the transport to and from the place where the walking was done. The English Speaking Board accreditation is taken by some students, at different levels. Lifeskills work is said to cover circumstances such as those in which one young woman complained about being tormented. She described one particular young man paying her attention.

The tutor acknowledged in front of them that the students may not go on to jobs, and that the question then arises, what else there is for them to do. Possible options are: health and leisure activities, such as walking or going to the leisure centre; and the social education centre, which would formerly have been known as the day centre or work centre. The students have 'looked at' voting; they do not do much reading and writing. They learn a social skills vocabulary and social behaviour.

#### Interview with the Second Student Group

The second group was of twelve young people described as having moderate learning difficulties. This was confirmed by asking them which schools they had come from; most were

from the three schools in the area for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Few were from mainstream schools, and coming from special schools, they would be expected to have few GCSE examination passes between them.

As with the first student group this group had male and female students, some of whom were in their second year while others had only just begun their courses. All the students were under eighteen. Again, the students were sat around a horseshoe of standard grey tables, but this group of students did not have any work in front of them. One had a pad on which he drew; he had a large, detailed and complex sketch in the back of his book to which he clearly contributed over time, presumably when lessons or lectures were less interesting. Another read a magazine between answering and commenting on questions and remarks and it was difficult at times for the researcher not to lapse into a teacher/lecturer role, and request that he paid attention.

With the second student group discussion was more informal. The decision had been made not to tape the discussion, as it was felt that even the small amount of equipment necessary would be distracting and divert the conversation away from its goals. It might also be inhibiting to some students to be recorded, and there was not the opportunity to build students' confidence over time. Covert recording was felt to be dishonest; the researcher therefore took written notes. However, the speed and variety of the students' responses meant that it was only possible to take general notes rather than record individual comments, as was done in the first group.

The researcher made a feature of learning the names of the twelve students and asking them about themselves and their wishes for the future. Some of the questions asked of the first group were used, but were presented as part of the conversation, rather than in the previously more formal way. One of the second year students was more vocal and more confident than the others and would have dominated the proceedings. However, others were brought into the discussion by asking them directly for their views.

What do you think of the course? The students said that they were satisfied with the course; they enjoyed the difference from school courses. The college course consists of English, mathematics, art, drama and information technology (the students' labels), and work

experience, which can be extended if it is going well. The work is mostly writing, talking, and doing worksheets; students can and do distract teachers into using up time talking about the work - this generated smiles all around. There are visits made as part of a leisure element. There are no discrete lifeskills courses; the tutor confirmed that this element would be built in to other work. However, the students affirmed that there was no mention of parenthood in the college course.

What's different to school? There is no uniform; teachers talk to you differently, and treat you better. They use first names. There are more adults (higher staff-student ratio); they help you learn more, because they come to you when you need help, whereas in school they didn't. In college you can mix with others who have the same kind of difficulty. Teachers don't tell you what to do. Some of the work is hard, but you can get help.

Is there anything that you would like done differently, or better - anything you are not happy with? Mostly the students did not wish for any changes, although one felt that the course would be improved by the addition of music. There was a noticeable emphasis on drama; whether this was a strong element in the course or had engaged the students' interests more closely because it was unusual to them, was not clear. However, P. thought that the drama element was the best part of the course, and communications skills was the worst.

Could you walk out? This question was not asked directly, but it was clear that most of the students in the group saw their college course as one, rather than the only, option. They expected to stay for two years and then move on, possibly to other courses, or to some kind of employment training. They knew what course they were following - BTEC entry- and had different views as to where they wished it to lead: one student sought a career in entertainment, another wished to explore further the options arising from his work experience. One student saw herself acting as her mother's carer, and saw the course as helping her to take that role more effectively; she was very close to her unwell parent, and the college option was discussed between them.

### Comment on the Interview with the Second Student Group

This group was clearly more confident and independent with considerable maturity among some of the group members, although others seemed vulnerable. The young men were generally more vocal than the young women. As a group they looked forward more than did the first group, and saw themselves as having possibilities in their lives, which they were able to articulate to a stranger. The interactions among them indicated that male-female relationships were important although not much discussed, and the circumstances of the visit made it seem intrusive to enquire about such personal matters. The greater level of independence of this group was demonstrated by the fact that they travelled independently to college, while in other groups such as the first, the students were transported to college.

Students generally enrolled on the course because it had been recommended to them: by the careers adviser; or by their peers; or by their parents. However one student had left school and taken a job of work- it was not clear whether or not this was a supported work placement - and had then opted to return to education and take the college course. Most of the students, if they returned to their schools for a visit, would recommend the college course to younger school leavers.

### Application to the Research Questions

How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be judged: The quantitative research shows that student satisfaction is an important indicator of assessment of quality in transition to adulthood courses, and student input makes an important contribution to the nature of the courses. However, in discussing these matters directly with students it is possible to wonder how real such input, and judgements of satisfaction, are. The student groups are not likely to be critical, since dissatisfied students are quite simply unlikely to be there; they will have left. The nurturing attitude which so often accompanies work in special educational needs may discourage opposition and criticism from students. Therefore while student input is very important from the ethical point of view, in reality it is susceptible to prompting and interpretation from the adults involved.

It can be properly argued that short visits from a stranger are not going to be able to draw much information or insight from students about their courses, nevertheless a better understanding of modern Further Education, and how it serves the wider range of students' learning needs, is gained from this experience. The college visited does not offer transition to adulthood work to its pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and it is intended, or assumed, that this is delivered within other content, much as it would be for pupils who are not identified as having particular learning difficulties.

Judging from their comments, the students in both groups are most strongly affected by, and therefore perhaps value most highly, the opportunity to be treated more maturely than they were at school. They are aware of themselves as students who need more, or a different kind of, help and appreciate the different working climate to that of school, where many have felt themselves to be unsuccessful. PSE-related transition to adulthood courses may therefore be judged by the degree to which their students are treated as mature, and given the opportunity to behave maturely.

How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be improved: the views of the students do not give much direct guidance as to how the target courses could be improved, apart from the suggestion regarding music. The value of these discussions is rather in what they reveal about the educational circumstances in which these young learners find themselves.

Each group was seated in an ordinary classroom, in a setting to which they seemed well accustomed. The environment was not stimulating and there was no sense of action, busy-ness or liveliness; this is perhaps unfair criticism when the group was in a receptive mode. Students had clearly been guided into their courses, however most felt College to be a noticeable improvement on their school lives. Questions are therefore raised about the quality of what was on offer in their school lives, particularly in the matter of transition to social maturity and adulthood.

Education has insisted on retaining the student categorisations of moderate learning difficulties and severe learning difficulties, and viewing them as separate groups. The college visited did not offer discrete PSE-related transition to adulthood input to the MLD

group, relying on existing curricular input to accommodate this. Much of the work of the SLD group however was concerned with transition to social maturity, and the approach here had been to make efforts to find an accredited course that would give a better fit with student needs.

Chapters Nine and Ten indicate that improved quality in the target courses lies with good staff and staff training, good match between curriculum and students' learning needs, varied resources, practical learning experiences, and an understanding of the power for teaching and learning that goes beyond subject orientation. Meeting the student groups in their classrooms confirms that this is what one wants for these young people, enabling them to move from passivity to autonomy, to the best of their abilities.

### Conclusion

Modern FE may now be taking the learning needs of students with moderate learning difficulties, or with physical, sensory or medical difficulties, more in its stride. The ethos of inclusion ensures that the concept of transfer to higher levels of work and qualification is inbuilt. At the same time the scope of modern FE has widened to include students with more extreme learning needs, such as those with severe learning difficulties, and transition to adulthood work may now seem to be the province of this client group. The underlying ethical and philosophical issues remain as to what should be offered and how it should be taught, and there may be some perplexity as to what to offer this group.

The interviews with the two student groups confirm the experience of modern Further Education for young people with LDD, as indicated by the regional surveys and the Expert Witnesses. Transition to Adulthood-related courses are delivered through accredited modules from an outside provider, and the colleges may change the provider in order to find the 'best fit' with students' learning needs. The student interviews provide only limited data so that any conclusions must be tentative. However these students and their courses seem likely to be representative of the experience of discrete, PSE-related transition to adulthood provision, as identified through the other research within this thesis.

Students with moderate learning difficulties are now more likely to be seen as a regular part of the client group within mainstream Further Education. The inclusion ethos allows them access to other courses, however there continue to be discrete courses for pupils with LDD at different levels. Further Education continues to use the MLD and SLD categories, and PSE-related Transition to Adulthood input may be moving more towards becoming provision for students with severe learning difficulties.

It is quite possible that what is on offer in this Further Education college is fairly representative of colleges throughout the country, although some offer more, and some less, discrete provision. The key to how such courses may be improved lies in turning the students from passive to active beings, setting them on the path to be mature contributors to their own destinies, as one would wish for other young people. This idea is perhaps easier to accommodate for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, who are increasingly seen as belonging within the regular school and college population, but for those with severe difficulties there is still some way to go.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The overall purpose of this study has been to enquire into the nature of the provision that is offered to young people with LDD in mainstream Further Education as PSE-related transition to adulthood studies, and to consider how it might be improved. Research has taken place on several levels: that of literature research, quantitative research in the form of postal surveys, and qualitative research in the form of interviews and discussions with Expert Witnesses, students and their tutors.

This chapter begins the interpretation and discussion of these different levels of research. The research problem is reviewed, and the research results are discussed in the light of previous research and appropriate theory. Strands from all the preceding parts of this study are brought together to inform the interpretation and discussion of the results of the empirical research. The nine purposes of the study, identified within the main research problem, are reviewed in the light of the research findings, in order to consider whether those purposes have been met.

#### The Initial Research Problem

The general wish to understand what was offered to young people with LDD under the provision of PSE-related transition to adulthood studies, was directed towards a consideration of the characteristics of good quality in this work. Two key questions were identified:

1. How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD be judged?
2. How can PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with LDD, be improved?

These questions were seen as related, since measures of success are needed before means of improvement can be identified. Within the broad aim of the research, the purposes of the study were subdivided into smaller objectives, concerned with:

1. Giving an overview of the field;
2. Considering the literature and establishing theoretical bases for transition to adulthood studies;
3. Clarifying the difficulties surrounding assessment in this area;
4. Considering recent approaches to assessment and evaluation and their possible application to the target courses, with a view to improving their quality;
5. Investigating curricular content in use in the courses;
6. Investigating the evaluation and assessment processes used in the courses;
7. Investigating and identifying the quality measures used in the courses;
8. Identifying directions for improving the quality of the courses;
9. Applying the findings in an attempt to construct a model of good PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The research plan began with a broad, literature-based enquiry. From this quantitative research was derived, with a preliminary, range-finding postal survey followed by a comparative postal survey of three Further Education regions. Small pilot studies were conducted to aid the development of the questionnaires. The comparative survey explored the null hypothesis that there was no significant difference between the provision for this client group offered by the three regions.

The quantitative research was supported by qualitative research in two areas. Information was sought from three professionals working in different aspects of the field, who were thought to be able to offer insightful opinions and different perspectives. These three 'Expert Witnesses' provided views which developed from the starting points offered by the initial research questions as to how quality in the target courses could be judged, and improved. However the conversations went further, revealing individual approaches which together considerably enriched the information gained through the quantitative research.

Finally, the research was informed by the views of two student groups within a mainstream Further Education college. This served to place the research within the context

of the everyday experience of the students, and reinforced the understanding of what was actually offered in courses for young people with LDD. All these elements of the empirical research, together with the theoretical and factual contributions from the literature, combine to give the required understanding of this area of educational provision.

### Relating the Outcomes of the Research to the Purposes of the Study

The intention of the main, regional questionnaire was to discover whether there were any significant differences between the regions; the data collected showed that there were not. It is therefore likely that the provision reflected by the responses to the questionnaires is fairly representative of this type of provision over England as a whole. The preliminary survey indicates that the purpose of the PSE-related input is to bring about a move towards adulthood, rather than for example, towards work or towards qualifications. The Expert Witnesses and students give some indications as to how this aim might be manifested in courses, and these pointers enrich the findings of the regional surveys.

All of the elements of the research are called upon in considering whether the purposes of the research have been met. The nine objectives derived from the two main research questions form the basis for interpretation and discussion of the research.

### An Overview of the Field

The overview is provided by both the literature and the empirical research, and an interesting picture emerges. On the one hand there is a field which has developed confidence and acceptability to become an established part of Further Educational provision. On the other hand, as a broader range of learning needs becomes more accepted in regular mainstream educational provision, some colleges no longer see the need for discrete provision of this kind.

Transition to adulthood work has developed from initiatives concerned with providing broader educational and employment opportunities, psychotherapeutic practices and a contemporary interest in self-realisation, together with demands by parents and interest groups for opportunities which were not previously available for young people with

LDD. The majority of mainstream Further Education colleges offer such courses, although they may now be increasingly directed towards the population of students with severe learning difficulties.

The nature of the PSE-related transition to adulthood courses, modules and elements on offer is discussed in detail below. Generally they are concerned with developing aspects of social maturity, mixing practical skills with classroom based discussion and worksheet input. The courses are often taught by dedicated individuals who have the best interests of the students at heart, and who may be frustrated by the restrictions placed upon them by resources, timetabling, or lack of opportunity. Increasingly transition to adulthood input is delivered through accredited, off-the-peg courses, of which the Open College and ASDAN are the market leaders.

There are, however, aspects of Transition to Adulthood studies which require improvement if they are to be as effective as their supporters would wish. The area lacks an understood theoretical basis for the work done with the students, and there is an over reliance upon classroom and pencil-and-paper tasks. Evaluative procedures are often internal, depending upon professional and student judgement rather than using more objective and structured evaluation systems, which tutors and students could set up for themselves. These could include systems where colleges use their own or others' criteria for success or good practice, and measure their performance against them. (An example of how this could be done is given in the Departmental Quality Profile in Chapter Thirteen).

Underlying these issues are deeper ones, concerned with the identification of what constitutes social maturity, what could or should be offered to students to bring this about, and the need to match curriculum experiences to the learning needs of the students: this is the curriculum process described by one of the Expert Witnesses.

### The Colleges and the Courses

Responses to the regional survey indicate that there is little variation between regions as to the nature of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses, modules or input for young people

with LDD in mainstream Further Education. Where regional variation is shown, it is concerned with relative importance rather than absolute differences of approach.

An overview of PSE-related input for young people with LDD as identified by the research, therefore suggests that this is an established and thriving area of mainstream Further Education, although this is not total; approximately ten percent of the colleges in the survey do not deliver PSE-related input. The three Expert Witnesses endorse the view that there continues to be a need for such provision, although it is pointed out that some colleges hold the view that where inclusion is well developed, such courses are not needed.

Where the courses exist, generally input is delivered in sessions of one to two hours, which take place more than once each week. The research does not address the question of whose organisational wishes govern the frequency or duration of the sessions; they may fit without further consideration into an existing college timetable. This general pattern of provision does not allow much time in which to deliver the practical activities recommended by the Expert Witnesses and sought by some of the respondents wishing for change.

Of some concern is the enormous range of courses through which PSE-related transition to adulthood input is offered, as reflected by the array of course titles (Appendix VIII). It is possible that this range is not helpful in Further Education, giving rise to confusion regarding the ethos and content of the courses. In addition course titles may carry patronising overtones which may set students with LDD apart from others within Further Education.

Possible confusion reflected in the range of course titles may be indicative of a greater confusion as to the purposes of these courses. Transition to adulthood is a generic title which suggests, falsely, that there is consensus regarding its purpose and content. Adulthood itself is a concept most people live with on a daily basis without feeling any need to define it. However on closer examination it is very difficult to define, beyond the facts of legal status (Appendix XII).

There is a disparity of provision in curriculum delivery. Among colleges offering PSE-related input there are discrete courses, discrete modules, combination modules and

courses, tutorial-based input, and input blended in with other course aspects. Underlying concepts about adulthood and its teaching may remain unquestioned amongst other, higher profile curriculum considerations.

In considering desired changes some respondents to the preliminary survey identified a wish that courses should be modularised and accredited, but by the later, regional survey this change had largely taken place. The preliminary survey identified concerns for more practical or realistic work, and more time to do the work, plus a range of other concerns including matters of structure, resources and status. The regional survey collapsed the items causing desire for change, into broad categories. These showed that the main desire for change was related to resources and funding.

The next two areas receiving most nominations in a desire for change in the regional survey are those of content, including vocational elements, and community involvement. These link with the earlier stated desire for more realistic work, and the recommendations from the Expert Witnesses that PSE-related transition to adulthood work should be based on real, practical experiences. The concerns reflected by the surveys and the recommendations of the Expert Witnesses make a strong case for more direct, 'hands on' teaching and learning, than may currently be the case. This however is expensive in terms of resources, and also depends on the resourcefulness of individual teachers, together with the support of management.

### Accreditation and Funding

Where PSE-related transition to adulthood courses or modules exist, they are mostly accredited, as shown by nearly eighty percent of the colleges in the regional survey. The 'market leaders' are the Open College and ASDAN. The wish on the part of colleges to find appropriate accredited courses is an outcome of the Further Education funding arrangements which require the colleges to show progression in the development of the students. This has had both benefits and drawbacks, because while it ensures that students with LDD are not left to fill time in unproductive courses, the priority among colleges has become the need to

fulfil the funding requirements. Funding arrangements are now being modified, and this may ameliorate the concerns about funding.

One college discussed by one of the Expert Witnesses is not bound by FEFC funding requirements because it is also funded by the Local Education Authority, and this funding continues because the college is successful. This greater flexibility allows the college to be more responsive in its provision of learning for students with LDD.

### The Students and the Teachers/Lecturers

Where young people with LDD are concerned, modern Further Education has a much wider remit than was previously the case. A move away from a medical model of deficit and towards an educational one, although still largely deficit-based, has coincided with political and economic changes. Large mental hospitals and psychiatric institutions have closed to be replaced by smaller, community-based facilities. At the same time economic recession and changing technologies have brought about a reduction in the availability of the simple, repetitious work which was previously contracted out to training centres. These centres are now described as social education centres and have a responsibility to provide educational input within their programme. Some of this education is provided through college courses, and may similarly be provided for those with psychiatric difficulties.

As a consequence the age range of students with LDD has extended considerably, and the range of cognitive ability has also increased, to include a much larger group of students with severe learning difficulties. This client group may present the greatest difficulties for lecturers and teachers in Further Education, possibly because, as two of the Expert Witnesses point out, teachers may remain wedded to special school approaches and an over-reliance on paper-and-pencil tasks.

Students intending to enter Further Education are subject to a college's assessment procedure, which identifies a student's learning and support needs. Students with statements of special educational needs also have Transition Plans from the education service and Individual Action Plans from the careers service, which should inform this process. There may be informal decisions made between professionals as to who is likely to

attend college and what the appropriate courses would be, so that subsequent discussion with students, parents and carers is guided.

Students from mainstream or special schools may therefore experience direction towards identified courses. It is pointed out by one of the Expert Witnesses that only the special needs population is expected to justify its course choices if anything different is sought, and agreement with the student's wishes may be affected by a college's willingness or ability to provide additional support. The loss of heart experienced by students when they find themselves guided into a limited range of options is described by an 'expert witness'. However, for many practitioners this guidance might seem a logical and necessary process.

It is very difficult for young people with LDD to prevent others from making judgements for them and about them. Assessment and guided entry into identified FE courses at least ensure a level of access to mainstream Further Education that was not previously the case, and it is possible that increased experience among educators in FE will extend this provision further. It is pointed out that the difficulty is that students with LDD 'slow up' the lecturers' delivery of curriculum to the 'other' students. There may need to be a reassessment of teaching in Further Education that allows for and accommodates a range of learning styles; this would accord with the concern of one Expert Witness that old style approaches may linger, hampering developments in learning and teaching.

The responses to the regional survey show that professional judgement figures highly in decision making relating to the target courses. The importance of staff development, leading to improving judgement through extending teachers' knowledge and experience is emphasised in the interviews with the Expert Witnesses. The dangers of allowing old ideas to continue unchallenged is also described. Teachers must therefore be helped to improve the quality of their professional judgements, if the professional judgements made are to be good ones. As has been pointed out, this depends on a commitment to staff training, and the seeking out of good quality staff to do the work.

The qualities of good staff are seen as being concerned with insight, courage, responsiveness and a willingness both to learn and to share one's own experiences. At the end of the nineteen eighties and start of the nineteen nineties Further Education staff were

finding their way into special needs work as a consequence of redeployment, rather than from choice. This situation may now have improved, since one of the Expert Witnesses emphasises the commitment of many serving teachers of students with LDD. It seems likely that staff training is important in ensuring that the quality of staff judgement is good, and there is scope for further enquiry as to how college management delivers this.

### Theoretical Bases

The theoretical bases which inform Transition to Adulthood input are complex and varied. Within the twentieth century these include theories of education and learning processes, curriculum, moral development, psychoanalytical and psychotherapeutic theory, theory of adolescence, and social theory. However, the PSE-related input represented by transition to adulthood studies has older theoretical and philosophical origins, concerned with the nature and function of the good person in society, and the purposes of education.

Post-Modernism questions the necessity and value of over-arching theory, viewing it as an artificial construct, the unacknowledged purpose of which is to impose the reassurance of order upon the essentially more chaotic experience provided by reality. Other, perhaps milder challenges to the value of theory in PSE-related input may be found in the literature (Pearson 1985, Kinchloe and Steinberg 1993, Standish 1995), and it is likely that most PSE-related input is delivered without recourse to theoretical considerations.

Theory and philosophy are however inherent in this field. The concepts underlying social maturity cannot easily be disentangled from their social context, which is by its nature based on religious, political, philosophical and theoretical considerations. Those delivering the input may have religious, political or philosophical viewpoints which inform the work they do, and influence their selection and interpretation of learning experiences. Even where there are no individual views of this kind input may be offered on a "common sense, everybody knows" basis which in fact has unacknowledged theoretical and philosophical origins.

One area of theory which may, directly or indirectly, inform PSE-related transition to adulthood, is that of stage theory. The theories of Piaget (Richmond 1970) and Kohlberg

(1984, 1985) have been key theories in education in the latter half of the twentieth century, and both are stage-based. Although they have been helpful in enabling teachers to tailor learning experiences more appropriately to their pupils, there are drawbacks within the inherent theory of stages and readiness which are not helpful to the young person with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Stage theories allow educators to believe that because the young person cannot do or understand one thing, they cannot therefore do or understand another. Learning experiences are offered in accordance with the stage of which the young person is felt to be capable, and this may restrict what is offered. If a young person is thought not to be able to think abstractly, because he or she is not at that stage, opportunities to think abstractly may not be offered. Consequently, the many aspects of social maturity which rely on the capacity for abstract thought may not be offered.

Within PSE-related transition to adulthood input there is therefore a full range of theoretical influence available, from underlying educational, curricular or psychotherapeutic theories, to none at all. However the breadth and scope of learning experience which could be considered as appropriate within the field of social maturity and transition to adulthood can itself be considered as limitless, and a way must be found for educators to select what is most helpful to the learner. In part this should be a direct response to the learner's individual needs, but beyond this immediate response there is a need for something more to help the educator to structure and direct learning towards its more advanced levels, and to plan appropriate learning experiences accordingly.

Bandura's (1986) view is that the value of a theory lies in its explanatory and predictive power, and its power to bring about change. When it comes to the education of young people with LDD, it is the view of this researcher that Bandura's Social Cognitive theory offers a valuable way forward, one that removes the limitations of earlier theoretical structures and their resulting expectations, to the advantage of young learners.

Stage theory is not a good tool for achieving the social maturity of young people with LDD, because it imposes a framework which allows for underexpectation and the limitation, however well-meaning, of learning experiences. Social Cognitive theory is a better

tool for this job because it acknowledges the reciprocal nature of stimuli for learning. It allows for reflection, thought, and learning by modelling and rehearsal, all of which are important methods for teaching those whose interactions with the daily world are hampered by difficulty or disability. Social Cognitive theory's use of observation, forethought, and self-reflection as tools to support social functioning can aid the autonomy of young people who may not have the same range of social access as some of their peers.

Social Cognitive theory is valuable because it does not limit development to linear, stage-based progression, allowing for a wider range of expectation and input on the part of the teachers and lecturers. The theory is relevant for any learners, across the whole range of cognitive ability, which means also that it is non-discriminatory. The theory therefore has consequences for PSE methodology, and for the teaching of those with LDD in PSE, transition to adulthood, and other areas.

Bandura's Social Cognitive theory holds that learning does not take place in a linear, Behaviourist fashion progressing from antecedent to behaviour to consequent, but is subject to the interactive influences of personal and cognitive factors, environmental factors and behaviour, with the mind ranging back and forth integrating past experiences and future probabilities and personal and vicarious experience, before committing to a course of action. The theory also argues that these processes are not subject to stages, but to experience and capability, including the capability for thought.

The theory therefore opens up the possibility that the performance of young people with LDD can be improved by attention to cultivating their thinking skills and experience. While many teachers would claim that this is already the purpose of their work, Social Cognitive theory removes the restraints upon expectation imposed by Behaviourist and stage theory concepts, so that it becomes possible to expect more, and thereby to achieve more with the students, as Mittler suggests (Mittler 1979, p.21). The possible contribution of Social Cognitive theory as a focal theory for this field will be further explored in Chapter Thirteen.

The empirical research says little about established theory, although admittedly no questions relating to theory were included in the surveys or interviews. No mention of

theoretical concepts or approaches was offered by the respondents. PSE-related transition to adulthood in practice therefore seems to follow a pragmatic approach.

An exploration of just what teachers and lecturers are basing their work on, including any theoretical or philosophical aspects, would make an interesting area for future research. However, for many teachers and lecturers, the work is quite straightforwardly based on the requirements of the accredited modules and the Further Education funding arrangements. Beyond these an understanding of, and willingness to meet, students' individual social and educational learning needs is desirable. Theory does not figure in the everyday delivery of these courses.

#### Assessment and Evaluation: the Difficulties

There are a number of fundamental difficulties surrounding assessment and evaluation of PSE-related input, including transition to adulthood courses. The difficulties may be theoretical, conceptual, operational and/or practical. There are problems of definition and conceptual understanding of some of the terms in use in this area, such as 'fairness' or 'maturity' and there is difficulty because of the broadness of the field. In terms of measures used, there are limitations within the procedures and instruments purporting to measure aspects of social functioning and maturity of thought, including difficulties of establishing validity, reliability and standardisation. There is a risk of trivialisation when criterion-based lists of competencies are used, and competency approaches themselves take no account of motivation or transferability.

There are ethical obstacles relating to intrusiveness and privacy, and the right to question, and there are issues raised about the place of formal and standardised assessment in PSE-related work generally; however there are difficulties in recommending alternatives. Observer and professional judgement are dominant in measures of social competency and maturity and the empirical research generally shows a reliance on professional judgement, together with self-evaluation, in the assessment and evaluation of transition to adulthood input.

As previously noted, Wakeman (1984, p.67) distinguishes between assessment and evaluation, describing assessment in PSE as the process of determining what a student has learned in relation to a particular aim or process, while evaluation is the description and gathering of information about the effects and value of educational activities. However, the terms are often used interchangeably, hampered particularly in PSE-related activities by the difficulty of determining outcomes. With the loss of distinction between the two terms there is loss of clarity about what is actually intended or desired in assessment and evaluation procedures. A range of approaches including profiling, formative assessment and combinations of tests and evaluative measures have developed to countermand the difficulties of assessment. However, the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1986, p.147) identifies a continuing need for greater consistency in assessment and evaluation informing transition to adulthood studies.

#### Recent Approaches to Assessment and Evaluation, Including Quality Approaches

The view is now established that students with LDD should be working towards progressively advancing goals, although progression can be taken to mean incremental or lateral progress, or the maintenance of existing levels when the student is faced with circumstances which may cause regression, such as illness or a medical disability. Consequently there is a greater requirement to find ways of demonstrating progression through evaluation and assessment. Because of the reformed funding arrangements, assessment and evaluation now have a higher level of importance in Further Education. Assessment takes place when or before a student with LDD embarks on a course, during the course, and in establishing the outcomes in terms of accreditation of the course.

Recent approaches include those of formative and summative assessment, established in the *Record of Achievement* process and developed through the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative. Profiling is recommended by some sources (David 1983, Pring 1984, McNiff 1986), either through the use of a published profiling measure, or the use of a range of comments collected among colleagues. In some instances assessment is based on the successful completion of a number of measures within the assessment scheme.

The empirical research shows assessment and evaluation to be reliant upon professional judgement, student satisfaction and review. These are in common use and could be highly informative and helpful if used in a rigorous way. For example, self-review and performance review could be linked to the use of a quality profile or performance indicators, hard and soft, and goal setting. Frequently colleges use questionnaires to establish students' satisfaction about their own performance and the course. It is, however, likely that both written and verbal responses from the client group are subject to a considerable level of prompting.

Assessment and evaluation have become closely linked with outcomes, and approaches have developed around performance indicators, competency, and quality. The composite nature of a performance indicator allows progress to be identified and good practice to be linked with improvement. The Rathbone Society (1990, p.1-10) recommendation of distinguishing between 'hard' and 'soft' indicators attempts to identify qualities which are helpful in the assessment and evaluation of social maturity, but, as is often the case, the clarification of what these indicators should be and how they should be measured, awaits further development.

Assessment, quality and competence measures are not without their critics. In addition to its concern about the lack of consistency among assessment, evaluation and quality measures, the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996) also warns against an over dependence of the assessment procedures linked to accreditation, so that the requirements of the assessment scheme effectively provide the curriculum followed. Hyland (1993, p.66) warns against the use of competency statements because they do not demonstrate necessary underlying knowledge or understanding. Sallis (1993, p.22-23) points out that quality can be absolute or relative. Quality 'kitemarks' are frequently sought by colleges as proof of excellence. Quality, however, can exist without them, and 'kitemarks' are not, of themselves, sufficient.

In seeking data about the quality in transition to adulthood courses, modules or input, a weakness in the quantitative research became clear in retrospect. This was that it was not certain whether the quality under discussion was that of the students' work, or the

course. Respondents did not question this, so it is not as clear as it should be to what they thought they were responding, and describing in their answers. Nevertheless answers were provided, and are perhaps best taken as giving a general understanding of how quality is assessed in this area.

The regional survey shows that the evaluation and assessment of quality in transition to adulthood work is accomplished by the teachers or lecturers delivering the input, by regular review and evaluation, by student satisfaction and for some colleges, by comparison with the requirements of accreditation. Except for the last, these are subjective forms of assessment and as such they are vulnerable to bias, influence, and vagueness. However, outcomes-based checklists are unsatisfactory for different reasons, focusing on small, isolated fragments of large, interconnected experiences. Subjective evaluation and assessment and outcomes-based checklists, are nevertheless common approaches. Both are hampered by the breadth of the curriculum area and the problems of definition within the concept of transition to adulthood.

The survey's enquiry concerning the identification of successful completion of the course or element continues this theme. The main ways of identifying successful completion are professional judgement, student self-appraisal, and completion of assignments (not in specific order). A reliance on subjective judgement may therefore be evident in this area. For some colleges successful completion of the course is identified through the meeting of pre-decided criteria, which may or may not be linked to accreditation requirements.

#### Possible contributions towards improving the quality of the target courses

The Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996, p.160) describes quality assurance within Further Education provision for young people with LDD, as variable, with a lack of comprehensive quality assurance and a lack of high standards. The question of how quality can be improved is therefore a relevant one. In education quality is currently linked to outcomes measured against performance indicators; In Scotland, the use of the Quality of Learning and Teaching Profile (HMI 1990) is regarded as a Performance Indicator in its own right.

In describing how they assess quality in the area of transition to adulthood work, the colleges in the regional survey show a reliance upon in-house procedures and subjective judgement. Quality is also linked to satisfaction of the accreditation requirements. The difficulties of clarifying or quantifying desirable student outcomes are largely avoided; one of the Expert Witnesses describes the difficulty for the member of staff when a student's preferred outcome differs from that of the staff member.

A useful measure to aid the identification of the quality of the target courses might be further exploration of the concept of the quality profile, which could be used both for course input and for the evaluation of student work. The profile could be compiled through discussion with those involved, at both student and teacher/lecturer level. Team or group, rather than individual performance could be evaluated against a scale, thus reducing the level of personal threat, and taking advantage of the benefits of the cooperative learning process. The quality profile could then be used to identify any external factors which may hamper the achievement of high quality in any area, and set further quality targets for a subsequent quality review.

### Curricular Content

The preliminary survey identified the overall aim of the target courses and modules as transition to adulthood, but it has been shown how broad and how vague an aim this may be. The preliminary survey also showed that there was uncertainty as to what the target courses were concerned with, for example as in the relationship between core skills and transition to adulthood courses. As a purpose of PSE-related transition to adulthood modules and courses the gaining of core skills did not figure highly; in the main survey questions about core skills were therefore not included, nor were they nominated separately by respondents.

In the regional survey colleges were asked to identify how they decided curriculum content, and the relative importance of different curricular elements. The results show that the content of PSE-related transition to adulthood input is decided through the assessment of students needs, through student input, and through professional judgement. Evaluation of the previous courses as a means of deciding content scores quite highly, and the general

picture suggests a reliance on internal and judgmental rather than external or evaluative methods of deciding content.

How professional judgement interprets the student assessment and input is clarified by the responses to the question regarding the relative importance of particular curricular elements. The most important of these are shown to be: independence preparation, personal identity, personal relationships and communication. It can be seen that these are all fairly broad terms which could be interpreted in many different ways.

It is noted in Chapter Nine that in responding to this question, broader, vaguer categories attracted higher scores while the more specific or controversial categories attracted lower scores. The exception is the category of prejudice or stereotypes, with which teachers apparently felt more confident. It may be that the broader categories attract more support because being more general, more of what people considered to be important falls within them. Alternatively, they may have been chosen because, being vaguer, respondents felt safer in nominating them than in being pinned down to specifics.

Given the range of possible educational experiences within each of these areas, and the range of course and module titles through which it is delivered, it is possible that this seeming concurrence masks a wide variety of input. Further research would be needed to establish exactly what is being offered within these identified curriculum areas. As has been pointed out, this input can become expressed in terms of activities which do not relate closely to the curriculum intention, such as the production of fairy cakes and padded coat hangers.

The literature indicates that there is little agreement or consistency informing the discussion regarding curriculum content. The analyses of PSE and transition to adulthood curricula described in Chapter Five are once again hampered by problems of definition, and also by differences of approach. For some individuals the work is concerned with the gaining of practical skills, while for others predominance should be given to the education of the emotions. This last area is prominent in the literature, but its importance is not borne out in delivery, or in the survey.

## Summarising and Analysing the Outcomes of the Research

Within the plan of the research nine objectives are described, the purposes of which are largely investigative. The original objectives are considered in relation to the information gained through the research project:

### 1. Give an overview of the field, of the teaching of transition to adulthood skills to young people with LDD:

Meager, Evans and Dench (1997, p.1) estimate the post-sixteen population of students with LDD at the time of their research, as in the region of 126,500 students. These are distributed fairly evenly among all college types (Meager, Evans and Dench 1997, p.16) and are more highly represented in agriculture and horticulture colleges. However, not all colleges cater for the same range of students. The smallest proportion of students with LDD is in London (3.4 percent), and the largest is in the West Midlands.

The empirical research in this study is directed towards mainstream Further Education and tertiary colleges. Within the sample, nearly two-thirds of colleges offer discrete personal and social education transition to adulthood input. Most such courses are accredited, and take place in sessions of one to two hours, more than once a week. There is little variation between the three regions studied in the regional survey; variation tends to reflect a matter of emphasis rather than different choices. The outcomes of the empirical research are therefore considered to be reasonably representative of provision throughout England as a whole.

### 2. Consider the literature with a view to establishing the theoretical bases for PSE-related transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD.

Theoretical influences upon this area of work are complex and varied and are discussed in detail in this chapter and in Chapter Four. Background theory includes theories of education and learning processes, curriculum, moral development, psychoanalytical and psychotherapeutic theory, theory of adolescence, and social theory. These have their origins in older theoretical and philosophical concerns about the nature and function of the good person in society, and the purposes of education. Although arguably the key theories of education in the latter part of the twentieth century have been Piaget's developmental theory

of learning, and Kohlberg's theory of moral development, it is possible that these theoretical approaches do little for pupils and students with LDD.

There is no focal theory for transition to adulthood work, although perhaps the theoretical aspects of social psychology come closest. The research suggests that an understanding of Social Cognitive theory could usefully inform PSE-related transition to adulthood studies.

### 3. Clarify the difficulties surrounding the assessment of transition to adulthood courses for young people with LDD:

The difficulties surrounding assessment and evaluation in this work are also varied and complex, and in part this is because of its lack of theoretical underpinnings. Lack of theoretical foundations leads to lack of definition or common understanding about the purposes of the work. This in turn creates difficulties in identifying desirable outcomes, and outcomes are also difficult to identify because they may come about at some indefinable point in the future, outside the control of educators. Difficulties also rise from the matter of selection of assessment techniques.

Lack of common agreement about what is desirable in this work is complicated by lack of common agreement about what may constitute adulthood. The literature suggests two distinct approaches, one concerned with pragmatic learning, the other concerned with the education of ideas and emotions. In reality the work offered may draw, with haphazard selection, from both areas of work. At their best the learning tasks will be practically based and will be in direct, sensitive response to identified and agreed student needs, including emotional needs. In reality assessment tasks may be governed by resources and resourcefulness, and on the accreditation requirements of the scheme being followed.

### 4. Consider recent approaches to assessment and evaluation and their possible application to the target courses, with a view to improving the quality of these courses:

When the Assessment of Performance Unit set out in 1981 to identify assessment measures that could be applied to personal and social development, their intention was to map the work against existing valid and reliable, normative tests. This did not, however, prove to be a viable approach (APU 1981, Foreword). Tests of maturity and social functioning such as

behaviour rating scales exist, however these are not usually available to teachers and lecturers. Assessment and evaluation is more commonly carried out through a measures available to teachers and lecturers rather than educational psychologists, and may draw on a range of approaches, described in item six below.

Further Education colleges assess students' needs at or preferably before entry and often seek information about student satisfaction by means of questionnaires on completion of the course or module. To improve the quality of the courses more use could be made of reviewing the course successes and failures against pre-decided criteria developed as part of the course design process, by devising a quality profile which can develop to take on the review recommendations, and by using a quality approach that incorporates the expectation of responsiveness and improvement. An example of such a departmental quality profile is given and discussed in Chapter Thirteen.

5. Investigate through empirical research, and gather information about, the curricular content of transition to adulthood courses currently in place;

The literature indicates a division between approaches which favour the gaining of practical tasks and those which favour less tenable concepts such as the education of the emotions, and relationships. The surveys conducted in the course of this research indicate some confusion as to what should be the content of PSE-related transition to adulthood. Preferences favour the more nebulous, less contentious categories of choice.

The ways of deciding course content are largely dependent upon the assessment of students' needs, and personal judgement, including professional judgement and student's suggestions and/or feedback. Less influential in these decisions are external resources, including publications, quality measures, and the colleges development plan. Accreditation requirements do not figure highly in the selection of course content, so that the process may appear rather inward looking, lacking the benefit of outside referents.

6. Investigate through empirical research, and gather information about, the evaluation and assessment processes used in transition to adulthood courses currently in place;

PSE-related transition to adulthood courses have developed without recourse to a standardised, consistent approach to assessment and evaluation. Approaches available to

teachers and lecturers include formative and summative assessment, which may include testing, profiling, and checklists, some of which are home-grown, and others which are commercially available.

Currently, assessment against competency statements and outcomes may be used, and continuous assessment rather than end of course tests or examinations is usual. The Behaviourist approach has included repetition of a task against a number of trials, to gauge the gaining and maintaining of skills. The Scottish approach assesses progress in a Further Education PSE module against a range of standardised, agreed procedures which may include tasks, tests, and/or the presentation of a portfolio of work. Performance Indicators have become widely used in education. However, because of the difficulties regarding outcomes, the literature is not informative as to how Performance Indicators might be used in this particular area of work.

The empirical research shows that assessment and evaluation are now closely linked to the requirements of accreditation. However with or without this framework, the main assessment and evaluation methods currently in use are concerned with personal judgement; professional judgement on the part of teachers and lecturers, and self-review on the part of the students.

7. Investigate through empirical research, and gather information about, the quality measures used to maintain and improve standards in the target courses;

When colleges were asked about how they assessed quality in the target courses, responses showed that professional judgement, student satisfaction feedback and regular review and evaluation were the most common means of accomplishing this. No more explicit information about the methods of review and evaluation were sought, and this could usefully form an area of further enquiry.

Once again external sources or quality measures did not figure highly in the choices, and worryingly, the quality of the work is not often matched to previously decided criteria, removing an opportunity for objectivity. Where external referents were used, these were generally the internal or external verifier(s) for the course.

## 8. Identify from the research directions for improving the quality of such courses

Quality in transition to adulthood studies is linked to input, process and outcome. 'Input' includes not only the effective assessment of incoming students but the availability of access through progression to other courses. Input for teachers and tutors includes training and professional discourse which allow for increased theoretical, philosophical and methodological understanding.

'Process' includes breadth and maturity of content, tasks which are practically based but which do not dodge the more complex or abstract issues, and assessment and evaluation measures that are a regular part of the course structure and which do not rely on internal judgements.

'Outcomes' are not always easy to measure, since they are linked to the effectiveness of young adults in functioning in the social context, but can be related in the short or longer view, to actions which are autonomous and which enable the young person to develop confidence and coping skills, both practical and emotional.

## 9. Apply these findings in an attempt to construct a model of good PSE-related transition to adulthood work for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.

From the findings of this study, a model of good practice in PSE-related transition to adulthood work will include the following characteristics:

Management will pay attention to providing good quality staff, offering regular training opportunities, and resourcing the courses adequately in terms of funds, space, and time. There will be access and transfer to other courses within the college, and the status of transition to adulthood courses will be accepted as equal to other courses. Management and staff will be prepared to be flexible.

Curriculum content will address emotional and practical learning, delivered through a range of stimuli and teaching and learning techniques, with a focus on practical work and preparation for real-life experiences. There will be a theoretical basis for this work, grounded in professional discourse about purpose, content and methodology. The recommended theoretical basis is that of Social Cognitive theory, which postulates five areas of capability: symbolising, forethought, vicarious, self-regulatory and self-reflective capability, acting on

three areas of information: the enactive, the symbolic and the vicarious. Teaching will therefore promote thinking ahead, rule-gathering, consideration of alternatives, and thinking about what has been seen and done, what has been learned from experiences, and what could be done differently. The recommended content areas will include those identified by the literature: social awareness, health and hygiene, quality of life, personal relationships, occupations development, communication and interaction, independence preparation, morality, critical faculties, personal and leisure interests, environmental development, money and economic awareness, and religions and philosophies of life. The curriculum will be matched to students' learning needs. Care will be taken that Affective elements are not eroded over time.

The courses will be subject to regular internal review and evaluation in addition to any accreditation requirements, and this review will include objective measures and well as personal judgement. There will be an underlying expectation of continuous improvement of quality in the courses, and autonomy in the students. Curriculum will not side-step the difficult issues, and staff will need appropriate guidance for these.

As a result of this research the characteristics of good quality in the target courses can be concerned with the input to the courses, the processes, and the outcomes. These should include regular review of course effectiveness in terms of identified quality indicators, and move the focus away from a deficit-based, 'within student' model towards a model which places responsibility for progress and development upon the colleges and the provision they offer. Further discussion about the characteristics of good quality in transition to adulthood courses as identified through the research, and considerations about their application, take place in Chapter Thirteen.

### Conclusion:

Taken in total the research shows that the basic, fundamental issues informing transition to adulthood studies remain unresolved. There is no consensus as to what should be the nature of this work, and on close examination the scope of what at first sight might seem a

straightforward area of teaching and learning is huge, immensely complex, and more culturally biased than at first might be realised.

The question of how this work may be assessed proves to be equally difficult because of these problems of definition. However, a change of emphasis towards evaluation and quality management may prove more fruitful in informing course content and delivery.

In the main qualitative research, consisting of a survey of three Further Education regions, the null hypothesis is proved, showing that there is no significant difference between what is offered in transition to adulthood work among the three regions. While not all colleges offer discrete courses, the majority of colleges do, and the provision they offer is likely to be similar throughout England. The structure and approach to the courses is similar and is controlled by the accreditation processes of the accrediting bodies.

The purposes of the research are therefore met, these being to investigate the nature of transition to adulthood input for young people with LDD in further education, and to explore how it might be judged, and improved, identifying in the process the characteristics of good quality in this field.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE WAY FORWARD

#### Introduction

In bringing together and summarising the different aspects of research in this study, a picture emerges of a significant educational field in which committed educators operate almost without referents, other than those imposed by accreditation schemes, funding requirements, and a kind of innate sense of what is appropriate. Transition to adulthood studies in one form or another are likely to be present in most English Further Education colleges, although some colleges have ceased to offer this as this discrete input.

This chapter broadens the discussion of the findings to explore further their potential for informing transition to adulthood studies. The theoretical context, and in particular the potential contribution of Social Cognitive theory, is examined more closely. The characteristics of quality informing transition to adulthood studies are considered within the framework of input, process and outcome.

In bringing together the outcomes of the research it then becomes possible to recommend ways forward in order to address the difficulties and dichotomies inherent in PSE-related transition to adulthood input. As an area of education this has gained support in spite of the progress made towards inclusion within the wider setting of the Further Education College. Transition to adulthood studies seem likely to become significant in the curriculum for students with severe or profound and multiple learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Social Cognitive theory is endorsed as the theoretical basis for this work. The identified characteristics of quality, discussed in terms of input, process and outcome, are applied to the development of a curriculum for adulthood, which is described together with its possibilities for implementation. A departmental quality profile is also devised, for use within the context of a quality cycle and departmental quality audit, so that the development and maintenance of quality in the target courses, modules and elements is always to the fore.

The chapter concludes with identification of the broad ways in which PSE-related transition to adulthood studies can be improved.

### The Theoretical Context

Quicke (1985 p.89) shows that there is a link between PSE and social psychology. Transition to adulthood studies can be therefore be regarded as the largely unacknowledged offspring of social psychology. While this area may not attract attention within the field of social psychological study, nevertheless what is offered through transition to adulthood studies is closely related to the interests of social psychology. Every day teachers and lecturers are investigating the social responses of a particular client group, that of young people with LDD, and offering input to enable them to match a set of informal, unacknowledged, but nevertheless real social expectations. Transition to adulthood studies may perhaps be viewed as applied social psychology.

Social psychology is concerned with understanding how people are affected by each others' thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Deaux, Dane and Wrightsman 1993). It examines group dynamics, the self, social motives, enduring relationships, and attitudes (Sabini 1992). All these are the business of transition to adulthood studies, particularly where personal, social and emotional elements inform the course. However, teachers and lecturers normally work in these areas without the philosophical structures or ethical considerations informing social psychology as a discipline.

The significance of what is being offered through transition to adulthood studies should be recognised, as should its potential to address the learning needs of other young people. Good teaching for young people with LDD is also good teaching for those without such difficulties, and for those who are disaffected. For the full potential of transition to adulthood input to be realised, teachers and lecturers must feel confident to tackle the difficult issues as well as the safer ones, and must receive backing from managers and carers in doing so. Care and thought must be given to those areas where difficult issues overlap with personal and privacy considerations. Overall, more rigour is needed.

A central aim of public education might be seen as a form of social engineering, that of preparing society's younger members to contribute to the social good, as it is understood to be. The current ethos of self-realisation does not mask the fact that society requires its members to help that society to develop and improve. Even if one wishes to argue that there is no such thing as society nevertheless it is a political reality, since the validation of governments arises from their capacity to deliver social improvement (there may of course be conflicting opinions as to what constitutes improvement). Educational trends and reforms may be presented as humanitarian in origin but they also carry a powerful economic purpose, and this remains true for transition to adulthood studies. In this case the human and economic costs are those of dependence and institutionalisation.

#### The Contribution of Social Cognitive Theory:

As has been discussed in Chapter Four, Social Cognitive theory is a social psychological theory which explains human functioning in terms of the reciprocal influence of three areas: behaviour; personal and other cognitive events; and environment (Bandura 1986). These act as determinants of each other, in a continuous dynamic process. Bandura's theory states that individuals receive information through three sources, which are the Enactive, the Symbolic, and the Vicarious.

These areas of influence and sources of information act upon five basic human capabilities: the capabilities for symbolising, forethought, vicarious learning, self-regulation, and self-reflection. By focusing learning upon these five capabilities Bandura holds that cognitive skills can be developed so that the individual's functioning, including functioning in the social setting, can be increased. Social Cognitive theory therefore places emphasis upon the power of thinking to influence and enhance learning. The theory is essentially concerned with the thinking process, how it is used in learning, and how by its application better functioning can be achieved over the whole range of cognitive ability. For the transition to adulthood teacher these offer a way forward, providing a structure and focus for determining learning experiences which will improve the students' cognition.

Bandura makes a strong case for the power of observational learning, in contrast to the long-standing view that concrete, practical learning is best. Observational and vicarious experience of behaviour modelled by others enable us to infer and devise rules for our own actions without directly experiencing those events ourselves. Second hand learning can therefore be powerful if used properly, and is particularly relevant to those whose daily interactions are hampered by difficulty or disability. Understanding and maturity can develop through second-hand learning, especially when applied in partnership with relevant and focused practical learning.

All learning whether practical, vicarious or abstract should aim to develop thinking skills. From the Social Cognitive viewpoint these include the learner's ability to find rules and predictive factors, extrapolate, think ahead, review, and consider alternatives and their application to themselves. These should be followed by practice, rehearsal, and action in the real context. Optimum learning is achieved when these thinking processes are applied to practical learning situations, in a cycle of observation, thought and analysis, and action.

Social Cognitive theory holds that cognitive skills can be improved by observational learning, and that seeing and understanding what does not work, conveys more information than seeing what does. However, it is pointed out that knowledge alone does not ensure that the relevant features of the observed event will be noticed, and that there are implications here for the development of attention skills. Also, knowledge alone does not guarantee skilled performance, so that testing knowledge against reality is important (Bandura 1986).

Information-processing difficulties can play a large part in hampering the learning of young people with LDD. Social Cognitive theory, in addressing the development of thinking and learning skills in a social context, is largely concerned with improving information processing. This approach can be applied to improve the thinking, response and action skills of students with severe learning difficulties as with other difficulties, since the key to effective learning is to offer these thinking tools, capable of great sophistication, at a simple level to start with, in ways which call on the personal and emotional responses of the individual, but which lead to practical application in the real world.

## The Characteristics of Quality: Input, Process and Outcome

This study links quality in transition to adulthood studies to input, process and outcome. Continuing this theme it is possible to apply the advice identified through the research, to a broader discussion of what a good quality transition to adulthood course or module for young people with LDD might be like.

### Quality of Input

Students may need careful guidance and assessment, but there will also be available a range of courses, including supported mainstream courses, to meet their needs. Students' wishes and ambitions will be seen as of paramount importance, and the views of their parents and carers will be taken into consideration. Staff should work in this area because they wish to be interested and involved, and should preferably also be teachers of mainstream courses. They should bring to the provision a different set of ideas and concepts than those that may be held in secondary schools, and these should include an underlying commitment to developing rights, independence and self-advocacy (although these should also be evident in the secondary school). Staff should also have an expanded concept of what is normal, which will include the rights of students with LDD to be as they are, rather than to seek always to realign them with an imagined but not articulated norm.

In order to deliver quality in this provision, college management will have an understanding of the wider potential of this work to inform and improve quality of provision throughout the college and will support the staff by demonstrating understanding, flair and imagination. Flexibility will be permitted and encouraged. There will be a match between resources (income to the college) brought in by these students, and the resources used to support them. The LDD provision will not exist in isolation, but a system which links LDD staff with other learning teams in the college will be in place. Accommodation will allow for a range of appropriate environments, tools and equipment as well as consumable resources.

## Quality of Process

The curriculum delivered to the students will relate directly to their learning needs. Where these may be met through the delivery of accredited modules these may be used satisfactorily, but care should be taken that accreditation requirements do not 'drive' the teaching. The curriculum will have a structure, but will also have the flexibility and responsiveness to address relevant issues as they arise. Students as well as staff will be involved in the curricular planning, and the curriculum will respect students' requests for input.

Teaching input should address emotional and cognitive needs as well as practical needs. Use should be made of observational learning and the development of thinking skills, and knowledge and understanding gained from these will be directed towards improving functioning in practical tasks. Teaching will seek to develop the five cognitive capabilities described by Bandura (1986); these are the capability for symbolising, forethought, vicarious learning, self-regulation and self-reflection.

Learning tasks will be individualised, practically based as far as possible, relevant to students' daily lives and perceived as such by them. Difficult or controversial issues will not be avoided. A broad variety of stimuli and media will be used, avoiding over reliance on paper and pencil tasks and discussion. Ultimately the aim will be for students to become autonomous as far as they can in their daily life. This includes the understanding that being autonomous does not mean having to do everything oneself.

The course will be subject to regular review and evaluation both with the students and among staff. There will be a desire for continuous improvement of quality, and a mechanism for quality evaluation and the setting of quality targets. Students' work will also be regularly reviewed using a range of assessment and evaluation measures, and the outcomes of the review will be regularly recorded. Students will be encouraged to set their own targets, and to make them time-related rather than open-ended; for example students may say that they would want to complete a certain piece of work, or reach a certain standard, by a given date.

Finally, transition to adulthood courses will be acknowledged as a regular part of the whole range of courses. Students will be able to transfer to, or experience in part, other mainstream courses, and staff who teach students with learning difficulties and /or disabilities will also teach on mainstream courses. There will be support from the college management for a view of these courses and modules as having the same status as other courses.

### Quality of Outcome

The difficulties with the identification of outcomes are attendant upon the difficulties with assessment and evaluation which have been described in some detail throughout this study. The question has been asked whether a partial solution is better than no solution, or whether a number of partial solutions can compensate for the lack of a whole one. The answer is that they may have to, and that the way through this difficulty is to incorporate a range of measures in the assessment process, not all of which rely totally upon subjective judgement.

It may be quite possible to build a good quality course around the successful identification of good learning objectives and the operationalising of them into relevant learning experiences. Rather than attempting to measure progression in terms of individuals' social maturity or competence, as was the original intention of the APU (1981), it may be more fruitful to assess and evaluate the effectiveness of the course by way of a number of desirable outcomes, identified through the research.

Outcomes may be seen in terms of progression, qualification or employment, but should also include less easily defined characteristics such as confidence, resourcefulness, and self-control. They may be time-related, for example through the setting of targets as to what the student should be likely, or able, to do in one, or three, or five years. Outcomes and targets could also reasonably be linked to students' desired outcomes. A consideration of outcomes should take into account the rights, requirements and responsibilities of legal status for the young adult (Wright 1990, Appendix XII).

### Further considerations

It is worth considering whether what students want from their courses and what Further Education personnel, or parents, want from the courses are the same thing, but all those

involved might say that what they seek from the courses is the development of maturity in the young person. The nature of maturity is difficult to define, as has been discussed elsewhere. However for this researcher it resides in two factors: in any circumstance closely and directly concerning the young person, who initiates action, and who sustains action? To the degree which this is not the young person in question, that person is not acting autonomously, and by association, maturely. Pring (1984) has a definition of autonomy which is similar, but in which action is implied rather than stated. Writing in the context of PSME, he says:

Autonomy in the first sense refers to the ability to make up one's own mind about what is right or wrong.... Autonomy refers to the ability to stick to those principles, not requiring those social props that weaker mortals require to keep them on the straight and narrow path of virtue they have freely chosen (Pring 1984 p. 72-73).

Autonomy and maturity may not be interchangeable, but they are closely linked in the purpose of transition to adulthood. Courses and modules may therefore be judged by the degree to which they encourage and enable young people to initiate and sustain the circumstances of their individual lives, bearing in mind the fact that autonomy or independence, does not mean having to do everything alone. The autonomous, empowered individual knows this and knows how, when and where to seek for help and support.

The empirical research identifies more support for some curriculum areas than for others. It is of some concern that religious and philosophical awareness, political awareness and controversial issues are considered to be unimportant in transition to adulthood work, as these are aspects of a mature social identity. Overlooking religious and philosophical awareness fails to take into account the fact that many young people with LDD may come from families with a religious or philosophical commitment, or may have such a commitment themselves, at their own level of understanding. Some will have been taken to Lourdes in the hope of a miraculous cure for their mental or physical disabilities. Young people with LDD may spend time pondering the deeper issues of life, albeit by way of a simplified vocabulary, and should be given the opportunity to explore these issues; it should not be assumed that they do not or cannot understand.

The same approach is desirable in considering political and controversial issues. These after all influence the control and passage of the daily lives of young people with LDD

in the same way as they influence the lives of other social groups. Without purposeful work, many young people with LDD watch a lot of television, and will absorb its messages. Many members of this client group, if asked to extrapolate on current 'soap opera' plot lines, will be able to do so with ease and with an understanding of the issues involved. For many such young people, their own lives will have contained similarly dramatic episodes; one of the Expert Witnesses points out how complex are student lives, although others less well informed might think those lives to be simpler than their own. Students may need to be shown ways of dealing with such issues, or getting help to deal with them; their political and social rights should not be overlooked.

Staff training may be needed to ensure that student needs and curricular priorities, once identified, become translated into relevant teaching and learning; this is the curriculum process, as described by one of the Expert Witnesses. The PSE literature reveals a wide range of approaches and techniques but, as has been pointed out, it is the relevant application of these which brings about quality, not their deployment for their own sake.

Good quality teaching for students with LDD must be based on developing thinking skills, and applying them to practical experiences. There must not be a reliance on paper and pencil tasks and worksheets although these, and group discussions, are easy and cheap, and may provide a sense of achievement when completed; they may be viewed as a kind of baseline methodology.

Practical experiences include residential experience, which may yield results in a number of different aspects of maturity. Practical experiences may also include working in the arts, particularly drama. To use this effectively requires an understanding of its possible applications, rather than techniques alone. An understanding of this potential for gaining social maturity through the subject approach suggests that it can be applied in any subject area. However, staff training is needed to provide the insight to enable teachers to realise this potential in their own subject areas.

There is therefore a need for what will be to some a new approach, in understanding how to use the subject to teach, rather than teaching the subject. Increasing the emphasis of practical learning increases the resource costs, and colleges may not be

very willing to do this. There may also be a risk in that, when so much may be novel to the students, the teaching of what is new for the sake of broadening experience may be considered as sufficient in itself. However in the opinion of this researcher it is not; there may be no connection with other understanding in the client.

To be truly effective, learning and teaching have to be connected together, and learning experiences for the students must be connected to the students. However, learning experience must then connect the student to the larger world, or else the student may not progress beyond an egocentric analysis of his or her own individual independence, personal identity and relationships, and communication issues.

### A Curriculum for Adulthood

Drawing upon the findings from the literature research and the information gained from the empirical research, it is possible to suggest a curricular framework for transition to adulthood studies which is broad enough to accommodate students with severe and moderate learning difficulties, and others. As Griffiths (1994) points out, post-sixteen education provides a context for this learning, and the empirical research shows the scale of the commitment to discrete courses offering transition to adulthood studies.

Table XXVIII offers a curriculum for adulthood which is framed as a series of questions which are intended to provide starting points. This allows for exploration and development, and for matching students' identified or expressed learning needs to an area of teaching, as well as attending to emotional issues by relating the questions directly to the student. Although the Curriculum for Adulthood is structured to read from left to right, it is offered for use as a matrix from which teachers and lecturers could select any starting points that are relevant for their students. The Curriculum for Adulthood could be used to provide enrichment and support to any accredited module, since the module can be compared with the matrix and areas not covered could be identified and addressed in response to students' learning needs.

The framework draws on, but extends, McBeath's (1988, p.57) structure. Whereas McBeath has 'coming to terms with society' as one area, the suggested Curriculum for

Adulthood divides external 'society' into two areas; those which affect the student more personally and individually, such as community issues and considerations, and those which are more remote and require more abstract thinking, such as global issues. These form the horizontal axis. The vertical axis draws on the areas of desired learning identified from the analysis of PSE and transition to adulthood literature, following the levels of importance awarded there. Coupled with the approaches to learning identified by Bandura (1986) it is considered that this could go some way to fulfilling the requirement for a theoretical and conceptual underpinning for transition to adulthood studies.

**Table XXVIII**  
**A Curriculum for Adulthood**

<b><u>Curriculum areas</u></b>	<b><u>(coming to terms with the individual : myself</u></b>	<b><u>those closest to me: friends and family</u></b>	<b><u>those more widely involved with me: local community</u></b>	<b><u>the world around me</u></b>
<b><u>Social awareness</u></b>	Who am I? What do I understand that to mean?	Who are they? How do I fit in with them? What are my rights and responsibilities here?	Who are they? How do I fit in with them? What are my rights and responsibilities here?	What is important to me in the wider world? What is important to others? What is my part in this?
<b><u>Health and Hygiene</u></b>	Do I know when I am healthy? Do I know when I am not?	How do we (friends and family) stay healthy? Is health only to do with our bodies?	What do we need in our healthy community?	What happens to make people healthy or un-healthy? What could/should I do?
<b><u>Quality of Life</u></b>	What makes life better for me? How can I make that happen?	What makes life better for us (friends and family)? How can we make that happen?	What makes life better for the community? How can we/they make that happen?	What else can we do to help others improve their quality of life?
<b><u>Personal relationships</u></b>	What relationships do I have? What relationships do I want?	Friends and family: how do I treat them? How do they treat me? How do they treat each other?	How should we (community) treat each other? Do I treat people in that way?	What do I find OK or not OK about the way people treat each other? What could/should I do?

**Table XXVIII**  
**A Curriculum for Adulthood (cont.)**

<u>Curriculum areas</u>	<u>(coming to terms with the individual : myself</u>	<u>those closest to me: friends and family</u>	<u>those more widely involved with me: local community</u>	<u>the world around me</u>
<u>Occupational/academic development</u>	What do I want to do - tomorrow, next year, in three years' time?	How does what I want to do affect those close to me?	What I want to do - how can I make it happen?	What else is there to do?
<u>Communication/interaction</u>	How do I communicate?	Who do I communicate with? Who communicates with me, and how? How can we communicate better?	Can I cope or deal with strangers when I am on familiar ground?	Can I cope or deal with strangers when I am in an unfamiliar setting?
<u>Independence preparation</u>	What can I do by myself? When do I need help?	How do I get help?	Who in the community can help me, and how? How can we help each other?	What do I know and what can I do about wider issues and policies affecting me and others?
<u>Morality, etc.</u>	What do I think is right and wrong? Do ideas stay the same?	What do we (friends and family) think is right and wrong? What happens when we differ?	What does the community think is right and wrong? Do I agree? If not, what could or should I do?	What do I think and how do I feel about others' ideas of right and wrong? What are the 'grey' areas and what are my views about them?
<u>Critical faculties</u>	Can I have an idea? Can I make judgements and back them up with reasons?	Can I cope with others' criticism of me? How do I deal with it?	Can I see more than one side of a story, and more than one point of view?	Can I see reasons for and against something? Can I weigh up ideas even when I don't agree with them? Can I make objective judgements?

**Table XXVIII**  
**A Curriculum for Adulthood (cont.)**

<u>Curriculum areas</u>	<u>(coming to terms with the individual : myself</u>	<u>those closest to me: friends and family</u>	<u>those more widely involved with me: local community</u>	<u>the world around me</u>
<u>Personal interests/leisure</u>	What am I interested in? What would I like to do in my spare time?	What do we (friends and family) do in our spare time? What do we do, and what could we do, together?	What leisure opportunities are around me? How can I find out about them?	How can I find out about things further away? How can I get access to them?
<u>Environmental development</u>	Where do I live? What is involved in living here?	Where do we all live? How can I get there? What is good about where we live? What could be better?	What is my local areas? Can I travel in my local area, alone or with help? How can we make the local area better?	What is important to me about the other places in the world? What is important to other people, including those who live there? How can things be made better?
<u>Money/economic awareness</u>	Can I manage my money? Do I know where my money is? Can I keep it safe? Can I shop?	Do I know how I get my money? Do I know how those close to me get and manage money?	Do I know and use my local shops? Can I get my own money out of my account?	Can I shop in a strange town? Do I know about banking, saving, credit arrangements and pitfalls?
<u>Religion/philosophy of life</u>	What do I believe?	What do my friends and family believe?	What do people in my community believe? What are my views about other people's beliefs?	What do other, wider groups believe? Can I accept or do I question the right of others to believe differently? Are there any absolute truths?

## A Quality Audit and a Departmental Quality Profile

Drawing on the findings of the research, and following the lead of the Quality of Learning and Teaching Profile (CAST 1990), it is suggested that colleges could construct their own Quality Audit. This could include whichever measures that the college found useful, but might, for example reasonably include the following:

- Measurement of the 'take-up' of courses, where high take-up would indicate desirability of courses;
- A Client Satisfaction questionnaire for students, where a high level of student satisfaction would indicate appropriateness of the courses;
- A Client Satisfaction questionnaire for parents and carers, where a high level of parent/carer satisfaction would indicate appropriateness of the courses;
- An outcomes/progression record, where a high level of students moving to other, more advanced courses, to employment, to voluntary or sheltered work, or to aspects of daily living which indicate increased autonomy (the college could construct its own list of desired, relatively short term outcomes) would indicate quality in the course
- A Departmental Quality Profile, as suggested in Table XXIX.

Within the Quality Profile, such as in the example shown in Table XXIX, the intention would be to secure consistently high scores, and to pay attention to those areas achieving lower scores. Score values such as 1 for 'never', to 4 for 'always' could be attached to the tick boxes in the Departmental Quality Profile, and the totals achieved expressed as a percentage of overall possible scores. Quality could then be identified by increases in totals, year-on-year and if wished, targets set to achieve higher totals. Alternatively, the Departmental Quality Profile could be used more informally, with the assessment of quality derived from the simpler mechanism of achieving most ticks in the 'usually' and 'always' boxes.

Much of the Quality Audit and the Departmental Quality Profile would still rely on personal, subjective judgement, but this would be tempered by the use of a range of measures. The Departmental Quality Profile could be completed by any number of staff from one to all, working together, or working independently and collating the results. It could also be completed by students, and the results collated. Consistently high scoring in any category in the Quality Profile over a period of time, for example on three consecutive occasions, could lead to the conclusion that quality in that area was secure, and need not be

further included in the Profile. Equally, the Profile could be customised to include criteria of particular interest and concern to a particular college.

The important point about this process is that colleges take on the responsibility for reviewing and improving the quality of their own work in transition to adulthood studies, following a quality cycle which consists of:

- agreement of a definition of quality
- development and implementation in line with the definition of quality evaluation
- application of insights gained to modification and improvement of the definition of quality, providing judgements with a focus and a structure on which to build improvements.

Table XXIX: A Departmental Quality Profile

<u>The Students</u>	<u>never</u>	<u>some- times</u>	<u>usually</u>	<u>always</u>
The students are assessed before they arrive in college				
The students and their parents/carers are involved in the assessment				
Students are free from categorisation				
The whole range of the college's courses is available to students with LDD				
Students and their parents and carers are given the opportunity for full discussion about courses available				
Students' ambitions are recognised and treated with respect, without value judgements being made				
Every effort is made to enable a student to try the courses they want to				
Care is taken that faulty performance is not always attributed to cognitive deficiency				
The key question, 'what is needed to enable this student to learn and achieve?' is asked, and the answers used to inform the curriculum				

<b><u>The College Courses</u></b>	<b><u>never</u></b>	<b><u>some- times</u></b>	<b><u>usually</u></b>	<b><u>always</u></b>
The College judges the quality of its own provision by departmental, peer and/or student assessment				
Students are offered courses that meet their full learning needs, identified through the college assessment				
Courses for students with LDD are adequately resourced				
Students participate in mainstream courses.				
The primary consideration in inclusion matters is not cost, efficiency or convenience, but students' learning needs				
Courses/modules enable students to demonstrate progression.				
Progression is understood in terms of personal and social growth as well as progression through a series of courses				
The course/module is subject to regular quality review				

<b><u>The Staff</u></b>	<b><u>never</u></b>	<b><u>some- times</u></b>	<b><u>usually</u></b>	<b><u>always</u></b>
Teaching staff have regular and relevant in-service training				
Staff are offered the opportunity for professional discourse				
Staff are delivering transition to adulthood studies because they wish to do so, and believe in its value				
Staff also teach on mainstream courses				
Staff are encouraged to be flexible and responsive				
Guidance is available to the staff for tackling difficult or controversial issues				
Staff are satisfied with their own performance				

<b><u>The Curriculum Process</u></b>	<b><u>never</u></b>	<b><u>some- times</u></b>	<b><u>usually</u></b>	<b><u>always</u></b>
The curriculum has a structure				
Students as well as staff are involved in curricular planning				
The curriculum takes account of student's stated requests for learning/input				
There is room for flexibility and responsiveness in the curriculum				
Learning tasks address emotional as well as practical issues				
Learning tasks are practically based as far as possible				
Difficult or controversial issues are tackled				
Teaching addresses thinking skills and cognitive capabilities				
Learning tasks are relevant				
Learning tasks are individualised				
A broad variety of stimuli, materials, methods and media are used				
Learning is reviewed with the students				
A range of assessment and evaluation procedures is used				
Outcomes of learning reviews, assessment and evaluation are regularly recorded				
Students can join mainstream courses				
Insights from review, assessment and evaluation inform the planning of subsequent courses/modules/input				

<u>Outcomes</u>	<u>never</u>	<u>some- times</u>	<u>usually</u>	<u>always</u>
The college finds ways to improve the quality of its transition to adulthood studies				
Student attendance is high (90%+)				
Students complete the course/module/element satisfactorily				
At the end of the course/ module, students initiate more than they did at its start (based on what evidence?)				
At the end of the course/module students sustain more than they did at its start (what evidence?)				
At the end of the course/module students are more confident than they were at its start (what evidence?)				
At the end of the course previously disaffected students are more engaged with learning than they were at its start (what evidence?)				
Students with deteriorating conditions have been enabled to maintain learning				
Most students progress to other, more advanced courses				
Students are prepared for parenthood				
Students are prepared to be voters				
Students are encouraged to set targets for themselves				
Students are encouraged to plan in terms of time-related targets				
Student satisfaction is high				
Parent/carer satisfaction is high				
Students understand that they have embarked upon a journey through adulthood, to which they will add their own increased skills and understanding throughout life				

## Conclusion

As a result of the research conducted in the course of this study, quality in transition to adulthood studies for young people with LDD in Further Education can be improved in a number of ways.

- by developing the five cognitive capabilities described by Bandura (1986) of symbolising, forethought, vicarious learning, self-regulation, and self-reflection, and by directing information through the three channels of enactive, symbolic and vicarious experience, which result from the reciprocal influences of behaviour, personal and other cognitive events, and environment;
- by paying attention to emotional as well as practical learning needs,
- by basing learning input on a cycle of observation, thought, and action in practical tasks,
- by tailoring the curriculum and learning tasks to identified learning needs,
- by reviewing, appraising and evaluating the learning experience in a continuous process of target setting,
- by instigating a regular process of quality review and improvement;
- by providing frequent and good quality training for staff engaged in this work.

Teachers and lecturers in Further Education should seek to improve the quality of their courses by regular review and evaluation, working always towards an expectation of social maturity among young people with LDD. There is a need for a greater underlying expectation of young adults with LDD. Educators should be seeking ways of making abstract and complex, but socially mature, concepts accessible to young people with LDD so that they may take their part in the social world, and have full access to their rights.

There are some who would find such an outlook unacceptable or unrealistic, and who find reassurance in a view of the learning disabled young adult as childlike. However, it should be noted that many young people will take up relationships and try to find meaning and meaningful occupations in their lives, whether or not these have been included within a transition to adulthood curriculum, and whether or not other people think them cognitively or emotionally capable of doing so.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

Looking back over this thesis, it seems justified to conclude that the purposes of the research have been met. The field has been examined, its origins and antecedents identified, and the null hypothesis, that there is no significant difference in provision between the regions, has been proved. This study strongly suggests that transition to adulthood studies should be seen as a branch of social psychology, and identifies Social Cognitive theory as offering a structure by which educators working in this field may be guided. Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive theory is affirmed to be the focal theory for transition to adulthood input, and consideration has been given as to how this might be operationalised for the use of teachers and lecturers.

The key questions, as to how transition to adulthood studies may be judged and improved, have been answered, within limits. The limits are those imposed by the nature of the field and its relationship to larger theoretical and philosophical questions. The issues have been explored and some suggestions are made as to how the difficulties surrounding assessment, evaluation and improvement, may be addressed.

The larger purpose of this journey of enquiry and exploration has also been met. This was to better understand this work, upon which the researcher was engaged for several years, and to apply that understanding to identifying ways of improving the quality of transition to adulthood education for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In concluding the study then, the individual conclusions from each chapter will be summarised, and areas for further research will be identified. Finally, in drawing together the findings of the study, advice will be offered to the teacher or lecturer engaged in transition to adulthood studies.

## Summary of Conclusions

Since the 1944 Education Act there has been an increasing integration of young learners with LDD into the mainstream education sector. In Further Education this has given rise to an increased interest in and development of PSE-related courses, modules and input concerned with the transition to social maturity and adult life. Young people with LDD have consequently become a significant client group in modern Further Education. The process of developing transition to adulthood studies, which gained a higher profile in the nineteen seventies, is well advanced in the year 2000. At the same time, a wider range of regular courses is on offer to young people with LDD.

In the nineteen nineties, the consequences of enabling post-sixteen education to meet a wider range of young peoples learning needs transformed the mainstream Further Education curriculum. The present ethos of accountability has led to a greater emphasis on assessment and accreditation, and the development of indicators of effectiveness, in order to secure funding.

There is little empirical research informing the area of transition to adulthood studies. The difficulties of identifying and defining adult characteristics and behaviour, and of assessing and evaluating these areas, seem largely to have been avoided, and there has been no acknowledged theoretical basis for the work. The research of this thesis strongly suggests that most curriculum delivery in transition to adulthood takes place without in-depth examination of such issues. Given the potential breadth of the field, there has been a need to gain a view of what is actually offered under the aegis of PSE-related transition to adulthood studies.

PSE-related input has broad philosophical and theoretical antecedents, based on concerns about the nature and purpose of the good person in society, and the nature and purpose of education. PSE and transition to adulthood studies include the two strands of self knowledge and the equipping of the individual for life as a member of society. However, theoretical differences may give rise to diverging views as to how these aims may be accomplished, and some contributors to the field have turned away from theoretical concepts altogether. Nevertheless a guiding theory is felt by this writer to be necessary, in order to

enable educators to select the most appropriate learning experiences, in addition to those immediately identifiable as students' individual learning needs.

In seeking a clear understanding of the purposes of PSE-related transition to adulthood input and their translation into curriculum content there is little agreement or consistency to be found, and little consideration of the ethical aspects involved. It is difficult to identify a common core of content, and a broad analysis of curriculum content recommendations has therefore been carried out, in order to clarify this matter. Comparing the PSE literature with the the qualitative research shows that there is a discrepancy between the importance attached in the literature to the education of the emotions, and the lack of attention given to this area in the delivery of PSE-related input.

There are fundamental assessment and evaluation difficulties inherent in PSE-related input; these may be theoretical, conceptual, ethical, operational, and/or practical. This study concludes that a focus on the quality of the course would be a useful approach, and recommendations are made to that end. However in order for this to be effective, underlying questions about the purpose of the courses need to be resolved.

The literature-based research revealed the range of themes and topics involved in PSE-related transition to adulthood work, and the development of related courses, over time. The publication of the Tomlinson Report (1996) and the Dearing Review (1996) indicated that the study of this work was timely. However long standing assumptions about social maturity and transition to adulthood continue within these publications.

The research project drew on quantitative and qualitative methods in order to illuminate the work being done in the target courses, within mainstream Further Education. The preliminary, information-gathering survey defined some of the characteristics of PSE-related courses for young people with LDD in mainstream Further Education. The findings showed that:

- a. The primary purpose of PSE-related courses for young people with LDD was seen as the transition to adulthood, with strong support also given to the view that its purpose was the transition to work. The courses were therefore seen as having a primarily practical function;
- b. Such PSE-related courses were considered to be important by the course providers, for young people with LDD, and also for other students;

- c. Most of the PSE-related courses were designed within the colleges and relied upon a range of sources and resources;
- d. PSE was not generally specifically nominated amongst Core Skills, however a range of PSE-related elements were included within Core Skills by a large number of respondents;
- e. There was strong agreement that the target courses should be accredited, should be subject to quality assurance measures, should be able to be assessed and evaluated, and should be modular. The strongest support was for accreditation and quality assurance;
- f. There was a certain amount of concern regarding funding and budgeting for these courses;
- g. There was not a great deal of dissatisfaction with the courses in their current form.

Following the preliminary survey and the publication of the Tomlinson Report (FEFC 1996), some changes were made to the approach to the empirical research. A further postal survey of PSE-related transition to adulthood input in three Further Education regions was carried out. This showed that the present position is that:

- a. Most mainstream Further Education colleges offer discrete, PSE-related input to students with LDD;
- b. Most discrete courses are accredited;
- c. Input is delivered mostly in sessions which take place more than once each week;
- d. This input occurs mostly in sessions of one to two hours;
- e. Quality in this curriculum area is assessed: by the teachers or lecturers delivering the input; by regular review and evaluation; by student satisfaction feedback and, for some colleges, by comparison with the requirements of accreditation;
- f. Content in this curriculum area is decided: by the assessment of student needs; by professional judgement; and by student satisfaction feedback;
- g. Successful completion of the course, module or element is gauged: by student self-appraisal; by professional judgement; and by the completion of assignments; and for some colleges, by the meeting of pre-decided criteria;
- h. The most important curriculum elements in this area are: independence preparation; personal identity; personal relationships; and communication.
- i. Practices in Greater London in transition to adulthood, do not differ greatly from practices throughout all three regions.
- j. Practices in the North show a slightly greater variation from the overall practices, however the sample from the North is the smallest and may not be completely representative of the region.

- k. Regional variation is not significant, and it is therefore likely that the profile of the courses, modules and elements described is representative of the provision of transition to adulthood courses, modules and elements in mainstream Further Education throughout England.

These findings show some movement away from the position shown by the preliminary survey. The earlier survey identified a wish for courses to be modular, and to have a means for accreditation and evaluation, and quality assurance. Courses are now generally accredited by external bodies, the leaders in this field being the Open College and ASDAN. Courses are generally modular, with assessment and evaluation linked in, and quality assurance has received a higher profile throughout education. These looked-for changes can therefore be said to have taken place.

The quantitative research was supported by qualitative research in the form of interviews with Expert Witnesses and students. The interviews with three Expert Witnesses clarified the nature of the characteristics of good quality PSE-related transition to adulthood input. These should involve staff, students, management, curriculum, and resources. Learning experiences must be matched to the wishes, needs and requirement of individual learners, but there also needs to be a foundation which provides theoretical and philosophical underpinnings to guide the practitioner in the selection of appropriate learning experiences.

Transition to adulthood input should have a strongly practical character, which carries resourcing, organisational and administrative implications. There needs to be evaluation on all levels, informing the development of further learning experiences. The concept of responsiveness is necessary to allow for individualised learning, and this needs to be accompanied by flexibility of staff, managers and resources. Staff development is therefore of critical importance for the development of these characteristics.

Interviews with student groups confirmed the experience of modern Further Education for young people with LDD, as indicated by the regional survey and the Expert Witnesses. PSE-related transition to adulthood input is often delivered through accredited modules from an outside provider, and the colleges may change the provider in order to find the 'best fit' with students' learning needs.

Students with moderate learning difficulties are now seen as more easily accommodated within mainstream Further Education. The inclusion ethos allows them access to other courses, yet there remain discrete courses for pupils with LDD at different levels. Further Education continues to use the MLD and SLD categories, and PSE-related transition to adulthood input is becoming seen as provision for students with severe learning difficulties.

Taken together, the different levels of research in this study show that the fundamental issues informing transition to adulthood studies remain unresolved. There has been no recognised theoretical basis for the work, and questions of assessment, evaluation and content have remained problematic, if they have been considered at all. There is little consensus as to the nature of the work, even though it continues to be offered. The null hypotheses is proved, showing that there is no significant difference between regions. The purposes of the research, to investigate the nature of this provision and consider how it might be improved, have been met.

In seeking a way forward, and drawing on the literature and the empirical research, Social Cognitive theory is identified as providing a theoretical foundation for transition to adulthood studies. A suggested framework or matrix for a Curriculum for Adulthood is offered, together with an evaluation procedure for the improvement of quality (the Quality Audit) and an evaluation instrument (the Departmental Quality Profile). Difficulties with assessment and evaluation in this field, noted throughout the study, are considered to be ameliorated by the use of a range of instruments rather than reliance upon professional judgement. It is considered that educators must have higher expectations of young people with LDD, and that improving the quality of the courses will aid the development of social maturity for students.

### Further research

Throughout the course of this study a number of further areas for research have been identified. Schindele calls for further research in special education (Schindele 1985, p.5) Bradley and Hegerty identify sixteen possible areas for research in post-sixteen education for

young people with LDD (Bradley and Hegerty 1981, p.30-32), and Elliott (1996, p. 107) expresses concern about the lack of research in Further Education generally. Ryder and Campbell list a number of unresolved, PSE-related questions and issues requiring further enquiry, including PSHE in the Further Education sector (Ryder and Campbell 1988, p. 241-2). While much of this study has been led by a desire to investigate some of these areas, the study has itself given rise to the following possible areas of further enquiry:

- Investigation as to how staff training in Further Education colleges is managed in order to improve the quality of work with young people with LDD, particularly where transition to adulthood studies are concerned;
- Investigation as to the nature of the basis for teachers' and lecturers' transition to adulthood input, other than accreditation requirements;
- Clarification of what is being offered within those identified curriculum areas which are described in the survey by broad curriculum categories attracting high levels of agreement;
- Clarification about methods of review and evaluation;
- Comparison of provision and outcomes between colleges which do, and do not, offer discrete transition to adulthood input.

Particular areas for further research would be the field trialling of the suggested Curriculum for Adulthood matrix and the suggested Quality Profile in order to investigate whether colleges felt them to be helpful when seeking to improve the quality of their transition to adulthood input, and whether quality increased accordingly. These, however, represent the outcomes of this particular study and the end points of its research, and must await projects of their own.

### Conclusion

The study set out to find out how transition to adulthood studies as a curriculum area has developed, to find out what was being done in the field, to identify a theoretical foundation for the work, and to investigate how transition to adulthood studies may be judged, and improved. To these ends, the research has drawn on the literature of several related areas and on empirical research, both qualitative and quantitative. The outcomes of the empirical research have established the general nature of transition to adulthood studies in

mainstream Further Education, and the likelihood that the provision is broadly similar throughout the country's Further Education and tertiary colleges.

The question of how progress in an individual's social maturity may be assessed remains unresolved and is probably an unproductive one. The underlying conceptual and theoretical issues are related to the great philosophical questions; questions of the order of: what is a person; what is the social good; what constitutes maturity; and, what is education for? These questions may never achieve complete, easy answers; nevertheless it is important to continue to ask them, and important that they continually be asked and reviewed in the context of transition to adulthood studies.

In seeking to apply existing, normative measures to the development of progress in the individual PSE-related matters and social maturity, the Assessment of Performance Unit (1981) brought itself to an untenable position from which there was no escape and retired, somewhat defeated but also with useful work done. At first sight assessing the individual's maturity seems like a sensible undertaking, yet as has been shown, the idea of what is 'sensible' does not always bear close examination. This original difficulty with personal assessment has not been satisfactorily resolved, since it is affected by the limitations of the measures in use. Instead this study has sought to shift the focus to assessing and evaluating the discrete courses, modules or input, in the belief that better quality courses will be better for the students, and will allow them to develop greater social maturity.

PSE-related transition to adulthood work may be more effectively evaluated than at present, and its quality improved, by the adoption of a regular evaluative procedure which includes objective methods as well as personal judgement, and adoption of a regularly reviewed and amended quality profile. The management of these courses, including review and improvement of their quality, should be as important a part of the college's quality remit as any other course.

However, outcomes-based evaluation procedures should be approached with caution. While they have a part to play, particularly in the context of successful completion of tasks or processes, within PSE-related transition to adulthood work an outcomes-based approach contains many pitfalls, because of the open-ended nature of the work and its

underlying conceptual and philosophical difficulties. On their own, outcomes-based approaches fall foul of questions regarding the purpose of this education. There may be a bias towards emotional outcomes which are not measurable and which demonstrate little application for those who favour the practical side. Alternatively, there may be bias towards practical-based outcomes which, to those who view practical tasks as limiting, bear little relation to the overall development of the socially mature individual.

Incorporated within a range of evaluative measures the dangers of reliance on outcomes may be minimised. With an understanding of the characteristics of a good quality course, outcomes for the course can be identified without too much reliance upon information about students' personal social maturity, as indicated in the Departmental Quality Profile. Above all, to improve the quality of their courses, teachers and lecturers and managers must regularly review the question, "What makes for good quality in our work?" and be prepared to revise the answers, providing the basis for the next cycle of quality management.

Where separate, discrete courses exist, much transition to adulthood work is likely to move between the two emphases of the emotional and the practical, offering something in one area and then something in another, with the best of intentions but with little structure. Without a guiding theory or philosophy, this is likely to continue. This study has confirmed transition to adulthood studies as belonging within the field of social psychology, and it is perhaps better described as applied social psychology, with Social Cognitive theory as its focal theory.

A Curriculum for Adulthood is suggested, drawing on the findings of the research and framed with the intention of addressing the emotional as well as the practical aspects of social learning. Using this, the research findings, and the recommendations regarding quality, it is possible to summarise the findings of this study by offering the following guiding principles for the practitioner in transition to adulthood studies:

1. Look to Social Cognitive theory, rather than stage theory, when basic guidance is needed;
2. Regularly review the course using a range of evaluative measures which are identified as useful, and keep to the review schedule;

3. In any initiative concerning the young person, ask who initiates it, and who sustains it. To the extent that this is not the young person, recognise that the young person is not acting truly autonomously, but is being guided;
4. In doing this work always start with, and deal with, the emotional aspects; other aspects can follow from these;
5. The curriculum should be tailored to the learner;
6. Learning tasks, including those dealing with emotions should draw on a balanced mixture of observational learning and practical learning, and call on a variety of resources;
7. All learning tasks should aim to develop thinking skills, including: analysis by students in terms of finding rules and predictive factors; extrapolation; forethought; review; and the consideration of alternatives and application to oneself; followed by practice, rehearsal, and action in the real context;
8. Never forget that ultimately, the aim is to foster in the young person the confidence to act independently. This includes the understanding that to act independently does not mean having to act alone, because knowing when and from whom to seek help is also part of independent, autonomous functioning.

If these principles are followed, it is likely that students will experience good quality PSE-related transition to adulthood input, and benefit thereby in the development of their social maturity.

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## APPENDIX I

### THE TWELVE CORE AIMS AS GIVEN IN "A BASIS FOR CHOICE" (FEU 1979)

1. To bring about an informed perspective as to the role and status of a young person in adult society and the world of work;
2. To provide a basis from which a young person can make an informed and realistic decision with respect to his or her immediate future;
3. To bring about continuing development of physical and manipulative skills in both vocational and leisure contexts and an appreciation of those skills in others;
4. To bring about the ability to develop satisfactory personal and social relationships with others;
5. To provide a basis on which the young person acquires a set of moral values applicable to issues in contemporary society;
6. To bring about a level of achievement in literacy, numeracy and graphicacy appropriate to ability, and adequate to meet the demands of contemporary society;
7. To bring about competence in a variety of study skills likely to be demanded of the young person;
8. To encourage the capacity to approach various kinds of problems methodologically and effectively, and to plan and evaluate courses of action;
9. To bring about sufficient political and economic literacy to understand the environment and participate in it;
10. To bring about an appreciation of the physical and technological environments and the relationship between these and the needs of man in general, and working life in particular;
11. To bring about a development of the coping skills necessary to promote self sufficiency in the young people;
12. To bring about a flexibility of attitude and a willingness to learn, sufficient to manage future changes in technology and career. (FEU,1979)

Expressing these as distinct objectives, the young person should be able to:

understand the role of a young person in adult society

understand the status of a young person in adult society;

understand the role of a young person in the world of work;

understand the status of a young person in the world of work;

make an informed decision about his or her future;

make realistic decisions about his or her future;

develop satisfactory personal relationships with others;

develop satisfactory social relationships with others;

**acquire a set of moral values**

**apply these values to issues in contemporary society**

**achieve a level of literacy appropriate to his or her ability;**

**achieve a level of literacy adequate for contemporary society;**

**achieve a a level of numeracy appropriate to his or her ability;**

**achieve a level of numeracy appropriate to contemporary society;**

**achieve a level of graphicity appropriate to his or her ability;**

**achieve a level of graphicity appropriate to contemporary society;**

**achieve competence in a variety of study skills;**

**approach problems methodologically;**

**approach problems effectively;**

**plan courses of action;**

**evaluate courses of action;**

**develop political understanding of the environment;**

**develop economic understanding of the environment;**

**participate politically in the environment;**

**participate economically in the environment;**

**appreciate the physical environment;**

**appreciate the technological environment;**

**appreciate the relationship between the physical and technological environments;**

**appreciate the relationship between the physical environment and the needs of people;**

**appreciate the relationship between the technological environment and the needs of people;**

**appreciate the relationship between the physical environment and working life;**

**appreciate the relationship between the technological environment and working life;**

**develop coping skills necessary for self-sufficiency;**

**be flexible of attitude;**

**be willing to learn;**

**manage future changes in technology;**

**manage future changes in career.**

## **APPENDIX II**

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES (Zetlin 1988)**

1. It is clear that within each area of the community adjustment - vocational, economic, social and personal - a high proportion of mildly retarded adults achieve satisfactory adjustments. These adjustments take a variety of forms and are not unlike those of their nonretarded neighbors in the community.
2. Success or failure in community functioning is not inherent in the individual but the product of many interacting variables, including employment opportunities, public attitudes, welfare legislation, and so forth.
3. The majority of community-based adults are able to maintain their independent status because of varying degrees of ongoing support and aid from parents, siblings, friends, benefactors, and social service agencies.
4. Money management is the most consistently problematic area across samples of independent adults and the one which requires the greatest need for outside intervention.
5. No simple formula for prediction has been established which can be relied upon to separate in advance those who will achieve satisfactory adaptations from those who will fail.
6. Each environment has its own criteria for success so that different variables may be associated with maintaining an independent residence rather than are associated with client movement through an independent training program; different variables may be associated with job performance than are associated with adapting to group home living.
7. Instability in various areas of adjustment from less restrictive to more restrictive settings or circumstances are more appropriate criteria for judging failure in community functioning than reinstitutionalization. Subjective elements must also be considered including personal satisfaction and the retarded adults' assessment of their adaptation.
8. Single point in time sampling provides insufficient and misleading evidence of success or failure in community living. Close monitoring of the progress of individuals over time allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of their adaptation.
9. Little is known about how nonwhite mildly retarded adults fare in the community and what their particular adaptations are like.

Zetlin, A. G. (1988) Adult Development of Mildly Retarded Students: Implications for Educational Programs, in Wang, M. C., Reynolds, M. C. and Walberg, H. J. (eds) Handbook of Special Educational Research and Practice Vol 2 Oxford, Pergamon Press

### APPENDIX III

#### **DECLARED THEMES AND TOPICS AMONG A RANGE OF PSE AND PSE-RELATED SCHEMA**

**Assessment of Performance Unit (1981) Personal and Social Development London: DES**

Persons and personal relationships

- Morality
- Social awareness
- Religion/philosophies of life
- Occupational development
- Political development
- Legal development
- Environmental development
- Health
- Community

**Baldwin, J. and Wells, H. (1983) Active Tutorial Work Sixteen to Nineteen Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd**

- Embrace life and accept its challenges
- Assess future life pattern
- Prepare for independence
- Contribute to group identity
- Develop personal philosophy of life
- Human relationships within school/college
- Human relationships outside school/college
- Belonging to a group
- Specific demands of A level work
- Assimilate knowledge effectively
- Independent study
- One's own limitations and aspirations
- Political awareness and individual rights
- Understanding economics
- Reconciling external demands and personal goals
- Post-sixteen environment as different from school
- Critical faculties
- Self-evaluation (skills, abilities, interests, creative powers)

**Beaumont College (undated but approximating (1988/1989) A Special Educational Process Designed to Meet the Developing Needs of the Inexperienced Young Person who Wishes to Achieve Independence in the Wider Community unpublished paper Lancaster: Beaumont College**

Qualities:

- Purpose/self-motivation
- Perception of self
- Use information/apply survival skills
- Social confidence/maturity/interaction
- Individual contributing in community
- Choice/decision making/accept responsibility
- Understanding and motivation for quality of life

Through:

- Communication
- Concentration
- Self-organisation
- Acquiring skills
- Applying skills
- Independence in the wider community

**Bottery, M. (1990) The Morality of the School London: Cassell Education Ltd.**

Self-esteem  
Empathy  
Cooperation  
Rationality

Buck, M. and Inman, S. (1993) Making Values Central: the Role of the Cross-Curricular Themes Careers Education and Guidance Feb1993 p 10-14

Confidence/assertiveness  
Knowledge about self  
Effective interpersonal relationships  
Awareness of beliefs/values/ways of life of others  
Be critically informed about the world  
Questions/assumptions/beliefs  
Think critically  
Concern for justice on interpersonal/societal/global level  
Work collaboratively  
Reflect on learning and plan for future developments.

Button, L (1981a) Group Tutoring for the Form Tutor 1: Lower Secondary School London: Hodder and Stoughton

Button, L (1981b) Group Tutoring for the Form Tutor 2: Upper Secondary School London: Hodder and Stoughton

Pupil's place in school  
Pastoral group as community  
Relationships. self and social skills  
Communication skills  
School and study skills  
Academic guidance and careers education  
Health and hygiene  
Personal interests

Foster, J. (1993) Issues Books 1-5 London: HarperCollins (Collins Educational)

Economic and industrial understanding  
Health education  
Education for citizenship  
Environmental education

Foster, J. with Stewart, P. (1988) Lifelines Books 1-5 London: Collins Educational

Personal relationships  
Social education  
Health education  
Study skills

Gurney, M. (1990) Personal and Social Education - an Integrated Programme Books 1-5 Cheltenham: Stanley Thomas (Publishers) Ltd.

Personal management  
Social awareness  
Personal relationships  
Social issues

Halpern, A. (1993) Quality of Life as a Conceptual Framework for Evaluating Transition Outcomes Exceptional Children Vol 59 no.6

- Physical and mental health
- Food, clothing and lodging
- Financial security
- Safety from harm
- Mobility and community access
- Vocation/career/employment
- Leisure and recreation
- Personal relationships/social networks
- Educational attainment
- Spiritual fulfilment
- Citizenship (e.g. voting)
- Social responsibility

Hitchin, P. and Hunt, J. (1988 ) Dilemmas Lancaster: Framework Press

- Employment
- Enterprise
- Community
- Relationships

HMI (1988) A Survey of Personal and Social Education Courses in Some Secondary Schools London: Department of Education and Science

- Health education
- Careers education
- Political education and world issues
- Moral and religious education
- Personal relationships and responsibilities
- Community and social studies
- Legal issues
- Study skills
- Economic issues
- Education for parenthood

Hopson, B. and Scally, M.(1982) Lifeskills Teaching Programmes No. 2 Leeds. Lifeskills Associates

- Studying effectively
- Preventing and managing stress
- Giving and receiving feedback
- Learning from experience
- Coping with unemployment

Hutchinson, D. and Tennyson, C. (1986) Transition to Adulthood London: Further Education Unit

- Personal care
- Mobility
- Basic education
- Recreation
- Personal development
- Work

**McConnon, S. (1989) Your Choice: Making Active Learning Work (Your Choice Series)  
London: Macmillan Education Ltd.**

- Nature of friendship
- Skills of friendship
- Boyfriends
- Girlfriends
- Self-esteem
- Self-awareness
- Interpersonal communication
- Assertion
- Conflict
- Stress
- Making decisions
- Feelings
- Groups

**McGuire, J. and Priestley, P. (1981) Life After School: A Social Skills Curriculum Oxford:  
Pergamon Press Ltd.**

- Self-assessment
- Interaction
- Work
- Leisure
- Money
- Rights
- Sex

**Plant, J. (1987) Education for Personal Responsibility: a Course of Personal, Social and Moral Education for Years 4 and 5 in J. Thacker, R. Pring and D. Evans (Eds) Personal, Social and Moral Education in a Changing World Windsor: NFER-Nelson**

- Group identity
- Puberty
- Law
- Environment
- Leisure
- Politics
- Personal relationships
- Society's problems
- Comparative religions
- Leaving school
- Harmful substances

Polan, A. (1991) Personal and Social Education: Citizenship and Biography Journal of Moral Education Vol 20 no.1

Relevant cognitive areas:

- Political
- Economic
- Moral/ethical
- Ecological
- Historical
- Philosophical
- Technological
- Scientific
- Biological
- Spiritual
- Aesthetic
- Geographical/spatial
- Legal
- Anthropological
- Ideological
- Psychological
- Communicative
- Linguistic
- Sexual/gender
- Multicultural

Pring, R. (1984) Personal and Social Education in the Curriculum London: Hodder and Stoughton

- Being a person
- Moral perspective
- Ideals
- Moral rules
- Social issues
- Politics
- Place within society
- Health

Ryder, J. and Campbell, L. (1988) Balancing Acts in Personal, Social and Health Education London: Routledge

- Physical development
- Sexual development
- Health/illness/fitness/disease/disability
- Mental health and illness
- Learning development
- Community health/environment issues
- Ecology
- Health care and social services
- Morals/ethics/values/principles
- Sexuality
- Leisure
- Group dynamics
- Prejudice and stereotypes
- Power relationships
- Social and political organisation/influences
- Controversial issues
- Religion
- Media
- Self-knowledge

Scrimshaw, P. (1987) Social Education for an Uncertain Future in J. Thacker, R. Pring and D. Evans (Eds.) Personal, Social and Moral Education in a Changing World Windsor: NFER-Nelson

- Self-confidence
- Self-respect
- Determination
- Open-mindedness
- Courage
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Fairness

Settle, D. and Wise, C. (1986) Choices Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.

- Who am I? (personal awareness)
- Changes (personal development)
- How others see us (social interaction)
- Practically perfect (disability issues)
- Food for thought (healthy eating)
- Resisting social pressures
- Rights and responsibilities
- Problem page (family difficulties)
- Helping each other
- Looking forward

Sweeney, P./St Augustine's High School (1986) Personal Development and Life Skills  
Lothian Region: TVEI

- Self-knowledge and awareness of the needs of others
- Self-confidence and the ability to work independently
- Ability to accept and use criticism
- Development of initiative
- Problem-solving and decision making
- Ability to work with others on a common task
- Ability to present ideas, orally and in writing; to listen, explain and discuss
- Awareness of opportunities for work, education and training in the local area
- Awareness of local opportunities for leisure activity
- Ability to take responsibility for own learning

TACADE (1986) Skills for Adolescence Manchester, Teachers' Advisory Council on Alcohol and Drug Education

- Entering the teenage years: the challenge ahead
- Building self-confidence through better communication
- Learning about emotions: developing competence in self-assessment and self-discipline
- Friends: improving peers relationships
- Strengthening family relationships
- Developing critical thinking skills for decision making
- Setting goals for healthy living

**Wakeman, B. (1984) Personal, Social and Moral Education Tring: Lion Publishing Inc.**

- Self-awareness/self-esteem/self assessment
- Health education in personal relationships
- Sex education
- Ethical/behavioural content
- Political education
- Social sciences
- Safety and survival
- World problems
- Environmental/ecological issues
- The school

**Whelan, E. (1984) The Copewell Curriculum: Development, Content and Use, in Dean and Hegerty (Eds.) Learning for Independence Londond: Longman for the FEU**

- Self help
- Social academic aspects
- Interpersonal aspects
- Vocational aspects

**Whitfield, R. (1993) Helping Youngsters Construct a Life: Life Foundations in Perspective Pastoral Care in Education Vol 11 no.2**

- Human development
- Feelings and emotions
- Human communication
- Time and task management
- Personal finance management
- Separation
- Loss and bereavement
- Family groups/parenthood/marriage
- Action for personal health
- Personal environment
- Moral dilemmas in relationships
- Public policy and private life

**Wilson, N. (1992) Getting Personal series. Dunstable: Folens Ltd.**

- Personal relationships
- Challenges in our society
- Personal health
- The family
- Personal finance
- Which way now? (work and training choices)

**Wolfenden, M. (1991) Face Up To It series. Halifax: Norwood Publishers**

- Race and prejudice: attitudes and values
- Race and prejudice: situations
- Women in the nineteen nineties
- Domestic feuds and dilemmas
- Health and fitness
- Vandalism and juvenile crime
- Teenage years: adolescence/personal relationships/sex

POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PRELIMINARY SURVEY

PSE-type courses for Post-16 Students with Learning difficulties and disabilities: A Questionnaire

Please tick the boxes that most closely match your own views:

1. There is a trend towards supporting students with learning difficulties and disabilities in FE rather than providing separate courses for them. Do you think there is still a need for PSE-type courses in this event?

No

Not sure

Yes

2. Do you foresee budgetary difficulties with the provision of such courses?

No

Not sure

Yes

3. How valuable do you consider such courses to be for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities?

Not at all valuable

Not very valuable

fairly valuable

Very valuable

4. What kind of PSE-type course are you using now?

None

↓  
please go to Q. 10

published PSE scheme

published guidelines or outlines eg. FEU, or other source

self-developed, using own material or composite of sources

5. a Please rank these possible purposes for PSE-type courses for post-16 students with learning difficulties and disabilities in order of importance, no. 1 being most, no. 5 being least important, etc.:

transition to work

transition to gNVQ

transition to NVQ

transition to adulthood

acquisition of Core Skills

5b Briefly, what do you understand by the term 'Core Skills'?

.....  
.....

6. Do you think such courses should be:

	No	Not sure	Yes
modular?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
accredited?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
able to be assessed/evaluated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
including some provision for quality assurance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Does the special needs PSE programme you are using now meet the specifications you have made in Questions 5 and 6? If not, what is missing?

.....  
.....

8. Is there anything that you would prefer to be different about your current PSE-type programme?

.....  
.....

9. Do you think a PSE-type course such as you have described would be of value to post-16 students who do not have learning difficulties and disabilities?

No

Not sure

Yes

10 Are there any further comments you would like to make? (please continue on a separate sheet if you wish)

## APPENDIX V

### RESPONDENTS' DEFINITIONS OF CORE SKILLS

**English/Maths/IT**

**Basic literacy/numeracy skills required for everyday living**

**As used in vocational GNVQ courses Communication, Application of Number, Information Technology, etc.**

**Central to learning.**

**GNVQ or 'essential skills'**

**Numeracy Literacy IT**

**Numeracy and Literacy**

**Transferable basic skills across the curriculum, i.e. Literacy, Numeracy, Problem Solving, Personal Effectiveness**

**Basic literacy and numeracy; travel management (independent travel), management of time, self advocacy.**

**Literacy/Communications/Numeracy/IT/Life Skills or Independence Skills**

**Skills required throughout education, work and life in general**

**The skills required to acquire, investigate and communicate**

**Communication/literacy-language/numeracy independence**

**Problem solving, literacy, numeracy, communication skills, IT**

**Essential literacy, numeracy, communication, IT (as per GNVQ)**

**Communication Numeracy IT Problem Solving Decision Making**

**A range of essential skills which underpin effective learning and performance**

**English/Maths & IT**

**Careers, literacy, numeracy, IT and Personal Development**

**Literacy, numeracy, Information technology, Personal Skills, Problem Solving and Communication**

**Underpinning skills used to access learning and problem solving**

**Numeracy/Literacy/Communication Skills required to cope with vocational work/life**

**Maths & literacy & IT**

**Communication, Numeracy, IT, managing self, working with others, Problem Solving**

**Personal and Social development, literacy and numeracy**

**Application of number - working with others communication application of IT Personal Effectiveness**

**As defined by GNVQ**

**(1994 Anonymous questionnaire responses)**

**APPENDIX VI  
POSTAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MAIN SURVEY**

*Dear Special Needs Coordinator,*

*I would be most grateful if you could spare a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire. I am researching into Personal and Social education-related transition to adulthood, or skills for adult life, courses for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and I would like to know your views.*

*My interests are in how the content of such work is decided, how it is assessed or evaluated, and how quality is developed and maintained. It may not be easy to generalise across a range of courses or modules, so please feel free to customise the form if you wish.*

*Completing the questionnaire should not take more than ten minutes. All data will be kept anonymous, and I will inform you of the findings when the survey is complete. I should be most grateful for the return of the questionnaire by Friday 11th July 1997. I enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for your reply.*

*Yours in thanks,*

**B E Pavey**

*(Research Student studying for PhD in the Education Department of the University of Hull)*

**QUESTIONNAIRE STARTS BELOW**

**Please tell me about the Personal and Social Education-related, transition to adulthood, or skills for adult life, work carried out in your college. Please feel free to omit any questions or parts of questions where you feel unable to make a judgement.**

1. Does your college offer a discrete, PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, course for young people with LDD?

Yes

No-but PSE-related input  
offered via other courses

No PSE-related input  
offered to LDD students

Please return questionnaire

2. Is/are the course(s)/module(s) accredited, and if so, by whom?

.....

3. What is/are the course/module titles(s)?

.....

.....

.....

4 Generally, how often are PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, lectures/lessons/sessions held?

Fewer than once a week

Once a week

More than once a week

Other (please give details

.....

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

5 For how long does the average PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, lecture/lesson/session last?

1 hour or less

1-2 hours

Approx. 1/2 (half) a day

Approx. 1 day

Other (please give details).....

<input type="checkbox"/>

6. How is the quality of PSE-related work or courses assessed (tick as many as you wish)

By the Special Needs Coordinator

By tutors/lecturers teaching the PSE-related work

By those in college with quality responsibility, eg quality team, quality manager

By a regular review/evaluation process

By student satisfaction feedback

By external assessment, eg inspection

In accordance with accreditation requirements

By feedback from other involved persons, eg parents, carers, other services

By matching to previously decided criteria

Who decides the criteria?.....

Other (please give details).....

<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Which of the above do you think are most important, in assessing quality? Please put 1,2,3 next to those items which you consider to be most important (1= of greatest importance)

	Very important	quite important	not very important	not at all important
Professional judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Input from others (parents, carers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schedule 2 funding requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' suggestions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
College development plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment of student's needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Requirements of accrediting body	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Evaluation of a previous course	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FEU publications	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other input, inc books, schemes, audio-visual media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Requirements of quality measures in college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student satisfaction feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please give details )	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Which of the above do you think are most important, in deciding content? Please put 1,2,3 next to those items which you consider to be most important (1 = of greatest importance)

10. What tells you whether the student has completed the PSE-related course/module/element satisfactorily? (Tick as many as you wish)

Student's level of attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lecturer's professional judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student's mature behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completion of specific assignments or tasks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student's self appraisal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completion of specified time on course	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students' appraisal of each other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Meeting of particular criteria eg based on competency statements or checklists	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent's/carer's judgement	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please give details)	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Which of the above do you think are most important? Please put 1,2,3 next to those items which you consider to be most important (1 = of greatest importance)

12. How important are the following items, in a PSE-related, transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, course/module/element ?

	very important	quite important	not very important	not at all important
personal identity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
controversial issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
environmental awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
morality/moral code	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
parenthood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
analytical/thinking skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
independence preparation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
political awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
occupational development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
economic awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
prejudice and stereotypes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
religious/philosophical awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
personal relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
disability issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
social awareness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
students' personal interests	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
education of the emotions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
health issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
other (please give details)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Which of the above do you think are most important ? Please put 1,2,3 next to those items which you consider to be most important. (1 = of greatest importance)

14. Within your college PSE-related transition to adulthood or skills for adult life, course/module/element, what, if anything, would you like to be able to do differently?

.....

.....

Thank you for your time and help.

## APPENDIX VII

### ACCREDITING BODIES USED BY THREE FURTHER EDUCATION REGIONS

#### North

ASDAN

CENTRA

City and Guilds

College Certificate (own scheme)

LCCIEB

NCFE (includes PSE elements)

NSP

RSA

TOCF

TROCN

#### Greater London

ASDAN

CENTRA

LCCI

LOCF

NELAF

NRAB

RSA (National Skills Profile)

Skillpower (City and Guilds)

TRAC

#### East Midlands

ASDAN

City and Guilds

GMOCF

Leicestershire Open College Network

National Proficiency Test Council

NEMAP (North East Midlands Accreditation Partnership)/ Open College

OCN

Open University

RSA

South Yorks Open College (OCN)

## APPENDIX VIII

**COURSE/MODULE NAMES USED BY THREE FURTHER EDUCATION REGIONS**  
Course titles suggesting strong LDD-related input in the study are shown in italics

### North

*Adult Basis for Choice*  
Bridging Group  
*Community Skills*  
Enterprise  
*Essential Skills (Units)*  
I.T.  
*Independent Living*  
*Leisure/Personal Development*  
Numberpower  
*Personal Presentation*  
*Skillpower*  
*Social Skills*  
Vocational Access Certificate  
Wordpower  
*Work Preparation*

### Greater London

*ASDAN Adult Group*  
*ASDAN Bronze*  
*ASDAN Silver*  
Bricklaying, Painting and Decorating Workshop  
Bridge  
Carpentry Workshop  
Committees and User groups  
Communication with Signs and Symbols  
Communications and Literacy  
*Coping With People*  
Core Skills  
Current Affairs  
Dress Workshop  
EGE  
*Getting to Know a Group*  
Horticulture  
I.T.  
*Independent Living Skills*  
*Independent Living Skills for Young Adults*  
Individual Programme Plan  
*Knowing About Myself*  
*Life Skills*  
*Management of Learning*  
MAP  
Meal Preparation and Cooking  
Numeracy  
Options  
*Out and About of College*  
*Out in the Community*  
P.E.  
Performance Arts-Mime  
*LDD*  
*Personal Development*  
Physiotherapy-Dance  
Popular Culture

Pottery and Ceramics  
Pre Foundation 3  
Pre Vocational Foundation Course  
Pre Vocational Programme  
Printing  
*PSH (Personal, Social and Health Education?)*  
*Rights and Responsibilities*  
*Self Advocacy*  
*Self Advocacy and Decision Making*  
*Sex Education*  
Sounds, Rhythm and Music  
Sports Studies  
*Towards Independence*  
Transition to NVQ  
*Understanding Health and Care-Personal Safety*  
Using College - Recognising Signs  
Vocational Access Certificate  
*Work Preparation Skill*  
Workright  
Youth Award

### East Midlands

*Advocacy and Citizenship*  
Art  
Autocare  
Brickwork  
C & G 3791  
Careers  
Careers Guidance  
Ceramics  
Childcare  
*Communications*  
*Community Awareness*  
Computing  
Cookery  
Cooking Skills  
Core Skills  
Core=Numeracy  
Creative Textiles  
Current Affairs  
*Decision Making and Taking Responsibility*  
Drama  
Environmental Education  
FE Award  
Fitness  
Floral Art  
*Good Grooming*  
*Growth (and) Development*  
Hairdressing  
*Health Education*  
Hobbies  
*Home Skills*  
Horticulture  
I.T.  
*Improving Own Learning*  
*Independent Living*  
*Independent Living Skills*  
Individual Education Programme

Integrated Studies  
Joinery  
*Know Rights*  
Leisure and Recreation  
Media Studies  
*Men's Group*  
*Moving On*  
Music  
Numeracy  
Office Practice  
Office Skills  
LDD  
*Personal Development*  
*Personal Effectiveness*  
*Personal Health Issues*  
*Personal Presentation*  
*Personal Skills - Self*  
*Personal Skills - Social Development*  
*Post Moving On*  
Pottery  
Pre Foundation  
*Preparation for Independence*  
*Preparation for Work*  
RSA Skills Profile  
Science  
*Skills for Employability*  
*Students with Profound Difficulties*  
Team Enterprise  
*Towards Independence*  
Tutorials  
*Us Girls*  
*Using Communities*  
Video  
Vocational Transition  
Woodwork  
*Work Preparation*  
*Working With Others*  
Yoga  
Your Choice

## APPENDIX IX

### CHANGES DESIRED IN THREE FE REGIONS

#### North:

Plan content more with students

More integrated approach

Parenting, sex education, relationships

Currently it is difficult to accredit individual units; also, need to have a variety of levels of unit.

#### Greater London

Spend more time teaching and less time filling in paperwork therefore be more focused on the student

more resources, more money, more time to develop resources, etc. -

more opportunity for the students to be involved with the community as part of their education

more time would be great, more input from community based groups, more work experience and practical experience of independent living. Time to develop resources - its often difficult to find things appropriate for this age group. Things are often school orientated and adapting materials takes forever.

many of the listed (items) - be more vocational based

#### East Midlands

I would like the modules to be more 'embedded' within individual student's under day care plan organised by social services - this does happen but not as frequently as I would wish

Have more time to work closely with family and friends of students - ensure work is continued

Improve vocational access - ring fence funding

Improve general quality of course, more time for individual development and independence - put theory into practice

Develop a more sophisticated but as easy to handle method of measuring progress

Have greater funding e.g. to fund European residentials without having to fund-raise. In terms of PSE I find residentials (in 2\* hotels, I must add) are of incredible value

Do it better particularly for students with profound and multiple disabilities

More liaison with other agencies

Basic philosophy courses for SLD+D (severe learning difficulties and disabilities)

Our PSE-related courses are being questioned by FEFC inspectors and we have to radically alter our programmes. Primary learning goals for students are now important, these are occupationally-led and students need to be integrated into occupational areas across college. We will retain a discrete course but student progress will be a major factor in assessing the programme. 'What we would like' is being determined by the funding body.

Offer courses that would not require specific achievements/progression in order to gain funding. Maintaining skills is an achievement in its own right and deserves recognition. Also progression does not necessarily have to be vertical.

Not to have to consider Schedule II re: FEFC and funding

1. Would like more time per week
2. Do the programme with 'mainstream' students
3. Offer Staff development in house for ALL college staff on the issues

## APPENDIX X

### AN INTERVIEW WITH EXPERT WITNESS ONE, AUTHOR AND COURSE LEADER IN DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY STUDIES

#### On the perpetuation of earlier ideas

We're talking about the way in which courses may be in danger of perpetuating some of the tensions that were apparent in school education; in FE there's a danger that it's not very clear as to what it's vision is, what its philosophy is; unless the teachers are clear about their vision, they are not going to be doing anything other than a replication of some of the things which have gone on in some of the activities in special school education. Those special schools have probably changed a lot - but people who have moved from them into FE are in danger of continuing to do some of the things which special schools used to do, but which, with the National Curriculum they have had to 'rein back'. The quality of the work in SLDD is varied, mainly because people aren't clear what it is they're trying to get at. LDD is in itself is a concept which is more school-oriented than it is post-school oriented; a lot of ideas are borrowed from those school perspectives.

#### On the place of PSE-related courses, and the tensions between older and newer approaches in Further Education

There's certainly been the argument put forward by the cynics, that these courses exist because there isn't any employment, and as employment comes back, it is noticeable that people would prefer to be in work more than they would in school. The decline in young males particularly, in wanting to continue in their education, is going to affect, I suspect, the drive towards widening participation. Somewhere along the lines the idea of education has got to be sold, particularly to young men, so that they feel that it is worth staying on to raise their academic qualifications. There has been an expansion of social disadvantage, and there is a gap between those who are very able and those who are less able; social disadvantage in itself is an aspect of this. Social disadvantage is part of how we identify those whom we consider to be the candidates who are in greater need of LDD, which touches on why it is an aspect of SLDD work. That in itself- just even the way I've slipped into "SLDD", is significant; we still categorise, rather than thinking in terms of the individual,

so whilst on the one hand we have inclusion, at the same time we're also caught up in thinking of a group of individuals that require a special sort of curriculum, in spite of all the best endeavours of saying that the curriculum has got to be adapted to the needs of individuals.

On whether PSE-related transition to adulthood courses are still needed, in a climate of inclusion

I think they are needed, but alongside a much more carefully thought through consideration of particular groups and individuals. Inclusion means that in considering the teaching and learning requirements of all learners, teachers are in a position where they have to take into account how they're going to set the agenda of their classrooms and their teaching methods. There will always be a group of people for whom there will be a need for particular strategies, which I think are being applied, either in terms of over-teaching, or resourcing, and adaptation of materials. Certain groups of learners are going to need additional support of some form or another, which may need to be discrete - discrete groups will exist, and if we've got a discrete group, then we're talking about the need for some aspect of a discrete curriculum, otherwise its 'catch up' curriculum all the time. We don't want the 'ambulance service' approach being moved from the school to the FE system, by which I mean the old model of the remedial teacher as the crew of the ambulance: you come in and the crisis is met and it's a tragedy; we all throw things at it and hope that it gets better and then we go away again. LDD doesn't need to exist separately, but the purposes behind it and the actions, they perhaps need to be attached to the other vehicles, so that personal; and social education is a feature of all other areas of the curriculum too. Teaching it as a discrete curriculum subject may be absolutely hell on earth for most people, because it hasn't really so much got a subject base as a cross curricular one, and yet it has a person to teach it; why doesn't everybody teach it, or participate in it, or build a module towards it?

On the guidance which young people with LDD may receive, directing them towards discrete courses in further education

Sometimes students are put into these courses because they are all that there is for them to take up, certainly not because they're passive with it; the resistance there can be sometimes quite extreme. The tradition of thinking of passive acceptance is very much again the hangover of old attitudes - we are doing this for you and to you rather than with you. The notion of the negotiated curriculum is very much an FE aspect. If it's genuinely working, then the teacher becomes the learner and the learner becomes the teacher; you see this interchange of roles and facilitators. Teachers might well want to do this, but it needs to have happened well before an FE context, for a learner to understand that they have some power in terms of being able to negotiate the learning that they undertake and the way in which they set about it.

#### On the need for earlier development of personal and social experience, including independent learning

Unless it's gone on in the school situation, it's not going to suddenly start at sixteen because a child *is* sixteen'. That oppression of the learner which has been a feature of quite a lot of school education for all kids is perpetuated for some time into early adulthood, and it's part of what FE tries to overcome, to make people recognise that they can share in the learning experience. It doesn't always happen that way - we see it time after time, in every college that we can walk into. Of course, the pressure comes from the National Curriculum - that is putting so much restriction upon some of the things that are far more incidental in secondary schools, one of which, some people would argue, is the personal and social curriculum. This is the incidental learning which you might hope people would pick up, in informal activity or at home, because of the parental offering to education. It's something which too often a school anticipates that they aren't going to have to teach, but that often is what schools have to do. They aren't finding they have the time to do it, so FE often is in the position of picking up on some of those things.

#### On the emergent 'voice' of the student with LDD

One of the biggest changes I've witnessed over the course of the last ten years is the emergence of the voice of the student, and the participation of the student in the design of the curriculum, and also even in such activities as staff development. A shared consideration of how students respond and can lead in informing staff about what they want best out of their education- now that's quite a challenge, its certainly quite a change. If the student voice can be heard, either in the form of case studies or in terms of witness sessions, it brings more than just illumination to the way in which work and practice can take place, but can give both parties, I think, an element of new insight. Certainly for the students it can bring about new forms of self-confidence, to realise that they are actually being valued in terms of the views that they hold.

#### On the assessment and evaluation of transition to adulthood courses

I would hope the FEFC inspectorate is sufficiently sensitive and flexible to understand that although there aren't quantitative data in most everything that they want, an understanding of 'value added', an understanding of 'distance travelled' is always going to be behind their work, particularly with the SLDD population. 2J\* is going to be as much about value added, measuring starting point to end point, and its progression towards qualification. We have to have a means of considering progress, and that brings us back to the need for record keeping prior to entry, and also to something like a learning log, or an inclusive learning profile, which means that you will record from the outset, up until, and prior to, the entry to FE, so that there is some understanding that we are taking into account what has gone before. That might be challenged by some people who say FE has to be a fresh start; I've never felt that to be something I've been enthusiastic about; - 'fresh start' strikes me as being a denial of everything that's gone before as being of any value, and that seems nonsensical, to cast aside fifteen years of education and records simply on the basis that everybody wants to make a fresh start; but that's a personal view. I'm sure there are plenty of people in FE who would think differently.

### On the value of PSE-related transition to adulthood courses

It doesn't seem very fair to pick out this particular aspect of the curriculum and say are these courses beneficial; does anybody ever know what's beneficial until some years later - what do you pick up? You take from the accumulation of what becomes the course, various considerations. There perhaps ends up needing to be an exam result in order for it to be recognised in amongst a lot of hierarchical systems. If it's in amongst an exam system and it doesn't have an exam, it'll never be held in high regard even though people might want to say they liked it. It's reflectiveness that comes from it, it's about coming to terms with oneself, and that's jolly difficult for kids of that age - they never admit that it might take some time, maybe even half a generation, before they really look back on their experience.

### On the rights and responsibilities of teaching PSE-related transition to adulthood courses

I think I have now reached the age where, speaking personally, I think we have the responsibility actually to change some views, or at least offer alternative views, with sound arguments as to why that particular perspective might be a better one than some others. Freedom of choice - if choice is the guiding principle behind what we're trying to do in promoting this sort of work - is important. Choice is, I suppose, a guiding force in terms of a lot of the work I've written about, making people realise that they do have power to choose. But we can find that even though we have the responsibility to point out to people that they're not doing themselves any good by perpetuating the particular lifestyle of their taste, you can't deny them the right to stay with it if they wish to. That's the painful part about being a teacher in the best of times, because you can see the consequences of actions which your students can't see, or you believe that you can. The danger of that is we don't always know the consequences, because we are within the perspectives that we carry with us - despite what we say, they might still be making the correct choice, for them!

### On how to determine quality in PSE-related transition to adulthood work

Its hugely problematic, because quality is increasingly judged on outcome measures, and those outcome measures are going to be judged in terms of employment, in terms of

progression, in terms of a qualification. If there's some way in which we could get at the affective aspect of how people are responding, how they are better made able to see the huge resources within themselves and outside themselves, to better understand and control, and to come back and understand themselves, then we're beginning to get at some aspects of quality. How do we judge self-confidence, how do we judge well-being? They are some of the things I see as being quality outcomes but they're not easy to measure. We need to think in terms of how we can actually come up with a vehicle, through which students can contribute, to give us some views on what they've got back from participating in programmes like this.

\* Schedule 2 funding regulations

## APPENDIX XI

### AN INTERVIEW WITH EXPERT WITNESS THREE, COURSE LEADER AND COORDINATOR FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH LDD IN AN EXEMPLARY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

#### On the need for flexibility in adapting the session to the needs of the students:

I run two hour classes because that's how the college functions, and I realised that there were lots of students who were getting very stroppy, and so I was excluding them, and then it suddenly came to me one day, - it was like a window, suddenly opening, once you realise it, and I think it's that that needs to happen to tutors, and once you've experienced where it's going wrong you never go back again, and anyway I realised and thought - this is stupid! All these people that are failing come to the class - they're fantastic for ten minutes, of an hour, or whatever, and then they get destructive and it's because their concentration's gone; two hours is too long for them. So they go; I say to people, come! If you want to come for ten minutes, stay for ten minutes. If you can manage for an hour, stay for an hour; if you can manage for two hours, stay for two hours. But I was the one who was not being flexible.

I had a group of people at all different levels, and I was expecting them all to fit into my arrangement for two hours. There was one girl who does dreadful, dreadful, horrendous projectile vomiting, bites her flesh, stuff like that, every time she came into the building - and normally she can't come, it's not right for her, she's obviously really unhappy. It took her two years to manage, and even now she joins the classes and she has to come with two carers because she's so difficult, but she comes, and she sits in those classes, and slowly she realised that if she vomited, or if she was going to bite her flesh and throw it around she couldn't come. So she's learnt that if she wants to stay she can't do that, and she obviously wants to stay because she doesn't do it, but it took two years of just allowing her. They took photographs of the colleges, photographs of the staff, which they had in a book, so that before she comes the book gets out, and she looks and so it allows staff to realise that you've got to go about it a different way. I'd realised it that day, and thought, why have you never thought about it before? It's ridiculous, it's absolutely ridiculous.

### On the need to take into account the experiences of parents and carers of the young adult

What the students thought about their learning experience, it was obvious that we needed to take into account what carers and parents and what other people in their lives saw and experienced when they were with them, their students. The Responsive College Unit actually put together a pilot, which has never been done before, which was a questionnaire, or a way of trying to assess what people with learning disabilities thought about what they were getting, and that was interesting, yes, because they took into account, and they interviewed, not just the students but the people that lived with the students. So if a carer spent time with a student at home, and then came to college with that student, they were saying interesting things about, well I've never seen such-and-such a body behave like that before, he only does that when he's at college, his behaviour is far better when he's at college. It seems to be because of the expectation; it's the college. So there is nothing particularly going on, that was actually looking at personal and social development but there were lots of things that were happening that were being recorded by parents, by carers, people who send their children, their young adults, to day centres; there's quite a few that have noticed that when their adult arrives home, that they are better, or more - not well behaved, the wrong term, but more adult when they come back from being here, than when they come back from being in the day centre. We've had to try and take all those responses into account of what we do, in terms of funding.

### On the need for PSD(E) to be responsive to students' needs

Personal and social development has to be a response to need. I think there was this big skit, when we were at B., do you remember, there was this thing of, well they're all adults, they've got to behave like adults, and they need to be treated like adults, and there was this great thing, of I think imposing what we thought adult behaviour was, on people. I think what I've tried to be is tolerant, and what I seem to have - I don't know, come to believe over the years, is that everybody's different.

### On what students with LDD may have missed in their learning background

I often draw a picture of a stepladder, with a little person at the bottom, and it's the ladder of success. At the top success can be anything. It might be learning to go on a bus, it might be passing a GCSE, it might be joining a French class, it might be anything for anybody. We expect people, in education, to get from the bottom to the top, somehow. But for all people with learning disabilities, they do not have the bottom few rungs, the bits that you acquire when you go to normal schools, when you have the rough and the tumble in the playground, all those normal things that you need in order to then function when you get further up the ladder, the dealing with being at college, and the dealing with getting married or being with someone. That's what we try to give, and that that could be anything, and in some cases it could be quite childlike things, because they've missed out on that, and that's not a wrong thing to do - sometimes people will respond in a child-like way because of certain things that are missing - to recognise that, just as you would with a sixty-five year old who then comes to learn to read, that they've had certain life experiences, and they are the way they are; the whole learning thing should just be a response to need. We all want to get to the top, but how on earth can you get to the top of the ladder if you can't even get on it? And sometimes it needs to be the sort of ladder that people can sit on, if they want to, for a bit.

#### On funding considerations

Now what FEFC funding does is stop you being able to respond to need. Where I'm really, really, really lucky is, because we were very well thought of by the Local Education Authority, they've backed this - they're very proud of the work that goes on with people with learning difficulties here. They have continued to fund, which means I am not having to jump through FEFC funding hoops. I can run a course when the need arises. I just go to my Principal, I say we need this at this particular moment, can I go ahead and do it? You know we've students that want it - let's do it, like now we've people with profound and multiple disabilities, because since the R. A. and the M.(two large local mental and psychiatric establishments) have closed, we've got so many people with profound disabilities that need the opportunity to have education, we're exploring what they might need. So I'm lucky enough to be able to be able to run a course in a way that's quite experimental, we're not

sure where it will go, but we swap tutors and we find out. Although I do have some FEFC public courses, there are some that are vocationally oriented - but they're there because it's right that they're there, because there are students that need that at that particular moment. I can run an incredibly flexible curriculum, and bend and move to the needs of the students. I'm a great believer in discrete provision. We are having to be more flexible about our funding, because things are tight, so we try to get our money wherever we can, but for the discrete provision I'm not dependent on FEFC funding.

#### On the need for flexibility in staff

Our main aim is to include people, and get people into mainstream, and I'm lucky enough again, with the flexibility, to persuade mainstream tutors to work with people with learning disabilities, and I've got more and more now, rather than just employing people that are only working with people with learning disabilities. This is why it's nice in a way that I've managed the Arts, because I can persuade my staff, and say, come on you can have a go at this, and it'll be all right. I go into all interviews for mainstream staff and bring up, during the interviews, that we have learning disabilities, and how would you feel about working with learning disabilities. I interviewed a Tai Chi tutor, and he'd never worked with learning disabilities before, and yet I was aware that I had a whole group of students who would love it, love to have a go. He was willing to try, and I think because we're not working towards vocational qualifications all the time, it can be a process of learning for the student and for the member of staff. He now works in mainstream as well as in discrete, and he hand-picks when somebody's ready to go into mainstream, so the success rate is far better.

#### On flexibility in the inclusion of students

Staff realise that the flexibility's there so that there's no set rule that Oh, we've got to have three people with learning disabilities in every class, you know, and if we don't, we're not really inclusive. Sometimes you might have five people with a learning disability in a mainstream pottery class and then the next term, because of the nature of the group, and the mainstream students -you've got to take their feelings into account as well - you wouldn't

have any, because they wouldn't be able to cope. And it's that, dealing with it sensitively and not bamboozling people, and saying, you've got to have them, it's their right to be here, and again, not paying lip service to people with learning disabilities and saying, Mmm well, it's their right to be in this class, so put them in, when they're never going to learn anything - it's giving them what they need, and I'm really lucky that I can respond to that.

#### On staff development as an outcome of working with students with LDD

We have, I think you know, all types of students. But it works as well because there's flexibility I think for mainstream tutors as well, and there's a lot of support, everybody's given a lot of support. What's wonderful -and this is the thing I want to get back to as well, is with all the tutors that have gone and worked with people with learning disabilities, because you can't ignore personal and social development when you're doing it, it makes for better teachers. They all feel that they've gone back in to their mainstream classes seeing their group more on an individual level, and recognising that there are difficulties that other people that might be having, and that support that other people might be having. I've got some tutors- we've got the art and design department at the top of the building, which actually belongs to the college of FE, so some of my art staff work for them as well.

#### On the potential for PSD(E)-based input to help disaffected pupils

The art and design department try to poach my staff, because they're aware what good teachers they are, and the sixteen to nineteen year olds who are upstairs are very difficult. They've failed in school, they're doing art because they can't do anything else, and they need loads of personal and social development, but the art and design staff see themselves just as art and design - they're only dealing with teaching them to paint and draw and do whatever they're supposed to be doing in art and design, and they won't deal with those personal issues. What they've realised is that you have a tutor who, within their teaching, will take on board the personal issues. It changes what happens, so I think it is something that in a way should just be part of a teacher's remit. The adult thing is really important, and like I've said to J., who runs the art and design department, she has loads of problems with behaviour they

don't do their work because they don't have study, they left school without being taught. If her young people were coming on our courses they would develop personally and socially, and I think it's the way they would be treated that makes that difference. People get shocked, they come into the building and they realise that they can go to the toilet whenever they want, or leave early, or that nobody's going to question and ask them, say you have to be here and you've got to do this and you've got to do the other, but it is, very much, you are taking this on as a responsibility and we're going to treat you like adults. For some reason it's quite an unusual way to treat people.

We've started just recently some collaborative work with the college of FE, and the main area is staff development, because I think that that's where we have something incredible to offer them, so that they value the people they're working with, because all they do is see them as problems, they see these young people as problems. They're noisy, they're rude, they're disruptive, they don't know how to work, they don't know how to study, but they've never been taught, and J. upstairs you see will not take on board that she should have some form of personal and social development within what she's doing. If we all did it - you see, when I go back to B., when I was teaching dance, I remember saying, Oh, I'm not going to do drama, and I'm not going to do this, I am a dance teacher, I love dance and that's what I want to teach, and then at some point realising that I was doing the people I was working with a disservice, by not being flexible enough to change what I teach. There you are with a group of people, and yes, your aim is to do this particular piece of work, but how you get there should be the way in which you take whatever journey is necessary for them.

#### On the need not to focus only on subject content

Some people in FE get very obsessed with their subject, and the end result of the subject, not the journey. It's the journey that's important. This is inclusive learning; we've just started to tackle it, because in fact we've not tackled it. I think there are lots of issues that we've dealt with over the years and we're well on the way to being truly inclusive, particularly with people with learning disabilities, and with people with mental health problems but in terms of some staff, they can't take it on board, because they can't break away from their subject.

It's the teaching and learning, that's the important thing; people are very much into that end product and not how you get there. And it is an interesting one, because we're just beginning to look at it, because there are some staff - how do you make them realise how difficult it is for some people, or how you need to have lots of different approaches. To just say we're going to do this, we're going to do it this way, and if you can't fit into that you're wrong; lots of staff are like that, particularly the ones that are doing the vocational courses, and the ones that are seen as academic, you know Open College Psychology, Open College Philosophy or whatever, Stage As and Stage Bs.

#### On the arts as a key to learning

I think if I look at the spectrum of students who we get coming in, and we've got a good ratio - it's quite interesting actually because I've just had to do a report for the evaluate meeting about learning disabilities, that it's actually levelled out in terms of numbers. I think we're actually meeting the needs locally of students, and the numbers are no longer increasing, but the curriculum continues to change. There are still the arts; I think for lots of people they provide the key for learning, because you can be different, and because you can be creative.

But the arts are still seen as a secondary thing, you know we're treated badly. For music we don't have proper practice rooms, but for information technology the most fantastic computer suites with everything you could ever imagine. And the same for art; you know, I've been firefighting this morning for silver jewellery, which is in a dreadful room, with not the right equipment, but you know, information technology has all the up to date equipment. When I look through, all the arts have a spectrum of people progressing, discrete classes through to mainstream, so it's happening, you know, inclusivity is happening, and yet IT, where you'd think it would be, it stays completely discrete, there's no feeding in at all; staff are very reluctant to actually accept and take people in.

#### On the value of 'mainstream' and 'special' crossover

It works best where I have mainstream tutors teaching the discrete classes. And again, you see, I have just a discrete person in the computer department and none of the mainstream lot

are willing to pass down, and yet the pottery and art, we have the most fantastic link. For art we've got two discrete groups, which provide opportunities for people with quite profound disabilities to do art, and then we've got an intermediate group for people that might move into mainstream, they're a lot more able, and then there are people in mainstream. But we've now started as well- this is how we can respond, I think, and this is why - it just builds people's confidence - we've a few people that are doing Open College pottery - they've been doing pottery for years, and they decided to do the Open College. They were falling behind on creating a portfolio, because they'd never done it before, didn't know how to do it. So we set up an art and design course which supported the work that they're doing, and that's doing remarkably well, and what's wonderful from that is, there are mainstream people saying, well, why can't we have a mainstream art and design class, because we could do with one as well, so next term we're setting up a mainstream class.

It's a slow process. It's exactly the same for the staff as it is for your students, or it should be, so that they never feel that they're failing, and that if something doesn't work, they can say so. I've got a student who's just joined a mainstream Spanish class, and he did a term in a mainstream Spanish with a volunteer tutor working with him, who does discrete Spanish, he moved to the mainstream, and he then wanted to move on to another Spanish. I couldn't get a volunteer to be with him, so it was decided he could try on his own, and it works incredibly well, the tutor was willing to accept it. But she knew right from the start, that it was perfectly alright to say this is not working, and the student knew that there was a likelihood that she might say it's not working. We've not to say right, he's failed - we're going to look at what we do next. I think that the whole thing is seeing - rather than something that has to be achieved, like we've got to have inclusivity, we've gotta have people in mainstream, blah blah blah - that it's a process, and it'll be ongoing, it will change, it will evolve, and it will never stop. I think that that's how they see the work that they do with people with learning disabilities, that it's a process, and that there's no set rule, that we need this, because we need that, because we need the other. It's what is right at that particular moment. And if it doesn't work, anybody can say, this is not working.

### On the need for a positive staff approach, and staff development

I think the staff are fantastic. They are so positive about the work they do; they want to share. That helps, in that they feed back to other members of staff: don't be frightened of doing it, it's great, you'll learn from these students. They'll teach you something. P., our Principal, is very positive about it all, and he allows me to make decisions about things.

We do a lot of staff development. I still teach on a couple of courses because I think it's important in managing staff that you can't be unaware of what they're doing, and what it's like to be a tutor. I invite mainstream members of staff to come and join my classes, to come and see, and have a feel, and they then think, well, alright I might have a go, you know, it might be alright, it might be alright. They come and they're interested, so that works as staff development. We have regularly what we call power meetings - I'm in these programme areas, because I'm down as a programme area leader. It's been very good in that instead of just having learning disabilities as a separate thing, all the courses fit into programme areas, so I'm just a cross college coordinator for the disabilities. I think without one person leading it, it doesn't work, so I vet every student that comes in, I don't allow just any student with learning disabilities to join mainstream classes without it coming through me. All the people that work in learning disabilities go to the power meeting of the area they're in. The art ones come to me, the creative writing has come to me, the IT ones go to C.

There is this awareness across the college of people that work in discrete classes, so although it's a meeting for people in foundation studies, it's not me that's taking the meeting. There are students, there are staff that work with GCSE, 'A' level, as well as the people that are working right down at basics with people with learning disabilities, they're in together, and that's worked really well I think, with people realising and that there are people with learning disabilities doing art, and there are people with learning disabilities doing other classes, so the structure of the college works well, and is supportive of it. The same with mental health, that happens there as well.

### On the value of drama as a means of personal and social development

I do what we call communication and drama groups, which I think are personal and social development groups. Most students that come into the college at some point will do my course, before they move into anything else so I can get a feel for them, so I'm not saying to a member of staff, Oh, I've got this student that wants to join your group, you know I think we'll be alright. I know the students and I can say to the person, I've worked with these students, I know what they're like, you know, these are their foibles, blah, blah, blah, please have a try. Those are personal and social groups.

There's the 'Living Your Life' group, there's a group that we run called 'Equal people', which is an Open University course based on story tapes - they're really good, they're like case studies of people with learning disabilities, and they might be wanting to get married, or moving out of a hospital, or various things- things that happen within families or within school or at home, or whatever. You listen to the story tape, and then there's a book that goes with it, and you then discuss points that have arisen and discuss it from your own point of view, so that looks at personal and social development issues. The 'Living Your Life' group is very much that. Rather than working from this pack, the issues that are dealt with are the issues that need to get dealt with.

That's the other thing with people with disabilities, they don't just come into college, do their course and go, you get involved personally, because their learning is very much part of the rest of their lives. There's two young men that have just moved into flats on their own, and they're joining 'Living Your Life' this afternoon, because it's obvious that there are certain things they're going to be sharing and blah blah blah - there are issues that are coming up - so we said, right, well, that's the place where they need to be, and that can be their platform for discussing and sharing all those things. So people can drop in and out of the classes, and we do try to respond to people's needs.

We're finding more and more that there are people with mental health problems who in fact fit well into the learning disabilities area; again it's trial and error. We've a young man who was in mental health, and had Oh, a dreadful history of suicide attempts and lots and lots and lots of gender problems- all kinds of things. They tried everything : discrete

classes for mental health problems, mainstream classes, none of it worked. We tried learning disabilities drama group, and it's been fantastic and it's been the making of him.

I think the drama is still as it was at B., a fantastic platform for looking at personal and social development, but it's not done as personal and social development. We now have one drama class, there are mainstream drama classes that people can go into, there is one that's run by a drama therapist, which is just a basic improvisation drama class for people with quite profound disabilities, and then we have a group that actually do performance work. They go into schools and do performance work, and in terms of personal and social development it is the accolade, it is the proof how drama is the answer.

They never talk about personal and social development, but to watch these people - in fact I will show you a very short film that was done for Channel Four, they were chosen to represent people with learning disabilities for adult learners' week in the area of drama, for work that was exceptional and outstanding - to see a group of students who can organise their time, work together as a group, really sensitively, take responsibility for performances, students that have mega, mega, mega problems, is quite astounding. That is the proof, it's the proof what drama can do, and how drama is personal and social development, without having to teach it. They are doing drama, in a theatre, a full performance, but for them it has been the way through. Although at the same time I watch my sculpting tutors, my pottery tutors, they are also incredibly responsible for moving people on, for progression, and people only progress if they are growing and responding as people.

The drama's actually been a thread that's run through the whole of the learning disabilities ever since I think we started work here. It's reached a stage where it is quite astounding and the work that's being done is fantastic. They're creating pieces of work they're taking to secondary schools and share with secondary schools. Where we went wrong in B. you see, we used to do pieces of drama that talked about disability; what these students do is drama. It doesn't mention disability, but just them in fact, going into a school, and running workshops, proves to people that people with learning disabilities have a place in society, it dispels the views that people have about people with learning disabilities. The

tutor I have also works with the Duke's Theatre and they do a lot of Shakespeare work. For some reason the students just love it, the language, the concepts are all the same, you know.

#### On the value of shared student and shared staff experience

I've also been responsible throughout the years, I've got heavily involved in taking people to Spain, which has ended up as a strong personal and social development week that's happened every year now, and without that week there, the drama group would never have got off the ground. I've just done a two year European project which was called enhancing education through the expressive arts for people with learning disabilities, and proof again, that it's the arts that actually does do things.

Without talking about it, without getting heavy about it, it's the practical doing of it, the sharing, the working, being allowed to be creative, it's that creativity that allows your personality to grow, and allows everything to happen. This is going back years - eight, ten years ago, yes, when we first started. I was then employed, in fact, to teach personal and social development here; I did two, two-hour classes and that was it. And we worked at St. M.'s College, and we used their drama studio, because we were in the most dreadful building without any facilities at all; we've got a very small drama studio. I used to take my group on a Wednesday, up to St. M.'s, when the drama department wasn't in use. The tutor there kept coming through, and slowly got kind of drawn in to it, and her students started to do teaching practice with us, and they got involved.

This tutor announced one day, the lecturer in charge of drama, that she'd no longer be there, she was going to become a cook at this wonderful place in southern Spain, that was there for people to find (themselves). After about six months I got a letter from her, and she said, do you know, I've been at this place about six months, and I'm watching all these people coming in and out, every week, and they're all doing different courses, you know, spiritual healing, how to find oneself, how to love oneself, how to do this, that and the other, and she said, I've never once seen anybody with a learning disability. She said, it's the most exquisite place - it's paradise, it's private, it has its own pool, the most wonderful space to work in, and she said, I think we should run courses here for people with learning disabilities.

She said, it would just be absolutely fantastic, and so she spoke to the owner, and he said, Oh, well, yes, let's do it - we'll advertise one.

So it was advertised in the brochure, a week for people with learning disabilities to come and do - I think we actually said we were going to do drama and art - a crazy arts week. We were inundated with people that wanted to come, but nobody could afford to go, because this place - it's paradise, absolutely stunning, but it becausets you five hundred pounds a week to go, then you need your flight on top. It's for middle class people, those rich middle class people, doctors and professional people that could afford to go and find themselves for a week, so anyway it didn't run. We tried again the next year and exactly the same thing happened - and it became obvious that without funding it would never get off the ground. So I decided rather than to invite people from anywhere, which was what we'd done -this brochure went out nationally - I'd just use students from the college, and try to get a group together from the college, and if they were willing to supplement part of the payment I'd try and raise the money. I managed to raise the money to pay for the centre, which was at the time, not that much - I think it was about two thousand pounds- it's about five thousand pounds for a week now, it's gone and jumped up so much - and the students paid for their flights. We went out, and it was like, unbelievable. We has this group- I think there were about twenty-four of us altogether, about sixteen students, with the rest staff, and I'd planned this week of activities which were all to do with creative arts - we went laden with masks and fabric and painting equipment, blah blah blah. When we got there, there was this astounding place - all the students had their shared rooms, in this absolutely beautiful, beautiful, beautiful place, with fantastic food laid on, cooked by a Spanish man. It was just amazing, when we realised that the students wanted to be themselves, and I think that it's played a huge part in how we treat the staff here.

And anyway the students: some of them, like, there was one chap, wanted to sit with his feet in the swimming pool; it was quite cold, we didn't go in the hot time of the year. And he said, Look, if I was at home, me mother wouldn't allow me to do this, and I want to do it, so leave me be, and I've got me arm bands on, so if mother sees any photograph she knows I'm safe. And there was another woman who obviously lived in a house where she

was only allowed to have a bath once a week. She couldn't believe she had her own bath, so she wanted to have a bath twice a day, and change her clothes twice a day. So they all went off, and there were all these other astounding things that went on. The staff couldn't believe the place was so beautiful - care assistants that were treated dismally couldn't believe that they'd been allowed to come to this beautiful place, and be together as a group.

When we went to Spain we decided that we wanted to do Lorca- they'd been working on Lorca's Blood Wedding for a while and their next piece of work is about that, and people go - My God! It was interesting actually, the expectations. The European project that we've just finished was with a College of FE in Ireland, and they were dealing with people with very, very moderate learning difficulties, and slight challenging behaviour, - young people, young adults. They did art but not much drama; they did use drama, they were aware that drama has its place, and they did lots and lots and lots of art work. So they were working with us, in Spain, and when we first met the group and we said that the students had been working on Macbeth, and, you know, they'd like to work on something else - the people from Ireland were, like, Oh My God! No, it's going to be absolutely horrific there's no way these students could do anything that involves any intellectual functioning.

We got a bit frightened when we met the people from Ireland because they were so able, and our students are not that able. We had lots of people with Downs' Syndrome and the people in Ireland didn't like to see themselves as having disabilities and being put with those with loads of problems. So we put these two groups together, and what was fascinating was to watch our group, who should have been a lot less able, being more able socially and coping a lot better, and at the end of the project the arts had brought together two groups of people who became friends and are still in contact; they continue to work together despite the project being over, they write, they are - together.

The work that was produced was quite astounding, and in terms of personal and social development the Irish staff said they'd never seen their students behave the way they had. There were issues that were addressed, the growth, the personal growth, was astounding. They want to go ahead and continue to use drama and include it in the curriculum because it was so vital. The arts staff had never realised the importance of art in

actually developing work. The whole project actually looked at how we teach, how we learn, and out of this has grown another project which we'll hear about at the end of January if we get it. It's actually going to create a teachers' pack which will show how, and display how, using drama is an ideal method for developing students. There is a way of working, a way of listening to students, and a way of being with students whether its' in education, whether you're working in an old peoples' home, wherever you are, that can actually enhance these students' development.

We did a few creative things, but as well we allowed students to be (themselves), and when we got back after the week the difference to everybody that worked with, or lived with, the people that went was astounding- everybody made comments and they said - they've changed. In fact, the young man that's now in the mainstream Spanish class -he's very very autistic, and has never spoken to anybody, was rude if he ever did - is now the most affable, wonderful man, wants to speak Spanish, goes regularly to Spain, is friendly, has made friends, but it's taken years.

It was obvious we had to do it again, so we've been doing it every year. The European project fit into it so we got to work with people in Spain, and people from all over the place. The college has actually recognised as well, that it is vital for staff, and we offer one place every year to somebody who doesn't work with people with learning disabilities to come along. They come for the week and work with us on the week. And then that person comes back and they say, well, they're people, they're fantastic. We work together, and we go away, and there's very much this feel of not to be afraid, it's them and us, that we are together as a group of people doing things together, negotiating what we want to learn, what we want to do.

And the care assistants that come all recognise that we're all in it together. They're valued, they're given space and time; the students get what they want, and it's the most amazing experience, but it's just, like, ridiculously expensive. The college started to fund a little bit, to pay a little bit, but then we went through a financial crisis, so the last trip in fact was paid for (by sponsorship) - I cycled from northern Spain to southern Spain, to raise the last lot of money.

It's just absolutely fantastic, but it's the staff development, and the same for the Centre too; the gardener, the cook, said people come to this place, and they walk in, and they ignore us. The gardener said, people will step over me rather than speak to me, and it's middle class snobs yeah. He said we come, and everybody becomes part of this week, and they have learnt so much about valuing people and just how there are no limits to people learning and sharing and working together; the development's for everybody. And what was wonderful, our Vice Principal came last time- I think she needed to come to kind of see what was going on, because people talk about it. You can't actually capture the essence of it unless you go and experience it. I think her experience as a mother was used rather than her being there as that Vice Principal - and she learned such a lot. She has now come back and is even more positive about the integration of students, about the inclusivity of students. She can say, I've been with them, I know, I've done it, and it works. We had a member of the office staff came one trip.

#### On the value of recognising and using staff strengths

What we've also done which I think is quite unusual, is that we might employ people, like I have a care assistant employed as a care assistant, but it turns out that in fact she's incredibly creative, and has skills in other areas. Now we're training her as a teacher, and she teaches certain subjects, creative subjects, with people with learning disabilities. She's now moved into mainstream and she would have never thought about it. It's actually harnessing, in your staff, what they're good at, so rather than saying, well actually I employed that person to do that, you say, Oh, blow that, they're good at *that* (something else), let's pay them to do that. We actually develop the confidence of the staff so that they feel well yes, all right, and because they're doing things that they're good at, they're successful at it, so it builds their confidence even more. I think that that's where we're quite unusual as well, that we allow staff to take side steps.

#### On the relationship between discrete provision and inclusion

What we try to encourage is, we realise that in order to get progression so they aren't just staying in discrete - although there are some students that'll never move out of discrete - but if I stopped discrete classes, there'd be no provision for them, because they've got such profound disabilities. You do need discrete provision, if we're going to try and offer education for all. But if you've got a mainstream tutor teaching the discrete, they themselves hand pick when the moment is right to move somebody into mainstream. They know the student, they know the rest of their students, because I think the whole process of inclusivity, integration, whatever you want to call it, has to be something that everybody is involved in; the canteen staff, the cleaners, we have to take everybody's feelings into account.

But we have to recognise that sometimes, through no fault of their own, if you've got a group of people and they have never in their life come across somebody with a learning disability, then you expect them to work with somebody who maybe might not be very attractive, and might dribble and drool, it is a frightening experience, and you need to know that they are prepared for it, and they feel OK about it. In terms of finances, all my students with learning disabilities do not pay, they get everything free, and there are people here paying a lot of money to come on courses. You have to make sure as well that they are receiving what they came for. So you've got to take into account everybody's feelings, and it doesn't stop the process, the process works better.

I think as well, it has to be flexible. There's no set rules, you can stop whenever it's not working and rather than see it as a failure, say right, where do we go to next, what do we do, what pathway should we take. So it's an ongoing process- we never get there. Hopefully we're going to change and evolve and move, depending on whoever comes into the building, or goes out the building. You're involved in a process that's flexible, that needs support from everybody so that you never feel that oh God, I've gotta take this person, I feel guilty, blah blah. Have mainstream tutors teaching in discrete so that they can hand-pick when people are ready, I think that that's important.

On the need for flexibility in arranging and supporting inclusion

And we use other students: like for the language classes I had a girl who wanted to do French, and it was absolutely no use putting my care assistant in with her, because she didn't speak any French. You needed somebody who was interested in speaking French, so the French tutor asked all her other classes if there was anybody who wanted to do another class free, but sit next to a person with a learning disability, so that if this person needed any help there was one person there to support -so that the French tutor could still get on, it wasn't going to slow everybody down. And it worked remarkably well, and yes, S. had to do the course twice to get her certificate, but she got it. I think that's been the sort of thing as well that people have realised, that it doesn't mean that students can't do it, it just means sometimes it takes longer.

The first aid course: we realised that there were students desperate to do the first aid course, and they were failing on the same things, it's really interesting, every time they did the course - it was the same particular little practical bits that they were failing on. So what we did, we set up a special discrete course where they practised just those things. They worked on it, they worked on it, they worked on it until they understood it, then they joined the mainstream, they did the mainstream course, they passed - didn't hold anybody back. I was able to go to my Principal and say, we need a discrete first aid (class) - just for a term, to get these students up to scratch, and then they can join the mainstream. It's being able to say what we've done, it's not going to work, it can't work, so we say well, how can we make it work? And rather than then say, well, we can't do that because we haven't got a class, we say, we'll make one, we do it.

#### On the need for discrete PSD(E)-related input

I know that Bn. College don't have any discrete courses at all, they've got rid of them all and they say you don't need them. But I think, personally, you'd be doing students a disservice if you didn't have them. I have students in mainstream classes who were failing because socially their behaviour was ostracising them, and instead of allowing them to become part of the group, it was making them worse. There were issues - the students have such complicated, complicated lives which you can't ignore. Sometimes they need a platform to be able to share some of those things. It's an interesting one actually, if we look at it's

evolution and the way everything, all the curriculum, seems to have evolved out of need. At the moment there's quite a few of my tutors who have been coming to see me and saying, Can we do something about lying? A lot of the students seem to be telling lots of lies, little ones, big ones, whatever, I don't know - and all at once there were quite a few tutors that were becoming aware of this. That was an issue that had to be tackled, so we set something up.

We've had a lot of problems with gender and sexuality, particularly with men. It's become obvious that women, because they menstruate, you have to face up to the fact of sexuality. It's dealt with, it's spoken about. No matter how disabled anybody is, they start their periods, you've gotta say what's happening, and why you're having this. So women's sexuality, and their safety re sexuality, is dealt with. With men, it's been ignored, and it's become obvious we have loads and loads of problems with men. They don't recognise what sex they are, they don't know whether they're male or female, they don't know whether or not it's all right to have sex with other men, or whether it should be with a woman -and it's not that they're gay, although some are, it's that it's never been discussed, and the rights or wrongs of it or whatever have never been discussed. So there are masses of issues that have come up with loads of male students all at the same time. I'm looking into finding a tutor that can actually deal with those issues. So again it's this response, and if I didn't run a discrete class that would never get dealt with.

I do contact other agencies. We're going to meet with the support team with the sex health organisation, and they can work with particular individuals and point people in the right direction. But sometimes if all the students here, and the work obviously works, we can look at bringing in a tutor. We've had as well, employment issues. We're using a tutor from an organisation which is responsible for finding employment placements. So they come. And rather than do their course that they're doing, they come and do it here. So I'm able to put students on it, and they're able to bring students into it. So again we try to share our kind of work; we set up the groups when they're necessary, so without this group, I think, you couldn't really do such a good job.

### On the need to allow students time to be themselves

Putting people in a discrete group for a while, and yet providing them with the opportunities to go into mainstream whenever they want is why it works so well. People need to be able to be themselves, and if they happen to be droolers or whatever, you know, they need a moment or two where they can do that. We went once to Spain and there was a woman who'd been in an institution all her life, she was in her forties, and she was brought up on cold showers, carbolic soap and cold showers, you or I would hate to put our heads under the cold tap, we don't want to do it, it's not nice - she loved it, it was habitual, loved it, loved it, loved it, loved it. Whenever they went on holiday, they had to keep her away from the swimming pool, because people were horrified. Because we had a private swimming pool she could do it to her hearts' content. And then when we went to the baths you restrain her and say, well this is how you behave. But there were moments where she could be herself; the care staff could relax. She loves coffee, wants to drink coffee continually, she was in her element being able to go to the bars and have strong coffee, and they could let her do whatever she wanted while we were in the safety of the Centre.

### On the characteristics of a good course for young adults with LDD

It's the tutor as well, and the tutor not being afraid, and being able to listen to what the students need. I found this Living Your Life pack - it's a very good pack actually, got lots of nice photocopiable material in it, and it has a structure that you could work with if you want. Have a structure if you want, like the Living Your Life pack is very good. But I think it's not to be rigid and sticking to it, and not to feel like you've got to cover too much material. You do it at the students' pace, to take your time and feel as if you have forever. See, that's the problem with all this business of accrediting things. You've got to jump through these hoops, and so, rather than actually dealing with the issues as they're arising, you're saying, well, we've got to do this today because we've got to do this by the end of the course. So it's to try, almost, to still be flexible within that structure, and to listen to your students - to listen to what they need. Because it's the thing that's sometimes not said, or things said out of

context, that are very often the issues that need to be dealt with. And its finding bloody good tutors, that's what it is.

Loads, loads, really really good staff development, and, you see there are some staff that you'll never change, no, no. In Spain, we ended up with, I think, a film which was something like two and a half hours long. We filmed the staff preparing for the session, talking about their own subjects, and then we filmed the session, then we filmed the students talking about what they got out of it, we filmed the staff talking about what they thought the students got out of it. Absolutely fascinating, absolutely fascinating, and also watching tutors actually work; some staff, they were so into their subject. If you have a pack, a 'Living Your Life' pack, and it says today that we're dealing with masturbation, and it tells you in the book, these are the questions you've got to ask; if you stick to it rigidly you still get to the end of it.

I watched one tutor, and she had decided we were going to go up onto the roof at (the Centre) which is very beautiful, and paint the mountains. Fantastic! Wonderful idea! The mountains are just utterly fantastic. And she just said, 'We are going to paint the mountains' there was no Hello, no anything, and so, there they are, there's the stuff, and she wanted one student to point at what they saw, and outline, which is incredibly complicated, and then somebody down on the piece of paper to respond to what they were hearing so that, as one person said to another, up, up a bit, down a bit, down a bit, down a bit, they have to draw. There are all these students were like going Aargh, I don't know what she means, I don't know what she means, what's she on about, aargh, panicking, panicking. They all did it in the end, it was fine, and they did it, and she then went round, and she even said to one of them, 'You've done it wrong, you've not left any sky'. But she'd never mentioned, 'Leave the sky' and so she made them do it again, and there's all this stuff going on. But at the end of it, we had pictures, they were done.

So the group might have learning about masturbation, they'd done it, but she hadn't seen how the journey of getting there could've been so much more, to get them to look at the mountains, to get them to talk about the ups and the downs, and all the other stuff, just that, that the journey should've been a lot easier, and a lot less painful, and that you don't tell people they've done it wrong because they've done it the way they've done it. She found it

incredibly hard to see how it could have been done, and how the educational process could have been a lot better if she'd taken a lot more time, and not worried about getting the pictures finished. It didn't matter. Because she ran out of time, and when they were all just getting into it, because it had taken them so much trauma to get into it, she told them they had to stop. And they were going to move onto something else, and it was like (large, long gasp).

Well, we had a feedback session; each session was going to be observed and that was the whole idea, we were actually looking at how people teach, and how people work. And we had to be very objective about it. I sat at the beginning, and I said to the other person that I'd been observing with, I said, I can't go in and do this, because what I saw was dreadful, dreadful teaching. And I was told that if our job is to look critically at teaching and learning and we're here to assess, and really, really, really question what we're doing, because all our sessions were going to be observed and done in exactly the same way, she said it's your right, you have to do it, because otherwise you're not fulfilling the role. So I tried to be very positive, and say yes, the objectives were met. However, if I'd've been doing it, or I just felt that, you know, they could've been - you could've added - it was awful, awful, awful, awful, awful, awful - she wasn't seeing it as a learning process, the whole process.

The whole thing was very fascinating. There was another art tutor as well that was working with it. So the second session which the tutor should've taken, she opted out of and she gave it to the other tutor to do. And the other tutor took on board all the issues that had been raised about listening and looking and responding to what the students say. When a student says 'I'm struggling, I'm struggling, I can't do it, I can't do it', rather than the tutor saying, you know, 'Just get on with it, don't be ridiculous' - responding to it, and doing something about it, and all the extra things. And she did, she continued the session and created the most fantastic piece of work that the students talked about passionately, that was just amazing. Sadly, for the first tutor, it made her work look even worse, but since returning to Ireland, this other tutor has taken it on board, and has tried very much to change the way

she's teaching. But when I looked back and I watched the videos of the session it was all done in a very positive way.

#### On the need for staff responsiveness

These things need to be shared with other teachers, and you need to be willing for people come in and watch you work. I've just employed a new tutor who interviewed fantastically, and his work's dreadful. And I've been in and watched, and he just doesn't listen or do anything. We've tried staff development and that doesn't seem to be working, so I think the answer is that we'll probably not have to renew his contract. Some staff are watching this other art tutor respond, and see the work change, and she felt so fantastic at the end of it, was just amazing. But it is that, that being able to be critical and change what you do. I might decide this is the structure of what I'm going to teach today, but very often it goes in a completely different direction because of what happens, and that - you see, is why I'm so lucky. At the end of the session I can look at what's happened and say well, so-and-so needs to be doing that, or that and that and that, so that's what we should do next session. And it might be completely different from what was expected. If you're doing a true personal and social development course, and you're truly responding to those students and looking at their development, it has to be what they need at that particular moment. But it is staff development.

## APPENDIX XII

### LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADULTHOOD

In addition to rights gained at sixteen and seventeen, rights and responsibilities acquired with adult status include the right to:

1. Vote in local, parliamentary and EEC elections
2. Be called for jury service.
3. Make a will.
4. Act as an executor for someone's will.
5. Consent to an operation.
6. Donate blood.
7. Give your body to science (if you are sixteen you may do this if your parents consent).
8. Apply for a passport without parental consent.
9. Leave home without parental consent.
10. Marry without parental consent.
11. Change your name without parental consent.
12. Trace your natural parents if you have been adopted.
13. Pay the community charge.
14. Buy and sell land, houses and flats and apply for a mortgage.
15. Be sued and bring an action in court.
16. Sign contracts for hire purchase and credit agreements.
17. Pawn an article in a pawn shop.
18. Place a bet in a betting shop.
19. See category 18 films.
20. Buy and sell alcohol.

Wright, M.(1990) Young People's Rights London; Macdonald and Co (publishers)Ltd.