

**CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT FOR
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING
DIFFICULTIES / DISABILITIES**

**REPORT BY UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**

OCTOBER 2000



**Qualifications &
Curriculum Authority**

Classroom Assessment for Students with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities

Final Report

**Jill Porter, Christopher Robertson, & Helen Hayhoe
University of Birmingham
May 2000**

Our grateful thanks to the following schools and colleges for taking part in the research:

Wilson-Stuart School (Birmingham LEA)
Meadowgate School (Cambridgeshire LEA)
St Andrew's School (Derbyshire LEA)
Murphy Crescent School (Durham LEA)
Riverside School (Hampshire LEA)
Redway School (Milton Keynes LEA)
St Giles School (Nottinghamshire LEA)
Department of Special Education, Balwearie High School,
Kirkcaldy (Fife LEA)
Oaklands College (Hertfordshire LEA)
North Warwickshire and Hinckley College (Warwickshire LEA)
Richmond Upon Thames College (Richmond LEA)
Northern Star Centre College (Independent)
North East Worcestershire College (Hereford and Worcester LEA)

Executive Summary

This research forms one part of a project that looks more broadly at assessment and pupils and students with learning difficulties. It reflects concerns about the need to further develop teachers skills in the use of formative assessment for *all* students. This particular part of the project is concerned with increasing pupil and student involvement in evaluating their own performance and setting learning goals. More specifically the objectives of the project were to:

- Illustrate effective support of student reflection on their learning and the development of self-assessment skills, including how these help them to evaluate their own performance and set further learning goals;
- Exemplify the use of a range of assessment activity which provides students with relevant feedback about their current performance of a kind that contributes to improved progress.

Methods

A review of the literature was carried out in order to identify key aspects or principles of good practice. These included:

- enhancing communication skills
- encouraging the development of personal and social skills
- supporting the processes of decision making and problem solving
- providing opportunities for students to develop greater autonomy and independence
- fostering links between class based learning and that which takes place in a range of other contexts

These elements formed the basis of a log or nudge sheet to collect illustrative material through observation, analysis of teacher documentation and reflection with teachers, pupils and students on their current practice. Visits were made to seven schools and four colleges of further education and observations carried out on practice with pupils and students with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties and disabilities.

Findings

The type of learning contexts in which student-centred assessment takes place can have a significant impact on their performance. In the post compulsory sector of FE, student involvement in assessment and learning is an unquestionable right. Choice of modules and courses lead more naturally to highly salient contexts. Students select goals and evaluate their progress towards these. Schools with a largely prescribed curriculum have to harness subject based and other learning activities in ways that will promote pupil involvement in decisions about their learning. Effective contexts are likely to be those which provide students with opportunities to use subject based learning in meaningful ways. Further analysis of case study material and the literature review suggested four aspects that shape effective practice. The full report provides

illustrations and vignettes of good practice together with the following summary points.

Ethos of the Educational Organisation

An ethos of respect for the pupil/students and their wishes was found to be fundamental.

- It underpins the development of practices that contribute to the development of self-determination and the raising of self-esteem.
- Given this positive philosophy pupils and students are more likely to be involved in the learning process and contribute to the assessment and target setting process.
- There is therefore an increased likelihood that they will be following an individualised curriculum that meets their learning needs.
- Organisation wide policies and practices help to ensure continuity and progression in provision.
- Staff development that regularly focuses on aspects of assessment, teaching and learning is an essential characteristic.

Student involvement and capabilities

Our case study visits highlighted a continuum of pupil/student involvement in the learning process.

- At the earliest stages pupils are developing their involvement through an awareness and anticipation of the activity.
- Choice and the expression of preferences underpin the earliest participation in decision making.
- Pupils and students need to be encouraged to reflect overtly and in a detailed way on their achievements.
- Pupils and students need to be enabled with appropriate degrees of support, to progress from monitoring and recording activities to being evaluative about their performance.
- Self-evaluation skills include the development of comparison with previous achievement, supported by the use of easily understood and accessible methods.
- Self-evaluation is also aided through sharing opinions with others.
- Developing confidence and raising self-esteem are integral parts of this process.

Teacher Strategies

This type of learning calls for teacher styles which promote reflection and problem solving. The case study observations illustrated a range of strategies that teachers used to support pupils and students.

- Shared attention, communication and dialogue were found to be fundamental.
- Creating scenarios that nurture curiosity and interest supports these processes.

- Allowing sufficient wait time for pupil responses encourages reflection
- Strategies for promoting dialogue include the careful use of questioning to help students remember and elaborate on their responses;
- Active demonstration of reflective behaviour, which involves considering alternatives and their implications provides pupils and students with a potent model.

Resources and Classroom organisation

An important aspect of teacher planning and preparation are the resources to support pupil and student involvement and the ways in which the class is organised.

- Self-assessment places heavy demands on memory where pupils are expected to recall activities and their own performance. Concrete materials as well as visual images in the form of photographs, video, or computer generated images are particularly useful aids.
- Additionally many pupils will also be well supported by the use of resources such as Rebus or Makaton symbols, which can further act as a prompt.
- Social interaction can be supported through the careful selection of resources and student grouping.
- It is important to check students' *understanding* of the target setting process, and to use this information in the planning of teaching and learning.
- Visual records contribute to pupils and students' sense of achievement - this is well reflected in the pride taken in record of achievement files.
- Access to the record keeping system is important if students are to be enabled to refer to their targets.

Tensions, Dilemmas and Implications

Whilst the report highlights good practice, a number of issues were raised. These included:

- For a variety of reasons some pupils and students are excluded from the process. There is a need for teachers to be conversant with the whole continuum of pupil/student involvement from early decision-making based on the development of choice, the development of simple monitoring (and its attendant record keeping) through to the evaluation of performance against self-selected goals. A further area of progression is to recognise the strategic nature of these behaviours and to select to use them to regulate behaviour and learning.
- Self-evaluation is an integral part of the process and should take place within a context that supports pupil and student self-esteem.
- This report has highlighted the processes of teaching and learning - the pedagogy. This in itself provides teachers with a dilemma where the curriculum is driven by an emphasis on outcomes. It may have directly influenced the focus on monitoring rather than evaluation.
- These activities need to be a regular and integral part of learning rather than an infrequent "bolt-on". This may best be achieved by the development of

IEPs that address these cross curricular skills, and these in turn need to be embedded within meaningful contexts.

- There are important implications for teacher planning to ensure that classroom organisation and access to resources support the involvement of *all* learners.
- We return therefore to the need for *all* staff to adopt an ethos which recognises student and pupil involvement as both a principle- a right to be heard, and of practical significance, pupils and students will be more effective learners if they are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and set their own goals.

Introduction

This research project is concerned with increasing the involvement of pupils and students with learning difficulties and disabilities in their own learning. It focuses particularly on how teachers can support pupils and students in developing the skills and understanding to evaluate and improve their own performance through the appropriate selection and use of formative assessment. An integral part of this process involves developing students understanding of their learning goals and enabling them to set new targets. As we shall see these practices are central to providing an education that prepares pupils and students with the ability to contribute to decisions which will directly impact on the quality of their life. They are also a powerful aid in improving performance and celebrating the achievements of *all* learners. Good practice identified in the research will therefore also be of value to a wider range of students designated as having special educational or learning support needs.

In many respects these principles and practices have been more overtly acknowledged within colleges of further education and by schools in the preparation of school leavers. A review of educational provision for students with learning difficulties and disabilities (FEFC 1996) set out the commitment:

“Our proposals are rooted in the belief that students with learning difficulties should be helped towards adult status. This requires the achievement of autonomy, and a positive self-image realistically grounded in the capacity to live as independently as possible and contribute both to the economy and the community” p7.

Student involvement in assessment and learning is an unquestionable right on entering the post-compulsory sector of further education. The Code of Practice (DfEE, 1994) also however aided recognition of the twin benefits of pupil involvement:

- practical - children have important and relevant information. Their support is crucial to the effective implementation of any individual education programme
- principle - children have a right to be heard. They should be encouraged to participate in decision-making about provision to meet their special educational needs

(para 2:35)

In the recent Programme of Action (DfEE, 1998) there was clear indication that guidance to schools to “seek and take account of the child’s views” will be further strengthened in the new Code.

There has been a long-standing emphasis on the importance of assessment especially in the case of pupils who are experiencing difficulty in learning. The use of assessment to inform the teaching process has been regarded as essential. Black (1996) captures this writing about the value of formative assessment to improve the learning of pupils with SEN:

Many initiatives have shown that children have more potential to learn than their teachers usually assume. Such initiatives, however, call for carefully prepared, skilled and sensitive teaching, maintained over extended periods. Teachers need to change the way they relate to their pupils, and the pupils must change their attitude to their own learning, in radical ways. The need for the development of *formative assessment*, which requires teachers to know the state of their pupils’ learning, and to act on this information, is a common thread running through all of this work.

Black (1996) p 51-55

There is however growing recognition that the learners themselves have an important contribution to make. It is not only teachers performance that will be changed by this process but also that of learners. Put more succinctly, pupils and students will be more effective learners if they are encouraged to evaluate their own progress and set their own learning goals.

Project Aim and Objectives

The particular aim of the project was to investigate how assessment for learning can be effective and to exemplify or illustrate good practice in a way that is helpful for both teachers and students. More specifically the objectives of the project were to:

- Illustrate effective support of student reflection on their learning and the development of self-assessment skills, including how these help them to evaluate their own performance and set further learning goals;
- Exemplify the use of assessment, which provides students with relevant feedback about their current performance of a kind that contributes to improved progress.

The project as a whole builds on previous work on assessment undertaken by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (Weeden, Winter et al, 1999), and is informed by a major review of 'mainstream' assessment practices, *Inside the Black Box* by Black and William (1998). It also complements other recent small-scale projects commissioned by QCA concerned with a range of issues focused on aspects of assessment and progression for students with learning difficulties or disabilities. It also connects with recent research on self-assessment in this field (Lee 1999). It is intended that findings from this report will inform further research in this area.

Methods

A review of the literature was carried out in order to identify key elements of good practice. Below is a summary of the points, which emerged. A fuller account can be found in Appendix 1.

Research indicates the following aspects are significant:

- recognition that self-assessment is only one part of the process by which students come to regulate their own learning. It therefore needs developing along with greater involvement of the pupil in all aspects of the decision-making around their learning;
- student autonomy and independence in learning (a 'voice' in the classroom)
- valuing and using student interests
- choice is an important element of learner involvement and the context in which this takes place is key
- adopting strategies such as self-assessment are effortful and are more likely to be done where the goal is actively desired and meaningful. This suggests that the process may be easier to learn where the pupil/student has selected the goal themselves;
- language and resource material, used well, supports progress
- dialogue (three way - pupil, teacher, peer), of a kind where the teacher does not dominate (didactic)
- questioning - and encouraging this in students - together with the fostering of 'elaborated' responses
- problem solving - pointing to contradiction/puzzlement
- providing enough time for responses started 'to flow' (rewarding)
- the use of links and metaphors enhances learning opportunities as does the embedded and explicit use of the learning cycle (do-review-learn-plan-apply);

- self-assessment and review involves remembering and reflecting on past performance and for some learners visual and other cues are needed to support this process;
- learners need to see that the strategy is useful in achieving the goal, that it will help them to focus on parts of the task they still need to learn. Seeing others evaluate their performance may be very helpful as well as positive feedback which helps them to see this link;
- self-assessment is best carried out in an environment where the learner feels secure.

Case Studies

The above elements formed the basis of a log or nudge sheet to collect illustrative material through observation, analysis of teacher documentation and reflection with teachers on practice. Schools and colleges were initially identified on the basis of recommendations from professionals in organisations with a national overview and Ofsted/FEFC reports. Following telephone interviews to further identify current practice seven schools and four colleges were selected. Fuller details of the methodology can be found in appendix 2.

Characteristics of the Final Sample

Schools

Age Range	Population	Geographical Area
Primary	MLD	South
5-16	MLD & SLD	Scotland
All age	MLD, SLD, PMLD	Midlands
All age	SLD, MLD,	East
All age	MLD & SLD & PMLD	East Midlands
All Age	SLD & PMLD	South
All age	SLD & PMLD	North

Colleges

Range of provision	Geographical Area
School Leavers- LDD Adult provision	SE
Basic Skills for Students with LDD	Midlands
Students aged 16-25 with physical and additional disabilities	National Catchment
Literacy, Numeracy, Learning Support for Students with LDD	SE

Findings

Information gathered from observations, interviews with teachers, informal discussions with students, together with documentary evidence, enabled us to identify the following four aspects that promote student involvement in assessment activities:

1. Ethos of the educational organisation
2. Student involvement and capabilities
3. Teacher strategies
4. Resources and classroom organisation

Ethos of the educational organisation: we identified as consisting of two aspects. Firstly, the formal structures and policies that support student involvement in assessment activities. An example of this would be having a member of staff with a senior management team responsibility for co-ordinating such activities across a college or school provision. Secondly, the more informal, but equally important way in which a commitment to student involvement in assessment activity is expressed through the values that inform teaching and learning. This aspect of ethos is exemplified where staff in a college or school actively seek creative and innovative ways to encourage student participation.

Student involvement and capabilities: we also considered as having two aspects. First, it refers to the opportunities that students have made available to them that encourage their participation in assessment activities. Secondly, it refers to students' own cognitive and developmental capacities to engage in reflective learning, and the ways in which teachers try to enhance these.

Teacher strategies: we saw as being the array of skills that teachers use to provide optimal conditions for students to make progress in their learning.

Resources and classroom organisation: we identified as being the types of support, material or organisational, that enhance opportunities for students to participate in assessment activities.

We found these four aspects helpful in the process of identifying good practice in student centred assessment activity in both colleges and schools. We would not claim that the four dimensions are the only ones that could be used for this purpose. We would though, emphasise their interrelated nature, and want to suggest that good practice in assessment activity that involves learners does take account of all four aspects.

Ethos of the Educational Organisation

As we have noted in our introduction, the Further Education and Funding Council Report (1996) has contributed to a positive ethos in many FE establishments towards the inclusion of *all* learners. The recommendations of the report led to the development of mechanisms to enable institutions not only to identify and review students' learning goals, but also to support students in response to their preferred learning styles. Inclusive learning is "guided by the student wishes". Furthermore, all students should have "equal access to the curriculum they have chosen".

FE is a context in which choice can be very meaningful. At school the curriculum is provided. When students enter post-compulsory education they must select courses and identify interests in a way that suddenly becomes very salient. At interview students are explicitly asked to identify skills they would like to improve, and longer and short-term goals become more evident. The sheer size of colleges, in comparison with special schools make more choices possible, as

the number of students makes the provision of a range of activities more viable. The opportunity to progress, to move between courses and modules and to continue with education or to stop, make the learner's involvement with self-assessment very real.

Our case study visits provided illustrations of institution wide practices and procedures to support student involvement in the decision-making process.

College Q -has a corporate mechanism of target setting and review which is used by LDD staff and supplemented by their own multidisciplinary system. Learner Pathways provides a format for agreeing goals and monitoring progress of all students taking courses of 180 hours a year or more. The process takes the learner from initial enrolment through to career planning and work placement. All form filling takes place with the student and there is an ethos of involving students at every stage. The records and evidence belong to the students themselves. Student centred action plans are developed and reviewed each term. Tutors pull together the subject goals and identify common themes. Tutors review these with students each term. The setting and review of targets forms a regular part of each lesson.

This facilitates a student centred approach and coherence across different subject areas as students are able to mix and match modules rather than being part of a common timetable. It also provides students with access to subject specialist [rather than learning support staff]

This translates to classroom practice where students are respected and involved in every detail of the assessment process. Teacher style is reflective, encouraging students to be autonomous; examples range from choosing where they sit, when to move, flexibility about the direction of the session and responding to individual needs. In one observation a student with autism was very pre-occupied with a thread in his jumper. The staff took time to sort this out to enable him to concentrate on the questions he was being asked.

Such self-determination and autonomy does not however happen without preparation. Indeed for many young people the process cannot start too early if every learner is to be given the opportunity to contribute to decisions. Thus the importance of *school wide* practices also became apparent in our case study visits. These were well articulated in a primary school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties that we visited. Staff throughout the school were committed to pupils from the nursery upwards developing the ability to reflect on their own learning and to contribute to target setting. Circle time was a feature of provision across the school. This resulted in both continuity and progression in the experiences of the pupils. This is key. Fostering learner involvement in assessment and target setting is not something to be undertaken one year but dropped the next if experiences are to be meaningful. This is particularly evident where for some pupils the focus of self-assessment is on their behaviour.

Encouraging pupils to reflect on how they behaved and performed must usefully build into helping them to regulate their behaviour for themselves. Pupils however were also involved in planning and review across the curriculum including geography history and RE. The school had clear policies and practices for supporting school wide practices from the playground to going home on the bus. Moreover this had been supported through joint staff training on raising self-esteem.

In two of the case study schools visited, particular members of staff held senior management level posts for the co-ordination and development of records of achievement. It was notable that the commitment of these members of staff, together with their knowledge and experience of records of achievement tradition, had provided their schools with coherent school-wide practices.

The importance of developing school-wide teaching and learning approaches that take account of student involvement in assessment activities was highlighted during a visit to school B.

In this large secondary school with a specialist department for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, teaching and learning issues are discussed on a regular basis. Outcomes from these discussions are documented and disseminated across subject areas and school departments. On a regular basis therefore, teachers are able to share and follow-up good practice on topics such as:

- effective teaching methods
- the presentation and quality of teaching materials
- homework
- relationships
- assessment
- examination technique
- consistency

Within the special education department for students with learning difficulties, assessment, teaching and learning issues are followed up in more detail during open forum meetings when ideas and difficulties are aired and shared. This approach is informed by a commitment to what the head of department describes as *curriculum enhancement*. Over a number of years, teachers, working with local authority guidance and support devised materials and teaching approaches to try and engage learners more effectively in active learning and associated activities. They used the term *curriculum enhancement* to describe how students could be more involved in sharing the purpose of lessons, visible planning, brainstorming, discussion, making choices, role play, practical experiences, games for learning and reviewing. The informal use of these materials has been beneficial to the teachers involved at a practical level, and in terms of developing a positive disposition towards student involvement and participation in assessment activities.

Summary

An ethos of respect for the pupil/students and their wishes was found to be fundamental.

- It underpins the development of practices that contribute to the development of self-determination and the raising of self-esteem.
- Given this positive philosophy pupils and students are more likely to be involved in the learning process and contribute to the assessment and target setting process.
- There is therefore an increased likelihood that they will be following an individualised curriculum that meets their learning needs.
- Organisation wide policies and practices help to ensure continuity and progression in provision.
- Staff development that regularly focuses on aspects of assessment, teaching and learning is an essential characteristic.

Student involvement and capabilities

Our case study visits enabled us to identify a range of ways in which learners were involved. Self assessment for example took place in relation to pupils identifying activities that they enjoyed, reflecting on activities they had been part of as well as more specifically identifying behaviour and activities that had gone well through to evaluating whether they had achieved their self set targets or not. A number of different underlying skills can be identified.

At the very earliest stages of involvement in the learning process pupils need an awareness of what they are doing. Many schools utilise objects of reference and calendar boxes to aid pupils' anticipation. This early start to pupil involvement was apparent in an SLD school where Individual Education Plans addressed core skills. Individual targets are set which involve pupils in the initial stages of decision making through the development of pupils communication of preferences and actions for expressing choice.

Sarah is a tall attractive young lady who has autism and severe learning difficulties. She communicates using gesture, facial expression and some sounds. She will nod her head for yes and wave her hand for no. Sarah has used Makaton signing and a symbol book to express her needs in the past but loses skills regularly which then need to be reintroduced. Currently therefore her IEP includes the target of being able to point to a picture to choose an activity and a photograph to indicate who she would like to accompany her. This will enable her to be *proactive* in indicating a range of needs as well as being able to make decisions in response to requests from others. This process is extended through the use of a Communication Passport, which she uses in the residential home.

A further way in which schools may approach early decision-making is illustrated by school R. The infant nursery runs a High Scope programme which is adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of individuals. This is a way of working with young children which helps them to develop a sense of purpose and to be responsible for their own activities. At the core lies the processes of plan-do-review as children are encouraged to think and reflect on their activities.

The session starts with group planning on the carpet. Each child has fetched their "planning board"- it is colour coded to aid identification but also has the pupil's name in the top corner. The teacher provides a structure to the planning "I want work, then computer, then you choose." Children choose symbols to illustrate their activities and fix them to the board. There is self-checking by the more able pupils "1,2,3". Children then divide into three groups, including one at computer. The boards serve as a point of reference and most children have now progressed to the stage where they can put it back on the wall and use it for reference. The teacher reminds them. "*Go and look at your board and choose your next activity*". A child goes to board and then finds the matched symbol on an activity box. Other pupils have the board in front of them and the staff work with them individually matching the symbol on the activity to their board.

Later at "Recall time" the children use the planning board as a prompt. For some pupils the actual activity or what they have made is brought to the group to serve as a concrete reminder. For some pupils the recall has also taken place during work time in order to immediately recognise what they have achieved.

With other pupils the teacher encourages more detail than simply naming the activity undertaken:

Daniel: *made a pattern*

T: *what colours did you use?*

T: *David what did you do ?*

David: *farm pegs*

T: *what did you do with the farm pegs Did you do anything else ?*

With two pupils the teacher is more directive:

T: *did you go on computer and then what did you do ?*

The pupils are prompted to look at their planning board and hold the relevant symbol up.

Our case study visits highlighted the continuum from being able to be aware of likes and dislikes and activities through to being able to make decisions on this basis. High Scope provides an example of how children are encouraged to be increasingly thoughtful in relation to both their planning and reviewing. Staff encourage this by requiring more detailed responses. However whilst many pupils and students demonstrated their ability to monitor and record activities, we saw few opportunities for developing evaluative skills. An intrinsic part of

learner involvement lies with building their own awareness of their strengths and helping them to identify needs. A deputy of an SLD school put these skills in context. She described self-assessment as a way of working out what you do well, the job a person is best suited for or the roles within activities. She also spoke of the importance of acknowledging that there are some things that one is never going to get much better at. This she saw as part of the continuum of reflecting on likes and dislikes, and recognising that not everybody is good at the same things. Within her class pupils were encouraged to recognise the skills in others. They were also taught to consider why they haven't achieved a particular goal and to acknowledge it - perhaps because they were ill and absent, or because they had not joined in enough, or because they needed to try harder.

Pupils and students may find it easier to self-evaluate if they are provided with a method of appraisal. Students on the Independence Programme in college S have no more than 6 targets. Progress is logged on a five-point scale:

0 - not a target they are currently working towards

1 - new target,

2 - in the process of learning it, they are making progress,

3- can independently meet that target

4- generalised learning across situations.

Our observations highlighted the importance of the opinion of others in evaluating one's performance. It is difficult to make an assessment without some comparison and reflection can be aided by the observations of others. It also provides a meaningful context for celebration.

The students are grouped with the teacher looking at their end of term reports. These have been completed by their tutor at college. The teacher is encouraging them to reflect on their "grades" as well as on the comments made by their tutor, and to consider the implications for their choice of activity next term.

I got a row of goods- Luke says to the assistant who has come in part way through the discussion.

Pupils initial responses can reflect the views of others and may need to be questioned if they are to be meaningful to them. The following examples from a session where pupils are setting their own targets illustrate the need for pupils to consider their responses:

Lee- *Be more sensible*

He is encouraged to reflect on what that means

Don't let others wind me up!

Neil- *Not putting hands in my mouth [they're there now]*

Staff: *Where could you put them instead?*

Neil : *Down*

Staff: *Yes in your lap*

Other pupils formed targets that included learning to spell their name, recognise numbers and learn the names of other children. Whilst these targets are quite narrowly defined they do aid pupils in thinking about what they are learning and how easy they find it to achieve particular goals. As pupils and students get older we saw more opportunities for the identification and use of individualised targets.

All pupils at school G make a personal learning plan in year 10. These are adapted from mainstream and although pupil's contribution varies *all* are involved in the process. The teacher responsible sets aside individual tutorial time which includes provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. This is an opportunity to validate their likes and dislikes and ensure that their individual responses are documented. Sammy's portfolio includes her tutorial report describing "things I like doing: listening to music, having my feet massaged and people talking to me." The individual portfolio is put together and used at the 14+ review. Short-term targets are set to inform work in the following year. In addition to recording their own view of their personal characteristics, their interests and activities outside and inside school, pupils are encouraged to consider how others see them. Leonie recognises that she can be helpful, cheerful and hard working but can also be short tempered and impatient. Her short term goals include:

"I would like to talk in class in a loud, confident voice" and her targets or actions for her personal and social life include *"help mum with looking after the boys at home and... have a go on the piano"*

Kieran, a school leaver, has set himself the target of making and receiving telephone calls. With a view to his future placement he also wants to take part in interviews, listening and responding appropriately. Ashley on the other hand recognises the need to complete a day at school without trying to wind up other people!

It is perhaps in college settings that student involvement is most clearly focused. The following vignette demonstrates how longer term personal goals result in more immediate targets and provide a reason to evaluate performance in specific settings as well as more general contexts.

Louise is at college T. She is in her third year of the prevocational course having left a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties at age 16. During her time at college she has become particularly good at thinking for herself and expressing her views. She has become more realistic in her personal goals. She initially wanted to become a rock musician but has become increasingly interested and skilled in catering. One target that she set last December was to “try hard with my attitude to work; getting ready for my work experience.” She also set a target to find out “what I could do at another college or where I could work when I become part-time next year.” She has the opportunity currently to spend one day a week working in a class café within the college. She is aiming to join an NVQ course in catering at the college, but she may also work in a supported café outside the college. Having set a longer term goal this becomes a focus for work in other areas including communication- slowing down the pace of her speech so that others can understand her more easily, to practise giving change, to be tidier in the kitchen.

At the end of each day spent in the café students routinely sit down as a group and identify situations that have gone well and those that haven't. This is an opportunity for Louise and the others in the group to think about alternative actions as well as assess themselves against a number of key skills. This is an important time for reflection. There is no time earlier in the day because of the pace of activity. Equally however it is important to have this discussion in the appropriate context where there are concrete cues and reminders of the day's events.

For many learners an essential element involves building self-esteem. Development of confidence is integral to their future placements.

When Sonny was asked what he gained his sticker for he simply shrugged, despite his eloquent earlier response to being asked what good work he had done that week in the group- "*a character portrait - I called it ugly*"- and the time and deliberation he'd given to choosing which sticker he wanted from the book. As his teacher explained one of the things he needs to go back to mainstream is to build his confidence.

This vignette illustrates that whilst some pupils and students may feel sufficiently supported in a group setting to discuss their achievements this may not readily extend to individually focused conversation.

Summary

Our case study visits highlighted a continuum of pupil/student involvement in the learning process.

- At the earliest stages pupils are developing their involvement through an awareness and anticipation of the activity.
- Choice and the expression of preferences underpin the earliest participation in decision making.
- Pupils and students need to be encouraged to reflect overtly and in a detailed way on their achievements.
- Pupils and students need to be enabled with appropriate degrees of support, to progress from monitoring and recording activities to being evaluative about their performance.
- Self-evaluation skills include the development of comparison with previous achievement, supported by the use of easily understood and accessible methods.
- Self-evaluation is also aided through sharing opinions with others.
- Developing confidence and raising self-esteem are integral parts of this process.

Teacher Strategies

We have noted that opportunities for learner involvement in assessment and target setting are more clearly evident where organisations have an ethos that support this. Our case study visits illustrated how this ethos is evident in teacher-student interactions. They also illustrate the range of skills which teachers utilise to support learner progress.

Teachers were observed using a range of strategies that encouraged learners to reflect. One of the ways they achieved this was in their use of language with pupils and students encouraged to think in more detail. For some this process was heavily structured with closed choice questions. For others the support was more open ended. This difference appeared in part at least to reflect the nature of the task and the difficulties encountered by the students.

The teacher is helping the children to reflect back on a story they had heard earlier in the morning: "can you sleep little bear". The teacher supports them by taking pupils single words or signs and expanding them to form a sentence. She then asks an open follow up question:

T: *What book did we read ?*

C: *A bear*

T: *A book about a bear*

T: *Peter can you tell me something about the story ?* She pauses to give him time to respond.

P: *Dark*

T: *It was dark in the story. And what happened in the dark?*

C: *Stars*

T: *They looked at the stars*

At this point she brings out the book to help those who are struggling to recall, to provide them with visual cues.

The research had pointed to the use of contradiction and puzzlement to aid pupil reflection. Staff used a range of strategies to encourage pupils to think. Where children are young or have very limited communicative skills, the task of gaining and keeping pupil interest in order to promote reflection can be particularly challenging. The following scenario demonstrates some of the strategies observed.

The teacher in a nursery class brings a big basket and places it amongst the children. She asks:

T: *What's in the basket?*

She pauses but the children, although looking towards her, make no response.

The assistant puzzles aloud: *What was in it yesterday?*

Pupil: Dog

Assistant: *It was a dog. And what does the dog say?*

Child makes noise.

Teacher: *Is it the dog in here today?* She lifts off the lid and looks in.

T: *Somebody's put in some rubbish?*

Assistant: *Rubbish?*

T: *Its a bit of paper*

She brings out an empty seed pack and passes it around.

T: *Is there anything in it?*

Pupil: No

Assistant: *Yes there is look!*

T: *What was in it? - When did we see it last?*

T: *Can you remember what noise it made- I shook it up and down .*

Pupil: makes a noise

T: *sssss Can anyone remember? ssssss.*

Pupil: *snake*

Pupil: *seeds*

Teacher: *yes seeds*

T: *what did we do with them?*

Pupils are still looking but making no verbal or action response. After Giving them time to respond:

T: *Did we put them on the carpet?*

Pupil: No

The session progresses with pupils crowding round to look and touch the seeds and observe the differences between them.

This vignette reveals a number of strategies. The use of a box where the items are slowly revealed prompts pupils to anticipate and this is then supported by a series of cues, which increasingly provide guiding information. The assistant models puzzling aloud. Later on the teacher suggests an improbable event, one that she can act out to aid understanding.

Staff sensitivity to pupils and students responses are highlighted in the following scenario from an FE college where the teacher helps the student to recognise her response to a demanding situation. The teacher is supportive but, as importantly, aids the student in thinking about the strategy she used.

One student described her fear of trains and her panic when she found that she would have to stand on a platform with trains passing either side of her. The member of staff responded:

Did you say I'm not doing it ? No you called for Sue and went in the waiting room- you coped; you found ways round it. You could have bottled out, but you didn't. You coped.

Members of staff however may also need to help students be more realistic about their capabilities. On some occasions direct speaking is necessary. In the scenario below the member of staff encourages the learner to reflect more and to think about the implications of her decision.

The students Paul and Linda are talking with two members of staff Carol and Babs about road crossing:

Carol : Paul, you worry about seeing the traffic

Paul: I got cataracts, one big, one small

Babs: Usually you cross the road with someone, with mum or a friend

Carol: That's good- good practice

Paul: Want to do on my own

Babs: You need more practice

Carol: One day- you need more practice. Do you think you could do it on your own ?

Paul: Yes

Carol: If you ask me what I think, I think you can judge distance and the speed- you can do that- but you don't trust your eyes. It is a good thing to check with another person. Good practice, because of your eyesight. You only have to get it wrong once...

Linda: Or you will get knocked down.

In a very different example, a year 5 pupil Paul wants to learn the 6 times table. The teacher encouraged him to have a go and see if he already knew any of it. "2,4,6,8" says Paul. The teacher pointed out that although it did include 6 it was in fact the two times table. Together they considered the numbers he had said to check this and they set an agreed target.

Both vignettes again reveal the importance of providing pupils and students with a supportive environment in which pupils and students can increase their confidence. They also demonstrate the need for careful feedback that will promote an awareness of one's own abilities.

Summary

This type of learning calls for teacher styles which promote reflection and problem solving. The case study observations illustrated a range of strategies that teachers used to support pupils and students.

- Shared attention, communication and dialogue were found to be fundamental.
- Creating scenarios that nurture curiosity and interest supports these processes.
- Allowing sufficient wait time for pupil responses encourages reflection
- Strategies for promoting dialogue include the careful use of questioning to help students remember and elaborate on their responses;
- Active demonstration of reflective behaviour which involves considering alternatives and their implications provides pupils and students with a potent model.

Resources and Classroom Organisation

One of the underlying difficulties for many pupils is remembering aspects of performance. Many pupils and students may find it difficult to remember what they have just done and may need supporting with a concrete reminder- perhaps the outcome of the activity or some of the materials used or for others it may be appropriate to use an object of reference. As we saw in the Highscope session, concrete materials and symbol cards were utilised to aid children's memory. In a number of the schools visited some very good use was made of differentiated symbol based worksheets to help students participate fully in reviews of their own learning. The use of worksheet resources has featured in a number of practical sources (Lee 1999; DfEE 1999).

Resources can however take a number of other forms. Visual images in the form of photographs or on-screen pictures serve as reminders to support the recall and evaluation process.

A group of students in school N made good use of digital photography images to run a 'slide show' on a computer at the end of a food technology lesson during which they had prepared and eaten a range of salad dips. The teacher prompted students to recall their learning, and they were able to do this by looking closely at the on-screen photographs, and when necessary, looking at earlier slides to remember the sequencing of learning engaged in. This approach enabled students to reflect carefully, and to adjust their remembering in the light of accurate information. During this lesson review activity students also offered helpful advice to each other and made particularly positive comments about the participation of a member of the group with profound and multiple learning difficulties. A particular advantage of using photography on the computer in this way, is through the flexibility it provides to focus on particularly relevant, difficult, or good aspects of a teaching and learning sequence. It also facilitates review of a whole lesson quickly, and as close as necessary to the learning event itself. Finally, the photographic material stored on computer disk provides a valuable permanent record of teaching and learning. In school N this material was used in a range of class and school displays. It was also incorporated into documents belonging to students.

Schools that had digital cameras were particularly well placed to ensure individual access to records. Indeed it was interesting to note how well this material contributed to pupils interest and sense of pride in their record of achievement folders. As we can see from our description below access can take a variety of forms.

In college S. long term goals are identified and recorded on a computerised system. Existing achievements are logged, and medium term objectives developed with students. This may be linked with accreditation goals. Students use the database system to log in, list targets and write action plans. Other students work through this process with their tutors. Individual reviews to update the system happen about every six weeks. These include the student, the personal tutor and the key worker. The system records the booking in time for tutorials, the record of tutorials, summary of targets and progress. The college finds that students have more independence by using the system- they can do it for themselves. The process is ongoing and ensures a dialogue between student and staff about their learning- they have to listen to one another.

We have already noted how this kind of teacher sensitivity to the individual needs of pupils forms an important part of the target setting process. A teacher in school E, does not take for granted that pupils in the class know what targets and rewards are for, and on a regular basis checks their knowledge of these through the use of a simple set of questions. Their discussion is based on the following questions:

*Why do we have these [target setting] sheets?
What have you been trying to learn?
Did you enjoy using these targets sheets?
Were there any bits of the work that you did not like?
Are you pleased with you work this term?
Why did you get stars?
How did you feel when you got a star?
What other reward would you like to get?
Would you like to use these sheets again after the holiday?*

Here we see how the development of a simple resource such as a checklist can enable the teacher, *with* students, to understand key aspects of learning, and incorporate this knowledge in future teaching and learning strategies.

Group processes are important to the process of reflection on learning. Many schools used circle time to good effect not least because it provided a routine time in which the expectations were clear and pupils were encouraged to listen to own another. It increased awareness of self in contrast to others. This was particularly effective where pupils were actively encouraged to be involved in the process even when it wasn't their "turn". Larger group sizes detract from this process.

Class four are having circle time. It is Friday morning and they are reflecting back on the week. The teacher starts by asking them to remember the rules of the circle. She shows a small ball and asks them what it means when she is holding it. A child signs in response. "Yes" she says, '*you have to listen*'. The group practice listening "*What can you hear now*". She then asks them to think back at the things they have been doing. "*Mrs S and I have been really pleased.. but I'm not going to tell you what they are. I want you to think and tell us.*" One child volunteers "*I did Blobs*" [the computer game]. The teacher asks if he got Blobs right? Yes he says. It is his turn to choose another child. Jade volunteers playing with her doll. The teacher explores with her what was good about the activity. "*Did you play with Barbie in the playground? Did you look after her..... Did she go in the bushes.*" Jade chooses Mrs S. She thinks hard and says she's done a piece of the garden. She chooses the next child. The teacher encourages the class to help him when he can't remember what he's done to gain a merit badge.

Whilst group processes support reflection and ultimately aid evaluation of one's relative performance, there may be occasions when discussion is best carried out individually. Before reading out each pupil's college report the teacher asks them if they are happy for her to do so. She respects the fact that they may want to keep such personal information private. This sensitivity to pupil wishes was also evident in another school when individual members of the class were asked to reflect on their [bad] behaviour. The teacher went round individually to discuss

it with them. David is embarrassed that he swore at another child. The teacher speaks with him quietly away from the other pupils. In college the teacher asks each individual if they would like to have their tutorial away from the group in another room.

Our visits have highlighted the need for teacher planning. Even though in some sessions relatively small amounts of time may be devoted to pupils and students self-evaluations, care must be taken that all learners can take part in activity and have access to supporting resources. These need to be readily available and differentiated in line with the range of needs within the group. A second key aspect is planning how the class will be organised. Whilst very large groups may be good occasions for celebrating achievements, our observations suggest that reflection is better achieved in small groups which promote peer interaction, with occasional need for individual tutorial arrangements.

Summary

An important aspect of teacher planning and preparation concerns the provision of resources to support pupil and student involvement, and the ways in which the class is organised.

- Self assessment places heavy demands on memory where pupils are expected to recall activities and their own performance. Concrete materials as well as visual images in the form of photographs, video, or computer generated images are particularly useful aids.
- Additionally many pupils will also be well supported by the use of resources such as Rebus or Makaton symbols which can further act as prompts.
- Social interaction can be supported through the careful selection of resources and student grouping.
- It is important to check students' *understanding* of the target setting process, and to use this information in the planning of teaching and learning.
- Visual records contribute to pupils and students' sense of achievement - this is well reflected in the pride taken in record of achievements files.
- Access to the record keeping system is important if students are to be enabled to refer to their targets.

Tensions and Dilemmas

This report has focused on good practice observed and reported. The visits however also raised a number of issues concerning the nature of student involvement in assessment activities. Teachers and other staff may find it useful to reflect on these in auditing their own practice as well as on the illustrations above.

Some students, particularly those with profound and multiple learning difficulties or autism, tended to be excluded from involvement in assessment activities. Teachers expressed their reservations about the 'meaningfulness' of such activity with these students. However, their perceptions of student involvement

was expressed in terms of their needing to be able to actively and independently record learning in some way. This view underestimates other ways of engaging in assessment activity, and might suggest that the teachers concerned worked with a model of assessment that placed a singular emphasis on learning outcomes

A second key issue is the dilemmas teachers face in encouraging pupils to reflect on performance when progress may be uneven or not easily discernible. Teachers may feel concerned about encouraging evaluative comments in these instances when it draws attention to their difficulties rather than their strengths. However if the process is to fulfil its purpose pupils and students need to receive accurate feedback about their learning but clearly this needs to be achieved in a context which supports their self-esteem. We would not wish to under-estimate the challenge teachers face but believe from the examples that we saw that this kind of evaluation must be an integral aspect of this process.

Student involvement in assessment activities tended to take place as review activity at the end of a teaching session. We were able to note good practice in such activity, but saw less evidence of assessment being used by teachers and students to either plan teaching and learning, or to reflect on it within lessons.

Some of the teachers interviewed suggested that a reason for the emphasis on review rather than planning and reflection was the imperative to cover curriculum content and to provide evidence of *required* learning outcomes. Concern about this was described in terms of “not having enough time”.

Target setting for students was seen by the teachers interviewed as “the way we *have* to do things now”, but also as an important part of teaching. Involving students in the target setting process was seen as most valuable when negotiated and agreed targets were relevant, meaningful and personal to the student. An important distinction was noted between the small number of targets that a student might be strongly aware of and committed to working on and achieving in a very personal way, and those used primarily by teachers to ensure progress within the curriculum.

In schools student involvement in assessment activities was not always clearly linked to practices that provided significant opportunities for decision or choice making in their learning across curriculum contexts. In colleges, students are only able to make meaningful choices about courses if a good range of provision is made available. In both settings there is still sometimes little choice for students who have severe or profound learning difficulties.

Information and technology (ICT), though it was used well to support student involvement in assessment activities, sometimes led to an overemphasis on ‘worksheet’ based reviews of learning. One teacher interviewed, noted the dangers of this in terms of the way that ICT sometimes “created dependency and routine practice that underestimated the need for students and teachers to *talk*”.

Few of the teachers we spoke to indicated that aspects of student involvement in assessment activities were discussed in relation to improving performance. This suggests perhaps, that there is a need for more continuing professional development in this area, perhaps of the kind taking place in school B referred to earlier in this report. The concept of curriculum enhancement incorporated into this school's routine staff development activity draws together key aspects of teaching, assessment and learning, and as such is worth emulating.

Appendix 1

Literature Review

Assessment forms one part of the pedagogic process and this is well reflected by a literature which is underpinned by a number of different theoretical perspectives. These approaches are not presented here however as discrete and separate, but as providing complementary insights into classroom practice.

The Role of The Teacher

The work of Brooks and Brooks (1993) highlights the active role of teachers in encouraging student involvement in classroom assessment activities. Though the focus of their work is on pupils without learning difficulties being taught in mainstream educational settings, their recommendations would appear to have an application to the work of all teachers, and are resonant with Black's view (1996) that skilled and sensitive teaching is needed if pupils are to make progress that builds on their current performance. Examples of *active* teaching to encourage student involvement in the full breadth of classroom assessment would include:

- Acceptance of student autonomy and initiative
- Responding to students' current interests
- Allowing enough wait time for student responses
- Encouraging dialogue and valuing the social aspects of learning
- Encouraging questioning by students
- Requesting elaboration of student's responses
- Exploring students' conceptual understanding
- The use of primary sources and materials that students' can interact with
- The nurturing of curiosity through use of the 'learning cycle' on a regular basis

*Adapted from Brooks and
Brooks (1993)*

These, what might be termed *principles* of effective teaching, are of the kind that Black and William (1998) identify as vital to the process of formative assessment. The effective application of such principles has been described by Watson (1996, 1999), who has shown them to be effective in work with students experiencing difficulties in learning in both specialist and mainstream school settings. Of particular note, is the way that such an approach can be used in group learning situations (Bennett 1991) and in the way that it actively supports emotional engagement and an increasing social awareness in students' (Watson 1999, p. 94). It also clearly shows the interdependent nature of sensitive and reflective teaching, key features of which are, responsiveness to student views, and carefully considered teacher talk (Wood 1992).

It has also been shown (Hart 1996, 1998) that skilled and reflective teaching, with an emphasis on thinking and problem solving *with* students, can be seen as compatible with identification, assessment and intervention procedures in the *Code of Practice* (Department for Education 1994), and the target setting

process (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority 1998)) currently used in schools. A small scale survey by Rose, McNamara and O'Neill (1996) identified a number of difficulties that schools faced in achieving greater involvement of those pupils with more significant difficulties but nevertheless concluded:

“we contend that in recent years, schools have made significant progress along a route which will eventually involve all pupils in a more active partnership role in the classroom.” p170

It cannot be assumed however, as Bennett, Wood and Rogers (1997) note, that teachers have all of the necessary skills to work with in such ways, and therefore careful attention should be given to their continuing professional development in the areas of teaching and learning that focus on constructivist approaches.

Student Involvement

The quality of teacher talk and associated forms of interaction with students has also been shown to be important from the learners' perspective in the recently completed *Learn Project* (Weeden and Winter, 1999) funded by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Findings from this project show that students need accurate, clear and specific feedback if they are to make good progress in their learning, and that feedback should actively encourage self and peer assessment. These findings have not been based on work with students who experience significant difficulties in learning, but their relevance is likely to have a useful application. Furthermore, including learners in aspects of self-assessment addresses the important issue of equity (Cline 1992), namely that students should have an 'voice' in assessment processes, and one that is both listened to and valued.

Reflective Organisations

It has been suggested by Clegg (1993) that reflection and responsiveness of the kind advocated here, with regard to both students and their teachers, also needs to be a feature of 'social environments' - cross curricular activity and other aspects of school organisation for example. For students with learning difficulties in particular, it might also be important to identify how home and community activity can be linked to the development of more reflective teaching and learning.

Practice of the kind described here is likely to involve assessment 'becoming continuous with instruction' (Meltzer and Reid 1994, p. 341) and this presents significant challenges for teachers wishing to work more reflectively, and for education professionals charged with ensuring that assessment in teaching and learning is both accountable and transparent. However, the benefits of adopting such approaches are potentially exciting and likely to have a significant impact on learning outcomes and improved standards.

Cognitive Processes

Cognitive and cognitive behavioural psychologists have for a number of years been interested in the development of strategies for learning through the identification of a number of ways in which people regulate their own behaviour and learning. These include a variety of mental processes such as checking or monitoring, planning, selecting, and inferring to name but a few. Self-monitoring and self-observation can be seen to be integral to the process. As Butler and Winne (1995) write:

“Theoreticians seem unanimous- the most effective learners are self-regulating- and the key is accurate self-assessment.”

A vital question however is to what extent can *all* children develop these learning strategies. Research provides evidence that cautiously indicates some success with both younger children and those with mild or moderate learning difficulties. A review of research carried out by Hughes, Korinek & Gorman (1991) examined studies of self-management with pupils with learning difficulties. The most frequently used strategy involved learners monitoring their own behaviour involving a variety of visual or auditory prompts including illustrated recording sheets. The importance of these supportive cues is highlighted elsewhere in the literature (e.g. Newman & Rose 1990, Porter and Male 1996). Included in this review are two studies that looked at self-evaluation- both studies involving pupils with a mild learning difficulty. They point to the heavy load on memory, which may account both for its less frequent use and the involvement of more able students. However it is noticeable that in other self-management techniques the researchers were able to provide additional cues, simplify instructions and make the modelling more intense. There are therefore important aspects of pedagogy that are highlighted in the psychology literature.

Self-monitoring has been used to improve work or for “idiosyncratic” behaviours. There is also evidence to suggest that self monitoring and self evaluation should be skills that are developed with respect to more familiar aspects of work or behaviour and goals that are likely to be achieved in the short term.

Research with pupils with profound learning difficulties has established the importance of their involvement in the decision-making processes of teaching through the development of choice (Halle 1995). These expressions of interest and indications of preferences may be utilised in the short term to select learning activities or materials or may form the basis of longer-term decisions about appropriate learning goals, As Guess et al (1985) state:

“The opportunity to make choices provides us with the power to determine, to a great extent, what happens to us on a moment by moment basis as well as over the span of our lives.” P82-3

Choice has a substantial impact on motivation (Bambara et al 1995) and consequently on attention to learning tasks, as well as on the likelihood of

challenging behaviour. Indeed, tasks that may initially be uninteresting can become more attractive and even preferred once offered as a choice. Research however also points to the potency of the context in which these choices are offered, a key element can be whom that choice takes place with (Nozaki and Mochizuki 1995), and the way that it is introduced (Bambara et al 1995).

Appendix 2

Methodology

Key elements identified in the literature review were used to construct a taxonomy that formed the basis of a log or nudge sheet to collect illustrative material through observation, analysis of teacher documentation and reflection with teachers on practice. The proformas were piloted in both college and school settings.

Sample Selection

These were selected using the following criteria:

- i) pupils/students with learning difficulties (who are below level 3 of the National Curriculum and below level 1 of the qualifications framework) in school and college settings were included;
- ii) classroom practice encouraged learner involvement across the age range (2-19+)
- iii) good assessment practices were adopted including elements of self-assessment (informing planning, progress, target setting) were also adopted
- iv) the school or college linked self-assessment to other elements of the learning process e.g. IEPs
- v) there were indications of progression within provision, with the development of practices across the age range

An initial sample of schools was selected by asking for recommendations of good practice in the involvement of learners in the assessment and target setting process from those with a national overview. These included:

- OFSTED school reports database. This was trawled on the basis of schools mentioned in a) *Supporting the Target Setting Process* b) Beacon School status c) Turf knowledge. This process involved looking at 60+ reports, and at curriculum/assessment issues in particular
- FEFC college inspection report database. A review was made of all FE inspection reports made in the 2nd cycle (i.e. since 1997) where Basic Skills/Education, Adult Education, Foundation, LDD or Literacy and Numeracy were designated as Curriculum Areas. This process involved looking at 70+ reports, and at college strengths and assessment issues in particular.
- National post 16 organisations: FEDA, SKILL
- professional networks - e.g. Professional Development Network (an organisation of tutors on SLD training courses), EQUALS (an organisation of SLD practitioners with a specific interest in curriculum issues)
- HMI/OFSTED contact and use of 'good practice' database in special education practice
- headteacher contacts

- SLD forum (e-mail interest group used by SLD school professionals)
- personal knowledge and that of our colleagues and others researching in the field

The final sample was identified through the use of telephone interviews to ascertain where the sample met our criteria, as stated above.

References:

Bambara, L.M. Koger F., Katzer T., & Davenport T.A. (1995) Embedding Choice in the Context of daily Routines: An Experimental Case Study. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 20, 3, 185-195.

Bennett, N. (1991) 'The quality of classroom learning experiences for children with special educational needs', in Ainscow, M. (ed) *Effective Schools for All*. London: David Fulton.

Bennett, N., Wood, E. and Rogers, S. (1997) *Teaching Through Play: Teachers' Thinking and Classroom Practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Black, P. (1996) 'Formative assessment and the improvement of learning', *British Journal of Special Education*, 23(2), 51-56.

Black, P. and William, D. (1998) *Inside the Black Box*. London: Kings college School of Education.

Brooks, J. and Brooks, M. (1993) *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*. VA: ASCD Alexandria.

Clegg, J. (1993) 'Putting people first: 'A social constructionist approach to learning disability'', *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 32, 389-406.

Cline, T. (ed) (1992) *The Assessment of Special Needs*. London: Routledge.

Department for Education (1994) *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs*. London: HMSO.

Department for Education and Employment (1998) *Meeting Special Educational Needs: A Programme of Action*. Sudbury: DfEE Publications.

Department for Education and Employment (1999) Progress File. Achievement Planner: Pilot project resource materials. Website address: www.dfes.gov.uk/progfile/index.htm

Further Education Funding Council (1996) *Inclusive Learning: Report of the Learning Difficulties and/or Learning Disabilities Committee*. The Tomlinson Committee. Coventry: FEFC.

Guess, D., Benson H., & Siegal-Causey, E., (1985) Concepts and Issues related to choice making and autonomy among persons with severe disabilities. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 10, 79-86.

Halle, J.W. (1995) Innovations in Choice-Making Research: An editorial introduction. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 20, 3, 173-174.

Hart, S. (1996) *Beyond Special Needs: Enhancing Children's Learning Through Innovative Thinking*. London: Paul Chapman.

Hart, S. (1998) 'Paperwork or practice? Shifting the emphasis of the code towards teaching, learning and inclusion', *Support for Learning*, 13(2), 76-81.

Hughes,C.A. Korinek, L., and Gorman, J. (1991) Self-Management for Students with Mental retardation in Public School Settings: A Research Review. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation*, 26, 3, 271-291.

Lee, B. (1999) *Self-Assessment for Pupils with Learning Difficulties*. Slough: NFER.

Meltzer, L. and Reid, K. (1994)'New directions in the assessment of students with special needs: the shift toward a constructivist perspective', *The Journal of Special Education*, 28(3), 338-355.

Newman K., & Rose R., (1990) Self Evaluation at Wren Spinney. *British Journal of Special Education*, 17, 1 12-14.

Nozaki, K., & Mochizuki, A. (1995) Assessing Choice-Making of a Person with Profound Disabilities: A preliminary analysis. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 20, 3, 196-201.

Porter, J., & Male, D. (1996) Using Technology to record progress by Pupils with PMLD. *PMLD Link*, 25, 5-9

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (1998) *Supporting the Target Setting Process: Guidance for Effective Target Setting for Pupils with Special Educational Needs*. London: QCA.

Rose, R., McNamara, S. and O'Neill, J. (1996) 'promoting the greater involvement of pupils with special needs in the management of their own assessment and learning', *British Journal of Special Educational Needs*. 23, 4, 166-171.

Weeden, P. and Winter, J., with Broadfoot, P., Hinett, K., McNess, E., Tidmarsh, C., Triggs, P. and Wilmut, J. (1999) *The Learn Project: Learners' Expectations*

of Assessment Requirements Nationally. Report for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. London: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

Watson, J. (1996) *Reflection through Interaction: The Classroom Experience of Pupils with Learning Difficulties*. London: Falmer.

Watson, J. (1999) 'Working in groups: social and cognitive effects in a special class', *British Journal of Special Education*, 26(2), 87-95.

Wood, D. (1992) 'Learning through talk', in Norman, K. (ed) *Thinking Voices*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.