Explaining Personal and Social Development

Written by
The Young Adult Learners Partnership
on behalf of the
Connexions Service National Unit
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Introduction

There is growing interest in personal and social development in the worlds of education and employment. Its wider social benefits are also being increasingly acknowledged. Companies recognise the importance of having a workforce of people with key transferable skills and attributes such as initiative and enterprise. Further and higher education institutions stress the value of learners who are conscientious, independent in their thinking and able to use the wide range of resources to which new technologies have yielded access. And communities welcome the contribution young people can make to their development though active citizenship. All can see that organisations, projects and programmes that explicitly promote personal and social development help to equip the young with the requisite confidence and skills. This especially applies to young people who, for various reasons, experience disadvantage and roadblocks on the road to adulthood.

Yet personal and social development is a nebulous, perhaps slippery educational concept. This may be because it does not seem to have recognisable curriculum content with specified outcomes that people can readily identify. This publication seeks to explain what personal and social development is by

- locating it in its contemporary context
- tracing its origins
- introducing some key ideas and characteristics
- exploring some of the factors that have to be considered in implementation
- illustrating its application with examples from the field

There are two sections. In the first we explain how the prevailing socio-economic circumstances and conditions influence young people and highlight the need for personal and social development opportunities to take account of them. We introduce some of the core thinking that underlies personal and social development. We set out examples of some of the most frequently adopted and adapted models or concepts that influence current practice. We end the section by demonstrating that personal and social development is above all a process as well as being concerned to create valuable outcomes for young people.

In the second section we explore some of the more practical aspects involved in providing programmes of personal and social development. This is not meant to be a ‘how to do it’ guide. It is intended rather to provide guidance for personal advisers, by indicating the kinds of factors that need to be taken into account in referring young people to personal and social development programmes or opportunities. The section aims to

- raise awareness of what young people and Connexions partnerships expect from personal and social development opportunities
- propose criteria to apply when seeking to match a young person’s needs with the opportunities available
- identify the kinds of barriers that might exist
- explore some of the factors involved in recognising the skills that young people may acquire and develop through these programmes
- consider the different aspects associated with one-to-one and group work in personal and social development programmes
- provide some examples of existing provision
Section 1: The theory of personal and social development

1.1 The contemporary context

1.1.1 The risk society

Beck (1992) argues that the change from an industrial to a technological society reduces certainty in the way structures frame social life. The loosening of former social constraints produces a new set of risks which people have to negotiate in their everyday lives. This requires people to have individualised life-styles from which they can construct their life histories. As risks become individualised people begin to see problems resulting from their own behaviour rather than as a result of structures in society that to some extent pre-determine their options. For example, unemployment comes to be seen to result from lack of skills rather than changes in the labour market and is interpreted as being solved on an individual level by personal action. Beck suggests that in order to survive risks, people have to put themselves at the centre of their world, and make pragmatic choices as they confront risks.

Giddens (1991) argues that young people make decisions about risks being presented to them as a result of reflecting on their own past experience or that of people near or significant to them. This places emphasis on their own individualised pathway. Their success in negotiating the way forward will depend to a large extent on their personal resources or self-agency.

Both Beck and Giddens assert that the changes facing society today are as fundamental for social organisation as the changes brought about by the industrial revolution. Educationalists and policy makers have been floundering in their wake, as their predecessors were in the past.

It is only with the benefit of hindsight that the bigger picture is beginning to emerge. We are now able to understand the connections between the main factors that impact on young people’s lives, including the way they learn and work in the 21st century. The most important is globalisation, the economic processes whereby capital, goods, services, people and information are increasingly mobile and cross national boundaries. This in turn is fuelled by the information revolution in which more powerful digital technology creates rapid communication and information exchange. The introduction of telephone banking and web-based shopping has changed the nature of the service sector. Technology is not only changing the way people work and trade but also the ways in which they learn.

These changes bring rewards to some and risks to others. One of the well-known risks associated with this is job insecurity and particular fragility in the youth labour market. A significant minority of young people is subject to a disproportionate amount of risk and those who fare worst have labels attached to them – excluded, disaffected, unemployable. Not surprisingly, they tend to conform to the deficiency model ascribed to them. Their own experience and that of their families tells them that they cannot depend on a supply of steady, permanent jobs since unskilled labour can be bought more cheaply overseas. An uncertain, bleak future of casual, part-time temporary work beckons, unless or until young people can acquire and demonstrate the characteristics demanded of an increasingly flexible labour market.
Generic qualities such as communication skills, positive attitudes, team working, problem solving are highly valued by employers but are seen to be lacking in many individuals entering the labour market. The growth in the service sector and other trends in the labour market mean these skills are increasingly important not only for the individuals themselves but also for the continued competitiveness of the UK economy. They are significant in determining how people from different socio economic backgrounds fare in education, employment and the broader society of which they are a part. It is important to ensure that all young people are adequately equipped with appropriate skills for life and work.

Furlong and Spearman (1989) suggest that the young people who have coped and been able to adapt to these new situations, even within the constraints of unemployment, have owed much to financial, social and emotional support from their families. In addition the moral and emotional support of long standing communities has been a significant factor in supporting families in rapidly changing circumstances. (Coffield et al 1986). However, in the de-industrialised areas and larger urban housing estates, where the effects of changes in society are having most impact, those systems of family and community support may not be available in the same way as before. The new generation has to establish and negotiate a whole new web of friendship and kinship relationships on the estate as they move through school, form peer groups, new relationships and new households.

Adults in the family, at school or at work, normally guide this transition, or process of social reproduction. But “young people today have to negotiate a set of risks which were largely unknown to their parents; this is true irrespective of social background or gender. Moreover, as many of these changes have come about within a relatively short time, points of reference which previously helped smooth processes of social reproduction have become obscure. In turn, increased uncertainty can be seen as a source of stress and vulnerability.” (Furlong and Cartmel 1997:1)

As a result young people are negotiating risks previously unknown to parents, adult advisors or educators. Points of reference which applied to the experience of adults have little relevance in helping young people to construct an effective identity to support their transition to adulthood, particularly since there is no clear idea what that adulthood will look like. Those who are not sufficiently supported or do not have the personal skills to chart their path effectively often choose alternative sources of satisfaction and identities.

1.1.2 Resilience as a response to risk

A logical response to the growing risks is to develop resilience and coping strategies – an important dimension in personal and social development programmes. This characteristic is very important for those encountering severe risk factors in their daily lives. Where social and economic conditions foster an increased likelihood of poor outcomes in education, employment, health (physical and mental), offending behaviour and so on, resilience becomes a crucial response.

By its very nature, risk induces stress. Paradoxically this can bring benefits because it is a physiological and emotional signal to the person facing the risk that some action is needed. The trouble is that when people are faced with stress, they can stop
thinking. Instead they simply react, with the danger of falling into patterns of behaviour – usually fight or flight – rather than stepping back and considering the options available. Recognising that there are options and choices is a first step to being resilient.

Another aspect of resilience is having the confidence and resourcefulness to bounce back after feeling defeated or disappointed. For young people at risk, feelings of being let down, of failing to achieve a goal, of being put under undue pressure and ‘bottling out’ are common. It is important for the vulnerable to recognize that it is possible to come back again after receiving a knock-back; indeed that it is possible to gain added respect for doing so.

Some argue that the lack of family support turns some young people in other directions in order to find their way – the peer group and in some places the gang. “This social group is often quite literally, the substitute for the adolescent’s family and within it he may experience all the feelings so essential for individual growth such as stimulation, empathy, belongingness, the opportunity for role playing, identification and the sharing of guilt and anxiety”. (Blos cited in Coleman & Hendry 1990)

Peer groups can have negative and positive impacts. A young person’s ability to make use of peer groups, in a positive way, for their own development, and negotiate their way in and out of helpful or unhelpful groups depends largely on their having achieved a coherent sense of themselves or self-identity.

Erikson (1968) sees the developmental task of adolescence as the establishment of a coherent identity. The search is particularly acute because of the rapidity of biological and social change happening at the same time as the requirement to make important decisions affecting the future concerning training, work and relationships. A coherent identity is needed to enable young people to navigate their way through the uncharted territory of adolescence (Lewin 1970 cited in Coleman & Hendry 1990).

1.1.3 Social capital

Sir Peter Hall, the distinguished town planner, recognises that contemporary life places great stress and strain on individuals and communities. “There is a bigger problem here, not susceptible to quick fix solutions. It’s the progressive decay of the social cement, the loss of social capital in cities and neighbourhoods, which causes society to atomise onto one of isolated and lonely individuals. Bad enough for the rich and strong, it’s catastrophic for the poor and weak, especially the young”.

It is increasingly evident that the way individuals relate to wider social networks and communities has important effects on their personal development and employability. One key emerging concept is social capital: the existence of social and community networks; civic engagement; local identity; a sense of belonging and solidarity with other community members; norms of trust, and of reciprocal help and support. (Putnam 1993). Putnam holds the view that these features of social life enable participants to act together more effectively to achieve shared objectives and hence to build stronger and inclusive communities.
John Gray proposes that social capital can be built in young people through access to information, the development of norms and sanctions, social trust, the provision of diverse services and programmes and monetary awards. Social capital helps us to identify how social processes and practices and young people’s experiences of their own environments affects their relationships and ultimately their long-term personal development. The Social Exclusion Unit’s consultation document National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal highlights some of the problems young people face in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

“Young people are the future of deprived neighbourhoods. But too often, young people are deprived of opportunities and start to be seen as part of the problem” (SEU 2000).

Carlo Raffo and Michelle Reeves (2000) identify individualised systems of social capital as influencing the school to work transitions of young people that can support and constrain individual actions and outcomes. They identify the potential for young people to have control over their development, dependent on how the individualised system of social capital evolves for each young person.

Young people growing up in fractured communities therefore have to manage their own development within the context of the most severe challenges. Given the amount and speed of interlocking changes, many young people have often simultaneously to deal with more issues than they can easily resolve or delay - parental divorce, acceptance or rejection by peers, anxiety about body image and fear of failure. Without adult support this can lead some young people into escapist behaviour such as drug or alcohol abuse and even serious mental health problems, including panic attacks, depression and self-harm. In order to avoid such alienation and resulting exclusion, it is important to develop intervention strategies with young people at a point where they are attempting to make choices in coping with crisis. This might be at the point where young people are adjusting to change rather than when they have become disempowered by it. Programmes of personal and social development can play an important and influential part.

1.2 The sources of personal and social development

1.2.1 Education as a social project

What is personal and social development? To answer this question, we have to go back to some key thinkers who wrote about the purposes and nature of education, each of whom in different ways has had a profound influence on both formal and informal education.

The starting-point is Plato whose *Republic* was the first - and some would argue the greatest - work in the philosophy of education. His concern was that people should be educated in such a way that the outcome would be a just society. Education, he argued, is about the building of ‘character’ as much as ‘intelligence’ - both concepts worth analysing. So from early times education is being directed towards creating a sense of social responsibility, of harnessing the individual’s development to the general betterment of society.

The 20th century American thinker, John Dewey, also held the view that education is part of an overarching political and social project. His ideas have influenced what has
become known as *progressive* education thinking, characterised by informal learning and personal and social development. Dewey linked meaningful education with the learner’s own attempts to solve problems arising from their own fundamentally *social* experience. The learning environment should be “a social enterprise in which all individuals have an opportunity to contribute”, in which “all are engaged in communal projects”, a sort of democracy in miniature. The teacher becomes the ‘leader of group activities’, who offers starting-points to be developed through the contributions of all involved.

Dewey’s philosophy addressed the question of how life should be lived. He believed that education was a progressive force if it led to the cultivation of intelligent habits in individuals and the maintenance of social structures that encourage continuous inquiry. Children and young people should not be regarded as empty vessels into which others pour knowledge, but should be seen as active centres of impulse both shaping and being shaped by their environment. We all develop habits - ways of thinking and acting – as we interact with our social and physical surroundings. If we want those habits to be flexible and intelligent, environments must be structured that encourage intelligent inquiry. More prosaically, we need to create and plan opportunities for personal and social development.

### 1.2.2 Experience and relationships

Dewey’s ideas are the source of progressive thinking in education, including the concept of experiential learning. It is now a commonplace notion that we learn from experience and this is one of the major ways of developing personally and socially. The defining characteristic of personal and social development that distinguishes it from other forms of learning is the *inter-personal and inter-group relationships* through which the experience occurs and from which the learning is derived.

As the Report of the Review Group on the Youth Service in England (also known as the Thompson Report) explained in 1982, young people’s views on what it means to be an adult are interesting and important.

“To them it means responsibilities as well as freedoms, relationships as well as possessions. Both introspection and analysis suggest that what underlies this language is a desire for change in relationships. Young people say that above all they want to ‘grow up’ – they aspire to the stage next ahead of them. The stages of human development are defined in terms of progress in relationships of which the more important are the following:

- relationships with self;
- relationships with parents and other significant adults;
- relationships with friendship groups;
- relationships with a particular partner;
- relationships with peers in school, college, work or the community;
- relationships to a wider society;
- relationships with an ultimate of some kind.”
What is crucial for young people is the change in these relationships as they move through the teenage years from dependence to growing independence.

Relationships do not exist in a vacuum. They come all mixed up together through a series of activities, interactions and experiences. As these experiences are felt and encountered, whether in families, peer groups, in education or work, relationships are affected and sometimes changed. Examples of the kinds of experience might be:

- being valued and accepted as a person
- measuring oneself against others
- making choices and decisions and seeing them through
- accepting and enduring a difficult situation or major disappointment
- being responsible for others and helping other people out
- giving, receiving and sharing ideas
- achieving a long-held goal

The learning derived from these experiences alone is more likely to be durable if young people are given the opportunity and support needed to reflect on the experience and the impact it may or may not have on the relationships involved.

Implied in personal and social development is the notion of growth and an increasing maturity. The trouble with these terms is that they are subjective, relative and highly-charged emotionally because they imply some sense of judgement, of somebody – usually an adult - making an assessment of whether another is measuring up to some arbitrary benchmark or quality. We talk a lot about people having ‘grown up’. Is this the same as personal and social development? And what does it mean?

In their seminal work *The Social Education of the Adolescent* (1967) Gibson and Davies develop the idea of ‘maturity for their own society’. They cogently repudiated the idea of maturity as a plateau attained or a blanket to cover all circumstances, recognising instead that all through life people have to adjust to new challenges and contexts, roles, relationships and responsibilities. What is important is to be exposed to different social experiences and have the opportunity to extract from these a wide repertoire of social skills. This repertoire can then be drawn upon to respond appropriately to the variety of situations which young people face.

The significant factor in helping them to grow new personal and social skills and attributes is less the activity itself, than the development of relationships through the activity. They argue that the central aim of personal and social development is “to help young people acquire the social skills of co-operation, of membership of and contribution to common effort, of sociability, of colleagueship”. In a group task it is not always the playing of the role that is most difficult, but determining which role is appropriate to play. They add that it is the making of choices and decisions and the taking of responsibility for their consequences that are important. This entails the capacity to be flexible, sensitive and versatile, requiring a very high degree of social skills. Programmes of personal and social development should be providing opportunities to practise and refine these skills.

Is there a single concept ‘personal and social development’? Or are there two separate but closely related concepts ‘personal development’ and ‘social development’? Some
of the young people consulted as part of this project had very clear views about the distinction between the two.

- “Personal development means to me how I view myself as a person and social development means to me how I view myself socially, for example communicating or getting along with others”

- “Personal: how you view yourself, your morals. Social: how you interact with others, your ability to take on board views, culture and sexuality of others”

- “Personal development is the private aspects of a person’s life and process of growing and developing. Social development is where you live in a community and how it develops”

From this we begin to sense personal development as being concerned more with the individual’s inner world of feelings, thoughts, beliefs, values, behaviour, temperament and character. While social development is more concerned with relationships with others (individuals and groups) and with the wider world, and with communities (of place, belief, culture, interest) which both reflect and shape identity.

1.3 Personal and social development as a process

Personal and social education operates through a process of developing relationships with young people based on mutual trust and respect. It engages their interest and participation, on a voluntary basis, in activities, experiences or issues, which are rooted in their personal experience. At the same time it stretches them and opens them up to new horizons. It develops inclusive behaviour by engaging young people actively in their own development. It encourages them to reflect on their progress in developing social skills, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in the range of opportunities provided. Reflecting with young people on their progress is probably the most important aspect of this process because it affirms learning and allows the young person to gain the confidence and self esteem to practise their self-agency again in new situations.

Material from the young person’s direct experience of home, school, work, friendships and community are used as the basic materials for reflection and action. Young people are encouraged to offer their perspectives or analysis of what is happening in the situation and to explain their reactions and self-agency. The purpose here is to identify their analysis of the situation, reflect on that analysis to see whether there are other ways of looking at it. At times adults might use role-play and simulations to help young people examine alternative strategies.

Personal and social development is not a state or condition that is achieved at a particular stage in the life cycle. It is continuous in the sense that people are open to it at all times, and can make gradual, incremental progress as they go through normal life events; or more sudden and dramatic step changes through particularly intensive activities, relationships and experiences. (This is illustrated in the model in Appendix 3).

There was agreement on this point among young people consulted and Connexions partnerships surveyed as part of this project. They see personal and social
development as a process of ‘developing into a well-balanced, rounded individual, someone who knows or understands who they are with a strong sense of identity’. It is about ‘whole development’ and rather than specific skills, much of which is likely to result from a variety of group activity

1.3.1 Personal development programmes

For young people personal and social development is more likely to occur when activities or programmes have been planned with this kind of learning in mind and when:

- young people have chosen to be involved
- the environment or setting enables young people to feel comfortable and relaxed
- there are practitioners with whom they can build relationships of trust and openness and who provide a combination of challenge and support
- the work starts where young people are but is designed to take them further and expose them to new ideas and experiences
- young people are encouraged to be creative and critical in their responses
- individual differences are respected and valued and young people’s belief in themselves and their capacity to grow and change are supported and strengthened
- the work recognises and responds to the wider network of peers, communities, cultures and contexts which help young people to achieve stronger relationships and a sense of identity - whether this is with their local community or through collective action
- the work is concerned with how young people feel and not just with what they know and can do
- the work enables young people to find and express their voice and influence the environment in which they live

Programmes of personal and social development should therefore be expected to reflect the values and assumptions underlying these conditions. They should

- be characterised by choice not compulsion.
- be influenced and determined by young people, not solely by adults on behalf of or in the interests of young people
- be planned, yet leave room for improvisation and taking up ideas ‘on the wing’
- attend to the needs of individuals, yet recognise that any group to which the individual belongs has a life and needs of its own.
- foster difference so young people encounter diversity, not just mirror reflections of themselves; and go to different places beyond their own patch
- concerned with the process of engagement, action and learning as much as the outcome
- address the affective domain of feelings as much as the cognitive domain of ideas.

These are not posed as alternatives. Programmes of personal and social development are a mixture of elements with regard to both content and method. The dynamics between those involved as providers and beneficiaries tend to fluctuate, as do the conditions and the emphasis. Relationships, learning and achievement are negotiated and secured at different points along the ranges outlined below.
Programmes of personal and social development should lead to specified outcomes, which, if they cannot be measured, can at least be identified and recorded. Measurement assumes a level of precision and objectivity not easily applied to attitudes and behaviour. They can for example include greater understanding of a particular issue affecting and individual or an appreciation of what needs to be done to make a difference. The more clearly the ends can be specified, the easier it is to choose the means for achieving them. Programmes might address particular themes that concern young people, such as their health and safety; and use different methods and settings for delivering them.

What therefore might one expect a personally and socially developed young adult of 19 to be? What capacities would we expect them to be ‘in a fit state’ to display. They should at least be able to do the following:

- function independently and effectively at home, school/college, at work and in the community;
- make informed choices and decisions and tackle responsibility for their consequences including planning for their own futures;
- express themselves clearly and vividly;
- use their initiative to tackle problems and social issues;
- apply what they know, understand and can do in different situations;
- establish and maintain positive relationships with peers and family and respect the lifestyles and values of others; and demonstrate the skills and attitudes needed to make an active contribution to their community’s cohesion and development.

Personal and social development opportunities are available to young people in different settings. This paper is in the main concerned with those that are secured through the informal, community-based learning sector, such as the youth service. However, the profile of personal and social development is rising in the formal education and training sectors, particularly in schools and colleges. Personal, Social and Health Education programmes remain a constant feature of the already crowded school curriculum where, since 2002, Citizenship has also found its place. In the post-16 sector, pilot development projects in Citizenship are already under way and since 2001, Key Skills have been part of core provision.

The new curriculum for 14-19 education is more diverse and flexible and encourages young people to explore individual learning pathways that suit them best. The recognition of wider learning and achievement is emphasised, through volunteering and a range of youth and community projects. It is important that providers work together to ensure that all young people know about local opportunities and are encouraged to take part.
1.4 Approaches, concepts and models

Personal and social development is an area of learning that has given rise to several imaginative approaches. We do not set out to provide here a full compendium but simply to offer a sample that have proved durable and interesting, in particular in the field of informal education.

1.4.1 Dialogue and conversation

Developing dialogue between adults and young people and among young people themselves has long been a feature of the social education process, as advanced by Gibson and Davies. As inferred earlier, it derives from notions of Socratic enquiry first recorded by Plato. Smith and Jeffs who emphasise the centrality of conversation and democracy in a rapidly changing world and have developed this concept more recently. It enables young people to make effective use of facilities available to them and to have their voices heard in the development of new services and opportunities - such as Connexions.

Smith uses the term conversation to denote a process, which is essentially a social activity involving interaction with other people. It requires people to co-operate, an appreciation by each participant of what the others are experiencing and some degree of reciprocity, or give and take. He argues that conversation is an emotional as well as an intellectual activity, involving an exchange of feelings as well as of ideas, information and opinions. And the use of language, the common currency of conversation, sometimes entails more than an exchange of information. It contains the possibility of experiencing, of making things real and bringing one’s world alive.

1.4.2 Developmental group work

Another major influence on the theory and practice of personal and social development has been developmental group work, a method pioneered in youth and community work training by Button in the 1970’s. The focus is very much on the group both as an arena and a source of social education. The purpose is to engage the group in a reflexive study of: how and why the group came together; what the group does; what individuals get out of the group; and introspective discussions on the needs and aspirations of members stimulated by new experiences. The group of young people plan and carry out a task, which allows experimentation of new roles, based on their new understanding of themselves. A picture of the group is constructed from friendship studies and dialogue with group members. The pattern of relationships is seen to change as the group gain new insights about themselves as individuals and the group as a whole from being involved in a range of new experiences or activities.
An example of how this might work is taken from a case study of a detached youth worker. Observing the behaviour of a large group hanging round a chip shop, she developed relationships with the group and then two subsidiary groups, one of young men and another of young women, to explore the processes and relationships of the groups. Through the groups’ own enquiry into their relationships and behaviour – “nothing to do”, “just hanging around”, and “if you don’t come people won’t speak to you again”. The young people decided that a larger group had become a barrier to new experiences. They all engaged in a mini conference to discuss the issues, using Socratic small group discussion methods. Members of the larger group were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences by following a set of short discussion points. Dialogue between and within groups was achieved. The large group took up the challenge of finding something to do and negotiated space in the village hall for activities.
1.4.3 The learning cycle

This is both a concept and a tool used commonly in all kinds of developmental work with people. It makes explicit and gives full attention to the different processes people go through when seeking to extract meaning and learning from experience. It requires a reasonable level of awareness of self and others and a willingness to reflect. If learning from experience is to have real impact on people they have to go through the full learning cycle as originally developed by David Kolb.

Experience

**Experience** might trigger our desire to learn. It might be a starting point for our learning. However – we don’t always learn from experience. Think of the number of times we repeat the same mistakes! We need to use the other parts of the cycle.

**Reflection** involves recalling and reviewing the experience and our responses to it – asking, for example, ‘What did I do?’ ‘And then what happened?’ ‘What was I thinking about, at the time?’ ‘How did I feel while I was doing it / thinking that?’ ‘How did I feel afterwards?’ As we reflect on our experiences, we work out their personal significance to us.

**Analysis** of a situation or experience requires us to step back from it. We try to make sense of the experience - and our responses to it – by looking at it in a broader context. To do this we need to find a conceptual framework or theory that allows us to think about the experience in a more abstract way and make generalisations. Sometimes we come up with our own theory – though we’ll not necessarily call it that! Sometimes we use those of others or combinations. It is unusual for people not to try and make some sense of the situations they find themselves in.

**Action planning** emphasises our personal capacity to change. We don’t always have to act in the same way. In this phase, we use our **reflection** and **analysis** to decide what to do differently in future. It might be specifically for the next time we find ourselves in the same situation (or want to avoid it). It might involve transferring the know-how to other situations.
Young people usually need some help in going through this cycle. It is important to encourage them to think back on their experience, try to trace consequences back to causes, and work out for themselves why things happened the way they did.

One particular difficulty that many young people experience is reflecting. They tend to be driven by action not thinking, moving from experience to planning without going through the intermediate processes of reflection and analysis.

The act of reflection is an essential feature of personal and social development. It is an activity in which people ‘recapture experience’, ponder and evaluate it. It involves three aspects:
- returning to experience; recalling salient events and conversations
- attending to the feelings connected with the experience – using helpful feelings and removing or containing those that get in the way
- evaluating experience – re-examining the experience in the light of what one knows and aims to achieve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases and questions that assist people to reflect include:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ identify and then explain</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ explore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ how can we change….?</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ how can we look at this differently….?</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ let’s take a step back…..</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ where were you in this situation….?in the middle or on the edge….?</td>
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<td>□ because…..?</td>
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<td>□ what does this remind you of…….?</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ can you think of something else that has happened to you like this…..?</td>
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<td>□ think about this, ponder on it for a while…..</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ how come…..?</td>
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<td>□ can you say a little more about this…….?</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ I am not sure I understand – tell me again…….</td>
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<tr>
<td>□ what are the pros and cons? tell me why…….</td>
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1.4.4 Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is now commonly regarded as a key feature of personal and social development. It refers to a range of aptitudes, which people need to develop if they are to function effectively, particularly as learners. A necessary ingredient of emotional literacy is a modicum of self-esteem.

Emotional health is fundamental to effective learning. Many young people who are disengaged from learning have turbulent lives operating on the margins of social institutions. Their emotional growth and development tend to be impaired by difficulties in forming attachments and developing stable relationships. This in turn can adversely affect other aspects of their development as they grapple with new experiences, extended transitions and their own emotional responses to them.

Emotional intelligence is sometimes referred to as emotional literacy and at other times as EQ. It comprises five elements:

♦ **self-awareness**: knowing and owning your own feelings; knowing what you truly feel about things; recognising and being able to discriminate between feelings, what induces them and what are the likely consequences of having them.

♦ **self-management**: knowing how to handle feelings so they are relevant to the current situation; being able to assess the impact of expressing those feelings on the listener; knowing how to express good and bad feelings without unduly upsetting other people.

♦ **motivation**: gathering up your feelings and directing yourself towards a goal; being able to persevere in the face of difficulties, despite self-doubt, inertia or impulsiveness.

♦ **empathy**: understanding the feelings of others; taking account of them in day-to-day behaviour; intuitively understanding causes and effects; being able to ‘read another person like a book’.

♦ **managing relationship**: handling interpersonal interaction, negotiations and resolving conflict; taking responsibility and making amends when necessary; supporting other people in difficulty.

*(Adapted from Working with Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman, 1998)*

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and deal with our emotions (and those of others around us) and with their consequences. It inserts thinking between the feelings which prompts the action.

feeling-----------------------\rightarrow thinking--------------------------\rightarrow action

Naming the feelings we have is important because when we have named them we can better know them. One of the difficulties many young people have is that they cannot easily find the words to express precisely the feeling they may have. Use of terms such as ‘boring’ or ‘crap’ indicate displeasure, but they are not sufficiently exact to
help identify the nature of the displeasure and therefore what its possible source may be. Therefore it does not always help us know how to advise the young person about coping with their discontent.

In the television programme *Jamie’s Kitchen*, the famous chef (and role model?) Jamie Oliver showed his impatience and disappointment when some of the young people he was selecting for apprenticeships could not describe the taste of the food he had cooked. He put this down to their inability to appreciate the food rather than any difficulty they might have in finding the words to express their thoughts and feelings. They were disqualified as much by their shortcomings in communication as by their inability to recognise and enjoy good food when they tasted it.

Emotional intelligence is an important asset for young people when struggling against social exclusion. It is necessary for:

- building the capacity of individuals (and consequently of groups, communities and organisations);
- creating the building blocks of autonomy and sensitivity which are necessary in meeting the challenges of adult and working life; and

Emotional intelligence is relevant to all of us. We can all benefit from enhancing these capacities. It is no coincidence that it has been advanced in business and industry as a characteristic required among aspiring executives. All adults working with disaffected and socially excluded young adults themselves need to be emotionally intelligent if they are to have a decent prospect of success.

Emotional intelligence is the keystone of a particular approach to personal and social development pursued through *Getting Connected*, a curriculum framework for social inclusion aimed at young people at risk. It comprises nine units set out in the diagram below, each of which has a set of specified learning outcomes achieved through activities and processes designed and differentiated to meet the needs and interests of the young people who use it.

*Getting Connected Curriculum Framework*
1.4.5 The youth work curriculum

Emotional intelligence is one of four elements that comprise what Merton and Wylie refer to as the youth work curriculum. They also propose three other elements: creativity and enterprise – feeding and expressing the imagination, thinking laterally, recognising and solving problems, calculating and taking risks health and well-being – looking after oneself, diet and lifestyle, keeping physically and mentally fit, dealing with stress; and active citizenship – making a contribution, getting involved and becoming influential, finding a voice and place, learning for sustainable development.

Whether the word curriculum is used or not, youth work is a form of intervention which has personal and social development as its core objective. It has in practice drawn on at least four sources to construct its offer to young people. First, it has to connect with young people’s interests, since their engagement is voluntary. Secondly, it provides activities, which can supplement the formal learning of school and college by offering different contexts for self-expression or active citizenship. Thirdly, it offers programmes, which engage with contemporary social issues that preoccupy young people, such as health or crime in their neighbourhood. Finally, much of the work reflects and addresses the particular tasks and needs confronting young people as they progress through the extended transitions of young adulthood, finding a place to live, a job and a stable set of relationships.

<table>
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<th>Activities complementing formal education</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure and recreational interests</td>
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<td>Developmental needs and tasks of adolescence</td>
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This broad curriculum contains goals which include helping young people explore the issues that affect them; to make responsible choices; to encourage social interaction and compassion; to promote self-acceptance through offering positive feedback; to act on their understanding. In short to enable young people to feel located – to understand better how the past, present and future relate to themselves and others.

But such broad goals need to be expressed in a set of more specific outcomes if they are to be helpful in planning, in practice and in review. The more clearly we can specify the ends, the better we will be able to choose the means for achieving them.

The outcomes are a device that can help to plan a programme of personal and social development and review the young person’s progress through it. The achievement of the outcomes does not mean that the young person’s personal and social development
is complete. It is merely a stage on the journey of life through which young people acquire greater measures of confidence, insight, awareness and skills.

The following diagram is an example of a youth work curriculum model with personal and social development at its core, developed in Northern Ireland. For further information on this please refer to Towards a Contemporary Curriculum for Youth Work.
Section 2: The Practice of Personal and Social Development

2.1 Connexions, the personal adviser and personal and social development

“Connexions offers a wide range of help – including information, group work, advice and guidance, in-depth support and access to personal and social development”.

Youth Support Services for 13-19 year-olds: A Vision for 2006, CSNU

The support provided may range from basic information, advice and guidance, to vulnerable young people requiring more substantial one to one support. They seek to ensure that needs of young people are met so that they are able and motivated to take education, training and work opportunities and achieve to their full potential.

Personal advisers act as signposts to opportunities. It is important that they know what these personal and social development opportunities are, that they can recognise quality and judge the suitability of different types of provision for the individuals with whom they work.

Personal advisers need to understand the meaning and importance of personal and social development. They also need to find ways of assessing young people’s need and appetite for it as part of the Assessment, Planning, Implementation and Review (APIR) process. The personal development process is sometimes the bridge between the starting-point of engagement and the position of learning-readiness young people need to achieve if they are to reach key destinations: training, education, employment.

The young people consulted for this project readily identify the kinds of activities that provide the context for the relationships that in turn contribute to their personal and social development. These include

- performance – drama, dance, music and socio-drama; ways of practising and rehearsing situations they have encountered or are likely to encounter; telling stories; recognising and releasing the power of anecdote
- outdoor education and physical challenge in which they discover new skills and characteristics
- youth forums and councils – in which to get involved and influential in the community
- volunteering, peer mentoring, ‘buddy’ schemes; providing support and guidance to others
- planning and organising an event or performance

In addition they describe important occasions where they ‘grow up’, such as work experience or significant life events brought about by changes in family circumstances - bereavement, divorce, relocation, being taken into care, or leaving it.

The local youth club, after-school activities, study support scheme or Summer University are seen as providers of new experiences and challenges. Some have the added opportunity of venturing further afield

“Camp America – I realised that I enjoyed working with the special needs population and learned to develop my social skills on an international scale, gaining knowledge of [other] cultures"
Young people and adults commonly regarded residential experiences as having a significant contribution to make to personal and social development. This is because particular conditions tend to apply, such as

- having to create and abide by their own ground rules,
- devising their own programmes of activities,
- being withdrawn from familiar, everyday distractions,
- having to draw on their own resources and initiative,
- encountering the new and the different,
- the social intimacy that comes from sustained contact and interaction.

These all contribute to an intensity of experience and relationships that tends to accelerate social processes and deepen understanding of how people feel, think and behave.

Young people consulted (and adults) identify a set of characteristics or conditions that need to be in place for good quality personal and social development programmes. The principal factor is **leadership**. Adults should have the right skills combining challenge and support and crucially creating relationships of trust and mutual regard among young people and between young people and adults. They should also be able to bring out the best in others.

- “In Connexions Partnerships it is important that staff are well trained and motivated, interested in what they are doing and what they are trying to achieve. [They should] use a wide range of learning styles.”
- “A focus on the needs of the young people rather than bureaucratic planning guidelines”
- “Available when it is needed by young people not when it is convenient for the Partnership”

And the young people welcome

- “Ground rules, a balance between work and play, an effective training programme, good relationships between workers and young people”
- “Good support structures for young people, seeing what they want to gain”

All this should result in

- “trust, reliability, motivation, confidence and determination”
- and the abiding ability to
- “learn how to learn” and
- “learn how to use what you have learned”

Conditions likely to lead to successful outcomes include:

- “good venues, handouts, free refreshments”
- “relaxed yet hard-working atmosphere”
- “a safe environment and a positive attitude”
- “peer-led schemes, by us and for us, with positive role models”
Young people also want to develop survival skills, including the ability to navigate their way through the opportunities that exist. To learn from these opportunities young people need

- skills in self-assessment
- opportunities to monitor and give/receive feedback on their personal and social skills
- the chance to reflect on experience and internalise lessons learned from it through supervision
- opportunities to have their say and find the words to describe the experience and express the feelings

Staff need skills in

- understanding the personal development process and how to convert activity into learning
- understanding and working through group processes
- identifying tasks and activities through which skills and understanding can be applied and demonstrated
- recognising (and assembling for accreditation purposes) suitable pieces of evidence

This applies to programmes that enrol at fixed points or those that recruit on more of a roll-on and roll-off basis.

An important dimension in personal and social development is the power and authority relation between adults and the young. The best-planned opportunities allow for a progressive, incremental transfer of power and authority from one to the other so that almost unobtrusively the young take greater control over the events and activities in which they are taking part. Associated with this is taking responsibility for the consequences and learning from the experience. There are obvious limits to the value of personal and social development if responsibility remains vested in the adults. If the expectation is that personal and social development should promote leadership qualities in the young, then every opportunity must be seized. Such shifts in the rules of engagement need to be carefully negotiated and managed on both sides.

Managers should give intensive support to practitioners of personal and social development; to ensure that people learn from what transpires; and that the policy context and planning and provision of programmes are managed as a consequence.

Managers are required to apply the same standards of quality assurance and the same rigour and consistency in monitoring and evaluating personal and social development programmes as they do to more ‘mainstream’ educational practice. Procedures have to be in place to assess its impact and potential. This means having a clear plan for communicating the outcomes of interventions, and convincing other service managers that this work is worth investing in. It requires managers to give personal and social development their full support. Resources need to be deployed to make the best use of opportunities, and this means ensuring that sufficient supervision is available to workers. Risk-taking is as an important facet of managing personal and social development programmes as of doing them because there are unlikely to be policy guidelines to cover all aspects. In fact the guidelines are usually derived from the practice itself.
It is important for such programmes to lead to learning, not only for the young people
directly involved but also for all those in the service or organisation. This learning
concerns both the intended and unintended outcomes. Four audiences should benefit:
the young people, practitioners, the communities to which they belong and the
organisations and services to which they are attached.

What therefore needs to happen if learning is to take place? The following conditions
seem to apply:
• the work should be linked to supervision and appraisal;
• it should be made the focus of team meetings;
• models should be tested out across different projects and centres
• it should be built into planning and resourcing;
• attempts should be made to establish baseline measures and assess impact and
effectiveness;
• practice should be continuously interrogated by posing questions such as “so
what?” …… “what else can we do with this information?” …… “where does this
take us now?”

Making the learning available to others is an important responsibility of managers
who should have a strategy for communicating the outcomes. It is important that what
is learned is not confined to those directly involved in a particular piece of work but
managers exploit the scope for replication. This should make the work more
sustainable and lead to systemic change.

2.2 Characteristics and conditions

Young people have offered some clear and consistent messages for Connexions in
their comments. They believe that the offers of individualised and specialist advice
and guidance are important and can contribute to their personal and social
development. However, they need to have sufficient opportunities to develop their
social skills. They also need activities and challenges to take part in with other young
people. They feel that it is within a group learning and ‘sharing’ environment that they
can be personally stretched and in the process develop or fine-tune their social
development.

The survey of the six Connexions partnerships also revealed a welcome degree of
consensus.
• Effective personal development programmes should be well structured with
clearly defined targets and outcomes, but they should also be flexible and
responsive to young people’s needs. The most successful personal development
programmes are those centred on young people’s individual needs, taking full
account of their starting point and what they want to achieve.

• The direct involvement of young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation
of personal development programmes is important in ensuring that it meets their
needs.
• A holistic approach is central to the delivery of personal development programmes, rather than a focus upon a narrow set of specific skills.

• The personal and social development programmes most consistently referred to were the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award scheme, Millennium Volunteers, Learning Gateway and the Prince’s Trust.

• Well-trained, highly motivated staff are crucial to the effective delivery of personal development programmes. Staff must have the skills and ability to engage young people, using innovative approaches and a range of learning styles. It is important to secure the resources that ensure staff can and do possess such skills.

It is important for personal advisers to know what opportunities for personal and social development are available in their local area, what the young people may need and then find a programme that matches. The personal adviser can use the APIR tool and process to identify the most suitable programme for each individual. It helps if there is a directory of such opportunities available locally, containing a short description of the programme, its target group (if specified), when and where it is available, and key contacts to refer to. Comments from previous participants are also helpful.

2.3 Criteria for judging provision

Below we set out some of the criteria that might be used to judge the quality and suitability of local programmes. They are cast in the form of questions.

• is the programme centred on the young people? does it attend to their individual needs, interests, circumstances and aspirations? does it recognise prior learning, build on strengths and see the young people as a resource to be developed?

• is the programme negotiable? do the young people have a say in establishing the ground rules? do they have a say in shaping the curriculum (content, methods and types of assessment)? is there scope for continuous feedback and adaptation in the programme as it unfolds?

• is the programme differentiated? does it recognise the individuality of young people and respond to a wide range of demands and needs? does it acknowledge the significance of different learning styles? is there variety of pace, activity and learning methods? is there a combination of one-to-one and group work?

• is the programme easily accessible? does it unwittingly discriminate against young people who have particular characteristics or difficulties? does it take place in settings where young people feel comfortable? are there costs and other barriers that may deter some young people from taking part?

• does the programme provide a suitable combination of challenge and support? are there sufficient new opportunities and experiences in the programme to stretch young people? will they have the chance to acquire and develop new skills and knowledge? is there support available for those who struggle?
• does the programme offer opportunities to explore **relationships**? are there opportunities for young people to maintain and develop relationships with peers? are the adults working on the programme able to establish relationships of trust with the young people? are the young people encouraged to see the relationships as a source of learning? do they use the relationships as a means of developing their inter-personal skills?

• does the programme contain specified **learning outcomes**? are the learning outcomes clearly expressed, transparent and understood by young people and staff? are there ways for young people and staff together to identify and record them when they are achieved? is there certification associated with this learning and achievement?

• does the programme offer opportunities for young people to **progress**? is the programme linked to other opportunities for learning and skills development? are staff in contact with providers of specialist services should the need for them be revealed during the programme?

• is the programme regularly **monitored and evaluated**? do the staff subject the programme to critical review? is there reliable data collected about recruitment, participation and achievement on the programme and its benefits to young people? are the young people invited to give feedback about their experience? are they involved in making suggestions for improvement and shaping future programmes?

• what is the **currency and status** of the programme? is it part of a national programme or is it nationally accredited? is it recognised and how do employers, training suppliers and gatekeepers of further education value it? can it be regarded as a passport to further opportunities?

2.4 **Barriers to participation**

Although personal and social development programmes are flexible and learner-centred, young people can still find themselves obstructed from taking part. It is important for the personal adviser to recognise that this can happen and take steps to ensure that any barriers are dismantled or overcome. The most common are

• **confidence:** low self-esteem may prevent an individual from ‘having a go’; this is often accompanied by fear of losing face in front of peers or adults

• **perceived irrelevance:** because the benefits of such a programme may be indirect, in particular if it does not lead to a recognised qualification, young people may think it is not worth investing their time; relevance is often seen as geared towards the labour market; soft skills are not valued as highly as ‘hard’ skills, such as working with materials or machinery

• **opportunity cost:** by taking part in such a programme, the young person may be giving up on another activity which they may regard as a higher priority, such as part-time work
• **conceptual challenge;** personal and social development is not a concept that is used much in everyday life. It is hard to describe and explain and that may discourage young people from taking part. By contrast, sometimes it can sound too much like ‘fun’ and therefore not be taken seriously as a learning activity. Learning is meant to be taxing and difficult!

• **undervalued by formal providers of learning and skills;** a similar view about personal and social development may be shared by teachers and other professionals; they may not necessarily see this type of self-improvement as being as legitimate an educational goal as studying for a qualification.

• **residential experiences;** many of the most intensive and rewarding programmes of personal and social development involve residential experiences which, for different reasons, young people (or their families) may be reluctant to participate in; the reasons may be material (they cannot afford the cost), psychological (fear of the unfamiliar) or social (they do not want to be away with strangers or a particular group). They may be anxious about practicalities such as sleeping arrangements, washing facilities, and meal times. However, these anxieties can be allayed by organisers. There is bound to be a degree of risk, but facing the consequences and managing oneself in relation to them is an important aspect of personal and social development. Overcoming barriers of this or any other kind should be properly recognised and rewarded.

2.5 **Recognising the skills**

The broad goals of personal and social development include helping young people to explore the issues that affect them, make informed choices and take responsibility for the consequences. These can be seen as key aspects of an informal learning approach. In the context of this publication an informal learning approach is determined as opportunities that are not part of mainstream education and where the actual approach is very learner-centred. The learners feel safe and competent to learn, the learning is set at their level and they are able to learn in their preferred style and at their own pace.

This might entail creating a learning plan, where there are particular outcomes intended. It is also important to provide for the incidental learning occurs en route in addition to the intended learning gain or goals.

Such broad goals need to be expressed as more specific outcomes if they are to help with planning and developing the practice of the staff and the young people involved in this work.

In personal and social development a variety of means are used to encourage the acquisition of particular skills and levels of understanding relating to the broad areas outlined above. It is usually through these activities that the development of so-called ‘soft skills’ takes place - those that are essential for everyday 21st century life. These include working with others, problem solving and negotiation skills, and the honing of personal qualities such as self-awareness and self-confidence, motivation, acknowledging and managing feelings, perseverance and a willingness to learn.
It is vital that more ways are found to recognise, value and reward the skills and qualities that young people develop as a result of their involvement in such projects. Valuing these skills is one thing; recognising, demonstrating and finding evidence of them in young people is another. This is particularly true when by definition they are hard to measure or precisely grade. In considering the term ‘soft skills’ it might be implied that the term ‘soft’ implies easy to achieve or of less significance. However, the development of these skills is neither straightforward nor carries less weight. Without such skills, the ability of the individual to acquire and develop harder skills - for example those of a more academic or vocational nature - is significantly reduced.

Measuring development and achievement in the area of soft skills is difficult because it involves producing evidence as a basis for making judgements about achievements. It is often complicated by the fact that such skills require skills in other areas. For example, the ability to get on with other people is directly linked to being able to communicate effectively. Whilst this is difficult to measure, there are examples of how these can be effectively recorded (NSF Development Framework) or assessed. (New Deal model)

The achievement also needs to take account of different contexts. One context relates to the learner and their starting point. Not everyone begins a programme with an identical level of understanding, knowledge and skill. Furthermore, many of the young people involved in informal learning projects lead turbulent lives and this affects both their learning-readiness and their ability to apply the things they learn. Another context relates to the situation in which the skill is being applied. This concerns the degree of comfort in the environment for the learner, the levels of expectation and the sensitivity of other people involved. Moreover, being able to demonstrate a satisfactory level of social skills on one occasion does not mean that the learner can do so on another when the conditions and circumstances may vary. This is not to infer that achievement in these soft skills should not be recorded once it is identified – indeed it should be. It is a warning that precise measurement is both hazardous and questionable.

### 2.6 Individual or group work

While personal advisers are likely to work principally with individual young people, they may have opportunities to work with groups and to devise and deliver programmes of personal and social development directly themselves. In doing so, it is important at the outset to decide whether to

- use a group work approach - with substantial support for individual learners
- base the learning entirely on a one to one mentoring approach
- combine the two approaches - this might well depend on the resources available, particularly the paid staff and volunteers

Some learners find it easier to start on a one to one basis. If this is the case, then the following questions have to be considered:

- is there the commitment of time and the provision of systems within the organisation to support the individual?
- can the individual access learning through group work at a later stage if that is chosen?
• can the one-to-one approach be used to supplement the group work approach?

If a group work approach is taken then the following questions have to be considered:
• are the resources available? are there minimum and maximum sizes for a viable learning group? what is a reasonable staff: learner ratio? is the venue safe, accessible and comfortable? are transport facilities reliable and affordable? are there sufficient resources to support the learners’ needs?
• is the group going to follow a common theme or activity?
• how long will the project or activity last?
• is recruitment going to be at a fixed point or will there be a roll-on and roll-off recruitment, with allowances made to incorporate new learners into an existing group?
• how is support for individual learners to be provided for within the group?
• what use can be made of a peer tutoring or ‘buddy’ system for newcomers to the group?
• how is evidence of individuals’ learning to be secured within a group project? and crucially
• do staff have sufficient understanding and skills in group processes?

Whichever approach or combination is adopted it is important that there is continuing review and evaluation of the process by the learners and the staff. Evaluative meetings are useful in highlighting any changes that might be helpful or in advising on learning styles being selected.
Below we refer to examples of organisations and projects that place personal and social development at the centre of their provision. This is just a sample drawn from the increasing number working with young people aged 13-19 in different settings. Further information on these and others can be obtained from the Information Team at the National Youth Agency.

EXAMPLE 1

NYA NSF Project/ YMCA Leicester Lifeskills Project

The aim of the programme is to reconnect disengaged young people aged 16 to 19 into education, employment, training and independent living. The programme is available in two YMCA offices – rooms have been equipped with computers, scanners, televisions, videos, and educational games and packs.

The activities within the programme are pre-determined rather than negotiated and include: communication, health education, self-awareness, employment and training, independent living. Young people complete a passport-style document in which achievements for sections are ticked off and the learning is captured, recorded and assessed. Youth workers support the programme participants. The most distinctive characteristic of the programme is the simple method for young people to record their achievements.

EXAMPLE 2

Derbyshire - CONNECT 2
(Run by Derby City and Derbyshire County Youth Services, and Derbyshire Careers Service)

The aim of the programme is to provide life skills training as part of the Learning Gateway for 16 – 17 year olds. It is organised through work-based, training centres. The young people attend for at least 16 hours per week, and training may last up to 19 weeks. Most young people attend for 8 weeks of group activities followed by skills training and/or work experience tasters as appropriate. The programmes are individually tailored with a flexible timetable and work placements are carefully selected to meet the needs of individual learners.

The training focuses on improving motivation and confidence, developing basic, key and personal effectiveness skills and allows learners to sample different work and learning opportunities. The learning is captured, recorded and assessed through development plans and records and a range of qualifications, including basic food hygiene and computer literacy. The programme helps learners to identify a careers aim and progress into employment with training, work-based learning or further education.
EXAMPLE 3

Lincolnshire – Education and Behaviour Support Service Scheme

The aim of the programme is to provide education and training to young people who have been permanently excluded from school. Work-related training with specialist providers takes place over four days a week (e.g. motor project, agriculture skills course), with life skills and personal development sessions provided by the Youth Service on the fifth day. The learning is captured, recorded and assessed through portfolios that satisfy the national skills profile established by OCR for three grades of entry-level qualifications. Some groups use ‘Getting Connected’ - the curriculum framework for social inclusion that concentrates on emotional literacy/intelligence. The scheme provides education for excluded young people, and helps them re-engage with education, employment and training.

EXAMPLE 4

NYA/NSF – L4 Skills Project, Liverpool

The aim of the programme is to equip young people who are disenchanted with formal education with the skills they need to enter education, training or employment, and for life generally. Participants may choose to go to school or attend the project – they negotiate their own level of voluntary attendance. Participation centres on the relationships built between the young person, the group and the project worker. The programme includes a mix of developmental groupwork, training sessions and one-to-one support. Learning contracts are negotiated on an individual basis and are reviewed periodically. Activities and targets are set to enable participants to measure their success. The learning is captured, recorded and assessed through individual work files, which young people can use to work towards ASDAN Youth Awards. Achievement is also celebrated through events at which, for example, the young people are presented with certificates. The project helps young people find a placement at a college or a training provider and to adapt to more formal learning opportunities.

EXAMPLE 5

NYA/NSF – Young Person’s Advisory Service, Liverpool

The aim of the programme is to encourage young people, aged 13-19 particularly those who are/have been homeless, have left care, or who have mental health problems – to re-engage in education, training or employment. Young people are referred through the YMCA, social services, word of mouth and voluntary youth organisations and the emphasis is on a partnership approach. It aims to enable them to look at what skills they already have and address those that need developing, increasing their confidence and developing their lifeskills. It is a flexible programme in which young people set their own goals and agenda, based on a structured approach to personal development work, combining one-to-one support with groupwork. Staff and young people devise individual action plans that are reviewed every six weeks. Young people map their own progress through task sheets with progress assessed jointly by participant and worker, in context of original aims and tasks achieved. The project uses ‘Getting Connected’ and in-house accreditation that aims to indicate
'distance travelled'. The programme aims to retain young people in education, training and employment.

EXAMPLE 6

NYA/NSF - Alford House, Lambeth

The aim of the programme is to re-engage young people aged 13-19 with education, training and employment opportunities. The project operates an information, communication and technology centre, clubs in the evening and offers work experience opportunities through sponsorship. Main activities include sport and adventure, arts, training and groupwork, and ICT. The project uses personal assessment and observation, including interviews and action plans, to respond to young people’s individual needs and circumstances that are used as evidence towards Youth Achievement Awards as well as computer literacy qualifications. It works to re-engage young people with education, training and employment opportunities. The Reconnect project runs in partnership with Connexions, including collaboration with two personal advisers to run a weekly ICT group at a local secondary school.

EXAMPLE 7

Coventry Democracy Project

The aim of the programme is to provide training and support for all young people, including the most marginalised to participate in local decision making. Activities include focus groups, consulting and surveying other young people, scrutiny groups to monitor and evaluate services, and becoming involved in city council processes. Approaches include internet use, detached and outreach work and work with specific groups of young people. Events are organised by and for young people and they make many decisions about allocating resources. The project provides training to develop young people’s ability to play an effective part in decision-making, and also offers training tailored to particular groups, for example, lobbying councillors on specific issues. The Youth Service has introduced qualifications through accreditation such as the Open College Network and ASDAN. The project aims to engage young people who are normally excluded from decision-making.

EXAMPLE 8

Fairbridge

The aim of the programme is to provide personal and social skills development, independent living skills, work-based skills, and recreation and community skills to young people aged 14 to 25. In particular, it targets young people deemed to be ‘at risk’, from the most marginalised, disaffected and vulnerable groups in society. The project works in 13 deprived urban areas across England, Scotland and Wales Activities are individually tailored, their duration is varied and the participants set their own goals. Instructors and development co-ordinators work with young people on various courses through both individual and group sessions. The learning is captured, recorded and assessed through various accreditation schemes and young people receive certificates upon reaching their goals. This programme successfully re-engages young people into learning.
EXAMPLE 9

Outward Bound

The aim of the programme is to inspire individual young people under 25 through challenging, outdoor experiences, to raise achievement and confidence, and develop social and life skills. The activities take place at Outward Bound centres, through partnerships with organisations providing youth work, education and training. Young people experience practical outdoor pursuits. The programmes of activity are set, and include adventure and challenge, life skills, basic key skills, teamwork and confidence building. Youth workers, teachers and activity instructors support young people through these programmes. The learning is captured, recorded and assessed to comply with different accreditation schemes - GNVQS, A Levels and Key Skills. All Outward Bound Centres are recognised as centres for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme. Certain programmes are targeted towards young people involved in crime or substance abuse, those who are socially excluded and those with learning difficulties. This initiative encourages young people to improve their skills for employability and provides them with the opportunity to re-engage with learning.

EXAMPLE 10

Raleigh

The aim of the programme is to provide progressive personal development for young people aged 17 to 25 including the opportunity to participate in overseas community and environmental projects. The programme lasts a year and includes Raleigh weekend, development week, personal challenge, a ten-week expedition and a follow-up week. Young people set the challenges. Support for the young people is provided by project staff and includes advice on raising funds to support themselves through the programme. Within a year of completing the programme, 65% of participants access work or training.

EXAMPLE 11

Weston Spirit – Edexcel/City & Guilds Profile of Achievement

The aim is to provide personal development programmes for hard-to-reach young people, including the socially excluded and disaffected. Learning outcomes include confidence building and teamwork. The Edexcel programmes consist of two-day personal development courses and take place in eight centres across the country where young people attend and gain support from course leaders. The activities are individually designed, and also delivered through group work. The City & Guilds Profile of Achievement provides an individually tailored programme through a negotiated progress. Short courses are also available to engage excluded and demotivated young people using a reward system.
EXAMPLE 12

Girlguiding UK

The personal development awards provide opportunities for young women to develop both personally and socially by undertaking different challenges or through leadership training. They are aimed at young women aged 16-25 who have made the Guide promise. The training is undertaken in Guide centres, and in the community with support from mentors and Guide leaders. The activities are individually tailored for young women who are supported by mentors. The learning is captured, recorded and assessed to count towards a Leadership Qualification, the Queen’s Guide Award and the Duke of Edinburgh Award. The organisation is currently attempting to widen the appeal of Guiding, to ensure that it is not seen as only a white, middle-class pursuit. The skills learned enable participants to take advantage of education and employment opportunities.

EXAMPLE 13

The Scout Association

The aims of the programme are to develop personal skills in communication or problem solving, and to encourage participation in various social, cultural and spiritual activities for young people aged up to 25. The programmes are organised through centre-based and community activities. They are negotiated with young people and supported by scout leaders. Development within the programmes can be used towards a Duke of Edinburgh Award and peer assessment is a feature of the programme. The skills learned enable participants to take advantage of education and employment opportunities.

EXAMPLE 14

Youth Achievement Awards

There are four Youth Achievement Awards (bronze, silver, gold, platinum) which reflect increasing degrees of responsibility and participation. For each level, young people produce a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates their involvement in the award and the level of individual responsibility taken.

EXAMPLE 15

The Prince’s Trust

The Trust offers various development programmes that have different aims. For example XL Clubs works in schools and aims to re-engage and motivate young people. The XL programme targets educational underachievers and those who have been or are at risk of being excluded. It also attracts offenders/ex-offenders, unemployed young people, and those young people in or leaving care. The programmes are led by young people who work on a personal development programme that promotes achievements and encourage success. An adviser with facilitation skills, from the youth service or the careers service guides the clubs. Young people work towards the ASDAN XL Award, which gives them a qualification.
in the wider key skills of problem solving, working with others, and improving their own learning. This programme prevents young people from completely disengaging with education and learning.

EXAMPLE 16

The Trident Trust – Skills for life

The aim of the programme is to provide personal challenge, community involvement and work experience, focusing on personal and practical skills for young people aged 14 to 16, but older learners can participate. The programme includes classroom-based activities, work placements, personal challenges and community involvement. The personal challenges are individually or group tailored. The flexible learning framework can be used in a school, building on existing activities so participants receive support from teaching staff. Local employers support work-based opportunities. The learning is captured, recorded and assessed through the Progress File, ASDAN Youth Awards, City & Guilds Profile of Achievement, and the Key Skills Enrichment Scheme recognised by OCR, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, and National Open College Network accreditation schemes. The programme enhances work-related learning and wider social skills.
APPENDICES

Appendix one    Bibliography
Appendix two    Resources
Appendix three    Youth work role in developing learning readiness
Bibliography

Books

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Comprehensive review of 'Informal education: adventures and reflections', regarded as the first single authored substantial exploration of informal education in the English language.

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Richardson, Linda Deer, ed.; Wolfe, Mary, ed.

Book which explores the principles and practice of informal education in areas including youth work and community and adult education. Divided into four parts: definitions, core values, elements of professional practice, and aids to professional development.


Feature which provides an overview of UK Youth's National Projects Programme, set up to deliver innovative youth work and informal education programmes at a local level, often targeted at hard to reach young people. It illustrates the range of ways in which the value of quality youth work is being promoted.

Campbell, Paul 2000.

Connexions, with its proposal for Personal Advisors, will have major implications for youth workers, other professionals and young people in the UK. This article looks at these implications and asks whether these government proposals will compromise the open agenda of informal education and substitute a closed agenda of education and training. It looks at how the proposals came about, using recent reports which have highlighted the needs of care leavers to look at how the proposals might affect this significant proportion of socially excluded young people, and what they think of the approaching changes.

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Report which makes recommendations for the provision of creative and cultural education in formal and informal education for young people up to the age of sixteen. It includes specific recommendations on the National Curriculum, and also includes recommendations for a wider national strategy for creative and cultural...
Appendix two

Informal education - conversation, democracy and learning (BXAC)[accession code 24083]

This book presents a practical introduction to informal education. Using helpful suggestions and support from linked pages on the internet, the book focuses on the central features of conversation, encouraging learning, democracy, education in terms of product, process and evaluation, ethics, and programme planning.

Developing social skills: a learning resource manual for trainers and educators working in non-traditional learning environments (BTN) [accession code: 19861]

Developed for use in informal learning environments, this training resource aims to encourage young people to consider their personal development and develop their social skills. Sections cover communication skills, communities and relationships, understanding and managing emotions, self-management, developing assertiveness, dealing with authority, and creating and maintaining relationships with family, friends and work colleagues. Available from Russell House Publishing, 4 St George's House, The Business Park, Uplyme Road, Lyme Regis, Dorset, DT7 3LS. Tel: 01297 443 948.

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This book explores the growing interest and major developments in practice in the use of informal education methods in welfare and schooling. It brings together a collection of papers written by contributors from a wide range of settings, which include social work, adult education, probation, community work and youth work. The main aim of the book is to encourage an exchange of ideas and practices across established professional boundaries.
Effective curriculum development requires the involvement of consumers in identifying needs, selecting goals and choosing methods to reach them. This has implications for methods of participation and for "selling" the value of informal education. A range of methods, which can assist these processes, accompanies these conclusions.

**Youth Work Curriculum**

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This report presents the findings of a review of the youth work curriculum in Northern Ireland. It looks at the youth worker's role in the development of young people and in developing the youth work curriculum, examines priorities and core principles, makes suggestions for programme areas and provides a model for effective practice, evaluation, and staff development.


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Youth work curriculum guidelines produced by the Scottish Community Education Council. Divided into two main sections it covers the principles of youth work and curricular guidelines, and curriculum development. Available from Scottish Community Education Council, Atholl House, 2 Canning Street, Edinburgh EH3 8EG.


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**Personal Development**


Article that describes how STORM (Self-confidence Training Opening up Recreation Motivation) is helping socially excluded young people to broaden their horizons through contact with European peers. Young people commit to the project for one year to follow a programme of activities and personal development which can include travelling aboard for the first time.


Teaching resource designed for use with key stage 3 (12 to 14-year-olds), which addresses their personal development and survival skills. Using activities which further creative thinking, emotional literacy, creative conflict resolution and active citizenship, the pack comprises three modules: connecting with yourself, connecting with others, and connecting with the community. The resource is also supported by a


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Developing life skills: a learning resource manual for trainers and educators working in non-traditional learning environments (BTN) [accession code: 18879]

Comprehensive resource designed for use in non-traditional learning environments on personal development and life skills training. Supported by trainer's notes, a wide variety of learning activities cover managing change, coping with stress, developing learning skills, developing communication skills, managing money, developing and maintaining positive attitudes, food and nutrition, and exercise and well-being. Available from Russell House Publishing, 4 St George's House, The Business Park, Uplyme Road, Lyme Regis, Dorset, DT7 3LS. Tel: 01297 443 948.


Article about a project run by Sheffield Volunteer Bureau, which aims to encourage disaffected young people to become volunteers. Funded by the Single Regeneration Budget, it offers an accredited personal development programme for young people aged 16 to 18 who are not in school or college, on a training course or in work.


Personal development resource pack for use with Guide groups but also relevant to work with young women in general. The pack contains information and activity cards on major issues faced by young women growing up, such as personal and family relationships, making choices, assertiveness, managing money, personal safety, rights, and developing beliefs and values. Available from Guide Association, 17-19 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W OPT. Tel: 020 834 6242.


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Barnes, Peter, University of Strathclyde Faculty of Education, 1997. ISBN 1900743302.

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Paper which aims to produce a theoretical framework for understanding youth work based on educational theory. It explores learning in a youth work context, social relationships in a youth group, and opportunities for decision making. It also provides an overview of the sociological theory adopted by Burrel and Morgan, and looks at models of youth work in terms of character building, personal development, and critical and radical social change. Available from Irish Youth Work Press, 20 Lower Dominick Street, Dublin 1.

The youth work curriculum (pam QP:BR) [accession code: AVCM]

This report describes and evaluates the curriculum adopted by youth workers to promote the personal development of young people as they move into adulthood. The report is based upon a survey of seven local youth services to assess how effectively they have pursued the objectives set out in the first and second ministerial conferences. Available from HMSO Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT.


Assesses the role of the voluntary sector youth service in aiding the personal development, social education and spiritual nurture of young people.

Call us by our names: a pack about people with special learning needs resulting from mental handicaps (kit LBM (oversize)) [accession code: ARCQ]

I intended for use in both the classroom and in staff development, this pack aims to help raise awareness and understanding of people with special learning needs. It also aims to develop a range of personal, social, literacy and numeracy skills such as self-analysis, communication skills, decision-making, and problem solving. It is centred on six main values: human value, self-advocacy, personal development, independence, special needs, and justice. The pack also includes a video to be used alongside the workbook, containing clips from films and other videos showing
people with learning difficulties speaking for themselves and examples which illustrate key learning objectives. Available from CSV Education, 237 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NJ.


Annual report of a youth project in Leeds. The aims of the project are to develop the arts as an alternative curriculum for young people and to use the arts as a tool for social and personal development. The report looks at the structure of the project, finance, working with other agencies, staff training and development and resources. It also describes its work with girls and young women and with Asian young people. Available from South Leeds Arts Base, St. Matthew's Community Centre, St. Matthew's Street, Holbeck, Leeds LS11 9LG.


Report of a youth service project with a group of young people with special needs, living in a social services residential centre in Trafford. The project aimed to use adventure activities to involve the young people in teamwork and to promote personal development through community involvement.


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After defining the territory and personal development, this book looks at how personal and social development may be translated into curriculum terms and makes practical suggestions for use in the classroom.


Extensive pack for young women, which aims to offer a personal development programme for young women, aged 15 to 25, which enables them "to do all they can
do to be all they can be." Based on the principles of Guiding, it offers "a fresh approach to what Guiding is about towards the 21st Century."

*Youth work into the 90's: a development programme for young women* (pam QQ:JHT) [accession code ASXD] Humberside Youth Association West Yorkshire Youth Association.

This pack describes a training and development programme aimed specifically at young women in Rotherham. The programme includes the opportunity to explore community involvement through a placement scheme with a local community group. The aims of the project are to recruit young women who would normally become involved in youth and community provision, to conduct a personal development programme, identify and provide placement opportunities, and to provide access to further training opportunities.

*Partners in youth provision: a discussion paper on expectations* (Local authority collection) [accession code: AKKZ] Warwickshire Education Department.

Paper looks at the different expectations of those involved in the youth service (including young people, the local authority and youth workers), suggests the components of a youth work curriculum, and gives an outline of 'skills for adolescence', a personal development course for young people.
YOUTH WORK ROLE IN DEVELOPING LEARNING READINESS

Plan
Reflect SELF Act
Observe

Plan
Reflect GROUP Act
Observe

Plan
Reflect ISSUES Act
Observe

Plan
Reflect TASK Act
Observe